

ID#17531

Interviewer: Christopher

Date: July, 1999

District: Balaka

Language of Interview: Chichewa

Recorded

I: Excuse me!

R: ok! Ok!

I: May I have some water to drink my medicine?

R: Hey you! Bring the water. He wants to drink medicine.

I: Yesterday but one I came.

R: Oho

I: Yes, I heard that there was a funeral there.

R: Eeh! Of course there was a funeral.

I: Eeh

R: Nowadays, things are beyond [have gone too far]

I: Of course I heard it when I was walking near that tree, the deaths of nowadays.

R: Sorry brother.

I: Every day...

R: Unun! Mhu! Mnhu!

I: Everyday...

R: Sorry! Danger.

I: Mh!

R: Danger

I: Sorry!

R: Danger.

R: So we're people who belong to the group that is digging some graves (*chipani*).

I: Oho! You're of that group?

R: Eeh! (Yes)

I: Oho!

R: So we were there yesterday.

I: So, I came yesterday and I was told that there was a funeral somewhere so I just returned.

R: Oho!

I: True, so I thought today I could find you.

R: Mmm.

I: So father, you stated that your wife...?

R: She passed away.

I: When was that?

R: On the 19th of June—"we were saying we shall vote tomorrow".

I: Oh, sorry indeed.

R: True.

I: Sorry, very sorry. She suffered severely?

R: Iih!

I: Or did it just happen accidentally?

R: No! She started suffering when the group of Let's Chat was here.

I: Oho! Last year?

R: Eeh! This group went there [to interview her], but she wasn't good in her body.

I: So, I'm not going to stay here for a long time, I just wanted to chat.

R: Umh

I: I want to learn about various things.

R: Oho

I: That's why I wanted to chat.

R: Unh!

I: Because if you chat, you can learn.

R: Eeh!

I: They say learning doesn't end (they both laugh)

I: They say learning doesn't end.

R: Eeh

I: So, we walk to chat, so one of the names is you, Mr. B.

R: Eeeh

I: So, I've said...

R: Eeh

I: Eeh

I: So, I wanted to know more about what *chitengwa* means (when a woman leaves her home and stays with a husband at his home village). Is this an area of *chitengwa* or *chikamwini*? (Husband leaves and stays at his wife's village). I don't know if you've understood what I mean?

R: Maybe it's *chikamwini*.

I: If you say "*chikamwini*", what do you mean?

R: It's the transfer of a man from his mother to his wife's home.

I: To a wife's?

R: Eeh

I: O.k.

R: That's *chikamwini*.

I: So everybody here is at *chikamwini*?

R: Eeh

I: Even you, you're at *chikamwini*?

R: Verily!

I: Ohoo! Ok!

I: Is *chikamwini* a Yao, Lomwe custom or it's for everybody?

R: It's for everybody here.

I: Oho. Is there any importance of *chikamwini*?

R: What?

I: I don't know whether *chikamwini* has its goodness or badness, so can you tell me? Say the problem is this, or it has no importance.

R: Ah! There is no problem if you're staying well at that place.

I: Eeh! What do you mean when you say "if you're staying well?"

(Both laughed).

I: If you stay well...

R: It means if you don't stay well, you might be chased.

(Laughed)

I: Oho!

R: If you don't stay well at that place.

I: Eeh! O.k.

I: Since you've said that if you don't stay well at that place....

R: Mmh

I: Yah!! So, I wanted you to give me some examples of one who isn't staying well at that place, because all of us are men, also me, my home district is there in Machinga.

R: Mmm

I: I come from near Ntaja.

R: Near Ntaja?

I: Ummh! We also do *chikamwini*.

R: Mmh!

I: So I'd like you to clarify what you've said, like "if you don't stay well."

R: It means to those people at the place (owners of the place) [the wife's, if it's matrilineal].

I: Oho!

R: Eeh! If they speak a lot about you in your absence, this and that...

I: Speaking about you in your absence?

R: Eyah!

I: (laughed).

R: Umh

I: Ok

R: True

I: Say, if children are born, to which side do they belong, to the husband or to the woman?

R: To the woman.

I: Oh, the child belongs to the woman?

R: Eeh (yes)

I: So, does a man have power to take children if the marriage ends?

R: Yes, he can stay with them.

I: Isn't there a problem that "no, you're at *chikamwini*?"

R: Ah no!

(Both laughed)

R: There is no problem.

I: There is no problem! O.k.

I: Let's say a boy, a boy, because what you're speaking of is the same where I come from, but I need to ask...

R: Mmm

I: If a boy wants to look for a woman to marry, what customs do you follow? He has seen a girl, does he just take and marry her, or is there a certain custom that you do?

R: If a boy sees a lady to marry, the owners [parents] of the girl go to the owners of the boy and tell them about it.

I: Hoo! They from the girl?

R: Eeh!

I: So what about from your side (the man's)

R: Oho, they to go to the woman's home.

I: Then they establish counselors?

R: Eyah

I: But can't it happen that they just marry each other and start to live together?

R: There are those who do it like that. So these...

I: It's happening?

R: Yes, it's happening.

I: Mmm

R: The one who does like this lacks good behavior.

(Both laughed)

R: They lack good behavior.

I: They lack good behavior

R: They become interrupters.

I: Interrupters.

I: Say, like we men, even me, I'm looking for marriage.

R: Mmmh!

I: What do we see in a woman that we choose her to become our wife?

R: What do we see?

I: Eeh

R: We see behavior, ...

I: Behavior...

R: ...maybe she is good (beautiful).

I: (laughed) R: Eyah!

I: Eeh!

R: Plus the behavior. Eyah!

I: We see behavior...

R: Umh! I: well!

I: So those who behave badly, who are they?

R: Who can't behave is the one who is rude, greedy, and involved in "run-run".

I: If you say "run-run", what do you mean?

R: I mean having sex with many partners.
 I: O.k., meaning that here you sleep with this guy and there with another guy and so on.
 R: Eya! (yes, of course)
 I: So if you hear a bad rumor of her...
 R: Yes, if you hear a bad rumor it means she doesn't have good behavior.
 R: Eyah! She run-runs (*othamanga thamanga*).
 I: ok.
 R: She sleeps with many partners (*wachiwerewere*)
 I: (laughed) Say you have married her?
 R: Ah! She can give you something (diseases).
 I: She will just run-run.
 R: Of course, a person with a bad habit is a person with a bad habit forever.
 I: But do you think it happens?
 R: Of course! Verily!
 I: That if you get married, you still sleep with other partners?
 R: Of course! It happens (they both laugh)
 I: O.k., let's say she's married and she sleeps with some other guys, does she sleep with guys who are married or unmarried?

R: If this is her habit, she sleeps with anybody, married or not
 (both laugh)
 I: O.k., because she has the habit?
 R: Yes, she has the habit.
 I: O.k., so you mean that even we men, if we are married, do we go and look for someone to sleep with?
 R: Of course! Verily
 I: laughed.
 R: It depends on the behavior of the person.
 I: Is it because of behavior, or we men, we have developed such a tendency?
 R: It's because of the mind of a person, they don't mind that they're married, so "I could love other women."
 (both laughed)
 I: Oho! Some keep their minds from such things and others not?
 R: Yes, verily.
 (Both Laughed)
 I: Do you mean that when you were a boy you didn't do such things like proposing a lady?
 R? Ah
 I: When you were a boy, didn't you do this?
 R: When I was a boy?
 I: Having a partner?
 R: Before I married?
 I: Say, when we're boys, we didn't fail to have at least one partner. Wasn't it like that?
 R: Of course! True.

I: Say, that time maybe we had two lovers, so we were choosing, “maybe this one, maybe that one”.

R: In the past we were able to do so, but nowadays there is a plague.

I: Eeh!

R: No! I’ve never done so

(both laughed)

R: But at the time when you were a boy, you did?

R: Of course!

I: Ok. So you’ve said that when you were a boy you did it, but now because of this plague you haven’t done it.

R: Since this plague came, those people who were doing it have completely stopped, but in the past we were able to do it.

I: oho! What do you mean by the word plague?

R: I mean the disease of AIDS.

I: Oho! The disease of AIDS?

R: Eeeh

I: Eya! Since it came most people...

R: Aah!

I: ...they have become surprised (*atutumuka*)

R: Verily

I: Which means you, that time in marriage...

R: I got married and completely stopped such tendencies.

I: You stopped there?

R: Yes.

I: Why did you decide that?

R: I decided that because I was afraid of getting other things.

I: O.k. Diseases, of course!

R: Of course, diseases.

I: Since you’ve started speaking about this plague (AIDS), suppose I wanted to marry a woman in this village, how can I know that this one cannot give me AIDS, or that this one will not suffer from AIDS? How can I know? Her appearance is very healthy, and she passes there. Mmh. For example, when I was passing there.

R: Mm

I:I passed and found a girl selling sugarcane...

R: Mmh I: laughed

R: Eeh

I: Eeh

I: ...I found her selling sugarcane, and I bought a sugarcane from her. So if I can say “Oh! Mr. B I’ve found a girl there selling sugar canes, so what about her, I love her, so what can you advise me? How can I know that one does not have AIDS?”

R: You or me?

I: Suppose me, I would like to propose the lady that I’ve seen selling sugar canes.

R: Eeh
 I: So, according to the issue of plague that you've spoken of...
 R Mmh
 I: So, how can you instruct me? How can I know that this one has no virus?
 R: How can you know?
 I: That she has no virus? Thus, what I say is "Mr B, advise me".
 R: Eya
 I: Eeh
 R: Hah! I can advise you that this girl...
 (both laugh)
 I: O.k.
 R: I can say "aah! That one! Ahh! She has not got it."
 I: Oho!
 R: Mmm
 I: You mean that for you to know you must firstly ask the people who stay in the village with that lady?
 I: Mmm
 I: But you can't really know that this one has got the virus or not, despite her healthy body?
 R: Ah, it can't be possible.
 I: It can't be possible?
 R: Of course
 I: (laughed)
 R: It can't be possible.
 I: Unless?
 R: You search/ask about it. Because sometimes.
 R: Mmh!
 I: As I've already said, men do have sex with *chibwenzi* (girlfriend).
 R: Mmh

I: Like where I stay, we might know that such man is moving with such person's wife.
 R: Umh
 I: He also has friendships with girls at work. It's happening these days So, why do many men follow these ladies? Because this is happening normally.
 R: Mmh!
 I: Why do they follow other women, what are their wives' lacking?
 R: Ah, they are just dying because of appearances.
 I: (laughed)
 R: Eeh
 I: Color?
 R: Yes. But there is no difference.
 I: It's just the same. Eeh!
 R: It's the same.
 I: Some do this because their wife has just given birth?

R: Umh

I: So, I don't know in this area, how many months should pass before they start having sex with their wives?

If a child is born, how many months to wait?

R: Most of the men wait until 7 months.

I: Up to 7 months?

R: Yes

I: O.k.! So during these months, what do they do? Since you're men, you might have a desire for sex.

R: Of course!

I: So waiting until 7 months?

R: Of course, up to 7 months. If you can't persevere, you can use condoms.

I: Um! You can just use condoms.

R: Of course!

I: Ok, to protect himself so.

R: To protect himself....

I:that he can "rest".

R: Eyah!

(both laugh)

I: ok! He takes condoms to protect himself?

R: So, he protects himself!

I: Waiting for the baby until she/he grows up?

R: Yes

I: What were you doing in the past when the baby is born?

R: Me, when the child was born, I stayed for that period without doing anything.

I: But you might have once used a condom?

R: Yes!

I: I think it was happening that "let me use this".

R: Of course it was happening

(They laugh)

I: Did you use it with your wife or not?

R: I used it.

I: Sorry, I mean we have said that others use condoms when the child is born.

R: Mmh

I: So they might use it somewhere else, not with his wife. Didn't you use a condom somewhere else with a woman who is not your wife, so that you've a "rest"?

R: Eeh. I once did it.

(Both laughed)

I: No, we're men.

R: Yes, true

I: (laughed)

I: Let's speak reality, it's nature.

R: Of course, yes!

I: It's better to use a condom, as you said.

R: Mmh!

I: Because many men just sleep with women without using a condom, so, can you tell me whether you've heard boys speaking about using condoms, what did they say about it?

R: You mean others who don't use condoms?

I: Mmm

R: Others think that it's false that if you use condoms you can't get diseases.

I: Do you drink beer?

R: I'm on holiday.

I: (laughed). We're on condoms, maybe if one is drunk, he forgets about it?

R: Some forget because they are drunk, while others they remember but just ignore them.

(Both laugh)

I: They say "there should be flesh-to-flesh"?

R: Yes.

I: According to how you see, do boys protect themselves or not? I mean when they have sex with other girls?

R: According to how I see, I think they don't.

I: Ooh! It's a problem.

R: Mmh!

I: Because nowadays, like me, I am very mobile, sometimes I might be in Nsanje, and this moment I'm here. So it happens to a man to have sex with another woman who is not your wife, though you're married, but if you don't protect, eeh!

R: Eeh!

I: (laughed) You won't come back.

R: Yes, you won't come back.

I: You won't come back!

R: Mmh!

I: True, so I just wanted to know, especially about boys...

R: Mmh

I: Do we protect ourselves or not from AIDS, and what makes us leave our wives and look for other women?

R: Umh

I: This is why I chat with boys, as I'm also a boy.

R: Yes, true.

I: We boys, we should fully understand why we love other women and leave our wives, or else are we attracted by the buttocks (*matako*) of women? (Laughs)

R: They want a change from their wives so they become attracted to other women.

I: But do the wives, don't they realize that "my husband is running with such, such woman?"

R: That the husband...

I: ...is running with such a woman?

R: The wife can't realize. If you are concerned, you can do it in the bush very far away, say at J.

(Both laugh)

I: You can do it at J but not here, not so?

R: Ah, I married this wife in 1981, I dislike moving around.

I: You would like to be silent (not having sex with others)?

R: Mmh! True!

I: (laughed) If she realizes, it could be a problem, she can go to the counselors, you become like you're shabby (naked, *kuyaluka*)

R: You become like you are naked.

I: You might be called by the chief to be accused and say, "speak".

R: Yes, "speak" (meaning of a husband).

I: "No this", "no that", "no this and that", failing to defend yourself.

(Both laughed)

I: Failing to speak (tongue-tied)

R: Tongue-tied.

I: I thank you very much!

R: Ok, thanks.

I: (laughs). We've chatted freely, so I do thank you very much.

R: Mmh!

I: So are you busy?

R: Me?

I: Yes, I thought you could escort me to the car. I've left something in it.

R: O.k., well.

I: Is that a person who wants to chat with you?

R: Yes, he wants.

I: Oho! Well!

R: True!

Farewells.

R: Go away! (Chased his child)

I: How can you know?

R: