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Chinese Marriage

By Wong Yee Lee

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Chinese Marriage

In ancient China, a man could have as many concubines as possible after the first wife. It was possible that the youngest concubine would be a teenager while the husband could be an ancient old man. Poor families sold their young daughters to rich families just because they could get some money from the rich family and also get rid of a useless female in the family.

Since 1950, the Chinese government has promulgated a law which stated that one man can only get married with one woman. It offends the law for anyone who has more than one wife.

In the past, parents arranged marriages were very common. Usually young people would have their spouse decided by their parents. Sometimes young people could only have the first look of their spouse at their wedding. It was also common that sometimes an arranged marriage could be organized even before the child was born as long as parents from both families agreed.

In modern days, things have changed quite a lot. Free love prevails and lovers can choose to get married with whoever they love. Of course, in order to show their respect to their parents, formal agreement has still to be obtained prior to any proper marriage procedure.

Even more modern, matchmakers businesses are all thriving just because sometimes people find it a bit hard to find their true love.

Before getting married

Before getting married, young people have to pay a formal visit to each other's parents. When visiting the girl's parents, the boy has to bring with him the betrothal gifts in order to show sincerity. When the gifts are received, then both the boy and the girl are engaged. When the girl visits the boy's parents, the parents have to prepare a formal gift for the future daughter-in-law.

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In China, usually the newly wedded couple will move to live with the boy's family. Sometimes it is not surprising to see that they will live with the girl's family. However, in these modern days, young couples would prefer to live alone without the parents if they can afford to pay for a new flat or house.

One of the wedding procedure is that the bride has to prepare a dowry to be brought to the bridegroom's family on the wedding day. A dowry is things bought by the bride's family, which includes blackest, clothes, accessories, daily necessities and etc.

What comes next is to choose a good day to hold the wedding. It is very important in the Chinese culture. A wedding, being such an important day in a person's life, has to be held on a day which symbolizes goodness. People will choose the best day based on the Chinese Lunar calendar, or on any festival days.

The wedding ceremony

A formal Chinese wedding requires the bridegroom to pick up the bride at the bride's home after respectfully greeted the parents-in-law to be. The couple-to-be will then go to the bridegroom's home, where the bride will greet her parents-in-law to be, or to the banquet location. If they choose to go to the bridegroom's home, the young couple will have to greet the parents-in-law to be with a cup of tea each and the parents will return the daughter-in-law to be with a red packet of money inside. Similar to the western culture, the bride and bridegroom will be accompanied by bridesmaids and best men and they are usually still non-married.

One very important procedure is the banquet. All relatives and friends will be invited and they will wish the new couple with all the best. At the banquet, the newly wed has to drink half glass of wine for a pair of glasses linked by a ribbon. After that the newly wed has to cross-hand and drink the other half of the wine. It is believed that after this ceremony the newly wed will love each other more dearly.

In some parts of China, the fish served in the banquet should not be eaten totally. The head, tail and the whole skeleton of the fish should be left untouched so as to symbolize a good start and end of a marriage.

After the banquet, friends of the new couple will usually continue the night by deliberately disturbing the new couple with a few games. Games will include different quests for some difficult performances or questions. Unfortunately to the newly wed that these games usually last till very late in the night!

However in the modern days, many young people try to skip most of these rituals or ceremonies. They do that either because they think that new generations should not be confined by these old traditions, or some do so just because of economical reasons of trying not to spend as much money as possible.

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The Basics Of Marriage Counseling

By Stephen Kreutzer

Almost half of all marriages end in divorce. That is why there is an increase in couples seeking marriage counseling. Nobody wants to think that the marriage they are in will end. Marriage counseling offers a way for couples to work through problems with an outside influence. Marriage counseling can help couples to rebuild a marriage that was on the way to divorce.

Marriage counseling is a type of therapy that helps married couples resolve problems they may be having in their marriage. Most often counseling is conducted with both partners present. However, sometimes there will be individual sessions depending on the couples needs. The basis for marriage counseling is research that has shown problems in a marriage are best solved through communication and working together. Marriage counseling usually lasts a short period of time, until the problems are resolved and the marriage is back on track and the couple can handle problems on their own. In a session the counselor will ask questions, listen and analyze problems. The counseling usually starts with an analysis of the marriage and its problems. Then the problems are worked through to an amicable conclusion.

Marriage counselors are trained in psychotherapy. They also have an understanding about families, how to understand client's needs and problems. They also have training that allows them to help clients work through the problems to reach conclusions. All of this training lets them be able to identify underlying problems. A good marriage counselor will not make a client feel guilty or blame. They will teach clients to work through problems and get over bad feelings.

Marriage counseling can help couples open the lines of communication. Communication has been shown to be the key to a healthy and happy relationship. Couples with problems seek marriage counseling to get a better understanding of what has went wrong in their marriage, so they can once again have a strong marriage.

Stephen Kreutzer is a freelance publisher based in Cupertino, California. He publishes articles and reports in various ezines and provides information on marriage counseling at CyberTopics!



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