

Wedding Ceremony And Rituals Among The Kunama And Nara(Part I)

Written by Winta Woldeyesus



Every society has its own norms, values, traditions and rituals that reflect its every day realities. The rituals of any cultural practice also have their own expressions, which have to be observed closely to fully grasp their meaning. In observing such rituals one will also be able to view their beauty and artistic side.

In today's world, many of the indigenous cultural rituals of various societies have either been in some way altered or completely lost. The traditions of societies' cultural rituals are replaced by other global rituals, but there are few cultures that have preserved their traditional rituals as it is and practice them whenever relevant. This article will to view some of the rituals practiced by the Kunama and Nara people during weddings.

Once dowry is settled between the two families, the wedding day is set and all the preparations begin. Both families have the responsibility of preparing the drinks and food for the wedding day and a hut will be built inside the bride's compound. This hut is the house where the bride and groom will be staying during their honeymoon.

Before the wedding day the groom will go and visit his relatives wearing a small scarf on his head accompanied by one of his friends. On his visits, he will announce his engagement and invite the relatives to the wedding. Usually, weddings are held a few weeks after engagement.

On the eve of the wedding day, the groom's father will give the dowry to the bride's family. The dowry also includes other presents to the bride from her in laws; the presents can be a calf, sheep or goat, or jewelry. The amount of the dowry is decided between the two families before the wedding day. Although some of the rituals of the wedding day differ in both Kunama and Nara ethnic group, the overall process of a marriage ceremony is similar.

In the Kunama ethnic group, before the wedding ceremony the bride's family brings a white calf and the uncle of the bride, her mother's brother, will circle the calf around the bride four times. This ceremony is done either in the eve of the wedding or in the morning of the wedding day. On this day the bride wears the clothes, the groom's family presented. If the bride is a virgin she will cross over the calf before it is slaughtered but if she is not she is not obligated to cross over the calf. This ritual is practiced among the Kunama society because it is believed that it will protect the bride from an evil eye.

On the wedding day, at midday the groom arrives at the bride's house accompanied by two ladies playing the drum-kebero- and other three ladies dancing and many other relatives holding sorghum. Once they reach the bride's house, they wait until they have permission from the bride's family to enter.

Wedding Ceremony And Rituals Among The Kunama And Nara(Part I)

Written by Winta Woldeyesus

After the groom and his relatives arrive at the bride's house, the relatives will gather all the sorghum at the porch of the bride's house. A woman from the bride's family will supervise the gathering of the sorghum. And once the sorghum is gathered, the woman together with two others kneel down at the porch wearing a single shawl over their heads. Then, men from the groom's family will take from the gathered sorghum and pour it over their bowed heads. The relatives also bring chicken to the wedding ceremony at the bride's house, which are given to the bride's mother in front of every one. The bride remains inside the house while all these ceremonies take place. After these rituals are completed, the relatives who accompanied the groom to the bride's house will return to their villages dancing and singing.

To be continued