COURTSHIP AMONG THE KUARAFI OF MALAITA: AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF SPEAKING APPROACH

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This paper describes courtship and the way disputes arising from courtship are settled among the Kuarafi, a Kwara'ae-speaking tribe of North Malaita in the Solomon Islands. The data we present are based on several years of participant observation by the senior author, himself a member of the Kuarafi tribe, as well as interviews with Kuarafi gwaunga'i ki (leader + [pl.]), from the mid-1960s to 1977. The analytical framework for this paper is derived from the "ethnography of communication" approach: we are concerned primarily with the Kuarafi's own "way of speaking" about courtship, courtship disputes, and marriage, and also the rhetorical strategies used by participants to accomplish their individual goals in courtship situations. Thus, our discussion follows the Kuarafi people's native taxonomy for the stages in a traditional marriage and the ways in which such a marriage can be initiated. This paper is primarily descriptive rather than analytical.

There is no Kwara'ae term for "courtship." We have arbitrarily chosen this word to describe the earliest phases that may initiate a traditional marriage, including "falling in love" and having a love affair. The stages in a traditional marriage as set out by Kuarafi gwaunga'i ki as an ideal type are as follows: gani kini'a (the asking [for/about] + woman), ba'e kini'a (the taking [from parents' home] and bringing [to groom's home] + woman--implying welcome and starting a new life), daura'ia (hanging/displaying of shell money [brideprice]), and tolonga (marriage feast). Since the establishment of Christianity, a final stage has been added: the fakamao (church marriage ceremony; literally foreign + dance/ritual).

However, the Kuarafi also recognize several ways besides direct gani kini'a for initiating a marraige: ura'i kini'a, kwaima'anga, kakabara'anga and lau kini'a/tafi'a. This paper describes these ways of initiating a marriage, along with a brief account of gani kini'a.[1]

We begin with a short description of some aspects of the Kuarafi tribe that bear on the data presented here, including certain aspects of Kuarafi kinship and restrictions on marriage.

The Kuarafi

The Kuarafi tribe is one of several Kwara'ae-speaking tribes in the Kwara'ae District of North Malaita, Solomon Islands. Kwara'ae-speaking peoples occupy a large area of north-central Malaita, extending approximately from Fiu Harbor in the northwest to Ngongosila Bay in the northeast, and from Uru Harbor in the Southeast to Rade Bay in the southwest. A Melanesian language, Kwara'ae is the vernacular with the largest number of speakers in the Solomon Islands--more than 12,000 people, according to the 1970 census. Very little has been written about Kwara'ae people or their language.[2]

Christian missions have been established in Kwara'ae District since the mid-19th century. Among the Kuarafi, who are scattered all over the District, the dominant Christian churches are the Anglican (formerly called the Melanesian Mission), the South Seas Evangelical Church (SSEC, formerly the South Seas Evangelical Mission, SSEM), and the Roman Catholic Church. Many Kuarafi living up in the hill regions (referred to as _tolo_ [bush] people) still follow the traditional religion of ancestor worship.

In this paper we are concerned primarily with Kuarafi people today living in the Fiu region of Kwara'ae District. Most of these people are Anglican and some are SSEC members. They are subsistence farmers growing taro, sweet potato, yam, coconut, and various introduced vegetable crops, along with betel. They also keep pigs, chickens, and sometimes cattle, and they supplement their diet by fishing in the sea, rivers, and streams.

The Kuarafi are patrilineal: all claims to land, possessions, and other rights pass through the male line. Kwara'ae speakers distinguish between _fu'ingwae_, tribe (each of which has its own name), and _futa'a_, descent group. "Descent group" is used here to refer to a group of interrelated extended families (_tua'a_) linked through the male line;[3] it can also be used to refer to one's mother's kin. _Futa'a_ literally means born as one of a string of relatives. Thus, depending on context, it is also used for one's siblings in the nuclear family. Land itself is owned by the _fu'ingwae_ as a whole, and rights to its use were granted (in a time beyond historical memory) in large sections to each _futa'a_ (descent group). The _futa'a_ has immediate and, for all practical purposes, ultimate control over its land--it can deny any other family or group the right to live on its land. The extended family (_tua'a_) has immediate and, for all practical purposes, permanent responsibility for a part of the _futa'a_'s land granted to it. The _tua'a_ holds this land collectively. It is rare that a nuclear family (also called _tua'a_) would attempt to claim outright ownership of a portion of the _futa'a_'s or _tua'a_'s (extended family) land, although with the introduction of Western concepts of "deeds" and "private property," land disputes within the _tua'a_ and _futa'a_ are becoming more common.

Families live in villages often comprised of groups from different tua'a, futa'a, or fu'ingwae. However, the land on which a village is located is always held by a particular futa'a, and the majority of the population will be of that futa'a. The village chief must be elected from the futa'a which holds the land, and generally he will be a futa'a elder, probably in his sixties. The chief (called sihi or sifi, derived from English) is a recent introduction through colonialism. Prior to Western contact, the head of fu'ingwae was the leading fataābu (priest; literally, speak + sacred), and village leadership was shared by priests and several ramo (warrior) of various types. Together, village leaders were referred to as gwaunga'i ("the headness"; literally, head + [emphatic]). Today, a chief is loosely referred to as gwaunga'i, as are church leaders, school principals, and other distinguished persons (including certain outsiders). Scattered throughout the district are also a number of custom judges who are called in to help settle disputes. These judges are also a recent introduction.

The kinship system of the Kwara'ae is classificatory. The aspect of the system significant for this paper is the reckoning of "cousins." One's father's sister's children and mother's brother's children (cross-cousins) are referred to as di'i fifi or "immediate cousins" (di'i = cousin). One's father's brother's children and mother's sister's children (parallel cousins) are classified as one's siblings and referred to by the same terms: ngwaingwaina for brother to sister, sister to brother, and sister to sister; and futa'a for brother to brother. (Today one sometimes hears sisters referring to each other as futa'a.) The English phrases used by Kwara'ae speakers for both di'i fifi and cousins classified as ngwaingwaina or futa'a are "cousin-brother" and "cousin-sister."

Marriage between all cousin-brother and cousin-sister relationships is prohibited (ābu). Marriage within the futa'a (descent group) is also ābu but sometimes occurs between distant relatives. However, such couples face open ridicule at first, and they may be gossiped about for years after the marriage. The proscription against marriage and love affairs between cousins is so strong that cousins of the opposite sex do not go about together unless they are in groups or accompanied by a younger sibling.

In traditional times, marriageable age was mid-twenties to mid- or late thirties. Today, however, teenagers often marry, although parents prefer that the traditional marriageable age be reached first (partly for economic reasons and partly because of the heavy responsibilities that come with marriage in the extended family). The preferred and usually insisted on order of marriage among siblings is as follows. The oldest son marries first if there is only one daughter in the family. If the oldest child is a daughter and there are other daughters in the family, she may marry first. The second son and second daughter then may marry. After that, there is no required order of sequence in marriage.

The main reason for this order of marriage is the requirement that there be at least two females (mother, daughter, or daughters-in-law) in the household when a son marries, in order to welcome the new daughter-in-law and help her adjust to the family. Women occupy an important role in the marriage celebration, as well. In families where there are no daughters or the mother has died, female relatives stand in for and carry out the role of the missing mother or daughters.

The above is a brief outline of some aspects of Kuarafi kinship and marriage restrictions that impinge on the data on courtship presented below, and which should be kept in mind as bearing upon parental refusal of marriage in some cases. We now turn to a description of the methods and strategies of courtship among the Kuarafi: _ura'i kini'a_, _gani kini'a_, _kwaima'anga/kakabara'anga_, and _lau kini'a/tafi'a_.

1. _Ura'i kini'a_

Kini is the Kwara'ae word for "woman" or "female." _Ura'i_ occurs only in the verb phrase _ura'i kini_ or the noun phrase _ura'i kini'a_ and is not easily translated into English. Briefly, it connotes the act of a man standing or sitting hidden in a place where he knows women (or a particular woman) will pass, so that he can see them (or her) coming. He would then attempt to approach the woman of his choice. Even if the man only spies on a woman (the equivalent of the English "peeping tom"), the term _ura'i kini'a_ would be applied to his action.[4]

Finding a woman to marry in this way usually ends in failure. Perhaps as few as 25% of the men who _ura'i kini_ achieve their goal in marriage. However, in traditional times this was a typical way of establishing a relationship, in contrast to _kwaima'anga_ (below).

A typical _ura'i kini'a_ might occur as follows. A man of marriageable age goes to a place in another village where girls often meet (such as the mouth of a river to wash clothes and get water, or to a garden).[5] He might do this after he has noticed a particular woman at some public place (such as a market or at someone's wedding feast). If so, he may go and hide near her parents' garden. Or he might be simply trying to find any woman he can (knowing, for example, that such-and-such a man has daughters of marriageable age).

The man goes armed, prepared for a fight. He might carry a club, bow and arrows, or other weapons to fight the woman's male relatives or anyone around the village who, spotting him and seeing he is a stranger, would be suspicious and challenge him. Besides, anyone walking through forest or bush always _dau ra'unga_ (be armed; literally, hold + weapon), and never goes _saba_ (unarmed).

The man hides and waits. He tries to catch a woman coming down the path or in the garden when she is alone. He calls to her

and comes out from hiding to ask her if she is interested in having kwaima'anga (love affair) and/or ara'inga (marriage).

Should the girl scream, shout for help, and run away, the man may or may not try to physically stop her. Up to this point he would not have touched her at all. Or the man may run away himself before being caught. Having failed this first time, he may try to meet the woman again on another occasion, or he may ask his parents to gani kini (see below).

If the woman's male relatives or other men nearby catch him, he will be beaten. Gani kini'a and therefore marriage is not then possible between him and the woman. On the other hand, even if he succeeds in getting away, the girl may have recognized who he is. Her male relatives are likely to pursue him to his home (if necessary), usually on the same day, and ask him what it was that he was urani (look for, await, wait to catch, "haunt a place"). They will question him sharply and angrily. If he denies that he was ura'i kini and argues that he was actually engaged in some other activity (such as collecting betel nuts or fruit), or if he denies that he was there at all, they will call him ngwae soke (liar; literally man + lie), and they will probably beat him. If he apologizes or tries to "cool" them down (fa'agwari = [causative] + cool), they may not beat him up. They may warn him against ura'i kini'a again, however. In either case, gani kini'a is very unlikely.

Often, if the man has denied he was ura'i kini, the woman's male relatives will take the case to the village chief for a village meeting, which is usually held on a Sunday. (Village meetings are discussed below.) If the man grabbed the woman or tried any kind of love-making towards her, her male relatives will ask for compensation at the village meeting. Compensation in such cases is called fa'aābu (literally, [causative] + sacred [again]), because she has been technically defiled. Such compensation is usually either a pig or an amount of shell money, but sometimes it was also paid in the form of food, for example taro. The amount of compensation depends on the seriousness of the offense and the circumstances surrounding it.[6]

If the woman and the man had noticed each other on a prior occasion and were attracted to each other (here the man must rely on his intuition), his ura'i kini'a may have a very different outcome and might end in gani kini'a. When he approached her from hiding, she would refrain from screaming and running away, and would probably not report the event to anyone. Instead she may speak with him and agree to meet him again. Or the ura'i kini'a could end in tafi'a (elopement; literally, flee or run away [mutual consent implied]). If elopement is decided, the woman would probably tell a sister, cousin-sister, or other female relative that she was in love with a particular man so that, when they eloped, the family would know whom she had run away with.

Ura'i kini'a is still practiced to some extent up in the tolo (mountain or bush areas) today. There are many legends told to young boys to discourage them from this practice when they grow up.

It should be noted, however, that if a young man from another village or a stranger is seen sitting on a log in the bush or near a garden and behaving fearfully (or in some other way looking "suspicious"), and if he runs or hides when people approach, then he may be charged with ura'i kini'a whether or not he has approached a woman. (This term, however, would not be applied to a couple who is seen together or caught embracing each other; see kwaima'anga.) He can be charged before a village meeting and eventually the Local Council, and even jailed. It is assumed that if he is caught under suspicious circumstances, he is either ura'i kini, or else a magician, thief, potential murderer, etc. What to charge him with depends on the circumstances of his capture.

In all cases of ura'i kini'a, trial can be held before a custom judge in a village meeting, or brought to the Malaita Local Council (which happens to be in the Kwara'ae District). Usually the case would be brought before the village meeting first, and then if the custom judge considers the case to be serious enough, he will take it to the Local Council. On other occasions, should the Local Council hear about the matter before the village meeting takes place, it may send "messengers" to the village to take down witness accounts and investigate the case, then set a date for a trial before the Local Council itself. This would obviate the village meeting. In still other cases, if the young man had been seriously beaten, the villagers might decide that the case was too complicated to be dealt with in a village meeting and would take it to the Local Council directly. For, if the man is beaten so seriously that he loses any blood, he or his parents can also demand compensation at the village meeting or before the Local Council. This kind of compensation is called usu'abu'a (literally, wipe [away] + blood). Today the Local Council often intrudes because the policy of the Council and the churches is to obliterate the traditional way of settling these cases.

2. Gani kini'a

Gani kini'a is discussed elsewhere more fully, as the first of the stages in a traditional marriage (see Watson-Gegeo and Gegeo, in preparation). Briefly, gani kini is a verb phrase referring to the father of the boy (perhaps accompanied by his married sons, his brothers, or other male relatives) going to see the parents of the girl and asking that his son and the girl be married (literally, gani = ask for + kini = woman). If the two fathers come to an agreement on brideprice[7] a date will be set for ba'e kini'a.

If a man is very shy or has kept his reputation clear (that is, never has had an affair with any woman), his parents may suggest to him that they will find a woman for him to marry, and he may agree to rely on their judgment.

The couple involved in a marriage has the right of agreeing or refusing it, even if it was initiated by the parents. The man may introduce the idea of marrying a particular woman by speaking about it to a sister, or cousin-sister (such as a di'i fifi), who would then make it "public" by telling her parents (if she is a cousin) or her mother (if she is his sister). The news would in turn come to the man's father. Then the father comes to his son and says that he has heard about the young man's interest in the woman. The son will pretend he has not revealed his feelings to anyone, but will say that he is glad his father has raised the matter. Then he tells of his desire to marry the woman. The two of them will discuss what to do: whether the young man should have a kwaima'anga for a while first to get to know the woman better and be sure of his decision, or whether to directly initiate the gani kini'a.

If the father and son agree on gani kini'a, the father will then speak to his own brothers to seek their advice and approval of the marriage. For if the gani kini'a is to take place, the father will be depending on his brothers (especially) to assist him with paying the brideprice and hosting the marriage feast. In traditional times, it was a rare man who had sufficient wealth to pay for a son's marriage by himself without help from the tua'a. Today, with the reduction of the amount of shell money required for a marriage, most fathers can pay the brideprice. However, in practice, the tua'a still contributes shell money, food for the feast, and (Australian) dollars. (For more on this topic, see Watson-Gegeo and Gegeo, in preparation.)

In some cases, especially in traditional times, children were forced by their parents to marry. (But see the discussion on elopement, below.)

3. Kwaima'anga and Kakabara'anga

We come now to the heart of this paper, marriages resulting from kwaima'anga and disputes arising from kwaima'anga. The majority of marriages among the Kuarafi today begin with kwaima'anga. Kwaima means to fall in love, but it is also used for other kinds of love aside from romance between two people. Kwaima ana is the verb phrase for loving someone. Kakabara is the verb to have a sexual affair (between an unmarried couple).

It is the man who nearly always takes the initiative in a love affair. If he spots a woman he likes (and who perhaps he thinks feels the same way about him), he will soon inquire through his friends where she is from and who she is, if he does not already know her. A woman usually does not take the initiative in a love affair, nor does she reveal her feelings in an obvious way publicly, in order to keep her reputation. A flirtatious woman is considered not a good risk as a wife. Furthermore, a man's parents might reject their son's request to marry such a woman if they hear gossip about her.

Attracting Attention and Using Go-Betweens

The man first attracts the woman's attention if he can at some public place. Typical situations for meeting for the first time are marriage feasts, ceremonies, days for village cleaning, church festivals, feasts held to dedicate a building, inaugurations of leaders, crab collecting, the marketplace, gatherings at someone's house (for several days) for a death and funeral, or the wharf (where people go to see off or meet relatives and friends). Village church functions are not usually such a place because most people attending them already know each other, or are members of the same futa'a.

Sometimes a young man or a young couple ask a widow, widower, or adult who has never married to act as a matchmaker. To matchmake is daukwalo (literally, hold/touch + string), which is both a noun and a verb. When used as a noun applied to a particular person, the word is preceded by the personal particle sa (for a male) or 'i (for a female). The concept of matchmaking is daukwalo'a or daukwalo'anga (used interchangeably). A daukwalo may or may not be a relative of the man or woman, and may have unmarried (but never married) children living with him or her. In any case, the daukwalo is someone who the young man or couple feels can be easily approached, and who would allow the couple to meet at his or her house, usually in the evenings.

Traditionally, the daukwalo is not condoned by the Kuarafi. A typical case exemplifying the Kuarafi attitude occurred in the 1950s. There was a widow who served as the meeting center for several couples. She became the talk of her village, and eventually was charged with daukwalo'a by parents of one of the couples at a village meeting. She was fined according to the fees set by the Local Council (one tafuli'ae). Humiliated, she left the village and took up residence in another village, where she eventually married. She also changed her church from the Anglican to the SSEM. It should be mentioned that the fine paid by the daukwalo goes to the Local Council and not to the village nor to the parents of the couples involved. Furthermore, if there had been kakabara'anga between a couple when they were meeting under the protection of a daukwalo, it is the man's father who pays compensation rather than the daukwalo.

More common than the use of a daukwalo is the use of a friend as a go-between in establishing a relationship. We will now construct a typical kwaima'anga of this kind, and follow it through its possible outcomes.

Suppose Lia, a young man, falls in love with Mola, a young woman in a nearby village. Lia cannot publicly approach her; if he tried to visit her at home, he would face physical threat from her male relatives (father, brothers, etc.; this would be the case if they lived in the same village, too). Lia and Mola have been introduced by friends at a public function in the past, and they

intuit that they share romantic feelings for each other. The next step is for Lia to arrange a meeting between them. Such a meeting is most conveniently arranged on a Sunday, the day when people are free from other duties.

Near the village there is a river where everyone goes swimming on Sunday mornings when it is hot. Lia knows that Mola often comes with her peer group, brothers, and sisters to this river, and he expects her to come on a particular Sunday.

From among his peer group, Lia chooses Ri'i, a boy he trusts and feels close to as a friend, but who is younger than Lia (to avoid suspicion by others and also to avoid Ri'i competing for Mola with him). Ri'i must not be related to Lia or to Mola.

There are several ways in which Lia may reveal his feelings to his friends and especially to Ri'i. Suppose, for example, that another member of the peer group is in love with a young woman who is also named Mola. On more than one occasion, Lia might say, "What is the name of your girlfriend (<u>kini kwaima</u>; or <u>mete</u>, derived from the English 'mate')?"[8] When the other says "Mola," Lia might say, "Mmmmm (or clear his throat), good name" (<u>sata le'a</u> = name + good), looking away, smiling, and in this way indicating to his friends that he is interested in another young woman named Mola. Or Lia might mention the name Mola often in his conversation, such as saying, "When I have my first daughter, I'm going to name her Mola." Such behavior is transparent to Lia's friends, who will also take notice of how Lia acts when Mola is anywhere nearby.

Also, when Mola's younger brother is around, Lia may begin treating him quite differently--giving him food, lending him his own towel after a swim, asking the boy to run errands for him (signifying friendship), giving him money for candy or other treats, and so forth. Lia would not behave this way with a boy old enough to understand the meaning of his acts, of course. Nevertheless, Lia's friends would be able to interpret it. Ri'i may therefore come to know of Lia's feelings indirectly. Or Lia may simply tell Ri'i directly.

Once Lia and Ri'i understand each other, Lia will say to Ri'i: "It is very likely that Mola will be coming down to the river today. This is the moment I want you to do something for me" (implying that Ri'i should act as a go-between). Lia will then instruct Ri'i what to do. "When you see Mola, tell her to go a few yards down the stream, away from where everyone else is swimming. I will be waiting there. Tell Mola I want to speak to her" (<u>saea fuana 'i Mola nauku oga ala'a fa'inia</u> = say + it + to + [fem. part.] + Mola + I [verb. particle] + want + talk/speech + with her).

Lia and his friends go to the river, and Mola and her friends arrive. Lia will be shy and perhaps say that he doesn't want to swim; but he will make sure that Mola sees he is there. Then he goes off to the appointed place of rendezvous.

Ri'i swims and mingles with Mola's group. When the opportunity presents itself, he goes to Mola and greets her and quietly tells her Lia's message. Mola then floats down the river. She can go off by herself and up into the bush along the shore without suspicion because it will be assumed she is doing so for one of several reasons: to change clothes, urinate, find a leaf to sit on, find a leaf for sharing food, or find a log on which to float.

When Mola reaches the spot where Lia is waiting, they greet each other and laugh shyly. Usually it will be the man who begins the conversation. "Did you get my word?" Mola answers yes, that's why she came. The two of them communicate their feelings through facial expressions and body position more than through words: winking eyes, shy smiles, looking at the ground shyly, looking up at the sky, turning the face away. In Kwara'ae, one can say "I love her/him" or "he/she loves me" or "we love each other" or "they love each other." But one cannot say "I love you." To express this idea directly one can say one of two things:

> nauku oga 'oe = I (verb. part.) + want + you (which does not connote sexual desire; oga is used for other kinds of "want" as in English, however);
> nauku oga kore 'oe = I (verb. part.) + want + marry + you.

However, such a direct statement is less likely to occur in a first meeting than is an indirect way of talking that connotes the same thing: baby-talk. By baby-talk we mean the kind of language used by adults when talking to babies or infants. In trying to attract Mola's interest in marrying him, Lia might list off all the attractive qualities that his parental home affords. It is of advantage, for example, to live near a stream and not far from the gardens, the market, or the road. Were Lia to speak standard Kwara'ae, he might say:

(1) Kafo kami 'iri tau go'o (with falling intonation; literally, water + our + not + far + merely/just).

But in baby-talk, the sentence would come out:

(2) Kafo kami 'isi tau go'o re! (with rising intonation, said shyly looking up to the sky, rubbing his hand across chin or neck, face away from Mola; literally, water + our + not [baby-talk] + far + merely/just + [emphatic]).

Mola's answer to this, should she speak in standard Kwara'ae, might be:

(3) Di'ia nia 'īra mo ne'e le'a (with falling intonation; literally, if + it + like that [what you described] + then + this + good = wouldn't that be just perfect).

But in baby-talk, the sentence would come out:

(4) 'Īra mo ne'e le'a re! (with rising intonation, said in a girlish tone, looking at the ground or into the bush, tapping one hand on her arm or rubbing one arm with her hand; literally, like that [what you described] + then + this + good + [emphatic]).[9]

Lia might go on to say that he's in love with (that is, "wants") Mola but was scared to approach her, and she would say the same. They then trace all the occasions in the past when they noticed each other, and the times they tried to attract each other's attention. This would include mentioning occasions when they brought gifts (such as cigarettes) for each other but were too shy to give them, or in Lia's case afraid of Mola's brothers. The tracing of occasions and planned gifts would be taken by each of them as meaning that their feelings for each other were mutual and fairly deep.

Assuming that all has gone well in this first meeting, Lia and Mola may embrace each other, decide on future meetings, and discuss whether they should make their feelings public in order to try to arrange a marriage. Mola will tell Lia about her brothers and other relatives in order to warn him that he should be careful should their relationship become public accidentally.

Several meetings of this kind will follow so that the two come to know each other better. Gifts will be exchanged during this period, at first through Ri'i from Lia, and through a little girl who is a friend of Mola's. Soon the go-betweens are no longer necessary, and, since their existence presents something of a risk to the couple's secrecy, Lia and Mola will rely on them less and less. Usually once a couple feels comfortable with each other, they make up their minds about marriage swiftly. Long-term relationships prior to marriage are uncommon and never last beyond a year. Men and women who have one affair after another quickly gain a bad reputation and are called tafu (garbage, rubbish, defiled object) and thereafter are avoided by single persons of the opposite sex.

Coming to Public Notice

Usually it is sisters who figure out that their brother or sister is involved in a kwaima'anga. This is partly because they clean their brothers' room and wash their clothes and are likely to run across the kinds of gifts exchanged by lovers--a gold chain, cross, handkerchief, perfume, photograph, or letters (if the two read and write). A sister who is suspicious of her own sister may search the room for evidence. Also, they are quick to notice any change in their sibling's behavior that might suggest a romance. Once a sibling, cousin, or even a friend has found evidence of a love affair, or has perhaps seen a couple together secretly, word will come to the parents of one or the other involved. The

Kwara'ae term for this is kwaima'anga fu (literally, the loving/ love affair + come to public notice).

If the boy's parents find out first, they will say nothing about it publicly, but they will be prepared for a visit from the girl's parents. Once the parents of the girl find out, there are several alternatives possible. We will take the kind of reactions and outcomes that can occur in sequence, as follows: (1) the most negative case (a case leading to a fight, including a dispute serious enough that it must be settled by a village meeting); (2) a case leading to argument (which results in breaking off the love affair, or in payment of compensation, or in a delayed gani kini'a; and (3) a positive case leading directly to a gani kini'a.

1. Most negative case: leading to a fight with dispute settled by village meeting

The couple must be caught in some kind of act together in order that there be grounds for the woman's parents to make a case against the man. Here, we will assume that Mola's younger sister Siu has seen Mola and Lia together. She will have told her mother immediately.

Thus the father comes home one evening and finds his wife upset or crying and asks the reason. She reports what Siu has said: that she saw Lia and Mola together down by the garden, embracing. Mola's father will get "hot in the stomach" (oga sasu/ 'ako'ako; literally, stomach + steaming/hot = angry) over the affair involving his daughter. Of course, if Siu had seen the couple having intercourse, the matter would be considerably more serious.

A father may say nothing at home, but silently get up and go over to the young man's parents' house and vent his anger there. Or, before going, he may tell his daughter he is angry at her for her misbehavior and even whip her. Or he may criticize and scold his wife (and perhaps older sons and daughters, too) for letting this happen, without saying much to the girl herself. He may even beat his wife. If the mother scolds the girl, she will say something like this: "Who do you think you are? ('oe kwasi 'uri 'oe 'i tai ne'ana/nana; literally, you + [have] thought in your mind + you + [fem. part.] + who + that + here). You are lazy and not fit (incapable) to join that family/you're not his first love/ his mother talks too much or fights or yells," etc., to discourage the woman from wanting the man.

The father is usually the one who goes over to the man's family, especially in a very negative case where a fight is expected. If the father of the girl is angry at his wife, she will not accompany him. However, she may follow after he has left and arrive while he is still at the man's parents' home. If so, when the young woman's father speaks or threatens, it is the young man's father who answers; and if the young woman's mother speaks or

threatens also, it is the young man's mother who answers: that is, for each threat, insult, or whatever, the answer is given symmetrically by the sex of the speaker.

Let us assume that Mola's father goes over to Lia's father's house, perhaps accompanied by his brothers, older sons (which is even more threatening in the eyes of Lia's father), or possibly his own father's brothers (uncles) or his own di'i. Mola's father does not need to recruit men to go with him. They will often follow if they see he is going somewhere angrily, even if they do not know what precisely is up.

On arriving in front of Lia's father's house, Mola's father will shout angrily, "Where is Lia?" (Sa Lia nia 'i fa'i?) Do you think I'm afraid of your relatives? (Sa tai ma'ungia ma'a 'oe fa'ida? That is, who is afraid of your father's relatives?). Come out here and face me! (Koso ma'i 'i ne'e!)." After hearing shouts of this kind, Lia's father comes out. Lia himself likely stays inside, and his mother may or may not come out. However, if Mola's brothers have come with their father and are very angry, they may go in the house and pull Lia out, especially if they are friends of his and feel that he has betrayed them by having an affair with their sister.

In contrast to Mola's father's manner, Lia's father will be cool and calm, whether or not he knew about the affair beforehand. When Mola's father accuses Lia of having an affair with Mola, Lia's father can rhetorically maneuver by saying that this is the first he has heard of it, he too is shocked, this is all news to him, he hasn't heard about it until Mola's father told him about it, etc. He will remain calm and will present his case in this way: "Let's settle this. (Koro fata alafe sulia ru ne'e; literally we + speak/talk + love + about + thing + this.) I know this is bad and a misbehavior (abularora'a). But this is the way it is with young people. (Ngwae falafala ki ne'e abula lada 'uri na'a; literally, people + young + [pl.] + this + behavior + them + this + now.) We are distantly related, so let's not fight. (Kulu'a to'a futa'a ki, noa'a kulu 'iri fu'a; literally, we [all] ourselves + people + born kin/brothers + [pl.], not + we + all + not + fight.)"[10] The latter is, of course, a rhetorical statement, since Lia and Mola are not members of the same futa'a. "They are children, they don't know what they are doing. (Kiri'a ngela ki, no'a kira 'iri sai le'a ana abula lada; literally, they themselves + child + [pl.], not + they + not + know + good/well + about + behavior + them .)" All these are maneuvers designed to cool the situation and not open an opportunity for Mola's father to challenge a fight.

To show how a mistake could be made in Lia's father's rhetorical maneuvering, suppose he were to say with some heat, "I will pay the brideprice for the girl! (Nai kwatea ngwa'i mani ne'ana kwa! Literally, I + give + basket [indef.] + traditional money + that + [emphatic, aloof])" This would be an error in rhetoric because by this statement Mola's father may infer that the whole affair was

planned by Lia's parents to begin with. If so, why did they not gani kini in the first place (which is the "right thing" to do)? Also, Mola's father may ask for an extravagant brideprice, thereby taking advantage of Lia's father. Therefore, for Lia's father to lose his temper and especially for him to offer the brideprice at this point is inappropriate; he would be considered foolish and incapable of handling the situation as an adult male. Rather than resolving the conflict, increased anger and fighting would be the likely outcome.

Returning, then, to where we left things prior to this digression, having heard Lia's father's calm words, Mola's father may also cool down and suggest that they set a date for a village meeting to settle their dispute, straighten out the relationship between the two families, and determine whether the kwaima'anga is true or merely rumor.

Should Mola's father continue returning anger for each calm sentence uttered by Lia's father, in time Lia's father would also get angry. Once that has happened, he might say, "I will pay the brideprice," pointing a finger in Mola's father's face and adding, "Who do you think you are? (Sa tai rorongo'o kwa! That is, what is your reputation/how important do you think you are; literally, who + hears you + [emphatic].) Lia is my son and I can't let him be treated this way. (Sa Lia 'alako nau, noa'a nau 'iri kwate ta sina'i ngwae ka fata go'ana fafia; literally, [masc. part.] + Lia + son + my, not + I + not + give/let + any + contemptuous + person/ man + [verb particle] + speak + down on [slander] him.) We are both males (Koro'a ro ngwangwane ki; literally, we [two] ourselves + two + male/man + [pl.])--implying an ability and a willingness to fight. During this exchange, Lia's father may threaten that he will bring the case to a village meeting himself, and demand the presence of a custom judge--usually the most powerful and respected in the area. If Mola's father knows he has strong evidence against Lia, he will quickly and angrily agree to this.

Now Mola's father may demand a huge sum, such as 300 shell money. Lia's mother may come out to support her husband. Meanwhile, village women overhearing may also come out and raise for the first time accusations that Lia has previously had affairs with their daughters. They too may begin making demands for compensation. A fight may ensue.

The sound of this much argument or the fight itself will bring other men running outside, and possibly the village chief, to break up the fight and to see that nobody is hurt. Usually the women, especially elderly or distinguished women of the village, step between the sides. In all situations, they can stop a fight more quickly than men can, by custom. Following the fight a village meeting will be held, if it is early in the day; otherwise the meeting will take place the following day.

The Kwara'ae term for village meeting is 'ala'anga (literally, the speaking/discussing), but village meetings are today also referred to as miting (derived from English). Although here we are concerned with a dispute that arises from a love affair, the manner in which any dispute is settled at a village meeting follows the form we are about to outline.

It is the chief who calls the village meeting. In traditional times, village meetings would have been called by an important gwaunga'i or person serving under the fataābu, as mentioned earlier. In many cases a custom judge will also attend the meeting, along with nearly everybody else in the village, but especially members of the two extended families involved in the dispute. Village meetings are one form of community education because through attending them young and old learn more about falafala (custom) and the rhetoric of dispute settling.

The meeting takes place in the gwaurau (village meeting house). The chief calls everyone's attention, and the local catechist or a person with some religious education and who is respected by the community offers an opening prayer. In an Anglican village, the prayer is a standard prayer asking for God's guidance, one used on many other occasions. It may be said either in English or Kwara'ae. In traditional times, a pig had to be offered to the ancestral spirits first during the day, and the meeting was held afterwards in the evening. The ritual of offering the pig, called gani fa'a le'a'anga (literally, ask + [causative] + goodness; that is, ask blessing) was conducted by the fataābu.

Following the prayer, the chief would begin by saying, "You all know why I called this meeting, because of what happened today/ yesterday. I am ashamed (as leader of the village) that something like this should happen to us. (Nauku 'eke fafia na ru/ngilongilo'anga nini fuli saena fanoa; literally, I + shame + because of it + the + thing/row + this + happen + inside + village.) I am ashamed that you are fighting each other. (Nauku 'eke osi'ana ne'e kamu fu'ali kami talamu'a; literally, I + shame + because of + this + you all + fight between + you all + yourself alone.) Let's settle this by starting from the beginning. (Kulu didi sulia etangilana ru ne'e; literally, we all + settle + going through + its beginning + thing + this.)" (If a custom judge is present, he takes over the meeting from here, conducts the questioning, renders the decision, and imposes the settlement.)

He will then call upon Mola's father to explain how it was that he became angry at Lia's father. On the other hand, if Mola's father is still agitated, he may burst out without waiting to be called on. Mola's father will speak of how it was he found out about Mola and Lia: "I was returning from the garden yesterday and when I reached the house I found my wife crying and she told me the news (fa'arongo'a = the report) about Mola and Lia. I was shocked (lebe) and I became hot in the stomach. . . ." He will go on to

explain what occurred next. Nobody will interrupt him, for he will be speaking very angrily.

When Mola's father has finished, the chief will say, "Thank you for telling us all about how you became angry. (Le'a liu 'oe ko fata sulia fulilana saeta'a'anga 'oe; literally, good + very = thank + you + speak + about + its + occurrence + anger + you.) According to custom, this is very humiliating for you ('eke = shame/humiliation). I know that you do not have a reputation for breaking out in anger/asking for a fight from your neighbors." This is a rhetorical statement made whatever the man's actual reputation may be. "I want to help cool you down from this anger. So let's go to the root of the matter (Kulu eta ma'i ana lalina kwaima'anga ne'e; literally, we all + first + this way [from there to here, in this direction] + its root + the love affair + this)--who saw Mola and Lia together, who reported on them," etc.

Mola's mother may try to interrupt with an angry statement, directed at Lia and his father, and others of Mola's family might join her, usually the women. But the chief will say, "No, stop, this is confusing. (Mango basi [na 'ala'anga ne'e] firufiru 'ala; literally, wait/stop + at this point [that is, "no, stop"] + [the + speaking + this] + confusing/spidery [like a spider's web].) Let one person tell his/her story. (Ta'i ngwae 'ala'a; literally, one + person + speak/speaking.) Who saw Mola and Lia--who witnessed it?"

If Mola's sister Siu is shy, she may not answer. Mola's father may say, "My wife (referred to by her name, not as wife) told me that it was Siu who saw Lia and Mola embracing (kwaiofi'i'anga)."

Then the chief will ask Siu (who is sitting with her mother) to relate what happened. Siu begins, "Since we were young, Mola and I always have done things together. But lately her behavior to me has been strange. She goes out/sneaks out alone to do things. I have been suspicious that either Mola wants to be independent (leka ta'ifilia = go alone, in the sense of independence), or that something else is on her mind (nama ta ru fata liana = or + any + thing + speaks [to, on] + her mind). I've seen strange gifts someone has been giving her and she has accepted a different woman as a friend (nia leka na'a fa'inia ti kini matamata = she + go + has + with her + some + woman + different)." This latter would be said if Mola and Lia had been using a daukwalo. If Siu mentions this, the chief will ask, "Who has she accepted as a friend? ('I tai ne'e nia leka fa'inia? = [fem. particle] + who + this + she + goes + with)"

If Siu mentions someone known to be a daukwalo in other cases, everyone begins to murmur in a way suggesting that they believe Siu: Ru baera ne'ana, meaning "That's no news to us" or "She's done that before" (literally, thing + that [past] + that [there]). If a person not known to be a daukwalo before is mentioned, people

will express surprise, and the chief might question Siu again to make sure of the woman's identity.

In any case, the chief will argue, "But that does not mean that Mola is having an affair with someone." Siu may say nothing more or burst into tears; Mola may also burst into tears herself, now that the meeting is getting closer to the core of the matter.

Should Siu weep, the chief will say gently, "Now daughter/ granddaughter, don't cry (Teo'ana 'angi'a defo nau/ko'o nau = stop/ lay it + crying + daughter, maiden + my/granddaughter + my). Just tell us the whole story and I'm sure we'll all feel better/cool down."

Siu goes on, perhaps sobbingly: "The other evening Mola went out and I went after her because we were supposed to go to evensong (for example), but she didn't come back to get ready. I saw her and Lia near the gardens"--talking, embracing, kissing, or having intercourse.

Several things could happen at this point:

(a) Mola's father may stand up and ask for a fight, scolding the chief with "Is that what you want to hear? (Ru ne'e 'oko oga rongoa ne'eri? = thing + this + you + want + hear it + that [just said]; or 'oko rongoa? = you hear?, which is to say, are you satisfied?). Do you think I'm trying to cause trouble in this village or that I am jealous with my daughter?" If Mola has brothers, they will stand up and challenge Lia's brothers to fight them if Mola's father has stood up. Furthermore, women may raise previous affairs they claim Lia has had with their daughters but which they never raised before (as they had done whem Mola's and Lia's fathers were arguing prior to the village meeting). If this happens, Mola's father will be against any marriage between Mola and Lia, fearing that Lia would continue to have affairs with other women after marriage. The women who accuse Lia of having had affairs with their daughters may demand compensation, and Lia's father may now have to pay them as well. Or the chief may say that these new cases are a separate issue, and the other parents will have to ask for a later meeting to settle them.

(b) The chief may say, "Now we have heard the story. Is thus true (mamana)?" turning to Mola. If Mola admits the affair, and admits also to having used a daukwalo, the chief will ask the daukwalo how he or she got involved. The daukwalo will explain that Lia and Mola had requested it. The chief will sternly say, "You know that this is ābu according to our custom." Mola's mother may call the daukwalo rude names--ru daukwalo! (literally, thing + daukwalo) is itself a scold; or "you filthy woman" ('oe 'o kini 'usu = you yourself + woman + prostitute). But the chief will probably intervene, saying to Mola's mother, "Now wait, you are bringing in a different

matter. Be careful, for you can be sued for what you are saying." If the daukwalo is known for serving this role, a trial for him or her may take place at this moment, and the chief can impose a fine. Or the chief may decide to put the daukwalo on trial later after the love affair issue is settled first. In the case of someone who has not served (or been known to serve) as a daukwalo before, the chief may strongly warn the person of future consequences of daukwalo'anga.

(c) The chief may ask Mola if Siu's statements are true, and if Mola admits so, then the issue of what settlement should take place will be addressed next.

(d) Lia's father and/or mother may stand up and argue that Lia was elsewhere at the time of the alleged rendezvous with Mola. A new debate will ensue, and the chief will question Mola or Siu further in order to verify what happened. If there seems no doubt that Lia was involved, then the meeting moves on towards settlement.

Once Mola admits the love affair, the chief will say, "It is true now," meaning that he has rendered his verdict. Mola's father, mother, brothers or other relatives may say to Lia's parents something like "Well, there you are, it has just been proved," which amounts to a challenge to fight. The chief will calm down this potential fight. He may ask Lia himself to admit the affair, which Lia will very likely do.

With the affair established as a fact, the chief will then say, "Now it is up to both parents (Bali kamu na'a te'a ma ma'a = side + your al + now + mother + and + father)." If the couple has had sexual intercourse (kakabara'a) with each other, the chief will say, "This is not just kwaima'anga. If you want to stop it and have Lia pay compensation, you can; or if you want Mola to marry Lia, it is up to you. But you know the consequences (to Mola's reputation if they do not marry, or to Mola emotionally)."

Mola's mother may say, "If Lia and Mola want to marry, all right. Just give me (and here makes the demand of what she wants)." Mola's father will apologize for his outburst. If Lia's parents are agreed to pay the brideprice, he will say, "Just give me (X amount of) shell money."

If Lia's parents do not want their son to marry Mola, however, the chief will say that Lia's father has to pay compensation if there has been kakabara'a. Compensation for kakabara'a is a fine set by the Local Council; usually, it is one red money. If only kwaima'anga was involved, the chief will lecture Lia and Mola, but no compensation will be paid.

If Lia's parents and Mola's parents have agreed to the marriage and set the brideprice, then gani kini'a is seen to have taken place here in the context of a public village meeting.

To close the meeting, the chief says again that he has fulfilled his role, and the matter is now up to the parents (Nauku fa'aburia na'a bali nau = I + cause to be behind/done away with it + already + side + my; or Bali nau sui na'a = side + my + finish + now/already).

In the case of a fine, Lia's father will present the shell money immediately (in fact, he may have brought it with him concealed in a basket, expecting such an outcome, especially if two villages are involved, since he is expected to pay the fine on the spot).

Whatever the outcome, with the settlement over the chief (or custom judge) declares the matter ended and thanks everyone for their cooperation. The same person who offered the opening prayer now offers a closing prayer, either another standard prayer or one he makes up on the occasion. Then the meeting considered to be adjourned.

In rare cases, if Lia's father has lost the case and has paid a fine, Mola's father might try to begin a fight again after the meeting. This would never happen, however, if a respected custom judge were present, nor if the marriage had been agreed to.

A few days later, Lia's and Mola's parents will exchange food gifts to finally bring relations between them back to normal (if the outcome was a fine). If marriage is planned, a week or two later they will meet and set the date for ba'e kini'a.

2. Case leading to argument and breaking off the relationship/compensation/delayed gani kini'a

Not all cases end with a formal village meeting, of course. Returning then to the point at which Mola's father and other members of the family confronted Lia's parents: after an argument Mola's father may begin to calm down. He may apologize, saying he is ashamed of his behavior and sorry for his outburst. The two fathers may shake hands (lately introduced by the church, government, and military in World War II). Lia's father may say, "I'll speak to Lia (about what he did--how he should behave). After all, Mola is a cousin-sister to him" (this, of course, is rhetorical). Lia's mother may also scold Lia herself.

Mola's father goes home. Perhaps in a week or month's time, if Lia still wants to marry Mola, he will find a way to raise the topic to his father. He can speak to him directly if he wishes, because the kwaima'anga is already public. On the other hand, he may give the message to his father through a sister. Meanwhile, if Mola is still interested in Lia and he makes no move to reestablish their relationship, she herself may send word to make inquiries as to whether he is still interested in her and in marriage.

If the couple still wish to marry, and Lia's father agrees, he may go to see Mola's father. This going would be gani kini'a. Mola's father, in fact, will be expecting such a visit, and he and his wife and family will already have discussed the marriage and made a decision. If they are going to agree to the marriage, they also have in mind what price they will ask.

Should Lia's father come and Mola's parents are undecided or against the marriage, outright refusal will probably not be expressed. Mola's parents may say they are still ashamed of their earlier outburst and not ready to negotiate the marriage, suggesting that Lia's father return later. If Lia's father is perceptive, he will be able to tell whether they are implying merely a delay or that they don't want the marriage to take place at all.

The most negative kind of case described in (1) above was nearly always the outcome of kwaima'anga in traditional times. Although it is rare today, it still does occur. The kind of case described in (2) was very common about 20 years ago and occasionally happens now.

3. Case leading directly to gani kini'a

If both parents have found out about the kwaima'anga and if neither opposes the relationship, Mola's parents will be expecting Lia's father to come and will be prepared for his visit. (Gani kini'a is described earlier and explained more fully in Watson-Gegeo and Gegeo, in preparation.)

Elopement

There are two kinds of elopement. Lau kini means grab and flee with the woman, and presumes that the elopement is against the woman's will. Tafi means elope, and implies mutual consent. Lau kini'a occurred occasionally in traditional times, but is extremely rare today. Tafi'a, however, is common in cases where a woman has no hope of gaining parental permission to marry the man she loves for one of several reasons: (1) because her mother is dead and she is the one raising her siblings (see "The Kuarafi," above); (2) because she is the only daughter and has to wait for one of her brothers to marry first (see "The Kuarafi," above); or (3) because she believes her parents will refuse the man since they want her to marry someone else. If the man whom her parents favor is unacceptable to her, she may be willing to elope. If he is acceptable to her, she will agree to her parents' wishes even if she prefers another man over the one they have chosen.

Elopement entails the assumption (at least) of sexual intercourse, and therefore must always end in marriage. In other words, it is a strategy couples may use, if necessary, to force their parents to agree to their marriage. Nevertheless, the woman's parents can still refuse to allow the marriage and demand

compensation from the man's parents. Such a move, however, is extremely rare.

Marriage Today

The influence of the churches, the colonial government, and cultural change itself have contributed to bringing about the decline of the kinds of negative outcomes described in (1) and (2) above. In urban areas today, in fact, a matchmaker is recognized as valuable and helpful to a couple, and his or her activities are not negatively sanctioned. In fact, matchmaking in urban areas is not considered daukwalo'anga in the traditional sense. In tolo areas, matchmaking has declined because it is less needed today. With village training centers, schools, marketplaces, and other social centers, there are many more opportunities for young people to meet than formerly, and parents today are less rigid about their offspring's behavior. However, kakabara'anga is still considered very shameful: getting pregnant outside of marriage is a matter of great shame to the woman, her parents, and her extended family.

Love affairs remain a somewhat touchy issue because marriage is a serious matter to families. A couple is expected to behave very differently after marriage than prior to marriage. For young men and women jolding jobs in urban areas, marriage usually means returning home to live with the new husband's family, at least for a while. Marriage is still deeply involved with rights to land and other possessions, the binding of families together, and a host of kin obligations. Thus, especially for young men, marriage means an end of irresponsible youth--wandering about from island to island taking temporary jobs, wearing flashy or Western hip clothing--and the immediate expectation of producing and rearing a family of one's own children. Marriage is a major adjustment for young couples. Previously married members of one's peer group can help a newly married person make this adjustment, but, once married, a man or woman is expected to more or less give up his or her unmarried peer friends. To be out drinking with one's mates until all hours of the night after marriage is supposedly prohibited, for examples.

Love affairs are also a touchy issue for two other reasons. For a couple to cohabit without benefit of marriage is strictly ābu. Similarly, divorce is virtually unheard of and would bring great shame to the family. If a Kuarafi man and woman divorce, the woman may return to her family. The man will probably leave his village and go to live with other kin elsewhere. Or he may take a job in Honiara, thereby leaving Malaita altogether. Both will feel great shame and embarrassment. Technically, the Malaita Local Council and the Anglican Church forbid either partner to remarry unless one of them dies. If the couple has children, usually the man's parents will claim them and rear them themselves.

Conclusion

In this paper we have briefly described courtship and the settling of courtship disputes among the Kuarafi of Fiu area. Although some expatriates and anthropologists who have worked on or briefly visited Malaita claim that Fiu District has been "spoilt" by modernization and that little of its original traditions remain, we have shown here that falafala is alive and well among the Kuarafi. In courtship and marriage, as in many other aspects of Kuarafi life, the Kuarafi have adapted to and learned to manipulate the customs and institutions introduced or forced on them from the outside. Nevertheless, so far they have not confused the "new" with the "old," nor abandoned falafala.

Notes

[1]We do not claim to be presenting an exhaustive description of Kuarafi courtship here, of course, but rather an outline of it. For a full description of a traditional Kuarafi marriage, see Watson-Gegeo and Gegeo, in preparation.

[2]For example, see Deck 1933-34, Hobgin 1934, Ivens 1930-32, and Keesing 1973. Most of what has been written about the Kwara'ae peoples is very misleading, and sometimes simply incorrect. The authors are currently working on a dictionary of the Kwara'ae language and an ethnography of the Kwarafi tribe.

[3]Other writers, such as Hobgin (1934), have used the term "clan" to refer to descent groups on Malaita. The senior author feels that "clan" implies too rigid a boundary between descent group and tribe. A Kuarafi's basic identity is with his or her tribe, and secondarily with the descent group. When referring to ancestors, Kuarafi speakers use the term fu'ingwae and not futa'a to mean ancestral members of the descent group. Futa'a is used only for living members of the descent group, but fu'ingwae can also be used for living members of the descent group. Compare Keesing 1971 and 1971a.

[4]However, peeping at women who are urinating or defecating at a toilet in the bush (outhouse) is called kele fa'i kini (literally, peep + with/which has to do with + woman). The penalty for being caught at this is even more serious than for being caught at ura'i kini'a: being whipped, paying compensation to the woman, paying compensation to the village, and paying compensation to the Malaita Local Council.

[5]A man may also ura'i kini in his own village, but given the risks involved and the probability of establishing a relationship through kwaima'anga or gani kini'a, it is less likely.

[6]If the woman was raped, the compensation clears her name of defilement and makes anyone who gossips about her afterwards liable to being sued by her family. She is completely eligible for marriage as would be a virgin. Emotionally, of course, she will find it difficult to recover.

[7]In traditional times, the minimum brideprice would be between 10 and 30 strings of shell money (tafuli'ae), each of which consists of 10 strands of shell discs strung together in six-foot lengths. Shell money is also called "red money." Today, to distinguish shell money (traditional money) from Australian/European money, it is called mani tolo (literally, money [of the] + bush [land]--that is, indigenous). Mani is a Kwara'ae word; its similarity to the English "money" is entirely coincidental. Today, the Anglican church has forced reduction of the brideprice for a virgin woman to five tafuli'ae. The SSEM abolished the brideprice altogether in the 1960s. Besides the brideprice, the two sets of parents must agree also on the marriage feast, and the woman's parents may make other demands in addition to shell money (see Watson-Gegeo and Gegeo, in preparation).

[8]The sentences in English which follow for the remainder of this paper are as close as possible to the way they would be expressed in Kwara'ae. In many instances, we give Kwara'ae equivalents to show the sort of rendering most often used; however, these should not be taken as formulaic or ritualized, and many alternative ways of saying most things are possible.

[9]These sentences are given as written in Kwara'ae: that is the underlying form as recognized by Kwara'ae speakers and as usually written by them. The same four sentences if written as spoken would actually come out as follows (because of metathesis and syllable dropping):

(1) Kaof kami 'ir tau go'!

(2) Kaof kami 'is tau go' re!

(3) Di'ia nia 'Īar mo ne' lea!

(4) 'Īar mo ne' lea' re!

[10]Since the introduction of Christianity, the sentence "We are people in the Church (Christians)" may be substituted here, especially when the two families are not members of the same fu'ingwae. (Kulu'a to'a saena Lalusae, noa'a kulu 'iri fu'a = we [all] ourselves + people + inside + Church, not + we [all] + not + fight.) Sometimes the man's father might argue that fighting is now illegal. The woman's father would angrily retort that the government is an introduced authority (Na gafamanu ne'e ru fi'i dao = the + government [derived from English] + this + thing + just + arrive [on our shores]), and that he is following falafala (custom).

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