

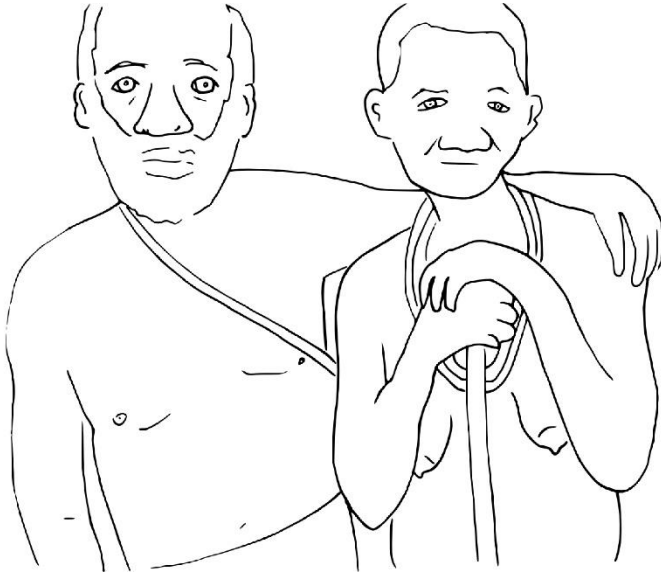


Fig.021 Illustration showing a native man and a woman who have grown old together. Their marriage has been likely a solid one and it is unlikely that they have been cheating on one another. While natives can divorce for one reason or another, adultery is prohibited and polygamy is more the characteristic of black farmers.

Laws Among the Natives of Higher Africa

Natives regard adultery "as a crime" and while there are no restrictions for "unmarried couples of different clans", sexual relationships "between members of the same clan is strictly prohibited". Thieves are "flogged" but there is no need for stealing because there is a "moral obligation to share one's food with one's comrades" (Schebesta 1933). And with apparent lack of organization "everything settles itself". If a problem occurs "co-operation is the key" to solve it and "the whole camp becomes involved". An older man or woman often steps in "with the familiar remark that everyone is making too much noise" and natives "forget the origin of the argument and give it up". As for everyday issues without leadership "appearing from any particular individual" natives discuss it "until there is agreement". In fact, they "dislike and avoid personal authority". While by no means "devoid of a sense of responsibility" they see it as a "communal factor". And while the blacks all around them have "their tribunals", natives have "no chiefs, no law-givers, no councils, or no leaders". They are "the People of the Forest" and this "great provider, is the one standard by which all deeds and thoughts are judged; it is the chief, the law-giver, the leader, and the final arbitrator" (Turnbull 1961).