<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Elsa Gemel, Robert Gemel, Bruno Leto and Wilma Kadilagowa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date of interview:</td>
<td>30 March 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location of interview:</td>
<td>Tatau, New Ireland Province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief interviewer:</td>
<td>Lalen Simeon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration of interview:</td>
<td>44:17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Main language of interview:</td>
<td>Tok Pisin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Image: | ![Elsa Gemel](image1)  
Elsa Gemel  

![Robert Gemel](image2)  
Robert Gemel |
**TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Transcript</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0:04</td>
<td>[Interviewer] Welcome all you relatives of Mr Aisoli Salin, and thank you making time for this interview. We will begin now by looking at his life history which you’ve held on too ever since the war, and I welcome you all once again. First of all we’ll look at his history where he was born and right up to time he got married. So thank you, we’ll hand it over to Bruno to start.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Interviewer] Thank you</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Elsa Gemel] My name is Elsa Gamel and Mr Salin’s father is the head or big man of our clan and he is also my uncle.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
When Salin was born in Lavambak, he, our big man took him to Tatau village located on the eastern part of Tabar island. This big man that took him is one of the respected elders at Tatau clan, and Salin was taken so that a cultural customary ritual could be made on his behalf, just like Bruno has mentioned. We already did the custom once with his clan called the Kopinati at a place named Kopinatis, and these were also his people.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[Interviewer]</th>
<th>They did the custom twice?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[Elsa Gemel]</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[Interviewer]</th>
<th>So the first was done when he first arrived just like it was done to us yesterday right?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[Elsa Gemel]</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[Interviewer]</th>
<th>When we first arrived, you all welcome us, who actually did it?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[Elsa Gemel]</td>
<td>It was dad and them.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[Robert Gemel]</th>
<th>Shee meant, his dad together with his clan.</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[Interviewer]</th>
<th>OK, so your dad and his clan.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[Elsa Gemel]</td>
<td>Yes, and it wasn’t a welcome</td>
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</table>

| [Wilma Kadilagowa] | It was a special cultural ceremony where they would initiate him in becoming a very big man (important man) in the near future. This initiation marks him as the chosen big man and this title will forever remain with him even though if he doesn’t go to school. So when they came from Simberi to Tatau, he was not initiated once, he was already initiated down at Tawui, at our place, his father’s place together with these old ladies who are living with me. And there would be another initiation for him again. He is looked up as a big man because his father was the chief, which he would eventually succeed him and reign followed by his son and their chosen children. |
[Interviewer]
Well thank you, that is very interesting.

[Wilma Kadilagowa]
Of course.

[Interviewer]
And that initiation, was it led and carried out by his father?

[Wilma Kadilagowa]
Yes, but only the first one.

[Interviewer]
What about the second?

[Wilma Kadilagowa]
The second was done by the clan.

[Interviewer]
Alright, please tell me more. Did they do the Tumbuan or Malangan or something?

[Group of people]
Speaking in language. (2:55-3:01)

[Interviewer]
Please could you say that again?

[Elsa Gemel]
They all came (speaking in language with all the others: 3:02-3:22)

3:40

[Interviewer]
Sorry Elsa, could you repeat what you were saying, Salin’s dad brought him over after the first custom was done at Tavaui and then what happen from there?

[Robert Gemel]
By the way did I make it clear to you about the first initiation?

[Interviewer]
Yes, now could you tell me what happen from there, the second clan initiation?

[Robert Gemel]
OK, when they brought him over ... sorry I’ll go back again, they gave him a mask to wear, a mask called Churukmi Churukpukues. That’s the traditional name of the mask. After that he was brought to a place called Pegenatings, that’s where his business or mother clan is. And he was given the Malagan which they called Vavara followed by a feast, all done at Pegenatings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[Interviewer]</th>
<th>Would you know how old he was during the initiation?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[Robert Gemel]</td>
<td>No, not really.</td>
</tr>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>[Interviewer]</th>
<th>And how big he was? Or would you know how big a person is expected to be? Before the initiation.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[Robert Gemel]</td>
<td>Not, really ... but Salin was initiated when he was still small. This initiation was done only to the chosen first born child, at the very young age.</td>
</tr>
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5.18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[Interviewer]</th>
<th>OK, and is he here now?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[Robert Gemel]</td>
<td>Yes, he was here, and was later he was taken back to his father’s place to stay.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[Interviewer]</th>
<th>You mean here at Tatau.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[Robert Gemel]</td>
<td>Yes, here at Tatau.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[Interviewer]</th>
<th>Was he there until he was old enough to go to school? Please tell us more.</th>
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</table>
| [Elsa Gemel]  | From here he was taken to Simberi, there he stayed until he was able to go to school.
(That’s were ‘I’ll join everything when he goes back) |

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>[Interviewer]</th>
<th>OK, thank you.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[Bruno Leto]</td>
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</table>
Upon Salin’s return, after he was given his Malagan and all the advices from his clan. We made and built him out of Lavabak, as he just said throughout the process. We did the Malagan. The name of the Malagan is Songsong, and this Malagan has its own bed built separately, on top it a huge pig is placed and everyone will have their faces painted with Kambung (Lime). But this pig must be completely finished within the fence (Barrier grounds) during the ceremony, and bits or pieces must not be left or brought back to the village, it must all be finished. This Malagan is referred to as Mitsurrism Songsong.

Salin was born out of this Malagan when he returned to Tatau, when he went back to Simberi they also did some customary ritual work, that’s when he sat on the Lavabak, which he would eventually go to school and his path was called or referred to as Lukbuk.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Interviewer/Listener</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:02</td>
<td>Elsa Gemel</td>
<td>Soon the missionaries came with the gospel work of the Church and his dad put him to school at a very young age, however he never learnt much so his other father (confirms his name: another, father in language) Klamka and his wife went and brought him back to Tatau. They stayed and his old lady got on the ship with him and left him at his new school in Rabaul. During his holiday, he comes back home and after his break his mother takes him back to Rabaul again. Later on his trip to Australia, he was followed by three other men, which are Emmanuel’s father, Kankan and Komus. Upon his journey he never came back for holidays or visits. He stayed there until he started working in Australia, and he never married. After a good number of years he came back and stayed home, until he found a wife which gave him two beautiful daughters. That’s all I know and heard from the old lady.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:48</td>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>OK, so the first wife, what part of Tatau is she from? The same place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elsa Gemel</td>
<td>Ah, she’s from Mapua.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>What is her name?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elsa Gemel</td>
<td>Pares Catherine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>By the way, is there a customary ceremony marrying a lady or something? And was his wife chosen by the elders or did they meet themselves?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elsa Gemel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
No, they met during a march in Rakupo, Salin saw her and followed her. It was more like love at first sight.

| 9:45 | [Interviewer]  
|      | And who went to March? |
| [Interviewer] | And you mean to march in what way? Our traditional singing way or the westernized way? |
| [Elsa Gemel] | The westernized way (or the white men way). |
| [Interviewer] | So Pares also gave in and followed Salin that time, right? |
| [Elsa Gemel] | Yes |
| [Interviewer] | OK, he must be a powerful man? |
| [Bruno Leto] | Yes, well taught by the white man. |
| [Interviewer] | OK, the strength of the white men is in him, (Background laughter). That’s good, and after he got married did he go back to Australia or did he start work back home, as a teacher? |
| [Elsa Gemel] | Umm... No, he was just at Simberi, even after his wedding they continued to stay at Simberi, at Lavabak. Until he received his call for work and they left together. |
| [Interviewer] | Was it after they had kids? |
| [Elsa Gemel] | Yes, by then they already had two daughters |
But we don’t know how many years they were in the village?

| Elsa Gemel | Yes, that’s the only thing. (speaking in Language – 10:43-11:30) |

11:30

| Interviewer | Oh, OK. Ah, after coming back from Australia, did he work anywhere outside before coming back home? |
| Elsa Gemel | He was a teacher at ... |

| Interviewer | So from Australia he came and taught as a young man |
| Elsa Gemel | No |

| Interviewer | Oh, so from Australia he came straight here. |
| Elsa Gemel | He came straight here, where he later got married, and he took his wife to Utu high school, that is where he taught. After Utu they came back and he taught here. |

| Interviewer | Was he the one who started the school or were there some people already teaching when he joined? |
| Elsa Gemel | He arrived and he brought his own teachers and they all taught together. |

| Interviewer | So from Utu he came here, would you know where he went after that? |
| Elsa Gemel | Well before that, they came and stayed, and they started to have marital problems which they ended up getting divorced. |

<p>| Interviewer | Oh, so Aisoli Salin and his wife got divorced, sad. |
| Elsa/Bruno |  |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Interviewer</th>
<th>Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes, that was his first wife.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Interviewer]</td>
<td>OK, so that girl was from his own place (referring to a photo/picture of Aisoli Salin and second wife)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Elsa Gemel]</td>
<td>Yes, this is the second wife. (looking at a photo/picture of Aisoli Salin and second wife) That was the one mother was talking about yesterday, their next stop was at Madang. That’s also where he started doing his work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:11</td>
<td>[Interviewer]</td>
<td>So after the divorce, did he bring his two daughters with him to Madang?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Elsa/Bruno]</td>
<td>No, the two daughters remained with his first wife</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Interviewer]</td>
<td>So the second wife which is you, followed him to Madang. And by then was your son born?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Elsa/Bruno]</td>
<td>Not yet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Interviewer]</td>
<td>Oh, so it was just you and the twos.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Elsa/Bruno]</td>
<td>Ah (speaking in language) After coming back from Madang, the wife gave birth to Alfred.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13:50</td>
<td>[Interviewer]</td>
<td>You wouldn’t know how many years you two stayed in Madang, would you?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>[Elsa Gemel]</td>
<td>I wouldn’t remember.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Interviewer]</td>
<td>It’s OK, by the way, let’s try to complete Salin’s life story... So apart from everything you could recall, from Utu to the school he started, he got divorced and then he went to Madang with his second wife and what happened after that, where did he go from there? If you could remember, did he go work for the government?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
As he served in Madang as a teacher, he also had a lot of other work which he dedicated his time to do. He did a lot of work for both the church and the government.

Yes, and the age, maybe his second wife will tell us about that tomorrow.

The part where we discussed in regard to Salin’s life is when he came back to Tatau, to his clan, back home and stayed until he was able to go to school. Now in regard to what the elderly lady was saying, she was talking about Salin’s schooling years over in Rabaul and his trip over to Australia, that’s when he left this photo. This is the photo which they took before leaving his Mom and dad.

OK father, these two men that followed him, how are they related to him? And who are they?

That was his father.

By the way, he also mentioned two other names.

Well, the other man’s name is Kankan, if you see his name then he is Salin’s brother in the clan. (speaking in language)

Umm... both Kankan and Komus are Salin’s clan brothers.

You mean brothers in terms of their clan?

That’s why they had to go with him to leave him down at Australia. This photo shows his first trip down to Australia.

OK, when Salin was serving down in Madang, they don’t know other people very well but they tend to know more about the church works and all these after arriving home. Now could you speak more about this, you or whoever that prefers to share anything.
16:48  ![Image](image_url)
(Speaking in language)
They came and he stayed here.

16:55  [Interviewer]
So he came and stayed with you after leaving Madang and after that did he go somewhere again?

17:16  [Elsa Gemel]
No he came and stayed here. He stayed at Simberi and then later he was sent back to school, to go and teach.

[Bruno Leto]
(speaking in language 17:16-18-21)
When Salin returned to Madang, he went and his big house back at home, he stayed there for a while then he was called back to teach. After the school at Tombochat was moved he came back here.

[Unknown male]
Oh the first school was done at Tombochat.

[Bruno Leto]
That’s the first school that was made before he went to Madang, after leaving Madang he came back home and stayed, later the school was moved out of Tombochat to here were it is today, there he was called to teach in that school again.
(speaking in language 18:02-03-04)
So what I can say is he was out doing some government work before he came back and started the school. After he left for Madang and then returned to teach in this same school.

[Unknown Male]
How many times did he travel to Madang province?

[Bruno Leto]
Just once, but I believe that he did some work there when he came back straight from Australia.
(Speaking in Language 18:37-47)

[Unknown Male]
He was at Madang when they moved the school from Tombochat to its current location

19:02  [Interviewer]
You mean when he was still in Madang?
| [Unknown Male] | Yes when he was still there. He even established a Methodist church there during his stay and service. After coming back to Simberi he built his house there in Maragon community, from there he was brought over to teach here. |
| [Interviewer] | Was that close to his retirement? |
| [Unknown Male] | Yes |
| [Interviewer] | Just to clear the picture... when he returned from Australia, was he a young boy when the war started? |
| [Unknown Male] | Yes, he was still a young boy |
| [Interviewer] | All these stories, they happened after the war right? |
| [Elsa Gemel] | No these stories were before the war. |
| [Interviewer] | Oh before the war. |
| [Elsa Gemel] | Yes, after the war we never knew anything that happened, but her old mother usually tell us that’s how we knew all these stories. |
| [Interviewer] | So his marriage was also before the war right? |
| [Elsa Gemel] | No when he got married he was still a young man. |
| [Elsa Gemel] | Before the war... when he just a boy, didn’t even started school. |
| [Interviewer] | Didn’t even started school and he became a maimai. |
| [Elsa Gemel] | |
Yeah... *(nods and agrees)*

[Interviewer]
So he was already Initiated as a maimai before he started school and before his trip to Australia.

20:43

[Wilma Kadilagowa]
That's correct.
Back in the village when a child of a chief is born they will quickly check to see if it’s a boy or it’s a girl. If it’s a boy they will quickly initiate him so he can take the place of the current chief and learn all there is to learn as a maimai.

[Interviewer]
And the ceremony, does it involves everyone in the village to witness

[Wilma Kadilagowa]
Yes, it’s very big and important to the New Ireland people, we call it the Malagan. A lot of shell money and pigs will be given at that time.

*(speak in language)*
They will sit him on the bed... the Malagan bed and he will carry everything required to indicate that he’s the chief of the bed. Sorry it’s a bit more complex to explain.

[Interviewer]
It's OK, just explain it in pidgin.

[Wilma Kadilagowa]
On this bed there is gorgor *(traditional flower)* placed on top of it to indicate that he’s the head.

[Interviewer]
Just to clarify again, this bed that you’re talking about, is it the same bed that we sleep on or something else?

22:20

[Bruno Leto]
In our custom this bed is done traditionally from special bush materials. It’s a throne where he will sit on top while he will be carried, on this throne he will be given a mask to wear which is the Malagan. As a child his dad would have prepared everything for him, as he grows up he grows with everything and with all the power around him. That’s why he is so important, if his clothes are on the line, you must not cross under or walk in front of it, if you do... you will have to kill a pig and do a malagan because the power he holds with him is too big, he is no ordinary person.
Yeah so when he left for Australia he already had those powers, after coming back and after working around with the government and the mission he still carried everything around with him. All these blessings were with him from the beginning, his childhood.

23:54
[Interviewer]
Thank you, anymore?

23:59
[Bruno Leto]
Let’s ask these women there.

24:00
[Interviewer]
Thank you so much, you’ve shared a lot. OK now Wilma and Agnes is there anything from memory which you would like to share?

24 22
[Wilma Kadilagowa]
My name is Wilma Kadilogiba and I am Aisoli Salin’s niece. In our culture my mother can come from another woman’s clan because we shared the same business in our clan business. In any of our clan business we always recognise every other business. Compared to where they came, we are far but because we share the same business it has held us together, at times I go stay with my clan sisters and at times they come stay with me so that’s how my mom is connected to everything. I always admire the life of Aisoli Salin because he is different and mom always say well that’s because he went to the white man’s school.

I’m already married but I’ll share some general things concerning Salin’s life. I was at Kaut, and every time we would drive past Utu high school my mom would say; oh sad, look there’s our house. She used to baby sit for Aisoli and his first wife, they had two daughters… Wilma and Novuk from his first marriage. He was a teacher, senior teacher there and also he was in charge of most of the office in Kavieng town that time. That’s what mom use to tell me.

I didn’t know what exactly uncle was doing back home, I wanted to go to school so I did my grade 2 outside, I wanted to ask him about the school however, the matter concerning the school wasn’t really known, maybe the land owners had a bit of quarrel. Before all that they use to come stay with us where we use to stay before. We usually visit each other closely and we developed the habit of meeting every time. After leaving the school at Madang he came back and built himself a really big house at Maragon. There they all did head stones in memory of everyone that died, more of a customary thing. I was still at school and I joined a singing group when we went to sing as they did an opening ceremony for his big house, a custom feast.

Uncle Salin did not teach over here and he did not make this school, when they removed the school at Tombochat, the school was brought over here so as the teachers that were already teaching in that school, they all came and taught here. On the 2nd year a foreigner came and made this school,
his name is Mr Gale. In 1964 another foreigner named Mr Morris came and directed the school. 1965 I left the school for Madina high school and every time I come home for holiday I would normally go and see him, seeing me he will call from far and invite me to go home and have some food and water, he someone my mom and everyone in the community respected. He is a real gentleman, you will hardly see him getting angry, shouting or seeing him fight. During my last holiday, before I was going to leave we sat down and talked. He said ‘Kandere’ (uncle), I waited and waited for my book to get published but nothing happened until now, if anything happens to me and I die, please don’t forget my children, and I started to question myself, this book that he is working on, is it his biography because he named the book title; the life story. The other thing he said was, Julius Chan always asks him about the book. I went straight to his first born son and said Lhalu, since I’m always busy in the office and I don’t get the chance to meet Mr Chan or know his whereabouts … please if he happens to come to Tabar please do ask him about the life story of your dad. How are they going on with the publishing of the book, what’s the progress?

When he died it was a real tragedy, as the news reached all the offices in Kavieng everyone was already alerted in working together to support out during his death. The officers in the education office had already got the coffin so my husband and I got the flowers, loaded them on the truck with the coffin and headed for Konos... there we got the boat and took the body to Tabar.

So I knew him as a very good man and very respectful. Even if he never went to Australia, he would still be a big man in the community with everything he learnt from child hood and how he would have use it to help the people. He usually smokes and crosses his legs every time he sits and I always ask him why he does that; he would just look at me and say, ‘this is how the foreigners relax’. They smoke because they are happy and at times because they have a little problem troubling them. Well that’s because he grew up there and knew most of the foreigners’ culture.

He would normally sit down and tell us stories every time, especially about the books that he read. He also would talk to us about his trip to Fiji, he went there as an inspector attending a Pacific conference. He told us about his riddle which he asked and no one answered even until today, the riddle goes something like this: who am I… the man that made me never use me but the man that use me never made me? I to didn’t know the answer but after begging him for quite a while he said the answer to the riddle is a coffin box.

Aisoli Salin is so generous, every time I come to visit and leave, he would always make sure he gives me money and don’t go empty handed. I know all this because the name that I’m using now, Wilma Sion Tapi... was his daughter’s name which it only changed when I got married. Thank you, I think that’s about it.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
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| After all his years out in the field serving, when he got back did he teach or he just stayed back at home? | [Wilma Kadilagowa]  
He just stayed back at home in Simberi. |
| Was he teaching when he died?                                           | [Wilma Kadilagowa]  
He never came and taught, he came back and started building his house. |
| After leaving Simberi to come and teach, did he go back to Simberi after teaching the last time? | [Wilma/Elsa]  
He never returned to Simberi. |
| Oh was he just with his family.                                         | [Wilma Kadilagowa]  
After teaching he went back to his small village back home. |
| After his return from Madang, he came and stayed with his second wife at Maragon village where they built their house. He was then called to teach, after serving his time he retired and followed his wife to her place there he stayed until he died. | [Bruno Leto]  
Yes, he died at his wife village. |
| Now I have the complete story                                           | [Wilma Kadilagowa]  
He was already married to his second wife when they went to Madang with my other cousin. And when they came back and started teaching here again, he then had a child from his second wife.  
When the first wife followed him to Madang the second time, the second wife never had any child, her first born was born in Simberi after the divorce. That would ah, Lahlu... I was already there when he was born. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewer</th>
<th>[Wilma Kadilagowa]</th>
<th>[Bruno Leto]</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>So where they all born here</td>
<td>Yes, all in Tabar.</td>
<td>He never shared most things with us, he wanted and always mention something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Interviewer]</td>
<td>Did he travel anywhere else?</td>
<td>about him wanting to die before everything happens. He never shared most of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OK thank you so much

[Wilma Kadilagowa]
Something I noticed about him, when he went to Australia and after coming back, most of the things he learnt was forgotten. I remember us going to the bush and he had no idea how to cut a bamboo, we were so worried thinking when did he learn how to work and he went to work. Nevertheless, as a chief he’s not expected and must never work. All he has to do is to relax and take part in big ceremonies and feasts. But he never took part in most of the events and feasts only the one that took place in Simberi where they did the cementing.

42:48
[Interviewer]
Can you further elaborate on this cement which they put as head stone, does it represent those that have already died and that they were once leaders in clans?

[Wilma Kadilagowa]
No, not leaders and not clans... it’s for anybody, me, my aunty, their sister and son on, for everybody. The cement is a memory reminding those alive who died, it’s a memory.

[Interviewer]
And the ceremony where does it take place?

[Wilma Kadilagowa]
At the burial site.

[Interviewer]
OK, now I understand.

43:29
[Elsa Gemel]
He did the cement after the death of his daughter, the deceased and Lhalu are tweens. That’s why he laid the cement on his daughter, mother and brother’s behalf.

[Interviewer]
Was that why the big feast was done, in regard to the ceremony?

Yes.

[Interviewer]
Thank you for your participation.