

Beating Around The Bush

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In northern Europe, there is an area of marital interaction which is considered so terrible that it is usually kept hidden away in the dark. This dark secret concerns wife beating. It is something which happens behind closed doors, and no one likes to talk about it. Men don't admit to beating their wives, and women don't like to tell anyone that their beloved husbands have beaten them. If someone notices that a woman has been beaten by her husband they don't mention it, no one likes to interfere. What goes on inside marriage, it is said, is no one else's business but that of the partners themselves. And wife beating is, in fact, a not uncommon reality. I personally know a number of women who have been, or still are, beaten by their husbands, but they don't like to mention the matter except in the strictest confidence, saying: "Please don't breath a word of this to anyone. I only tell you because I know I can trust you." Now-a-days there are a few organizations which try to help battered women. I know that in Britain, for example, such organizations keep houses available for women to escape to from their battering husbands. They also provide legal assistance and advice to battered women. As to the statistics, it is hard to say how many women get beaten, or how seriously they are beaten, because the topic is so taboo.

Among the Hamar in the Ethiopian province of Southern Omo, wife beating is not taboo, rather it is an open convention. Men are actually expected to beat their newly wedded brides,

and when they do so, it is not denied nor hidden. On the contrary, if a man does not attempt to beat his bride at least once, he is likely to be ridiculed. Whereas, in northern Europe, wife beating per se is considered something terrible, my Hamar women friends insist that for them, it is good, (*kaninta wonna paya* - beating for us is good). On the other hand, they say that a man who beats his wife for no good reason is bad, (*edi sia* - a bad man), and should be made to stop. In fact, if a man beats his wife brutally, people will intervene to stop him, and his wife will be encouraged to leave him and take refuge among her relatives. Then, if he persists in beating his wife for no good reason, her kinsmen will come and beat him in turn, until he promises to change his ways. What is Hamar wife beating all about and why on earth do Hamar women consider it a good custom?

The Hamar term *kana* describes a number of different actions; *Kulin kanat*, driving the goat; *kankin kana*, drive the car; *dommo ko kane*, may the rains fall; *issinin kana*, thrash the sorghum; *nurin kana*, churn the buttermilk; *dungarin kansa*, (*kansa* is the causative form of *kana*), throw the sandals. One thing all these different actions have in common is that they are instrumental to positive outcomes. It is this term, *kana*, which is used to describe beating, not only wife beating, but the beating of any person, whether child, girl, youth, man or woman. The term *g'a* is used instead of *kana* when the action is more forceful or violent.

The main thing in common with driving an animal and beating a person is the *micere*, a whip made from a long thin flexible branch. There are two or three trees in Hamar whose branches are suitable for making whips, but *baraza*, *Grewia mollis* Juss., is used the most. A branch is either pulled or cut off a tree, the leaves are stripped off, and then the *micere* is ready. Ivo Strecker has written a very interesting article about the *micere*, dealing with its practical use in herding goats, its symbolic use in various ritual transactions, and its practical and symbolic use in the sphere of social control, including its use in wife beating (Strecker 1990). I am in full agreement with what Ivo has written on these topics, and have chosen to deal with them again here, because I have some new data to present which both confirm and complement his and allow me to extend his analysis a bit further. In his article, Ivo quotes from his unpublished notebooks, and from "Baldambe Explains". This book is Ivo and my translation of what Aike Berinas, otherwise known as Baldambe, told us about Hamar culture. Baldambe is a Hamar

elder and has been our closest friend and teacher since we first went to Hamar in 1970. Over the past two years I have made two films with the BBC about Hamar women and Hamar marriage. During the filming I did a lot of interviewing of women, girls and young men, and one of the topics which I often broached was that of beating. It is these interviews which provide the new data that I want to present here.

To understand wife beating in Hamar it's necessary to look at the whole gamut of beating. As Ivo describes in great detail, the *micere* whip is indispensable for herding livestock, in particular goats. The goats are not so much beaten as tapped and threatened with the whip to make them go in the desired direction. When the word *kana* is used in relation to livestock, it means 'drive'. Animals are driven to a destination with the aid of the *micere*, but one can hardly compare this with the beating of people.

When dealing with the use of the whip in social control, Ivo forgot to mention how the first experience most children have of the whip is at their mothers' hands. The Hamar do not like to hit their children with their own hands. This is not called *kana* but *ca'a*, slapping, and is considered quite terrible. The dead spirits are said to hit people in this way to make them ill. When mothers need to teach their children a lesson, they will not smack them on their bottoms as is the custom in Europe, but will take a small *micere* and hit them on their legs. Older brothers and sisters will also punish their younger siblings in this way. The switch stings and may produce a welt which recedes after a short while. Mothers and older siblings don't usually hit a child so hard that the skin breaks, and if they do they are liable to get beaten themselves for doing so, by the father or uncle of the child.

Children soon learn to respect the *micere*, and normally, one only has to threaten them with a switch to make them obedient. When the children grow into girls and youths, however, they often like to challenge the authority of their elders. Even when forbidden to do so, they will go off and dance in the bush where the young men whip the girls and make love with them. In his book, Baldambe described such a typical case. When the young men defy them, Baldambe explained, the elders get together and whip the young men and boys as they dance at night in the bush. The youngsters are then excluded from their homes, and hunger in the bush until they

repent and offer to feed the elders with a goat. Before the elders accept the goat, however, they whip each and every one of the offending youngsters, and then they bless them.

Baldambe also explained how, in olden days, senior age-sets of men would whip the up and coming age-set on the occasion when they got their name, but now-a-days this institution is no longer observed.

I asked a young man called Digomba whether any one ever beats a man, and he answered; "No one beats a man except the age-mates. If a senior man comes here he might beat you. Declaring: "How did the children loose the livestock?" he will beat you. If you do something wrong he will beat you. Otherwise there isn't anyone who beats you, just your seniors will beat, no-one else will beat you." When Haila, another young man, was talking to me about how terrible it would be if one of his sisters or cousins got stolen into marriage, he said: "If Keri or Suzanne got stolen while we were accompanying them, Kairambe and Anombe and Baldambe (that's to say the fathers and uncles of the girls) would beat us and chase us away. That's why we herd them (the girls) all the time, just like goats we herd them."

As these examples indicate, it's by no means only women who get beaten in Hamar, children and young men are also liable to get beaten if they do something wrong. When I asked the young man, Bonko, however, why he didn't want to be a woman, he ignored the fact that boys and men may also be beaten. I asked him: "Do you say; "Let me be female"?" and amidst laughter from all sides he answered: "Not that. I don't say; "Let me be female". I don't say; "Let me be female"." I asked further: "Is there nothing good about a female?" "No, no. There's nothing good about a female. A female is beaten. A male isn't beaten. A female is just simply beaten. She's beaten at the dance. If she's married her husband beats her. Also when an initiate leaps (across the cattle), when a kinsman leaps, then the maz (initiates who have already leapt across the cattle) beat, beat, beat her. That's bad isn't it? I don't like it. I like being as I am, a male." To fully understand Bonko's response to my questions the terms *ma* and *angi* which I have translated as female and male, have to be further explained. In the first instance the terms denote sex. Hence, if you want to know the sex of a child you ask; *nasi ma mo angi?* - is the child female or male? If you ask of a man; *ma kisa dau?* - female his exists? this means: does

he have a female sexual partner i.e. a wife or lover? If you say of a woman; *angi kosa kolei* - male hers does not exist, this means: she has no male sexual partner i.e. no husband or lover. The terms *ma* and *angi* also connote other characteristics. A Hamar woman once told me that a female has a heart like a gourd full of water which spills over when it is shaken, and breaks when it is knocked. She used this analogy when explaining to me why she had put on her cowrie shell belt. She had put on this sacred belt, she said, because her young son had gone off with the herds to the distant grazing areas. The belt, which she had received from her mother-in-law upon the birth of her first child, would help her contain her fears and act as a blessing for her son so that he would avoid all dangers and return safely from his stay in the lowlands. A male, she explained to me, has a heart like a stone which never spills nor breaks, and he is, therefore, never afraid of anything.

So females are considered to be, by nature, easily frightened, whereas males, by nature, are considered to be fearless. In fact, a woman or girl may be fearless, while a man or boy may well be afraid at times. If a woman acts with great courage she will be praised by being called *angi*, whereas if a man is cowardly and acts in fear he will be ridiculed by being called *ma*. Furthermore, if a boy or man acts like a woman, for example by putting on coffee to serve the guests, scorn will be poured on him for becoming *ma*. The term *ma* is only a term of abuse, however, when applied to a male. A woman cannot be insulted or ridiculed by being called *ma* because no-one expects her to be courageous in the first place. It is a woman's privilege, you could say, to be a coward and expect the protection of fearless males. A man, on the other hand, is supposed to be courageous and prepared to risk his life for others, in particular the women and children, and the livestock. A man who fulfills this expectation will be praised by being called truly *angi*.

When I asked the young man Bonko whether he would like to be *ma*, this produced hilarious laughter on all sides. Of course he would not want to be *ma*, no man in his right senses would admit to wanting to be *ma* because that would be tantamount to saying that he wanted to be a coward. Bonko did not give this as an explanation, however, but said instead, that he didn't want to be a female because females get beaten. As Bonko pointed out, women not only get beaten as wives, but also at dances and initiation ceremonies.

Before I proceed further, let me pause to explain what beating involves in the case of girls and women. I have mentioned that it is done with a *micere*, a flexible whipping wand. When a man beats his wife, or a youth beats a girl, he cuts himself *micere* and whips her so that the whip hits her shoulder and back. In some cases a man may bind his wife's hand to her feet and then whip her across her back. In any case the man should not whip her anywhere other than on her back, and if he does he will be severely criticized. At the initiation ceremonies where girls and women mostly get whipped, they hold or bind their leather capes over their breasts so that the whips cannot hurt them there. I asked my women friends what the *micere* was like. Birinda said: "Just your skin is hit. It's not very bad. There's nothing bad about the *micere*. Sometimes when it beats you, it doesn't leave a mark. But if it hits you really close, it will swell up like this, and then after a while it subsides."

I asked two girls, Duka and Gadi, why they got whipped at dances, and Gadi explained: "If you don't like your *indanas* (these are the boys and men a girl is allowed to dance with, but not allowed to marry) and you don't dance with him, he will beat you. "Why don't you dance with me?" he says, and beats you. That's why we dance with all the *indanas* ." In Hamar, it is the girl who chooses her dance partner by going up to him and kicking him on the leg. What Gadi did not tell me was why girls so often refuse to dance with certain *indanas*, and then get whipped by them. Ivo observed in his article that flirtation in Hamar takes the form of laughing eyes and threatening whips rather than soft wooing. It seems to me that a girl incites a youth to whip her in order to find out if he fancies her. She does this by ignoring him and not kicking his leg. Then, if he does fancy her, he will chase after her with a whip and threaten to whip her, or, if he fancies her a lot, he will really whip her. A girl who gets whipped will feel she has made an amorous conquest, and will happily sport the scars which prove it, not unlike the city girl who sports a silver bracelet to prove she has an admirer. Having come to this conclusion, I said to Duka: "It seems to me you girls like being beaten," and she answered: "Yes, because we are young. Being young we seek to be beaten. When you are young you want to experience everything. When you are young you get beaten. When you are old nobody beats you anymore. All the young people, because they are young, just want to get beaten. At the initiation

ceremonies you also get beaten. And dancing at the dance you get beaten." "There, you see," I said, "you do like it". Gadi agreed, "We seek it. Creating a great fire, we seek it."

Turning to the question of being beaten at an initiation ceremony, Gadi then explained: "At the ceremony the married women just sit. The young get beaten, seeking it, seeking it. If a maz (an initiate who is already initiated) refuses to beat you, you say: "Aye! You maz!". You provoke him till he gets up and beats you." "Otherwise, won't he beat you?" I asked. "Otherwise, he won't beat" she replied. Duka explained further: "We do the seeking. Those fellows (the maz) just sit there with their whips which they have cut. They just sit there, and if you ignore them, they take their whips and go away. Then you drink beer and eat food. You drink honey beer like a flood, drinking, drinking, drinking. Then you go up to the fellows and say: "Come, beat me". They have come just to sit there. They cut some whips and came just to initiate the new initiate. While the new initiate leaps across the cattle, you grab hold of them (the maz) and get beaten. While they are beating, beating, beating, the new initiate leaps. Then, next day you will talk with these fellows again, the ones who beat you yesterday." Gadi added: "Just simply, it's good for you." Duka and Gadi went on to explain how, at the initiation ceremony, it's not the indanas who whip them, as it is at the dance, but the tsangaza, the ones who can marry them. On another occasion Gadi described what it was like getting beaten by the maz. "Because I sought it, I was beaten. Seeking and singing and calling out my ox names, I sought a maz. If he refused, I cried and then he beat me. And when it was done I felt good, otherwise I felt bad." Duka and Gadi showed me the scars on their backs, which they had acquired at initiation ceremonies. Gadi was disappointed that her scars were flat and almost invisible. Duka had many scars because she had initiated many *indanas* and kinsmen. They could both remember which scar was for whose initiation, and were very proud to have them. These scars serve as a record of the *indanas* and kinsmen they have initiated, while the scars they acquired at the dances record the *indanas* who especially fancied them. A woman's *indanas* and kinsmen are very important to her for she can turn to them for help in times of want. Perhaps this is why the girls are so keen to demonstrate that they have these relatives. Duka and Gadi can point to their scars as proof that they were prepared to get whipped at the initiation of these relatives. As a consequence, these men cannot easily deny their relationship to them, nor easily refuse them help if ever they seek it.

What Duka and Gadi make patently clear is that girls like being whipped, and deliberately provoke young men to whip them. It seems to me that when a girl provokes an *indanas* to whip her at a dance, it is to see if he fancies her and to show that she fancies him. When a girl provokes the *maz* to whip her at an initiation ceremony, on the other hand, it is to show her *indanas* or other relative whose initiation is taking place, that she cares for him. By doing this she ensures that he, in turn, will care for her.

At the dances, young men may chase and whip girls without being provoked to do so. Gadi told me she was only once whipped by an *indanas* and this was unprovoked. "I don't know who he was", she said, "He came from somewhere else. Because he came from elsewhere, I didn't know him and didn't dance with him. I didn't know he was my *indanas*. He asked: "Where's my *indanas*?" "There she is." And then he beat me, just like that. I didn't know him." Just as the girls like to indicate which men they fancy by not dancing with them, I suspect the young men like to show the girls that they fancy them by chasing and whipping them, whether they have been provoked to do so or not. If a man happens to fancy a girl who is his *tsangaza*, someone he could marry, and chases her and whips her, this produces a great outcry and her *indanas* and close kinsmen may well beat him in return. The girl herself will pretend to be offended, but secretly, I believe, she will be very flattered.

When I asked the young men whether they would beat their future wives, they all said they would, and when I asked why, they all said because otherwise she wouldn't do her work properly. Bonko's answer was a typical one. He said: "If she does things badly, you see, mother, if she does things badly, I will beat her. If you don't beat a woman she won't listen to you. If you don't beat her she'll just wander off into the lowlands. If you don't beat her she won't look after the livestock. If you don't beat her she won't look after the field well. If in this way she makes the field fall short, and makes the livestock fall short, beating is her medicine. If you beat her, she then says; "When my husband comes he will beat me", and so she watches the livestock closely, she watches the field closely. Otherwise, if you don't beat her, she will become too proud and, going off, won't watch them. If you beat her she will be a bit alright." I short, Bonko says that he would beat his wife if she does something badly, and if he didn't beat her she

would not listen to him but wander off and do no work. But why would his wife do something badly in the first place? And why, if she doesn't get beaten, would she abandon her work and husband altogether? Doesn't this look like provocation on the part of the wife? Doesn't it look as though she wants to be beaten? If so, why?

I asked Duka what she thought it would be like when she became a bride. Duka explained: "If your mother-in-law says: "The dung should be swept up. The milk containers should be smoked like this, look. Your father-in-law won't eat bad food. The man who married you won't eat bad food." then you will do what she says. He (the husband) doesn't tell you anything. But if you do something badly, he'll just beat you. "Do things well", he does not tell you in words. If the flour is rough, he beats. If the milk container stinks, he beats. If the fodder hasn't been put down, he beats. Having beaten, it means: "Why doesn't she put down the fodder?" Having beaten, it means: "Why doesn't she smoke the milk container? I won't drink from a stinking milk container." Having beaten again, it means: "The dung of my father's goats and cattle, this homestead always used to be clean. Why does she not do it?" Then you, if you have understood, you will do the things. Some will think things over in their hearts. If someone is bright in her father's home, when she goes, she won't be beaten much. She will sweep up the dung, and she will get the fodder. He will keep watching her with his eyes and it will be alright. But if you don't do what he tells you, if you don't do what your father-in-law tells you, if you don't do what your mother-in-law tells you, your mother-in-law will be bad with you, your father-in-law will be bad with you. "She doesn't listen to what we tell her, she doesn't sweep up the dung, she doesn't smoke the milk container, her heart doesn't think about what we tell her. Why don't you tell her?" they say to the husband. So he beats her, saying: "Don't you have ears? In my father's homestead things should be done properly. Didn't you hear this being said?" After that, if your heart thinks about things, it will think about them. If, in spite of this, you are beaten again, you will run back to your father's home. Then your father and your father-in-law, and your older brother and the man up there who has married you, will get together and a fight will occur. "You are the one who makes her crazy" they say. The others say: "You are the bad one. You don't behave, do you?" A fight occurs, doesn't it, in your father's homestead." In Duka's account, she says how her husband won't tell her with words what she's done wrong or failed to do, rather he will beat her and she'll have to work it out for herself. The parents-in-law

will tell her what to do, but not her husband. Why does a husband not tell his bride what he wants her to do instead of beating her when she does something wrong? And how about the bride, why does she do things badly or not at all? If she didn't want to get beaten, surely she would try to do everything correctly. Thinking this, I was curious to hear whether Duka thought she would be well behaved or not when she joined her husband's home. Duka laughed and said: "I don't know. Now, here I do the sorghum, here I grind the flour, here I sweep up the dung. Your son (Duka's father is my son because he gave his name to my youngest son) tells me everything. I don't know. Shall I be bright? Shall I be careless? I don't know." In other words, although she did everything well in her father's home, Duka could not assure me that she would do things well in her husband's home. Is this because she knew she would most likely want to provoke her husband into beating her? If so, why would she want to provoke him? Why didn't she say she would be a perfectly behaved wife who never gets beaten? In the light of Duka's comments, it seems to me that wife beating is not simply a punishment administered to correct bad behaviour, but rather a wordless dialogue between husband and wife about something else.

Sago, the young man betrothed to Duka, explained why he would beat her when she became his bride: "The reason I'll beat her is because it's an ancient custom. When a bride has been brought in, then you beat her with sticks (i.e. whips). If she spoils something you simply beat and keep on beating until later when she gives birth to children and you have become full adults (elders), then there's no fight. You have become accustomed to each other. While she is a bride however: "May she do that thing there" you say in your heart, you don't tell her with words. Then when you beat her, and she gets to know (what you mean) by herself, and she does the work. If you come and find the kids' fodder hasn't been put down, you beat her, without words. And then: "It's because of the kids' fodder isn't it, why I'm beaten?" she'll discover by herself. If she doesn't put on coffee for you, and if you beat her: "It's because I didn't put on coffee, isn't it, that he beats me today?" Thus she gets to know." I was curious to know why Sago would not tell his bride what he wanted rather than beating her. He explained: "If you tell with words, the next day and the day after that, then she'll make you look pathetic and go away. It'll be said: "He's a pathetic person"." I then suggested that his bride would ask herself: "My husband, is he a true male? Let me see". Sago agreed: "Yes, "Let me see" she says and checks

you out. If she's not beaten, and the next day you don't beat her, when she's a bride, and the following day you don't beat her, and the day after that you don't beat her, and so it goes on... if you don't beat her after she's been given to you, and she's born a child, and still you don't beat her, she'll say: "That one is pathetic", and going off into the village she won't come back. She'll stay away and when you come back from cutting the field, she won't be in the house. When you go with the livestock to the water-hole and then return, she won't be there in the homestead. When you arrive she'll take ages to put on coffee. Because she'll act like this, that's why, when she's a bride, you keep on beating, beating, beating her with sticks. If you do that she will get to know your dominance (bullness) and she'll do everything for you. She'll put down the calves' fodder for you. She'll put on coffee for you. If a guest comes asking about the homestead, when he arrives she'll put on coffee, and cook. When you arrive the guest will be sitting there, having eaten. Otherwise, if you don't beat her, the guest will wait for you in hunger, without having eaten. Coffee will not have been put on. Then, when he has sat outside for a long time, and she refuses to speak to him, he'll get up and leave. For this reason we beat." In his account, Sago explicitly argues that the bride will test her husband to see whether he is dominant or pathetic. In order not to look pathetic and not to lose his friends, a man has to beat his bride. Either the bride will provoke her husband, or he will take the initiative and beat her before she even attempts to make him look pathetic. So bride beating seems to be a kind of dominance display, one which may be initiated by the bridegroom or provoked by the bride herself. In his article, Ivo wonders why Hamar women provoke their husbands into beating them, and suggests that it is because: "The women want a show of strength by their husbands. They don't want to make good food and drink for weaklings and men with no determination and strong will." Sago's account of bride beating supports this interpretation of wife beating. But why do women want their men to make a dominance display? And if a man initiates a dominance display without being provoked, why does he do so?

Shortly before her wedding day, I asked Gadi, whether her future husband would beat her and she answered: "Sure he'll beat me. He lives in his father's home while I'm living in my father's home. Our hearts are not attracted to each other. Then, from the midst of your father's home, you are taken and made into a bride by your mother-in-law. She brings you up and gives you to your husband. His heart is different, my heart is different, we are the children of different

people, aren't we? Our hearts, not growing up together, don't like each other. "You are the one who wouldn't cut the fodder. Earlier on when I told you to cut some, you said: "I won't cut" and so he will simply beat me. It's not anything big. Just for that he will beat." In Gadi's account there is again the idea of provocation. Gadi indicates that she will refuse to do something her husband tells her to do, and that's why he beats her. Gadi also indicates why she will provoke her husband, it's because they don't know each other and so don't like each other. In Hamar, marriages are usually arranged by the parents of the couple, and these parents usually prefer their children to marry someone from a different residential area. This practice allows for a wide distribution of relatives throughout Hamar and therefore, a better insurance for the newly married couple should their area of residence suffer hardships at any future date. In any case, the couple will never have danced with each other because those who are allowed to marry are not allowed to dance together. As Gadi's account shows, a newly married couple will, in all likelihood, be complete strangers. How, then, can they get to know each other and like each other? The model with which they are familiar is that of the dance where the girl provokes the man she fancies and, if he fancies her, he beats her. I suggest that this is one of the reasons why young brides provoke their husbands to beat them. In other words, since, at the dances, beating is equated with liking, a bride and husband use this medium in order to overcome their strangeness. If a bride provokes her husband, it is like when she used to provoke an indanas because she fancied him, and if a husband beats his bride whether provoked or not it's like when he beats a girl at the dance to show he fancies her. I once suggested to two of my Hamar women friends that beating in Hamar is like ferenji (white people's) kissing, and they agreed full heartily. They said the husband has to beat his bride to show her that he wants her, just like the ferenji man kisses his wife to show her that he wants her. Hamar men never kiss their wives, at least not in public.

In his article, Ivo quotes Baldambe's account of how a bride gets beaten by her husband. In this account the bride finds her husband repulsive and, being a very proud girl, she refuses to serve him or to sleep with him. The man is urged by others to beat her, and this he does in the bush when they go together to visit relatives in order to collect goats. He ties her hands and feet together and whips her with micere until she cries out that he is the dearest and sweetest man on earth and she promises never to run away from him but to bear only sons for him. This story

parallels that given by Gadi, and, I suggest, it can be explained in the same way. That's to say, the new couple has the problem of getting to know and like each other, and they do it in the way they have learned at the dances, through provocation and beating. By provoking him the bride shows that she wants to get to know him, and by beating her the bridegroom shows that he wants to have her.

Sometimes a man's parents will stop him from beating his wife, as was the case for Hailanda. "He was like my father. My father gave me when I was still little. I would wonder: "Is he my older brother or is he my father?" They said to him: "If you beat that little girl, you will turn her against you." So he didn't beat me. "The girl is little", so he never beat me. In Hamar people are beaten, saying: "Learn that. How come you don't know it." But in my case, "The girl is little. If you beat her she'll go crazy. Don't beat her. Let her get accustomed to you." So he didn't beat me. I was little, low down, and because he didn't beat me he was like my father, like my older brother. It was said: "Usually a man will beat the one he marries, but if you beat her, this girl will run away. She's little. You will send her off to her father's home. She'll go away." He told me: "That should be done like this. That's done like this. When you cultivate the field, do it like this." It was good for me when he told me like this." Hailanda's experience adds weight to the idea that bride beating is a wordless communication between husband and wife, because it only works if the bride is old enough to understand the rules of the game. A girl who is still very young will not deliberately provoke her husband to get him to show her what he's made of, and if he beats her without provocation she will not understand that this is just a dominance display. This is why Hailanda's husband was told not to beat her, but to tell her things instead and let her get accustomed to him in a gentle way.

Sagonda, a woman of my age (in her mid forties), gave a different account of how a bride gets accustomed to her husband: "Once your rituals have been completely finished, and you have been given to your husband, then after you have lain with him for four evenings, you will be accustomed to him. Then he will accompany you: "Let's go together and collect goats". Just the two of you, he and you. You arrive over at some person's homestead and a female goat is given to you and you take it. The goat may be a large kid, but if you are given a little kid: "Why did you take that kid?", he says and beats you with micere. Then next time, having seen how he

beats you, you take a large kid. When you go to another relative and a little kid is given, you refuse it: "I won't take it." So they go over and bring a large one and give it to you. When this happens you drive it home and put it in the enclosure. So you get accustomed." I asked Sagonda: "Being beaten, you get accustomed?" and Sagonda laughingly agreed: "Being beaten." The term *dusa* which I translate here as 'get accustomed', implies getting to know and like another person or animal, getting to accept another, or becoming compliant to another's wishes. When used in reference to animals, it means 'become tame'. What I find interesting in Sagonda's account is that in this case the bride does not deliberately provoke her husband, but he beats her because she is not self-assertive enough. Could it be that Hamar men like to have proud and self-assertive wives? Just as Ivo has suggested that women want men to make a show of strength, I would suggest that men want a show of determination and strong will by their wives. Life in Hamar is not cushy and there is no institution which will care for those who cannot care for themselves. For a person to survive and prosper, whether male or female, they have to be able to assert themselves and demand their rights. In the sphere of gift giving, which underlies the whole economy, the recipient has to demand the gift otherwise it will not be given. This idea that men want their wives to be determined and strong willed is further supported by what Hailanda told me. She explained that when a man comes home, he waits at some distance to see whether his new wife will approach him to relieve him of his things, or whether she'll just sit and watch him from a safe distance. "If you are too frightened to go up to him", she said, "he beats, beats, beats."

Not only the husband, but also the husband's age-mates will beat a bride. Let us listen to Sagonda's advice to Gadi on the eve of her wedding: "Don't cry. Put a stone in your heart. Don't worry. When you go to your husband's home, don't run away. Work very well for the goats, work very well for the cattle. The girl who runs away to her father's home, is bad. The one who runs away when her husband beats her, is bad. The one who insults her father-in-law, is bad. Staying, keeping calm, controlling yourself and being calm, you sweep up the goat dung, put down the fodder for the goats, and some for the calves, and relieve the age-mates of their sandals. Age-mates will come and beat you. "Ai! I, the daughter of the one called Alma, spokesman and wealthy man, I will not run away from the age-mates." Saying this, and closing your eyes, take hold of their rifles, take hold of their sandals, and bring them and put them in the house. Then put on coffee for them, and when the age-mates tease you, laugh. In this way, when

they come again tomorrow, they won't beat you. You will call each other: "Bargiä" "Bargiä" (term of address used between two men initiated in the same season), "Misso" "Misso" (term of address used between hunting friends), and you won't be beaten... Look straight ahead! Don't look down like this, the person who looks down like this is a dog. The child of someone who has not collected cattle, has not collected goats, has not put up beehives, looks down at the ground. Looking straight up like this, take hold of their rifles, and if they beat you with sticks, say: "Where did that stick, that micere, sound? It didn't sound on my body. Where did it sound?" When you say this, it will be as if you are drinking the milk of your father's cattle, as if you are eating honey." Above all, Sagonda encouraged her niece to be proud and fearless for in this way she would win the friendship of her husband's age-mates.

Sagonda's son, Sago, explained to me why his age-mates would beat his bride: "It's so they can get to know each other. When an age-mate likes her, if he likes her, he will beat her. And he'll make her chew tobacco, and sniff snuff. That's the custom." When I asked, "Won't she be afraid?" Sago answered: "Is there anything about liking to be afraid about? It was always the custom, it's just how it is." As at the dance, beating here seems to be a way of demonstrating and establishing a liking for one another. Both Ivo and I have repeatedly been impressed by the good friendship which exists between a woman and her husband's age-mates, a friendship which is characterized by a lot of flirting and joking, quite different from the relationship she has with her husband. The age-mates do not seem to be interested in making a dominance display but in establishing a friendly relationship with the bride. A husband, on the other hand, is usually more concerned to make a show of dominance, and he is more provoked to do so by his bride. Once again I return to the unanswered questions, why do women want their husbands to make a dominance display, and why to men feel obliged to make such a display? Before I tackle these questions, I would like to consider the case where a woman is beaten against her will.

I asked Hailanda the following question: "A Hamar woman, if her husband is bad and keeps on beating her, what does she do? Will she run home to her father's homestead?" "She will run, and running arrive over there. Then it's said: "What did you come for?" "What does he keep on beating me for? What does he keep beating me for?" When you say this, you father grabs a goat, or if you have no father, your older brother will grab a goat. "Take it and go,

driving it." So you depart from over there. You drive the goat over to your husband's home. Then you sleep. If he beats you the next day, you remain, and when he beats you the day after that, you remain. But when he always beats, always beats, eventually you return home. Running there you arrive: "I refuse to stay at that fellow's place. He is always beating me. What have I done wrong? When he sent me with the goats (to herd them), I did not loose any to the wild dogs. When he sent me with the cattle, I didn't loose any of his animals. Why does he always just beat me?" "She came to you driving a goat. Did she loose cattle or what? She came to you driving a cow to give you. Why do you beat her? Why do you beat the girl, my sister?" So your older brother and your husband start a fight and beat each other. "I will take my sister away from you because you keep troubling her with your beating." Saying which he beats him. As he leaves the homestead: "The next time you beat her, if she comes over there to me, she will not return to you." But even if this happens, you can't become another person's wife." Hailanda's account indicates how important a woman's natal family is for her. If her husband beats her too much she will run to them for help. The first thing her family suspects is that the husband wants a goat or cow, and they send her back with such a gift. Only when the husband proves to be really bad, will the woman's brothers go and fight him. Hailanda, as we have already heard, was herself never beaten by her husband, so this account of hers is not based on personal experience. I asked some other women to tell me of their personal experiences.

Kuulanda was a woman in her early fifties. She was a widow, and had been married to a man many years older than herself. I asked her whether he had beaten her. "He beat me extremely. My husband was an extremely bad man. Being a bad man, he was very short tempered. He beat me in the evening, he beat me in the morning, he beat me during the day. He beat me when I went to fetch water, extremely, extremely. "When you went to fetch water, who was it who went in your footsteps?" he'd just say. "No one went with me, I went on my own." "You didn't go alone. Someone was there beside you." When I said: "There wasn't", he said: "Why don't you tell me? There was someone. There was someone. Tell me." Then he beat me. He beat me in the evening, the next day he beat me, the day after that he beat me. "Run away", the people told me, "Run away". "I won't run away. Let him beat me to death." I kept on saying. Only once I went to my father's place. Then my brother beat him, and after that he stopped beating me. After I returned to him, I never ran away again. That was all." It looks as

if Kuulanda's husband was a very jealous man. In Hamar, it doesn't matter who the natural father is of a woman's child, her husband is always the official father. This means that if a woman doesn't get pregnant by her husband she can try to get pregnant by someone else, and even after her husband is dead she can carry on bearing children who are said to be his. It also means, however, that a woman can keep her child even if it is sired by a lover and not her husband. I imagine Kuulanda's husband, who was an old man when she was a bride, was worried that she would get pregnant by a lover instead of by him, for she was surely far more attracted to the young men than to himself. It was probably this sexual jealousy which led him to suspect her all the time. Perhaps he beat her to make sure she kept away from the young men, and that the children she bore were his in fact as well as in name. It is not uncommon in Hamar that a woman's husband is many years her senior, and therefore this problem of sexual jealousy on the part of the husband probably arises quite often.

My special friend, Saarinda, was married to an ancient man who only knew how to herd animals and nothing else. "Even though he was old he beat me. But when he did so, I didn't run away. I stayed cursing him and upbraiding him. When I kept on cursing and insulting him, he would really beat me. When I was quiet, he stopped. He kept beating me until Aike was born. Then I bit him with my teeth. He was just standing there while I was outside. I wasn't in the house, I was outside. He took hold of my leg like this, and when he did that I bit him. After that he never beat me, he stopped doing it." From this account it would seem that Saarinda's old husband would initiate a beating which she would then provoke him to carry on. She used to curse him and insult him which is truly provocative. If he had been a younger and more competent man she would surely not have dared to insult him in this way because this might have incited him to beat her to death. As it was, he was harmless and even though he beat her, this did not stop Saarinda from having lovers. Only her first child was from her husband, all the others she got from lovers.

Birinda who was a young widow, told me how Woro, her husband's younger brother who lived with her like a husband since her husband died, used to beat her, but had now stopped. "Since I gave birth to Biri (her third surviving child) and since I brought in Woro's wife, he hasn't beaten me. We just get cross with words. "You have become precocious" he says, having

brought micere. "Get out! Come out here! Today will be your last. Come out here. I'll not leave off. You have become precocious", he says. "There's nothing stopping me except one thing which keeps hurting me." "What is the one thing which hurts you?" "I can't beat you. You have become my mother by bringing me up, and that's what hurts. Thinking about that, I've decided not to beat you. But if you do something very bad, I will thrash you, I won't stop. If you insult me I'll say: "Get out. Get out without talking. What's your talk all the time. Today I'll beat you."" Then I laugh and say: "Stop, today I'm going to do the beating", and he cools down." Birinda's experience is not untypical, after two or three children have been born, a man will usually stop beating his wife, and she will stop provoking him. Their wordless encounters will have been replaced with words as is typical of all other close family relationships.

Let me pause for a moment to review the possible reasons for wife beating which have come to light so far.

I first considered the beating of girls at dances and initiation ceremonies, and discovered that the girls want to be beaten and actively seek it by being provocative. When a girl provokes an indanas to whip her at a dance, it is to see if he fancies her and to show that she fancies him. When a girl provokes the maz to whip her at an initiation ceremony, on the other hand, it is to show her indanas or other relative whose initiation is taking place, that she cares for him so that he will care for her. I also found out that young men often beat without being provoked and suggested that this was to show the girls that they fancy them.

I next considered wife beating and noted that the young men all said they would beat their future wives because otherwise they would neglect their work and abandon their husbands. When I asked the twenty five year old girl, Duka, about wife beating, she pointed out that her husband would beat her without telling her what he expected from her, she would have to work out for herself what he wanted. She also indicated that maybe she wouldn't do things well in her husband's home, although she knew perfectly well how to do things properly and did them well in her father's home. These points led me to suggest that wife beating was not simply punishment administered to correct faulty behaviour, as the young men suggested, but rather a wordless dialogue between husband and wife about something else.

When I asked Duka's future husband, Sago, about wife beating, he explicitly said the bride tests her husband to see whether he is dominant or pathetic. In order not to look pathetic and to lose his friends, a man has to beat his bride. In other words, bride beating is a kind of dominance display which is either provoked by the bride who wants to test her husband's dominance, or is initiated by the husband who doesn't want to look pathetic. Sago's account lends support to Ivo's suggestion that "The women want a show of strength by their husbands."

When I asked the seventeen year old girl, Gadi, about wife beating, she indicated that when she got married, she would refuse to do what her husband told her to do, and thereby provoke him to beat her. She explained that this was because they didn't know each other and so they didn't like each other. I explained how Hamar marriages are usually arranged by the parents, and a newly married couple will in all likelihood be complete strangers. I argued that, since, at the dances, beating is equated with liking, the bride and husband use this medium in order to overcome their strangeness.

Hailanda's experience gives support to the idea that bride beating is a wordless communication between husband and wife which only works if the bride is old enough to understand the rules of the game. If a bride is too young, her husband should tell her how to do things and let her get accustomed to him in a gentle way.

Sagonda's account of wife beating showed that a man may beat his bride because she is not self-assertive enough. This suggests that one reason why men beat their wives is because they want a show of determination and strong will by their wives.

In connection with bride beating by the husband's age-mates, I quoted Sagonda's advice to Gadi. Sagonda encouraged her niece to be proud and fearless for in this way she would win the friendship of the age-mates. In considering Sago's account of this custom I concluded that the age-mates are not interested in making a dominance display but in establishing a friendly relationship with the bride.

Next, I considered what happens if a husband beats his wife unreason-ably. Hailanda explained that a woman's natal family is very important for her, and if her husband beats her too much she will run to them for help. The first thing they suspect is that the husband wants a goat or cow, and they send her back with such a gift. If the husband proves to be really bad, however, the woman's brothers go and beat him to make him stop beating their sister.

Considering Kuulanda's and Saarinda's experiences of wife beating, I concluded that it was sexual jealousy which led their much older husbands to beat them. The men beat their wives to try and stop them having young lovers.

Finally I considered Birinda's case which demonstrates that normally after two or three children have been born, a man will stop beating his wife, and she will stop provoking him. The voice of the whip gets replaced by words.

Let me summarize what has been found out so far. It seems that wife beating is a strategy which may be used to achieve several different goals:

1. To overcome estrangement between a bride and her husband or his age-mates.
2. To prevent the bride of an elderly husband from having young lovers.
3. To get a timid wife to become bold and self-assertive.
4. To get a husband to make a dominance display.

One question remains unanswered; why do women want their husbands to make dominance displays, and why do men feel obliged to make such displays?

Ivo Strecker has already tackled this question, so let me quote him at length. "Jean Lydall and I have often heard and sometimes seen the dominance display of men towards their wives. Or should one rather call it the semi-public humiliation of the wife, that is of the young wife? We have also heard of, and occasionally witnessed, how men threatened to beat their wives. Also, we have seen women who had been beaten by their husbands. But in spite of this it often really does not look like the men being the real bosses. Rather it looks as if the men are

provoked by the women to beat them. The women want the show of strength by their husbands. They don't want to make good food and drink for weaklings and men with no determination and strong will... If a wife wants to make her husband believe that he has complete and final authority over her (and wants to make others think that he has this authority and strong will etc.) what better strategy could she use than to make him whip her? By whipping her he has almost publicly proclaimed: "I am in charge here", and by doing so he has assumed all responsibility. Also he is bound to believe that he controls his wife. But as I have said above, he does not control her. Instead she controls not only himself but also his feelings of controlling her"

What Ivo does not fully explain is why women want men to think that they are in control when in fact they are not. He implies that it is a tricky way of getting men to assume responsibility, but responsibility for what and how does this work? Let me pursue this topic a bit further by bringing in some ideas of my own. It seems to me that vis à vis men, women almost everywhere are in a weaker bargaining position than the men. Because they bear the children and have to breast feed them, they do not enjoy the same amount of freedom that men do. A man can make love to a woman and then go his way. He will never become pregnant and never give birth to a child which he has to breast feed. He is free to pursue his own interests like making love to other women and leaving them with the consequences. If he wants to get a woman to do something for him, he can use his superior strength or the threat of raping her, to coerce her. A woman, on the other hand, is tied to the needs of the children she bears. If she wants to get a man to do anything for her, she has to use persuasive, rather than coercive methods. In Hamar, women cannot get by well without the assistance of men. They survive best if they have a husband who is committed to them and, as Ivo has indicated, who assumes responsibility. The responsibilities which a husband should assume include protecting his wife and her children, accumulating and protecting the livestock which support the family, representing the family's interests in the public arena, helping his wife in her agricultural activities, acquiring food in times of shortage by going on grain expeditions or going hunting, etc..

How do the Hamar women get their husbands to assume these responsibilities instead of going off to pursue their own interests? Ivo suggests that by forcing her husband to whip her,

she makes him proclaim that he is in charge of her, and by doing so he assumes all responsibility. I would put things differently. I would say that a woman forces her husband to whip her so that he feels he is in charge, and to hide the fact that he is actually as dependant on her as she is on him. The fact of his dependance precedes the whipping, and it is because of this dependence that he has been forced to assume responsibility. The way in which women make their husbands dependant on them involves a lot of psychological manipulation. Let me explain. Hamar women, like women in many parts of the world, monopolize cooking, and thereby make their menfolks dependant on them for their food. In order to monopolize cooking, however, the women have to use persuasive strategies. They start on their infant sons whom they ridicule terribly if ever they play at grinding flour or cooking food. Our son Theo suffered a lot from such ridicule which in the end persuaded him to stop playing such games. The women laughed at him whenever he attempted to play at grinding or cooking, saying: "Look out, you'll grind your penis off. Careful, your penis will get burnt." Likewise, any man who tries to cook food or make coffee for himself will be ridiculed by the women, except if there are special attenuating circumstances such as his wife being sick or his being far from home and there being no women around. Once a man has been initiated by leaping over the cattle, he is not allowed to grind flour, because, it is said, he will get sick and perish should he do so. I believe the women were the inventors of this particular taboo. This taboo, however, does not on its own bind a man to his wife because it allows him to go to any woman to get food. In order, therefore, to get their husbands dependant on them the women ridicule any man who doesn't gets fed by his own wife. This is where wife beating comes in. The bride refuses to cook for her husband, refuses to serve him, knowing that if he has to go elsewhere to get fed and be served, all the women will ridicule him, telling him he's not a real man. It is the fear of this ridicule which forces a man to be dependant on his wife, and being dependant on her he's forced to assume responsibility for their joint welfare. It's the fear of ridicule, as Sago so clearly explained, which forces a man to beat his wife. When he beats her, it looks as if he is forcing her to cook for him and serve him, it looks as if he is the boss, but if the truth be known, it is just a face saving device, because in fact he is caught in a trap. He has lost his innate freedom to wander off as he will, and is obliged to take on responsibilities he would otherwise be free of. Bonko said that if he didn't beat his wife she would go wandering off into the lowlands. If only he knew what really was going on, that by

being provoked to beat his wife, it is he himself who is prevented from wandering off into the lowlands.

During the four months when I was in Dambaiti in 1989, there was one case of a wife being beaten. This was the wife of Woro, the man who lived with Birinda. Birinda helped Woro get initiated and married and then acted as mother-in-law to his wife when she brought her in as a bride. The two women had to share Woro and there was a great deal of rivalry between them. Birinda seemed to have the upper hand, however, having lived with Woro longer and being in the senior position within the wider family order. I noticed that Woro spent most of his time helping Birinda in her field, eating the food she prepared and sleeping in her house. Woro's wife complained to me a lot about Woro and referred spitefully to Birinda as his mistress rather than as his brother's widow. Then one day Woro's wife was beaten, and everyone was talking about it. I asked Saarinda and Kuulanda to explain what happened. Saarinda said: "It was because she spilled the sorghum out for the birds. Because she let the birds destroy the sorghum. The sorghum husks were empty, just as if one had rubbed out all the grain. There was nothing left inside. It all lay on the ground. That's why she was beaten." Kuulanda explained further: ""Why don't you throw stones at them?" When he said this, she slowly got up and started tying up the sorghum instead. She took no notice of what he said, just tied up the sorghum. "Hey you, you scorn me, ignoring what I say, and just tie up the sorghum." So he threw her down and beat her, beat her, beat her." I asked: "When he beat her, was that good or bad?" "It was good. If he beats because of the birds, it's good. If the livestock get lost, and he beats her, it's good. Now since she's been beaten, those eating birds have gone, haven't they?" Kuulanda laughed. "Now you, Theoinda, are going to be beaten." Saarinda added. "The birds have returned, and this time you're going to be beaten." "Me?" I exclaimed. "We are the ones who will beat you. Your age-mates and neighbours." "Why?" I wanted to know. "Because the birds have not left the country. You abandoned the birds and stayed up in the homestead. You haven't been coming to the fields to chase them away. We told you to come and drink coffee, staying in one field one day, in another the next. You ignored us and spent all your time up on the ridge. Now we will beat you." I had expected that the women would say that Woro was bad to have beaten his wife, but they said it was good. By way of explanation they said that since she was beaten, the birds which had been pestering the fields had left, but now they had come back again, and they would

beat me to get the birds to leave again. They said all this with a great deal of laughter, so I knew it was just a game, and the real reason why they supported the beating was something else, something which they didn't want to spell out. It was plain to me that by beating his wife Woro had done nothing to get rid of the birds. What he had succeeded in doing was to put his wife out of action for a few days so that she couldn't work in the field at all, and he had to take over guarding the field himself. When I met Woro's wife a few days after her beating, she beamed at me and was very cheerful. She didn't appear at all put out by her experience, on the contrary, she seemed to be flourishing on it. Then it slowly dawned on me that the reason why the women said the beating was good was because Woro's wife had deliberately provoked it. She wanted to be beaten because she was fed up that he spent all his time with Birinda and neglected her. She wanted to get him out of the clutches of Birinda and under her own sway. She resorted to the age old Hamar strategy of provoking a beating, and she succeeded not only in getting a beating but in getting Woro to resume his responsibilities towards her. The women supported the beating because the strategy only works so long as all the women play the game and prevent the men from seeing through their almighty con trick.

The women had convinced me that beating was in some way good for them, now I wanted to know whether they ever beat their husbands. I asked: "Now, perhaps your husband won't herd the livestock well, will you then beat him?" All the three women I was chatting with laughed, and Kuulanda replied: "No, no, we wouldn't beat him, that's taboo." Saarinda told the others not to laugh. "That's taboo, isn't it?" she said. Kuulanda explained: "Your husband may beat you, but if he loses the animals, you don't beat him. You will talk to him thus: "The other day, why did you lose the animals?" That's how you talk to him. When he says: "Why don't you beat me?" you answer: "If you were a child you would be beaten." Then you leave it. That's all." Birinda added: "With us Hamar, if a woman beats a male, she'll be killed, she the wife. It'll be said: "So-and-so's wife beat so-and-so" by way of justification" Kuulanda elaborated further: "If she gets hold of him up against the house for example, others will say: "Hey! the wife, so-and-so's wife, has taken hold of her husband and is strangling him." Then the people will gather and beat her. Your husband will take his rifle and kill you. He'll take a knife and wurp jab it into you. That's why it's taboo. He's not beaten. But if he beats you, you say nothing." I knew that if a man kills his wife, for whatever reason, neither her family nor the

local community have the right to retaliate or demand compensation. He will not only be let off Scot free, he can even demand another wife to replace the one he killed if she has not yet born children. Baldambe explains this in his book with the following story; "Some men are high spirited (i.e. tyrannical) and beating their wives they kill them. There are lots of people who have killed their wives. Having killed her, since her father has eaten the things given for her, one marries her younger sister in her stead. There are those who beat to death. Such a man takes thick pieces of wood, such as one uses for firewood, and tying up the woman he throws her down exclaiming: "She refused to give me her vagina!" And he kills her." (Baldambe Explains p. 153) I am sceptical of Baldambe's claim that many men have killed their wives, and believe this story should be understood as a moral tale rather than as a statement of fact. Since marriage is usually arranged between strangers, and a husband is usually ten to fifteen years older than his wife, a young bride is often reluctant and apprehensive about sleeping with her new husband. The story is one which people relate to encourage young brides to assent to their husbands' demands by pointing out that otherwise they may be killed and replaced by a younger sister or cousin. It's not unlike the threat of hell fire with which my Irish born mother was brought up. Since men can kill their wives with impunity, most women are deterred from provoking their husbands too far. The women's provoking-a-beating strategy only works, however, so long as the women can effectively ridicule their husbands for not being really male. To this end Hamar women bring up their sons by constantly ridiculing them if ever they act in a female way, and calling them ma, female, whenever they show fear or act as cowards. Thus boys grow up in fear of being called ma. They also grow up convinced, as Bonko put it, that "A female is beaten. A male isn't beaten." The ultimate challenge to a man's masculinity is for his wife to beat him, for by doing so she implies that she is the male, brave and superior, while he is the female, cowardly and inferior. The only way a man can meet such a challenge is to go one step further and kill, or at least try to kill, his wife. The sex-role stereotyping on the basis of which the women's provoking-a-beating strategy relies, sets limits to how far a woman can use the strategy. In other words, a woman can only use this strategy to her own advantage if she does not over-provoke her husband (and, of course, so long as her husband is not a tyrannical man like the one described by Baldambe) and cause him to try and kill her. Only if a man is really feeble and cowardly, and is considered to be so by the community at large, would his wife's attack on him

go unchallenged. Such was the case when Saarinda bit her feeble and generally unrespected old husband.

In conclusion, I'd like to say that although I think I've come close to understanding why Hamar women are in favour of wife beating, and I would never try to get them to give up provoking their husbands to beat them, I do not want to suggest that it is a custom which would suit every society, nor that it will always remain an appropriate custom for Hamar women. In spite of being in favour of wife beating, it must be said that Hamar women do not approve of unprovoked beating and in no way condone wife battering or wife killing. I hope that people concerned with wife beating in other societies may get some helpful insights into the phenomenon by looking at the Hamar case, just as I hope yet to gain further insights into the Hamar case by looking at research done into wife beating and wife battering in other societies, as, for example, in the United States of America and in Europe.

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