

0.1-15 Handlaked.BETROTHAL OF A WOMAN.

(in deed)

1/8

The betrothal of a woman. A long time ago during the life time of our fathers, we did not on our own make an offer of marriage to a woman. Our fathers did everything for us. A mention was made even before a woman gave birth to a child, that, if the child who will be born happens to be a girl, then I am making an offer of marriage, that she be married to my son, so and so. A beast was even given as security before the child was born and it was said that it was for providing milk for the child. It did not matter if this woman gave birth to male children but eventually, one that would be a female child was the one awaited. Even if the female child were born when the man for whom she was sought, was already old he had to marry her, no one would have cause to complain. No young man could even make an offer of marriage on his own behalf to a woman if his parents had not done so, if he hinted to them that he desired to marry, they would tell him that in the home of so and so at such and such a place, is there where we as your parents have decided that your wife should come from. One makes every effort to marry a woman, if she is a hard worker. If she is not a diligent worker, people do not like her. They don't want to hear anything about a lazy girl, it does not matter how much a young man may say he loves her. If these matters have been discussed by the parents, there is no strife at all in them. If they say, "we like the child of so and so, the young man has no say". Very often, marriage is arranged among the relatives. A young man must marry the child of his maternal uncle or the child of his father's sister. But he may marry a child of other people with whom he is not related also if his parents want him to do so, if they are convinced that the child of so and so is a hard worker. The young man's parents speak to the parents of the girl, they ask them to give their daughter away to nobody in marriage. If anybody else who is not a relative had offered to marry a girl, if the relatives come, they break the engagement, saying the child of my sister cannot be in need of a wife as long as I have a daughter. This of course, is not a betrothal, it is putting things straight and preparing for the future so that when people are sent

to offer marriage to a girl, it must be something that is already known and so that the girl should not be impatient.

Retrosual. The people who are sent to offer marriage to some one's daughter are the maternal uncle and the mother's younger sister of a young man. When they have made the offer to the parents of the girl, they bring back word that their offer has been accepted. The father of the young man will then pay the "bogadi" cattle, the young man's maternal uncle also pays one head of cattle to add to those that have been paid by the young man's father. The maternal uncle must naturally pay another beast to be slaughtered for his grandchild. The grandchild gives his uncle something. People are not allowed to marry their mothers. That is to say a man cannot marry the wife of his father, even if that woman is not his mother, he is not allowed. She is the wife of his father. A man is allowed to marry the wife of his elder brother or the wife of his younger brother. It means that he is taking care of the children of his younger or elder brother.

Actual case. Radiseko married the wife of his elder brother Moamogoe. It was after the death of Moamogoe when Radiseko married Motlatsi the wife of his elder brother. His reason being that, he is taking over the children of his elder brother in order to look after them for him.

Actual case. Melotona had also married the wife of Kokoe, his younger brother. He had both his own wife and this one. His reason was that he should look after the children of his younger brother, after the death of Kokoe, Melotona's wife did not complain when her husband married the wife of his younger brother because the children of his younger brother would get lost. The things belonging to these children were not mixed with those of the elder children. They remained at their own place, the cattle in their cattle kraal, the fields remained separate as well so that there should be no disputes among them after the death of Melotona. There was no trouble

however after the death of Pelotona. The children of the junior house looked after their property, and those of the senior house also looked after their own.

The betrothal of a woman. When a woman is betrothed, all the relatives who are nearby are called together. They are the people who will come and discuss the matter and make a decision. If it is the child of the young man's father's sister who is to be betrothed, the girls' mother and the girl have no say in the matter. The sisters and brothers hold the discussion. When they have discussed everything, they report to the girls' mother and her child the result of their deliberations. She only accepts what they have decided whether or not they gave their consent. The sisters and brothers are the fathers of the child. The mother cannot do what she likes with the child. The brothers and sisters are the people who have to discuss her betrothal and say all they wish to say about her. But when the brothers and sisters are in consultation, the girls' mother is with them, not the girl. She keeps away she will only be told in the end what was said. The girl only accepts what has been said. If it is said that the young man is marrying her or not, she has no say in the matter. The brothers and sisters will explain what the young man is like, whether he is a hard working man or a lazy man and whether the girl is hard working or lazy. If a young man is not a hard working man, nothing is said, but if the girl is lazy, they do not allow their child to marry her. Sometimes they ask their child, "are you going to marry her even though she is such a lazy girl?" If he wants to marry her, he does so and if he does not want to marry her, he does not. They say that a woman is married because of her hard working hands. If she is a lazy woman, she is married by those do not know her, but those who know her just by-pass her.

When a girl is already engaged, the young man who has engaged her is free to visit her, no obstacle is placed in his way if he so desires. But they cannot live together. They are not allowed to have carnal intercourse. If they do, the penalty is cattle. When a girl has been engaged, the young man's parents buy skin frocks for her and they sew a kaross made of sheep skin for her, this is a sign that the girl has been engaged and it is an affirmation that the woman is theirs.

Lebeko and Mantshere.

Lebeko was a boy belonging to a regiment of young men whose people offered him in marriage to a girl by the name of Mantshere of the Monneng section of the tribe. Monneng was at his grandfather's, where Lebeko's mother was born, Lebeko's mother wanted him to marry at her parent's home. Permission was sought for Mantshere to be married. Rakhudu the paternal uncle of Lebeko and Motlatsi the aunt (mother's younger sister of Lebeko) were sent. When they had obtained the consent of the parents, the father of Mantshere demanded seven heads of cattle as "bogadi". Lebeko's father gave three heads of cattle and Lebeko's paternal uncle gave one, making four. Mantshere's father refused to accept them saying that they did not reach the number he wanted. Lebeko's father gave yet another one and they were then five in number. Mantshere's father then accepted them with pleasure and said, "Grandchild there is your wife, I am giving her to you!" Mantshere's maternal uncle was given one of the cattle so that he should also give up the child of his sister (allow her to be married).

Wedding.

To ask for marriage. After Mantshere was satisfied with the "bogadi" cattle that were paid, the same people who were sent before to engage the girl, were sent again to

ask for marriage. The paternal uncle and aunt (mother's younger sister of Lebeko went to ask for marriage. On their arrival, they stated that they were sent to ask for a water calabash. When they ask for a woman to be given away it means they take her away to the home of the young man. After making their request, they are given consent. They go back to their home to report the result of their mission. Now they inform the relatives of Lebeko that he is getting married to Mantshere daughter of his maternal uncle. The day of the wedding is then fixed. Beer is cooked. Lebeko's maternal uncle gives out a beast to be slaughtered for his grandchild. Lebeko's father also gives out a beast and a sheep to be slaughtered for his child. People are picked out to go and fetch the daughter-in-law. The girl's people slaughtered a beast and three goats. When the wedding was over at the girl's home and the people had to go away, the younger sisters of Mantshere's mother refused to allow their elder sister's child to go out of the house unless something is paid. A person was sent to inform the father of the young man that unless something was paid, they would not allow the bride to go. They said she would go nowhere. Lebeko's father gave out three goats for the release of the bride. When the person came with the goats, they were reported. They clapped their hands thanked and the bride was allowed to go. When they arrived at the young man's home, the wedding ceremony took place. When the wedding was over, the grandmothers of Mantshere called Mantshere and Lebeko together and gave them instructions. They said to the bride, "My grandchild, it is the duty of a woman to be humble to her husband, do not argue with him, take care of him and do not make him your play thing. He is your husband and it is only death that will separate you. A husband is not guarded, if you don't see him, don't conclude that he is misconducting himself. Family matters are a secret, a husband is your father, he is the one who has married you."

They said to Lebeko, " There is your wife, my grandchild , provide for her, do not cause her to worry, do not beat her, she is your mother, the people's mother, do not make her a thing to play with, if you disobey these instructions, the mother earth will hit you hard ". A small hut next to the house of Lebeko's mother was pointed out to Lebeko and Mantshere as the hut which both of them would occupy until such time as they could build their own. They said to Mantshere, " There is your hut, look after your husband and give him food in time. Mantshere's mother-in-law showed Mantshere kaffir corn, pots and small bowls, she showed her hers (Mantshere's), her husband's, she showed her her father's and "Here is mine", she said. " when you have dished out, take your father's bowl and your husband's to the 'kgotla'. I as your mother, will no longer touch anything, everything will be done by you ". Mantshere's wedding was very grand and there were very many people. They danced and beer was plentiful. People got very drunk. Mantshere and her husband Lebeko were in a shelter made of bushes. The woman applauded her and threw kaffir corn out of their hands over her. When the wedding was over, the relatives remained behind, some relative who came from distant places went away and only those who lived nearby remained. They remained eating the leavings in the pots and drinking out the beer that was left over. They also went away quietly until all of them had dispersed. Then remained only the family members, busy with sending away utensils which they had borrowed to help them in the wedding feast. The now left Mantshere and her mother-in-law to do work which had been left undone. To smoothen the lapa" and the house including smearing it, the one which was occupied by the people-in-law, the people from the bride's home. That was the work which had to be done by Mantshere and her mother-in-law.

Kobedi Ranthokgale.

The Chief's wife. The people who are responsible for seeking the principal wife of the chief are his paternal uncles. Although the chief may be attracted by an ordinary woman in the village and marry her, she is not the principal wife to beget the heir to the chieftainship and one who is to rule the people. The paternal uncles, members of the royal family should hold a consultation in the secret and say, "since we are having a chief here, who is our father, where is our mother"? They will select one among the children of his paternal uncles and then say, "The people's (the tribe's) mother should be this one". When they have all come to an agreement, they will call the chief and report their decision to him, that, "Here is the mother of the tribe". The chief will accept their decision. After that, they must call the people together and tell them who the tribe's mother is in their village, the one to beget the future chief. The people will clap hands and say, "Rain, rain". From that time, people will be selected to go and fetch that girl". From that very day on which the people are told, the people's mother, that girl, will hide herself so that she may never be seen. These men who have been sent to fetch her, must guard this house which is the home of her parents so that if she makes the mistake of going out of the house, they should catch her and take her away to the chief's place. On her arrival there, other people will be sent to go and inform her parents, that their daughter, if they may be searching for her, is at the chief's place. Her mother's company will go to the chief's place to report that their child is missing, and that they do not know where it has gone to. One of the men of the "kgotla" will explain to them how their child was taken away. Not that her parents do not know where their child has gone to. They just fulfil the law to show the greatness of the chief, to show that it is their duty to bow their heads before him. After they have been given this information, they all go back to their homes. The chief and the members of the "khotla" remain behind discussing the number of

cattle to be paid for the "bogadi" and deciding from which of the chief's cattle most they would come. It must be clear of course that the chief's cattle are many and that they are herded by very many people. When they have agreed on the number of number of cattle to be paid, two or three men who are headmen are chosen to drive the cattle to the home of the girl's parents, after they have been driven away, the girl is dressed in lion's skin and she is taken to the home of her mother to see her because she had been stolen away. After this, she returns to the chief. No wedding is made for her because she is being stolen. The wives who were the first to be married should know that she is their mother, they do not in any way surpass her, people are chosen to serve her and help her in her household duties. The people who help her do not live for ever with her, they go away and others come and so on.

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