

Graves on family land: the tradition continues

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In Bora Bora, on the land of the Tapi family. . © Polynesia the 1st

Even if in Tahiti, it is increasingly rare to see graves on family land, the situation and any other in the islands. In the garden, under the house or

inside the fare, some families bury their loved ones near them. This is the case in Bora Bora.

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It is a tradition that remains, even if in Tahiti it tends to disappear: the burial of parents or relatives in land owned by family. In some islands, families are attached to it. An almost physical way of continuing with the elders, who left a cultural heritage that the descendants do not want to fail.



Take care of the deceased. · © Polynesia the 1st

In Bora Bora, for lack of land base, there is simply no communal cemetery. On the other hand, each family benefits from the logistics of the municipality to bury its deceased on the property, even if they end up in the family home. This

is the case with the Tapi family. *"For some, it may be shocking, but for us it was something normal. Because the loss of loved ones, at the beginning is very painful. But having them with us, over time it calms down,"* says Mairena Tapi, a resident of Bora Bora.



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In Tahiti, it's different. There are still family cemeteries grouping together several graves. But there is no legal term to qualify a collection of graves because the principle of a private cemetery simply does not exist. Except that the Polynesian being attached to his land, it was fashionable that he rests on his property. As for families, some admit that it is much more practical. *"It is a*

land that has been offered by our tupuna Heuea, so that we can be well on our land," says Melba Fuller.



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In an extension of the Orofara municipal cemetery, standard measures and specifications must be observed for the construction of a vault. As well as a regular maintenance of the surroundings carried out by the municipal agents. This is why a contribution is requested from bereaved families. *"In a communal cemetery, there are burials, exhumations, and concessions in which the beneficiary decides who can be buried there or not"* , explains Charles Bernière, in charge of the Mahina cemeteries service.



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In French Polynesia, the municipalities are competent in matters of cemetery, whether in terms of creation, implementation of legislation, but also burial on private land.