

A successful courtship - would they accept the drink from the silver cup

A courtship could last for several years. Right into the 20th century, the suitor came with a "prayer man", a respected man, *suoggnooaiivve* (Lule Sami) who brought his case before the woman's parents. The "prayer man" was an important person at the courtship. He would have the gift of speech. It was his task to highlight the suitor's merits and bring the suit to a successful conclusion. The suitor brought gifts to the intended in-laws' family. He offered brandy, coffee and bread. "*Ruvte*" is called in Southern Sami the gift that the girl's father received at the proposal. The "*kåsa*" was an honorary gift to the father to drink from. If the father, mother or daughter accepted to drink the brandy, it was a silent hint that they were friendly towards the man.

The silver brought success!

A cauldron or bedding were other gifts the suitor could bring with him. Maybe the mother got a belt with silver buttons, clothes or a silver collar. Sisters and brothers could also receive gifts in silver. The suitor wanted to prove himself worthy of the girl. If the man was accepted, the gifts of honor were received. Then it could happen that celebratory shots were fired and cheers were made after the successful courtship.

It was difficult to propose outside one's social group. You should marry your equal. The poor man could only dream of the well-to-do girl. But that is not the whole truth, ability to work was a gift that was also highly valued. The gifts the man brought reflected his position. It was about making an impression. Christoffer Sjulsson writes that if a young man did not have any of the silver that was necessary at the courtship, he could borrow it from friends and neighbors, and restore it after the wedding.