

Respondent: ID#9505

Age: 33 years

Interviewer: Davie Chitenje

Date: 7 July, 1999

District: Balaka

I found G relaxing while drinking traditional beer (*masese*). When I approached and introduced myself to him, he offered me a share and I refused. He then offered me a seat. He asked if it was o.k. for him to stop drinking and attend to me first. I told him that it was o.k., I'll just be interviewing him while he is drinking.

I started the ball rolling by asking him what he knows whenever a couple has children: do they keep sleeping together or not? This respondent was fast to hit the nail. He started by telling me that according to Ngoni customs, it is proper for the couple to stay about six months without having sex; for Yao customs, he said, they stay about 4-5 months without sleeping together. I continued by asking him if it is still a custom for the husband not to sleep with anyone while he is waiting for his wife? F said for those six months starting from the birth of the child, it is proper not to have sex with anyone for fear of exposing the child to illness. I then probed further by asking what happens after six months, he said then he is free even to sleep with someone apart from his wife because that cannot cause any harm to his child. Still on this point, I asked him if he has ever slept with anyone himself. In response he said, "Mmm, you know", which means that he slept with someone because, as he said, it cannot do harm to the child. I did not go any further since he had hit the nail on the head without beating about the bush. We bid goodbye.