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TOPIC: MARRIAGE

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SUBJECT: MARRIAGE IN THE OLDEN DAYS

- When a young man has fallen in love for a young girl he would go to his father and tell him that he wants to marry that particular girl. The young man and his father will than go to the girls house to ask the girls father for his daughters hand. If the girl's father is still alive the two man would ask him if his daughter could be married to his son. After this the young man and his father will return home and from this day to the engagement day the boys family will be feeding the girl and also clothing her. They'll be taking food and clothes to the girls home. Then the engagement date will be decided when this is done, the wedding day will be decided. Cows and pigs are killed on the girl's side and on the boy's side for the wedding feast.

TEVUTEVU (this is the special beddings, mats etc.prepared for the couple) follows the wedding feast. The boys mother will spread her TEVUTEVU first and than follows the girl's mother. The TEVUTEVU is displayed; the boy and two best man will be

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traditionally dressed, and also the bride and her two bridesmaid.
- When they have sitted, Meke(Fijian dance) will be presented to them, they will also be entertained.

The bride and the groom will than be required to sleep together for four nights. A cow or a pig is also killed for this.(for the couple).

- What do the young man and his father are to take to ask the girl's father for his daughter's hand?

The boy and his father will take a TABUA. Sometime when the girl is asked on this occasion, the girl don't agree, this is because she doesn't like the boy or she didn't know that they would come. Than the boy will take his tabua back home.

But at times the girl is already informed that the boy and his family will be coming home and she also knows the boy. The girl will say YES or AGREE than everything is settled. Usually the boy, his father and his closest relatives goes to see the girls father or to ask for the girls approval to be married to the boy. We call this DUGUCI(this is going with tabua to the girls home to ask her to be married to the young man). It depends on the girl, if she likes the young man than she'll say Yes. If, NO than very sorry. When the young girl has agreed to the proposal; the young man and his relatives will go back home and they'll be bringing food and clothes for her once every week for 21 days.

This is because after 21 days from the DUGUCI is the wedding. Feeding and clothing the bride -to-be in to 21 days is a sign that you have stamped or booked the girl. You have the traditional DUGUCI power to say that she is mine because you've already proposed to her with a tabua.

- Only after the wedding can the young man sleep with his wife. The wedding date is usually decided from the boy's side. Presentation of things (TEVUTEVU) and the wedding ceremony will all take place at the boys residence. The bride and her two bridesmaids and the groom and his two best man will be dressed traditionally in Masi; SAIUSAIU and their body will be oiled to shine. When the three some have eaten, they will change dress. The bride and her two maids will go and take off their traditional wedding dress on the boy's side and the groom and his two best man will go and take off their traditional wedding dress to the girls side. An exchange of wedding dress takes place here.

- Who gives the bride away to the groom?
The girls relatives. The bride's father will escort her daughter up to the groom. The bride will be holding a tabua, and she will give to the groom as a sign that her father has given her away to the groom. After the wedding the girl will go back to her place and the boy's side will go up to her home with TABUA, MATS etc. to present the KALI-NI-GONE

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(this is the weaning of the bride from her mother). When this is presented to the brides mother, only than can the bride be weaned from her mother and taken to her husband's home.

- What is usually done on the first night?

The bride and the groom will never go anywhere for four nights. They will only stay home and they won't have any bath until the fourth night. The new couple will be always sitting on the prepare beddings(TEVUTEVU) that was prepared by the boy's mother and the bride's mother. The new couple will be sleeping on this beddings too until the fourth night.

All this mats etc. are all theirs. Before the couple goes to bed for the night the girl will tell her mother to close the door. The door will be closed as a sign that the bride is a virgin if she tells her mother to keep the door open, this is a sign that she is not a virgin. When the relatives of both sides sees that the door is closed they'll know straight away that the bride is still young. Entertainment and meke will be presented from both sides.

- How about if the bride is matured, not young (not a virgin)?
If the girl is matured the girls side will be made ashamed. When the pig or cow is killed for feast, on the fourth night, the boy's side will lie the pig side-ways and spread its legs

apart and they will push a piece of brush through the pigs hole to show that their girl is not a virgin. When the girl's side sees this, they will never utter a word because they'll be really ashamed that their young girl is not pure. The couple won't bath until the fourth night, on the fourth night they will go down to the river to net fish (Qoli- using fishing nets) they will also have their bath.

When they have returned the boy's side will be waiting with a VAKAMAMACA(change for the bride). When they have change than the bridesmaid and bestman will seat and feast with them.

That same afternoon there will be another feast prepared by both sides to celebrate the fourth night. When relatives from both sides have feasted than they'll go back to their various homes. When the bride and groom goes down to net-fish they will also be taking with them a NOKE(fish basket) each.

Everything they catch they'll keep it in this basket. The fish they brought will be the last thing to be eaten before a YAQONA - GRCG drinking ceremony. The cooks who had been cooking for them all along will be required to eat the catch the new couple had brought. In the olden days (even to this day) this function is a very important and happy one. And if the girl is a virgin, Oh, that is another thing.

- Is there anymore you would like to say?

I think that is all I would like to say from what I know.

Vinaka Vaka-Levu.