

32

FUNERAL.

Investigator:Miliana.R

1st October, 1982

Interviewed: Mereisi NagaleGaloa,Tavuki,Kadavu

TITLE: THE DEATH OF THE CHIEF IN THE VILLAGE.

- When the chief of the village had died, then the relatives will have to discuss together the things should be done. Also during the discussion they will see who is responsible for each items. After the discussion then the message will be send across to his relatives who are staying very far. The message also in very important because there are different cast of people who have to do their items. So when the chief died there will be a special person who have to blow the DAVUI, meaning that is the cry of the people of the village and nobody have to cry. Also there will be a special person who have to guard the chief's body when he had brought into the house. Before the body is being brought the relatives who are staying with chief will have to layed down mats and masi, from here the person who always guard the chief's body will come and lay down the white long piece of masi around the house which inside. From here then the ladies can sit down and they have to sit in a proper way, which they have to sit only on their right side and fold their legs backwards. Also in here there should no sound at all the ladies should stay in silence. The person who is guarding the chief's body is called the BATI. In here they have to dressed in the VASILI leaves as a skirt, paint their face in black charcoal and

Cont'd Page 2.

- carry a war club on their shoulder. They are the ones who have to see that nobody is doing what he should not do. This person who called the BATE if they said you people there should make no sound and means it so nobody will have to disobey them. Everyone should follow what they said, if not then they can punish you by ordering you to get some special things and give it to the relatives of the chief. If not that kind of punishment then they can give hiding to any one who disobey them. This is done in the olden days that the BATE always give hiding to the person who disobey them. There is a special person to blow the DAVUI, it is the cry of the village. Nobody will have to cry his voice out it is not allowed. Everybody should respect his chief. For those who are blowing the DAVUI they have to wear black dresses and they can not leave it and go somewhere else. That is their job to blow the DAVUI until the body is buried. So the person who is blowing the DAVUI should not stop, once he stop it he would be punished by the relatives which called the ORE.

This ORE means that it is the punishment given by the relatives of the chief. The person who punished should bring one item which he had been told already.

Also the people will come and give their last gift to the chief. They will bring the tabua, mats and masi. This is called the REGUREGU, it is the items which the people brought as their last gift to the chief who had just died. All the items you brought is called the REGUREGU.

Cont'd Page 3.

- When this people come to gift their last gift to the chief, they will have to come to the place which have been prepared for them. Also in this place the old man will be sitting around the yaqona bowl. This people who are bringing their REGUREGU will come to that place and presented five tabua explaining the people why they come and all the things they brought. After that then one of the close relatives of the chief will take the tabua by saying their words of thanks to those people who are coming and asked them to stay for the funeral and that is. After that then the ladies will have to bring their things like mats and masi and put it inside the house. Also there will be certain person will be sitting with the old man in the shelter, that he will be writing the name of the people who have come. This happen also inside the house, also to those who preparing the food that their names will be written down. From here the relatives can tell how many people attend the funeral. So when the time the relatives think it is time for the funeral then they have to send for leader of the BATI and asked them to prepare the cemetary. So the BATI will go and prepare the cemetary and they will stay there until the body is being brought. If it is delayed then they still have to wait at the cemetary, because they can not go back to the village before the body is being buried. So when the body arrived at the cemetary, the relatives will presented another tabua as a VAKASOBU to the BATI meaning that now they can layed down the coffin into the hole.

Cont'd Page 4.

- This tabua is meant as the VAKASOBU, so after that then the Reverend can continue with his preaching for the funeral then they bury the coffin. But in the olden days they just wrapped the body with his clothes then wrapped it around with themats and masi. After they had buried the chief then they have to break the bamboo into small pieces so it can not grow again. As we know that the bamboo is a very strong tree, which comparing to the strong chief who had just died. By doing this they mean that the people can not take it away from the cemetery. So when the funeral is done then the people will have to return to the village. For those BATI who buried the chief's body they do not have to touch their food and they are not allowed to smoke cigarette. In here the relatives of the chief will have to prepare the yaqona for the BATI to washed their hands which is just to drink it meaning that is the ways they have to wash their hands. After that then go to another house which the ladies have prepared a special food for them. And from there then they can touch their food. After that then the relatives of the chief will presented another tabua to the relatives and to all those people who came for the funeral and asked them to stay behind until the fourth night. When the relatives agreed then they will be looked after by the people of the village. Then on the fourth night the relatives will have to killed one cow and a lot of dalo, then they prepare this and divide it between the people. This magiti is called the BURUA and it is given to the people who attended the funeral.

- So this magiti is called the BURUA is done on the fourth night. After that then the people can go now to their own place. Now only the relatives of the chief will have to stay behind. Also the magiti is done on the tenth night. But on the fourth night the relatives of the chief will have to put their taboos. This taboos is like that they do not have to drink grog and they do not have to smoke cigarette until the hundred nights. Also they have to wear black dress to show their respect for their chief who had just died. If it is for the man they have to pin a black ribbon on their shirt. This is done until on the hundred night. Then on the hundredth night the relatives will have to bring drums of kerosene, bundle of new clothes, Fijian oil, tabua and present it to the chief's mothers relatives. When they have presented the things to the mother's relatives same time they will have remove their black dresses and live it there. From here on the hundred nights the relatives can allowed them to their taboos. So this what is done on the hundred night.
- Can we talk about the BATI?
- The BATI is the person who are guarding the chief's body when he died. Also this people will have to dressed in VASILI leaves as a skirt then wrapped the masi around the waist. Then they have to put the black charcoal on the face and oil themselves in Fijian oil. Then they have to carry the WAU on their shoulder. Also this people are those who are giving orders to the people what should they do. If the BATI said there should be no sound they means that there should be no sound at all.

Cont'd Page 6.

- This people who are guarding the chief's body are called themselves as the BATI. This BATI comes from a certain group of people from a certain village. Once the BATI says something all the people should follow it. If somebody does not follow what they said then he will punished by the BATI. Also this people will have to prepare the cemetary. By preparing the cemetary the BATI should stay on the cemetary until the body arrived. If the body is a little bit delayed then they have to wait. They can not come back to the village.

When the body arrived in the cemetary it is for the BATI to bury the body. When the funeral is finished then the people have to come back, the BATI should allow themselves to touch their food or smoke ciggarrete.

In here they will attend a special discussion by the relatives of the chief. The relatives will have to give them yaqona to drink yaqona as meaning to wash their hands.

After that then they touch their own food. So the BATI is very important according to the chief's death.

Because they have to follow every single things they should do. After that the relatives will have to give the magiti and the yau so that it show that is their appreciation to the BATI of doing a big job during the funeral. And that is all about the BATI.

Cont'd Page 7.

- Can you tell me what do they always do when it is time for the funeral .
- When it is time for the funeral, the BATHI will come to carry the body. Before they enter the door to go outside they should turned around the head of the chief inside the house three times. This means that it is the last view of the chief to his village and to his people. When they had turned the head three times then they go outside. It is very important also to do this because as in the olden days they belived that if you do not turned the head of the chief threetimes inside the house then chief's spirit will come back to the village and will punished the people. So it very important to do this.
- Can we talk about what always happen on thefourth night ?
- On the fourth night it is very special, the relatives of the chief will have to prepare the BURUA. This BURUA is mainly the pig, cow and dalo, this rawed food will be given to the person who attend the funeral. Also on the fourth night then the relatives will have to begin their taboos.
After the fourth night only the relatives can stay behind the rest can go back.
- Is there anything else you want to say ?
- Apart from the fourth night the relatives will also prepare the magiti on the tenth night. This is only for relatives and for the people who wants to bring something. In here they just have to come and eat together with the relatives.
After themeal then they can go back to their places.

- Also when this magiti is done it shows that the relatives of the chief have got much courage from doing all those things. After the tenth night then people of the village will have to wait until the hundred nights.
 - What is done on the hundred night ?
 - On the hundred night then the people will have to bring their drums of kerosene about two drum each and six metres of new clothes with the tabua and give it to the relatives of the chief. Also in here the relatives will come bringing with them their things like mats, drums of kerosene and bundle of new clothes and present it to the mother's side of the chief. Also in here they have to remove their black dress which they were wearing from the death of the chief until the hundred night. When doing this they are allowing themselves from their taboos. All these magiti and you will be given to each person who come for the REGUREGU, to the BATI and to all the people who came for the funeral. So this is what is called the VAKA-BOGIDRAU. It is the last thing also to be done during the death of the chief. In here also the relatives will have to presented about ten tabua to the mother's relatives showing them how they are very much depressed from the chief's death, it is not only for them it is for all the people of the village. So to all those who are attending the funeral will now can go to their village.
- Also from here the relatives will have to prepare some magiti for the people to eat it when they have finished with the ceremony. So this is called the VAKA- BOGIDRAU and it is the last thing should be done in funeral ceremony.

Cont'd Page 9.

- After the magiti is been done then the ladies can perform some meke just to make the people happy. It shows also that all the taboos they have been carrying from the time the chief died until the hundred night but now they had allowed themselves again. After that then the people can go back to their own village.

So after that then the funeral ceremonies is finished.

Thank you.

T H E E N D