

Chipo Chiroorwa

Chipo, Get Married

Chipo chiroorwa tipemberere
Chipo, get married so we can celebrate
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Vabereki vedu vangazofare
Our parents would be so happy
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Our parents would be so happy
Vabereki vedu vangazofare
Our parents would be so happy

Tidye makeke, titambe muchato
We will eat cake and dance at the wedding
Tidye makeke, titambe muchato
We will eat cake and dance at the wedding
Tidye makeke, titambe muchato
We will eat cake and dance at the wedding
Tidye makeke, titambe muchato
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Guitar solo

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This was a very popular wedding song back in the day, and was a favourite for the entrance “wedding steps” (the first bridal party dance at the reception, after the actual marriage ceremony – usually in a church – and the photo shoot.) Nowadays, however, the sentiment expressed by the singer would be viewed as exerting pressure on the song’s subject (his sister, in this case.) From a modern perspective, Chipo (which, incidentally, translates to “gift” in Shona) is very likely a young lady, maybe in her late twenties or early-to-mid-thirties, probably a career girl or professional student, with goals, a vision board, and a five year plan. She drives her own car, is paying off the mortgage for her three-bedroomed house in a medium-density-suburb somewhere in Harare, and she has her parents and younger siblings on her medical insurance. But her parents, her siblings, her relatives – indeed her friends, who are “going off the market” in masses – are worried. Why isn’t Chipo getting married? Can’t she see that her biological clock is ticking? With all this education, will she get a man? With her regular promotions at work, will men not be intimidated? How will they approach her? What, after all, is personal growth when you don’t have a husband? Therefore, *Chipo chiroorwa tipemberere*. As if none of her other achievements mean anything, her putative loved ones will only celebrate her when she finds a man who will actually bring the cows home to Dad (that is, pay the bride price.) Mr. Manatsa obviously didn’t mean to imply all of the above context, although it’s a reality for many women in this part of the world, and one whose historico-cultural precedent can be seen in the lyrics to this song.

Language(s): Shona
Songwriters: Zexie Manatsa & The Green Arrows
Original Album: Chipo Chiroorwa LP
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