

The chinese wedding day



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Chinese Marriage Custom 1. The Proposal. The process starts with an elaborate marriage and acceptance. This process was placed in the hand of go-between, who acted as a buffer between two parties. The important parties in proposal and betrothal negotiations were the parents of the bride and groom, rather than the bride and the groom. When the boy's parents identified a future bride, they would send the go-between to present gifts to the girl's parents and to express their feelings about the match. If the proposal was well-received, the go-between would obtain the date and hour of the girl's birth recorded on a formal document.

The groom's family would place this document on the ancestral altar for three days. If no suspicious omens, e. g. quarrels between the parents or a loss of property, took place within that time, the parents would give the information to an astrological expert to confirm that the young woman and their son would make a good match. If the boy's family found the horoscope to be favourable, they gave the boy's birth date and birth hour to the go-between to bring to the girl's family, who would go through the same process. Only after both outcomes were favourable, the two families will arrange to meet.

Finally after discussion, each family evaluated the other in terms of appearance, education, character, and social status. If both were satisfied they would proceed to the betrothal. 2. The Betrothal. First both parents exchanged family credentials as tokens of intention. Then, after extensive bargaining, the two families would arrive at the amount of money and goods that would make up the gift to the girl's family. After presenting engagement tokens, the go-between would ask the bride's family to choose among

several wedding dates suggested by the boy's family and also set a date for presenting betrothal gifts.

The boy's family presented betrothal gifts of money and significant items such as tea, " Dragon (male) and Phoenix (female)" bridal cakes, pairs of male and female poultry, sweetmeats and sugar, wine and tobacco, accompanied by an itemized statement of these gifts. Tea was such a primary part of these gifts in some areas that they were known collectively as cha-li, that is, " tea presents. " The girl's family reciprocated with gifts of food and clothing. It was customary for the girl's family to distribute the bridal cakes they received from the boy's family to friends and relatives as a form of announcement and invitation to the wedding feast.

The boy's family's gifts acknowledged the parents' efforts in accepting the girl, and by accepting the gifts, the girl's family pledged her to the boy's family. Several days after the presentation of the betrothal gifts, the girl's family sent porters with an inventoried dowry to the boy's house. The dowry consisted of practical items, including a chamber pot, filled for the occasion with fruit and strings of coins. This procession gave the girl's family the opportunity to display both their social status and their love for their daughter, and wealthy parents often included serving girls to attend their daughter in her new home.

The betrothal generally lasted for a year or two, although the betrothal would last until the children had grown to marriageable age. 3. Before The Wedding. In preparation for her departure, the future bride retreated from the ordinary routine and lived in seclusion in a separate part of the house with her closest friends. During this moment, the young women sang and

mourning the bride's separation from her family and vowing in front of the go-between and as well as the groom's family and the girl's parents.

Since this sleep-over often took place in the cock loft, the bride's emergence on her wedding day is sometimes referred to as "coming of the cock loft". The preparation on the part of the groom involving the installation the bed on the day before the wedding. A man or women with many children and living mates, were selected to install a newly purchased bed. After the bed was in place, children were invited onto the bed as an omen of fertility. For the same reason, the bed was scattered with red dates, oranges, lotus seeds, peanuts, pomegranates and other fruits. 4. The Wedding Day.

At dawn on her wedding day (or the night before), the bride bathed in water infused with pumelo, a variety of grapefruit, to cleanse her of evil influences. A 'good luck woman' attended the bridal preparations. She spoke auspicious words while dressing the bride's hair in the style of a married woman. After the hair is styled, the bride emerged from her retreat. She was carried to the main hall on the back of the 'good luck' woman or her most senior sister-in-law. There she donned a jacket and skirt and stepped into a pair of red shoes, placed in the center of a sieve.

The bride's face was covered with either a red silk veil or a 'curtain' of tassels or beads that hung from the bridal Phoenix crown. (Thephotobelow was taken at the mock wedding at a prior year's Chinese Summer Festival. After completing her wedding preparations, the bride bowed to her parents and to the ancestral tablets and awaited the arrival of the bridal procession from the groom's house. Dressed in a long gown, red shoes and a red silk

sash with a silk ball on his shoulder, the groom knelt at the family altar while his father placed a cap decorated with cypress leaves on his head.

The groom bowed first before the tablets of Heaven and Earth and his ancestors, then to his parents and the assembled family members. His father removed the silk ball from the sash and placed it on top of the bridal sedan chair. Next is the process to obtain the bride. The firecrackers start to play, the loud gong and also drums marked the starting process. The groom starts the procession led by the kids as a sign of his future kid. The groom would to the bride's house to fetch her, taking with him the bridal chair, which was completely covered with red satin and fresh flowers.

On arriving at the bride's house, the groom's party was met by the bride's friends, who would not 'surrender' the bride until they were satisfied by red packets of money, ang pau from the groom's representative. This was the occasion of much good-natured haggling before the two parties could reach an agreement. In some cases, the groom would take dinner with the bride's family, and receive a pair of chopsticks and two wine goblets wrapped in red paper, symbolic of his receiving the joy of the family in the person of their daughter. In some regions, he would be offered sweet longan tea, two hard-boiled eggs in syrup and transparent noodles.

Another variation was the groom's partaking of soup with a soft-boiled egg, the yolk of which he was expected to break, arguably symbolic of breaking the bride's ties with her family. The 'good luck woman' or a dajin, employed by the bride's family to look after the bride, carried the bride on her back to the chair. Another bridesmaid might shield the bride with a parasol while a third tossed rice at the sedan chair. Sometimes the bride was borne out in a

wooden ‘ cage’ with her feet padlocked –; presumably a remnant from rougher times with extremely reluctant brides.

A sieve, shai-tse, which would strain out evil, and a metallic mirror, king, which would reflect light, were suspended at the rear of the bride’s sedan to protect her from evil influence. The bride might also attach a special mirror to her garment, which she would not remove until she was safely seated upon the marriage bed. Firecrackers were set off to frighten away evil spirits as the bride departed in the sedan chair. The physical movement symbolized the transfer of the bride from her parent’s family to her husband’s. Great care was taken to ensure that no inauspicious influence would affect the marriage.

The female attendants who escorted the bride to her new home were chosen with particular care that the horoscope animals of their birth years were compatible with that of the bridegroom. The sedan chair itself was heavily curtained to prevent the bride from inadvertently glimpsing an unlucky sight, e. g. a widow, a well, or even a cat. Attendants scattered grain or beans, symbols of fertility, before her. Once again, firecrackers were set off just before the procession arrived. A red mat was placed before the sedan chair for the bride lest her feet touch the bare earth as she dismounted.

The entire household would be waiting to receive her. The bride was required to step over a saddle or a lit stove to cross the threshold, since the words for " saddle" and " tranquility" sounds the same and the fire would cast out of evil influences. An attendant might immediately place a heap of rice in a sieve over or near the bride. If the bride did not wear a lucky mirror, one might be used at this time to flash light upon the bride. In some regions, a

grain measure and a string of of copper coins were laid out as talismans of prosperity.

After these rituals took place, the groom could finally raise the red scarf and view the bride's face. 5. The Wedding Day. In contrast to the elaborate preparations, the wedding ceremony itself was simple. The bride and groom were conducted to the family altar, where they paid homage to Heaven and Earth, the family ancestors and the Kitchen God, Tsao-Chun. Tea, generally with two lotus seeds or two red dates in the cup, was offered to the groom's parents. Then the bride and groom bowed to each other. This completed the marriage ceremony, except in some regions, where both also drank wine from the same goblet, ate sugar moulded in the form of a rooster, and partook of the wedding dinner together. Immediately after the ceremony, the couple were led to the bridal chamber, where both sat on the bed. In some areas, honey and wine were poured into two goblets linked by a red thread. The bride and groom took a few sips and then exchanged cups and drank it down. On the day of the wedding (and sometimes for the next three days), the bed chamber was open to visitors, who were given to teasing the young couple with ribald remarks.

Generally, separate wedding feasts were given by the parents of the bride and the groom for their respective friends and families. Even at the feast, men and women sat separately. There could be a single feast for each or a series of feasts over several days. However, the most important feast was that given the groom's family on the day of the wedding. It was generally considered as public recognition of the union. On the day after the wedding, the bride awoke early to attend honor the ancestors at dawn. It

was only then that she was then formally introduced to the groom's relatives and friends.

As she knelt before each of the older relatives, she received a small gift. The bride's parents-in-law gave her a title according to her husband's seniority in the family hierarchy. On the day after the wedding, the bride awoke early to attend honor the ancestors at dawn. It was only then that she was then formally introduced to the groom's relatives and friends. As she knelt before each of the older relatives, she received a small gift. The bride's parents-in-law gave her a title according to her husband's seniority in the family hierarchy.