

ID#12513

Interviewer: Christopher

Date: 2nd July 1999

District: Balaka

Language of Interview: Yao

Christopher had a list of men 30 or under who said last year they had had no extramarital affairs. Interview was not recorded, he wrote it up afterwards.

Found him packing cotton in a bale. There were three males and I was just like passing by and interested in how they pack the cotton using feet, *i.e.*, stamping over the top of the bale so that the cotton squeezes down. I explained that I am so interested to know/see how they pack the cotton. One man said, "Are you the family planning people?" I said no. He said he had seen our vehicle, the family planning one in another village. I explained that we were from the University of Malawi and doing research so that we can learn from them how they live, and their health. He asked me where I come from, mentioning a village since I was speaking Yao. I said Ntaja and an older man probed to know where exactly since it's also his village. I told him and I mentioned people whom he knows and he was so glad. I then asked if I could get a goat and they said no goats since Mozambicans bought most of the goats. Then I said I'm going to buy Panado and they said a grocery was about 500 meters away, and I asked him to escort me.

He started escorting me and I asked why there was a gathering at one of the houses near the chief's house, he said there was *sadaka* (remembrance feast for a dead person). An old man had died last month. I asked him if he was very ill, he said, "ya, it's because he was so old." I said I envy those old men who die at that age, and I said I wondered if we the young generation shall reach that age. He said it's not possible to reach that age since nowadays there is AIDS. I asked him why? He said AIDS has no cure, and most people are dying because of AIDS. I asked him if he knew anyone who died of AIDS, he said, ya, there was a teacher at K. Primary School who was fond of sleeping with other people's wives and in the end he suffered from AIDS. He said at one time he nearly got chased from the community since he was fond of moving around with women in the community.

I asked him how he knew the teacher died of AIDS. He said he became so thin, with hair falling out and he looked unhealthy. He said he has also heard people say so, so has died of AIDS in the village, although some say it's witchcraft if somebody died of AIDS. I reminded him that he had said the teacher liked to move around with other women in the community. He said yes, the women want money and he had money. I asked him if this is common in the community, he said yes, this happens every day, especially the young school-going girls, they are growing up and being beautiful and one envies them, has lust for them. He explained that if a wife has many children the breasts flop and young men envy pointed breasts (he said standing), which schoolgirls have and most young men go for them. He gave an example of a young man in this village who impregnated a school girl but he is married and his wife learned of it, but the man is challenging that he wants to marry the girl. He does not know if the parents of the girl have decided or not.

I asked him if women also indulge in extramarital affairs. He said ya, some women go to the market on a

market day (Tuesday and Thursdays) just to meet other men who are usually selling items such as secondhand clothes or kitchenware or plastic ware, but not many. He said a woman who does that is a “prostitute”, since women do not propose a man but can do so because they propose. He said most have extramarital affairs to fulfill their lust for that particular lady. You see a lady and you think oh, if I could sleep with this one, and you propose her just because you want to sleep with her, he said. I asked him if he had ever done this in his life, he says ya, a man has to do that, it’s natural, and said that he has done it. I said ya, even me being a married man sometimes I find it hard when I am away in the field, maybe in Chitipa, to avoid it, and he said “ya, when I go to the lake I stay for a week or two before coming to the shore and when I come to the shore usually it doesn’t fail.” He sometimes picks a woman, and emphasized that he uses a condom always because condoms are safe.

I asked him when he went to the lake (Malombe) he said it was in February and then he had a concubine around C village. I asked him when this relationship started and he said it’s almost two and a half years and there is a gift (child), he laughed. I ask him if in the two years every year he slept with her, and he said “look here, these women, when you don’t sleep with them and just give them money they buy clothes, straighten their hair and look beautiful and other men go for them so it’s necessary to sleep with them and when they become pregnant they stick to you. I asked him why she became pregnant when he said earlier that he used condoms, and he said he used condoms for the loose ladies, like that one, he pointed to a young lady in a white blouse/black skirt (this time we were near the school). He said “that one, if you (meaning me) can tell me you want her I’ll tell you “Oh brother, if you want to go fast do it.” I said why, since she was young and beautiful and I said I thought she’s married. He said ya, she was married in K (a town) and they separated, then married in L (another town) and then came back in January and now she moves in bars around a trading center. I told him if I came across her I’d propose her in U and he said he could do it even then. Then I said but you’ve said I can “go fast” if I went for her and he said the use of condoms nowadays was important, and I said no but she looked very healthy and beautiful and how could I know I could go fast? He said he knew her very well, she moved around in bars and most likely she has AIDS. Don’t be taken by her looks, he said.

I asked him what advice he can give to somebody who wants to choose a partner, how that person could know this is the best partner. He said there is absolutely no way you can tell that the person is infected or not unless the signs start to show, it’s difficult to determine unless you know the behavior of the person, has she moved around or not, but for those who move like the young lady, he said, she’s infected and if someone wants to marry her he’d tell him not to because of her behavior. I said o.k. But if I find her at [a] pub I’d propose her and see if he was saying the truth or maybe he had plans to propose her and was discouraging me.

We laughed, and I told him to escort me to the car. Of course, I had to give a gift and escorted him back to the house where I also ate paw paws and chatted with his father who bombarded me with questions pertaining to the research, are we family planning people, I should advise a certain guy who has five children, *etc.*