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Extra-marital Affairs 1999  
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Introduction not taped

- I: As I have said that we are going to chat on something about traditional customs here, such as in other areas they practice a system called hyena (sending a man to have sexual intercourse with another woman/girl) for some tribal reason
- R: Mmh
- I: Have you ever heard about a hyena here?
- R: Hyena?
- I: Yes, hyena, here in the village they send a hyena to a teenager/virgin.
- R: Mmh
- I: What sort of customs are there so that they reach to a point of sending a hyena?
- R: To be sent a hyena, there is no such traditional custom here
- I: Ok
- R: Eeh
- I: But somewhere else?
- R: Somewhere?
- I: You have not heard about this in your areas but what about other areas?
- R: I have never heard that someone has been sent a hyena anywhere else (Both laughed)
- I: Ok
- R: Eeh
- I: Not the beast - hyena (I mean)
- R: No.
- I: Eh
- R: I have understood now
- I: Eehh!
- R: What you mean is: What can we say, explain to me.
- I: Laughs: When the woman is not getting pregnant, they think that something is wrong. So they take another man into the house, so this man is called a hyena.
- R: Eeh
- I: Eh
- R: Oh! That system takes place even here but I was not understanding that word  
Both laughed.
- I: But they still say hyena?
- R: Yes, they say hyena
- I: Eh

R: But I had forgotten. That's why I said you should explain that first  
I: Ok

R: It happens because the people doubt about the husband, so they send someone into the house whether a brother or a friend of the husband.  
I: Ooh!  
R: Eeh  
I: They can send a brother?  
R: Yes  
I: Does the owner get informed that they are going to have a hyena or that they do this secretly?  
R: There are two ways, one is that the husband is aware, that is when the husband himself has planned that to take place. The other way is that the wife only is the one that is aware at that time.  
I: Laughs  
R: That is the other way  
I: Who plans that this should take place?  
R: It is the wife most of the times, because she knows that my husband is not such such (in fertile)  
I: Oh  
R: Eya  
I: So whom does she consult, the counselors or her mother?  
R: At first she tells the counselor then her friends tell her that if you have loved the man just have an external affair may be it can help.  
I: Do they tell her to be sent to hyena or to go and have extra-marital affairs?  
R: The friends tell her to go and have a male friend  
I: Ooh! Laughs  
R: The other means is through the counselors  
I: Mmh  
R: Eeh  
I: So, if they tell her to go and have a male friend, is this possible while she is married?  
R: That is possible because the parents have them not to separate so they agree with the system to take place. The person can't do this on one's own.  
I: Laughs  
R: Eya  
I: So, how does it seem to the parents?  
R: The parents get informed that their son is not fertile so they do agree that she should be sent a hyena  
I: Ooh  
R: Sure  
I: So, how do they choose the hyena?  
R: They look for a man who can be responsible for that  
I: So what are the qualities of such a man?  
R: They look for a person who has got children so that they can't doubt that he will do the good job.  
I: They choose the one with children?  
R: Eya

I: Does this person go into that house once or up to the time the woman conceives?

R: They give him three weeks, and at that time, they observe whether the woman is changing or not, if she is not changing, so they suspect both of the spouses. And leave them

I: Eh

R: But this is not practiced due to the outbreak of AIDS

I: Oh!

R: So, this is not in use nowadays, because we can take a person who is already infected with AIDS

I/R: Both laughed

I: Sure. So this was happening in the past?

R: Yes. It was in the past

I: What we are talking is what we heard that was happening in the past?

R: Yes

I: Ok

R: Sure, sure. (Said that in English)

I: So, after the hyena has done this, was not this becoming a friendship (opening extra-marital affairs)

R: This was a friendship straight away

I/R: Both laugh

R: There can't be any way

I: Because they have known each other

R: They have known each other, yes.

I/R: Both laughed

I: So, if they meet sometimes, they can do what they want?

R: Definitely

I: So, was this system good or not?

R: Aah!

I: On the side bearing children because you have already said it's bad because there are diseases?

R: Mmh

I: What about on children's case?

R: This was helpful because a person had to have gifts [children] in the family

I: Eeh

R: Because it is a plan that we should have such a number of children in the family but not exceeding the recommendable number

I/R: Laughs

I: If you say exceeding the limit, what do you mean?

R: I mean having six, seven, eight children and above

I: Laughs

R: So you fail to support the family

I: Especially nowadays?

R: Yes

I: As the things have changed

R: Yes

I: So you know that this number, I can manage?  
R: You know yourself that this is ok  
I/R: Laugh

I: What number is the child in your hands?  
R: That's the first born  
I: You have married recently?  
R: I have married last year  
I: Last year?  
R: Mmh  
I: Ok! I am also married  
I/R: Laughed  
I: Nowadays, if you reach this you .....  
R: No.  
I: You have to doubt yourself about how you are  
I/R: Laugh  
I: You doubt if you are Ok in your body  
R: Sure  
I: OK. There is the custom of waiting after the woman has just given birth, or we can say what customs are there after the birth of the child?  
R: We have got different customs because we are in two groups, there are the Chewa and the Ngoni  
I: Oh! Here  
R: Yes  
I: Ok  
R: So the customs are mixed up  
I: Oh  
R: So as of me, I can know the Chewa customs  
I: Ooh  
R: Eya, As how they taught us, there should be four months rest after the woman has delivered to avoid getting diseases.  
I: Four months?  
R: Yes. So that the woman may be ok.  
I: What can happen if you sleep with her before that period has ended/completed?  
R: The woman can infect you with a disease  
I: What kind of disease?  
R: The elders know that disease much better, but the person grows thin to the point that people may think that you have AIDS, the fingers protrude as well  
I/R: Laughed  
I: So what do you do during this period since you used to sleep with a woman most of the times, now in the period of four months, how do you help yourself ?  
R: I think that the best way is to keep safe, because you can have another woman but without knowing that she is infected, and more over you can infect the young child

I: What do you mean?  
 R: I mean that you can do that secretly and according to the customs, the baby will probably die  
 I: Oh  
 R: He/she dies straight  
 I: Eh  
  
 R: Eh  
 I: So you have to forget that?  
 R: Yes. You have to forget that  
 I: But are most of the boys keeping themselves safe?  
 R: Aah! Most of the boys are not keeping themselves safe  
 I/R: Laughed  
 I: They are just moving  
 R: Eh  
 I: Trusting a condom  
 R: Yes  
 I/R: Laughs  
 R: Sure  
 I: I will do it with someone, four months is too much  
 R: Yes. They think that four months is too much  
 I: Have you ever done this?  
 R: No. I have never done this  
 I/R: Laughs  
 I: Have you never trusted a condom and did it?  
 R: I haven't  
 I: Do those boys who just move around with women use condoms or not?  
 R: Some use while others don't  
 I: But when they are talking that I had such, such a woman do they mention about condoms?  
 R: The majority do not speak about condoms here  
 I: Not many?  
 R: Yes  
 I: Mmh  
 R: But in the areas like M [trading center], and at the Boma (Mchinji district), they use condoms.  
 I: Why don't the boys use condoms?  
 R: Just because they don't like  
 I: Ooh! Because they are at the town?  
 R: Yes  
 I: Laughs  
 R: Because they think that AIDS is in towns only while it doesn't have special place  
 I: Ok  
 R: Mmh  
 I: Can you know a person who might be infected with AIDS but he has not yet started showing the

signs?

R: No. We can recognize him/her only after the blood has been tested

I: After blood test?

R: Yes

I: But

R: It is when we can know this one have or not

I: But can't we know that this one has got a virus before testing?

R: Before he/she starts suffering?

I: Yes

R: Aah! You can just say she/he is Ok

I/R: Laughs

R: Sure

I: But let's say you go to [the trading center] for a chat and you see those healthy women, can you know them that they have got AIDS or the bar girls look so health? Can we know them that they have got AIDS?

R: We can't know them?

I: So we can't know that they have a virus?

R: Yes

I: We can't know them

R: Mmh

I: So we can't know that they have got a virus?

R: Yes. But if we know that the person is having sexual moves regularly that one can probably have the virus

I: So the bar-girls have that?

R/I: Laughs

R: Automatically, they can have it

I: Oh!

R: Yes

I: Ok

R: Mmh

I: So as I said that we are going to have a short talk, so I thank you that we have chatted on something about customs and AIDS

R: Thanks

I: So you are free to continue your business

R: Ok

I: Thanks very much

R: Thanks