

Tabana ni Vora kei na iTovo Vakaviti
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TOPIC: MARRIAGE

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Informant: Makelesi Tinai of Tonia, Verata, Tailevu. (60 yrs)
(F.60 yrs)

When ~~someone~~ someone wants to marry a young girl from another family, it will be the young man's father's duty to go over to the girl's father and discuss it with him.

- What is the reason for the boy's father to go over to the girl's father and discuss the proposition with him?

~~There~~ There is a saying used among the elders which says that the young man wants to cook the food for the ~~the~~ young girl.

Does the young people know anything about ~~this~~ this proposition discuss by their parents?

- In the olden days, when a father of a boy wants his son to be married off, he will first discuss with his wife and they will approach the young girl's parents and they will all discuss it together, the matter concerning their children and the arranging of their marriage. If both sides agree to it, then the two young people is informed about it. And the marriage arrangement begins here.

- What happens when the boy's father ~~visits~~ makes the visit to the girl's father, what is he going to take with him?

He can take anything he wants to take but first he has to go over to the girl's father and discuss the ~~marriage~~ possible

- marriage with him. He will discuss it over with the girl's father and if both agrees to it, then the real marriage preparation begins. As to make the thing official, the boy's father will bring a TABUA or whale's tooth and he will present it to the girl's father, stating the purpose of his visit. The TABUA, which is presented to the girl's father asking him for his daughter's hand in marriage for this is known as the VAKADONUI NI GUSU, or the TABUA for the girl's side to say yes. The TABUA which is known as the VAKADONUI NI GUSU is to show that the girl and her relatives has agreed to the proposal which is already discussed by the two respctive parents. As for the boy's side, again they will bring their own TABUA which is presented to the girl's family to show that they also agree to this aranged marriage. And the TABUA which ~~is~~ they present represents the VANUA or the whole village.

- Could you give the number of TABUA or whales' teeth taken for this sort of thing?

- This will depend on the number of TABUA or whales' teeth they can get. There could be ten TABUA and more than that.

- Who will take the priviledge of asking the young girl if she ~~would~~ would like to marry so and so?

- The asking will be done by the ~~girl~~ girl's relatives and usually it is by her uncle- her father's elder brother - he will take the priviledge of telling her about the arranged marriage and asked her if she is willing to go along with it. If she says yes, then her relatives or her father will present another TABUA to the young man's

- side^{giving} their daughter's word. During this presentation of the VAKADONUI NI GUSU, the young man's relative^j will be there to witness the outcome of the visit. Once the girl agrees to it, then the TABUA for the ~~x~~ VAKADONUI NI GUSU is presented to the girl's side.

- What is the meaning of all these?

- This shows that the girl~~h~~ has agreed to the boy's proposal and she is willing to marry him. And during these discussion and talk, the confirmation of everything is signified by /the presentation of the TABUA.

- Would you like to say more about this particular case concerning marriage?

- After the parents have discussed about this marriage, they will arrange ^athe date when the two young people will have to perform the ceremony of DRESU I VOLA - tearing a paper- and it is on this paper which states their agreement to get married.

- What do you mean by DRESU I VOLA~~x~~?

- If two people wants to get married, they will have to ^{go}through ~~x~~ this process first before they get married. When they have this ~~th~~ thing, a food is taken to the girl's house. There will be another small feast to celebrate the agreement sealed by the two people who are now ready for marriage. They will wait for twenty more nights before they held the actual wedding. The date for~~the~~ the wedding will be decided upon by the boy's relatives. It will be their decision to make. And once the date is confirmed, both sides will prepare themselves for it. After sometimes, some ladies will

- come and prepare the mats for the two people. The preparation for the beds will be done by both the girl's mother and the boy's mother. Both sides contribute something to it. All these mats belong to the couples. After that, the boy's side will prepare a MAGITI for the girl's mother. The MAGITI will be presented to the girl's mother with other gifts. There is a specially prepared food for the girl's mother on the day of her daughter's wedding.

- Could you ~~ga~~ give me a rough number of the mats which is now belong to the two people?

~~2~~- I can't give a definite number. When the boy's side do their TEVUTEVU, the number of mats is counted and ~~when~~ when the girl's side do their TEVUTEVU, also the number ~~of~~ of mats they give is counted and then the two ~~n~~ numbers are compared as to who gave the most. This ~~is~~ is like a competition again.

- What happens ^{on} after the ~~first~~ first night after the wedding?

- Since it's going to be the first night for the newly married couple, ^{their respective relatives will lay out some mats for the newly married} their bed. It is on these mats that the two ~~people~~ people will sleep on. When the two newly married people spend the first night together, both sides of the two families ~~won't~~ won't be feeling relaxed but they will be eager to know what the outcomes like. If the old ladies goes into their ~~z~~ room and sees the sign which they are dying to see you could hear them screaming and ~~ya~~ yelling out with joy. Both the girl's relatives and the boy's relatives will rejoice together. They will be ~~swingging~~ singing and dancing to show that they are really happy for the girl's parents and for the girl herself.

- Who will go out to do the checking?
 - There could be four ladies from the boy's side and four from the girl's side and they will all ~~be~~ stay together as a group to do the BIKABIKA. When they go out to check the couple's bed, each will ~~be~~ bring a mat.
 - What ~~can~~ would happen if they go ~~to~~ out to check the young couple's bed but the sign ~~they were~~ which they were dying to see is not there?
 - When the two newly married persons sleeps together and in the morning when the old ladies does the checking but finds nothing they know what they are going ~~to~~ to say to one another.
 - How will the people outside know that she is not a virgin?
 - After the old ladies has gone in to check but no response from them. There is no shouting or screaming, but if the couple had slept together and her husband is the first man for her, there will be ~~a~~ lot of shouting and ~~is~~ screaming of joy. Again a MAGITI is done for them when the four nights is over. But the same thing is also done although the girl had already slept with a man.
- ~~THE~~ That is the custom followed if the marriage is arranged. Today, these things are not taken seriously, our young people just please themselves as to whom they go out with. In the olden days, it is one important thing in a young girl's life, ~~is~~ the care taken on her. The girl's father will be having his own choice as to who will make a good husband for her daughter. It is a problem which ponders on the girl's fathers mind all the time. Somtimes, the marriage is arranged between two closely related family and this is to try ~~to~~ and strenghten the relationship of the two family.

- Who will have the privilege of escorting the girl to the boy's home after the marriage?

- After the wedding, it is the duty of the girl's father to escort her daughter to her husband's home. Everything else that will take place after that will be done at the boy's home. The boy will be dressed up to await the arrival of his wife. The girl will also be dressed up and taken to her husband's home.

- What is the name of the oil or perfume which they use?

- There is a special oil which they use to oil their body with. This could be the oil made of YASI or the sandalwood.

For some ladies and young girls they have a TOBE on the side of their hair. The TOBE is one small part of the hair which they let to grow from the moment they were small up to the day of ~~ix~~ their marriage. This ~~x~~ is the sign that tells us that a particular girl hasn't been to bed with ~~the man~~ a man yet. The sign is that TOBE on the side of her hair.

- What about in Tailevu, how is this thing done?

- This is not so in the Tailevu area. When the two ~~men~~ people is oiled with this specially prepared oil, there will be a woman who will be doing this thing. It will be her duty to oil them. The purpose of oiling them up is to make them appear fresh ~~and~~ and happy to go through with whatever thing is laid out for them.

- Who will accompany them when they go off to sleep?

- The place ~~where~~ ^{wh} the mats are neatly arrange as a bed, they are going to sleep over that. They will sleep on that bed ~~in~~ ~~the~~ until the four nights is over. The idea of keeping them together during the four nights so that they can develop something ~~strong~~

- stronger, more than a close relationship, where each will sacrifice one another, to experience giving and sharing. And on the fourth day, the couple will go down to the ~~rix~~ river or pool to have their bath. ~~On~~ On the fourth day, they will take off their wedding clothes and they will be accompanied by other ladies ~~and~~ and men to the pool or river. After having their bath, the boy will be dressed up in a large piece of KUMI and it is to be let down at the back to trail behind him. All these things will take place after they have their bath and they have returned to ~~the~~ their respective homes. After the boy is dressed up, he will go to the girl's home. The clothes which ~~the~~ the boy ~~was~~ had on is removed off when he reached the girl's home. It is left behind at the girl's home. The girl is dressed up and she ~~is~~ will accompany her husband to her new home and it is this time that she is taken there for good. They are ~~just~~ just like exchanging ~~the~~ gifts. And after that, everything for a wedding is over.

It is our tradition that ~~the~~ a newly married couple be taken down to the river or pool to have their bath. But during their stay ~~together~~ together for four nights, water is brought to them for them to wash their face and clean themselves. Often is the case that most of them always ~~slip~~ slip out ~~secretly~~ secretly to have a bath. But when the four nights are over, it is a must for them to go down to the pool and have their bath. They will be accompanied by some of their close relatives. There is a special fishing ~~basket~~ basket which is kept aside for them. This procession to the river or pool is like their down to have a bath the main thing is catching fish for the couple's NOKE or fishing basket. It is ~~not~~ not meant

- for the fishing trip to last till night time. When they are ready to go down to fish, both will have their ~~dyed~~ hair dyed and this is a tradition observed by our ancestors. There will be some young men and women who will accompany them. It is not meant for the young couple to stick together, they can please themselves as to where they stand during the fishing trip. After having some fun and catching some fish, they will return to their respective homes. The boy will be dressed up in a large piece of KUMI and then he will go down to the girl's house. After he has removed his clothes which he will give to the girl's parents, then the girl's turn to get dressed. Usually a large piece of KUMI is used and then both of them will return to the house which is now their own home.

- Who will accompany the young man to his house and the young girl to her house after they have had their bath?

- Some older men will accompany him to his home where he is dressed up and then a long trail is let off behind him. There will be some small boys who will hold on to the trailing end. The boy's father will lead the procession to the girl's house and some ladies will follow from behind, carrying some mats and other gifts. The young man will be carrying a TABUA or whale's tooth and usually he will wear it as a necklace or around his neck. The girl will also be dressed up in the same manner.

- In some cases, the girl does not sleep very well or it is

- father to arrange the marriage between his son and the girl, from that day the boy has to take some food for the girl one day in every week until the four nights of her wedding is over. These are chicken, taro, yams which is presented to the girl. That is our tradition and custom practised from the olden days. If the boy wants to ~~marry~~ to buy some clothes for the girl, he is free to do so.

All these things shows how precious a girl is. When the young girl spends her first four nights after ~~her~~ her wedding with her husband, the girl's relatives will be bringing her clothes which she changes in to every morning.

- Who prepares the food for the SOLEVU- feast?

- The food for the feast is prepared by /the boy's side. As for the girl's ~~side~~, they can contribute anything if they want to but the day they bring the ~~ix~~ girl to her husband's home, they have to present a MA/GITI to the ~~boy~~ boy. This happens on the ~~first~~ fourth night.

- Where do they eat and ~~where~~^{wh} is the food prepared?

- The food is brought up to where they are sleeping and a ~~spesa~~ special place is prepared to be th~~ei~~r eating place. The food is laid for them and ^usually the food is ^fprepared by the boy's relative. Also, the girl's food can be brought from her own home. After the fourth night and its celebrity is over, so is everything done on a wedding. The girl will now stay at her ~~her~~ new home which is her husband's home.

Thank you.

THE END.