

I wish to tell about a traditional making marriage in which I took part in. This is when we went to look for the wife of our TALATATA or priest in the village. At that time we had a meeting in my home, where all the members of the MATAQALI were present including JOSEWATA who is the bigger brother of the TALATATA. In discussing the woman to be the wife of the TALATATA, I put forward the name of a young woman who is called WATI. She is staying in WAKANISIA about half a mile from our village then. Josewata, the big brother of the Talatata agreed to my proposal and also including the members of the mataqali or clan. That same afternoon, some elders and I went to see Wati's father at Wakanisila. Before we went to Wati's place, we already had gather eleven TABUAS which is one VUIO and one in traditional counting. When we reached Wati's place the big brother of the talatata told me that I should be the one to do the asking of the young woman to father. The father of Wati's is called AMINIO. As we entered the house the father of the young woman was there. We went inside and sat there for a while. After sometimes I told Aminio (Wati's father) that all of us are coming to see her daughter and ask her hand for the talatata.

THE MARRIAGE

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Aminio told us to wait for a while so that Wati could come and be asked. After a while, Wati entered into the house, she came and sat near the door and never looked at us. Aminio asked her to shift further into the house. Wati shifted in but kept on looking outside. It is a saying that if a woman entered into the house and yet kept looking outside, then there is no men sitting inside the house is of her choice.

After a while Aminio asked Wati about coming for her. He told her daughter that we are coming to see her and ask for her hand for the talatala. Wati sat there in silence without making any move. The father cautiously asked her and wanted from her, her own answer.

After a while, Wati spoke up saying that what the parents think right is right, she will obey their wish. The message was then taken to the mother and she was pleased with it also. Right then we knew that Wati has agreed.

Soon after, Josevata took up a tabua ~~xx~~ and presented a ceremony which is called the VAKADONU NI GUSU. This is the gift of tabua in appreciation for the girl in agreeing to the proposed marriage. Soon after Josevata presented the rest of the tabua, i.e. ten of them, in the ceremony which is called the VOSAKI or the ceremonial asking of the girl. After presenting all the tabua to Wati's father, we informed him ~~for~~ the planned date in which the two couple are to be officially registered in the near government office. The father agreed and we return to our village again.

We went to the village and waited for the month of the couple's registration. It was after two months that they went to the

government office to be registered. On that particular day we prepared a feast for the girl's father and family. At that ceremony, the date of their marriage is also planned and announced to both parties.

On the marriage day, a man from the boy's family would go to the girl's father to inform him that the boy is ready at the ceremony place. This is what happened in our case. A man from the village went down to Wakantilla and inform Watt's father to come up to the village with her daughter and family. We waited at the ceremony place with the bridegroom and also the priest who will do their ceremony service. Watt, the bride, came to the ceremony place, fully dressed up in traditional customs.

The couple sat at the ceremony place and all the women from both parties begin with the TEVUTEVU ceremony. This is the ceremony in which the women from the boy and girl side will present KUMI, mats and other traditional materials to the couples.

After the tevutevu ceremony, the church service for the couple will begin. All of us went to the church to witness their marriage.

After the church service, we the boy's side would present another ceremony to the girl's side which is called NA I VOIA (the book). In this ceremony we presented tabua, materials, food to Watt's relatives. This ceremony is same what like the buying of the girl.

In the olden days if a married woman comes and stays with the boy's family and started trouble, the boy's relatives would inform that woman to keep still and not to make any complaint

because she had already been bought with the NA I VOLA ceremony. Without this ceremony being done in any marriage ceremony in the olden days, the bride or the married woman would have much priviledge in saying things out because she knows she has not been fully bought to the boy's side.

Hence the ceremony of NA I VOLA is important to the marriage ceremony because the woman who is going to be married will never complain of anything after her marriage. If she will do so, the boy's relative would tell her to shut-up because she has already been bought. This is known as or known to us 'YOU ARE BOUGHT WITH FOOD' or 'TALE NI SULO VAVI'. That was foten spoken by elderly women in the olden days.

After the church, the couple will return to the ceremony place they would stay together until the fourth night when another ceremony will be presented. As for the all the materials presented in the tevutevu ceremony, some of it are spread in the couple's house to be their bedding. These materials spread out will not be touched until the fourth night.

All the traditional materials such as mats, TAPA and etc collected in the ceremony as termed as the VEIKUMUNI in our customs. That is all what our ancestors used to practised in a marriage ceremony in the olden days. That is all.

I heard that in traditional ceremony of marriage the couple would have a bath after the fourth night.

Yes that is true. After the fourth night they would have a

traditional bath at the nearby river. There would be a VAKA-

MAMAGA (drying) ceremony held after the couples would come out

of the water. This is presented by the girl's relatives.

I wish if you could tell me how the wife to be is chosen?

Is it chosen from the same clan or can it be someone from outside? In the older days, the choosing of the wife-to-be is really

dependent on the parents. The parents will look for a ~~girl~~ especially from their mataqali.

You mentioned about choosing of WATI to be the wife of the talata. Could you tell me if the talata knew before hand that Wati is going to be his wife?

In the choosing of Wati, the talata knew nothing of our decision. When we had decided that Wati is going to be his wife, a message is send to him about the decision. He didn't say

anything but agree to our proposal. It was my decision to I inform the rest of the elders about the choosing of Wati who is staying near to our village. Every one at our side was happy at the choosing of Wati as the wife to be of the talata.

Could you tell me, if the talata was present at any time during the discussion of his marriage?

No, the talata was not present in any discussion of his wife. He just have rumours about it until it was officially announced to him. When we will inform him of our wish, he would just

obey our decisions. Could you tell me if he does not want the girl who have been chosen what should be done then?

If the talata will strongly go against our decision, then we will have no choice but to look for another girl whom he will

be pleased with.

You mentioned about the traditional asking of a girl, could you tell me how old will a girl be, when this ceremony is going to

in asking for Wati.

I am related a bit to her father. When Aminio learnt of our visit, he send for Wati straight away to come into the house. When Wati came, her father asked her about our proposed marriage. After Wati had agreed, we present one tabua first, as the token gift of thanksgiving to Wati and her father in agreeing to our proposed marriage. This token gift of tabua is called the DANU NI GUSU (mouth strengthening). After this, ten tabua is later presented again in the official traditional asking for Wati's hand.

You mentioned about the asking of Wati to be the wife of the TATAVALA. Could you tell me has a girl is asked for marriage in the olden days?

The father of the boy may asked the father of the girl that he is coming to ask his daughter if she could be a helping maid in the cooking of his food. All sorts of that asking is used in the asking of girl's hand in the olden days.

You mentioned before our recording that you went into Aminio's house with the other elders and informs Wati's father that you and your colleagues are wanting to hear (ROGOCI) from Wati. Is that the approach you used or any other kind of approach?

Yes. That is how we went to ask for Wati. I told her father that we are coming just to hear (ROGOCI) Wati. The father or Aminio knew at once what I am referring to. That is another way of asking for a girl in traditional marriage.

I wish if you could tell me how long will the two parties wait since after the asking ceremony, for their WAKABI VOLA or registration ceremony.

I am not sure of the exact period of time but I know that it will depend on the boy's side. They will decide for the day and they will inform the girl's side about it.

I wish if you could tell me if the young man and woman are allowed to see and talk to each ~~xxxxxxx~~ other before the marriage day?

In the older days the young woman and man are forbidden to see and to talk to one another before their marriage day.

They would only talk to each other on the day of their marriage.

"This is a very important actor in the traditional marriage ceremony.

mony.

You mentioned about the feast prepared by the boy's side during the VAKABI VOLA or registration ceremony. I wish if you could tell me more about the ~~my~~ food prepared in this ceremony?

A pig can be killed and cooked in the loto with some other baskets of dalo. The girl's side can also provide a feast too in the ceremony.

This is just a matter of consideration from their part. This feast provided during the registration ceremony is solely for the girl's side but sometimes the girl side would invite all the boys side to partake in the feasting.

Could you tell me about the day of the marriage.

The day of the marriage is arranged by both parties. It would take about two months so that both parties could prepare themselves for the ceremony.

Mentioning about the ceremony preparation, could you tell me about the food preparation?

As for the feast, both parties would provide feast for the function. The feast which is prepared by the girl's side

is known as her BULAGI of food. Pig is used also and dalo too. I wish if you could thoroughly tell me about the wedding day in which was held in the olden days. You can tell me everything

small and big about it.

For example let's take the marriage of the talatala and Wati in this village. Wati and her family came from their home in Waka-

nista and stayed in my home during the wedding day. At the

hour of the wedding, I was informed to go and call upon Wati to

come. I went to where Wati and her family is residing and pre-

sented them with a tabua requesting them that Wati should be

dressed and be ready then to attend to their marriage ~~marriage~~

service in the church. Soon after I presented that abua, Wati

stood up in full traditional dress ready to walk into the church.

You mentioned about the traditional dress, could you tell me

more about it?

The bride is dressed in full traditional customs. She would

be wrapped around her waist. She would wear MASI, KUMI and clothes.

The MASI ~~is~~ would be a decorated one which would be wrapped

around her waist. It would be decorated very nicely and it

really look nice.

During the wedding day, the couples were dressed up in different

places. When the bell rang, Akula - who is the talatala - went

to where Wati is residing and took her hand and headed to the

church for their service.

Marriage arrangements in the olden days is done very nicely. It is ~~is~~ often done in a very respectable manner.

After the church service, then shall the feasting begin, Something about the feasting is that the utensils used is for

the girl's side. After the feasting, the girl's side would take all the utensils used. This is traditional custom in a marriage ceremony.

Thank you. I wish if you could tell about something important in which the bride is proved to be a virgin or not.

As for the marriage which I am telling you about the PALATATA, his wife was a virgin.

Could you tell me what would happen if the girl is or was not a virgin?

Well in that case nothing is done except it brings shame to the girl's side especially the parents. Sometimes the girl's relatives would run away from the ceremony place if they learnt that the girl is not a virgin.

The girl's virginity is known as or by checking of any sign of the blood in their bedding. This is also known or shown in the preparation of the feast for the BOGI VA (fourth night) ceremony. The pig cooked in the ~~two~~ would be brought forward to the feasting table with its stomach and back side full opened and exposed. When people at the ceremony sees this, they will know at once that the bride is not a virgin.

But if the feast brought is nicely wrapped and closed up, this shows that the bride is a virgin. Seeing this, the bride's side especially for the parents, would be fully overjoyed and all full of pride. They would be a dominate figure among the people in the ceremony.

It is during this fourth night that the couple will go for a swim in a near-by river. That is how the marriage ceremony is held in the olden days.

Thank you. If you have anything else to tell me about marriage in the olden days, you are welcome to do so.

Marriage in the olden days is such a big ceremony. It takes time and lots of ceremony to be held. But as times goes by, changes also come with it. Today another method of marriage is termed as VEIDROPAKI. This is practised and in which a man will run away with a young woman to be his wife.

For instance, the man would visit another village and saw a girl over there. He talks with the girl that he wanted her to be his wife. When the girl agree, the man brought the girl straight to his home without the notice of permission of the girl's father. This is called the VEIDROPAKI.

When the man brings the girl to his home, the relatives would provide small ceremonies for the couples. During this ceremony, no relatives of the girl is present.

Sometimes after the VAKABOGIVA or fourth night ceremony, the boy's parents and relatives would make a ceremony of forgiveness to the girl's side. This ceremony is called the BULUBULU or

burying ceremony. In this ceremony the boy's side would present gifts such as mats, tabua and other Tjijian items to the girl's side as a sign of forgiveness. In the presenting of the gifts, the spokesman from the boy's side would ask the forgiveness of the parents and their relatives to forgive them for what their young man had done. If the girl's parents will receive the

gifts then it means that they are forgiving what the young man

had done.

It is during this bulubulu ceremony that some of the boy's relatives would also present the NA I VOLA ceremony in which the presentation

of food and material is given to the girl's side especially the parents. This is somewhat like buying ~~the~~ of the girl.

I heard that there is a part of a ceremony ~~xx~~ which is called

the KALI NI SUCU (away from the breast). Could you tell me more

about this ceremony?

After the ceremony of marriage, the boys relatives and parents would present a tabua and a feast to the mother of the girl.

This is a ceremony in which the boy's family would ask the mother to allow them to have full responsibility for the girl.

This ceremony is like the process of taking away the ~~girl~~ girl from the mother's breast. After this ceremony, the mother have

no more power ~~xx~~ over her daughter.

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