

Respondent: ID#17502

Age: 38 years

Interviewer: Christopher

Date: July 6, 1999

District: Balaka

Found the respondent seated at his house. He welcomed me and I sat down and he said “Should we fear you?”, an expression. I explained that I am on a chat-chat around just to learn about some issues in the village and I was eager to learn what people look at when choosing a lady/partner for marriage. He said this is difficult to say since it’s subjective, and gave an example of himself to say he married in his home village in [district, name of place] way back in 1984. Then he looked at the behavior of the wife. I asked him what behavior he was looking for, he said he was looking at how she moves about with other young men or boys, if she paid respect to elders. I asked him why he looked at how she moved, why was this important. He said if a woman is fond of moving around before marriage and you happen to marry her, she will not stop that habit but will continue even in wedlock. I asked if some women move with other men when they are married and he laughed and said, “Brother, this is happening every day”. He continued to explain that in the same village recently, a certain man divorced his wife because she was moving a lot and the man was just hearing stories until recently he caught her at [a trading center] with a man who sells second-hand clothes. I asked him why this woman would do that and he said maybe she wanted money. I asked him what her husband does, he said the man is a subsistence farmer. He explained that that meant this lady started moving around when she was not married and couldn’t stop. She was used to. I asked if it’s only women who do that and he said men are number one. He said there are more women than men and that’s why some men have two or three wives or have a concubine besides their wives. I told him I knew there are more women than men and there are more beautiful women and I told him I admire women around [the trading center]. He said there are indeed beautiful women around [the trading center] whom could be tempted. I asked him if men around move with other women and he said yes, especially those vendors at [the trading center], they move around with other women besides their wives. He said women just want money and if you had it you could move out with other women. I asked if he himself had once done that with these beauties of [the trading center] and he laughed and said he is grown up and cannot do that, he was doing that when he was not married.

I said even me, I used to do that when I was in school because most girls in my village would admire me, but even in wedlock I have secretly done it and I was telling this to him as a man since hiding it was useless. He laughed and said of course, ya, sometimes a man does that but his friends do that but he does not, since he is afraid of bringing AIDS to the family and hurt his wife and children. He said the days when this was common have gone since the world has changed and there is death everywhere. I told him it’s good he knows there is AIDS and at this juncture I asked him to escort me to the car if he wasn’t busy (since his wife was behind in hearing distance) and I bid farewell to the wife I told him the car is now waiting for me, maybe there was a message for it had just come again. As we walked I again admired the women around [the trading center] and he said there are also girls from [a school] and maybe these were the ones I saw. I said that with that environment I cannot avoid having one as a partner since there are condoms around and I could protect myself. He said ya, that’s a good idea to protect himself. I asked him that he had said he had

girlfriends who he slept with when he was not married, are they all married and he said Ya, right in [district]. And I asked him if he can meet one by chance and could sleep with her and he said no, it's not good for somebody married, and moreover he doesn't know how she has moved about these past years. I asked him if he at times feels like having another partner, and ye said ya, at times when his wife bores/quarrels with him, he nearly thinks of just going to other women to show her that she is not the only woman, but then he refrains knowing that it happens that people do quarrel. I asked him if he only thinks of just going to other women at such situations or if he has at least once over the 10 years in wedlock actually gone to another woman. He said he hasn't and cannot do that as he had earlier said. I said its good he is trustworthy and honest since it's rare. I then switched to his personal occupation and he said he grows maize, I told him if I could get two bags of maize, he told me it's K250 per 50Kg bag, but he hadn't the ready maize, but maize still on the cob. We talked about that. Then I bade farewell.