

English translation:

Before the wedding, people get engaged. Nowadays in Ethiopia, since it has become more modern, there are no longer arranged marriages. People marry people that they know and choose. They decide on their own, they don't marry because their father or elders choose for them. You will find this sort of thing in the rural areas, but it's very rare in Addis Ababa.

If a woman and man decided to get married, they'll probably do the following. Their father and mother may know that they're engaged, but in order to make it official, there's a tradition of *shimagele*. A *shimagele* is an older person like an uncle, father, grandfather, or someone else with a similar position. The process is as follows: the man's *shimageles*, older males like a father or an uncle or someone like that, go to the woman's house. They slowly approach the woman's father, mother, and the *shimegles* of her family and begin to ask their question. This is the way it goes most of the time, but not everyone does it like this. The man's relatives, while remaining standing, don't bring up the issue of the wedding at first, this comes up slowly. First they chat; they don't ever go straight to the heart of the matter. After some time passes, they bring up the desire of their children to marry each other. And then the woman's family must ask if the man is a good, kind person, how he plans to take care of and provide for her. Traditionally, the woman leaves her father and mother to go live with the man, so her parents and family must make sure that their child will be well taken care of, that she'll be okay, that she's marrying a good person, that she's marrying into a kind family. After these inquiries have been exchanged, a yes or no answer is given. Usually, the answer is yes because the *shimagele* ceremony is usually carried out just for the sake of tradition, it isn't official. Usually the *shimageles* and families of both sides know the outcome, they're just following tradition.

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