

ID#: 17500

Age: 35

Date: 6 July, 1999

Interviewer: Christopher

District: Balaka

The respondent was preparing short pieces of wood for basket chairs. I approached him and he greeted me. We exchanged greetings and talked about basket-chair weaving, whether he sells them at [the trading center]. He said yes, and explained that he gets the reeds from the hill near U, some 5 miles away. I asked him if this village was his home village, he said it wasn't but he came here for marriage; he is married to the younger sister of the late wife of my first respondent within the premises. I asked him if it was common practice for men to live in their wife's village or otherwise, he said most men go and live in their wife's village although there are a few cases whereby a woman makes a special arrangement to go and live in her husband's village.

I then asked him what traditions or rituals were followed after a baby was born. He said usually it takes 7 months to resume sleeping together, and the husband is advised not to sleep with other women since this can lead to the baby becoming ill. I asked him if a man can manage to wait for 7 months to resume sleeping together? He said for some it is not possible, and I asked him what do they do then? He said some move around with other women, and I asked him if this happens in the community. He said he cannot mention names but he knows a number of men who move around with other women. I asked why they do it. He said they are after fame, so that people should say they move with different women. He explained that when men have lust for a woman they propose to sleep with her, after that sleeping then they boast and say "ah, that one should not be proud of herself, I slept with her", and then they see another and they do the same, "to be number one", as he put it. He said "eating *madeya* (husks) and *nsima* (staple food) serves the same purpose of being satisfied; hence, one's wife is not different from other ladies". He explained that whatever your wife has other ladies have, and men are just lustful, especially young men who just want to sleep with the women so as to become famous. I then asked him what he himself does when his wife has a small kid, like now (she has a kid of about a year) and he said he controls himself. I told him that even me, I know it's difficult to stay for a long time waiting for the kid to grow up to 7 months, honestly it is very difficult to just stay without sleeping with a woman. He complied, saying of course one cannot just stay. But in a far place, not in the same village, since if the spouse discovers then one can be called/summoned. I then asked him if he had a partner the past year, he said no, but in 1997 when he had his first born, and that time he had to use a condom to protect himself. I asked him if he frequently met the partner and used a condom always, and he said he met her occasionally in N village, which is where he comes from. He said he has now stopped doing that since he is aware of AIDS, which is so dangerous.

I asked him if it is possible to know that such, such a person might be infected with AIDS, he said no unless he/she starts to suffer from it. He said in the past time there used to be buboes which, when one was ill, was lying on the mat, everyone could know that "eh, that one is sick", but with AIDS it's impossible to know that such, such a person is ill. I asked him if he has seen and read posters on AIDS or family planning anywhere, and he said he just sees pictures/posters at the hospitals and in books/magazines. I asked him if

he thinks these posters have an impact on him and the said ya, they teach him to control himself, how AIDS can be contracted and prevented. I then thanked him and he told me I was free to pick up some *masau* fruits from a tree there.