

## Gaanman Gazon Matodja

**Gazon** Matodya (1910s – 1 December 2011) was **gaanman** of the Okanisi or Ndyuka people of Suriname, South America, one of six Maroon ethnic group of people in the area.



He lived in Diitabiki, a village located on the Tapanahony river.

He belonged to the Otoo Lo clan. He was one of the longest living chiefs to date.

He was gaanman from 1965 to 2011, He died in the capital city of Suriname, Paramaribo on December the 1<sup>st</sup> of 2011, not long after being crowned «King of the Ndyuka».

Born: ca 1904, Moitaki, Sipaliwini District, Suriname

Burial: 10 April 2012, Ma-Kownoe-Gron cimetry in DiitabiKi, Sipaliwini District, Suriname.

In 1992, while in the United-States, Gazon said he was not happy with the changes that have occurred in his tribal area during the modern era of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

As a chief he had many wives and many children. His successor is now mister Bono Velanti of the same clan, Otoo Lo.

He was crowned king when he received a golden crown and scepter by his people in recognition of his authority in 2011.

The crown is a new badge of leadership in the traditions of Ndyuka Maroons, the presentation of which follows the example of African tribal communities.



The ceremony took place in Drietabiki, the residency of Gazon Matodja.

His reception of the crown and staff has earned the paramount chief the nickname 'King of the Ndyuka'.