

night. They will sing hymns, pray, drink kava (a traditional tongan drink) and generally talk about the deceased, his life and times.

Visiting guests will have brought food, mats and other gifts, which will be distributed according to blood status. It may appear strange that persons with a higher blood status than the deceased (i.e. Fahu) get first choice ahead of those with lower status (i.e. Tu'a). The personal effects of the deceased are buried with him, and his other possessions may be distributed by the family to others in the community.

Crying and Wailing

Tongan bereavement behaviour is marked by the mourners' wearing black clothes, and even a mat wrapped around them, for a variable period depending on their closeness to the deceased. When the Queen of Tonga died the whole population was requested to wear black for six months and her immediate family were expected to do so for a further six months.

The funeral is usually Christian and there is likely to be considerable crying and wailing, especially by the women. Afterwards, the mourners will attend the burial and will then be invited by the elder to a feast (Pongi Pongi) which is often held in the church hall. Any who wish will be able to make speeches at this time. The mourning period, which will last for some twenty days thereafter, will be marked by daily visits with flowers to the cemetery and by the supportive presence in the home of the extended family of the deceased. While the mourners are usually very generous and bring gifts of food with them, the family is expected to bear the costs involved.

Unlike the European family, the Tongan family will have a mourning period which will be "unveiled" by announcement from the elder, after which the survivors may continue their normal life style. Further formalisation of mourning is provided by the family's calling together its members for an anniversary party, one year after the death occurred.

The deceased's old church congregation is invited and the family make a contribution to the church at this time. The western clinician may envy the Tongan this particular aspect, since it appears to mitigate against the troublesome features so often encountered by the bereaved European as part of the 'anniversary reaction', involving rekindled unresolved grief.

Death of Cook Islander

Typically, the death of a Cook Islander is notified immediately to the whole of his community. There is substantial emotional and financial support given because it is felt that the deceased belonged to the community and that the death is a community loss. As in Tongan culture, the body is usually

prepared by a female relative of the deceased. In New Zealand, most hospital mortuaries co-operated in preparing the body in traditional style. The males are expected to provide food for the community through the bereavement period. The ceremonies are begun only after the friends and family have arrived.

On the evening before the burial, a service called the Apera is held, during which the body is placed in the middle of the house. The mourners are expected to touch and embrace the corpse. This practice is more common in the Cook Islands than in the New Zealand Cook Island community, where, for example, children usually do not go near the body. At the Apera people will pray over the deceased, crying and making speeches recalling the good as well as the bad attributes of the person.

The deceased is treated as though he is still alive until after the burial. The Apera is a time of catharsis when the community has opportunity to express emotion and to pay its respects to the deceased.

At the burial, close relatives of the deceased will cut tresses off their hair and place these in the coffin with the body, along with the deceased's most personal possessions. In New Zealand, mourners are expected to return from the burial to the church hall for a light meal together, and some may return to the family home. The church service on the Sunday after the burial is dedicated to the deceased. Those who are in mourning are expected to wear black clothes for three months after the death and to place flowers on the grave each Sunday. Donations may be given to the family during this bereavement period, and if a sufficient sum is gathered some monument may be erected and an unveiling ceremony held.

The bereavement pattern in the Cook Island community indicates continuing support to the family of the deceased, along with gentle encouragement to return to a normal life-style as the deceased is regarded as having had his life and gone on to better things.

Niuean Community

As in other Polynesian cultures, the death of a member of the Niuean community involved the gathering together of family and villagers. The body is prepared by the adults of the immediate family of the deceased, and children are not permitted to participate as the genitals are considered to be taboo. In New Zealand, the Niuean family usually has the body prepared by the mortuary.

The funeral is held the day after the death, although in the New Zealand Niuean community a few days will elapse before the funeral to allow distant family and friends to travel. Again, during the nights prior to the funeral the family may visit the body in the

home or in the mortuary, hugging and kissing it as part of the farewell.

On the night prior to the burial visitors will come in choirs to the house and each sing a hymn in rotation throughout the night. Mourners are encouraged to express their feelings for the deceased, amid much moaning and crying, and fights have occurred during this immediate bereavement period, as an expression of angry recriminations.

The funeral service, held the morning after the night of singing, is usually of a Christian form. People wear either their best clothes or black garments. The mourning period is formalised at ten days after the burial, and members of the community may keep the bereaved family company right through this time, night and day. In the New Zealand Niuean community this practice is less common.

Unlike other Polynesian cultures the Niueans do not have an anniversary ceremony as they believe that this brings back memories. Even the tombstone, placed at the grave at any time, has no special ceremony attached to its erection. The only notable commemoration of the death may be in Niue where if a person has drowned, a ban will be placed upon fishing in that area for one year.

Expressing Feelings

The familiar pattern also occurs in Samoa where messages are sent out to friends and family immediately after the death, the women prepare the body for burial and the men are responsible for digging the grave and helping to prepare the food for the bereaved community. Mourners are encouraged to express their feelings for the deceased, and there will be much weeping and crying and holding and kissing the body. The funeral is usually a Christian service and there will be singing by many choirs. Speeches are made at the service by the minister, by the head of the family and by visiting heads of other families.

There occurs at this time the ritual giving of fine mats. In addition, preserved foods such as cans of corned beef and tinned fish may also be given, although gifts of fresh food are shared by the mourners. Again, black clothes are traditionally worn as a sign of grief.

The anniversary service, common in the Tongan culture, is not always held, but may be convened a year after the death of an important person in the Samoan community. Some two months after the death, a headstone and elaborate decorations will have been erected for the deceased, usually at the rear of the family home. This monument is usually dedicated during a church service. The Samoans interviewed during the present survey indicated a deep experience of consistent and long-term support for the bereaved individual and family. They credited this support with mitigating against any difficulties asso-