“结婚啦！！”
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Every year, the Anthropology Department organizes a field trip to give majors a chance to observe and experience other cultures and to gain experience conducting fieldwork. In recent years, the Department has sought opportunities for students to actually conduct interviews and collect data.

This year, 7 students went to Pingdong in southern Taiwan. We lived in a village where Dr. Joseph Bosco first conducted his PhD dissertation fieldwork in 1984-86. We lived with families, and interviewed villagers and some outside experts, such as two matchmakers, a local historian, and at a shop that specializes in selling wedding ritual objects.

Our Taiwanese informants were extremely generous and willing to answer our questions. They themselves are interested in weddings.

Weddings have changed greatly over time. In the past, a groom delivered “engagement cakes” and “bride-price” in cash to the bride’s family. The wedding was held in front of the groom’s house, and one to three days later, the newlyweds returned to the bride’s natal home as guests for a feast known as guining.

Nowadays, the engagement party has merged with the guining and often takes place at a restaurant.

The wedding banquets used to be held in front of the home (a form called liuixuixi), but many weddings now are held in restaurants in the city. Our trip did not overlap with any village weddings, but we had a banquet like the liuixuixi on our last night in the village, when the Senior Citizens Society invited us to their annual banquet.

There are many rituals and customs associated with weddings. Taiwan is famous for the bridal photography that developed and is most elaborated there. Special stores sell ritual objects.

This exhibition intends to show how wedding rituals have changed over time, and also to illustrate how anthropologists can study a simple custom to learn more about a society and culture more broadly.
SEQUENCE OF WEDDING IN TAIWAN

Xiangqin
The practice of asking a matchmaker to find an appropriate bride for a son

Engagement
Engagement is the first ritual that formally unites the two families. At this ritual, the two families will exchange gifts to show mutual commitment and both sides introduce key family members through the ritual of offering tea.

Tiqin (Wedding Proposal)
The meeting between the two families to propose the marriage and to discuss details of the wedding including the amount of dowry and engagement cakes.

Yingqu
Yingqu refers to the ritual of the groom visiting the bride’s family to pick up the bride and lead her home. The process includes many critical rituals such as praying to the ancestors, saying farewell to the bride’s parents, dropping a fan from the wedding car window, etc.

Wedding Banquet
The banquet on the wedding day is an important ritual. Relatives and friends of the groom’s and the bride’s will join the banquet to share the happiness and give the newlyweds their best wishes.

Guining
Guining is a banquet held by the bride’s family. It is usually held one to three days after the wedding banquet. The newlyweds return to the bride’s natal family as guests (i.e., outsiders).
媒人婆的传统角色与变迁

媒人婆在六十年代早期是唯一在婚事安排中扮演多重角色的职业。她首先为年轻男女牵线搭桥，随后再作提介的中间人。

牵线
当两家长者在六亲關係错综复杂，就需要媒人婆帮忙把家庭背景与八字相配的俩家串连。媒人的任务是将男女双方的家庭背景、性格等信息提供给需婚配的方。媒人婆需要观察飞鸿、蚂蚁等小动物的行为，以判断男女双方是否合适。

提亲
一旦找到合适的对象，媒人婆便同家长和媒婆进行婚事洽谈。媒人婆会模拟一些性事和事务，看男方是否愿意为女方提供资金。媒人婆会观察到男方是否愿意为女方提供足够的资金。

台湾南部的居民习惯请媒人婆做主，但也有些客家人、客家人等传统中，男方在提亲前会先留下红包，以表示诚意。如果女方答应婚事，男方会送红包。双方同意婚事，就会以结婚通知书作为最后的书面证明。

由相亲到提亲

八十年代社会逐渐开放，女性开始进入职场工作。林先生提到当时工薪族成为年轻人婚姻选择的焦点。自由恋爱也变得越来越普遍。媒人婆原本是为媒人的功能因日渐式微，然而媒人婆在正式提介前依然不可或缺。

尽管自由恋爱也越来越普遍，然而婚检程序的决定和婚检依旧由家中长辈在提介时相协调，而最终由媒人婆居中协调。媒人婆虽然名义上依然叫“媒人”，但她们的工作性质已经变成辅助婚事的协调者。

现今的求婚、提亲习俗

时至今日，提亲早已不再是双方家庭的首次见面，聘金的数目也再不再透过提亲来衡量。在交往期间，不仅伴侣关系已经和双方家庭相互理解，而且双方长辈往往会提前见面。虽然年轻一代可能会有更多自由的作法选择，但仍然有例外的情况，如聘金或婚期等。然而提亲的基本步骤仍旧不可少，透过提亲正式的仪式来表达对未来的祝福和期待。

自由恋爱和新式婚姻介绍

自由恋爱让人联想到婚姻媒介的排行表，但我们的调查却发现自由恋爱的典范其实为婚姻介绍。新式婚姻介绍不仅创造了新的婚姻，还有的新式婚姻介绍为新婚夫妇提供了实际的帮助，为单身男女创造机会。他们多半不会担任媒人的媒婆角色。根据我们的调查，媒人的角色是媒婆媒人将女士的婚姻介绍给客户，客户的年龄由二十至四十岁不等，一般都是熟人介绍到伴侣的人。媒婆媒人会为新人选择喜好，如是否吸食、年龄及家庭背景等。媒婆媒人可能是在客户的同意下，在婚事大相中扮演了决定性角色。

MATCHMAKING: THE ORIGINAL DUTY OF MATCHMAKERS

In the early 1960s, the matchmaker was an occupation with multiple functions, including matchmaking and coordinating official wedding proposals.

Original duties of matchmaking
Parents would consult a matchmaker when their son reached a suitable age for marriage, and the matchmaker selected potential brides-to-be from her database based on similar family backgrounds and bazi astrological compatibility.

Official Proposal to the bride’s family
The main purpose of the brief meeting is to discuss expectations, dowry and engagement cakes. One informant, Mr. Lin, said they send the matchmaker to ask the bride’s family the amount and flavour of engagement cakes wanted. The bride’s family would calculate the amount according to the size of their family and social circle. Engagement cakes are measured by the kilo, and nowadays there are over 60 flavours of wedding cakes including red bean, pineapple etc.

The majority of Southern Taiwan inhabitants are Hokkienese, but there are also a number of Hakka. In the Hakka tradition, if the groom’s family was interested, they would leave a red envelope with the bride’s family as a subtle symbol. In response, the bride’s family agrees to the wedding by accepting the red envelope. Returning the red envelope through the matchmaker implies rejection of the proposal. After both families agree to the marriage, they will take the groom and bride’s bazi compatibility to calculate a wedding date that is most compatible with the couple and that brings the most luck.

FROM MATCHMAKERS TO GO-BETWEENS

In the 1980s, societies began to accept both men and women in the workforce. According to one informant, Mr. Lin, the factories became a common area for couples to meet and free dating became more common. Hence, the matchmakers’ function of matchmaking decreased but they still played an essential part in the official proposal between families.

Despite gaining independence in choice of partners, wedding decisions were solely made by the parents of both sides through discussion during the proposal, and the matchmaker must be there at all times to coordinate the negotiation. While the title is still matchmaker, their duty was primarily as a go-between.
Matchmakers Nowadays

Nowadays, wedding proposals are no longer the first time for families to meet, nor is it for dowry negotiation. Young couples will meet the family on a more casual basis while still dating, and it is likely the parents of both sides have met beforehand. In addition, although the younger generation has more exposure to western rituals such as surprise proposals with rings, this is a practice that exists outside of traditional wedding procedures, and does not replace the traditional wedding proposal. Formally seeking the family’s permission continues to be seen as “an inevitable item on the wedding agenda,” as stated by Mr. Chen. Wedding proposals are seen as the official announcement to family and friends of the union of two people, and the deed must be performed with the matchmaker.

Rituals and Regulations loosen up
- Compatibility with wedding dates is no longer as strict. Quoting one of our informants, Mr. Cai, “convenience is everything for wedding dates.”
- Requirement for a go-between has become more lenient. A female relative who possesses the qualities of a “blessed person” may be invited to fill in the role of go-between instead of hiring a professional. “Blessed” means she must be well-off and have a happy family completed with a son and daughter.

Freedom of love & modern matchmaking industry

Contrary to popular belief, the freedom of love has actually brought an increase in dating and matchmaking industry. Our informant, Ms. Guo, is a professional matchmaker who does not interfere as a go-between in wedding proposals, but specializes in 1-on-1 date arrangements and group dating events for women and men who have trouble finding their other half, and the age of clients ranges from the 20s to late 40s. The professional matchmaker filters the likes and dislikes, such as smoking habits, family age backgrounds. Although the duties differ from the original importance of a go-between, the professional matchmaker can be seen as a vital decision maker under the consent of the clients.

Wedding in Changes in Engagement

From 1960s to 2010s, the wedding proposal has seen a transformation. The changes are reflected in various forms such as the increase in the number of engagement weddings and the decrease in the number of dowry weddings. The average age of engagement has increased, and the percentage of women getting married without a dowry has also decreased. However, the desire for a successful marriage remains strong across all generations.

Blessing

Long time ago, marriage was considered an important event, and the bride was often accompanied by her parents or elders. Nowadays, it is less common for the bride’s family to be present, and the focus is more on the couple’s happiness. The blessing ceremony is usually held in the presence of close relatives and friends.

Types of Blessing

60s to 90s
- Usually held in the bride’s home, followed by a feast.
- The blessing is usually performed by the bride’s parents or a respected elder in the family. They will offer prayers and wishes for the couple’s happiness and prosperity.

Gifts

Matching gifts are usually exchanged between the couple. The gifts could be of various types, such as jewelry, appliances, or wedding decorations. The gifts are often symbolic, representing wishes for the couple’s future.

Yi Shi

1. Ceremony

The ceremony involves the exchange of gifts and symbolic items. The bride and groom will hold hands, exchange rings, and make vows to each other.

2. Rituals

- The bride and groom will perform various rituals, such as the exchange of gifts, which symbolize the couple’s commitment to each other.
- The ceremony is usually held in the presence of relatives and friends, who will offer their blessings and wishes.

The Yi Shi ceremony is a significant part of the wedding traditions, and it is believed to bring good fortune and prosperity to the couple.
**ENGAGEMENT CAKES**

Engagement cakes are fundamental in Engagement. The bride’s side can inform their friends and relatives about the bride’s coming marriage through sending them the cakes. The bride’s side will return some cakes to the groom side, allowing the groom to offer it to his ancestors and to inform them of the impending marriage.

**The types of engagement cakes**

The cakes in the 1960s to the 1990s were Chinese traditional cakes without many changes. The size and fillings of the cakes were determined by the groom’s side as they are the one buying the cakes. The cakes in the 2000s have changed significantly as some of the informants replaced the Chinese cakes with western biscuits and cakes to be their engagement cakes. They explained that people nowadays do not eat Chinese cakes and instead prefer to have western cakes. Some of them even expressed that the fancy packing of western cakes present an elegant image, which is what they wish to show. The Chinese traditional engagement cake, however, did not disappear; instead it exists in a new way by adding some new elements. For example, apart from those commonly used fillings (sesame, peanuts), new fillings like red bean and mochi (sticky rice cake) are added into the cakes, making the engagement cake more tasty and trendy.

**The approach of buying the engagement cake**

From the 1960s to the 1990s, it was the groom’s side that determined the type and quality of the engagement cake, bought the cakes, and sent them to the bride’s home during engagement ritual. In the 2000s, though, the groom’s side would discuss with the bride’s side before buying the engagement cakes. Some even ‘handover’ the power of decision-making to the bride’s side, allowing them to choose what they want while the groom’s side still remains responsible for paying the bills. Some would give a red envelope of money to the bride in advance to let her buy the cakes she desires.

**The method of sending the engagement cakes**

The groom’s side purchased and sent the cakes to the bride’s home as part of the engagement ritual from the 1960s to the 1990s. Since 2000, though the engagement cakes are bought by the bride’s side, the cakes are sent to the groom’s home first and the groom will bring the cakes with him to the bride’s home for the engagement ritual. When the bride’s family holds an engagement banquet, they are just given out at the banquet. And since some people nowadays out of convenience combine the engagement banquet and wedding banquet, an informant mentioned that they sent the cakes to the banquet hall directly and gave them to bride’s friends and relatives who came to join their wedding.

**The format of the engagement cake**

In contrast to the practice before 2000 where actual cakes were delivered, the cakes nowadays, in some cases, are virtual cakes, where the bride’s side sends cake coupons to their friends and relatives instead of sending the ‘real’ cakes. Informants claimed that it reduces the time and cost in transporting the cakes. People can go and take the cake anytime they want to and thus they can have fresh cakes.

**RITUAL**

There are several rituals the bride and groom have to follow during engagement day.

**Worshipping the ancestors**

The groom brings with him the Liuli (6 ritual gifts) or Shierli (12 ritual gifts) to the bride’s home. The bride’s family places all these items on the table in front of their ancestors’ tablets. The bride and groom then offer incense and pray to her ancestors, telling them that they will be married. One thing they should pay attention to is they have to insert the incense into the censer successfully at the first attempt since the second try symbolizes remarriage. This ritual has not changed much since the 1960s as people in Ke Po still believe in life-after-death and pay great attention to inform their ancestors about the important changes in their life stage.

**Wearing jewelry**

The groom helps the bride to wear the ring at engagement, symbolizing the groom has betrothed the bride. However, this was not a ritual before the 2000s. Informants who got married in the 1960s mentioned that the jewelry was brought by the matchmaker, together with other gifts, at the engagement ceremony, and the bride later wore the jewelry by herself on wedding day. Some informants who got married in the 1980s and 1990s, however, reported that when the groom visited the bride at engagement, they had carried out the ritual of wearing jewelry together. In the 2000s, the groom must go to the bride’s home for the engagement, and wearing the jewelry becomes one of the most important rituals that day. Female informants claimed that they were told to bend their finger when their fiancé is trying to put the ring on their ring finger, symbolizing that they are not that easy to be caught by their husband. On engagement day, the bride is regarded as the most important person so she is the only one sitting on a high chair and resting her feet on a low stool. The rest of the family members and relatives participated all stand around her during the jewelry-wearing ritual. Resting her feet on a stool is a ritual symbolizing that the bride can enjoy a relaxed and happy life after marrying her husband.
奉茶：孝順與輩分

奉茶是中式婚禮中一個重要的儀式。在台灣，奉茶時娘家人和夫家的長輩都會坐在上位，等待新娘為他們送上一杯茶。在奉茶期間，兩位婆婆根據輩份向新郎逐一介紹家中長輩。順序首先由男方父母、弟媳之旁，最後才輪到女婿和女婿父母。這儀式是由芹茶敬親，敬親時以長輩兒子為先，體現中國傳統的尊卑長幼之序。輩份在家庭倫理關係上十分重要，每個人要嚴格遵守，奉茶的重要性在於使新人了解家庭的關係，使日常在待客時懂得長幼之序。另外，奉茶時新娘需要站立，整體坐姿，亦是顯示了長輩與新娘之間的禮儀差異。在古時，只有地位較高的人才能坐著並接受別人的侍奉，因此奉茶儀式替補了新娘對長者的孝順和尊重。

進廳儀式由古至今仍然保留，可見孝順、尊敬長輩這些觀念在台灣社會保持着重要地位。即使是現代社會，很多新人會對儀式內容作出修改。比較有趣的是我們其中一位被訪者，在婚姻中要求新郎也要進行奉茶儀式，以表示對女方家長的敬意。雖然形式有所改變，但儀式的重要核心—孝順和輩份，仍維持不變。

潄水：“嫁出去的女兒是潄出去的水”

潄水是傳統禮儀中婚禮儀式之一。當新娘準備離開娘家的時候，親朋的母親會塗一些潄水到地下。此代表著以往人們認為出嫁的女兒便不再屬於娘家，像潄出去的水一樣不能收回來了。在傳統社會，姪媳往往是根據“父母之命，媒妁之言”，而潄水卻是不被認可的行為。潄水是不孝和不尊重家規的表現，因此潄水這一習俗，可視為新婦以及她父母對新婦這一角色的決心，不希望潄水，同時亦是新婦對尊重大輩的表達。

從上，我們可以了解到傳統女性在家庭和社會的地位。老一輩的人往往都不太希望生女兒，原因是因為女兒是無法傳宗接代的，是外姓的，像潄出去的水一樣無法收回來。但是，對於年輕一輩，他們開始對不同的家庭觀念，並改變潄水這一婚禮習俗。為此避免潄水或是以其他方式取代習俗，例如以茶水倒水畫圈圈以表示對女兒的祝福。

米鐃與黑傘：對性的規範

當新娘離開了娘家，媒婆會根據新娘是否懷孕來決定當新娘在戶外時（亦即從娘家出門到上車和從下車到進夫家門兩段路）需用米鐃或是用黑傘纏在新娘頭上。當新娘沒有懷孕，媒婆通常會用米鐃；相反如果懷孕，則會用黑傘。必須要有一種東西纏在頭上，主要作用是為了阻止著眼於新娘身上的新郎眼神或於強大，以及對夫方尊重。

對於米鐃和黑傘的謎由，我們從媒婆身上得知。只知道米鐃上的八卦會影響胎兒，因此不能用在產婦身上，但是，黑傘絕對是絕大時間的習俗。一位80歲多的婦人指出，古時她所見的儀式並沒有提及黑傘的習俗，相傳與古時社會對性的規範有一定的關係。黑傘代表著婚前性行為，在傳統社會中視之為嚴重的罪行，由於避免家庭威望，男女雙方會避免黴罩，因此不會有黑傘的出現。僅管婚前性行為視為是不道德，黑傘並不是為了要尊重胎兒，而是為了保護產婦。

在現今這個令人不願生育的時代，人們逐漸不將婚前性行為視為是一件羞恥的事，相反的，對於希望早點抱孫子的長輩而言，更是十分歡迎。我們其中一位被訪者曾說到很多人都希望能夠使用黴，而不將婚前性行為視為是不道德。這與米鐃和黑傘都是新婚夫婦以及生子的一種規範，以界範圍來保護未婦女性以及維護家庭名聲。

TEA SERVING: FILIAL PIETY AND FAMILY HIERARCHY

Tea serving is an important ritual for Chinese weddings. In Taiwan, the elders of the two families will sit on chairs and wait for the bride to serve them tea. The matchmaker (or later the “blessed female elder”) will introduce the family members one by one according to their age and gender. The strict order reflects the importance of filial piety and family hierarchy in Chinese society. According to one of our informants, serving tea is a process designed for the bride to meet and learn how to address the elders and to learn her position in the family. With the knowledge, the bride can in the future treat the family elders well and show appropriate respect to them. In addition, the bride needs to stand when she is serving the tea, while the older people are sitting on chairs, which shows the hierarchy between the bride and the other family members. In the past, only people with higher position can sit and enjoy service from people with lower position.

The ritual passed from generation to generation, until now. The ideas of filial piety and respecting hierarchy are still rooted in Taiwanese society. Therefore, people seldom modify the content of this wedding tradition. Interestingly, one of our informants has required the groom to serve tea to the bride’s parents, so as to show his respect for his in-laws and to make the ritual more equal. Although there are some changes which assert gender equality, the core value of these rituals – filial piety and family hierarchy – still remain the same.

POURING WATER: THE DAUGHTER WHO WILL NEVER COME BACK

The traditional family and kinship system remains striking in the ritual of pouring water. The mother of the bride will pour a bucket of water on the floor when her daughter gets in her wedding car and is ready to leave. Many informants say the meaning of this ritual is that as spilled water cannot be put back in the bucket, so too daughters once married cannot come back home. Traditionally, marriage was arranged by the parents. Divorce and returning to a woman’s natal family is not encouraged and would bring bad reputation to her family. Pouring the water, therefore, can be interpreted as a ritual reflecting the determination and confirmation of getting married for the bride and her family. It also reflects the bride’s filial piety, that she should “obey her parents’ command and the matchmaker’s advice” (“父母之命，媒妁之言”) and be a good wife in her husband’s family.

The above statement allows us to see the position of women in the traditional family and society. The older generation prefers sons over daughters because a daughter was not a carrier of the family lineage and would marry out from her natal family, like water which has been spilled. However, nowadays, parents and the bride begin to see things differently and therefore alter the meaning of pouring water. Some of them may cancel this ritual, others may change the ritual into using a tea pot to pour a circle around the bride and her wedding car to symbolize the family’s good wishes to her.
MI-TAI (米篩) AND BLACK UMBRELLA:
RESTRICTION ON SEXUALITY

When the bride leaves her home, the matchmaker will hold either a mitai (rice sieve) or a black umbrella over the head of the bride while she is outside, that is, from the time she leaves her house and enters the wedding car, and then, at the groom’s house, from the time she exits the car and enters his house. If the bride is pregnant, instead of using a mitai, the matchmaker will use a black umbrella. Both of them are used to prevent the powerful bride from offending the gods in the sky. Most informants could not explain why the black umbrella is used. Some said the “eight trigrams” (八卦) on the mitai will badly influence the baby. Therefore, mitai cannot be used for the pregnant bride. On the other hand, according to an informant who is over 80 years old, the black umbrella seems to be a recent ritual and cannot be seen in the past weddings. The black umbrella tells about pre-marital sex. Since sex was strictly forbidden in traditional society, it is understandable that no such rituals were performed in the past. But while there was a taboo against premarital sexual behavior, the umbrella is not meant to humiliate the bride. It is to protect the infant.

So nowadays when people are unwilling to have children, premarital sex is less forbidden. The older people are even happy to see black umbrella in a wedding as this says that they will soon meet their grandchildren. Regardless of the acceptability of sexual behavior before marriage in general, the rituals of the mitai and black umbrella are still a restriction on females regarding their sexual behavior and virginity as this is a public evaluation related to family reputation. It is a duty for females to maintain her virginity before marriage so as to be a proper wife in traditional society.

為什麼要探討“爭執”？

1. 探討爭執就是在挖掘那些細節對於新婚夫婦和雙方家庭是最重要的。爭執不會隨時間而消失，它們會成為婚姻和家庭關係的重要部分。在這些爭執中，你可以找出婚姻中的共通點。

2. 「爭執與協調」這個主題吸引我的原因來自於一位新嫁娘的話：「我的婚姻不是因為我們的，而是因為我們的父母和各自的家人。」當我們回顧我們的婚姻時，請注意我們的父母住在爭執的背景下。然而，在婚姻中最重要的爭執和新嫁娘往往被忽視了。我們把目光轉向「爭執與協調」時，我們會看到的不僅僅是習慣和儀式，而是能帶來婚姻的後台、進一步思考「婚姻」對於當事人的意義所在。

3. 尋求協調可以是一個探討「習俗」的新角度。在婚姻中，人們都希望能避免爭執與協調。習俗和慣例的存往往往往可以緩衝愛情的摩擦。

表達“和睦”意願的典型例子

- 說吉祥話
  婚禮上，新郎新娘上禮車，常在新娘身旁，新郎向新娘講吉利話。這些吉祥話，不僅可以幫助消除異，而且可以提起新人的興趣。

- 吃瓜子
  每個瓜子殼都是每個家庭的歷史，每一個瓜子殼都代表著新婚的喜悅。

- 撒辣粉
  新娘到達夫家後，新郎在門前準備，撒上辣椒粉，然後親親相見， nouveaux riches.

- 吃湯圓
  新娘到達夫家後，新郎在門前準備，撒上辣椒粉，然後親親相見， nouveaux riches.

關鍵問題

意見的不同往往出現在哪些方面？

- 性別：新婚，有爭議的習慣，主導權

- 是什麼引起這些不同的？
  - 差異：性、階級、年齡、家庭結構

- 透過哪些方法解決這些問題？
  - 協調：讓新婚、獨家、適應、溝通、理解、尊重
WHY FOCUS ON CONFLICTS?

1 Conflicts show what is important for the newly married couples and their families. They show the aspects that the participants pay significant attention to. Although disagreements or quarrels have their backgrounds which vary from household to household, by accumulating different stories, the important values in weddings in general can be highlighted.

2 The second reason I found the focus on “conflicts and negotiations” productive came from a witty comment of a recently married girl. She said, “My wedding was about everybody else but me. I was only the most important guest of my own wedding.” The attention towards weddings tends to be draw upon the ceremonies. The couple who are getting married, worried and occupied with preparation, are somehow alienated from the very wedding that is supposed to be designed for them. The wedding finally becomes a theatrical production to entertain the guests. Hereby looking at negotiating and comprising, the significance of the “back-stage” is brought up. And what happens behind the scene is just as important as what is shown to the audience on the big day.

3 Conflicts offer a new perspective for rethinking the concept of custom. At weddings, people have a tendency to avoid conflicts and disagreement. Customs or conventions, whether they are all practiced or not, play a major role to minimize the possibility of disagreements.

BASIC QUESTIONS

What are the kernels of the disagreements?
Money, ambiguous customs and initiative

What triggers these disagreements?
Gender, ethnicity (e.g. Hakka vs. Hoklo), generation, the relationship between in-laws

How these problems were solved?
Mediator, sensitive silence, rhetoric efforts, and being flexible

THE TYPICAL STEPS TO PRESENT THE IDEA OF HARMONY

Auspicious Words

Guests are expected to voluntarily give auspicious greetings to the couple and the family. In the weddings of Southern Taiwan, there will be a lady called “the blessed lady” (好命). She is usually a close friend or relative of the bride’s family. Her family is well off and she has a harmonious marriage and at least one son and one daughter. Through the ceremonies of engagement and the wedding day, she utters auspicious sayings as the bride goes through the wedding rituals. The bride’s parents wish that, by doing so, the bride will be as lucky and happy as the lady after the wedding.

Throwing the silk fan

When the bride is leaving her home for the groom’s, before the car drives away, she needs to throw a silk fan out of the car window. Her brother or a close male relative of hers will pick up the fan. He then needs to put it under his bedding. It means that the bride will throw away her bad temper as a beloved and spoiled daughter but enter a new household as a tender and obedient wife.

Spreading the pink powder

After the bride arrives at her husband’s home, before she passes the entrance, the matchmaker will sprinkle some lime powder colored in pink upon the bride and say “Your popularity arrives before you”. It means that the bride is loved and welcome even before her arrival. The colored lime powder is prepared by the bride’s mother. This step implies that the girl will blend in her husband’s family smoothly.

Eating sweet tangyuan (sticky rice dumplings)

After the bride is sent to the bridal room, her husband will feed her tangyuan (sticky rice dumplings) in sweet soup. The round shape symbolizes harmony and the sweetness symbolizes happiness of the marriage.
由聘金到奶粉錢：嫁女概念的轉變

台灣人現在一般是不會收取聘金，而改為收取「奶粉錢」。對受訪者而言，聘金和奶粉錢是完全不同的概念。很多受訪者都說，如果不收奶粉錢，就不只是這個數目，每當他們解說奶粉錢的意義時，他們都會說這是「敗布錢」，意指這錢是為了補貼新娘的父母把新婚費夫所花的費用。因為奶粉錢本身就是對方父母花費的一種報償，女方不需要因為收了奶粉錢而為新娘準備嫁妝。相對而言，聘金是一種補償，是為了補償女方失去一個女兒。

在「嫁女」當中提出台灣人現在在女兒出門時或不再游泳，或者認為社會代表一種說俗而不是用來表達「嫁出去的女兒是個掉出去的水」（嫁出去的女兒已經不再歸屬於原生家庭，而是繼續跟原生家庭保持緊密的關係，這和從聘金到奶粉錢的轉變所反映的意義轉變相當一致。

由物質到金錢：婚禮的現代化

在訂婚和結婚的儀式中，「聘」是不可或缺的要素，男女雙方父母會分別送贈給親戚和伴郎伴娘的禮物，準備衣服、鞋子和金飾等，根據以前的習俗，雙方父母在結婚當天會送聘禮和金飾給新人。現在父母一般也不再買禮物，而是把相應的金錢換成紅包給新人，讓他們依照自己的喜好去使用。雖然大部分的人仍然會準備聘金，但也有一位受訪者表示，小女兒結婚時沒有要他打賭金，因為當時的金額太高，所以他們決定以紅包代替。在現代的婚禮當中，越來越常見以紅包代替以往準備的各種禮品。

現在，準備禮物「六禮」或是「十二禮」（後者為男方所準備如酒席、瓜果等能帶來好兆頭的禮品）等，基本上都是以紅包代替。以紅包代替禮品，讓人按照自己的需求去購買，這種以實用性為主的做法很能體現現代婚禮的簡潔。

以前的喜餅是由男方準備，然後在訂婚時帶過去女方家，現在則是由男方與女方訂婚前商量多少喜餅，然後由女方方所得的金額，丟餅的錢會在訂婚時包在一個紅包裡交付女方，然後女方在農曆及分送喜餅，除了喜餅以外，在訂婚儀式中所用到的錢，都能以紅包的形式轉交。但有一位受訪者的例子，卻展現出現代婚禮儀式更進一步的簡化，這位先生同意婚禮可以一切從簡，並把很多細節的細節都交給兒子和媳婦決定，最後他並沒有把喜餅的錢包在紅包裡，而是透過銀行把錢直接通過女方的帳戶。

In a traditional Chinese wedding, the most important aspect is money. Every single expense requires the consensus between the two families. A matchmaker said that the money aspect is always the biggest subject of debate. In the past, a matchmaker introduced unmarried men and women to each other today, matchmakers are usually invited as a “middle person” (hence the Chinese name bianmeiren, i.e., “expedient meiren”) for discussing the details of marriage, mainly about the issues dealing with money. Some of the informants said that they invited a female senior relative as the bianmeiren.

FROM BRIDE PRICE TO NAIMITUQIANG: THE CHANGE IN IDEA OF GETTING MARRIED

People in southern Taiwan do not accept the bride price anymore and instead take naimituanqiang (can be understood as a marriage fee). According to our informants, bride price and naimituanqiang are different concepts. Many of them said that if they are taking bride price, they would have taken much more money. When asked to explain the idea of naimituanqiang, the informants only replied that it is the money for paying baby’s diapers. They used the term to explain the idea of naimituanqiang as a return for the bride’s parents bringing her up. Since naimituanqiang itself is a return for the bride’s parents’ care for the daughter, the bride’s family does not need to prepare dowry for receiving naimituanqiang. On the other hand, bride price is a kind of compensation since the bride’s family is losing a daughter.

As mentioned in “Ritual Performance in Wedding Day”, when brides leave their parents’ houses on the wedding day, their parents either no longer pour water, or they pour water to express good wishes rather than that “a daughter is like spilled water who never come back after getting married”. We can then conclude that there is a change in the idea of daughter getting married such that the married daughters are able and expected to keep contact and connection with the original family. This is consistent with the change from bride price to naimituanqiang.
FROM MATERIALS TO MONEY: THE MODERNIZATION OF WEDDING

At the engagement/wedding ceremony, li (gift) is necessary in every part. In the engagement ceremony, the groom’s and bride’s parents prepare touwell (dressing up gift) including commodities like clothes and shoes, gold jewelry for the bride and the groom. According to the custom, parents give the touwell and golden jewelry to the couple on the day of engagement. Nowadays, their parents usually do not buy touwell; instead, they put the money for touwell in a red envelope allowing the couple to buy what they need. Although most people still prepare gold jewelry, one of our informants told us that she did not buy gold jewelry for her younger daughter but prepared a red envelope because gold was too expensive at the moment. In a modern wedding, there is a growing trend of preparing red envelopes, substituting the actual gift items that they need to prepare.

Nowadays, other li, for example, the liuli (six gifts) or the shierli (twelve gifts), which are the gifts prepared by the groom’s side for the bride (including things that symbolize good fortune like sugar) are usually replaced by red envelopes. The couple therefore can later choose what they need or what they would like to buy with the red envelopes. The choice of offering red envelopes illustrate the pragmatic characteristic of modern wedding.

In the past, the groom’s family was expected to bring engagement cakes to the bride’s home on the day of engagement. Nowadays, the groom’s family asks how many cakes the bride’s family hopes to have and gives them money for the cakes. They would put the money inside a red envelope and bring it to the bride’s home on the day of engagement. The bride’s side would buy the cakes and deliver the cakes by themselves. In most cases, the money used in rituals is put inside a red envelope. However, we heard one exceptional case that further simplified modern wedding rituals. In this particular case, the parents agreed to the proposal of a simpler wedding and leave the wedding arrangement to the groom and the bride. The informant did not even offer the money for wedding cakes in a red envelope but sent the money to the bride’s side via bank transfer.

POWERFUL YET VULNERABLE

“We cherish the females!”
- Hakka man in his early 90s

The female gender is always a two-edged sword; on one end, females are protected and cherished, and, at the same time, because they are protected, they are thought to need help and not seen as independent females. This theme is present in the statements people make, as they tell of how they cherish females, implying an incapacity of females to act alone.

The bride is powerful on her wedding day: she sits while her elders stand, and other elders of unlucky zodiac signs have to hide themselves from her when she enters the room. However, she is to be protected by the mitai (rice sieve) and the black umbrella: the mitai protects the female from the sky (天), just as the black umbrella protects the child in her womb. As one elderly male Hakka informant told us, the bride is to walk first as she goes up the stairs, so that if she falls, the male can protect her; and she walks after the man when she goes down the stairs, in case she falls. In another symbolic practice, Wearing Gold Ornaments, at the engagement, the bride places her feet on a low stool while she sits as the elders stand, to imply that the bride will not suffer in her groom’s house since she will be able to sit around and relax. Yet again, this is to say the bride/woman is under the protection of the family instead of being seen as an independent character.

MALE’S PROMINENT ROLE IN MARRIAGE AND THE PREFERENCE FOR SONS

Informant: “If anyone tells you they don’t want a son, they are lying.”
Interviewer: “Would you mind if you didn’t have a son?”
Informant: “Oh no, of course not.”
Interviewer: “Are you lying then?”

- A conversation with a female informant in her late 60s

Even though many of the informants had rejected the notion of valuing males over females, there is nevertheless an implied male superiority over females. The male is still seen as the one who is to initiate marriage as a female university student informant shared with us, and many of the practices in the marriage custom still reflects a general preference for sons over daughters. In addition, the fengcha ceremony in which the bride offers tea to the elders of the groom’s side since she is marrying into their family, is also an indication of this gender inequality as there is the expectation that the new bride is to serve the groom’s family and show respect to them.
受珍視的弱者 「我們疼惜女人的！」 - - 九十歲的客家老先生

女性的性別好似是雙刃劍。一方面而言，女性是受到呵護和珍視的；但另一方面而言，因為女性總是受到保護，他們很容易被認為是脆弱的。許多男性會認為「我們疼惜女人的！」這句話似乎同時也暗示了男性對女性獨立自主能力的懷疑。

在婚禮當天，新娘的地位是最高的，其地位甚至高於家庭中的長輩。比如說，新娘會坐在主位上，而家中的長輩會站在她的身邊。當新娘進入屋中，和她生育相親戚的年長的親友不可以與她面對面。同時，新娘需要有八方和傘庇護，為了不被「天公」看到，她的新娘衫中一位客家婆贈送。新娘要先走上橋梯，因為怕她摔倒，這樣走在她後面的男性可以保護她。新娘走下橋梯時，男人跟着走在她前面，也是為了保護她。另外一個例子是，新娘在訂婚時會飾有只有她坐在一個椅子上並把腳放在一個腳凳子上（這意味著新娘嫁給新郎，進入他們的家庭不會受到），其她的人包括長輩都站在。如此種種，都可以看出新娘（女性）是被看作一個需要被保護的對象，而不是一個獨立的個體。

男女在婚姻中的優越地位和「生兒子」的殷勤
報導人：「要是有人跟你說他們不想要兒子，他們就是在說謊。」
訪談人：「如果你沒有兒子，你會介意嗎？」
報導人：「不會啦。」「那你有做過嗎？」 - - 與六十多歲的女性報導人的對話

雖然許多受訪者都認為現在已經不再重男輕女，但是在他們有關結婚的語彙中還是可以感受到男女優越的意味。在結婚的決定中，男性被視為是掌握主動權的（一位我們訪問的女大学生就說希望男性先提出求婚）；很多的婚禮也都暗示了希望新娘會生兒子而不是女兒。此外，在奉茶的儀式裡，只有新娘需要奉茶給男方的長輩，而新郎則不需要同時為女方的家人奉茶。因為新娘被認為是「嫁入」男方家，將需要被侍和尊重這些長輩。這些細節都顯示了兩性的不平等。

一些婚禮的習俗都強調女性「傳宗接代」的功能，而不是把她當作一個完整的個人。例如，使用米香和鴛鴦花是解決於新娘是否懷孕。使用鴛鴦花的目的是希望保護肚子裡的孩子而不是新娘。又如，在迎娶的前一天，新娘的家人也會換上一雙專門在新娘床上穿的鞋。因為很多人都想讓這位新人將生一個兒子。此外，「生兒子」的願望還表現在許多細節中：如老奶奶會告訴新娘希望可以有個男孩，或是在她進門時會給他們一個紅蛋。

女性的主導權與性別角色的轉變

儘管如此，在與傳統有關的習俗中，女性並不是完全被動的。有一位女性的受訪者就跟我說，她有幾個做法是可以讓新娘在結婚對妻子言歸於好的。例如：新娘母親都會為自己挑選適合的禮服，這是她對樓梯的尊重。又如，在我們的訪談對象中，有一個新娘要求新娘要給她的長輩奉茶，以表示她是平等的。在現代，女性即使在結婚時也會去保護自己的權益。例如，當有女性在結婚時發現對方的行為不當時，她會態度強烈地要求對方做一個道歉。因為女性不再是必須依循傳統的規範。在訪談的過程中，我們可以看到許多女性會提出「獨立的女性」這個觀念。顯然，性的定位是在慢慢改變的。

CHANGES IN WEDDING RITUALS STEM FROM THE FAILURE IN PASSING ON THE MEANINGS

Do people have to tell others that they are getting married? The question can indeed be broken down into several more questions. First, what are the symbolic meanings behind wedding announcement? How different would that be in the eyes of the older and younger generations? Second, why do some of the younger generations resist wedding announcement? The fieldwork conducted in May has inspired me to think that the ritual had been passed down with their meanings lost.

The differences between the two generations lie on the emphasis of individuality. To the older generations, being able to expand their family is an unannounced honor. To the younger generations, it is completely unnecessary to spread the news to people because it signifies only a change of relationship status to them. LinXinYing is one of my informants, and she has expressed to her parents her unwillingness to host a wedding banquet and rituals. Both Lxy and her fiancé think it is the best for them, and according to Lxy, quite a lot of her friends of similar age prefer her way too.

WORSHIPPING GODS BEFORE GETTING MARRIED

According to tradition, the groom has to worship TianGong and DiGong right before the wedding night. It is common for this ritual to be eliminated in recent years because fewer people recognize the importance of doing so.

People used to practice arranged marriage, which means there is limited time shared between the bride-to-be and the husband’s family. As harmony is very important in Chinese culture, relationships are a great contributing factor to whether the family would stay harmonious. The older generations seek help from God and pray for good relationships between the married couple, and more importantly between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law.

Yet, as recent generations seldom get married based on arranged marriage, it allows the younger people to have sufficient time to understand their another half before marrying. According to my younger informants, they think it is a pointless ritual: they are not aware of the meaning of the ritual. It seems inevitable that the ritual is abandoned.
The female is often depicted as a reproductive machine rather than an individual being in marriage customs. For example, the maitai and black umbrella both symbolize whether or not the female has a child in the uterus; the black umbrella meaning to protect the child in the uterus rather than the mother herself. A lot of the marriage customs is about having a son. For instance, on the day before the wedding, the family will invite a boy with a dragon zodiac sign to roll on the bed in the wedding room, as many say this will give them a son. There are also other subtle ways, like the grandma telling the bride that she hopes to have a grandson, or when at the groom’s home, the newlywed couple is given two red eggs to mean the wish for sons.

**WOMEN’S AGENCY AND THE CHANGING GENDER ROLES**

It is, however, significant that in many of the aspects of marriage, the woman is not passive and has agency. As a female informant told us, there are a few practices that the bride does to ensure that her husband listens to her, for instance, putting her shoe on top of the dresser, above everyone else’s, or stepping on her husband’s shoes. A bride had asked her husband to serve tea to her elders on her side to reduce the gender inequality. The female leaving home and the poushi practice (spilling water) are changing as people are assigning new definitions to the practice, where it is no longer about getting rid of the female from the home. The decline of guining is also symbolic of the declining emphasis put on the female being an outsider to her natal family. There is a game that the groom must play before he gets the bride, where the female is valued more than before. The idea of the independent female too, is illustrated in many of the conversations. Gender continues to be reshaped.

**儀式意義的失傳與儀式的改變**

結婚到底有沒有「名正言順」的必要性？我們可以試著從兩個方面來回答這個問題。首先，到底把「好消息」告訴親朋好友的意義在哪裡？對於不同的人而言，這份意義是否相同？其次，為什麼有些人認為婚禮太俗套？不把喜訊告訴他人，對老一輩和對年輕人來說又有何差別？五月份的田野考察結果，讓我得出一個結論：儀式之所以改變是因為儀式的象徵意義並沒有被抹去。

對於老一輩來說，儀式作為家庭帶來喜事是家族的榮耀，因此把好消息分享給身邊的人就是喜上加喜。對年輕人來說，儀式只是消遣而已。只是代表互相身分的改變，所以沒有喜訊喜訊的必要。Lxy是我其中一位於該村的對象，他和她的未婚夫一致認為不需要擺喜宴，並正在向他們的父母極力爭取免卻所有儀式。根據Lxy的說法，她很多年輕朋友也都有這樣的想法。

**結婚前夜的「拜拜」**

根據傳統，新郎需要在結婚前一天晚上到廟宇裡拜天公及地公。這個儀式於近年經常被省略，因為新一代的人都不明其中的意義。

從前的人結婚時難以自行挑選對象，所謂的「盲媒婚媒」，因此以結婚的儀式在婚禮前根本沒有和新娘相處的時間。和結婚的儀式在中國文化中向來被看重的儀式。結婚前的儀式，新人拜謝父母及雙方親戚的儀式，都是結婚者的儀式，即新人拜謝父母及雙方親戚的儀式，都被視為結婚儀式的必要部分。

相反的，現在的年輕人多為自行挑選的新人，結婚儀式可以依足夠的時間和身邊的人了解對方。根據我對年輕人的訪談對象所言，拜拜只是「傳統」，他們無法感受到這儀式的必要性。失去意義的儀式自然難以獲得被尊重的命運。

**結婚歸寧一次辦**

「訂婚要請客，結婚又要請客，這樣很無聊呀！浪費時間與金錢，當然要把它們放在一天，無聊一天還不夠嗎？」

- 節錄自一位年輕女性

根據台灣傳統，歸寧與結婚必須分開辦兩次宴客。結婚的宴客名義上是新郎請客，結婚宴客要歸寧，就是在女方再婚一次宴客。年紀較大的一輩相信這儀式更正式和完整。

年輕一輩卻希望減少婚禮的開銷與所需時間，所以通常把兩次宴客合起來辦理。

老一輩都認為結婚歸寧是非常重要的事，因此把結婚視為一大榮耀，開銷的兩次宴客對象不同，以讓人分享家族的喜事。

現在的年輕人較少保有這種看法，他們大多以事業為重，對家庭的義務看得較輕。其中一位剛剛結婚兩個月的結婚對象解釋：其實現在越來越多人會選擇一次宴客招待客人，因為辦宴客的費用實在太昂貴，而且台灣的公司大多只給員工一星期的婚假。
CHANGES IN WEDDING RITUALS STEM FROM THE FAILURE IN PASSING ON THE MEANINGS

Do people have to tell others that they are getting married? The question can indeed be broken down into several more questions. First, what are the symbolic meanings behind wedding announcement? How different would that be in the eyes of the older and younger generations? Second, why do some of the younger generations resist wedding announcement? The fieldwork conducted in May has inspired me to think that the ritual had been passed down with their meanings lost.

The differences between the two generations lie on the emphasis of individuality. To the older generations, being able to expand their family is an announceable honor. To the younger generations, it is completely unnecessary to spread the news to people because it signifies only a change of relationship status to them. LinXinYing is one of my informants, and she has expressed to her parents her unwillingness to host a wedding banquet and rituals. Both Lxy and her fiancé think it is the best for them, and according to Lxy, quite a lot of her friends of similar age prefer her way too.

WORSHIPPING GODS BEFORE GETTING MARRIED

According to tradition, the groom has to worship TianGong and DiGong right before the wedding night. It is common for this ritual to be eliminated in recent years because fewer people recognize the importance of doing so.

People used to practice arranged marriage, which means there is limited time shared between the bride-to-be and the husband’s family. As harmony is very important in Chinese culture, relationships are a great contributing factor to whether the family would stay harmonious. The older generations seek help from God and pray for good relationships between the married couple, and more importantly between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law.

Yet, as recent generations seldom get married based on arranged marriage, it allows the younger people to have sufficient time to understand their another half before marrying. According to my younger informants, they think it is a pointless ritual: they are not aware of the meaning of the ritual. It seems inevitable that the ritual is abandoned.

COMBINING ENGAGEMENT BANQUET AND WEDDING BANQUET

“You have to hold a banquet for the engagement and again for the wedding; this is very boring, a waste of time and money. Of course you want to hold them together on one day; is one day of boredom not enough?”

- A quote from a young female informant

In Taiwanese tradition, there used to be two banquets: the wedding banquet hosted by the groom’s family, and another called GuiNing. According to the older generations, this makes the wedding more formal and official, hence they think it is important to follow traditions.

The younger generations think it is a waste of time and money to host separate banquets; hence they combine two banquets into one.

People used to consider it their main duty to expand their family and getting married is therefore considered a big honour to the family. They would host separate banquets with different guests, in order to share their happiness with other people.

The younger people now have different priorities and the major one is usually careers. According to one of my informants who has just gotten married two months ago, it is actually less and less common for people to host banquets in the traditional way because it is costly and there is only a week of wedding holiday in policies of TaiWan companies.

Regarding the practicality of the separate banquets, it is indeed understandable that people would combine everything into one.