

TOPIC: MARRIAGE

Investigator: Willie

Informant: Joseva Seru.....from Vorovoro, Sawakasa,
Tailevu. M 74yrs.

This is how we do our weddings here in our village, when we know that soon there is going to be a wedding, it is only when they are going to have this ceremony of betrothal. When they are going to have this marriage ceremony between a chief from a village, there is this ceremony which is the chiefly giving of women in marriage. Let's say that I have a daughter in my home or in my family, and in another family, they have a son, they are going to come to my house often to arrange this marriage between their son and my daughter, they are going to do this until the day comes when the two of them gets married. This is how they used to do it in the olden days or how they did it here in our village today also. If say, a young man is noticing this young girl from another family, he is going to tell his father that he wants that girl to become his wife or things like that which is done in the open. There is no secret about it. When this young man is going to tell his father about the girl she wants to become his wife, he is going to go with the father to this ceremony of Veiduguci at the girl's house. The girl's parents accepts and this is what is going to happen from the day they agreed to this marriage, the boy's side is going to bring food and other gifts to the girl's house for her. The boy's side would be doing all these, they bring her food and all that. They are going to keep doing this until the time comes when both sides of the families, know that this is the good time and the good age for them to start a family of their own.

Cont'd Page 2

This is also the time when they know that the young man is able to support their own selves. This is how they hold their marriage ceremony in the olden days. They do not care if these two young people have the relationship of being brothers and sisters, still they are going to do whatever thing they think right, not real brother and sister, say their parents are brothers and sister and they are first cousins, still they are going to be allowed to be married if the parents agree to it. Say the boy from the other side approached the girl's parents asking them if he could marry their daughter, they can agree to that, although they are first cousins themselves. First of all the young man has to tell his father about it and then they are going to see the girl's parents and see what they think about it. This is how they do it years back in this village. But time brought changes and a lot of new things came into our lives which makes it impossible for us to try and keep up with the old method of arranging marriages like they used to do before. Then this we had the independence and independence and all that, we have noticed a lot of changes taking place in our villages and towns and places. Also we have this one great change brought by christianity, and when this started, we have another new way in which boys can communicate with girls and they let the other knows of what they have in mind, like they wish to get married and all that. Through writing letters they are able to let the other know what he or she wants. But they did not have this in the olden days, and we can always compare this two as to which is better. Let us take what is happening today. Then one and one the letter from the boy's side reached the girl and she had agreed to marry him, then this is what is going to happen. The boy is going to approach his parents and he is going to tell them

Cont'd Page 3

of what is happenign between ~~him~~ and the girl from the other village or from the same village too. He might say that he wants to marry that girl and she has ~~gg~~reed to become his wife. When the father is told of ~~this~~, he is going to infomr the girl's parents of what is happening between his son and his daughter, they are going to become his sons future parents-in-laws, so they are going to ask them if this marriage is possible. But today, we do not have this proce~~du~~re of letter writing between two people, this is what most of the young people are doing today. They ~~just~~ meet up with the other or their partners, and then from then they develop a relationship which last in marriage. ~~they~~ make their own arrangements as to when they are going to get married and the last person to know of the decio~~s~~ions are the parents. The young men and young women make sure that what they are doing and what they want are carried out. Well inthe olden days these were not so, they have their own metho~~d~~s which they foolow when two young people wants to get married. The young girl is betrothed to a boy and a time comes when they are going to get married, the parents all these things arranged and no one is ever going to change what the parents want. What the paren s says, goes, so they have to live up to all the things which ~~the~~ two parents arrange. and all these are what our elders used to do during their days. This ceremony of betrothol is often done, the boy's side is going to see the girl's side and then they are going to perform this ceremony which sort of says that this girl is the property of the boy un~~til~~ the day when they are going to get married, then they are going to end allthese preparations, like the boy is going to bring food to the girl's house from the day when they have the betrothol ceremony, and all that.

Cont'd Page 4

- I heard that in the olden days they have this sort of a game called VAQIQI MOLI(rolling oranges) in which the partners are able to pick their own selves. I wish if you could tell me more about this game... Very well. This is one method they used way back in the past, this game of rolling oranges. When our elders or our parents realise that there are a lot of young people in the village who are still single, they are called into a meeting with the parents present also and all of them will attend this meeting. The young girls are going to sit on one side and on the other side, it is going to be occupied by the boys, or the young men in the village who are still bachelors. The young girls or women are going to form a long line, straight line, and in the middle there is quite a gap in between them and the place where the young bachelors are sitting. These gap which they have created, to one side all the boys are going to remain standing, and with them a basket full of oranges. A young man is going to take an orange, or a young woman from the side, with the orange on their hand, in this case the girl is holding the orange, she is going to call out this is the orange for Akuila. Then she is going to roll this orange on that gap which they have formed. If the young girl who wants to marry Akuila is right at the back of the line, none of the girls sitting in front of her is going to take that orange or receive that orange. The young girl who is in love with Akuila, she is going to accept that rolled orange when Akuila's name is being called out and his orange being rolled across to where the girls are sitting. This is how the people way back in the past used to play this game in which many young people are able to pick their wives and husbands through playing this one game of VAQIQI MOLI or rolling oranges because the oranges are used, they are rolled across to where the girls are sitting, and they have to accept it if it is the person

she wants. Let's say that the young girl who is in love with Akuila is right at the back of the line, but before the boys are going to roll their oranges, they are going to call out their names this way: This is Akuila's orange. If anyone of you girls wish to marry Akuila this is his orange. But sometimes before the orange reach the girl who is secretly in love with Akuila someone else along the line has grabbed at the orange. After Akuila ~~have had~~ had his turn, then they are going to say, this orange belongs to (and they mention another boy's name who is next of the line) again the same thing happens, the girl who wish to marry this other person is going to take that orange. All the boys have to do is to roll the oranges when their turn comes and there is a girl on the line that is going to receive that orange rolled by a particular boy. But if there is a boy in the numbers who do not wish to get married to a girl, his orange is going to roll right to the other side without being picked by one of the girls, they are going to ignore his orange because they know that this young man do not wish to marry anyone. The orange is going to roll right to the other side of the line. This is how they play this game of veiqiqi moli or rolling oranges in which many young people are able to find themselves a wife or a husband. It is done in the past when our ancestors realised that there is too many young people in the village who are still single.

- In this game are the boys only given the priviledge to roll the oranges, or the girls are also given the opportunity to roll their own oranges, the same way the boys do theirs, like they call out their names and they roll their oranges.....

Yes, the girls can also have their turn to roll the oranges, they call out their names and then they roll their oranges, the same way as I've

Cont'd Page 6

described to you. The young men are lined up on one side, and then the girls are going to roll their oranges. The orange before it is rolled, the girl's name who is going to roll the orange is going to be called out like: This is SO's orange, (someone's name is given) and after this is being said, then she is going to roll her orange. The boy who is on the line and who wish to marry this girl, he is going to pick her orange. Then on and on the game continues until there is no one left in the group. Sometimes when it is over, there are sy two or more people left, because they do not wish to get married. This is how the game is played by our ancestors in the olden days and also not very long ago.

- Can you tell me as to how many years in between do they have to wait until they have another game of rolling oranges say they have it this year, how long else are they going to wait befoer they hold another similar game in the village.....

This game is seldom done in the village, only when the time comes when our elders realise that something had to be done about young people who still remain single when they were supposed to be married a long time ago. This is done once in a long while, because it is not practical to have it donemore often.

- Can you tell me as to where they are going to hold the game of rolling oragnes, do they have a house especially for it or do they have it done in the open say in the playing field.....

It is all the same, they can have it out there in the open fields or have it done inside the house. When the time comes for them to have this game played all the young men and women collect together at the place where they are going to have the game. This is a chiefly thing, not something that is done without the chief's permission and

Cont'd Page 7

also, the chiefs are present when they are going to play this game.

This is all I know about this game.

- Thank you very much. You were telling me that before they have a marriage ceremony for a young girl and a young man, they have to do it a certain way that has been observed by our elders in their days. You said that the young man's side are going to see the girl's side and asked for her hand in marriage to their son when they come of age. Can you tell me as to how young the girl is in order for the boy's side to make the arrangements for her future husband.....

I would like to be honest with this, let's say that a young girl is growing up the way do grow up, and say a boy's father from a family wants that girl to marry his son, he will approach the girl's parents and he is going to tell the girl's father that he wants his daughter to marry his son when both of them comes of age for marriage. This could be around the age of fourteen or sixteen, the boy's father and his relatives are going to do this ceremony of betrothal at the girl's house. But today, at the age of fourteen I heard that a young girl can get married at that age, but during those days when our ancestors had their own ways, this is something that is well prepared for, they do not rush into anything, they make sure that there is not going to be any trouble again when they are going to have the actual wedding ceremony. This is all that I know as to how they make this early arrangement for two young people.

- You were telling me that the girl is going to be told that she is going to be so and so's husband, can you tell me about the things the boy's side is going to do for the girl from the day they have been told that the marriage is a possible one, are they going to make her food everyday or are they going to leave her alone until

Cont'd Page 8

the day she gets married.

When the boy's side are given the alright for themarrigae, they are going to make sure that they do something for the girl from that age until the day when she is going to get married. On every Sunday, the boy's side can prepare and take across to her house some food and also on special occasions like birthdays and Christmas Days and New Years day, they can give her something like a present and as for the food this is done once a week and taken there on Sundays only. On Saturday, when the boy's side prepares their food for the Sunday, they are going to include this young girl in their ~~ration~~ also, and it is taken to her house. It is going to be the boy's father's duty to take this food across to the girl's house. They are going to keep doing this until she has come of age and is ready to be married off to her husband whom they have already chose for her. The ceremony called VEIDUGUCI (ceremony done to a man's prospective ~~parents-in-law~~) is done to the girl's parents and when he agrees, then they are going to do all these for the girl. So they are going to feed her~~a~~ but today, we have new changes, so the way in which marriage arrangements are made is slightly different from those taken by our ancestors. Today, say if Akuila a boy in our house has been accepted from the girl's house for him to marry this particular girl, it is the duty of all Akuila's relatives to get the food for the girl's Sunday meals. The whole of his relatives are going to contribute something to it to make life good for the girl and also for the boy, for them to know that everyone in the family accepts this marriage, as for some they used to have other ideas as to who their children are going to marry, which can end up being none at all.

Cont'd Page 9

I have gone over this thing, at one time I was told that I am going to take the food to the girl's house at every Saturday, this is how they observe this thing, it is nothing which they treat very lightly, it is something which they enjoy doing because they know if they do not do it right towards the girl and her parents, they might change their mind about the coming marriage ceremony/.

- When the girl's father realised that the young man's parents are really doing their duty well, what is he going to do concerning her daughter, is there anything he is going to do about her daughter in preparation for the coming wedding.....

When he realises this, he might invite them over, invite the boy's relatives over for them to drink yaqona together and discuss their children's future together. And for the father also he is going to do all the things expected of him since he is the girl's father. He is going to keep an eye on the girl and make sure that she is not up to some sort of mischief that might spoil or ruin her name before she gets married. He is going to look after her daughter well and feed her well with the food brought from the boy's side, she is kept indoors most of the time, never allowed to join bad young people, and for the things she wants, this is going to be given to her. The reason why they are going to be extra careful on her because she has been promised to someone when she gets old she is going to be so and so's wife. This is a chiefly thing and every parents are very careful that they do not let their children do anything that might ruin their reputation in the village and in the eyes of all the people in the village. The boy's side is going to do all he could or they could to see that the young girl is in good health and has things of her own also. They are going to spoil her before the

day actually comes for them to get married, I have come across this a lot of time because I often do the arrangements when a young person in our house is going to be betrothed to someone. All these things are something really important in the life of a young girl and a young boy, it is something that parents look forward to when their children are growing up, a very chiefly thing also.

- When the time comes for the young girl to get married, is the boy's side going to do something else for the girl or are they going to come to the girl's house and take her to the boy's house..... They do all the custom and tradition which they observe when a marriage is being arranged. When they know that the time is ripe for the two young people to get married, the two parents, from the girl's side and from the boy's side are going to have a meeting. They are going to discuss about all the things which they are going to hold for their children from the very smallest thing to the latest and the last thing they need to do to make their marriage a success. They are going to discuss about the spread of their mats which is called the TEVUTEVU and other which follows from there. There are different ways in which people hold their wedding ceremonies since we differ in some of the things concerning the marriage between two people.

- You were telling me that other means of communication and later on end in marriage is through letter writing, when the young people have agreed to marry the other, are the parents going to be told then and the boy's father is going to see the girl's father then or are they going to wait for sometimes again, before they actually do something about it.

Let's say, that two young people are communicating to each other through letter writing, then one day the boy proposes to her and

she gladly accepts, when the boy receives his letter from the girl with the girl's acceptance clearly written on it, he is going to approach his father, and he is going to tell his father about it. He is going to say: I am in love with this girl(and he is going to mention the girl's name)and she has agreed to become my wife. We have decided to get married and I have already propose to her. When the father hears this, he is going to act straight away, he is going to see the girl's parents and also the relatives are going to be told to help in all the preparations which they are going to do for their wedding. The villagers will come to know about it too and some of them would like to contribute something to help both families in all the things which they are going to have for their children. It could be that the girl is in another village, and when the time comes for the boy's side to go to the girl's village, the whole village, that is from the boy's village, they are going to see the girl at her village. It goes to show that they are all eager to help and see what the girl is like and many of them are very good at matchmaking. They are going to do this ceremony of veiduguci at the girl's house and after that, they return to their own village, this all happened through the letter writing which these two young people did. This is what that is happening lately in our young people's world, they have their own ways of dealing with things, they do not let their parents know of what is going on until the very last minute, then the parents are told.

- After this ceremony of Veiduguci or betrothal, I heard that they have this ceremony of VAKABI I VOLA(they ~~register~~ register their marriage at a office) or.....

Yes, they have this ceremony of veiduguci and then they are going

Cont'd Page 12

to look into this part where they (the young people) are going to register their names at the marriage register office which is part of the government too, to make it official, and in this case a tabua is going to be presented to mark that they have really register their names as to the next couple to get married in front of the magistrate personnel or a lawyer. They are going to register their names until it reaches twenty one days, then again they are going to present another tabua to see if the card is still there, and no one has done anything to it to show that they do not agree for the marriage between these two young people. And when it is over, then the day of the marriage is going to be arranged and many of us today have their marriage done in the church. We have a church service and they are married in front of a priest of the church. And for the things which they are going on that particular day, they have what they need ready, when the time comes for them to make use of this, they get it from there and make it, or present it. They are going to need a lot of farm animals for food and for the magiti which they are going to present say from the boy's side, they are going to present it to the girl's side, they are going to need a lot of pigs, a lot of cows, turtles if they are able to catch some from the sea, fish and lots of other dishes besides the ones mentioned. They have these food cooked in the lovo ((underground oven) like pigs and all that. After the wedding, the girl is going to remain at her home and the father is going to let the boy's side know that they will be coming to their home or village on so and so time to bring the girl to them for the boy. When they are told of the date and the time, then the boy's side is going to prepare all the things which they are going to need to receive the girl and her relatives. This is going to be a great preparation time

Cont'd Page 13

for the boys' side. They are going to make sure that the food and the things they prepare is going to feed one whole village. Men are going to spend all their time at the lovo area, cooking food. And the ladies are going to be busy preparing all the things for the girl when she arrives and the boy is also going to be dressed up in order for him to receive his wife when she is brought to his home. They have the animals and all the things ready before the girl and her relatives arrive at their home. The girl's side when she comes to the boy's house, not only the family would accompany her, the whole village and also some surrounding villages who wish to come with them to see what is going to happen, they are going to come with them. When they arrive there, the boy and the girl are going to stay together for four whole days and nights, and when the four nights are over, they are going to have this ceremony of VEISOLEVUTI (presentation of gifts from one side to the other). The girl's side are going to do this first before the boy's side does theirs. This is how they do this thing in the olden days, I have seen it done too with my own two eyes.

You were telling me something about the tabua which is used when they go to the registration office to register their marriage, can you tell me as to who is going to take this tabu, from which side of the group the boy or the girl, and who is going to do the presentation of this tabua, the girl's father or the boy's side, this tabua..... This is something that used to be done during those days, and it is usually done by the matanivanua or village herald. He is going to take this tabua which is given to him from the boy's side, and he is going to present it at the same time informing the other person as to the purpose of their visit and the presentation of the tabua. The

Cont'd Page 14

girl's father and everyone is going to be present when they are going to do this thing. But before they make any sort of move, first of all both sides, the boy and the girl are notified of what is going to take place on a particular day.

- This food which is prepared for the wedding, who is going to prepare all the food for it, the girl also is going to contribute to it or the boy is going to do all the preparation.....

The boy's side is going to prepare the food reception for the wedding all by himself, only the girl is going to be there to eat with her relatives and other guests invited to the wedding. After the wedding all the young girl's relatives are going to sit down first to enjoy this great food prepared by the boy and his family and relatives.

- After they have this wedding reception, is the young girl going to return to her own village or is she going to stay some place else... No, she is going to remain there in the boy's village, she is not going to go anywhere.

- I heard that in the olden days, this is something which is really important to our elders when a young girl is married off to a young man, they have a lot of expectations for the girl, and it would really cause a great shame and a bad reputation for the girl if she comes into a family or married to a boy but she had already been sleeping around with other men. Let's say, that when she comes to stay with this young man, she had already spent some nights with another man and this other man had taken away the rights that the actual husband should get from his wife on the night of their wedding. Can you tell me more about this as to how the do it in the olden days.....
Very well. As you've said that this is an important thing for the boys side and also the girls side will be expecting no shock or

disappointment from the girl on the night of the truth. There are many ways which they say this thing when something goes wrong from the girls side. Let's say, that she is going to spend the first night with her husband actually they are going to be together for four full nights, and the boy discovered that she is not innocent at all, in the morning, he is going to let the other people or the ladies sitting there in the house that this is so. The ladies are going to be informed of what had happened, and at this time, they are going to see as to where the trouble started, also the moment of happiness and disappointment is going to be revealed when the young man is going to approach the ladies outside of their bed to let them know of what had taken place between him and the young girl. When the young man knows that his wife had been faithful to him for that long time of waiting, he is going to tell the people outside, WAQA NA BUKA (light the fire) this is one way of saying that the young girl was still a virgin until last night when she slept with her husband. But if he finds out that she is not a virgin, she had already slept with a man before she came to him, she is going to tell them BOBKO NA BUKA (put out the fire) and when the ladies hear this, they know of the meaning of these words, that the young girl is not a virgin at all the day she got married to this man. This is how they express this thing of letting other people know that this girl is a virgin or not on the day of her marriage. But in other places they have their own ways of expressing it and the slangs which they use which only them and interpreted. But here, we use, LIGHT THE FIRE or PUT OUT THE FIRE.

- When the time comes for them to learn of the truth, how they are going to know, are they going to ask him as to whether they should light the fire or how are they going to prove that this girl is not a virgin.

- Can you tell me as to who is going to check whether the sign for the girl's virginity is there or not, is it the girl's relatives or the boy.....

The boy's side is going to check whether this is so. If they see that there is a problem and the thing which they were not expecting is there, they are going to say these words; put out the fire, and when the people hear this, they know what it means. And when the girl's side hear them say this they are going to be really ashamed and many of them refuse to stay until all the things concerning the wedding is over. But when the other word light the fire is heard, you can see them jump for joy and they are so proud that there is singing and dancing among the people. This is how they observe this thing in this village.

- I heard from some of the old people that I have met, that when they say these words: put out the fire, everything sort of stops and there is no longer the sound of happiness among the people is it true or.....

All of it is true and this shows that the girl's side is really ashamed of what their little girl had done and all they have to do now is to return to their village because it is no use staying now to complete whatever thing they were doing.

- I heard that when they have learnt as to what the condition of the girl is the first night with her husband, and on the fourth night in the morning, they are going to make something to show as to what kind of girl they brought to the boy's house....can you tell us something about this magiti or food which they prepared, all because of their saying to put out the fire.....

They are going to observe everything that is left off from this

Cont'd Page 17

part of the ceremony, all the chiefly things would be done although they know that the girl is not what they expected. Never mind if they call out the fire is out, still they are gong to ðb all the things for the fourth night celebration. Now they can't do anything because the girl is there, and all theyhave toð do is to accept her ~~althought~~ she is not perfect, because she is the one who is going to give him children and the generation and the descendants of those people will continue from her. She is going to bore him children which is what they want.

- I heard that on the fourth night, in the morning, the couple is going to take this special bath like they used to do in the lden days.... Yes, this is all part of the ceremony. On the fourth night, the boy's side is going to prepare all the food for the girl, they are going to make vakalolo, and also the girl's side is going to prepare some vakalolo too. And these is going to be given to those who are going to take these couple to have their bath at the pool may be or down at the seaside. This is called VAKASISILI(bathing) and that is when the ~~coupil~~ are going to bath after the fourth night. The vakalolo prepared by the boy's side, this is going to be given and presented to the girl's side and the girl will eat from eat too. As for the vakalolo prepared by the girl's side, this is gong to be presented to the boy's side the ones who went with them to take that bath, not all of them are going to do that. This is something common among the elders and also they observe all these things from the smallest to the biggest. They never leave anythng out, never mind if what they expect did not turn out right for them, still they are happy that they have got a woman there to give them children. This is the main thing behind the marriage, for the woman to bore them children.

When they have finished from their bath, they are escorted to the village, where the villagers or the family members have something ready for them. This is they have prepared a seat made from all the mats, and they let them sit there, then someone from the girl's side and the boy's side is going to come up to them and oil them well.

Dry them first and then oiled, then they get dressed. This is how they do it here in our village, and many of us have witness this been done.

- Can you tell me when they go out to take that bath at the pool at sea maybe, is the girl going to be the only one to swim or the husband too is going to bath with her.....

Yes everyone is going to come and take the bath with them, the couple who got married, their relatives and other young people will join in the fun, no one can stop them all are invited to enjoy it with them, and for the women they have this thing done, they dye their hair and when they go down to bath, their hair is very beautiful and everyone looks fresh and pretty, the men goes with them to swim and many other people who wish to join them are allowed to go. These people majority of them are young people of the same age as the two people who had just got married.

- Can you tell me as to why they dye their hair before they go down to take this bath with the two people who had just got married?

The only reason that I can think of, is that they dye their hair because they are going to take this bath with the couple and they want to look their best also. There may be another reason but that I do not know off.

- You were ~~se~~ telling me that they use a special dye today their hair, could you describe to me the type of things they use to dye their hair or is it something like this dye which we buy from the shops today.....

They have their own methods of dyeing their hair. But I do not know as to what they use, someone else could help you there since I do not know as to what they use.

- When they are done with this ceremony of dressing the couple up, is it going to finish there, or there is something else which is going to follow.....

After they had done their duty and they have got their ~~K~~KAMAMACA (the clothes and gifts for this special bath they took) then they will be taken to the place where the food have been prepared for them, as for the lady she would be followed by all the ladies to where the food had been prepared. She is going to sit next to her husband and they are going to make use of the food prepared for them. All the other young people who went with them to take that bath are going to join them in the feast. These food is prepared at their house when they return from the sea or from the pool, as for the boy's side, they have another magiti prepared there in the village green or RARA.

These magiti or great mass of food, is for the girl's relatives who came to the wedding and those who stayed with them until the last of the ceremony is done with. Their magiti is there for them to come and take it away. to their village where they are going to share it with the other people. The magiti is for the girl's relatives only, no one else. Then ~~it is~~ it is taken away to the girl's side.

- This is all done on the night of the fourth day or.....

Today they are going to do the TEVUTEVU, and for the ladies and the men from the girl's side, when they come to our home, they are going to be fed and given shelter or accommodation during their stay there in our home. There is nothing left as to the service we offer them. We do this to them until the fourth night is over and they have to

be looked after very well. They sing and dance during those nights and nothing is left out. People chant and meke is performed by the people. Many of them used to have say four groups of people who are going to perform in the meke.

- After they have this, so is the whole marriage ceremony and other celebrations which they have when there is a wedding.....

After they have all these things then they are going to return to their own village, the couple will now live in their house and the girl's relatives are going to take the magiti which was prepared for them and other gifts for the girl's parents and also some for those people who came to the wedding and things like that. In the morning, the relatives of the girl are going to return to their own village. As for us, who are here in the village, we are going to do all the other things just to welcome the girl to our village and many nights we are going to spend them with these young people telling them stories to cheer the girl up because she might be thinking of her home. These are some of the things which we have when a marriage is arranged between a girl and a boy when they were still young.

- There is a magiti presented from the boy's side which is called the KA NI SUCU (food for birth) and this is presented to the girl's mother. I heard from some of the elders that they used to have this too, can you tell me more about this magiti or food which is called the food for the girl's birth.....

This magiti which is called the KA NI SUCU, this is also part of the ceremony, say they are going to display all their gifts and other items which they have prepared for the wedding. This is called SOLEVU in Fijian. The relatives of the girl are going to bring theirs and they

Cont'd Page 21

are the first people who are going to display their gifts to the boy and the rest of the people who are their for the wedding. And when we know that they are going to do this thing, we are going to present a yaqona to these people and we are going to say that this yaqona is particularly for the ceremony of solevu they are doing for us. This is when he knows that the girl is going to do her part and present her gifts for the tevutevu. Then it is going to be the boy's side to do their part and they are going to bring the magiti and everything for the girl and her relatives, they say that this is the magiti called the magiti ni sucu or the food for the birth of the girl. They have their own ways of doing this but this is how it is done here in our village. They are going to be informed as to what month are they going to make their solevu at the girl's home and on that day we are going to do just that. As for them they are going to tie this piece of Masi, if there is eight knots being tied on to the piece of masi, this goes to show that in the eighth month, then they are going to do the solevu for them. If there is six knots on the piece of masi, it goes to show that on the sixth month they are going to do their solevu or ceremony of gift presentation at the girl's house. On the night when they are going to do all these things, they make sure that they do everything for them all, they do not want to miss out on anything. As for us we are going to keep counting the number of months left before we are going to do our tevutevu to the girl's house. Then when the time comes, we are going to do all we could to make it a success, for both their side and our side. When two knots are left to be untied, this is when we have got everything for the tevutevu ready. Then on and on we are going to count the days until the very day arrives. This is how we do it here.

Cont'd Page 22

People really prepare themselves well when the time comes for them to have the ceremony for tevutevu, this could take place two or three months after they have had the wedding of the two people. Also it can take as long as four to ten months for them to do their ceremony of tevutevu, that is when they are both ready to do so. The day when they are going to have the actual thing, everyone is in a festive mood and this could be seen on the eager faces and all the excitement could be recognised among the people there. On the fourth day of the festival, then everyone is going to return to their homes, in this case the boy's relatives will really make this a great success. These are some of the ceremonies that both parents have to prepare themselves with when they are going to think of a wedding for their children, they have KALI NI SUCU (food for the birth remembrance of a child and when she gets married this is done for the mother) and VAKABI I VOLA (registration of their names at the marriage registration office) and many other small ones which makes the wedding ceremony a success. As for all these things, they are going to need a lot of gifts like mats, native mats, clothes, gifts, other traditional items, food and many others besides. They have their own ways of doing this or of getting things for their ceremonies. And also there is one part when the gifts presented is going to be all owned by the girl. When these gifts and other things are being presented to them, it is all going to be taken to her house where they are going to leave it because it belongs to her, this is from her relatives side, since they are bringing the girl for good to come and stay with the husband, she is no longer a member of a family from their parents.

Also there is one part of the ceremony when all the girl's sisters and brothers are called to bring and present a magiti to their sister who will be going away soon and she is also going to leave them soon. They are going to prepare a magiti for her and present that to her. They will also have a time when they are going to bring their gifts for the couple. They are going to make sure that this is done, since since it is for their sister.

There is something else you often say that today, many young people just meet some place and not long, you hear that they are living together. There is another type of marriage which they have today, and this is called VEIDROTAKI (elopement) in this case, the two young people ran off to get married. Can you tell us if these were also done during those days or.....

Yes. We know this very well since it is happening around us most of the time but many of us are always able to avoid it. Many of young people meet some place and they fell in love with one another and not long you hear that she is married to this person, but they did not follow this way of getting married done by our elders long past this time. Also they did not follow this way of writing to each other and then decided to get married, this is done all of a sudden, but some marriages done this way always ends well. The only thing that people do when a lot of people are against your choice is to elope with this other person, she is taken to the boy's house and from there, the girl's relatives are told of what had happened, then they are going to make a yaqona or things like that to cool it down, but many times, it ends very badly for the girl, because the parents do not want to do anything for her, since she ran away from home to get married without the parents consent.

If two young people are going to do this, the young man's father is

Cont'd Page 24

going to take a tabua and he is going to present this to the girl's home to inform them that his son and their daughter are staying together now, and he is there to let them know in case they start looking around for her. And when the parents are told, then they have nothing to worry about now. All they have to do now is to try and set a date when they are going to have the ceremony for their wedding and also they have this thing of BULUBULU. But first of all, the message of their wedding is going to be taken to all the people who should know maybe because they are related and all that. They are going to say this to them and at the last day when they have all the things ready, then they are going to have their wedding, and also they are going to have this ceremony of bulubulu(asking for atonement from the girl's parents because of their elopement) after that then everything is over. It is easy but it may create some type of talk among the other people about this boy and his family, they might say that the reason of his doing that, because the father cannot do all the things expected of him when his sons wants to get married. This can also bring shame to a family. So, they are going to do the bulbulu to the people concern and many people offer their help when someone is in trouble like that. When it is over, so is everything. So the girl is going to be the boy's now and no one have the right to take her away, because the boy had done all that is expected of him. Not long then people will start to visit them again and all is ~~back~~ back to the normal way of life again. Today, we have a lot of things to present , like we can make use of gallons of kerosine and all that when there is a ceremony in which gifts are needed, since not all of us do have this thing like mats, Fijian items and all that, they make use of things which are available in shops, they make use of it by money.

Cont'd Page 25

After the ceremony of bulubulu, there is nothing else for the boy to worry about. But since we have a lot of changes happening around us, there are new ways too in which people prefer to have in order to get married. But the only difference is that we have different ways of solving our trouble and all that.

- I heard that in the olden days, it is a very dangerous thing when people from the boy's side goes into the girl's village to make the ceremony of bulubulu or when they go there to ask for atonement. Is this true or.....

Yes, this is true, but today, all this things are not very important to us today, people tend to disagree with the others with the things they do and the ways they choose. In the olden days, the parents and those older than us, they do all the talking and the arrangement when it comes to the wedding of someone. It is a very dangerous one, if a boy is very bad and he doesn't tell his parents about the thing he had done and that is eloping with the girl, then he is going to be watched by the people from the village when the girl comes from. It can end with someone being killed because they know that this is one lowest thing to do. When the people from the boy's village comes to the girl's village, they are going to be stared at and people are going to look down upon them and say nasty things about them too. Let's say, that they are going to do something about it and he is going to make sure that he reach up to what the girl's parents are expecting after the bad act he did to them of stealing their daughter like that. Today, people do not care as long as they live together that is alright with them, but soon some people are going to feel guilty of what they had done. As for the people in the village of the girl, they will make sure that they make life

more easy for us, the matanivanua can also step in to help us with our problems when two people decide to run away and live there together without their parents knowing it. The chief of the village can also be included in this fight among two villagers because the boy is from his village, so what they are going to do they are going to try and restore this good relationship which exists between their village and the boy's. The chief is going to encourage the boy's parents to do something about it and they are going to get the full support of the village and those behind it. So, they are going to do all these and the matanivanua is going to see if he could settle all these with the other people and upon him are the bad things the other people are going to do since he is from the boy's village, and this the other people do not consider it at all. This is what is going to happen when he arrives at the girl's village on his way to ask for atonement between their village and mine. The people are going to talk about them and they are going to shout at him and might even punch him although he doesn't know of what is going on, just because he is sent to the village to do this since it is his duty too to see that it falls through he has to suffer all these silently. That is the most worse thing that can happen when the people from the girl's village do not want anyone from the boy's village to come to their village. The only thing that they are going to do is to make sure that the girl does not set foot again on their land and the same thing goes for the boy too. They never let this thing rest until they have done something to repay the other person for the damage he had done to that family or to that village. This is the worse thing about elopement that happens in the time of our ancestors. Sometimes it is even worse than this, but they are always able to solve it somehow.

Cont'd Page 27

This is the only thing that I know of these ceremonies of marriage which they used to have in the olden days.

- Very well thank you, just before we end this interview, if there is anything else you would like to say concerning this thing of marriage which they usually have in the olden days, I invite you to let us know now.....

I am very happy to be picked to talk on some of the important things that our ancestors used to do in the olden days, but many of us today do not even know of such things. But I am sure that I have shared all there is to know and what I also know with you on our talk.

Thank you very much.

.....

FINISHED