Balancing Rites and Rights:
The Social and Cultural Politics of New-Style Weddings in Republican Shanghai, 1898-1953

By

Charlotte Lucia Cowden

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Committee in Charge:

Professor Wen-hsin Yeh, Chair
Professor Andrew Barshay
Professor Patricia Berger

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Abstract

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During the Republican Era both ceremonial rites and legal rights were redefined simultaneously, but not necessarily in concert. This work traces the evolution and implications of the "new-style" wedding ceremony, which at its most basic was defined by the choice of one's own spouse and the elimination of a dowry. Focusing on Shanghai, I examine the tension, negotiation and collaboration between Republican policies, market forces, and the practices of urban residents to illustrate the relative power of the fledgling state in the face of new-style ceremonies and their combined effect: a war against the traditional wedding.

New ceremonial rites linked many women to new consumptive practices: this change was embodied in the rise of the bride as both an individual woman and a symbol for enlightened, urban modernity. This - and the popularity of the new-style ceremony - would not have occurred without the publication of wedding photographs in newspapers and women's magazines. The evolution of the new-style wedding as a "pictured" event presents a parallel visual narrative that illustrates how personal ritual was presented publicly throughout the Republican Era. Here I interrogate the production and consumption of images of new-style wedding rituals and consider the power and utility of such images, both personally and politically.

Previous scholarship on the Republican Era has focused on re-codification of political rituals as a new state was being made, and the power of that Republican state in the creation of new families. Until now, no work has directly engaged the linkages between the public state and personal rituals especially those that governed individuals, particularly women, in their every day lives. Traditionally, there was no necessary reason for the state to be involved in personal rituals, nor was it expected for such things to be the matter of the state. In fact, the Nationalists' attempts to standardize, codify and enforce personal ritual were unprecedented, and represented an emphatic intervention of the state in these matters. This effort continued under Communist rule and is, I argue, no less than a defining characteristic of the Chinese state in the twentieth century.

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Dedication

for my parents, John and Lisa Cowden
and my grandparents Sylvia Reines and Jackie Cowden
with love

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Chapter One. Introduction

We begin with two photographs. The first photo was published in the Shanghai magazine *Funü shibao* (妇女时报) in 1911.[1] The second, a propaganda photograph taken in Shanghai by the Chinese Communist Party to promote marriage registration, dates from the early 1950s.[2] Together, these two images illustrate how marriage practices changed in contemporary China.

The first photo, with the caption "preserving the essence of national culture, China's old-style wedding" (*baocun guocui zhongguo jiushi jiehun* 保存国粹 中国旧式结婚), is a condemnation of traditional practices. The bride is pictured with her family before the ceremony, most likely in her family home. A portrait of a foreign woman hangs on the wall, suggesting that the patriarch was a merchant or businessman with foreign ties. The bride and her family stand in a line, her father to her left and her mother to her right; there is little physical contact between parents and child. All wear traditional Chinese clothing; bodies obscured by fabric, feet in padded shoes. The men wear soft and formless silk robes with butterfly clasps and high collars. Their hats are the type worn by scholars and government officials.[3] The bride's mother is hardly remarkable, with small - perhaps bound - feet and slicked back hair. Her face is blurry - she has moved during the photograph's long exposure time. The bride's face, on the other hand, is covered. She wears a large, ornate headdress and a long veil which covers her body well past her waist. With her wedding costume, her entire body is covered: the viewer cannot find a stray hand or even a foot! We are confronted with a picture of someone completely hidden from view.

We now turn to the second photograph, take some forty-odd years later, also of a Chinese wedding ceremony. In the first photo, the focus of the image was the man to the bride's left - we presume her father - who would have had ultimate authority over the union. Here, the focus is on a young cadre with a pen in hand; he is signing the couple's marriage registration form. This is essentially the ceremony itself, the marriage in action. A ceremony previously marked by betrothal and the expense of both time and money was now quick and efficient. The venue had moved from a family home to an office and authority shifted from a parent to a civil administrator. Markers of ordered, civic bureaucratization are prominent in the second image: the large desk with its organized stack of papers dominates the photograph. We note that Mao Zedong's portrait hangs on the wall behind the cadre.

In this second picture, apart from Mao's portrait, there is no father figure to be found. In fact, women and children dominate the image, crowding around the desk with babies in hand, linking marriage and reproduction. Their body language differs dramatically from the subjects in the first photograph, where men and women stood in a stiff, formal line. In stark contrast to the first image, here women's bodies are exposed, their hair is cut short, they wear light, patterned clothing.

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[1] See Figure 1: "Baocun guocui, zhongguo jiushi jiehun 保存国粹 中国旧式结婚 *Funü shibao* 妇女时报, no. 2 (1911).

[2] See Figure 2: Xuanchuan guanche hunyin fa 宣传贯彻婚姻法 H1-22-4-10, 1953 Shanghai Municipal Archives.

[3] Antonia Finnane, *Changing clothes in China: fashion, history, nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 68.

The bride and groom have changed too. In the first image - assuming this was a photo of the bride and her family - there was no groom. In fact the bride and groom would have been separated until their wedding day when they would be meeting, in some cases, for the first time. Here, the couple - who likely had not been betrothed - sit close to one another, side by side at a desk. The bride wears her hair in two braids and her face is uncovered. She is not wearing a special wedding dress. The groom sits to her right. His head is shaved - no silk scholar's cap there - and both look on as their marriage is certified. Whereas the family in the first photograph were probably quite wealthy, here the bride and groom were ordinary people. This change illustrates how weddings would be democratized under the Communist Party. Before, the expense of a grand ceremony - a dowry, a banquet - often saddled the poor with massive debt and gave the rich a chance to flaunt their wealth. Changes in the wedding ceremony changed this, too.

The journey from the first to the second picture - in the span of forty-odd years, in Shanghai - is the story told here. How did reform in personal ritual, which began even before fall of Qing, contribute to a new Chinese Republic? For our purposes, answers lie with the so-called "new-style" (*xinshi* 新式) wedding, which at its core meant choosing - or at least a say in choosing - one's own spouse, and the elimination of the dowry. As we will see, while the new-style ceremony was generally welcomed in cities, agreement ended at the rejection of past practice, and the shape of new ceremonies was contested and contentious: during the Republican Era both ceremonial rites and legal rights were being redefined simultaneously, but not necessarily in concert. This work examines the tension, negotiation and collaboration between Republican policies, market forces, and the practices of urban residents to illustrate the relative power of the fledgling state in the face new-style ceremonies and their combined effect: a war against the traditional wedding, waged in coastal cities.

While marriage practices were certainly not static, from Song dynasty onward they took on certain standardization which remained essentially unchallenged until the early 1900s. In fact, at the conference from which the book *Marriage and Inequality* was borne, Ruby Watson and Patricia Ebrey noted that "we frequently marveled at the continuities in Chinese marriage practices. Wedding rituals, exogamy rules, and concubinage showed many similarities from the aristocrats of the classical Chou period well into modern times."[4] This was due in large part to the rise of Neo-Confucianism during the Song dynasty, which meant adherence to a hierarchal family structure based on the principles of filial piety. Patricia Ebrey notes that "Confucian and legal models, although very old probably came to be more widely known and accepted by the

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[4] Rubie S. Watson and Patricia Buckley Ebrey eds., *Marriage and inequality in Chinese society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 17. Other rules, we find, continue into the Qing. For example, while a man could have numerous concubines, he could have only one legal wife. For a girl's family, engagements were binding; once a family had replied to a marriage letter, "suddenly changing one's mind" led to a punitive punishment of a sixty-stroke beating; furthermore "the same is true if there is no document agreeing to the marriage but betrothal gifts have been received." The groom's family, however could change their mind; if this was the case they should not expect that their betrothal gifts would be returned. Men and women were prohibited from marrying someone of the same surname. Patricia Ebrey, *The inner quarters: marriage and the lives of Chinese women in the Sung period* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 47-8.

general populace as the Song progressed."[5] And so it was the Song dynasty wedding, forms of which continued to into the Republican Era, that reformers of various stripes pushed against.

What was this wedding like? According to Ebrey, "matches were not just matches of individuals; they were matches of families."[6] Unsurprisingly, the best matches were matches of "equals" - similar reputation, background, economic status and so on.[7] Families looked to their friends or relatives first, officials looked to other officials to make connections; if these paths did not work and families were otherwise unable to recruit a good son-in-law then the would go to a matchmaker.[8] There was not consideration for a love match, and children - particularly women - had little if any say in their future spouse. Marriage was a duty placed "in the context of the universal obligations to parents and to patrilineal ancestors."[9] At this time - and as we will see, well into the Republican Era - "one did not have to go to a government office to get permission to marry or to register a marriage, but marriage was nonetheless a legal institution, for laws promulgated by the state recognized only certain sorts of unions as valid."[10] The performance of a series of personal rites changed one's status, and afforded participants with a new set of legal rights, different social standing and familial locus. Indeed, Christian de Pee writes:

> The wedding (*jiaqu, chengqing*) introduces the bride (and to a lesser extent the groom) into new mourning circles, and this change of the ritual status bears with it new rights and obligations . . . Her membership in her husband's ancestral cult obliges the legal wife to assist in its perpetuation, and obliges her husband and his family to mourn her death, to bury her corpse, and to sacrifice to her ancestral tablet. Marriage also extends rights to property that concubines and servants do not possess . . . The wedding, in other words, introduces the bride into a ritual hierarchy whose intricate patrilineal gradations determine her legal rights and obligations.[11]

Like today, the relationship consisted of courtship, engagement and marriage. Both Ebrey and Jacques Gernet detail wedding practices during the Song in the cities of Kaifeng and Hangzhou. This description will serve as a basis for our understanding of traditional practices, going forward. Go-betweens - a figure we will come to know well - played in important role in the process. Writes Gernet, "As soon as the parents had got in touch with each other, the young girl's family dispatched via the go-betweens, a card bearing the name and date of birth of the prospective bride. This card was handed over by the family of the future bridegroom to a soothsayer, who had to decided whether the match was lucky or unlucky . . ."[12] If the match was

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[5] Ebrey, *The inner quarters,* 60.

[6] Ibid. 62.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.72.

[9] Ibid. 50.

[10] Ibid. 47.

[11] Christian De Pee, *The writing of weddings in middle-period China: text and ritual practice in the eighth through fourteenth centuries* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 189. De Pee may be miffed to be quoted in the same paragraph as Ebrey, as he accuses her of conflating the transmission of legal codes with a historical narrative of ritual practice, 215.

[12] Jacques Gernet, *Daily life in China, on the eve of the Mongol invasion, 1250-1276* H.M. Wright, trans. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1970), 159-60.

deemed fortunate the bride and groom's families exchanged cards with information on their backgrounds and property or the dowry. Then an auspicious day was chosen for the ceremony. The bride and groom then met and "exchanged cups," a ceremony where they drank wine and the groom sized up the bride for the first time. "If his future spouse pleased him, the fiancé stuck two hairpins in her chignon. If not, two pieces of brightly colored satin were sent to the bride's family."[13] Presents were exchanged again and Ebrey notes that "from this point on, the prospective in-laws addressed each other as relatives."[14] Betrothal gifts signified the "completion" of the betrothal itself. After this, there was no real need for the families to communicate until the wedding date was set.

On the wedding day, the bride dressed at her parent's house and then traveled to the groom's by sedan chair - sometimes she was "fetched" by the groom, other times she was accompanied by her family. The bride wore a veil over her face and was "elaborately" dressed in red, for luck.[15] Ceremonies differed from region to region. Generally, the bride and groom entered the groom's family home and bowed at the family's ancestral altar. The bride then led groom into bridal chamber and they bowed to each other.[16] Grains representing fertility were scattered on the bed, then bride and groom drink wine from the "nuptial cup." Sometimes their hair was tied hair together, or the bride and groom themselves where tied together from the start of the ceremony; in other cases the bride changed clothing after the ceremony and received guests and congratulations.

Matchmaking, betrothal, superstition, a dowry and lavish gifts, limited contact between the prospective bride and groom: these features all came to indict the traditional ceremony in the twentieth century. New-style weddings, which were often called "civilized" or *wenming* (文明) weddings, emerged as a critique of traditional practices.[17] By the end of the Qing dynasty, along with political reforms, there was agitation for social change and an opening for a discussion of new wedding ceremonies. Any and all efforts at marriage reform were aimed at two things: expense in the form of banquets and dowries, and betrothal. Other ills that reformers often railed against were those that oppressed women: concubinage, the sale brides, and child marriage. Beyond advancing a woman's lot, reformers in the early 1900s saw that new ceremonial rites would lead to changes in the traditional family structure, greater autonomy from one's parents and subsequently, changes in personal rights for young men and women. The New Culture Movement and May Fourth Movement (1919) served a strong blow to traditional structures, and the new-style wedding gained exposure in the 1920s, in large part through newspapers and women's magazines. Although personal behaviors of urban residents was slowly changing, what was on the books legally remained the same as it has been, in some cases, since the early 1400s.

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[13] Ibid, 161.

[14] Ebrey, *The inner quarters,* 84.

[15] Ibid, 90.

[16] Ibid, 93.

[17] For a historicized discussion of the term "wenming" see: Douglas R. Howland, *Translating the West: language and reason in nineteenth-century Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002).

This disconnect between personal practice and legal code is quite interesting. For two decades after the fall of the Qing, parts of the Qing code were retained as the official civil law of the new Republic. The was complicated by the fact that there was more than one version of both the civil and criminal code for the Provisional Government to choose from. The government "enacted the late Qing's fully drafted but un-promulgated criminal code" which had been "patterned after the new Japanese code, borrowed almost intact from German law."[18] As for the civil portion of the code, the new government "opted instead to retain the civil portions of the revised Qing code as promulgated in 1910," which was not based on foreign models.[19] The result, explains Philip Huang, was a "counterintuitive combination in the early Republic of a new-style, Western-modeled code for criminal justice and an old-style (pared-down) code for civil justice.[20] Not surprisingly, this led to much confusion in part because the old Qing code "had represented itself as mainly a criminal code with little concern for civil matters" and people "understandably expected that the new government would adopt a wholly new civil code, just as it had adopted a new criminal code."[21]

As legal scholars have pointed out, the Qing code was more punitive than proscriptive, underscoring a certain ideology about the roles of the ruler and the ruled. This hinged on the notion that the ruler's power was total: "the general conceptual structure of the Qing code, in fact, did not allow for any juxtaposition between the power of the state and the rights of the individual or of society in general."[22] Rites, not rights, were the order of the day and defined one's position in society both in relation to one's family and with respect to the larger political order. As such, rituals were not of great concern to the Emperor. Marriage, Huang writes, could be categorized under "minor matters" which were "things best left to society itself to handle, like familial disputes."[23] Under the Provisional Government's civil code, as far as rules for marriage were concerned, statues 101-1, 103, 108-2, 111, 112, 112-1, 116-1 and 116-2 of the Qing code were all kept intact.[24] These same, essential statues were included in the Ming Code as well.[25] This meant that while Shanghai residents were practicing new-style wedding ceremonies with increasing frequency, the Provincial Republican Government was using marriage laws dating from the 1400s if not earlier, and would do so until the early 1930s!

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[18] Philip C.C. Huang, *Code, custom and legal practice in China: the Qing and the Republic compared* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 18.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid, 19.

[22] Ibid, 26.

[23] Ibid, 29.

[24] Ibid.

[25] The differences are slight and have to do with the article numbers of the statues and some wording. For example Article 101 in the Qing code is Article 107 in the Ming code, and so on. See: *The Great Ming Cod*e: *Da Ming lü*, Jiang Yonglin trans. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), 82-91; and *The Great Qing Code,* William C. Jones trans. with the assistance of Tianquan Cheng and Yongling Jiang (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 123-137.

Theoretically, it was an awkward fit, especially in urban areas. Yet there was significant degree of ambiguity as to the form of such rites, which were left to custom. Article 101-1 stated that when a marriage was arranged it was the responsibility of each family to fully disclose the background of the prospective bride or groom. If both parties still agreed to the match, they would draw up a marriage contract. The young people "will be engaged and married according to the rites." Concubinage was still legal in the Republic. Article 103 concerned "Failure to Observe the Order Between Wives and Concubines" and stated that punishment would ensue if a wife was made a concubine, a concubine was made a wife, or if a man married a second wife.[26] Article 116-1 forbade repudiating a wife for no reason. The grounds for repudiation were largely subjective and illustrate just how few rights women had in a marriage. The conditions were: having no son; having a malignant disease; being wanton; failing to serve one's parents-in-law; talking to much; stealing; being jealous or envious. In the worst cases, a wife would be subjected to the whims of her husband and could be cast out with no recourse.[27] Finally, there was article 116-2 which stated that a man would be punished if his wife committed an act (such as adultery) that "extinguishes the duty that binds them" but he still did not divorce her.[28] Nowhere in the laws - holdovers from the Ming dynasty - do we find proscriptions of the rites themselves or the codification of the form and shape of ceremonies. Rather, laws focus on how certain situations should be handled if things went awry and the social order was upset in some way.

Throughout the 1920s, despite attempts by the Provisional Republican Government to the contrary, there was no consensus about the form of the new-style wedding, which was defined by city residents however they saw fit. The new-style ceremony took center stage in Shanghai in 1927 with Soong Meiling's wedding to soon-to-be Nationalist leader, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek.[29] Their wedding - which featured two ceremonies - was an event rich in political rhetoric and featuring the most popular consumerist trends of the day. Consequently, with Chiang's subsequent rise to power, the new-style ceremony was framed on a political stage by the market, the municipality, the nation and the state. Up to now, popular definitions of new-style ritual had ruled the day. Could a politicized version of the ceremony find a foothold in the city?

By 1929, there was a desire by those in the newly established Nationalist regime to favor code over custom. Wrote Hu Hanmin, one of the authors of the forthcoming Nationalist Civil Code: "we know that in our country there are more bad customs than good ones. If we expand the use of custom [as legal standard], then the spirit of the rule of law among our citizens will be even harder to develop, all the political and social developments will be slowed down even

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[26] Huang, 126. For reference: Article 108-2 prohibited various permutations of marriage between relatives; article 111 prohibited marrying a woman who had committed an offense or was on the run; article 112 prohibited forcing a woman into marriage.

[27] Ibid, 134. However, if a wife had mourned her husband's parents for three years, if the husband was previously poor but now was rich or if his wife had no natal home to return to, repudiation may be hindered.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Throughout the dissertation I will use this romanization for Chiang and Soong's names, rather than pinyin.

more."[30] Nonetheless, the Civil Code for the new Republic kept the original penal approach to civil matters.[31] What did change was the government's involvement in the proscription of ritual itself.

In 1931, the Nationalist Regime released its own Civil Code, redefining marriage and parents' relationships to their children. Now, individuals had certain legal rights whether they practiced ceremonial rites, or not. This was accompanied by Nationalist attempts to reformulate the wedding ceremony itself under the banner of the New Life Movement, Chiang Kai-shek's plan of social and political reform. From what we have seen, there was no necessary reason - or precedent - for the state involvement in personal rituals, or for wedding ritual itself to be codified and enforced by the state. This move by the Nationalists was, in fact, was counter to tradition and represented an emphatic intervention of the state in what had previously been personal matters. This was continued under Communist rule.

The process of state intervention in personal ritual - as exemplified by the construction of a politicized new-style wedding ceremony - challenges existing scholarship on the Republican period. In *The Making of the Republican Citizen: Political Ceremonies and Symbols in China 1911-1929,* Henrietta Harrison focused on the re-codification of political rituals while a new state and new nation were being made. Susan Glosser examined the power of the new Republican state in the making of new families and the women in them in *Chinese Visions of Family and State, 1915-1953*. Read together, we may begin to understand how ritual codes functioned in formal politics, and the power of the state in the private lives of individuals. Neither author, however, directly engages the linkages between the public state and personal rituals, especially those that governed individuals, particularly women, in their every day lives. With this work, I show that the Nationalists' attempts to standardize and nationalize personal ritual were unprecedented.

Both books find continuity with past practices. Harrison sees this with respect to public, political rituals - like National Day - which were accepted because public ritual was part of life in the Qing. Even so the 1911 Revolution, which felled the dynasty, is a turning point marked by changes in behavior and belief systems, which resulted in a new "mindset" where people felt like citizens of a new nation. In the wake of 1911, new rituals constructed a sense of national identity and political culture; while their forms were different, the practice of public, political rituals themselves was not new.

For Harrison, Chinese nationalism was demonstrated through cultural change among ordinary people where politics reshape everyday life. For example, she argues that after 1911 certain behaviors - like dress - took on "Republican" cache because of their association with politics, and public behaviors. But, after Nationalists' consolidation of power in 1927, the give and take between state and citizen ended; now the state took symbols and rituals that were meaningful to ordinary people - the flag, or National Day for instance - and reinterpreted them as it saw fit.

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[30] Huang, 66.

[31] Ibid, 28-9.

> Since the founding of the Republic the symbols of nationhood had become a mark of a political class of Republican citizens and had been adopted because of the status and power they gave. That political class eagerly adopted the symbols of new nationalism, and to them the progress of the Nationalist armies was indeed a citizen's revolution. But when the Nationalist Party came to power and endeavored to enforce the symbols of citizenship by law among the rest of the population it withdrew the element of voluntary participation.[32]

While this may have been true in some cases, with what Harrison considers "public rituals and political symbols," as a private ritual, weddings complicate this notion. Markers of new behavior - in the form of new-style wedding ceremonies and wedding attire - were occurring prior to the fall of the Qing and with no political trappings. Furthermore, under the Nationalist Regime, while accepting symbols of state may have been mandatory, participation in personal rituals - in the form of group weddings - was not. In fact, with new-style weddings, all behaviors were voluntary and open to interpretation for each individual; there were also often municipally, rather than nationally, based.

For Glosser, despite New Culture Reformers' intentions and their hopes for change, the more things changed, the more they remained the same. "In targeting family reform as an important part of China's strengthening, reformers drew on an ancient element in Chinese political culture that linked family and state order."[33] She cites William Rowe's translation of the classic *Daxue*: "well governed families mean a well governed state, and vice versa."[34] She continues: "With its inclusion in the Neo-Confucian canon in the Song dynasty, this causal linking of self cultivation, family order and state governance became a central prescriptive model for China's elite." In the Republican Era, family remained a building block for the state. What did change, and what Glosser tracks, is the shape of the family itself, which moved from large extended families to a small family, where newly married couples lived apart from their parents. This was achieved in a variety of ways; New Culture reformers challenging family formation, Nationalists pushing models of a consumptive family, and Communists legislating the family.

My work builds on Glosser's, showing that during the Republican Era there was a concerted, politicized attempt to restructure the family by redefining its cornerstone: wedding ritual and the wedding ceremony. The notion that the state - a governing body - should intervene, define, and standardize personal ritual was something new in the twentieth century, even if the notion of family as a building block for that new state remained.

The new-style wedding begat changes in gender roles as well, particularly after the May Fourth Movement. Though there was often still a go-between, young men and women could choose their own spouse, the dowry and betrothal were eliminated, the ceremony took place in civic venue not the young man's home. Furthermore, women were out in the open more, at least in urban areas. The confinement of women had been one of the main reasons for betrothal in the first place. With these new rites, women saw other changes - related to consumerism - that were

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[32] Henrietta Harrison, *The making of the Republican citizen: political ceremonies and symbols in China, 1911-1929* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 201.

[33] Susan Glosser, *Chinese visions of family and state, 1915-1953* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 4.

[34] Ibid, p. 5

not linked to legal rights, and were perhaps unintended. This was embodied in the rise of the bride.

Prior to Soong Meiling and Chiang Kai-shek's wedding in 1927, new-style weddings were more about the groom and his wishes for a certain kind of ceremony, than the bride. After Soong's wedding, the bride - with her white dress and her special day - became the star, the groom her escort. This change was aided by the bridal industry in Shanghai which grew in large part due to the publication of wedding photographs in newspapers and women's magazines. Explicit focus on women - in the ceremony and as consumerist actors - put the Nationalist regime in a bind as they worked to codify their wedding ceremony, perhaps things had gone a bit further in the marketplace than they would have liked! By the 1930s the new-style wedding had become a symbol for enlightened urban modernity, and could not be eliminated completely. The Nationalists' group wedding ceremony, and later Communist wedding registration, both worked to redefine the role of the bride within the wedding ceremony. The group ceremony made the bride one of many, Communist registration eliminated the consumerist trappings the new-style bride completely.

We began with two photographs and now we ask: would wedding ceremonies in modern China have evolved in the same way if the camera was not present? The evolution of the new-style wedding, as a "pictured" event presents a parallel visual narrative that is both useful and important; the photograph and the photography studio are supporting players in this tale. With such photos we can see how personal ritual was presented publicly, throughout the Republican Era. Here, we consider the production and consumption of images of new-style weddings in an urban environment, and weigh the power such images had both personally and as a political tool. For our purposes, the utility of the photograph is dual: the spread of information, and the spread of ideas. The photograph made the new-style wedding into an idealized commodity. After all, a new-style wedding portrait did not necessarily mean participation in a new-style ceremony.

Chapter one introduces a critique of traditional wedding practices through the translation of a manual on French marriage customs by a Qing dynasty diplomat. Simultaneously, small pockets of reform-minded individuals began practicing what they called "new-style" ceremonies. Reformers hope that changing ceremonial rites this would lead to changes in legal rights. By the end of the 1910s, while the consensus was that traditional practices no longer suited a modernizing China, there was no agreement on what should come next.

With chapter two, in the wake the May Fourth Movement young people began to voice opinions about the "rights" they would like - particularly choice of one's spouse - but many felt that they could not act, due to parental and societal pressure. These popular desires are balanced against two very different political weddings, the wedding of deposed Emperor Puyi in 1922, and the wedding of Soong Meiling and Chiang Kai-shek in 1927. Both men were out of power at the time, and in both cases, hoped that ceremonial rites would engender political leverage. While Puyi was unsuccessful, Chiang and Soong became the nation's first modern political couple and used the media to frame their public image and further Chiang's career. But their wedding unwittingly endorsed the forces of the new-style wedding market, which were not necessarily compatible with the Nationalists' spartan political vision.

Chapter three discusses Nationalist attempts to reconcile the commercial, new-style wedding with their political ideology. Here the new-style wedding is examined in the wake of the 1931 Civil Code, as an urban business, and a political tool. Legal reforms did not necessarily mean a change in personal behavior, or a nation wide adoption of new-style ceremonies. For those in Shanghai with means, the possibilities for new-style ceremonies were endless. Group weddings under the New Life Movement presented a model for civic behavior and standardized ritual practice. But, on the eve of the war 1937, the gap between market and politics remained.

Though municipal weddings were halted in 1937, they continued on as a commercial business through the early 1950s, as discussed in chapter four. Simultaneously, the Nationalists hoped to standardize group wedding ceremonies throughout China. But they had still not succeeded in uniting ceremonial rites and legal rights: most people did not follow Nationalist ceremonies, or register their weddings. Furthermore new-style wedding ceremonies - even during wartime - were numerous and varied. This ended with the Communist victory in 1949. With new marriage laws in the early 1950s, the Communists not only standardized the wedding ceremony and eliminated the new-style wedding: by proscribing ceremonial rites they succeeded in ascribing legal rights to the population.

As we have seen, state involvement in personal ritual was counter to traditional practice. And yet, with the constitution of the new state in the Republican Era we find an emphatic intervention of the state in personal ritual matters. Why did both Nationalists and Communists intervene in this matter? And, why was the reform of wedding ritual so difficult for them to accomplish?

We began with two photographs and the question: how do we get from here to there? We must recognize at the outset that photographs - especially of ritual performance - are models, sometimes stereotypes, other times ideals. We begin now to look behind and beyond the image to the production of these models - both practical and rhetorical - which came to represent new, urban wedding ritual in twentieth century China.

Chapter 2. The New-Style Wedding as Critique

PART ONE

Cultural Practices, Translated

"Look! Look! Look!" shouted a 1905 newspaper advertisement, "*On Marriage*!" Translated from French by Liu Shixun (刘式训 1868-1929), a Qing dynasty official, the book "narrated the form of a civilized wedding ceremony in a detailed, clear sequence."[1] This clarity, the ad claimed, would allow for easier implementation of the text, where "ambitious countrymen can refer to this manual to reform wedding ceremonies." In fact, *On Marriage* was only one chapter excerpted from a much longer original text which had been published in Paris in 1892 under the title: *Usages du monde: Règles du savoir-vivre dans la société moderne*.[2] Before the translated text was published in its entirety, however, the chapter about marriage was released as its own slim volume due to popular demand.

Usages du monde was not the first text on Western etiquette to be translated into Chinese. In 1886, a translation of missionary John Fryer's writings on English etiquette entitled *Preliminary Instructions on Western Etiquette* (*Xili xuzhi* 西礼须知) was published. According to the preface, Fryer felt compelled to write the book after returning home to England and finding that social discourse had changed greatly in his absence. London was presented as the English standard and the text discusses the proper way to behave in various social situations: making friends, sending invitations, rules for drinking and smoking, party etiquette, how to dress (readers are warned not to "blindly follow fashion, as those with culture know what suits themselves"), and general tips for interacting with the opposite sex.[3] The text has a moralistic overtone, ending with the idea that gentlemanly behavior has nothing to do with family origins but lies with the quality of one's character; in short, money cannot buy class.[4] While informative, the text is relatively general and it is difficult to imagine it either engendering a fervent readership or being implemented in a greater Chinese context. The audience was most likely government officials or elite men, and the book was probably read more to satiate one's curiosity than as a practical manual on how to reform social mores.

The political and social climate had changed by the time *On Marriage* hit the presses in the early 1900s. Defeat at the hands of the Japanese in the Sino-Japanese War (1895), the failed Hundred Days Reforms of 1898, and humiliation at the terms of the Boxer Protocols in the wake of the Boxer Rebellion exposed China's weaknesses on an international stage. Many intellectuals - and others - turned to the West in search of education, wealth, and power, as an impetus and inspiration for reform. Reform not only political; it was social, too.

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[1] *Shibao* 时报, "*Hunyin tan!* 婚姻谈!" September 2, 1905. The advertisement refers to the French author as Sidakang (司达康), which is most certainly a typographic error. In all other cases, the author of the text is referred to as Sidafu (司达福), or Baroness Staffe.

[2] Baronne Staffe, *Usages du monde: Règles du savoir-vivre dans la société moderne* (Paris: Victor-Harvard, 1892).

[3] *Xili Xuzhi* (西礼须知) 光绪十二年 1886, 19. Held at the Shanghai Municipal Library.

[4] Ibid, 26.

Critics argued that strengthening women's social standing would strengthen the Chinese nation. One way to accomplish this was through reforming marriage practices. As a prominent figure in the reform movement Kang Youwei had drafted both political and social reforms during the late Qing. He was active in the Hundred Days' Reforms, which had proposed changes to the dynasty's education system, moved to bolster economic development and military training, and streamline the labyrinthian bureaucratic structure. The reforms failed and Kang was exiled. Portions of Kang's *Datong shu* (大同书) were written in the early 1900s while he was abroad and often fearful for his life. The book presented a utopian vision for China's future that eliminated the boundaries of class, nation, race and sex. This included reform of China's marriage system. In Kang's brave new world, men and women were equals who selected their own spouses. Women would retain their original surnames. Marriage was entered by choice, after men and women were twenty years of age and had received schooling. Wrote Kang:

> All marriages of men and women will be the personal choice of the parties. Their affections and will [in this matter] being mutual, they will then form an alliance. [This alliance] will be called an 'intimate relations contract.' We will not have the old terms husband and wife. For, since men and women will be entirely equal and independent, their love contracts will be like treaties of peace between two states: there will be no distinctions of [either party being] unimportant or important, or superior or inferior . . . [The marriage alliance] should only be like joining together of two friends, nothing more.[5]

Furthermore, for Kang marriages were not meant to be lifelong endeavors. Contracts could be voided when the relationship no longer worked for both parties, as "familiarity breeds boredom."[6] The emphasis was on happiness, compatibility and choice. Though these portions of the text were not published until 1913, given the breadth and depth of his intellectual circle, Kang's ideas were no doubt influential before that time.

Kang was not alone in his calls for change: his student, Liang Qichao - also exiled after 1898 - lent his voice to the chorus, decrying early marriage and foot binding. In his own work, Liang railed against the "feudal" marriage system and concubinage, and called for marriages based on love.[7] Other reforms spoke out as well: Tan Sitong advocated for more open discussions of sex and chastity.[8] In 1900, prominent educator Cai Yuanpei laid out five conditions for social change: the elimination of foot binding and concubinage, spreading women's literacy, allowance for widow remarriage, and the initiation of divorce by both men and women.[9] Higher level intellectual critiques mirrored growing popular sentiment on the topic: *On Marriage* was published for a general audience.

A desire for practical reform set the tone of the *On Marriage* preface. According to the editor, previous etiquette manuals had mainly been aimed at elites, where "the instructions primarily concentrated on the upper class and high government officials and were written in

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[5] Kang Youwei, *Ta t'ung shu; The one-world philosophy of K'ang Yu-wei. Translated from the Chinese with introduction and notes by Laurence G. Thompson* (London: Allen and Unwind, 1958), 163.

[6] Ibid, 164.

[7] Shao Xianchong 邵先崇, *Jindai zhongguo de xinshi hunsang* 近代中国的新式婚丧 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chuban she, 2006), 9. Liang later parted ways with Kang as well, because of disputes over the role of the monarchy in reform.

[8] Deng Weizhi 邓伟志, *Shanghai hunsu* 上海婚俗 (Shanghai wenhui chuban she, 2007), 57.

[9] Shao, 10.

extraordinary detail. For midlevel officials, descriptions of etiquette were relatively simple. For the common people very little was included, if at all."[10] Furthermore, many officials had no compunction to put the contents of such manuals into practice, feeling that the compilation itself was an academic exercise rather than a social enterprise. Consequently, the editor wrote, there was no standardized ritual practice throughout China. "Everyone comes to think that their behavior is correct; each village believes their customs are appropriate. Therefore all of these strange, individualized practices have emerged . . ."[11] The conclusion was stark: "Chinese etiquette is like a silk worm, wrapped in its own cocoon."[12]

The remedy was to change practice itself, through a new type of text aimed at a different audience. This would be facilitated by someone with firsthand experience both in China and abroad. The preface continued: "Mr Liu Shixun, who has spent much time in Europe, has researched differences between Chinese and Western etiquette and analyzed why Chinese politics and education are ailing. He has therefore translated a French book about etiquette . . . Not only can readers understand Western etiquette, the book can serve as a reference for those who want to reform China's traditional etiquette and advance social welfare."[13] Whereas Fryer's *Preliminary Instructions On Western Etiquette* was mainly descriptive, *On Marriage* was instructional, and with advertisements in periodicals like *Shibao*, it was clearly intended for an audience of well-read city folk, not just elites or those holding political positions.

Liu's own take on the manuscript provides further insight. In a preface to the longer text, he wrote that his goal in publishing the book was to help increase Chinese understanding of Western custom. According to Liu, mistrust and doubt about Westerners dated back to the days of the frontier trade where despite interactions, understanding was hampered by China's lack of knowledge about Western society.[14] While many books about politics, the military and engineering had been translated into Chinese, information about Western society itself was often limited to sporadic descriptions in travel diaries, and it was difficult to get a sense of the larger whole. Liu believed he was adding context through an explication of popular social customs. He wrote: "In the winter of 1902, I had the honor of going abroad. Again I was stationed in France. On a leave of absence to attend to public affairs, I was walking the city streets and saw a bookstore with various etiquette manuals; Baroness Staffe's book had just been published. I returned to buy it and glanced through it. From birth, to various social occasions, marriage and

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[10] Liu Shixun 刘式训, *Taixi lisu xinbian zhiyi hunyin tan* 泰西礼俗新编之一婚姻谈 (Shanghai: Shanghai zhongxin shuju 1905), preface. In the preface, the author refers to previous collectanea about etiquette from Tang and Song dynasties complied in the Ming and Qing.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Xiong Yuezhi 熊月之, "Wan Qing zhongguo guanyu xifang lisu lunbian 晚清中国关于西方礼俗论辩," *Xueshu yuekan* 学术月刊, 40 (August 2008):150. Here, Liu is referring to the Chinese tribute system.

death, it is written in considerable detail and therefore I have translated it."[15] Not only were the contents of the book comprehensive, Liu saw it as sufficiently representing Western etiquette as a whole. According to Liu, French etiquette was admired by "white society" (*baizu shehui* 白种社会) and although the book was written by and for the French there were only minor differences (*datong xiaoyi* 大同小异) between European and American practices.[16] "When speaking of the West (*taixi* 泰西)," Liu wrote, "Europe is to the west of us, and America is to the west of Europe, the idea being that we are speaking of both."[17]

By this time in his career, Liu had had much experience abroad. Born in Jiangsu Nanhui, now Shanghai, his parents sent him to a specialized language school, the *Shanghai Guangfang Yanguan* (上海广方言馆) at a young age.[18] The school, founded in 1863 by Li Hongzhang, the famed Qing diplomat known for his impressive military record and desire to modernize China, was one of the first of its kind to train students specifically in translation, employing foreign teachers and sending students abroad.[19] Here Liu studied French. Due to the school's unique nature, its students were often sent on assignments by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*zongli yamen* 总理衙门).

In 1890, because of his excellent grades, Liu and seven others were sent to the Beijing language school, the *Beijing Tongwen Xueguan* (北京同文学馆), for further study. Part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the school was founded in 1862 in an effort to better understand foreign trends and train more Chinese as translators.[20] It eventually became the famous Beijing University (*Beijing daxue* 北京大学). After time in Beijing, Liu studied in France, at the University of Paris, the Sorbonne. Liu was then stationed in France, Russia, and Germany, and elsewhere acting as an attache responsible for translation at those consulates.[21] His skills were

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[15] Ibid. Liu uses "*yishu* 译述" (translate freely) rather than "*fanyi* 翻译" (translate) when he describes his writing process. He goes on to say that he has added certain descriptions in the text, altering the contents of the chapters, joining some of them together.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid. Like many Chinese of the time, Liu went by more than one name. His style name (字) was Zhengsheng (筝笙) and his assumed name (号) was Zizhen (紫箴).

[19] For more information on the school including name and curriculum changes, see Chen Bohai 陈伯海 ed., *Shanghai wenhua tongshi shang juan* 上海文化通史 上卷 (Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chuban she, 2001), 852-5. See also: Ceng Jusheng 曾钜生, "Luelun Shanghai guangfang yanguan 略论上海广方言馆," *Hangzhou daxue xuebao* 杭州大学学报 16 no. 1 (1986): 104-9.

[20] Shi Jianguo 石建国, "Liu Shixun: Shanghai guangfang yanguan chushen de xinshi waijiaoguan 刘式训: 上海广方言馆出身的新式外交官," *Shijie zhishi* 世界知识 no. 15 (2010). Aside from Chinese language, all other classes were taught by foreigners. Due to the degree of foreign involvement in the school, it was not without controversy. For more information see: Timothy B. Weston, *The Power of Position: Beijing University, Intellectuals and Chinese Political Culture, 1898-1929* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

[21] Xu Youchun 徐友春 ed., *Minguo remin da cidian* 民国人民大辞典 (Hebei: Hebei remin chuban she, 1991), 1414. Liu's career was noteworthy enough to garner him mentions in both his local gazetteer and the Qing draft history, though neither provide the reader with much detail. See: *Zhongguo difangzhi jicheng, Shanghai fu xianzhi ji* (5) 中国地方志集成, 上海府县志辑 (5) (Shanghai: Shanghai shuju, 1991), 1073. *Qing shi gao* (*di ershijiu ce*) 请史稿 (第二十九册), (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1976): 8823-8833. Liu went on to act as an envoy to France, Spain, Brazil, and Peru. See also: Shi Jianguo 石建国, for more details of Liu's adventures abroad.

top notch: after the Boxer Rebellion, Liu assisted Li Hongzhang and the "Great Powers" in their negotiations. China's weakened position in the talks, the superstition that drove the Boxers, and his own experiences abroad most likely solidified Liu's belief that beyond political reform, social reforms were needed to strengthen China. It was probably around this time that he came across *Usages du monde* on the streets of Paris.

Usages was written by Baroness Staffe, who by the time of her death in 1911, had achieved enough notoriety to be eulogized in the *New York Times*. Labeled a "Feminine Chesterfield" she was remembered for publishing "dozens of manuals to advance the politeness of maids, spinsters, wives and widows. She taught how to dress, how to receive, how to cook, how to write letters, how to be good looking . . ."[22] She was also quite a character, as was evident in what was probably her most popular book, *The Lady's Dressing Room*. The preface included the following wisdom:

> How ever pretty or ideally graceful you may be, you cannot escape a fatal absurdity at certain moments of your toilette. For instance, to take a small thing; a woman in the act of curling her hair, even if it is her own, will not appear to advantage and may even look ridiculous. Such trivialities cause us to lose of the halo with which we would always be surrounded in the eyes of those who love us best. Let us wrap the prosy facts of life in some little mystery; shall we run the risk of lowering ourselves, even in the sight of those who hold us most dear. It is unnecessary to remind them that though we are goddesses at some times, we are but ordinary women at others.[23]

Those who did not follow her advice did so at their own peril: "Some women may object that if all of this care is necessary, marriage must be slavery. All I can say is, total disregard of appearances and too much familiarity will make an *inferno* of it."[24] The book is a treasure trove of tidbits about daily life. It included home remedies for insomnia (use a pillow stuffed with camel's hair); various recipes for skin lotion and perfume; cautionary tips about eyebrow grooming ("bushy eyebrows give something brutal and fierce to the face"); diet tips for the obese and the thin.[25] It was the type of book one might hide under the mattress and consult surreptitiously at night after others had gone to bed.

Usages was certainly of the same genre, though the contents were less about personal care and maintenance, and more about how to behave in proper society. That said, ownership of an etiquette handbook was probably not to be flaunted, as it showed lack of knowledge about social mores. One imagines *Usages* being consulted frantically by a hostess before an afternoon

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[22] *The New York Times*, "Feminine Chesterfield" September 3, 1911. Title of the obituary shows just how influential Staffe had been in her day. Lord Chesterfield, of course, was known for his letters to his son, written in the mid 1700s and published after his death. See: *Lord Chesterfield's letters to his son and others* (New York: Dutton, 1969); Ester Aresty, *The best behavior, the course of good manners - from antiquity to present - as seen through courtesy and etiquette books* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970): 143-149.

[23] Baroness Staffe, *The Lady's Dressing Room,1892* Lady Colin Campbell trans. (Devon, UK: Old House Books, 2006), 13. First published by Cassell & Company in 1892. Lady Colin Campbell (born Gertrude Elizabeth Blood) was a prolific writer herself, and composed her own etiquette manual (*Etiquette of Good Society*. London: Cassell and Company, 1893) about English customs under the name Gertrude Elizabeth Campbell.

[24] Ibid, p. 14. Italics in original text.

[25] Ibid, p. 363, 171.

tea party, or pored over by a girl and her mother in the early stages of the young woman's courtship.[26] The readership was likely female.

And yet, it was this text that Liu chose to translate: because of its comprehensive scope, Staffe's book was a window into Western society and the proper social behavior that it held so dear. The translation, as Liu mentioned in his preface to the longer book, was a free one. The Chinese text does not adhere strictly to the French original and is annotated with Liu's own notes about social practice; the order of the text is also altered and Liu has combined certain sections and added information to others to aid the Chinese reader. Perhaps the most striking difference is that the conspiratorial feminine tone and gossipy flourish of the French text has been stripped from the Chinese version, where a handbook for ordinary French woman has been refashioned into a no-nonsense reference text for educated Chinese men.[27]

While not militantly reformist, the text is a critique of Chinese practices. Here Liu, trained in elite educational institutions with experience abroad and connections to those in power, presented a civilized model for changing Chinese behavior. With his translation, Liu showcased a range of possibilities for reform in China, with the implicit understanding that such examples could not - and would not - be adopted wholesale. Ultimately, Staffe's book was a distillation of a French custom, which through translation was further distilled by Liu, who was no doubt considering China's current social and political situation as he worked. Some recurring themes that Liu highlights in his translation include: roles for parents and their children - including the prominent role of women - in the courtship process and the wedding ceremony, and the standardized, civic codification of what was formerly a religious ritual.

On Marriage

Liu began his manuscript with a warning: "It is natural for adults to marry; marriage is a great event in one's life. Yet as far as marriage is concerned, one should be cautious to ensure a lifetime of happiness."[28] This sort of warning - the declaration that marriage is a great event in one's life (*zhongshen dashi* 终身大事) to be entered with caution - was commonly found in guidebooks of the period and would have been a familiar admonishment to readers. What followed, however, was new: a discussion of how a young man and woman became acquainted,

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[26] Michelle Perrot ed., *A history of private life, vol. 4: from the fires of Revolution to the Great War* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1990): 307-324, provides some excellent preliminary context for this time period, particularly with reference to courtship, social expectations for youth and marriage rituals.

[27] I am indebted to my French tutor, Anita Sagastegui, for her help with the French text. Her understanding of the material added a depth and an insight to the endeavor that would otherwise be missing. I am thankful for Professor Gao Jun's help with the Chinese text.

[28] Liu Shixun 刘式训, 1. Liu's translation - despite alterations - matched the comprehensive breath of Baroness Staffe's original text. *On Marriage* included the following sections: before the proposal; the proposal; the engagement (private); post-engagement; sending wedding gifts; engagement announcement and the wedding certificate; invitations; the civil ceremony and church ceremony procedures; the civil ceremony; the church ceremony; offering congratulations; the ring bearer and flower girl; the clothing of the groom and male guests; the clothing of the bride and female guests; announcements to those who did not attend; after the wedding; new couple visits friends and relatives; what the bride and groom should know; remarriage; spinster marriage; silver anniversary; gold anniversary; broken engagement; divorce. Relevant excerpts of these sections are discussed selectively.

began a relationship, and arranged a proposal in France. Liu provided a general summary of the original text, omitting specific details about what conditions were considered before to marriage (family background, for example), focusing instead on more general relationships. By framing the text in this way, similarities between Chinese and French customs - particularly the role of the go-between - came to the forefront.

> If a young man is interested in a young woman and wants to marry her, first he must he must tell his parents. Then a relative from the young man's side of the family communicates with the girl's parents. If her parents agree, a meeting can be arranged. The go-betweens should fully understand the familial situations of each side and inform the other side respectively. If the go-between is a mutual friend of the two families they may arrange a get-together for the two families.[29]

At this point, details of the impending match were known only by the two families and the go-between. If the match did not succeed, it was the go-between's responsibility to keep this secret.[30] Just how a young man and woman became acquainted was not discussed, though this was most probably accomplished through various social networks. In France, "Friends and family were of course useful for finding a mate. A best friend's brother or sister was a natural candidate, as were the distant cousins who appeared at family gatherings for weddings, baptisms and First Communions. Young people had plenty of opportunities to meet at such events as charity sales, sporting events (such as tennis or skating) and dances."[31] This was fundamentally different from the Chinese case, where the distinct segregation of unmarried women from their male counterparts was strictly enforced - one of the primary reasons for betrothal and the use of a matchmaker in the first place.

In France, if both parties agreed to the match, this was communicated to all; then the young man would propose. According to Liu, this should happen with relative speed (*buyi guochi, zhi she youyu* 不宜过迟, 止涉犹豫).[32] The proposal consisted of a formal conversation by elder family members about the dowry, wedding contract, and any other pertinent details. "After this was completed, the young man's side should dress in formal clothing and visit the young woman's family to thank them for accepting the proposal. The young woman will meet the young man at this time. He should not be either too excited nor too cold with respect to the proposal acceptance, as should she."[33] From this time on, it was acceptable for the young man to call on the young woman regularly. This was completely different from the Chinese case, where there was often no contact between the man and woman until the day of the wedding. Here, through gifts, outings, and a variety of social functions, there was a chance to build a preliminary relationship before wedlock.

Liu was much more faithful to the French text when discussing the actual engagement. Perhaps this was because the procedures for courtship were more varied, whereas those for engagement were rather specific; he may also have thought that such details - so different from

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[29] Ibid, 1.

[30] Ibid, 2.

[31] Perrot, 309.

[32] Liu, 3.

[33] Ibid, 3.

the Chinese case - would interest his home audience. After the proposal, the young man's side should prepare a ring. On the day of the engagement announcement there was party at the young woman's home. The young man and his family should arrive early. At this time, "when the young woman comes out, the young man should open the box, give her the ring, put it on the fourth finger of her left hand and kiss her hand."[34] The ring itself, Liu explained, illustrated that the couple was engaged and that others should not court her. While the young woman should accept the ring whether she liked it or not, the young man should inquire ahead of time about what type of ring she might like, or what type of setting she fancied for a diamond. "Most young women," Liu wrote, "do not like pearls because they look like tears. They also do not like blue stones. Young men should consider this prior to purchasing a ring."[35]

The Baroness meticulously documented engagement dinner seating arrangements and Liu reported them faithfully: at dinner time, the young man and woman sit side by side, the young man's father should sit on the right of the young woman's mother. The young man's mother should sit to the left of the young woman's father.[36] If there was dancing after dinner, the young woman's parents should announce the engagement at that time, as some guests may not arrive until then. On the day of the announcement the young woman should wear a corsage and bright colors like pink, baby blue or white. Female guests in attendance should wear brightly colored clothing, and certainly no black. Male guests should wear formal attire. After the dinner or dance, the young couple could sit and talk with a chaperone present; this person should not watch them too closely, however. The next day, an announcement should be made to friends and relatives who could not join the festivities.[37]

Though the relationship between the young man and woman was strictly proscribed and carefully monitored by parents and family friends, such interactions would most probably have seemed extraordinary to most Chinese readers. These readers - familiar with a dowry as social currency - were also likely be interested in number and sort of gifts the young man lavished on his bride to be. After the engagement, the young man should send his future bride fresh flowers daily. After the wedding contract was finalized he could send other trinkets like hair pins or earrings. Liu included information from a later chapter on gifts here, providing the Chinese reader insight into the ways in which budding relationships between young women and men were conducted, as well as the form of Western holidays. On the first day of the New Year, Christmas, and the young woman's birthday, for example, the young man should consult with the her mother ahead of time; he may give her candy, music books, and magazines.[38] Books were an

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[34] Ibid, 4. Here, Liu omits the Baroness Staffe's further explanation of this gesture: the kiss symbolized how united the couple was. Staffe, *Usages du monde*, 26-7.

[35] Liu, 5. Baroness Staffe was much more specific: pearls were "an omen of tears to come" and blue stones, specifically aquamarine, should not be given as they were considered bad luck. Turquoise, however, was loved by many for its soft color and meaning - loyalty and truth. Staffe, *Usages du monde*, 26-7.

[36] Ibid; Staffe, *Usages du monde*, 28.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Liu, 7. Information on gifts in Staffe, *Usages du monde*, 245.

appropriate gift for a young woman to give her fiancé; however Liu notes that she should not write anything in them, in case of a broken engagement![39]

Between the engagement and the civil ceremony, men and woman could meet at social functions such as dinners or outings to the theater, chaperoned by older relatives. Each interaction was choreographed with precision: when the engaged couple went out with the young woman's mother, the young man should take his fiancé's mother's arm, and his fiancée should walk to the side.[40] In the countryside, however, the young man could take his lady's arm without worry. In France, as in China, it seems that the importance of proper social decorum was heightened in urban areas.

In France, a marriage contract was set prior to the civil ceremony. Regarding the marriage contract negotiations, Liu wrote: "During the ceremony, the two families should be honest and treat each other politely. Especially with respect to economics. Lest, the result is disappointment and resentment. Ordinary people who are tricked will be angry; if a young man marries and discovers that he has been tricked by the young woman's family he will not be able to accept it. Therefore, these things may lead to divorce."[41] Chinese readers were no doubt familiar with such contracts and the trickery they could produce! In China, marriage contracts were negotiated between the heads of the two families before the engagement and were considered binding once agreed upon; children had little say in the matter. In the French case, marriage contract was deemed official by the town notary. The contract could be signed either at the notary's office or at the young woman's house. If the latter was the case, there would be a dinner or tea party to celebrate the occasion. This would no doubt have been seen as extraordinary by Chinese readers; in China, of course, the action occurred at the young man's home, and a civil officiant would have been novel, to say the least. At the French civil ceremony, "When the notary arrives, they read the contract and it is placed on the table; the young man and woman both sign it, the young man taking the young woman's hand as they approach the table. He signs first, passes the pen to his fiancé, who passes the pen to her beau's mother. The pen is then passed to the young woman's mother, the young man's father and then the young woman's father."[42] At this time, the young woman should wear youthful and feminine clothes that were attractive but not showy; this would be her last opportunity to wear the clothing of a young, unmarried, girl.[43] In both France and China, marriage marked the formal entrance into adulthood; signing the marriage contract began this process. According to Liu:

> During the signing ceremony, the notary should kiss the young woman's hand to show congratulations. The notary stands, takes the woman's hand, indicating that he wants to kiss it. She should look at the her family and fiancé to make sure that this is alright. They will nod and then the notary can kiss the her hand. Some people think that she should not look at her fiancé. But I think she should, as this shows that

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[39] Liu, 10. According to Liu, personal notes should not be written in books given to one's beloved until after the civil ceremony.

[40] Liu, 10; Staffe, *Usages du monde*, 30. Here Staffe adds that this is done "despite the most ardent desire to take the fiancé's arm." Phrases like "ardent desire" are absent from Liu's text.

[41] Liu, 15.

[42] Liu, 14; Staffe, *Usages du monde*, 33.

[43] Liu,14; Staffe, *Usages du monde*, 34.

> she respects him, and that he is starting to become her husband. Others think that a girl who is not officially married is still under her parent's care. But I think that because she is already wearing the engagement ring she is under the fiancé's care.[44]

Both Liu and Staffe devoted a considerable portion of their respective texts to the detailed procedures of both civil and church ceremonies.[45] In an extensive note Liu wrote:

> There are two types of etiquette, the civil ceremony and the church ceremony. The civil ceremony is the legal aspect, the church service has a religious aspect. If the couple does not have both ceremonies, they the are not recognized as married. In the past, when the church dominated affairs in every European country, it was necessary to marry in a church. Therefore, at that time there was only a church ceremony and no civil ceremony. The government agreed with this, recognized the marriages as legal. Nowadays, France, Australia, and Italy have reformed marriage regulations taking power from the church where now the civil ceremony is a must. The church ceremony has become a (social) custom that is optional. Most commoners do both. Note that in the spring of 1903, the son of French minister of Commercial Affairs had only a civil ceremony, from this you can see the church ceremony is on the decline.[46]

We will see that for our story the civil ceremony was central to marriage reform in China - but just what that ceremony and who the civil authority would be were was yet to be determined. The fact that this process had also occurred in France - a "civilized" country looked to by other "white" nations - placed marriage reform in a larger, modernizing narrative. Liu's translation suggested that this kind of reform could occur in China: a civil ceremony - uniform and streamlined - could replace the familial, the superstitious, and the varied.

Before the civil ceremony, the couple's parents should notify town officials who would display a communique at the entrance of town hall for eleven days announcing the union.[47] The reason for this, Liu noted, was that within those eleven days, if an ex of either party objected to the marriage - perhaps due to one party keeping an engagement gift despite a broken engagement - they could sue.[48] Before the communique was written, the couple had to produce their birth certificates and written proof of their parents' consent, if their parents were not present. If one's parents did not consent, all was not lost - in this case, the administrator sent notice to the parents asking for consent. If there was no response after three months, the couple could marry.[49] If the parents were ill and could not attend, the administrator would accept written proof from the doctor; if one's parents had passed away, a death certificate would suffice. In cases of remarriage, a death certificate of a former spouse was needed; divorce was not addressed at this time. Later, during the Nationalist regime, this same process would be adopted for marriage registration, though there is no proof that it originated from Liu's translation.

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[44] Ibid.

[45] Liu also has a section on wedding gifts, adopted from various sections of the Staffe text. See Liu, 11-13.

[46] Liu, 17.

[47] Liu, 17; Staffe, *Usages du monde*, 35. The communique should be posted where the young man and woman live, or where the parties had lived for six months prior, if they had recently moved. If the young man or the young woman was less than twenty, they were not considered formally independent and it should be hung in the vicinity of their parents residence.

[48] Liu, 17.

[49] Liu, 18; Staffe, *Usages du monde*, 36-7.

At this time, Chinese ceremonies took place in the groom's family home; the French civil ceremony, before the church ceremony, was held in a government office with four witnesses.[50] The ceremonies were sometimes held two to three days apart, in which case the bride should wear dowry clothing for the church wedding. Before the civil ceremony, the young man's family would prepare a car and meet the young woman and her parents at her house. The young man's family journeyed to the office in one car, the young woman and her family in another. Witnesses, relatives and friends were to take cars prepared by the young woman's side.[51] Entrances to the office were carefully choreographed. The bride's father took her hand and lead her in, followed by the groom and his mother. The bride's mother and the groom's father were next, followed by family and friends. At the time of the ceremony, the officiant stood in front of the group; the bride and groom stood facing him, to the left and right, respectively. The groom's family and friends were on his side of the hall, the bride's on her side. The official read the marriage certificate aloud and asked the young man and woman if they were willing to marry. If both sides were indeed willing the certificate was signed, first by the young woman, who then handed it to the young man.[52] If, for some unfortunate reason, one of the parties was not willing, the certificate would be immediately nullified. Social mortification would no doubt follow!

Staffe writes in the original text, "It is futile to discuss how marriage is celebrated, because it is the law."[53] Indeed, it seems that celebration of the civil ceremony was relatively subdued, generally there was a family dinner prepared by the young woman's side and attended by those who had been at the earlier ceremony.[54] Chinese readers and reformers would no doubt have noticed the absence of a lavish wedding banquet after the ceremony, a fixture in Chinese weddings of the day. Indeed, it was the cost of Chinese wedding ceremonies - due in large part to the banquet and dowry - that lead many to call for their reform. The wedding dinner complete, the groom kissed his bride's hand and left with his parents; the couple would remain separated until after the church ceremony, if one was planned.

Liu's discussion of the church wedding was notable because it was unlikely to occur in China, and as far as government officials were concerned, it was not necessarily a desired outcome of marriage reform. Liu likely included this section as a means of illustrating cultural differences and to demonstrate the type of ritual legacy the French had, a legacy that was altered by the emergence of a secular model.

On the day of the church ceremony, friends and relatives of the bride would assemble at her house. The groom and his family would arrive first and the bride made her entrance at the last moment, taking her final bouquet of white flowers from the groom before the crowd made

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[50] Ibid.

[51] Staffe notes that if witnesses and others have their own cars they should use these rather than inconveniencing the family. Liu, 23; Staffe, *Usages du monde*, 43.

[52] Liu, 23; Staffe, *Usages du monde*, 44. As the civil ceremony was the "duty" of the local official, there was not need to pay him, but "donations" were often made to the local office.

[53] Staffe, *Usages du monde*, 44.

[54] Liu, 23; Staffe, *Usages du monde*, 44. Again, there was assigned seating: the young man placed at the right of his bride's mother, the young woman to the right of her father, along with any VIPs of the day.

their way to the assembled cars. This scene might have surprised Chinese readers; after all in China, it was the young woman who left her natal home alone and travelled to the groom's family home for the wedding. Furthermore, the church ceremony was held at the young woman's village church, in and deference to her family's religion.[55] Regarding attire, Liu noted that the bride should "dress up a bit."[56] Staffe, not surprisingly, went into much greater detail about the bride's clothing: it should be virginal but not too fastidious, diamonds should be avoided as they were considered too gaudy; fabric and jewelry should be chosen with consideration for the season.[57]

In what would likely tantalize the ordinary Chinese reader, the bride was the star of the day.[58] Escorted by her father to the altar, she should enter the church slowly, with a natural and casual air. Staffe is a bit more descriptive, declaring that despite the undivided attention of the crowd, the bride should act as she is not troubled in the least nor should she present herself like a "victim crowned in flowers, that one drags to the altar."[59] Of the ceremony, Liu summarized Staffe's descriptions, writing the following:

> The bride and groom stand in front of the altar; the bride is on the left and the groom is on the right. Nowadays it is very popular in the church ceremony for the couple to have rings engraved with the other's name and date of wedding. The priest takes the two rings and places them on a silver plate on the altar. The couple kneels before the alter and listens to the priest sing a hymn . . . The groom then takes his bride's hands and they stand. The priest asks the couple in a loud voice if they are willing to marry. The two kneel in front of the priest, then the groom lets go of the bride's hand. The priest takes the wedding plate with the rings on it and gives it to the bride. Then the groom says to her, "my parents expect me to see this as proof of the wedding." Then the priest takes the ring and gives it to the groom, who puts it on the fourth finger of the bride's left hand. He says to her "this is proof of our marriage."[60]

Leaving the church, the bride should take her new husband's hand. Flanked by their family and guests, the new couple left together in a car (usually a coupe, notes Staffe) decorated with flowers.[61] If they were wealthier, on this day, family servants would wear uniforms and women's ponytails should be adorned with white roses and orange blossoms. In a funny mistranslation, here Liu renders ponytail as "horse's head" reminding us that while he was trained to translate high level diplomatic exchanges with specific vocabulary, perhaps the ins and outs of women's fashion may have eluded him.[62] This may also be why he is so vague about women's dress and behavior throughout the text (though this could also have been lack of interest).

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[55] Liu, 19, 22, 26.

[56] Liu, 24.

[57] Staffe, *Usages du monde*, 48.

[58] This was to the extent of the following: If the bride took her father's left arm, all other women in the wedding party were to take the left arm of their men, even if those men were wearing military uniforms (traditionally, in this case the woman would take the man's right arm as the weapon for military uniforms of the day was worn on the left side). However, if the bride's father was a military officer, she must take his right arm, and all other female guests must do the same, regardless of the attire of their male counterparts. Liu, 25; Staffe, *Usages du monde*, 48.

[59] Staffe, *Usages du monde*, 48.

[60] Liu, 20, 22-3.

[61] Liu, 27; Staffe, *Usages du monde*, 51.

[62] Thanks again to Anita Sagastegui to pointing out this incongruity.

The French marriage could be celebrated in a variety of different ways, from a simple family dinner to a grand party in the countryside summer house where the guests could "enjoy the serenity of the flowers and trees."[63] According to Liu, a tea party organized by the bride's family was the most popular custom of the day, because it was more affordable and the etiquette for such a soiree was not as strict. A long table in the dining room would be arranged with fruit, flowers, cookies and drinks. After congratulatory greetings, the new couple, their family and their guests would mingle, chat and eat snacks. The party would then move to the living room, and the cake would be cut. According to Liu, the bride would pretend to cut the cake but because it was so large "she would no doubt have difficulty." Eventually the groom would finish the task and the cake would be served by the best man.[64] Passing her good fortune on to her friends, the bride would take flowers from her dress and give them to any unmarried women in the crowd.[65]

The description of the tea party was not in the original text, which is quite interesting as Staffe covers almost everything related to eating - down to various ways of cutting meat. It is most likely that this information came from Liu's own observations, suggesting that he may have participated in such an event himself. Again, perhaps the cake and tea party were posited as alternatives to the lavish banquet often held in China. The description of the etiquette surrounding the cake - so different from Chinese practice - would no doubt be of interest to Liu's readers. Both texts note that after the honeymoon, "the real responsibility" started. Further details about visiting, invitations, outings, remarriage, anniversaries were also included.

Liu's text serves as a critique of traditional Chinese marriage practices, particularly when read in the wake of reformist agitation for change. The translation highlights differences between Chinese and Western practices, regarding the role of women in courtship and the wedding ceremony, a civil ceremony as a replacement for religious ritual, and the relatively open social interactions between men and women in France. The text was a model and a manual for reforming Chinese practice. Simultaneously, in Shanghai and elsewhere, there was a small movement underway where new-style weddings were practiced by a select few, as we will see below.

PART TWO

Experiments with the New-Style Ceremony

As Liu's translation hit the presses, the earliest new-style ceremonies were recorded in newspapers and women's magazines, beginning in 1905. The fact that these ceremonies were deemed newsworthy in their own right speaks to both audience interest and their novelty. These wedding announcements give us clues as to what early new-style wedding ceremonies were like and the types of people who participated in them.

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[63] Liu, 28.

[64] It is unknown where this custom originated, though it should be noted that this "fake" cutting of the cake also occurs in postwar Japan. See: Walter Edwards, *Modern Japan Through Its Weddings: Gender, Person and Society in Ritual Portrayal* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989).

[65] Liu, 28.

The domestic affairs section (*neiguo jishi* 内国记事) of the magazine *Nüzi Shijie* (女子世界) covered three different ceremonies in one 1907 issue under the subheading "Wedding ceremonies made new" (*hunli yixin* 婚礼一新).[66] In the first, Mr. Wang and Miss Wu - both graduates from Shanghai schools - had their ceremony at a student affairs office (*xuewu chu* 学务处) in Xijin. According to the write-up, the ceremony adhered to "old customs" but also used "civilized" guidelines.[67] The guests gathered and cheered the bride and groom, who wore Western-style clothing. After the ceremony, the bride and groom paid respects to their family (*jian jiazu* 见家族) and accepted congratulations (*shouhe* 受贺). Female students sang the "free marriage song" (*ziyou jiehun ge* 自由结婚歌) to close the wedding. The venue, the couple's attire, the role of friends in the ceremony and their singing seem to mark the union as "new-style." The "free marriage" song itself also offers clues as to what new-style meant.

A copy of the "free marriage" song had been published in a 1904 issue of the magazine in the "literature garden" (*wenyuan* 文苑) section, which included poems, short stories, personal anecdotes and other songs. Songs published in the periodical at the time were aimed at reforming women's behavior and bettering their lot in life: the benefits of women's education were extolled, the painful aspects of foot-binding discussed.[68] All songs were arranged for a Western musical score; the "free marriage" song was set to the key of G and in 4/4 time. The song began with a call for change, where "reforming new China begins with the bride and groom."[69] The lyrics go on to describe past customs - reverence for heaven earth, exchanging jewelry - as repetitive and ritualistic (*pupu* 仆仆). This old ritual was contrasted with new choice and opportunity, and the ability to find real love without the meddling of one's parents or a matchmaker. This love went beyond external attraction and was based on true emotion (*xianghe zen bi de aiqing* 香盒怎比得爱情).

There were other clues about the meaning and practice of free marriage in the song, too. The wedding took place in a hall (*huitang* 会堂) outside of either the bride or the groom's home. Guardians (*zhuhun ren* 主婚人) participated and everyone was happy. This happiness was juxtaposed in the second verse with "laughable customs of old society, relying solely on a matchmaker to connect people: the process of urging the bride to marry and prepare (*cuizhuang* 催妆); the a veil shielding her face (*queshan* 却扇), a noisy crowd looking in on the bride and groom (*hunao kan xinren* 胡闹看新人). Nowadays this [new] marriage (*hunyin* 婚姻) is a revolution in women's rights and equality where one husband and one wife is the most civilized."[70] The civilized wedding took place in a hall "full of guests." After the ceremony there were speeches, organ music and dancing. The message of the song is clear: new behavior based on choice, individuality and emotion meant reform of "laughable" old customs, a new beginning for China predicated on new possibilities for women and families.

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[66] "Neiguo jishi 内国记事," *Nüzi shijie* 女子世界 no. 6 (1907): 93-4.

[67] Ibid, 93.

[68] "Wenyuan 文苑," *Nüzi shijie* 女子世界 no. 11 (1904): 64, 66.

[69] "Ziyou jiehun ge自由结婚歌," *Nüzi shijie* 女子世界 no. 11 (1904): 63-4.

[70] Ibid.

Returning to the *Nüzi Shijie* report on new wedding ceremonies, we find the bride and groom in the second ceremony, Miss Lin and Mr. Fan, had both studied abroad in Japan and become engaged there, of their own accord. The union was marked as a "free marriage" (*ziyou jiehun* 自由结婚) and took place outside of either party's home at a friend's residence, in May.[71] The final wedding, between Shanghai residents Mr. Zheng and Miss Zhang, was held in a pavilion at a private residence in September. The sequence of the wedding ceremony was reprinted for *Nüzi Shijie* readers as follows:

> 1. the master of ceremonies enters and faces north 2. male guests enter face west and sit; music plays 3. female guests enter, face east and sit; music plays 4. the guardians (*zhuhun ren* 主婚人) enter and stand, facing south and west; music plays 5. introducers (*jieshao ren* 介绍人) enter and stand, facing east and south; music plays 6. the bride and groom enter and stand, facing north; music plays 7. the guardians read the wedding certificate 8. the bride and groom stamp the wedding certificate 9. the guardians stamp the certificate 10. the introducers stamp the certificate 11. the guardians exchange jewelry on behalf of the bride and groom 12. bride and groom face each other and bow 13. the guardians speak; the bride and groom thank the guardians and the introducers 14. the guardians and introducers leave; music plays 15. guests applaud.[72]

What set these weddings apart and made them seem both new, and newsworthy? In the first ceremony, a new-style wedding was marked by a unique venue, Western-style clothing, and singing about free marriage. Paying respects to one's family and accepting congratulations were the "old" customs retained by the couple. In the second wedding, participants were students who had studied in Japan and become engaged on their own. In the third wedding, which was probably the most elaborate, there was a new, detailed ceremony with roles for guardians, introducers and bride and groom. All ceremonies took place outside of either the bride or the groom's home - in private residences of others, or in the case of the first wedding, in a student affairs office. Furthermore, these new-style weddings used a marriage certificate rather than parental witnesses to mark the marriage as sealed. This was a case of ritual practice adapting to personal need, as there was no basis for this type of marriage certificate under the Qing civil code. Choice - of one's spouse, of a venue, of clothing, of a marriage certificate - marked such weddings as new.

At the end of the piece, the reporter noted that "new wedding ceremonies are slowly becoming popular and it seems that new families (*xin jiating* 新家庭) will appear in the near future." [73] New families, which came from new weddings, would create a new China - the form which was still to be determined. Not all choice was seen as good, however. Indeed, the article continued: "But, Mr. Wang's wedding, which was held in a student affairs office, is downright outrageous and those who accepted this really cannot be excused from blame."[74] Apparently, even if a ceremony retained traditional gestures like acknowledging one's relatives, marrying in the student affairs office was going too far!

Two other new-style ceremonies were documented at this time, one in *Shibao* in 1905, and another in *Nüzi Shijie* in 1907. Both contained similar elements, and consciously mixed

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[71] Ibid.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Ibid.

aspects from East and West to produce a new, unique ceremony similar to that of Miss Zhang and Mr. Zheng.[75] As with the aforementioned weddings, the "Western" part of the wedding ceremony is the new wedding ritual, and the "Eastern" aspects have to do with familial interactions after the actual marriage is performed. The 1905 *Shibao* article also included a description of the couple's wedding certificate. The certificate contained the names, ages and birthplaces of the bride and groom, the name and provenance of the introducer, the date and location of the wedding and the name of the guardian.[76]

In both cases, Zhang Shuhe (张叔和) acted as guardian, and the ceremonies were held at the Wei Chun Park (味莼园) in Shanghai. Zhang was the proprietor of the park, which he purchased in the 1880s, though it remained under foreign management until 1909.[77] The park was a large amusement complex, with lodging and entertainment; it also sold Western and Chinese food. There were fireworks, drama performances, a photography studio, a circus, electric lights, sports courts, and a dance hall. The park was also a site for political gatherings.[78] Zhang's guardian's speech at the 1907 wedding gives clues as to what new-style weddings meant to those who practiced them at the time: "My country is beginning to become more civilized as the marriage system is compelled [to change]. Erroneous customs have spread disharmony and misfortune, and are a main reason that the country is weak. If uncivilized (*yeman* 野蛮) marriage is not revolutionized I believe that new families will never appear."[79] In this schema, the new-style wedding was nothing less than the key to China's future.

Images of New Weddings and New Women

Four years later, after years of teetering, the Qing dynasty fell. That same year, 1911, the wedding photograph of Zhang's sixth daughter was published in the September issue of *Funü shibao* (妇女时报).[80] The magazine, which began publication in Shanghai that year, ran until 1917. It was geared towards promoting women's issues educating women about their female counterparts in the West, particularly America. It featured articles about household health, women's employment and schooling, the legal rights of women abroad, personal accounts of local customs, recipes, clothing patterns, women's literature - both poems and longer stories - and household how-to.

Magazine covers, which were painted, give further clues as to the type of woman the editors hoped to both attract and produce. Cover girls were active and engaged in the outside world. They read the paper together, walked to school, strolled along the Bund with a female

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[75] In both cases, the introduction to the ceremony read: "jointly using civilized guidelines from both East and West." S*hibao* 时报, "Wenming jiehun shi dan 文明结婚礼式单" September 1, 1905, 7 and "Neiguo jishi 内国记事," *Nüzi shijie* 女子世界 no. 6 (1907): 93-4.

[76] S*hibao* 时报, "Wenming jiehun shi dan 文明结婚礼式单."

[77] Xiong Yuezhi 熊月之主编 ed., *Shanghai tongshi* 上海通史 (Shanghai: Shanghai remin chuban she, 1999), 571-2.

[78] Ibid.

[79] "Neiguo jishi 内国记事," *Nüzi shijie* 女子世界 no. 6 (1907): 93-4.

[80] See: *Funü shibao* 妇女时报 no. 7 (1911).

companion. When they were alone many were busy with literature: reading, writing or sending letters. One subject, on the cover of issue eight, fell asleep, her head resting on the table by her magazine. Another woman, on the cover of issue thirteen, peers into a store window at magazine covers on display, one of which looks suspiciously similar to the cover of issue eight. The message was clear: readers were reading about themselves, they were reflected - literally and figuratively - on the cover. These were confident, educated, refined women; they were the type of women who would have had (or wanted) a new-style wedding.

Each issue of the *Funü shibao* began with a series of photographs. There were individual portraits of female students and notable women both Chinese and foreign; class pictures, particularly of girls' schools also graced the magazine's pages. There were photos of Chinese women engaged in interesting activities: on horseback, in Western dress, flying airplanes; foreign princesses, political families, and women in various costumes including Manchu, Western, Japanese dress and bridal attire were pictured. Almost every issue also featured new-style wedding portraits and photographs of newly married couples.

As with the text of the magazine itself, the photos were meant to inform readers - who were most likely women in Shanghai and surrounding areas - about their female counterparts, domestic and foreign. The images presented female readership with a range of increased and increasing possibilities: for their education, for social and ritual behavior, and a certain degree of independence. This was alluded to by the women on the magazine's stylized covers who were often alone outdoors, or at most accompanied by a sole female companion. Here, with the photographs, were in-the-flesh examples of what was only imagined on the cover, real life actors with familiar names and hometowns, displaying various permutations and layers of possibility. In this way, the photos serve as a mediating layer between the idealized, almost aspirational cover images, and the un-illustrated, instructive content of the magazines itself.

With respect to wedding photographs, message was not particularly subtle in the first few issues. In the first published wedding image, that of a Javanese aristocrat's wedding (which begs the question of the photo's origins), the newly married couple sat side by side on a rug, a photo backdrop crinkling behind them.[81] The image, which at first looks to be taken outdoors reveals upon close inspection to have been taken in a studio. The bride and groom slouch, torsos exposed, legs obscured by patterned cloth. Both wear jewelry and headdresses, which are offset by their dark skin. The result is exotic looking, foreign, even primitive. It is difficult for the viewer to distinguish the man from the woman.

This image is juxtaposed with a studio photograph of a Chinese couple who have participated in a "new-style" wedding ceremony.[82] The bride and groom stand, with straight posture, arm in arm, a stark contrast to the slouching Javanese pair. The groom wears a dark colored Western-style suit with a long coat and white shirt, the bride is in a white dress. Though the dress has a high neck reminiscent of Chinese-style attire, her veil is clearly a nod to Western bridal tradition as is the color of the gown itself: white, which traditionally was reserved for

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[81] See Figure 3: "Zhuawa guizu jiehun shi zhi sheying 爪哇贵族结婚时之摄影," *Funü shibao* 妇女时报, no. 2 (1911).

[82] See Figure 4: "Liu Junji sheng yu Chen nü shi ding zhen 刘君吉生与陈女史定真," *Funü shibao* 妇女时报, no. 2 (1911).

funerals and mourning. She clutches a bouquet of flowers, also in keeping with Western-style ceremonies. The photos, placed on opposing pages, would have been viewed by a reader simultaneously. The visual cues could not be clearer: the first wedding was primitive, likely steeped in superstition, tribalism, and backwardness. The second wedding, with its Chinese participants, was new.

Any lingering questions about the meaning of "new" were answered on the next page. Now, the message was condensed onto one page with two images side by side.[83] Considering the page from right to left, as readers of the time would, we are confronted with the first caption which reads "preserving the essence of national culture, China's old-style wedding" (*baocun guocui, Zhongguo jiushi jiehun* 保存国粹 中国旧式结婚). The picture of the old-style wedding, which we explored in the chapter one, came next. The setting was an ordinary room with no real defining characteristics apart from the portrait of a foreign woman on the wall. The carpet on the floor reminds the viewer of the one that laid at the feet of the Javanese couple. There are four people pictured, family members we presume; the bride was the second woman from the right. There was no physical contact between the subjects, all of whom wore traditional Chinese clothing. We see padded shoes, the men in soft and formless silk robes with butterfly clasps and high collars. Their hats were the type worn by scholars and government officials.[84] With her tiny feet and slicked back hair the woman to the bride's right was hardly remarkable, her face blurred as she had moved while the photograph - with its long exposure time - was taken. The bride was decked out in her wedding finest. Though the photo is black and white, we can imagine without difficulty the red of her dress. A long veil obscures her face, covering her body well past her waist.

Scanning the page from right to left, the reader would then see the caption "the sweetness of freedom, a European new-style wedding" (*ziyou zhi mi, Ouzhou xinshi jiehun* 自由之蜜 欧洲新式结婚). Here, rather than pictured inside, we find a couple standing alone outdoors. They were not flanked by relatives but rather were poised to begin a journey on their own. The man's straight posture, the jaunty bend of his left leg, his left arm resting on his hip denote a possession of this new role as husband. The clothing was of course, Western. The man wore a top hat and suit with a button-down vest and gloves. The clothing was tight on his body, his limbs were defined and taut; who could miss how this contrasts with the soft formlessness of his Chinese counterparts?

The main story here is the Western bride. Though she was largely covered by her long gown, the gown itself was fitted to her body. Through puffy sleeves we make out her arms, the lines of her shoulders, a high collar defines her neck, we can find the curve of her waist as she clutched her new husband's arm. She was ensconced in white and her veil framed her face. We find her gazing outwards. Old and new; Chinese and European; preservation and sweetness - could the contrasts be starker, the message any more obvious?

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[83] See Figure 5: "Baocun guocui, zhongguo jiushi jiehun; ziyou zhi mi, Ou'zhou xinshi jiehun 保存国粹 中国旧式结婚 自由之蜜 欧洲新式结婚," *Funü shibao* 妇女时报, no. 2 (1911).

[84] Antonia Finnane, *Changing clothes in China: fashion, history, nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 68.

Considering the four pictures together, the message is slightly augmented. In this case, the Chinese couple with their new-style wedding become examples of the possibility for ritual change in China. Their attire - the suit and top hat for the man, the white dress, bouquet, veil for the bride - their physical closeness, and the fact that the bride and groom were pictured alone rather than surrounded by friends and family are dramatic markers of something new. With similarities between the Western and new-style Chinese wedding, the photograph of the "old" Chinese wedding and the Javanese ceremony are tied together as well, unleashing a series of what may be unsettling questions. How were the old-style, Chinese customs - even if they did "preserve" national essence - different from those in Java? In this light, what was at first simply "old" now becomes almost primitive. Having established this trope within the first few issues, the implicit meaning of a new-style wedding photograph was clear: new-style marriage meant freedom, individuality, choice, modernity, newness and progress. Symbolism aside, what do such photographs tell us about who participated in new-style weddings, and what these weddings may have been like?

Participants in New-Style Ceremonies

We know from *Funü shibao* and *Shibao* that participants in new-style weddings were often students; some of whom had studied abroad. Others - like the couples who married with Zhang Shuhe as guardian - clearly knew or had connections to those who knew Westerners and Western customs. These same participants may have also been politically inclined, or brushed shoulders with politicos of the day. Careful consideration of the photographs published in both the *Funü shibao* and *Zhonghua funü jie* (中华妇女界), another Shanghai based women's magazine of the day, allow us to further hone in on biographical and material details to create a broader sketch of participants, reconstruct the web of interactions between them, and speculate how customs may have been understood, transferred and assimilated. *Funü shibao* published around 40 wedding photographs during its six year run; about 10 wedding photographs ran in *Zhonghua funü jie*. Generally speaking, these 50 photographs can be divided into four groups, based on bibliographic information of the participants: the majority of images published at this time included the names of both the bride and groom in a brief caption.

Those in the first group were gainfully employed in relatively prestigious jobs but did not necessarily have connections to political circles. In this sense, they can be viewed as precursors to Wen-hsin Yeh's petty urbanites of 1920s and 30s Shanghai: they had a familiarity with foreigners and had been educated; some studied abroad.[85] Others gained exposure to the West through their jobs. One example is Pu Zhuoyun (濮卓云), general manager of the Zhejiang County railroad, and his wife Qu Baoji (瞿保吉), a teacher at a Nanyang school.[86] Pu and Qu's wedding photograph is of note as it captures a series of cultural transitions in one frozen snap.

The location is nondescript, but seems to be an outdoor courtyard. The bride and groom are in Western-style dress, or what might be seen as a Chinese interpretation of Western-style

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[85] See: Wen-hsin Yeh, "Progressive Journalism and Shanghai's Petty Urbanites: Zou Taofen and the Shenghuo Weekly, 1926-1945" in *Shanghai Sojourners* (Berkeley, CA: Institute of East Asian Studies, 1992): 186-238.

[86] See Figure 6: "Zhejiang tielu jianzhu zhang Pu Zhuoyun yu jiaoyu jia Nanyang shifan Qu Baoji jiehun sheying 浙江铁路建筑长 濮卓云 与教育家南洋师范瞿保吉," *Funü shibao* 妇女时报 no. 17 (1915).

dress. The groom wears a dark colored suit with a long jacket, white collared shirt and tie, a top hat and white gloves. There is a corsage on his lapel. The bride wears a white two-piece wedding gown. The top has long sleeves and a high Chinese-style collar, and hits at mid thigh. The bottom consists of a long skirt, which touches the ground. The bride carries a bouquet of flowers and wears a large veil with a floral headpiece. Though her body is completely covered, her face is not. The couple is flanked by young female attendants. They wear longer silk tunics with Chinese collars, pants, black cloth shoes with white socks; they don floral corsages, some clutch flowers, others handkerchiefs. In the front row two solemn - almost mournful - little boys wear uniforms of nautical or military design. They stand on an oriental carpet, bodies hidden behind tall baskets of flowers. From the photo's caption we learn that the little boys were orphaned, and that are now in Qu's care. Along with a new-style wedding ceremony we find a new formulation of family, with Qu - who was employed as a teacher outside the home - caring for her brothers.

More is known about Wu Weichen's biography (吴伟臣 1879-1946). Born in Shanghai, Wu entered the French company Yongxing (永兴) in 1898 as an apprentice. After his apprenticeship was complete, he was responsible for customs duties there. Wu later left Yongxing for a German company where he took a position as a comprador, overseeing exports. In 1905 he returned to Yongxing as a deputy comprador; in 1918 he became an executive comprador dealing with exports. Little else is known of Wu; in 1946 he committed suicide by jumping from a building.[87] There are no records on Wu's wife, Shen Fengwu (沈凤梧). As with many other wedding portraits published in *Funü shibao*, Wu and Shen's wedding photo was taken at a Shanghai photo studio *Minying* (民影), located on Dama Road.[88] The couple stood against a painted backdrop of an outdoor scene - a field and trees. Wu dressed in a dark colored Western-style suit. He wore white gloves and held a top hat. Shen's dress, a Chinese interpretation of a Western-style wedding dress was white with floral decorations. The dress was actually a two piece garment, the top with a high collar reminiscent of traditional Chinese styles, the lace ruffle of the bottom skirt reaching the tips of the bride's toes. Shen clutched a large bouquet of flowers. A large, puffy, white veil framed her face, in keeping with new-style brides of the day. Shen's dress was remarkably similar to the dress worn by the bride in the first new-style wedding photograph published by the magazine, suggesting that this style was a popular one. Taken together, these photographs give us a better sense of Chinese interpretations of Western-style ceremonial dress at this time.

While individuals comprising group one may have been employed in positions that were noteworthy at best, those who fell into group two had a higher public profile and were engaged in artistic production. Members of this group were involved in publishing, painting and calligraphy, and the movies; some studied or traveled abroad in Japan. These factors led to a degree of political involvement not exhibited by members of the previous group.

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[87] Zhou Jiazhen 周家珍 ed., 20 *Shiji zhonghua renwu mingzi hao zidian* 20世纪中华人物名字号辞典 (Beijing: Falü chuban she, 1999): 362.

[88] See Figure 7: "Wu Weichen jun yu Shen Fengwu nüshi jiehun sheying 吴伟臣君与 沈凤梧女士结婚摄影," *Funü shibao* 妇女时报, no. 7 (1911).

One extraordinary example was the famed movie director Li Minwei (黎民伟 1893-1953). Born in Japan of Guangdong stock, Li returned to Hong Kong for his schooling. In 1911, he joined the Hong Kong branch of the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance (*Tongmenghui* 同盟会). The Alliance, founded in 1905 by Sun Yat-sen, aimed to rid the country of Manchu rule and establish a Republic. Li's career and the Republic rose simultaneously: in 1913 his first film, "Zhuangzi Tests his Wife," was shown in Hong Kong; it is generally considered to be Hong Kong cinema's first feature film. Li's wife, the actress Yan Shuji (严淑姬 1896-1952, also known as Yan Shanshan 严珊珊) had a role in the picture. Li would go on to produce a series of political films and photographs: in 1924 he took pictures of the front line on the Northern Expedition, later he made "The Guomindang's First Representative Assembly" and commemorative films after Sun's death including "Sun Yat-sen's Journey North," and "Sun Yat-sen's Funeral and Memorial."[89] Li continued to make popular films during this period as well, which placed him in a unique position to shape both political and cultural mores. He fled to Hong Kong in 1937.

But in 1914, for a moment at least, the personal took center stage. Ten photographs of the couple were published in *Funü shibao* in a spread that detailed the couple's wedding and their honeymoon. That so many images of the couple were published was probably because they had starred in a movie together, which generated a good deal of curiosity surrounding their relationship. Practically speaking, it is also likely that Li had access to photographic equipment due to his professional background. As with other wedding photos of the time, the couple wore new-style wedding attire - a suit for Li and white bridal attire for Yan. Captions of these images give us a sense of how photography was integrated into new-style ceremonies; here we learn that although one image was taken right after the ceremony itself, the couple had their formal wedding portrait taken three days later. It is possible that the wedding portrait was taken on the couple's honeymoon in Guangdong; a set of studio portraits was shot at this time. *Funü shibao* also published four photos from the honeymoon itself showing leisure activities; horseback riding and hiking.[90] The publication of honeymoon photos was something new, depicting not only leisure time but a sense of companionship between the bride and groom who seem to be enjoying each other's company. Indeed, it is hard to imagine the bride and groom who "preserved the essence of national culture" with China's "old-style" wedding enjoying the same vacation time and sporting activities.

Though his wedding was not overtly political, Li's connections to the political scene are both interesting and important. We have seen that in the early 1900s, the new-style wedding was at times allied with "revolution" which - rather than being political charged - meant changes in behavior, in society, in personal choice. Now that the political revolution had occurred, had anything changed?

Yes and no. As we will soon see, the ceremonies themselves retained a good degree of continuity after 1911. What did change - due to women's magazines - was the degree of visibility such ceremonies received. This brings us to group three, which is composed of

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[89] Zhou, 1387.

[90] "Li Minwei yu Yan Shuji jiehun hou sanri sheying 黎民伟与严淑姬结婚后三日摄影," in *Funü shibao* 妇女时报, no. 13 (1914).

political figures and their children. Members of this group were linked in a web of familiarity through positions of power and influence. Many studied in Japan or at prestigious institutions abroad; some were connected to Yuan Shikai or Sun Yat-sen; others went on to hold various positions in the Nationalist government.[91]

The wedding photographs of two of Zhu Qiqian's (朱启钤 1872-1964) daughters were published the magazine in 1914 and 1915.[92] Zhu had held a number of prestigious political positions after the fall of the Qing; when the photographs were published, Zhu was acting as cabinet minister for the Bureau of Internal Affairs (*Neiwubu zongzhang* 内务部总长).[93] The photographs of Zhu's daughters are interesting because one daughter married in more traditional-style clothing, the other in Western-style dress. In the first image, Zhu's second daughter wears a long, patterned silk tunic and skirt with Chinese style headdress; the tunic is accentuated with an elaborate decorative knot. Though she is clearly not bowing to the latest fashion trends, her face is not covered which suggests that though her dress may have been more traditional, the ceremony was likely new-style. Her husband wore a long gown and cap, common attire for scholar officials of the day. On the other hand, in the second photo Zhu's third daughter was decked out in a white Western-style gown, complete with a long flowing train. Her husband wore a dark suit with a white shirt and, like so many grooms of the day clutched a pair of white gloves in his hand. That two sisters from the same family staged such different weddings shows that sartorially, new-style weddings were marked by individuality and choice, and did not necessarily adhere to a set of fixed rules.

Zhu, no doubt, had connections Tang Shaoyi who served as the first prime minister of the Republic. Tang's wedding photo was also published in the magazine at this time, along with that of his fifth daughter who married a young Wellington Koo, future diplomat and ambassador.[94] Both couples wore new-style attire the grooms in Western suits, top hats, shiny shoes and white gloves. The brides wore what we can now identify as new-style wedding gowns of the day: white two piece garments with long sleeves and a Chinese collar, white veils and large bouquets of flowers. With his wedding photograph published alongside his daughter's, this was clearly not Tang's first marriage (it is in fact believed to be his fourth). This juxtaposition illustrated another aspect of such weddings: men who were previously betrothed often remarried wives of their own choosing in new-style ceremonies. These photographs presented a very different rendering of the parent/child dynamic which traditionally had been predicated on a mother and father arranging their child's marriage. In this sense, new-style ceremonies were revolutionary,

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[91] Sun had wed Soong Qingling, of the famous Soong sisters, in his own version of a new-style ceremony in Tokyo in 1915. The union was scandalous as Sun had not formally divorced his first wife and Soong was considerably younger than him.

[92] See Figure 8, 9. The images were "Zhang Yiwu jun yu Zhu ?ru nüshi heying 章以吴君与朱?如女士合影 妇女时报," *Funü shibao* 妇女时, no. 14 (1914) and "Yan Nanzhang jun yu Zhu Songjun nüshi xinhun sheying 严南璋君与朱淞筠女士新婚摄影," *Funü shibao* 妇女时, no. 17 (1915), respectively.

[93] During the Yuan Shikai period, Zhu acted as the directory of the preparatory ceremonies.

[94] "Tang Shaoyi jun yu Wu Weiqiao nüshi jiehun sheying 唐绍仪君与吴维翘女士结婚摄影," in *Funü shibao* 妇女时报, no. 10 (1914).

at times implying both divorce and remarriage, and upsetting generational distinctions and divisions.

But was participating in new-style weddings a political act? As was the case with Liu's translation, participation was certainly a critique of traditional practices. Politicians inherently gave their consent to these new-style ceremonies through their participation, but rather than imposing a mandate on the population they chose to lead by example. Participation may have been symbolic, but it was also still largely personal and inherently individual. And of course, not all participants had political inklings or inclinations. This brings us to last group of photographs published at this time. This group is composed of those whose lives were not noteworthy enough to be recorded or memorialized later, or even worthy of a detailed caption below their photograph in their own day. Regardless, the fact that they had participated in - and photographed - new-style ceremonies shows that such ceremonies were becoming increasingly popular not only amongst the political elite but urban residents with means, an open mind, and an eye for trends, as well.

A Republican New-Style Ceremony?

Such weddings may not have been political, but that did not keep some in the Provisional Republican Government from attempting to become involved in the process of ceremonial reform and codification. This was a testament to the popularity and utility of the new-style wedding: likely, the new government recognized the importance of ceremonial reform as a way of demonstrating its modernity, constructing a foundation for a new type of family and affording new rights to women. In 1913, the very time these wedding photographs were being published in *Funü shibao* and other periodicals, the fledgling government drafted a template for its own a civil ceremony, as a part of a larger piece of legislation on etiquette reform that also addressed funerals. But the document was ambiguous about the place of such reform as related to legal changes, and the negotiation between the legal and the practical was not yet resolved: the preface to the proposed etiquette stated that "aside from civil law and its special, legal stipulations, one should comply with established etiquette, and put it into practice."[95] These legal stipulations, were of course, sections of the Qing criminal code that had become the Provisional Republican civil code and would not be revised until the early 1930s, despite earlier attempts.

Regardless, the Republican vision for the new-style wedding was as follows. The new Chinese wedding party would include guests, witnesses (*zhenghun ren* 证婚人), introducers (*jieshao ren* 介绍人), an officiant (*zhuhun ren* 主婚人) and the bride and groom. Music would play. Then the entire group would stand and face the national and party flags and a portrait of Sun Yat-sen - founding father of the Republic - and bow three times. After this the wedding certificate would be read and the bride and groom, witnesses, introducer and officiant would stamp or seal the document. The bride and groom would then face each other and bow three times. Witnesses would offer words of advice and the guests would offer congratulations. The officiant would thank the crowd and the bride and groom would thank everyone with three bows. Music would play and the ceremony concluded.[96]

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[95] *Lizhi cao'an cankao cailiao* 礼制草案参考材料, 128-1316, Academica Historica, Taiwan.

[96] Ibid.

This draft ceremony was published eight years after Liu's translation of *On Marriage*. Had Liu's work had an impact on the drafters? It is hard to say definitively. We remember that *On Marriage* was advertised in *Shibao* just as new-style ceremonies were being described on its pages; certainly this shows wider popular recognition of new-style weddings, a popularity that the government was perhaps hoping to co-opt. As a government official, Liu was privy to the attention of a certain audience. We would be loathe to overlook potential personal connections: it is possible that Liu knew Tang Shaoyi, who had also received foreign language training as a child, and had served abroad as a diplomat.[97] Though it is unknown if the drafters looked specifically to the French civil ceremony or Liu's text as a model, there were similarities between the two ceremonies: the ceremony was short and took place in one day, the wedding certificate was read aloud and signed by all who participated and was certified by an officiant rather than one's family member. The Republican ceremony had a unique twist, different from both the French civil ceremony or the popular new-style ceremonies of the day. The new, Republican ceremony was marked by the presence of Sun Yat-sen, whose portrait now occupied the place once reserved for family ancestors marking the new, paternalistic, role which the Provisional Government hoped to occupy in a ceremony that was once strictly familial.

Along with a new ceremony that explicitly included politicized, newly crafted Republican imagery, the new government also attempted to redefine the legal side of marriage. Subsequently, documents included examples of a marriage certificate and how a wedding contract should be written. A sample marriage certificate included the names of the bride and groom, their ages, home province and county, the date and place of the wedding, and the signatures or seals of the witnesses, introducers, officiants, bride and groom. Dates for the wedding were chosen by mutual agreement and the wedding could be held in a public hall or a home. Men and women were to wear ceremonial or "suitable" attire. A new civic wedding contract read: "So and so, on X year, age X, from X province and X county is willing with Mr. X to establish this marriage contract."[98] The date follows, along with the signatures of the bride or groom, introducer, witness and officiant. There were two contracts, one copy for each party.

But legal codification, ceremonial standardization, and their subsequent implementation were enormous endeavors, predicated on a series of crucial factors. These included the government's ability to change someone's mind about the new-style ceremony and free marriage, and the construction of a cohesive legal framework to support ceremonial changes, which would drastically alter parental power and proscribe parental roles ceremonially and legally. Here, the fledgling state was left with two paths: individuals could either be made aware of the inherent value of such new behaviors and adopt them of their own accord, or be forced to adopt them due to state mandate. Regardless, both of these paths - a topdown mandate or bottom-up behavior change - would take a large outlay of capital, a degree of political strength, and uniformity of message. The 1913 draft legislation on etiquette reform, which included the Republican civil

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[97] Zhou, 761.

[98] *Lizhi cao'an cankao cailiao* 礼制草案参考材料.

ceremony, was not implemented at the time where "due to insufficient funds, it was halted until the fall of 1928, when it was resumed."[99]

Even so, in 1914, one year after the draft ceremony was proposed and subsequently shelved, government regulations regarding ceremonial clothing were published in the Shanghai guidebook, *Riyong baojian* (日用宝鉴). These regulations give us a sense of what contemporary brides and grooms were supposed to wear to their new-style wedding ceremonies: ceremonial clothing (*lifu* 礼服) made from fabric produced in China. The *Riyong baojian* provides the reader with descriptive sketches - and measurements - of various outfits.[100] Clothing for both men and women was made from black fabric. A woman was outfitted in a pleated skirt and top with a mandarin collar, three quarter length sleeves and hem that fell below the hip. The clothes - relatively nondescript - were not formfitting, nor were they too loose. The clothes were clean, tailored and neat and were actually multipurpose ceremonial wear: to adapt the same attire for a funeral, all a woman needed to do is sew a black gauzy fabric ornament (*shajie* 纱结) to her the breast of her shirt.[101] Men were dressed in what looked almost like a typical Western-style suit, with slight differences. The jacket was quite long, hitting mid-thigh; like an overcoat. He was pictured with a top hat, as though he might be setting out on a journey.[102] Unlike his bride, he was not all in black, but has a white shirt and tie. If he attended a funeral, he would amend his attire by tying black gauzy fabric (*heisha* 黑纱) to his left wrist.[103]

As with new-style wedding attire pictured in *Funü shibao* and elsewhere, the government's ceremonial clothing was very different from traditional attire. But while new-style wedding dress marked the day as special, government attire was decidedly utilitarian: nationalist ceremonial dress could be worn repeatedly. These outfits grouped all celebrations into the same category: ceremonies. Apart from a flourish of black gauze material, there was no difference between wedding and funeral attire. What is most striking is the lack of color in the utilitarian formal wear for women: "traditional" dress was, of course, auspicious red for weddings and mourning white for funerals. The sartorial regulations may have been drafted to eliminate superstition and waste, but instead they unwittingly served to render the clothes as drab, and ceremonies less extraordinary. Furthermore, ceremonial dress was not produced in large quantities for purchase; as measurements were given in the diagrams, it was most likely to be made at home and used for special occasions only; it was definitely not convenient! Is it surprising, then, that such regulations did not catch fire, particularly in light of the Provisional Government's failure to enforce its own new-style wedding ceremony? Indeed, sartorial regulations were not strictly enforced, rather, suggested somewhat weakly from the sidelines. Clearly, we have seen from published wedding photographs that even those engaged in high

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[99] Ibid.

[100] See Figure 10: *Riyong baojian*日用宝鉴 (Shanghai: Chinese Republican Book Publishers, 1914). This information was later reproduced in the guidebook *Jiating riyong funü baojian* 家庭日用妇女宝鉴. (Shanghai: Shanghai shuju, 1920).

[101] *Riyong baojian*日用宝鉴, 1-3.

[102] Ibid.

[103] Ibid.

level politics - Tang Shaoyi, for example - did not adhere to such rules. Really, what chance did they stand?

Ideas about the politics of ceremonial dress persisted throughout the 1920s. At least one contributor to the popular newspaper *Shenbao* (申报) saw ceremonial clothing as a way for the government to make its mark, and for citizens to show their respect for the new regime. "Each country and each era had its own ceremonial dress; when the Nationalist government was established they were too busy to produce these clothes even though changes to ceremonial clothing had already been proclaimed. I hope that the government is not indifferent to this. How could citizens (*guomin* 国民) not be respectful of contemporary etiquette?" The idea was, as of 1926, not catching on as quickly as the author (and perhaps the government) had hoped: "Those who I have seen getting married generally perform the ceremony in convenient civilian clothing."[104]

That there was little overt political involvement in new-style wedding ceremonies until the late 1920s reinforces our assertion that participation in a new-style wedding was not a political act but was, instead, something practiced by politicians and those with means for a variety of different reasons. For many, participation represented "revolution" with a lower case "r," and meant change on a personal level, where individuals led by example. Perhaps this is one reason why wedding photographs of the political elite were published in women's magazines of the day: while the government lacked funds or the organization to implement ritual reform, photographs were a low cost way to show new behaviors as something both aspirational, and attainable. Ultimately, ritual reform or state codification of ceremonial legislation was for all practical purposes, secondary: what continued in popular practice was essentially the same ceremony, minus the political flourishes. The process of wedding reform moved forward regardless.

PART THREE

The Transmission of New-Style Ceremonies

One way that this process occurred - perhaps the most instrumental piece of the puzzle - was through the continued publication of information about new-style and Western-style weddings. Various versions of the new-style wedding practices were circulating in Shanghai at this time, documented in newspapers, magazines and guidebooks. They were probably also observed by city residents with increasing frequency. As with wedding announcements, such articles often included numbered instructions, which were easy for readers to both understand and emulate. Yet rather than presenting a uniform picture, we find a lack of standardization during this time, where the range of possibilities and practices available to readers seemed only to increase in the wake of the traditional ceremony.

In her introduction to a 1915 article entitled "Shanghai's Marriage Ceremonies" Miss Wang Jieliang (汪杰梁) detailed this very problem. "Although the state system has changed since the establishment of the Republic, marriage etiquette (*hunjia lizhi* 婚嫁礼制) has not been enforced. People still continue to use old methods and have also concocted what they take to be

[104] *Shenbao* 申报, "Hunjia yi yong limao lifu 婚嫁宜用礼帽礼服," 227-504 (2) 1926.

a civilized ceremony."[105] According to Miss Wang, ceremonies were either too extravagant or too simple. Furthermore, in Shanghai, "the more ceremonies that come out, the stranger they are, where there is almost no set standard. This should not be blamed on ordinary people."[106]

Miss Wang's description of the "new-style" ceremony allows us to better understand how couples who married in the aforementioned new-style weddings may have become acquainted in lieu of betrothal. According to Miss Wang, when young men and women came of age they would be introduced through a matchmaker who would help them exchange photographs. If both sides liked what they saw, they would agree to marry. In some cases, the young man and women already knew each other; in other cases, they communicated through letters before agreeing to set the marriage contract through an intermediary (the introducer, *jieshao ren* 介绍人). Though the matchmaker and introducer still played fundamental roles in facilitating the relationship, the crucial difference here was that both the young man and young woman had a say in their choice of spouse. While on one hand free marriage meant increased choice, according to Miss Wang there was a darker side to this new agency that coincided with a decline of public morals. In countless cases, lack of social experience - particularly for women - could mean trouble where "one moment of zealous infatuation leads them to fall prey to trickery" and "one false step leads to endless sorrow" (*yi shizu qian guhen* 一失足千古恨).[107]

Supposing one did find a suitable partner, the next step was becoming formally engaged (*dingqin* 定亲). Here the groom-to-be sent his photograph, a ring, and other goods over to the future bride's home. If she agreed, she would send her photograph and ring back to the young man's house and this set the relationship.[108] This type of engagement was seen as a way of saving money as it eliminated the "bride price" or courtesy money (*pinjin* 聘金) that would have traditionally been exchanged between families.[109] This money presented an obstacle for many who wished to marry but lacked funds and consequently had to borrow money. Prior to the wedding day, an introducer would communicate with both families and set a date that was presumably based on convenience rather than auspiciousness. The ceremony itself was relatively similar to what we have seen published in *Shibao* and elsewhere.

Miss Wang concluded her discussion of "new-style" weddings with a description of church weddings which fell under the "special" category. No mention of the courtship or engagement is included - it is likely that such a courtship would be in keeping with new-style practices detailed above. A new-style church wedding was officiated by a pastor or priest. First the officiant, bride, groom, and guests would sing a eulogy. The officiant would then ask both the bride and groom if they were willing to marry. The marriage certificate was read. Everyone prayed to God. The bride and groom then thanked God and read their vows (*zhiyuan shu* 志愿

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[105] Wang Jieliang 汪杰梁 "Shanghai hunjia zhi lijie上海婚嫁之礼节," *Zhonghua funü jie* 中华妇女界 1 no. 4 (1915): 1.

[106] Ibid.

[107] Ibid, 5. See also: *Shenbao*, "Xinjiu shi hunyin de liangmian guan 新旧式婚姻的两面观" 192-345 (4) 1923.

[108] Wang, 5.

[109] The economics of new-style weddings are discussed at length: *Shenbao*, "Hunjia gailiang yu jingji guanxi 婚嫁改良与经济关系" 183-531 (1) 1922.

书) while holding hands. They then exchanged jewelry and sung another eulogy, which concluded the ceremony.[110] This ceremony would most likely have been practiced by a small minority, perhaps coastal families, in areas that had had contact with missionaries or by students who had returned from abroad.

As if this multitude of options was not enough to satiate readers, magazines also included discussions of foreign wedding customs. One such article, entitled "American Marriage Customs" (*Meiguo hunjia zhi fengsu* 美国婚嫁之风俗) was published in the second issue of *Funü shibao* (1911). This was the same issue that began with the wedding photographs of the Javanese and Chinese couples, followed by images of the Western "new-style" and "traditional" Chinese wedding. Considering the message - traditional needed revision, new-style was modern - the article can be interpreted as an instruction manual of sorts for new-style wedding protocol and civilized behavior, presenting a range of possibilities and opportunities for readers. While the piece ostensibly discussed American wedding customs, small portraits were interspersed throughout the text of this article featuring American, German, and Italian women, and a European couple. The message, it seemed, was that new-style ceremonial practices were common in "the West" America being only one example. Indeed, astute readers would find remarkable practical similarities between this text and Liu's translation, as well.[111]

Rather than exchanging photographs as in new-style Chinese practice, in America young men and women were introduced through friends and usually got acquainted at dinner parties. If both sides already knew each other, the young man could call on the young women at her house, invite her to the park, a show, or dancing. If the couple went out dancing or to a show in the evening, the young man should invite an older female chaperone, or risk criticism from others.[112] If the affection was mutual, young man should show his "innermost feelings" slowly, otherwise it was considered rude. As for the proposal, the young man should also be brave and ensure that he could gain parental approval.[113] After this he could then go freely to the young woman's house and send her fresh flowers daily.

As in France, most young women in America did not like pearl engagement rings because they looked like tears.[114] On the day of the engagement, the young man brought a gold and diamond ring and fresh white flowers to the young woman's house. After putting the ring on the third finger of her left hand, he kissed it; the ring illustrated that the young woman was spoken for.[115] After a successful engagement, it was time to make a formal announcement. There might be a dinner or a dance where the friends and family of the young couple were invited but

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[110] Wang, 5.

[111] Whether presented in Chinese or translated from English, such information generally did not deviate from the actual practices occurring abroad at the time; Chinese understandings of Western-style weddings were remarkably accurate. See, for example the etiquette manual: Home Makers of the World, *Wedding Bells for the Engaged Girl: Her Engagement, Trousseau, Wedding At Home. Proper Forms, Customs and Practices* (Chicago, 1924).

[112] "Meiguo hunjia zhi fengsu 美国婚嫁之风俗" *Funü shibao* 妇女时报, no. 2 (1911): 31.

[113] Ibid, 32.

[114] Ibid.

[115] Ibid.

unaware of the purpose of the gathering; after dinner the bride's father would announce the proposal and engagement to the crowd and congratulate the parents and bride and groom to be; for this occasion, the young bride should not wear black, or dress entirely in white.[116] The wedding should take place not long after the announcement. Brides generally preferred the months of June, July and August for the ceremony. Friends and relatives were expected to send gifts two weeks before the ceremony and with consideration to the economic background of the bride and groom; the groom also received gifts. The bride should wear a pure white dress, jewelry and flowers from the groom.[117]

The article describes two types of ceremonies. In both cases, a wedding certificate obtained through the municipal government was needed to certify the union as legal. For those who "thought the church wedding was too tedious" they may choose a municipal hall instead.[118] Here, the couple arrived at the relevant bureau, signed the certificate and that was that. Receptions followed and the bride's family prepared a banquet and cake. The bride should cut the cake and give a piece to each guest.[119] It was then time for the honeymoon; the length and grandeur of the which depended on the groom's finances and employment. Divorce and remarriage are also addressed.

Desire for information about Western-style weddings continued to grow and women's magazines were not the only publications discussing Western-style weddings at this time. In the early 1920s, Shanghai's *Chung Hwa English Weekly* (*Zhonghua yingwen zhoubao* 中华英文周报) provided a translation - both literal and figurative - of the Western wedding ceremony and social customs that accompany it for its readers. In a series of "social conversations" spanning at least seven issues, the Western-style wedding is explicated in dialogues printed in both English and Chinese.[120] We can imagine the audience for this weekly may be someone who wants to participate in Western business or learn more about the West and learn English, but has not had the chance to travel abroad. Perhaps the weekly served as a primer for those who would eventually take a trip overseas. The "social conversations" section emphasized the proper way to behave in what might be deemed - literally - foreign situations: at a dinner party, at a funeral, how to receive an invitation.[121] Whereas the *Zhonghua Funü jie* or *Funü shibao* were specifically targeted at female readership, *The Chung Hwa Weekly* was by far more gender neutral and perhaps even aimed at men; the scenes were presented from a man's perspective as the dialogue was between two males. Indeed, the dialogues feature a well informed Mr. Tang and a somewhat befuddled Mr. Hu. We can guess that backdrop is the United Kingdom; perhaps Mr. Hu has just begun his studies there and Mr. Tang is helping his fellow compatriot learn the

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[116] Ibid.

[117] Ibid, 34.

[118] Ibid.

[119] Ibid. "Jiaoji bian, hunsang yizhu 交际篇, 婚丧仪注," *Jiating riyong funü baojian* 家庭日用妇女宝鉴, 28.

[120] I say at least as the Shanghai library only held these issues. It is unclear when the dialogue actually began, I am suspecting much earlier, with the courtship. The dialogues were translated and annotated by CY Vane.

[121] The weekly also contained basic dialogues, English grammar, "a fairy tale in simple language," a sample business letter sample, bibliographic stories, translations of Chinese fables and poems.

ropes. We join our two protagonists as they discuss the different styles of courtship. With respect to how couples meet in the in the United Kingdom, Mr. Hu saw quite a gap between Chinese and Western customs:

> Mr. Hu: I don't see much sacrifice about the foreigners' wedding, if, as I'm told the young people are free to choose their own partners.
> Mr. Tang: Yes, that's quite true. With us, the families find husbands for their daughters; but with the foreigners the custom is quite different; in most cases the parents know nothing about the matter till the young man asks the father of the girl to give him his daughter as his wife.[122]

In the West, apparently parents were often in the dark about a child's spouse-to-be until the time of the proposal. While this observation is not new, we do find the Chinese wedding being framed (by men) in terms of sacrifice - here perhaps of individuality or choice. The Western wedding was marked by a distinctly different relationship with one's family where relations between peers, rather than between parent and child were paramount.

Once Mr. Tang and Mr. Hu arrive at the church they admired the decor.[123] As the ceremony begins, it is up to Mr. Tang to explain its nuances to Mr. Hu:

> Mr. Hu: What do you mean by "best man"?
> Mr. Tang: He is a friend chosen by the bridegroom to accompany and assist him through the service.
> Mr. Hu: Look; the bride is coming up the nave. Who are those girls holding her train?
> Mr. Tang: Those are the bridesmaids, chosen by the bride from among her friends.[124]

It is not entirely surprising that Mr. Hu may have such questions. We note that the function of such attendants was very different from that of an introducer or a witness at a new-style Chinese wedding. The best man and bridesmaids are peers of the bride and groom, helping them successfully execute the ceremony, rather than older family members who serve to execute the ceremony on their behalf. Mr. Hu had further questions when it came to the ceremony itself:

> Mr. Hu: What is the bridegroom doing to the bride's hand?
> Mr. Tang: He is putting the wedding-ring on her finger. A wife is supposed to wear her wedding-ring on her left hand until death separates her from her husband, or a death occurs.[125]

While it seems hard to believe that Mr. Hu, studying abroad, would not recognize what a wedding ring was (particularly given his use of other English vocabulary) it does bring to our attention that many Chinese of the time may not recognize the aforementioned gestures. While the use of wedding rings was part of the new-style ceremony, here Mr. Tang explains the ceremonial significance - binding the couple - to an audience that may not understand why a ring was used or what it may mean.

Later, more problems presented themselves for Mr. Hu with regard to presents and the so called wedding "breakfast":

> Mr. Hu: . . . I have a present at home for the bride; and one for the bridegroom. How can I present them?
> Mr. Tang: My dear fellow, you should have sent them to their houses before the wedding. Are you invited to the wedding breakfast?

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[122] "A Social Conversation: A Wedding Invitation" in *Chung Hwa English Weekly* (中华英文周报) 9 no. 212 (June 16, 1923): 204.

[123] "A Social Conversation: A Wedding Invitation" in *Chung Hwa English Weekly* (中华英文周报) 9 no. 213 (June 23, 1923): 239.

[124] "A Social Conversation: A Wedding Invitation" in *Chung Hwa English Weekly* (中华英文周报) 9 no. 214 (June 30, 1923): 276.

[125] Ibid. The mention of commitment led to a lengthy discussion of divorce, which occurred over two weeks.

> Mr. Hu: Yes; I went to the bride's parents' house about seven o'clock this morning, to make breakfast; but the servants laughed, and said that the breakfast is after the wedding service as the church. Do foreigners usually breakfast so late?
> Mr. Tang: (*Laughing heartily*) Oh dear! Really, Hu, that's too awfully funny! Don't you know what is called a wedding-breakfast is really a ceremonial banquet, more like a lunch than a breakfast?[126]

Hu misunderstanding that "breakfast" actually occurred at lunchtime is a classic error of literal translation that could happen to many regardless of social finesse - here with comical results. The incorrect timing of the wedding gift is, unfortunately for Hu, a breach of etiquette. Tang, ever the kind helper suggests "smuggling" the present in "unobserved, to 'save face' as we Chinese say."[127] While smuggling the present in may mask Hu's blunder to the crowd, his ignorance was on full display for his friend Mr. Tang once again, this time about the wedding cake:

> [*At the wedding-breakfast*]
> Mr. Hu: (*Whispering to Mr. Tang.*) What is that big white ornament, like a cemetery monument, on the table, in front of the bride?
> Mr. Tang (*Laughing.*) Good heavens man! That's the wedding cake! Inside it is made of flour and raisins and currants and citron peel and spices. Outside it is covered all over with a thick coating of iced-sugar, and decorated with white and silver artificial flowers and foliage, and little white porcelain statuettes of children. Some of these cakes are works of art, and require great skill in the making; and are, consequently very expensive.
> Mr. Hu: But nobody eats them, surely? This one, at least, seems to beautiful to cut up.
> Mr. Tang: Eat them! Of course they do. See, now! The bride is cutting up the cake and the bridegroom is helping her. A slice will be passed down to the table to each guest. Many persons, especially young girl friends, will put their slices in pretty little boxes, supplied for the purpose, exactly the same size and shape of the slice, and keep them for mementoes of this auspicious occasion, or for a happy omen of their own marriage in future.
> Mr. Hu: But the cake will not keep very long? It will go bad, surely?
> Mr. Tang: Oh dear, no! The materials of which it is made are so pure, that a slice of good quality wedding cake will last for many years, if not kept in a damp place.[128]

The situation here is presented in a humorous manner, but does make an apt point - what would someone think of a wedding cake if seeing it for the first time, having not being exposed to the tradition from childhood? While Mr. Tang's description not only gives us a good sense of the kind of cake that was popular at this time - citron and currant, with raisin and spices - he is again acting as a cultural translator for the reader, explaining not only what cake is, but how it should cut and eaten. After mistaking the cake for a gravestone - perhaps an unintended pun on marriage being the grave of love - Hu is then impressed at its beauty and cost, the fine quality ingredients further touted by Tang. After the toasts, Hu and Tang see the couple off as they leave on their honeymoon.[129] Presented in this way, the Western wedding was a complicated endeavor, rife with particular rules of behavior sure to baffle an outsider. Throughout, Mr. Hu's seeming ignorance serves as a nice foil and a way to explain social customs to other Chinese without

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[126] "A Social Conversation: A Wedding Invitation" in *Chung Hwa English Weekly* (中华英文周报) 9 no 215 (July 7, 1923): 311.

[127] Ibid.

[128] "A Social Conversation: A Wedding Invitation" in *Chung Hwa English Weekly* (中华英文周报) 9 no. 217 (July 21, 1923): 382.

[129] Ibid. The dialogue ends in the next issue: 9 no. 218 (July 28, 1923): 420-1.

seeming overbearing or condescending. Mr. Tang is an informed insider, willing to dispense information to a fellow countryman in need.

Conclusion

There was a certainly a demand for information about new-style weddings, beginning in the early 1900s. We remember that Liu's translation of Baroness Staffe's book was published as an individual volume due to popular interest. As time passed more practical information about new-style ceremonies and Western ceremonies became available to the general public, along with photographs of couples who had participated in new-style weddings. These photographs allowed readers to connect names to faces and see what new-style brides and grooms looked like; although many participants held positions in the new government, ceremonies were not overtly political but remained markers of personal choice and individual freedom.

A testament to its enduring popularity, select information about new-style weddings - Miss Wang's article and the discussion of American marriage customs - would later be reprinted in Shanghai city guidebooks, most notably the *Jiating riyong funü baojian* (家庭日用妇女宝鉴), published in 1920. In the guidebook, the discussion of marriage customs begins with "old style" wedding ceremonies, followed by "new-style" and "Western" ceremonies.[130] Sections about old style and new-style ceremonies quote Miss Wang's article verbatim. The section on Western ceremonies is in large part an adaptation of the article on American wedding customs; authors have replaced mentions of "America" with "the West" and omitted sections about individual state law. Generally, changes to the text are slight.

Furthermore, it seems highly likely that parts of Liu's text were quoted or at least considered in the "American Wedding Customs" article, particularly the section about engagement rings reminding young women of tears, references to women's clothing and the times at which fresh flowers were to be sent to the bride. If that was indeed the case, pieces of the guidebook text took a complicated and curious path: originally translated from French into Chinese, the same information was now transformed into "American" custom in a magazine article, only to be repackaged as "Western" behavior in a guidebook. On the most basic level, this cutting and pasting exposes the inner workings of the publishing industry, showing how guidebooks were constructed: material of interest was from lifted magazines and reprinted elsewhere, published in one volume along with information about illness, pregnancy, social invitations, the hiring of household help, and so on. In this sense, such customs were codified as common practice and information that was first presented as American wedding customs now represented all "Western" wedding customs in Chinese guidebook texts.

According to Xu Ke (徐珂), who wrote in 1917, the "civilized" marriage ceremony was characterized by three main features: choice, independence and economy.[131] The consensus by the end of the 1910s was that traditional weddings no longer suited an urban agenda, or served the needs of the country itching for change. As we have seen, a select few - politicos and their

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[130] See: "Jiaoji bian, hunsang yizhu 交际篇, 婚丧仪注," *Jiating riyong funü baojian* 家庭日用妇女宝鉴, 30.

[131] Xu Ke 徐珂, *Qing bai lei chao* 清稗类钞＃5 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2003 reprint): 1987. Originally published in 1917.

children, returned students, businessmen - engaged in experimental ceremonies, photographs of which were published in women's magazines of the day, exposing a larger audience to new ceremonial practices. Such weddings were also were documented in Shanghai city guidebooks as "new-style" ceremonies. But agreement ended there: there was no consensus on what the new wedding should look like - the permutations were endless - and whether new ceremonies would be defined by the fledgling Republican state, or not.

Chapter 3. The New-Style Wedding as a Popular Dream and a Political Symbol

Introduction

The old-style wedding may have been rejected by a select few in urban centers, but what would come next? In the wake of the May Fourth Movement, intellectuals and urban youth began advocating for new-style ceremonies, but as we will see moving from new ideas to new practices proved difficult. During the 1920s, both traditional and new-style weddings would take center stage with the ceremonies of two very notable figures: deposed Emperor Puyi and the Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. Marrying within five years of each other both weddings were large and highly publicized, yet neither man was in power at the time. Could ceremonial rites bring political legitimacy? What was the value of spectacle? Here we begin to assess the relationship between politics and personal ritual. While Puyi's wedding was an outdated relic of a bygone era, Chiang's wedding - which was in fact Soong Meiling's big day - could not have existed without the increasing popularity of the new-style wedding, and the changes that occurred earlier in the decade amongst urban youth and intellectuals.

PART ONE

Social Changes and Popular Concerns

With the Provisional Republican Government on shaky ground, student agitation grew in the wake of China's instability: warlordism on the domestic stage, and the simultaneous encroachment of foreign powers with their sights on China's territory. The May Fourth Movement, as the spark to this tinderbox, lit a national fire. In 1919, provoked by the Treaty of Versailles - which placed former German concessions in Shandong into Japanese hands - 3,000 students marched in Beijing in protest. They burned the house of a cabinet minister and beat the Chinese minister to Japan. Police attacked the students, who called a larger strike. Similar demonstrations occurred in Tianjin, Shanghai, Nanjing, Wuhan, Guangzhou and elsewhere. The protest spread as merchants joined in, closing their shops. Labor unions also allied themselves with the strikers. This eventually led to a large scale boycott of Japanese goods for over a year. Political agitation was accompanied by social change under the banner of the New Culture Movement; this combination dealt a huge blow to the Confucian family system. Susan Glosser details the wide ranging changes New Culture encompassed: "All aspects of traditional Chinese culture - veneration for the past and the elderly, authoritarianism and hierarchy, elite literature, gender roles, family organization - felt its fury. These young radicals promoted an alternative vision that emphasized rational scientific thought, democratic political organization and the valorization of the young and the new."[1] Increasingly, young people begun to shape the debate about a range of social issues: love and romance, companionate marriage, and relationships between men and women, parents and their children.

The movement was accompanied by a rich body of literature - often romantic and highly idealistic - written in the vernacular, and accessible to all. Tracing the genealogy of love in modern China through such literature, Haiyan Lee finds that "The mantle of the May Fourth

[1] Susan Glosser, *Chinese visions of family and state, 1915-1953* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 3.

tradition . . . was claimed by a liberal intellectual contingent professing a firm faith in "free love," "love's supremacy" (*lian'ai zhishang zhuyi*), "the unity of body and soul" (*lingrou yizhi*), and the sanctity of heterosexual monogamy. They continued to denounce arranged marriages, paternal authoritarianism, "feudal" customs, and Confucian kinship ethics (*lijiao*) and to lament young people's (especially women's) lack of freedom."[2] These ideals were touchstones for many who participated in new-style weddings. Courtship and marriage - once considered family business - were discussed more openly. Yet as we will see there was no consensus as to what should come next and for most, new discourse did not mean new practices. As before, the stumbling block was parental consent.

As before, new-style weddings advocated by New Culture reformers and others had two distinct features: the elimination of betrothal and the dowry. New-style ceremonies were also lauded for saving time and money. A traditional ceremony generally required a tremendous amount of money for the engagement; those without were often forced to borrow from others or go unmarried, either road leading to much hardship. Furthermore, in the new-style ceremony there was no formal bridal trousseau. According to one *Shenbao* (申报) newspaper contributor, writing in 1922, many of the items in the bridal trousseau were expensive but impractical; if less items were prepared the money could be saved for other things.[3] Expense aside, eliminating or limiting a trousseau altered the way wedding negotiations were conducted.

Previously, the trousseau and dowry were agreed upon and accepted by one's parents and were tantamount to a wedding contract. Without these transactions, the wedding contract itself would have to be redefined. Furthermore, these exchanges had often occurred over a long span of time and items were passed back and forth between houses. Not only did the material nature of the wedding change, the relationship between the bride and groom's families changed, too. Not surprisingly, the tradition of feasting over a number of rowdy days was also curtailed. Before, a wedding involved the courtship, the engagement, the contract, the exchange of presents, the dowry and the ceremony itself, all of which were orchestrated by one's parents. Now, while parents still approved a child's match, they may not have arranged it or had a hand in the engagement. The ceremony itself was condensed - the same *Shenbao* contributor suggested allotting thirty minutes - and in many cases it was removed from the family home and occurred in a civic space.[4] A family friend or family member acted as the introducer, replacing the matchmaker but still serving as a go-between for the two families. Most likely there was still a bit of distance between the young man and woman and they were probably not well acquainted before marriage. A go-between helped choose the wedding date based on convenience rather that superstition. A sedan chair was replaced by a carriage.

Despite these changes many of the same, familiar elements remained. There were still roles for family to play: as introducers, go-betweens, witnesses, master of ceremonies, guests. Family members were also acknowledged with ritual bows at the close of the wedding ceremony.

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[2] Haiyan Lee. *Revolution of the heart: a genealogy of love in China 1900-1950* (Stanford: Stanford University Press 2007), 141.

[3] *Shenbao* (申报), "Hunjia gailiang yu jingji guanxi 婚嫁改良与经济关系" 183-531 (1) 1922.

[4] Ibid.

In fact, the new-style ceremony was quite an ingenious adaptation of traditional modes of behavior. There was more choice involved, more flexibility, and some input from the bride and groom-to-be, not just one's parents. But the movements were slight, the form was similar, the content familiar. This continuity was noticed by observers of the day, one of whom wrote in a 1925 "etiquette and customs" section of *Shenbao* that the differences between new-style wedding and a traditional wedding were easy to point out. "The [new-style] wedding must use a marriage certificate, which must be stamped with seals. The bride does not cover her face with a handkerchief. The master of ceremonies (*zanli* 赞礼) must invite the guests. A matchmaker is now called an introducer. Officiants provide instructions [words of advice for the bride and groom] and invited guests make speeches. Other than this, the differences are very small."[5] The simplification of the ceremony, while invoking traditional modes, was seen as a way to reduce extravagance, promote the small family, and eventually "really change social customs" (*zhenzheng yifeng yisu* 真正移风易俗), presumably through the elimination of the dowry and betrothal.[6] These changes, of course, were predicated by new sorts of behaviors by one's parents - who would let their children choose their own spouses, were willing to negotiate marriage contracts in a different way, and were not bound to practices of the past.

According to *Shenbao*, reading and stamping a marriage certificate at a new-style wedding marked a couple as husband and wife. This change - which shifted authority from parents to the master of ceremonies - occurred in the social realm. We remember that the Provisional Republican Government had adopted the Qing Code in lieu of drafting its own Civil Code; rules about marriage remained as they had during the Qing dynasty. Consequently, the use of marriage certificates and marriage registrations was a municipal matter rather than a national one. In keeping with rise of new-style weddings and increased interest in such ceremonies, the city of Shanghai began issuing wedding certificates and requiring wedding registration in 1913, slowly replacing the previous system where parents would simply vouch for both parties. These new certificates were produced by printing houses, provided by the city, and could be purchased throughout the municipality at stores selling cigarettes and newspapers (*yanzhi dian* 烟纸店).[7] In 1920, an advertisement for certificates printed by the Commercial Press read:

> In recent years, many social weddings have upheld civilized and improved etiquette and marriage certificates have become necessary for wedding ceremonies. This printing house has specially requested the painting and calligraphy of two women, Miss Zhuang Caishi and Miss Zhuang Chenshi and uses five illuminated colors in printing; it is very beautiful and is truly most suitable for a certificate of marriage. Also enclosed is an etiquette manual, adapting all types of etiquette with the most appropriate compromises, which may serve as a compass, ensuring success for those putting on a wedding. A and B are sold at a set price of one *yuan.*[8]

New-style ceremonies required new behaviors, both personal and material; an integral part of the new-style ceremonies was the reading of the wedding certificate aloud. With wedding certificates replacing parental authority, the legitimacy of a marital union was vested elsewhere -

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[5] *Shenbao*, "Wenming jiehun de shiyi 文明结婚的释义" 210-456 (3) 1925.

[6] Ibid. See also: *Shenbao*, "Zuixin shi de jiehun 最新式的结婚" 216-99 (3) 1925.

[7] *Shanghai zhanggu cidian* 上海掌故辞典 (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chuban she, 1999), 682.

[8] Ibid.

in this case the municipality, which was now requiring registration at a civic location. While certificates were authorized by the city, it seems likely that individual publishing houses embellished their products with a variety of attractive flourishes to ensure purchase from customers hoping to mark a special moment. It is noteworthy that the aforementioned commercial includes an etiquette manual which was clearly aimed at adapting traditional marriage customs to make a new-style ceremony palatable. Those who bought wedding certificates were interested in having a new-style wedding but may not have known what constituted new-style rites. The sale of the manual and the certificate in one convenient package may have increased the number couples willing to stage new-style weddings; one-stop-shopping made the necessary materials and rules easily accessible.

With a stamped wedding certificate now marking new-style unions as legitimate, some observers questioned the necessity of a ceremony at all. In fact, one discussion topic in the Shanghai women's magazine *Funü zazhi* (妇女杂志) "Whether or not a ceremony is essential for marriage" (*jiehun shifou bixu xiangdang de yishi* 结婚是否必需相当的仪式), concerned itself with this very question.[9] Most contributors saw very little relationship between a large ceremony and the marriage itself. If the purpose of the ceremony was to mark a union, they reasoned, an elaborate celebration served no real purpose. Some suggested eliminating the ceremony altogether, posting an announcement in the paper and having friends and family over for refreshments. Others thought that sending out postcards to notify friends of the nuptials was enough. In light of a traditional wedding celebration - the movement between houses, the procession, the participation and acknowledgement of family members - this spartan vision would no doubt have been seen as radical. Regardless, we again are confronted with the multiple versions and visions for a new-style wedding, and the remarkable flexibility with which such ceremonies were interpreted, considered, and practiced.

No matter how the ceremony was conceived, a new-style wedding meant that young men and women had a say in their choice of spouse. Opportunities for interactions with the opposite sex were limited, however, and many on the sidelines were worried how young people would meet a suitable spouse, given lack of experience both dating and socializing with the opposite sex. A *Shenbao* columnist, writing in the "etiquette and customs" section, emphasized the gravity of such a commitment and suggested setting a series of standards to ensure good results. "Young men and women today often do not scrutinize their own environment and do not pay attention to the family background of the other party, following that person blindly and with complete devotion, only to bear a lifetime of resentment (*zhongshen yuanyi* 终身怨艾)."[10] A set of conditions was offered up for "sensible people" to consider: men and women should not marry too young, family status should be unsullied, one's education complete, and health good and candidates should have a mild character, be thrifty and able to work hard. A future spouse should

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[9] "*Jiehun shifou bixu xiangdang de yishi* 结婚是否必需相当的仪式," *Funü zazhi* 妇女杂志 10 no. 12 (1924). The magazine, published in Shanghai, ran from 1915-1931. As with many magazines of the day, it included photographs at the beginning of most issues. *Funü zazhi* covered women's issues in a theoretical and studied manner, debating eugenics, marriage, divorce and so on from a variety of perspectives. It also included discussion topics, some of which contained reader submissions. Unlike earlier women's magazines, it did not include clothing patterns, household remedies, or recipes.

[10] *Shenbao*, "Dinghun zhi biaozhun 订婚之标准" 228-332 (2) 1926.

have a good educational foundation of at least middle school or the ability to be economically independent, be of a more liberal (*kaitong* 开通) family without vices (*e'xi* 恶习) and, at the time of engagement young people must request that someone of "social conviction" act as introducer.[11]

While not all young people were as bold or as out spoken as the New Culture reformers, many carried ideals of change and reform with them. Influenced by what they themselves called "new wave" thought - young men and women had their own ideas about who they wanted to meet, and why. A 1923 *Funü zazhi* special issue devoted to "selecting a spouse" (*pei'ou xuanze hao* 配偶选择号) featured 60 essays by young men and women on the topic "my ideal spouse" (*Wo zhi lixiang de pei'ou* 我之理想的配偶). Both male and female contributors were young and educated. Generally speaking, they emphasized personality and compatibility over looks. Most contributors were looking for similar things: a certain level of education (middle school or higher), financial independence and strength of personality and character, social morals or a desire to help society - and each other - in some way, health and a decent appearance, and, real love. While most contributors acknowledged that they presented an "ideal" that was not necessarily realistic or attainable, this did not keep them from hoping to find that perfect match.

Many contributors were grateful for the opportunity to express their thoughts on the matter: such subjects were not generally discussed openly, particularly among mixed company. Indeed, the first contributor - a young man - wrote with much excitement: "Topics like this were originally discussed amongst friends of the same sex but with friends of the opposite sex, one would think to bring them up but in the end not dare to openly discuss them. Now we have a good opportunity for the two sexes to say what they want to each other, without the pretense of politeness."[12] In a similar vein, one young woman wrote: "when I saw the *Funü zazhi* special essay topic, I had an extraordinary feeling in my heart (*xin zhong juezhe yangyang de liaobude* 心中觉着痒痒的了不得), because I had already been thinking about my ideal spouse . . . Us girls have never told others about our ideal spouse before. If someone said to a girl 'What kind of husband would you welcome?' she would certainly turn red and not dare to answer. [Even] Now I am openly talking about my ideal spouse, but I am still hidden behind the magazine . . ."[13] Her ideal husband was from a simple family; he had average looks, studied well, and knew English and Japanese. He would be strong and sporty with an even-keeled personality, and would value her opinion. He would want a small family of his own, and they would fall in love first, and then marry. And because of this, he would still often say "I love you with all my heart, more than I love myself."[14] She concluded by saying: "This is my ideal, but can an ideal be reality? This is the question. If I cannot have my ideal I would rather be alone."[15]

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[11] Ibid.

[12] "Wo zhi lixiang de pei'ou 我之理想的配偶" *Funü zazhi* 妇女杂志 8 no. 11 (1923): 56.

[13] Ibid, 85.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

How to best translate one's ideal into the flesh? Contributors often harbored a certain level of desperation about the lingering presence of the Confucian system. One young woman lamented that although the majority of young men and women had been "baptized by new wave thought" and "did their upmost to oppose the mechanism of marriage" there was still a "stubborn clique opposing open society and free love" as well as a group of young men and women who were too embarrassed to act openly and did not dare to.[16] Consequently, many were unhappy. One nineteen year old man wrote: "I think - although other reasons are given - the sorrows of today's youth, our low spirits, are mainly because of the marriage problem. There are those who kill themselves or fall into a terrible state due to an unsatisfying marriage. I have seen a lot of this."[17] According to this young man, while many individuals may desire change, they did not necessarily feel that they could act. He continued: "We have accepted 1000s of years of Confucian influence. Now, although it has faced an assault its influence is still great and many young people have an attitude where they keep quiet out of fear (*jinrou hanchan* 噤若寒蝉), going on as they would before. But you cannot blame them . . . they have been educated in Confucian ways since youth. There is no good way to cast it off - they cannot think of casting it off."[18] His ideal spouse would be strong and healthy, around his age, and of the same academic and economic background. Both sides would "really understand" each other's personalities, share a willingness to help each other, and the match would be based on real love (*zhenzheng de aiqing* 真正的爱情).[19]

As we have seen, change - and choice - was easier when one's parents were understanding. One young woman wrote that though her mother was filial to her father, her father was open-minded. "My mother is a person tied by the fetters of Confucianism, accepting of the old ways. In all cases she listened to my father and therefore paid no attention to my marital affairs. As for my father, although he is trained in the Classics, as far as my marriage is concerned in the first place, he loves me; in the second place he has accepted the influence of new wave of thinking, therefore he has very little autocratic thought and was willing to take my opinion into account."[20]

Though Chinese youth may have been cloistered by their parents and guardians, their desires paralleled those of their Western counterparts. Young men and women in the United States, for example, were also looking for meaningful relationships and partners with compatible personalities. A wedding handbook published in Chicago in 1924 noted that: "through association in business, college and society young people become better acquainted and show their real personalities to each other more than ever before. Consequently when the average

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[16] Ibid, 102-3.

[17] Ibid, 58.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid, 95.

couple become engaged they are better . . . able to see each other's point of view."[21] There was potential for such a relationship to be a partnership. Indeed, Americanist Paula Fass notes that due to an increase in marriage age, female education, and access to contraception, marriage in the United States at this time was being redefined first as "a relationship between two people rather than a necessary and determined step towards family formation."[22] Consequently, by the 1930s, Phyllis Blanchard, who famously conducted a series of surveys on the state of young women in America at the time, could write; "Girls are today demanding positive values of marriage rather than looking upon it as a way of escape from parental authority or of gaining economic security, marriage has now become the entrance into a fuller and richer life: an opportunity for sharing joys and sorrows, with a mate who will not merely be a protector or a provider but an all around companion."[23]

One of the hallmarks of a Chinese new-style wedding was choice, or at the very least the expression of one's opinion. It stands to reason that "ideal spouse" contributors were also advocates of new-style ceremonies. One young man said as much when listing his criteria for a partner: "She's a new-style girl who understands free love. We will have been friends for at least two months and we will be friendly to each other. She has at least a secondary level of education, even better if she has graduated from teacher's college. She is not sickly. She is a little younger than me or the same age. We will be able to make allowances for small mistakes. She wants a small family, she will not advocate early marriage and she wants a simple, new-style wedding. She believes in love before marriage and understands that divorce is better than a loveless marriage . . ."[24] Choice was one thing, but, consistent with Susan Glosser's findings about New Culture radicals, there was little fundamental change to male and female roles within a relationship - even a new-style one. For example, one woman discussed the difficulties educated women encountered when looking for a suitable spouse: "if you study abroad you must marry someone with a PhD or a Master's, if you go to middle school or higher you must marry a college graduate."[25] On the flip side, a young man wrote "I want to choose my own spouse . . . simply put her mission is to help me realize my ideal" which was a "happy, small family." Furthermore, she would "know the ways of the world, be skilled in housework - like educating children and sewing - and could be independently responsible for the duties of a housewife."[26] Clearly, these two would not be getting married.

Photographs of new-style weddings published in *Funü zazhi* at this time gave another face - literally - to new-style ceremonies, linking them to "new wave" behavior. Whereas wedding photographs published in the *Funü shibao* were of businessmen, politicians, and

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[21] Home Makers of the World, *Wedding Bells for the Engaged Girl: Her Engagement, Trousseau, Wedding At Home. Proper Forms, Customs and Practices* (Chicago, 1924), 1-2.

[22] Paula Fass, *The damned and the beautiful, American youth in the 1920s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 69.

[23] Phyllis Blanchard, *New Girls for Old* (New York: The Maculay Company, 1937), 179 as quoted in Fass, 80.

[24] Fass, 121.

[25] Ibid, 87.

[26] Ibid, 113.

children of those with means, brides and grooms featured in *Funü zazhi* tended to be intellectuals, many of whom had studied abroad. Furthermore, wives were as accomplished as their husbands and often spoke multiple languages. The following photographs of new-style weddings were published in the "ideal spouse" issue of the magazine, giving us a clue as to the kind of relationships the editors saw as noteworthy, and perhaps ideal. Indeed many of the couples pictured were exemplary models of both women's education and autonomy. In the wake of the New Culture Movement participants of this caliber pushed the boundaries of the new-style wedding beyond changing relationships with one's parents. Ceremonial rites were encoded with new educational and social possibilities for women, too.

One photo, published in 1922, featured Yang Duanliu (杨端六 1885-1966) and his new wife, Yuan Changying (袁昌英 1894-1973). As a young man, Yang worked as a primary school teacher. Later, he studied abroad in Japan. He entered English language school there in 1908; at this time he became involved in the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance (*Tongmenghui* 同盟会). Yang returned to China in 1911 but was abroad again in 1913, this time at London University where he studied monetary affairs and banking.[27] After seven years, he returned to China to edit the Eastern Miscellany (*Dongfang zazhi* 东方杂志) under the auspices of the Commercial Press. At this time he also worked as a professor of economics and accounting at the Wusong Chinese Public School in Shanghai.[28] Yang married Miss Yuan in 1921. He went on to become section chief of the publishing house and began a career at Wuhan University as a currency specialist, teacher and administrator. Throughout the 1930s and into the 1940s he held a variety of official positions in both government and education; despite affiliations with the Nationalists he participated in the Communist government after 1949.[29]

Yang's wife was no intellectual slouch herself: in 1916 she studied abroad in England, earning a Master's degree at the University of Edinburgh in English literature; she returned to China in 1921 and held numerous teaching positions in Beijing.[30] After her marriage she traveled abroad again, this time to France in 1926, where she studied theater at the University of Paris. Yuan returned to China over two years later where she resumed teaching, joining her husband in Wuhan. She was also an accomplished author with a play, short stories, and books about French literature to her credit.[31]

Unlike the majority of photographs published in the *Funü shibao* where grooms were pictured in Western-style suits holding white gloves and a top hat, corsage pinned to their lapels, here the groom wore traditional, loose fitting scholar's robes with a mandarin collar. The bride wore new-style wedding attire in white: an elaborate floral headdress with a floor length veil, a white top that hit at the hip, a simple white skirt that hit mid calf, stockings and high heels. She

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[27] Zhou Jiazhen 周家珍 ed., 20 *Shiji zhonghua renwu mingzi hao zidian* 20世纪中华人物名字号辞典 (Beijing: Falü chuban she, 1999), 986.

[28] Xu Youchun 徐友春 ed., *Minguo remim da cidian* 民国人民大辞典. (Hebei: Hebei remin chuban she, 1991), 1241.

[29] Ibid. Yang entered the CCP in 1956 and would continue to teach at Wuhan University.

[30] Ibid, 651.

[31] Ibid. Also see Zhou, 1058.

held a large bouquet and clutched the right arm of her groom. Bride and groom were flanked by two young children who held large baskets of flowers and were dressed in Chinese-style attire, frog clips at their throats, with smoothed hair and short pants. The outdoor setting and the couple's poses gives the image a spontaneous and affable quality; Mr. Yang rests his hand on the shoulder of a young attendant who looks slyly to the side. We note the absence of family members in the photograph, perhaps hinting at the couple's desire to have a small family or to mark their union as a twosome.

The same, "ideal spouse" issue published the wedding photograph of Cai Yuanpei (蔡元培; here identified as Cai Jiemin 蔡孑民) and his wife Zhou Yangjie (周养洁 also known as Zhou Jun 周峻).[32] The couple was married in July of 1923 at the Lingering Garden in Suzhou; it was Cai's third marriage.[33] Unlike Mr. Yang, Cai wore a very formal Western-style suit with tails. As with so many new-style wedding photos of the time, Cai donned white gloves, clutched a top hat in his left hand, and pinned a corsage to his left lapel. Like Miss Yuan, Miss Zhou - outfitted in white from head to toe - carried a large floral bouquet and clutched her new groom's arm at the elbow. The tone of Cai and Zhou's portrait - the juxtaposition of new-style wedding attire against the backdrop of traditional Chinese architecture - is of note. In the photo the couple stands in front of an ornate carved screen flanked by baskets of flowers. Behind the screen is a round doorway, with bamboo peeking slightly from the side. The setting would likely evoke memories in the minds of Chinese readers who may have visited the same garden or one like it.

By this time, Cai's views on marriage reform were well known and his participation in a new-style ceremony would have been expected. The presentation of Cai and Zhou's Western-style wedding attire against the backdrop of a Chinese garden presented new ceremonial possibilities for the magazine's readers, marking new-style weddings as fundamentally Chinese ceremonies and integrating them into the Chinese landscape. The publication of Cai's wedding photograph carried other messages as well. Cai had long been a supporter of women's education and free marriage. This third marriage was to a much younger woman. In this sense the image stands in defiance of traditional codes of marriage that shunned divorce - and choice - and relied on concubinage.

Apparently, there had been a good deal of gossip about the union in the papers, so much so that Miss Zhou felt the need to write an editorial in *Funü zazhi* to set the record straight. A photograph of the couple in Western-style dress was published in the preface of the issue. In a decidedly unromantic piece (though not without dramatic flourish) Zhou detailed the hardships of her youth and how she turned to Cai, her childhood teacher, in an attempt to pursue education abroad, and serve her country and Chinese society.[34] Education and service were paramount; China's future considered. Cai's wedding photo holds further significance for our tale: he went on to help pen the Nationalist government's new Civil Code of 1931, which legally redefined

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[32] See: *Funü zazhi* 妇女杂志 9 no. 11 (1923).

[33] "Zhuiqiu wenming jiehun de Caiyuanpei 追求文明结婚的蔡元培" in *Renmin ribao haiwai ban* 人民日报海外版, October 25, 2002. (version found online, last accessed 4/24/2011 http://www.hlyg.com.cn/jz/view.asp?id=224)

[34] "Wo zhi jiehun shi 我之结婚史" Funü zazhi 妇女杂志, 10 no. 10 (1924): 1549-50.

marriage for the first time in the Republican era. He also participated in Soong Meiling and Chiang Kai-shek's wedding ceremony.

Featured in the "ideal spouse" issue, these men, their wives, their relationships and their wedding photographs were presented as an ideal for the magazine's readers. The individuals pictured, along with the magazine's contributors, were educated and politically aware; they hoped for matches based on love and personal compatibility. Women were generally seen as equal to men and had ambitions of their own. Personal choice - in the title of the magazine's special issue, and in a young person's life - was paramount. *Funü zazhi's* "ideal spouse" special issue demonstrates that information about new-style weddings was beginning to reach a larger audience. Whereas five to ten years prior, participants were the children of wealthy families and politicos, couples marrying in this fashion now included intellectuals and urban youth. As before, participation in a new-style ceremony represented different things to different people: thrift, fashion, politics, modernity. The common thread that united them all was the ability to choose - or at least have a say in choosing - one's spouse.

This was easier said than done, and obstacles to "free love" and a new-style wedding ceremony remained. The difficulty of open interaction between the sexes was a recurring theme in many of the "ideal spouse" essays. Many individuals felt hindered by social constraints: if someone was not comfortable discussing their ideal spouse in mixed company, how would they go about meeting potential candidates of the opposite sex? For those pursuing higher education, intellectualism and the promise of courtship - or even love - went hand in hand. As in the West, young men and women found themselves able to interact more freely with each other in educational settings. While some universities in China began admitting women in the 1920s, most were coed by the 1930s. Of Yenching University, Wen-hsin Yeh writes:

> The admission of women enlivened a pattern of life in which students intermingled on numerous occasions: at church services, athletic meets, public lectures, association meetings, editorial reviews, concerts, movies, drama performances, and so forth. Aside from receptions and parties there were summer boating and winter ice-skating on Wei-ming Lake. All these activities meant dressing for the occasion, even if one could hardly afford it. Western-style suits were thus necessary, according to one contemporary guide book, if one were to enjoy college.[35]

But for those with modest means or simple minds, the problem of how to meet that certain someone remained. This issue was addressed in a *Funü zazhi* discussion series, under the heading: "Is it feasible to use an advertisement to find a spouse" (*yong guanggao qiuhun de kefou* 用广告求婚的可否). While the content of such advertisements varied, they generally read as a slightly less personal and less romanticized version of the "ideal spouse" essays. Such ads usually included a description of the writer - age, schooling, body type, family background - along with the types of qualities that they would like in a future spouse. Though contributors to the discussion acknowledged the difficulty of open social interaction between the sexes at this time, there remained a general skepticism over the utility of such ads. Some pointed out the disingenuous nature of ads claiming to be looking for friends that could develop into something more:

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[35] Wen-hsin Yeh, *The alienated academy: culture and politics in Republican China, 1919-1937* (Cambridge, Mass.: Published by Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University and distributed by Harvard University Press, 1990), 225-6.

> Someone said 'advertisements often say: I'm looking for the right person to make friends, and from friends then possibly become engaged. Can love grow from this?' I said 'Why not begin as friends? [But in this case] What kind of ad [would you pose]? If I lack friends and put an ad in the paper seeking friends, isn't this a joke?' Ads seeking marriage, on one hand they enumerate one's own family background, property, appearance, age, personality, and on the other hand put forth the qualities they are seeking in a person. This is old style marriage in disguise.[36]

Others could not see past the "advertisement" aspect of the process, which inherently seemed to include an embellishment of the goods: "We merely [need to] look at ads for Shanghai shops in the newspaper declaring bargains. How many poor guys have been attracted to this, thinking they are buying quality clothes when they are really buying something cheap . . . Who can guarantee that these proposal ads won't be like shop ads?"[37] One writer declared that the chances of such an ad succeeding were as likely as purchasing a winning lottery ticket! Another questioned how such ads were any different from those for movie theaters or cosmetics, and then continued "if both parties see the advertisement and agree, this transaction (*maimai* 买卖) is a success. How can our most sacred matrimony be like this?"[38] Here, we note that the term "*maimai*" - or transaction - was commonly used at this time to refer to mercenary marriage (*maimai hunyin* 买卖婚姻); this double meaning would not have been lost on astute readers of the day.[39]

Proponents, however, saw ads as a way of encouraging the freedom to choose one's own spouse. Another contributor wrote: "Proposal ads are quite suited to China's current marriage system . . . Many young people are unsatisfied . . . and want to choose their own spouse. But love is the basis of this and such love must come from open social relations. Can one have open social relations in today's China? Simply put, no."[40] Some argued that ads were a way to facilitate this, allowing young men and women to voice their own requirements for a spouse, rather than relying on their parents.

In the end, such ads were viewed as a necessary evil. The editor's final remarks noted that ideally marriage should not be a reason to look for someone to love; love should grow naturally, and could not be forced through ads. In fact there was only one reason to support such ads: "opportunities for young men and women to become acquainted are too few."[41] Ultimately, the editor reasoned, there was very little difference in the "expediency of such a method and taking one step backwards to recognize the expediency of a matchmaker."[42] There were no easy answers; ads, it seems, were a shaky bridge for young men and women in this transitional age,

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[36] "Yong guanggao qiuhun de fouke 用广告求婚的可否" *Funü zazhi* 妇女杂志 10 no. 7 (1924): 1185.

[37] Ibid, 1191.

[38] Ibid, 1189.

[39] Many books about the history of marriage published at this time had sociological or evolutionary slant and tended to categorize different "types" or marriage. See for example Huang Xinmin 黄新民 ed., *Hunyin zhidu* 婚姻制度 (Shanghai: Guanghua shuju, 1927).

[40] "Yong guanggao qiuhun de fouke 用广告求婚的可否," 1187.

[41] Ibid,1198.

[42] Ibid.

where their desires for their lives and futures were often balanced against the will of their families and the social constraints that they felt mandated their behavior.

PART TWO

A Slight Detour North: the Wedding of the Emperor Puyi

We have seen from the previous chapter that the fall of the Qing dynasty had very little influence on the development of new-style wedding ritual. While magazines and guidebooks continued to publish photographs and descriptions of new-style weddings, and youth dreamed of choosing their ideal spouse, vestiges of the imperial system and Manchu rule remained: the deposed boy-emperor Puyi (溥仪) was preparing for marriage, cloistered in the Forbidden City.

Born into a changed and changing world in 1906 - one year after the first new-style ceremonies were published in *Shibao* - Puyi was named emperor by the Empress Dowager Cixi as she lay on her deathbed in 1908. Bending to calls for change, in the early 1900s Cixi had proposed a series of self-strengthening measures including "gestures towards constitutional reform."[43] In 1908, the "court announced that a full constitutional government would be established, along with provincial assemblies" but it was too little, too late: these advances were hindered by a financial system riddled by years of systematic weakness, a beleaguered military, and clumsy, disorganized bureaucracy.[44] Furthermore, local elites were loathe to endorse such changes, hoping to maintain their investments and their power. Wrote Fairbank: "It became apparent that the Qing government had been superficial, passive and indeed parasitic for too long. It could not become modern."[45]

Compounding these problems was the fact that in 1908 Puyi's uncle, the Emperor Guangxu, died within a day of Cixi leaving the dynasty with no locus of power. Puyi's father, Prince Chun, served as his regent until 1911, when his mother, the Empress Dowager Longyu, emerged to negotiate with reformers who by this time had staged a series of local military revolts and were demanding a dramatic restructuring of the government to include a parliament and a constitution, amnesty for political offenders, and a curtailment of the Emperor's rights.[46] In the end, it was all the Empress Dowager could do to negotiate for a modicum of security for those who remained in the palace, and by 1912 a deal had been brokered by politician and general Yuan Shikai. Subsequently, an edict was issued by the Empress Dowager formally abdicating power: "We recognize the signs of the ages and We have tested the trend of popular opinion; and We now, with the Emperor at Our side, invest the nation with the sovereign power, and decree the establishment of a constitutional government on a republican basis."[47] Under the agreement,

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[43] Jonathan D. Spence, *The search for modern China* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999), 246.

[44] Ibid, 248.

[45] John King Fairbank and Merle Goldman, *China: a new history* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998), 249.

[46] Spence, 265.

[47] See: Henry McAleavy, *A Dream of Tartary, The Origins and Misfortunes of Henry P'u Yi* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1963), 77-8.

the Emperor would receive favorable treatment, retain his title and ceremonial powers, receive an annual subsidy of four million dollars, and live in the Forbidden City and Summer Palace with his staff. Save a brief imperial restoration facilitated by warlord Zhang Xun in 1917, Puyi was an emperor in name only.

Why then stage a grand - and very visible - imperial wedding ceremony in 1922? As Puyi details in his autobiography, many who were cloistered within the palace believed that this wedding would demonstrate political legitimacy and lead to an imperial resurgence, or at least an increase in imperial power. In the heyday of Qing rule, Puyi's wedding would have been a quintessential symbol of Manchu identity; after marriage rites Puyi would be recognized as an adult, beginning his tenure as Emperor. According to Mark Elliott, throughout the Qing marks of Manchu identity shifted from normative - military skills and the use of Manchu language - to performative, where by the eighteenth century the Emperor's reputation, behavior, dress and hunting prowess were all touchstones for the Manchu elite. But by the time of Puyi's nuptials even this performance had lost its luster; he was Emperor in name only, and bannermen had become indigent outcasts. In fact, anti-Manchu sentiment had helped fuel the 1911 Revolution as a cornerstone of Sun Yat-sen's rallying cry for change. Now, a public, imperial wedding had to be sanctioned by the Provisional Republican Government in a city riddled with warlordism: "Beijing became a prize in the military struggles on the North China plain, rather than an arbiter of national policy and politics."[48] The power - and rights - that came with imperial ceremony were negligible at best.

The main character in the tale, Puyi, had little interest in his own nuptials; looking forward to them only because "marriage would mark my coming of age and would mean that others could no longer control me as if I were still a child."[49] As with some new-style weddings of the time, Puyi chose his spouse from a series of photographs; however, the women in the photos had no reciprocal choice in the matter. The groom himself was less than enthralled by the process:

> To me the girls seemed much the same and their bodies looked as shapeless as tubes in their dresses. Their faces were very small in the pictures so that I could not see whether they were beauties or not. The only comparison I could make was between the styles of their clothes. It did not occur to me at the time that this was one of the greatest events of my life, and I had no standards to guide me. I casually drew a circle around a pretty picture.[50]

His choice, a young girl named Wen Xiu (文绣), was panned by high consorts of the court who saw her as poor and ugly. After a series of negotiations it was decided that he would marry Wan Rong (婉容), a Manchu with a reputable background, and take Wen Xiu as his consort. With free love (*ziyou lian'ai* 自由恋爱) and new-style marriage now hallmarks of the new youth

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[48] David Strand, *Rickshaw Beijing: city people and politics in the 1920s.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 198.

[49] Aisin-Gioro Pu Yi, *From Emperor to Citizen, The Autobiography of Aisin-Gioro Pu Yi, volume one.* (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1979), 117.

[50] Ibid, 117-8. While photographs were integrated into traditional rites, playing a role (albeit limited) in Puyi's choice of wife; photography also served as a pastime for the former emperor, his wife and consort while they were cloistered in the Forbidden City. See: Liu Beisi 劉北汜 ed., *Gugong jiu cang renwu zhaopian ji* 故宫舊藏人物照片集. (Beijing: Zijincheng chu ban she, 1990) for excellent candid shots of Puyi, Wan Rong and Wen Xiu playing around with cameras.

movement, Puyi's urban peers would have no doubt (privately) ridiculed his marriage to not one, but two young women! We note from his dispassionate and detached tone, however, that this choice was made by someone who understood that he had no real agency in the matter. And as small, blurry, and shapeless images captured on photo printing paper, neither did the young women - who Puyi judged not by their personalities, education, or compatibility - but their attire.

On December 1, 1922 the sixteen-year-old Emperor took an Empress and a consort in a series of wedding festivities lasting five days. In keeping with tradition - and in stark contrast to new-style ceremonies - superstition determined the timing of the wedding procession, the ceremony, and the placement of ceremonial objects. Manchu weddings occurred at night, and Puyi's ceremony was no different. It was divined that the bride should arrive at the palace at four in the morning - she had been staying at another residence in the city with her father, learning palace etiquette - and in the dead of night a ceremonial sedan chair was sent to fetch her. At her residence the chair was set down at the auspicious angle of southeast, and Wan Rong, dressed in Manchu bridal finery, stepped in and was paraded through the dark streets of Beijing back to the Forbidden City.

The sedan chair was escorted by Republican soldiers and police. The procession was grand. It included two princes on horseback dressed in Qing court robes with staffs of office, army bands and calvary, mounted police and security police, seventy-two dragon-and-phoenix parasols and flags, and thirty pairs of palace lanterns.[51] According to Puyi's English tutor Reginald Johnston, the streets of the city were lined with people standing behind rows of Republican security and "the centre of every street through which the imperial lady passed was strewn for the occasion (in accordance with ancient imperial prerogative) with yellow sand."[52] The Provisional Republican Government not only provided security for the procession, it also provided funding for the ceremony; warlords Zhang Zuolin and Wu Peifu gifted the Emperor significant amounts of cash, too. These contributions underscore political instability in the capital at this time where various factions hoped to ally themselves with symbols of the imperium.

Though the wedding procession was clearly imperial, it was sanctioned by the Republic: made evident by the presence of Republican soldiers and police who flanked the parade circuit, by the warlord gifts to the Emperor and his family, by Republican government's funding of the wedding itself. The event is not being endorsed by the new government or warlord strongmen; it was permitted. Here the powerlessness of the monarchy became even more apparent. Flanked by Republican guards, could the old-style, imperial wedding have been associated any more clearly with the past? Perhaps city residents knew this would be their last chance to see the Manchu princes, the street with yellow sand, the flags and parasols, and lined the streets to gawk at rather than to revere this tremendous spectacle. By allowing the monarchy to stage a grand wedding for all to see, the Provisional Government acknowledged enduring power the dynasty held in the eyes of the people. For the new Republican government, symbolic capital came from allowing a former power to submit and perform in public rather than suffocating it in private.

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[51] Aisin-Gioro Pu Yi, 120.

[52] Reginald F. Johnston, *Twilight in the Forbidden City, by Reginald F. Johnston. With a preface by the Emperor.* (London: V. Gollancz, 1934), 311.

At the palace, the bride emerged from the sedan chair in the presence of eunuchs and women, who led her to Puyi. Her ceremonial headdress was removed and the couple stood face to face for the first time. Generally, the Manchu bride of an official "wore a non-official formal robe with horse-hoof cuffs and eight roundels [large circular embroidered patterns] on the gown. Later in the dynasty these garments were predominantly made in red, reflecting the Han influence of this auspicious 'Chinese' color. A dark blue surcoat was worn over this robe, and an elaborate headdress completed the outfit."[53] While this outfit was for a Manchu bride of some standing, it was not fit for a princess. Wan Rong's attire was, in comparison, beyond the pale: intricately embroidered and embellished, the height of her ceremonial cap far exceeding that of an official's bride, her waist-long necklaces crisscrossing her body.[54] Wan Rong's outfit was also a far cry from new-style wedding dresses now in fashion, which were white, had minimal embroidery, showed the bride's ankle, and rather than a hat featured a veil that flowed down the bride's back rather than covering her face. Instead of a Western-style suit, Puyi would wear dragon robes: yellow in color and with nine dragons "embroidered on the robes: at the chest, back, on each shoulder, two at the hem, and two at the back hem . . . The symbolic ninth dragon was hidden on the inside flap of the robe."[55]

Facing each other, Puyi and Wan Rong would then drink from a "nuptial cup" and partake in a symbolic feast.[56] Details about Puyi's wedding ceremony are scarce: the wedding is hardly discussed in his autobiography and is treated with thinly veiled ridicule in other accounts of the Emperor, where much focus is placed on the fact that Puyi married *and* took a consort, and that he did not consummate his marriage on his wedding night, which is taken as evidence of homosexual tendencies. Indeed, while Johnston provides the most meticulous account of the events leading up to the ceremony he glosses over the ceremony itself, saying that it was "similar in essentials to those that take place at all old-fashioned Manchu weddings and need not be described."[57] For the public, the procession was the real event worth viewing; of scope and scale far beyond what any ordinary family could muster.

As for the ceremony itself, *The Marriage of the Emperor of China, at Peking on the 16th of October, 1872,* details an "old fashioned Manchu wedding."[58] Here, the author provides an English language translation of the Board of Rites (*libu* 礼部) guidelines for such an imperial wedding: a tremendous amount finely detailed pomp and circumstance, from betrothal gifts, to appropriate attire, to numerous and varied processions. Johnston had noted that after the couple shared the "nuptial cup," the marriage was "sealed." From the *The Marriage of the Emperor of China*, a more detailed telling of the ceremony:

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[53] Valery M. Garrett, *Chinese dress from the Qing Dynasty to the present* (Tokyo: Tuttle Publishing, 2007), 49.

[54] See Figure 11: Liu Beisi ed., image 157.

[55] Valery M. Garrett, *Chinese dragon robes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 27.

[56] Johnston, 312.

[57] Ibid.

[58] L.M.F., *The Marriage of the Emperor of China, At Peking on the 16th of October, 1872* (Shanghai: Da Costa and Co, 1872).

> A herald cries with a loud voice, "The auspicious moment dawns, all is prepared for the joyful 合巹 *Ho Ching!*" Then a door slowly opens and the Emperor, in full State Uniform and Dragon Robes, attended only by His body guard of eunuchs, enters the Throne Room, approaches the central seat, where He for the first time sees the "veiled object" of all this pageant pomp and ceremony; he performs the prescribed rites of meeting and sitting at the same table. [The detail of these ceremonies is not given by the Board of Rites]
>
> Another document from the Lord High Chamberlain of the realm, gives some account of how the tables are arranged and of the decorations, and the two Dragon flagons of gold which hold the wine, from which the Bridal Pair are first served, and the two jewelled (sic) wine cups which are filled from them, and presented at the same time by the attendants - one to the Bride and the other to the Bride-groom; the cups are exchanged, and the Bride receives that just offered to her Lord, and He the one just presented to her. This ceremony, to which belong other minute details, is called the *Ho Ching* and is considered the real ratification of the marriage vows. It is accompanied by bands of music outside, and clouds of incense within, as an offering sacrifices to Heaven.[59]

Presumably, the same rites were enacted at Guangxu's wedding ceremony in 1889, and at Puyi's 1922 wedding. While there were no guidelines for practical customs of individuals and their families, which we remember the Emperor considered "minor matters," there were strict guidelines for imperial practices.

After this ceremony, the couple paid homage to their ancestors and greeted foreign guests, most of whom were foreign ministers and officials. In fact a group of foreigners was pictured after the wedding ceremony, marking foreign presence in the Forbidden City for the first time since the revolution.[60] In the picture Puyi and Wan Rong sit side by side - though at a considerable distance - in the front row. After marrying in traditional and very elaborate Manchu attire, they have changed into plain, Western-style clothing. The couple was flanked by foreigners and Puyi's consort was no where to be found, her presence probably deemed inappropriate for the occasion.

The setting - once grand and imperial - now seems flimsy and decrepit. The photograph conveys a musty feel: bits of grass sprouting from cracks in dusty steps, ropes secured haphazardly to wooden columns, opaque, dusty windows winking behind the group. The scene refracts the arcane artifice of the wedding itself: even Puyi and his new bride seemed eager to strip themselves of the ceremonial clothing that marked their lot in life. The image belies all that came before it: the complicated ceremony, taking both a wife and a consort, the procession that dominated the city streets. The modern and the imperial could not coexist and the performance of ceremonial rites did nothing to augment Puyi's political power or alter his social standing. He remained an imperial captive, the outside world coming to him in the shape of foreign faces selected by their respective countries for this ceremonial duty.

Of the events, Wan Rong later wrote to a friend:

> My wedding in 1922 was perhaps the last Manchu pageant. Everything was done with care to fulfill the rites which have been elaborated through centuries to make the Son of Heaven's wedding the most marvelous of spectacles. Flowers perfumed the court. All the Banners came, bringing their wives and children. Everyone was dressed in robes jeweled and encrusted with gold, according to rank . . . I was the bride in it, and I enjoyed it all. It was a fairy tale such as my nurse used to tell me, come true.[61]

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[59] Ibid, 26-7.

[60] See: Liu Beisi ed., image 161.

[61] Arnold C. Brackman, *The Last Emperor* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975), 122.

Manchu pageant was perhaps the most apt description of Puyi's wedding ceremony. But as we have seen, in this case spectacle was not a demonstration of imperial power rather, its absence. Eleven years after the revolution, the procession and the ceremony that followed - funded by warlords and government officials who by some accounts had taken claim to part of the Forbidden City itself - were more markers of a bygone era than in step with this new and different world, a world where urban youth married in Western-style suits and white dresses, and shunned matchmakers in search of true love and new-style weddings were lauded for their economy and efficiency.

Even Puyi (or his handlers) could not resist the allure of the new-style wedding though; Puyi and Wan Rong posed for a portrait in keeping with new-style wedding photos of the day! While he likely had little sense of what a new-style wedding entailed, the fact that he participated in a ritual often associated with such weddings shows the hold - and the popularity - that these new practices had. Puyi's play-acting at new-style ritual was a way to demonstrate his grasp of modern behavior in the new Republic. It is useful here to consider Henrietta Harrison's conclusion in *The Making of the Republican Citizen* where she writes: "Out of 1911 revolution came a new sense of national identity. Republican citizens as a group that could be identified by customs and symbols - not by political participation (which was impossible for most) but by short hair, hats, celebrations, women cutting hair - marking oneself as a citizen."[62] While the idea of a cohesive national identity may be up for dispute, the later point - how at this time one's appearance, countenance, dress were part of a larger visual code, a clue as to how individuals viewed themselves - is applicable. Western-style clothing may have been shorthand for modernity with a capital "M" but, as we see from Puyi's photograph there was a difference between knowing what aesthetic markers stood for, and using them properly.

Indeed, Puyi's wedding portrait shows how disconnected he was from sartorial - and ceremonial - trends of the day.[63] From the previous chapter, we know that men's new-style wedding attire consisted of either a black, tailored western suit, with a top hat, a flower at the lapel, a white shirt and tie, white gloves and leather shoes, or in select cases scholarly robes. Here, Puyi dons an ill-fitting, white, three piece suit with a colored tie. His bald head is striking, and because of his pose against the scenic backdrop - bald head against painted sky - it almost blends in. We notice that he wears the wrong type of shoes - here a rounded, tapered toe instead of a wide, flat one. He holds a hat which seems more suitable for a walk in the countryside under the hot sun than for a formal occasion - it is certainly not a top hat. Wan Rong wears a decorative headdress instead of a long, white veil; soft, cloth slippers rather than leather heels stick out below the hem of her dress. The unfortunate backdrop of the image underscored the fact that the couple was cloistered in the Forbidden City and not allowed to move about freely. The couple's awkward posing served as a reminder that the marriage had been arranged: there was no physical or emotional connection between the two individuals, either could be cropped out of the photograph without dramatically altering the fundamental composition of the image.

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[62] Henrietta Harrison, *The making of the Republican citizen: political ceremonies and symbols in China, 1911-1929* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 240.

[63] See Figure 12: Liu Beisi ed., image 160.

Eleven years after the fall of the dynasty, Puyi and his handlers were sorely out of touch. While others - at this very time - married in Western-style suits with abbreviated ceremonies, Puyi took two wives in an arranged ceremony that lasted days, relied heavily on superstition and Manchu imperial tradition, and paraded a sedan chair through the city streets. New-style weddings shunned betrothal and divination, and the expense of extravagant ceremonies was looked down on by reformers as wasteful excess. Now, the general consensus was that the old was no longer fashionable, or necessary. Unfortunately for Puyi, his wedding represented both "old" and "imperial." Puyi lost out in two ways: the ceremonial rites he practiced were divorced from any kind of imperial power that he would have previously enjoyed, and because of his position he was also denied any new rights or autonomy that came with the new-style weddings that New Culture reformers were clambering for. The rites of new-style weddings were, theoretically, open to all just as Puyi and Wan Rong became the last two participants in their grand, Republican sanctioned, Manchu pageant.

PART THREE

The Staging of a Public Wedding: Chiang Kai-shek and Soong Meiling

Amidst war and chaos, Chiang Kai-shek emerged as commander of the National Revolutionary Army, uniting the Nationalists with the Communists in 1926 to head the Northern Expedition, eliminate the warlords, and ostensibly unify China under the principles of Sun Yat-sen. But political rivalries and strategic disagreements festered among the camps, and seeing a chance to seize power, Chiang acted. He unleashed a bloody massacre of Communists and union strikers in Shanghai in April 1927, betraying the united front and shocking even members of his own party with his brutality. The Northern Expedition dissolved, and after suffering a particularly bad military defeat at the hands of warlords Chiang resigned in August of that year.[64]

But by September, Chiang's personal life took center stage as rumors of his engagement to Soong Meiling swirled around Shanghai. Soong was an ideal candidate to rehabilitate Chiang's image and bolster his financial and political connections within China and abroad. Educated first at Wesleyan in Georgia and then at Wellesley, Soong spoke flawless English with a charming Southern lilt. She was a figure in Shanghai high society, well known for her charity work in the city after returning to China in 1917. Soong was a member of the YWCA and involved in church activities; she was on the film-censoring committee; notably, she was the first Chinese person (male or female) ever appointed to the Child Labor Commission by the municipal authorities.[65] Her brother, Harvard educated Soong Ziwen (T.V. Soong), was a financial mastermind who, despite his initial opposition to the marriage, would help Chiang fund his military endeavors throughout the 1930s and 1940s. Her sister, Soong Ailing had married the foreign educated banker Kong Xiangxi, a purported descendent of Confucius. Perhaps most importantly, her other sister Soong Qingling was the widow of Sun Yat-sen, recognized widely as China's "national father." By marrying into the Soong clan, proximity to Sun's legacy gave

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[64] Spence, 362. See also: Hollington Tong, *Chiang Kai-shek, soldier and statesman; authorized biography by Hollington K. Tong* (Shanghai: The China Publishing Company, 1937), 173-82.

[65] Elmer T. Clark, *The Chiangs of China* (New York: Abington-Cokesbury Press, 1943), 73.

Chiang political legitimacy. Perhaps because of this, the courtship, engagement, and wedding were covered extensively in the press, both international and domestic.

The couple married in Shanghai on December 1, 1927, five years to the day after Puyi's wedding in Beijing. In many ways, their wedding marks a turning point in the way new-style ceremonies were presented and perceived in modern China. Soong and Chiang were married in two separate ceremonies: Methodist rites at the Soong family residence and newly created, politicized rites at the Majestic Hotel, one of Shanghai's most exclusive foreign venues. Though the wedding at the Soong residence was ostensibly private, it was covered by the media and the details of the ceremony were published in the newspaper *Shenbao*. It was a decidedly religious ceremony, a new-style ceremony, and the venue - the Soong's - subverted the traditional norms of a household wedding taking place at the groom's family home. The second ceremony was a new-style ceremony with a twist: the bride and groom wore Western-style attire and the venue was decked out in the most popular Western trends of the day, but the composition of the ceremony itself was decidedly Chinese and introduced special, politicized rites. For the first time, the bride was the star of the new-style ceremony with Soong calling the shots about the proposal, the ceremonies, her dress, and so on. Photos of the wedding - practically unavoidable - helped shape the image of both the modern Chinese bride, and the political couple. Chiang and Soong's ceremony not only glamorized the new-style wedding, it also gave such ceremonies a social legitimacy in the Chinese urban context that would further develop in the 1930s. Whether social currency and ceremonial glamour could be translated into political might remained to be seen.

On September 18th, news of the Soong-Chiang engagement was broken by *The New York Times*, in juicy detail:

> The present whereabouts of General Chiang Kai-shek, who resigned recently as the Commander-in-Chief of the Nanking Nationalist armies, is a question that is puzzling Shanghai these days far more than the political manouvres [sic] at Nanking as reports of his approaching marriage are confirmed . . . Rumors of the marriage, which have been thick for the past week or ten days, were confirmed this afternoon . . . That he is in Shanghai seems fairly certain, his tailor, an Englishman, admitting to me that Chiang had ordered several suits and had fittings a few days ago.[66]

According to *The Times*, Chiang and Soong began their romance two years ago in Canton; T.V. Soong "bitterly" opposed the union, and Soong Meiling was "resolutely breaking the age-old precedent and choosing her own mate."[67] Soong family drama aside, much of the fuss about the engagement and wedding was due to Chiang's ambiguous marital status which involved at least two other women. *The Times* explained that Chiang divorced his first wife several months ago by the "old Chinese custom of merely proclaiming she was no longer his wife."[68] Furthermore, "Chiang has also denied that the Mme. Chiang Kai-shek who is now in America is his wife at all and it seems that he has sent away two other 'wives' as well as his original wife, and is now ready to marry Miss Soong."[69] Though it was well known that this would not be Chiang's first

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[66] *The New York Times*, "Chiang Will Wed Mme. Sun's Sister," September 18, 1927.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Ibid.

marriage, the article hinted that Chiang had at least two concubines; the status of his first, arranged, marriage to Miss Mao Fumei (毛福梅) was also called into question. Had he and Miss Mao actually divorced? To complicated matters further *The New York Times* reported that a Miss Chen, claiming to be Chiang Kai-shek's current wife, was currently traveling in the United States![70]

Chiang, meanwhile, went on the offensive a few days later, talking to *The New York Times* about his marital situation, stating that:

> The reports concerning my first wife and the young woman who went to America were circulated widely in order to discredit not only me but my proposed marriage to Miss Soong . . . The reports were instigated by political enemies desiring to embarrass me as much as possible and prevent my return to the revolution as well as to obtain personal advancement. I divorced, in 1921, my first wife. Since then I have set free two concubines. I was surprised to learn that one of them went to America as my wife.[71]

Chiang's relationship with Soong Meiling was discussed in the context of a self-imposed political hiatus: "I do not propose a return to politics for several years. I hope that the new Nanking Government will succeed, but I feel I must stand aside. I want to spend a year in America and two years in Europe . . . my primary interests are related to the future of a unified China, and I want to study American government and military science and tactics."[72] When the reporter asked Chiang where he intended to live, he replied "Wherever Miss Soong wants to live, we live."[73] Meanwhile, Soong Meiling was said to confirm the engagement to at an "intimate" dinner party with prominent Chinese and foreign friends declaring "I sincerely love the great General."[74] While she hoped to win approval for the match, Soong was determined to marry, regardless of her family's opposition. What a scandal: Chiang's relationship with wives and concubines, Soong's declarations of true love against the wishes of her family, Chiang's willingness to follow Soong's lead and live abroad!

Both parties denied that politics was a factor. According to *The North China Herald*, Chiang declared: "It is accidental that we are all so prominent in politics . . . I have been courting Miss Soong these many years without a thought of the political bearing of such a marriage."[75] When interviewed, "Miss Soong . . . ridiculed the idea of a political marriage and said that she only hoped that political members of her family would place no impediments in the way of her

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[70] See: Ch'en, Chieh-ju, edited by Lloyd Eastman, *Chiang Kai-shek's Secret Past: The Memoir of his Second Wife, Ch'en Chieh-ju* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993). *The New York Times* reports: "At the Foreign Office this evening I saw a copy of a passport application by the girl the General denies is his wife. She signed the form Chiang Cheju, not stating whether she was Miss or Mrs. She gave her occupation as a student, her age as 20, and said that the purpose of her visit was to travel. The official who issued the passport denied that he did so on the understanding that she was Chiang Kai-shek's wife." *The New York Times*, "Chiang Silent on Wedding," September 20, 1927.

[71] *The New York Times*, "Chiang Blames Foes for Talk of 'Wife,'" September 25, 1927. He then continues, somewhat valiantly: "Only cowards would strike at me in this manner, through Miss Soong. They are hiding behind a woman's skirts, the most cowardly thing to do."

[72] Ibid.

[73] Ibid.

[74] *The New York Times*, "Says She Will Wed Chiang," September 22, 1927.

[75] *The North China Herald*, "Chiang Kai-shek's Visit to Shanghai: Proposed Match with Mme. Sun's Sister," October 1, 1927.

choice."[76] According to Chiang's personal diary, the engagement was officially announced on September 26th at the Soong residence. A far cry from his tortuous relationship with Miss Mao, Chiang wrote "being engaged at this time in my life is the happiest thing."[77]

On September 28th, in a highly visible and internationally publicized move, Chiang sailed to Japan to ask the Matriarch Soong for permission to marry her youngest daughter. The couple met in the early morning hours to say farewell before Chiang set sail. Chiang was taken aback by Soong's sadness at his departure, writing in a surprising moment of intimacy: "it's not only outsiders who do not know your true feelings, but I was also not aware of them until now."[78] Chiang sent Soong a telegram from the ship that very day, declaring: "from today on, I plan to send her a telegram every day or every other day."[79]

The day that he set sail, Chiang set the record straight for the Chinese audience, posting an announcement about his personal affairs in *Shenbao*. "On the tenth year of the Republic [1921], Miss Mao and I officially divorced. As for the other woman [Miss Chen], we have never been married. I have already broken off my connection with the Chen family. I have two sons. Outside of that, there are no wives or daughters only rumors . . . which are easily propagated and confuse and befuddle the public. I am therefore issuing this response."[80] Chiang also addressed the English language press in Shanghai. In an authorized interview with the *North China Herald* published on October 1st, Chiang again explained his divorce, explicating Chinese cultural differences that may be misconstrued by outsiders: "I was duly divorced, in accordance with Chinese customs . . . Foreigners perhaps do not understand all the intricacies of the Chinese family system."[81] One day later, an old letter from Chiang to Miss Mao's family conveniently surfaced and was published in *Shenbao*. In the April 1921 letter, addressed to Miss Mao's brother, Chiang formally requested a divorce from Miss Mao, and elaborated on his perception of the flaws in the Chinese marriage system. We find his sentiments very similar to *Funü zazhi* contributors hoping to find their ideal spouses and true love.

China's family system, Chiang wrote, was based not on mutual happiness but rather on one's ability to endure their spouse. Subjected to an arranged marriage, here Chiang detailed his frustrations with his wife, which had simmered for ten years to the point where "hearing her

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[76] Ibid.

[77] Wang Zhenghua, ed. *Jiang Zhongzheng zongtong dang'an, shilüe gaoben* 蒋中正总统档案, 事略稿本, *2*. (Taipei: Guoshiguan, 2003), 70. (Will henceforth be referred to as SLGB in citations)

[78] SLGB, 70-71.

[79] Ibid.

[80] *Shenbao*, "Jiang Zhongzheng qishi 蒋中正启事" 238-581 (1) 1927. Soong Meiling was also implicated in a series of rumors namely, that she was making demands on Chiang and influencing him by meddling in his political affairs. One telling rumor (declared untrue) was as follows: on a car ride with Chiang to Nanjing, Soong gave him conditions for marriage: that he formally divorce Miss Mao; announce that in 1925 he and Soong had not yet become acquainted and that he broke his connection with his two concubines voluntarily; avoid divisions within the party and maintain cooperation with party members and to study abroad. *Shenbao*, "Jiang Soong dinghun zhi jingguo 蒋宋订婚之经过." 293-14 (5) 1927.

[81] *The North China Herald*, "Chiang Kai-shek's Visit to Shanghai: Proposed Match with Mme. Sun's Sister," October 1, 1927.

footsteps and seeing her shadow caused agitation."[82] When a husband could not acknowledge his wife - and was in fact, repulsed by her - a family could not be considered a family. Furthermore, this strained relationship had spread, influencing Chiang's interactions with his mother. Others of his generation - torn between Western education, new-style ideals, and Confucian morals that had shaped their traditional upbringing - faced similar difficulties as they straddled two worlds.

Furthermore, Chiang claimed, social stigma against divorce forced men stay in unhappy marriages and seek concubines rather than divorcing their wives - a practice he found deplorable. He wanted to use his divorce as an example for others. His divorce from Miss Mao, he explained, would actually to free her from their arranged marriage and ensure the happiness of both parties who would no longer be forced to interact in misery on a daily basis. After the divorce, Chiang vowed to treat Miss Mao's relatives as his own, claiming that their relationship would improve because now interactions would be based on friendship and not obligation.[83] The letter not only served as official proof of Chiang's intention to divorce Mao, it also framed divorce as a positive, logical, and progressive act that would promote happiness; arranged marriage and concubinage were seen as backward vestiges of the old family system that weighed on those who practiced them.

Chiang arrived in Japan on October 1st; on October 3rd the Matriarch Soong consented to the marriage. The pair seemed very friendly, despite press reports to the contrary. "We spoke of the wedding proposal and it was approved in person. The only thing is that she did not want her daughter to come here [to Japan, presumably, to get married]. . . . I telegrammed Soong Meiling and told her of the exchange, in detail. I also told her the truth about why I cannot return home right now [never elaborated on] and I hoped that she would come to Japan soon. Today I visited her mother three times." Chiang added an uncharacteristically private note: "her mother seemed very happy when she looked at me, her approval and love showed on her face and I was very touched."[84]

Chiang received a telegram the next day from Soong Meiling; she would not join him in Japan as he had requested.[85] Perhaps another Soong family wedding in Japan would not frame the union in the best light; Soong Qingling had married Sun Yat-sen in Tokyo in 1915. Though Sun was a Christian, he was also dogged by a previous marriage; unlike Chiang, he never formally divorced. Coupled with the twenty-seven year age difference between Sun and Soong Qingling, their marriage was at best mildly scandalous, and a political liability for Sun. The Soong clan must have been aware of this precedent, even if Chiang himself was not.

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[82] *Shenbao*, "Jiang Jieshi xinian banli lihun zhong zhiyi han 蒋介石昔年办理离婚中之一函" 239-28 (6) 1927.

[83] Ibid.

[84] SLGB, 74-5. Chiang makes no mention here of the Matriarch Song's supposed demand that he convert to Christianity in order to marry her daughter, as is claimed in Seagrave and Hahn. This incident is also documented in a memorable scene in the Hong Kong movie *The Soong Sisters* (1998) where Soong Meiling's mother, accompanied by Soong Ailing (absent in the SLGB account), hands Chiang a bible and tells him that somewhere in the book her deceased husband wrote down one phrase: the implication being that Chiang's ability to recite the phrase will serve as proof that he has actually read the bible and that his intentions were honest.

[85] SLGB, 78.

Away from the Chinese political scene, Chiang found himself missing the action, writing in his diary: "I feel concerned about politics at home. In the past, I thought that after I resigned, I would not concern myself with politics and would just rest. Who knew that without a political job, I would miss politics? I am ambitious, and absence from the political scene is more painful that I thought it would be."[86] Chiang often met with journalists, party members and political friends while abroad. He took an interest in Japanese politics and attitudes towards the Chinese, and discussed political affairs with T.V. Soong. Chiang consciously stayed in the public eye, too: in Japan he traveled with an entourage of eleven automobiles.[87] *The New York Times* also reported that Chiang "talks willingly to newspaper men and tells them of his friendship for Japan and says he hopes to wipe out the misunderstandings of last year between the Japanese and the Chinese Nationalists."[88]

After a month of sporadic telegramming, Chiang Kai-shek and Soong Meiling were reunited in Shanghai on November 10th, less than one month before their wedding. Docking in Shanghai, Chiang went to see Soong immediately. That day, he also visited Nationalist higher-up Zhang Renjie and others, and ventured to the Soong residence to discuss the current political scene: it was a seamless mix of the private, the personal and the political, connected by the thread of the Soong family.[89] In fact, Chiang increasingly conducted political business at the Soong residence, receiving prominent political guests there to discuss party affairs or current events. Here, we find Chiang subverting the traditional male/female dynamic where a bride was absorbed into the groom's family after marriage, rather *prior* to the marriage the Soong residence and the Soong family pulled *Chiang* into their orbit: their home became a resting place when he tired or ill, a place to conduct political and personal business, both alone and with his fiancée.

Unlike many contemporary courtships that were sealed with the passage of a photograph, or marked by limited contact between the young man and woman before their wedding, Chiang and Soong were often spotted about town. In fact, the press tracked the couple's movements. They were spotted "hand in hand" meeting He Xiangyi (何香凝), prominent female political figure and a member of their wedding party, on Nanjing Road; Miss He had been seen visiting the Soong residence, too.[90] *Shenbao* reported that Chiang and Soong purchased books together and decorated their house as a couple.[91] Many *Funü zazhi* contributors could only hope for such a public, companionate relationship; Puyi would have probably found it unimaginable.

Around this time, the couple began to shape their public image through photographs published in newspapers and pictorial magazines. One such image was published in the new

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[86] SLGB, 80.

[87] *The New York Times*, "Chiang in Japan, Cultivates Tokio," October 1, 1927.

[88] Ibid.

[89] SLGB, 114.

[90] *Shenbao*, "Jiang Soong lianmei wu He Xiangyi 蒋宋连袂晤何香凝" 240-619 (1) 1927.

[91] SLGB, 149-53.

pictorial magazine, *Liangyou huabao* (良友画报, also known as *The Young Companion*).[92] Taken by a member of the Chinese Photography Society's news bureau, the image was clearly intended for public consumption. *Liangyou huabao* was an appropriate venue: in 1926, the Shanghai based periodical burst on to the scene and was met with instant popularity; its first issue sold over 7,000 copies in three printings.[93] Soon after, *Liangyou huabao* added English language captions and was sold abroad too. Advertised "the most attractive and popular magazine in China" it included a range of content, from the silly to the serious. One issue featured a "Healthy Baby" contest, another commemorated Sun Yat-sen's death in a 1926 issue.

Soong and Chiang's portrait was taken outdoors. The couple was seated at a table set with trays of fancy sweets. Chiang wore a long coat with a mandarin collar, often associated with Sun Yat-sen, and engaged the camera with a commanding gaze, perhaps befitting of a General at rest. Soong wore a jacket with a fur collar, a striped shirt, and patterned skirt. She held a magazine open on her lap, as if she had been captured in the midst of reading. Having been captured by a news photographer, the image does not depict a private moment; rather, it reads as a statement of the poised couple's glamourous, worldly presence and gives readers a peek into what their life may be like during leisure time. This was not a couple that had been betrothed, or had exchanged photographs, met a few times, and become engaged. Their lives - time abroad, military experience, brushes with politics and power - made them exemplary, and Chiang knew this.

He leveraged this glamour and notoriety into political capital, stressing themes of charity and civil service he formally announced their wedding plans on November 26th in *Shenbao*:

> I have pursued the revolution for many years and have devoted myself to the military life. I never considered my own family issues. Even though I have resigned, the revolution is still not complete. I still have a responsibility to hungry comrades and those still fighting. Many people are miserable and homeless; I cannot forget this.
>
> I have decided that I will marry Miss Soong on December 1st in Shanghai. We plan to have a frugal wedding and allocate funds intended for a banquet to build a disabled veterans' hospital instead. This will fulfill a personal wish from my military days. Soong Meiling has also agreed . . .
>
> If you love us please send money to the disabled veterans and we would be grateful. Please let us save on lavish formalities . . . The wedding will be simple . . .
>
> We will discuss plans for building the hospital with comrades . . . and entrust Mr. Jin Songpan in the military bureau of Zhejiang with this responsibility.[94]

A few days later there was a reply in *Shenbao* from the Veterans' Preparatory Office, located in a bank on the Bund. Mentioning both Chiang and Soong in their grateful message, a representative from the office stated that a fund was established in the bank which would accept donations in the form of deposits for the construction of the disabled veterans' hospital.[95]

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[92] See Figure 13: "Jiang Jieshi yu Soong Meiling nüshi heying 蒋介石与宋美龄女士合影" *Liangyou huabao* 良友画报 20 (1927): 3. Though the location of the photograph is not mentioned, the image is similar to others that were taken at the Kong residence.

[93] Hu Zhichuan 胡志川, Ma Yunzeng 马运增 eds., *Zhongguo sheying shi 1840-1937* 中国摄影史 1840-1937 (Beijing: Zhongguo sheying chuban she, 1987), 282.

[94] *Shenbao*, "Jiang Jieshi qishi 蒋介石启事" 240-613 (3) 1927. This is also reproduced in the SLGB, dated November 26, 1927.

[95] *Shenbao*, "Jin Tongpan qishi 金通盘启事" 240-631 (1) 1927.

With this statement, Chiang cast himself as a General who had sacrificed family for the greater good. Soong's endorsement of a frugal, simple wedding underscored her compassion and charity. It also marked lavish ceremonies as relics of the past and incompatible with revolution. This sacrifice for revolution and nation was mapped in time: Chiang's selfless military past, and Chiang and Soong's simple marriage in the present both set the stage for the sacrifices of future revolutionaries. United as a couple, Chiang and Soong embodied this process.

These sentiments were echoed in Chiang's next essay "Our Day," published in *Shenbao* on December 1st:

> I firmly believe that today, after I marry Soong Meiling, my revolutionary work will improve. I can fulfill my revolutionary duties from now on without worries. I study philosophy and social problems and deeply believe that if there is no perfect marriage, then life is meaningless. There will be no happy families in society and no national progress. This is especially true for revolutionaries. If we do not pay attention to social reforms, then this is not true revolution, not complete revolution. Family is the foundation of society. Therefore, in order to improve Chinese society, you must first improve the Chinese family.
>
> Soong Meiling and I have discussed China's revolutionary problems and we share this same belief. Now that we are married, it is our greatest wish that our marriage can have some influence on the old society and make a contribution to the new society.
>
> Today, we not only celebrate our happy marriage but we also hope to encourage the reform of Chinese society. This is my ambition and I will work hard, without rest and take the completion of the Chinese revolution as my final goal. Therefore, our wedding today is in fact building a foundation for our revolutionary business.
>
> When I first met Soong Meiling, it occurred to me that she was my ideal spouse. Miss Soong also agreed, saying that if I was not her husband she would rather be single her entire life. For us two, it is a holy union; there is nothing ordinary about it.[96]

For Chiang, his wedding day was more than just a special moment between two individuals and their respective families; it was a new, hopeful time for all of China. Casting his happy, new marriage against the ills of old society, the union – one where an extraordinary spouse was chosen – became a mechanism for progress and reform, a cornerstone for new revolutionary practice that began not with military might but with home and family. As Chiang's revolutionary muse and ideal companion, Soong Meiling emerged as a crucial link in this revolutionary progression: she helped Chiang create the foundation upon which the family, society, and revolution would all rest. The call for revolution through happy marriage and family was a far cry from betrothal of the past. What was a revolutionary wedding ceremony like?

In 1927, after the ostensible unification of the country through the second Northern expedition, the Nanjing Government began to draft new etiquette reforms, referencing government attempts at regulation from years prior: we remember from chapter one etiquette reforms from 1913 had not been implemented, due to lack of funding. What was created in 1927 was a temporary draft of government sanctioned procedures; it is unclear how widely the draft was circulated or implemented. We find the draft essentially identical to popular, new-style wedding ceremonies detailed in *Shibao* and elsewhere. But rather than one in a series of guidebook variations, the goal of government policies was standardization. Here, as the Nationalist government began to draft its own Civil Code, we find a departure from the "minor matters" approach of the Qing code, whereas such rituals were "things best left to society itself

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[96] *Shenbao*, "Jiang Jieshi Soong Meiling jinri jiehun 蒋介石宋美龄今日结婚" 241-14 (1) 1927.

to handle, like familial disputes."[97] Instead, we find another attempt at government involvement in the creation of rites *themselves*.

For the first time, we see an attempt to codify engagement procedures with a wedding contract befitting a new-style ceremony. An engagement agreement would be drawn up as follows: Mr. A, on X year, of X age, X province is engaged to Miss B. The date followed, with the signatures of the bride, groom, and the introducer. After this agreement, the news was made public (*tonggao* 通告) with announcements at the young man and young woman's households, stating that the bride and groom had agreed to hold a wedding on a certain date (here we remember Liu's translation of Staffe included similar procedures). This agreement was signed by representatives from both parties.[98]

As for the wedding, it could be held in either a public venue or in the home. Participants were: introducers (*jieshao ren* 介绍人); one parent or guardian (*zhuhun ren* 主婚人) from each side; one witness (*zhenghun ren* 证婚人) from each side; two attendants (*binxiang* 傧相); and two masters of ceremonies (*ciyi* 词义), one representing the bride and one for the groom. Attire would be formal ceremonial dress (*lifu* 礼服).[99]

The ceremony consisted of twenty-one parts, which were listed as follows. 1. masters of ceremony enter the hall 2. music begins 3. guests enter the hall 4. introducers take their places 5. officiants enter and take their places 6. guardians take their places 7. the bride and groom take their places 8. the entire group faces the party and country flags and the portrait of the President (Sun Yat-sen) 9. guardians read the wedding certificate 10. guardians speak to bride and groom 11. the bride and groom stamp or sign wedding certificate 12. the introducers, guardians and officiants all stamp or seal the wedding certificate 13. the bride and groom face each other and bow three times and exchange jewelry (music plays) 14. the officiants speak to the couple (*zhenci* 箴词) 15. the guardians offer advice 16. guests offer congratulations 17. the guardians offer thanks 18. the bride and groom thank the officiants with three bows, which the officiants return 19. they then thank the introducers with three bows which are returned 20. guests are thanked with three bows 21. music plays, concluding the ceremony. The bride and groom then thank their family with a series of bows. The order of this was designated by generation.[100]

A detailed diagram of the ceremony was also included, for the first time. By the 1930s, this spatial configuration would be relatively commonplace for weddings sponsored by, or affiliated with, the Nationalist regime.[101] The focal point of the ceremony was Sun Yat-sen's portrait and the party and state flags, which were placed at the head of the venue above a ceremonial table (*li'an* 礼案). The symbols of the new government were featured prominently, supplanting ancestors who, in the past, would have been placed at the forefront of such rituals. Participants were organized in a hierarchy, with symbols of the state and the party at the top.

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[97] Philip C.C. Huang, *Code, custom and legal practice in China: the Qing and the Republic compared* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 29.

[98] *Lizhi cao'an cankao cailiao* 礼制草案参考材料 (128-1316) Academica Historica, Taiwan.

[99] Ibid.

[100] Ibid.

[101] See Figure 14, Ibid.

Family members and introducers were in the outer most ring, the bride's relatives on the left and the groom's relatives on the right of the hall. A second, inner ring, was designated for officiants and guardians who were placed at the top of the hall, guests and musicians at the bottom. In the middle stood the two masters of ceremonies, the bride and groom, and the bridesmaids and groomsmen who stood behind them.

The new wedding contract, the carefully enumerated wedding rites, the diagram of the venue were all preliminary attempts by the Nationalist regime to co-opt, standardize and politicize the new-style wedding ceremony. Nationalist drafts were a departure from both new-style and Western-style weddings which were simpler, rife with variation, and did not concern themselves with the decoration of the hall or the positions of certain parties in that civic space. Furthermore, new-style ceremonies were inherently personal and staged for a variety of reasons. Why did the Nationalists want to change this?

The exact date of this 1927 draft ceremony is unclear. It seems probable that the ceremony was composed and revised prior to Chiang's wedding: Chiang's ceremony was the first civic wedding to feature Sun's portrait and the arrangement of state and party flags. His wedding took place in December and it seems likely that this legislation would have been drafted in the eleven months prior, on the heels of reunification and government consolidation. Drafts were one thing, implementation was an altogether different matter. For this Nationalist version of the new-style ceremony to gain traction and visibility, it needed to be presented in a grand manner. Below, we will see how this draft was adapted and performed on a domestic stage for an international audience when Soong Meiling married Chiang Kai-shek.

One Revolution, Two Ceremonies

Soong Meiling and Chiang Kai-shek were married in two separate ceremonies. The first, Methodist rites at the Soong residence on Seymour Road, was a who's-who of China's high society and the political scene, with a few special foreign invitees. The second ceremony at the Majestic Hotel on Bubbling Well Road showcased new marriage rites to over 1,500 carefully chosen guests (plus date), and approximately 1,000 spectators, journalists, photographers.[102] Intricate details of both ceremonies were published in China and internationally; despite any pretense that they may be private, the couple's words, behaviors and activities were presented for public consumption.

Security at the Soong residence on the day of the wedding was tight; the area was patrolled by both foreign concession and Chinese police detectives.[103] On the day of the wedding, the Soong residence was lavishly decorated with baskets of flowers and a red carpet had been laid on the floor. The guest list was an exclusive who's-who of the wives of Chinese politicos. Madame Li Dequan, wife of Feng Yuxiang, arrived at 2:40 in the afternoon wearing a black jacket, ivory qipao and black leather shoes; Madame Kong Xiangxi [Soong Ailing] and

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[102] *The New York Times*, "Chiang Weds Mme. Sun Yat-sen's Sister; 3000 See Rites for Wellesley Girl Bride," December 2, 1927.

[103] *Shenbao*, "Jiang Jieshi Soong Meiling zuori jiehun shengkuang 蒋介石宋美龄昨日结婚盛况" 241-37 (3) 1927.

others all gathered upstairs, touched up their makeup and waited for the right time to emerge, as Soong's brother-in-law Kong Xiangxi received guests downstairs.[104]

A little after 3:00, the ceremony began with music and singing, Chiang Kai-shek and guests all faced the officiator, Mr. Liu Jiwen, the national secretary of the YMCA in China, as Soong Meiling entered the room.[105] Traditionally, the bride would arrive at the groom's house and enter the bridal chamber; here the wedding was taking place was the parlor of Soong's natal home. In most traditional ceremonies, the couple bowed to the household gods, the ancestral tablets, the bridegroom's mother and father, and finally, the guests. Here, in homage to *her* ancestors rather than Chiang's, a portrait of Soong Meiling's deceased father hung prominently in the western parlor. After opening remarks, Chiang said his vows:

> I, Jiang Jieshi, of my own free will and following God's wish, take Soong Meiling as my wife from this day forward, regardless of carefree times or trials and tribulations; in sickness and in health; together with you, and with all my heart. I must do my utmost to love and respect you, to protect you, to remain loyal for life, under God's sincere examination; this is my honest promise to you. Now, I confer this special ring to you as a means of solidifying this oath.[106]

Soong Meiling repeated the same vow. A witness read a statement, which was followed by a formal prayer from Liu Jiwen:

> Dear Heavenly Father . . . today we evoke your name with the union of Chiang Kai-shek and Soong Meiling. We are thankful for your great kindness and seek your guidance in their relationship as a married couple. With each day, guide them to love and aid each other and help them to obtain happiness. We beseech you to guide them to organize a complete and ideal family on behalf of establishing a happy foundation for a Chinese society. Today the Chinese people endure great hardship; we seek your sympathy. Let this husband and wife at all times be able to vigilantly carry out revolutionary work, and to make brave sacrifices on behalf of their country and do all they can forging ahead, overcoming any difficulties. Help them from this day forward with the great work of building a new China and to make an extraordinary contribution. Let the people of the whole country enjoy supreme happiness and this blessing . . .[107]

Soong Meiling's mother had insisted that the wedding ceremony was Methodist. Because of Chiang's previous divorce, however, it was difficult to find a Methodist minister who would officiate the wedding, hence Mr. Liu's role as officiant.[108] Though the couple exchanged what would be recognized in the West as age-old vows, Mr. Liu reiterated Chiang's sentiments about revolution and family, too: family was the basis for a new Chinese society and newly married, Chiang and Soong would be at the forefront of this revolutionary movement. It was a movement that was carefully contrived. Despite the exclusivity of the ceremony, detailed information was given to the press: descriptions of the Soong family's interior decor, the portrait of Soong's late father, the names and titles of guests. The wedding was a family event, but it was also a civic event. Transcriptions of the couple's vows and Mr. Liu's speech were printed in the paper, too. Revolution, here, began in the home; in this case, the home of the bride, not the groom. Despite revolutionary rhetoric, Soong, not Chiang, was the star of the day. The wedding ceremony did

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[104] Ibid.

[105] Ibid.

[106] Ibid.

[107] Ibid.

[108] Clark, 80-1.

not conclude with rites at the Soong home, but continued at a larger venue with even grander gestures. What a blow to the old order!

Outside the Majestic Hotel, Shanghai's most "exclusive foreign hostelry," security for the highly publicized nuptials was tight, as it had been at the Soong's.[109] *The North China Herald* included catty but informative remarks about security - or lack thereof - in the city, underscoring the tension between foreign nationals and Chinese leadership, and the danger the city posed for both.

> The marriage of General Chiang Kai-shek and Miss Soong . . . at the Majestic Hotel . . . is another illustration of confidence which is generally felt in the power of our Municipal Police to maintain order. At this marriage all the leading officials of the Nationalist Party were present, and they were afforded the full protection of our police force. We do not wish to recall the events of last March and April any longer than to remind General Chiang and all other party leaders that in spite of those unfriendly occurrences, as long as they choose to live in the Settlement they can expect protection of their lives and property without any discrimination against them on account of their affairs. We wish that two our own nationals who chose to go to Nanking, Changsha or Wuchang to celebrate their nuptials could count upon a similar maintenance of order by a well organized police force, if the wedding were to be attended by our Admirals, Ministers and Consuls. As a choice between the Municipal control of Shanghai and the Nationalist regime in Nanking is it surprising that even the highest party leaders prefer Shanghai?[110]

By 1:00 p.m., the door was flanked by at least ten military personnel.[111] *The Shanghai Times* reported: "At the door of the ballroom it was necessary to show invitations and to sign a register before being admitted. After signing the register the signer was presented with a small pin bearing the name of General Chiang and Miss Soong. Signers of the register were also presented with a programme [sic] printed in Chinese."[112] According to *Shenbao*, invitations were extremely exclusive and each bore a number and Soong Ziwen's personal seal.[113]

Soong and Chiang wed in front of a who's-who of Chinese political power players and international politicos. Foreign guests included consul-generals from Norway, Japan and France; Admiral Mark L. Bristol, Commander-in-Chief of the American Pacific fleet, and his entire staff; Major General John Duncan, commander of the North China command.[114] Prominent Chinese attendees included political heavyweights Wang Jingwei, Dai Jitao and Chen Lifu, as well as selected representatives from military circles.[115] Cai Yuanpei, former president of Peking University and current Minister of Education to the Nationalist Government, presided over the ceremony; given Cai's prominent calls for marriage reform in the previous decade this symbolic gesture would not have been missed by those who concerned themselves with the topic. We remember, of course, Cai's wedding photograph in the "ideal spouse" issue of *Funü zazhi* as well. His presence at the wedding - sanctioning the union and implicitly endorsing this new and

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[109] *The New York Times*, "Chiang Weds Mme. Sun Yat-sen's Sister; 3000 See Rites for Wellesley Girl Bride."

[110] *The North China Herald,* "Two Funerals and a Wedding" December 3, 1927.

[111] *Shenbao*, "Jiang Jieshi Soong Meiling zuori jiehun shengkuang 蒋介石宋美龄昨日结婚盛况" 241-37 (3) 1927.

[112] *The Shanghai Times*, December 2, 1927, 5.

[113] *Shenbao*, "Jiang Jieshi Soong Meiling zuori jiehun shengkuang 蒋介石宋美龄昨日结婚盛况" 241-37 (3) 1927.

[114] *The New York Times*, "Chiang Weds Mme. Sun Yat-sen's Sister; 3000 See Rites for Wellesley Girl Bride."

[115] *Shenbao*, "Jiang Jieshi Soong Meiling zuori jiehun shengkuang 蒋介石宋美龄昨日结婚盛况" 241-37 (3) 1927.

politicized ceremony - no doubt marked the proceedings as modern, forward-thinking, in step with the times.

The ceremony was held in the ballroom of the hotel, which had been elaborately staged for the occasion. Flowers were abundant; a red carpet, "bordered by little white standards bearing bunches of white chrysanthemums and fern leaves" led to an alcove, where an "arbour [sic] of greenery had been erected."[116] Inside the arbor hung a portrait of Sun Yat-sen, flanked by two Nationalist flags. The arbor itself was covered with white flowers and red cloth, at the corner of each entrance hung a white dove crafted from cloth and flowers. According to *The China Press,* an altar, placed in front of the arbor, ". . .was composed of a Chinese table . . . on either side of which were gigantic white shields of massed flowers, the character for long life and happiness worked out in red geranium on them."[117] Seats for guests and relatives had been arranged to face the arbor. A Russian orchestra was present, and played the Mendelssohn wedding march.[118] Outside the ballroom at the end of the red carpet were two chairs for the couple, to serve as a receiving area after the ceremony. Above the chairs hung a tremendous bell made of flowers, "from which hung ribbons which when pulled released a shower of rose petals on the pair beneath."[119]

This was not the first time a bell of flowers had been constructed for a wedding in Shanghai![120] In fact, the wedding decorations were in keeping with the most popular Western wedding trends of the day: Mendelssohn's wedding march, greenery such as ferns, the construction of an arbor.[121] Chinese touches were added too: red decorations and Chinese characters woven into floral arrangements. Indeed, the wedding incorporated the most fashionable, modern wedding trends from China and abroad. The material for Soong Meiling's Western-style wedding gown and her choice of flowers were also were in keeping with the current Western favorites; silk georgette and orange blossoms.[122] Soong's dress was made by Reville of 10 Nanjing Road.[123] The veil was "beautiful real lace made long and flowing to form a second train to that of white charmeuse embroidered in silver . . . fell from her shoulders" and she wore silver shoes and stockings, her bouquet of pink and white flowers was tied with white and silver ribbons.[124] The bridesmaids' dresses were also Western-style and a popular color,

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[116] *The North China Herald*, "The Wedding of Chiang Kai-shek" December 3, 1927.

[117] Emily Hahn, *The Soong sisters* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, 1941), 142.

[118] *The Shanghai Times*, December 2, 1927, 5.

[119] *The North China Herald*, "The Wedding of Chiang Kai-shek" December 3, 1927.

[120] See, for example, *The North China Herald*, "The Taggart-Turner wedding," January-March 1927.

[121] See: Home Makers of the World, *Wedding Bells for the Engaged Girl: Her Engagement, Trousseau, Wedding At Home. Proper Forms, Customs and Practices* (Chicago, 1924).

[122] Anthea Jarvis, *Brides: wedding clothes and costumes 1850-1980* (Liverpool: Merseyside County Museums, 1983), 19.

[123] *The Shanghai Times* December 2, 1927, 5.

[124] *The North China Herald*, "The Wedding of Chiang Kai-shek" December 3, 1927.

peach. The dresses were elaborate: two were peach charmeuse beaded with diamante, peach colored beads and charmeuse sleeves that blossomed into bells of georgette at the elbow, also a shade of peach.[125] There were also two smaller bridesmaids who wore peach dresses "trimmed with frills of georgette at the neck and having sleeves of frills."[126]

Such an extravagant wedding for a modern head of state was without precedent in China or abroad. Looking to America, weddings of prominent American families, presidents, or their children did not provide models. For example, Teddy Roosevelt's daughter Alice, Harry Truman, Joseph Kennedy were all married in the late nineteen teens and early 1920s but with much less fanfare.[127] There were, in the 1920s two royal weddings that were widely reported. The first in 1922 was that of Princess Royal, daughter of King George V and Queen Mary. The second was, in 1923 the wedding of their second son, Albert, to Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon. These weddings, though of royalty, were not of heads of state but rather their children.[128] The Chiang-Soong wedding, it seems, was without parallel.

Dressed in fashionable, Western attire Soong and Chiang may have looked as though they were participating foreign-style ceremony. The ceremony itself, however, was an adaptation of the aforementioned Nationalist draft legislation; a new family and a foundation for China's revolution began with a model ceremony. Rumors that the ceremony consisted of some twenty-odd parts had been swirling; to set the record straight a copy was hand delivered to the *Shenbao* newspaper office.[129] The Nationalist draft ceremony did indeed have twenty-one parts; what was published in *Shenbao* was a revised and condensed version of those rites. This new version eliminated words of advice and congratulations from the officiants, guardians, and guests; it combined the entrances of certain parties which were enumerated separately in the longer version; music was also included. The revised wedding sequence was published in *Shenbao* as follows: 1. Guests enter and are seated (music plays); 2. The bridegroom, the witnesses and the officiants enter and take their places; 3. The bride enters and takes her place; 4. The entire group faces the national flag, the party flag and President Sun's portrait and bows three times; 5. The witness reads the marriage certificate; 6. The bridegroom, bride and witness affix their seals to the document; 7. The bride and bridegroom face each other and bow once; 8. The bride and bridegroom thank the witness and the officiant and bow to them each one time; 9. The bride and bridegroom thank the guests and bow to them one time; 10. The ceremony ends (music).[130] Core elements: roles played by participants, facing flags and Sun's portrait and bowing as a group, reading and stamping of the marriage certificate, remained.

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[125] Ibid.

[126] Ibid.

[127] See: Deborah McCoy, *The world's most unforgettable weddings, lust, money and madness* (New York: Kensington Publishing Corp, 2001).

[128] Shelley Tobin, Sarah Pepper and Margaret Willes, *Marriage a la Mode, three centuries of wedding dress* (London: The National Trust, 2003), 84-5.

[129] *Shenbao*, "Jiang Jieshi Soong Meiling mingri jiehun 蒋介石宋美龄明日结婚" 240-622 (1-3) 1927.

[130] Ibid.

A description of Soong and Chiang's wedding certificate was also published in the paper. The certificate included a preface by Cai Yuanpei and others; then the names of the bride and groom, the officiant, and witnesses, finally the year, month, and day. Soong and Chiang's wedding certificate had been signed by Department of Finance Secretary Zhang Youshuo.[131] Ceremony aside, in theory, a signed marriage certificate made a union legal in Shanghai. We remember that in practice, though, the Qing Civil Code was *still* the law of the land. Despite municipal attempts to enforce marriage registration, there were no repercussions for those who did not comply. The publication of the wedding certificate was deliberate: it set the stage for the 1931 Civil Code, were weddings were recognized by the state - a third party - and not one's parents.

Why would Chiang allow *Shenbao* to publish details from two ceremonies, and excerpts from the wedding certificate? In his conception of the Nationalist state, just as the family was the base for revolution, civic authority was the basis for private ceremonial rites. Soong and Chiang had a religious ceremony at her family home and a very different ceremony at the Majestic Hotel, but it was the marriage certificate that marked them as a couple. Nationalists may have tolerated wedding rites with a religious bent, but the majority of the population was not familiar with these practices; hence the publication of the ceremony at the Majestic Hotel, enumerated in a manner that allowed the average reader to follow each step. The Nationalist ceremony borrowed heavily from popular new-style rites, which were a reformulation of traditional ceremonies. In this way, their ceremony united traditional behavior and fashionable, urban trends with political undertones.

Why the move to create special, Nationalist wedding rites in the first place? Chiang said repeatedly that family was an essential component of his revolution: weddings created families. Real change not only came from advocating a small family - as New Culture radicals had done - but from changing the way the small family itself was formed. New marriage rites - certified by the state - meant new relationships between parents and their children, and redefined boundaries for state involvement in personal affairs. Chiang's ceremony laid the groundwork for sweeping changes to the legal underpinnings of weddings in the 1930s - whether Shanghai residents would comply with such changes and embrace his revolution was another matter.

The Image of a Modern Couple

The couple's official wedding portrait was published in *Shenbao* and *The North China Herald* the day after the wedding. The photo illustrates the importance of image-making: presenting Chiang and Soong as models and advertising their new, Chinese wedding ceremony.[132] The photo was taken at the Majestic Hotel, site of the second ceremony. The composition of the image sets it apart from the simple new-style wedding photographs that had been published in *Funü zazhi* or *Funü shibao*. The image was staged to showcase a moment that could be shared with an entire nation. Chiang and Soong were flanked by flora and fauna: palm fronds and roses, bouquets and trees. Unlike many new-style portraits where bride and groom

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[131] Ibid.

[132] See Figure 15: "Jiang Jieshi yu Soong Meiling nüshi jiehun liying 蒋介石与宋美龄女士结婚丽影" *Liangyou huabao* 良友画报 21 (1927): 1.

stood side by side, here Chiang stood slightly behind Soong who was seated on a bench. Wearing a Western-style suit and tie with a corsage pinned at his lapel, Chiang clutched a pair of gloves in his left hand, highlighting his new wedding ring. Soong held an enormous and elaborate bouquet of roses in her lap. Her head was covered with a cap-like veil. Her train was gathered at her feet, emphasizing her delicate leather shoes and silk stockings. The white of Soong's dress captures the eye of the viewer. It was her day. But it was Chiang's revolution. Indeed, it is Chiang, not Soong who dominated this picture. We see more of Chiang's body, the curve of his shoulders, his arm at his side, his legs. Soong's body was largely obscured by her bouquet and dress, her head and ears were hidden beneath her veil which covered her forehead, her hands and legs were hidden; we see only feet.

For a moment, let us juxtapose Chiang and Puyi's wedding portraits.[133] The background of Chiang's portrait was real, live foliage whereas Puyi's country scene was painted on canvas. Chiang and Soong's clothes were the most fashionable trends of the day, anywhere in the world. Puyi's clothing was all wrong, marking him out of touch rather than Modern. Peeking out of the hem of Soong's wedding dress, we find not a cloth slipper but a set of pointed leather heels. And while Puyi's portrait may have been taken for the sake of posterity or entertainment, Chiang and Soong's photograph was printed for sake of selling a revolutionary vision and marking a General's ascendence back to the center of the political scene.

It is not surprising, then, that a full page reproduction of the image, taken at the Zhonghua photo studio (*Zhonghua zhaoxiang guan* 中华照相馆), was printed in the December 1927 issue of *Liangyou huabao* (良友画报). It was followed by a two-page pictorial spread of the couple's wedding ceremony. Here, readers were given a visual companion to the details published in *Shenbao*. Chiang and Soong were pictured entering the hall and exchanging rings. We see their posture as they bow to their guardians. In another photo Chiang beamed to his guests. A photograph of their car was also included. The photographs gave the reader a glimpse into the action, and a closeness to the couple. The wedding - separate pieces of the ceremony, images of the individual players - was condensed and arranged for immediate consumption.

Though only in its second year, *Liangyou* had already taken to publishing wedding photographs and announcements. Many were formal studio portraits and were much more polished and posed than the wedding photos published some ten years prior in *Funü shibao.*[134] The coverage, though irregular, was not unlike *The New York Times* announcements section of today, a who's-who of Chinese high and higher society, where socialites, musicians, writers, graduates from prominent schools, those with famous parentage were all featured. Writers, artists and musicians tended to opt for portraits in more understated, formal attire while those with more glamourous professions and intentions dressed accordingly. The new-style and Western-style wedding, first an elite practice by Qing dynasty politicos, petty urbanites and their children, next a personal and political statement for intellectuals, was now becoming a mark of status for socialites, performers and elites at the same moment that it was being fashioned as a political symbol for Chiang Kai-shek. Images now became glamourous venues for political propaganda.

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[133] See Figure 12 and Figure 15.

[134] See, for example: *Liangyou huabao* 良友画报 19 (1927): 7; 25 (1928): 30.

The publication of Soong and Chiang's wedding photographs in the glossy *Liangyou huabao* not only provided readers with information it also allowed them to possess the event, as a memento, in miniature, to imagine and re-imagine it in the context of their own life. For those who missed the ceremony, there was also a commemorative movie from the Star Company, which began at the Soong residence, continued to the Majestic Hotel and included the couple's return to the Soong's after the second ceremony. Playing at the Great Central Theater on Yunnan Road, it included footage of party VIPs, and the "beautiful smiles of the couple after the ceremony."[135] The movie was described as a "precious opportunity" for those who did not "experience it personally."

This initial framing worked. Speculation about Chiang and Soong's honeymoon was presented in the light of political contingency plans - the wedding had shifted the glare of the political spotlight elsewhere and prepared Chiang for his second act. According to *The New York Times*: "Immediately after the ceremony the couple departed from the hotel to their home in the French Concession, where they plan to remain awaiting the outcome of the Guomindang plenary session which will open here [Shanghai] on Saturday. If the conference succeeds Chiang plans to remain and resume the work of the revolution. Otherwise he and his bride will proceed to America as originally planned."[136] Revolutionary work did not wait for romance, however: Chiang was renamed commander and chief of the Nationalist forces and was back at the helm in January of 1928.

Conclusion

What was next for the new-style wedding? Public discourse about love, marriage and weddings continued. The *Funü zazhi* held its place as a consultant on matters of the heart and issues of the day. In the summer of 1928, the magazine's marriage issue (*Hunyin hao* 婚姻号) was published.[137] It began with a series of illustrations: an English painting depicting the signing of a marriage contract in olden times; a few wedding photos featuring Chinese participants, some in Western-style dress; a photograph of Westminster Abbey arranged for a wedding; bouquets for brides and bridesmaids; a grand wedding cake adorned with flowers surrounded by champagne, fancy table settings, sweets, and captioned with instructions on in Chinese about the etiquette of cutting the cake. The text consisted of ethnographic reports - often first hand accounts - of marriage customs among different ethnic groups throughout the country. Other articles discussed marriage customs in America and Japan, the old marriage system, mercenary marriage and polygamy, marriage, reproduction, and divorce from a philosophical perspective, and the future of marriage and the relationship between marriage and love. Freedom to choose one's own spouse, divorce, and homosexuality were examined from a historical perspective.

The following year, an issue about life before and after marriage (*Jia qian yu jia hou teji hao* 嫁前与嫁后特辑号) focused on the realities of married life: balancing expectations, how to stay happy, the relationship between love and marriage, psychological changes after marriage,

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[135] *Shenbao*, "Jiang Soong hunli jinian pian kaiying 蒋宋婚礼纪念片开映" 241-93 (1) 1927.

[136] *The New York Times*, "Chiang Weds Mme. Sun Yat-sen's Sister; 3000 See Rites for Wellesley Girl Bride."

[137] See: "Hunyin hao 婚姻号" *Funü zazhi* 妇女杂志 14 no. 7 (1928).

marriage and child rearing.[138] Now, it seemed, choosing one's own spouse was necessarily a guarantee of happiness. Clearly, the rules for marriage and married life were still in flux even if new-style marriage was preface to the conversation. Pictures of a Western-style wedding cake and various bouquets began an issue of the magazine that dealt largely with the realities of old-style, countryside weddings.

Even in urban centers, the parameters for wedding ceremonies were still not set in stone, despite Soong's and Chiang's highly visible and expertly choreographed weddings. Five years after Puyi's stale and dated ceremony, they had deftly incorporated both new-style and Western-style elements into a uniquely political creation, framed figuratively with revolutionary rhetoric, and literally with emblems of the state. This formation gave both Western-style wedding and the new-style wedding a new type of legitimacy in the Chinese context. Such weddings, practiced on a large scale as an international event, the open courtship that proceeded them, and Chiang's shunning of old customs - and wives - in favor of familial happiness all pointed to a turning of the tides with how weddings were framed, understood, discussed, produced, and consumed in Shanghai.

With such weddings, personal ritual had potential to become a political tool. The failure of the Provisional Republican Government to lay claim to - and implement - their 1913 draft ceremony was a boon for Chiang who could frame his own wedding in any way he saw fit. There were, perhaps, unintended consequences to this. Soong Meiling, as modern bride, had taken center stage. Her unconventional relationship with Chiang - where her family, rather than his, was central - shifted notions of gender and the new-style wedding. Indeed, theirs was the first new-style wedding that was all about the bride. Furthermore, in glossy periodicals of the day, Chiang and Soong were pictured alongside movie stars and glamourous ladies: the new-style bride was not only Modern, she was fashionable and the market potential of the new-style wedding had been unleashed. How would the commercial and the political square off in the contest to define wedding ritual? This tension will be explored in the next chapter.

[138] See: "Jia qian yu jia hou teji hao 嫁前与嫁后特辑号" *Funü zazhi* 妇女杂志 15 no. 10 (1929).

Chapter 4. The Market, the State and the Undeniable Allure of the New-Style Wedding

Introduction

After the Nationalist consolidation of power in 1927, the government looked to redefine ritual in a way that would favorably enhance state power and promote new legal rights. The Nationalists deemed Shanghai a crucial site for ritual reform with weddings at the crux of this movement, as was evident in their 1931 Civil Code, and New Life Movement group weddings which were featured in the city. Simultaneously, urban elites and those with means were producing their own versions of new-style ceremonies, which gained further recognition through the publication of wedding photographs in women's pictorial magazines of the day. Here, we explore the tension between the commercial, new-style wedding and the Nationalist's spartan political ideology, in the wake of Chiang's grand, bride-centered wedding.

PART ONE

Rights on Paper, Rites in Practice

Rights on Paper: The Nationalist Civil Code

With Chiang's ascendence to power in 1928, the Nationalists established their government in Nanjing. Attention now turned to political consolidation, economic planning, and social reform. A new administrative structure - which included legislative, executive, control, judicial and examination bureaus (yuans) - provided the legal framework to implement such changes. Though modeled after Sun Yat-sen's "five power constitution" the bureaus were hastily formed, and according to Jonathan Spence "establishing them in this hurried way, without a true backing of elective or popular support, ran counter to some of Sun's deepest ideas about the value of the system."[1]

While Sun remained a Nationalist figurehead, it was Chiang's ideology that now ruled the day. With statements in *Shenbao* prior to his highly publicized and very public wedding, Chiang made it clear that his union was a "foundation for revolutionary business."[2] At that time he wrote: "Soong Meiling and I have discussed China's revolutionary problems and we share this same belief. Now that we are married, if our marriage can have some influence on the old society and make a contribution to the new society, this is our greatest wish."[3]

The ground for such a foundation was prepared through sweeping civic legislation: the Civil Code of 1931. We remember that up to this point the Republican government had adopted sections of the revised Qing code; the sections that pertained to marriage dated, in fact, back to the Ming dynasty. According to Philip Huang, the Code was drafted by a group of foreign educated, bilingual and "bicultural" men - including Cai Yuanpei, Hu Hanmin and Dai Jitao - whose concern was to "'modernize' Chinese law by drawing on what they considered the best

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[1] Jonathan D. Spence, *The search for modern China* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999), 365.

[2] *Shenbao*, "Jiang Jieshi Soong Meiling jinri jiehun 蒋介石宋美龄今日结婚" 241-14 (1) 1927.

[3] Ibid.

from the West, while also adapting it to Chinese realities."[4] The introduction clearly defined the goals of the new laws: "reforming the Chinese family system" was a means of achieving the "political and social rehabilitation of China."[5] By now we are familiar with this refrain; the changes the state intended to codify, however, were remarkable.

Women were made legal equals, "placed on the same footing as [a] man."[6] Arranged marriages were no longer legal; "an agreement to marry shall be made by the male and female parties,"[7] with less interference from parents (this is not to say that parents were excluded from the process; indeed we will see later that parents or guardians still need to sign applications for marriage, but now the choice of spouse rested on the shoulders of the young people themselves).[8] Furthermore, a marriage contract could no longer be arbitrarily drawn up by one's parents without a child's consent. And now, a wedding could be called off by both parties for a variety of reasons, including if "the party willfully fails to observe the appointed date of marriage" or when one party has "sexual intercourse with third party, or when party has venereal or other loathsome disease."[9] In this same vein, parents also had little say in divorce, which was now to be obtained by mutual consent, and upon divorce "each spouse recovers his or her own property."[10] Before, we remember, a man could divorce his wife for a variety of reasons, including being excessively wanton or bearing no male children, but the woman had little reciprocal legal recourse.[11] Parental consent was needed for minors to marry, but minors were now protected by the law and could not be forced into marriage before they were of age. Marriage between relatives was illegal, and concubinage was ended.[12] In all cases, customs were proscribed; theoretically, the law was an intermediary protecting individuals from detrimental practices.

The Civil Code concerned itself with what Philip Huang calls "minor matters" such as ritual, weddings, divorce, and so on, which in the past, "the absolute ruler preferred to let society handle itself."[13] Consequently, this changed an individual's relationship to the practice of

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[4] Philip C.C. Huang, *Code, custom and legal practice in China: the Qing and the Republic compared* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 53.

[5] *The Civil Code of the Republic of China* (Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh, Limited, 1931), v.

[6] Ibid, ix. As Susan Glosser also points out in *Chinese visions of family and state*, this may have been equality in name, but we will see that in many ways Nationalist practices enforced gendered behaviors for both men and women, particularly in the domestic realm and with respect to child rearing.

[7] Ibid, article 972.

[8] For a comparison to the Qing code, see: *The Great Qing Code,* William C. Jones trans. with the assistance of Tianquan Cheng and Yongling Jiang (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 123.

[9] *The Civil Code of the Republic of China*, article 976.

[10] Ibid, article 1058.

[11] Jones, 134.

[12] *The Civil Code of the Republic of China*, article 985.

[13] Huang, 53.

ceremonial rites and the granting of legal rights. Of the Song dynasty which established many of the marital customs that were continued into the twentieth century, Christian de Pee writes, "The wedding, in other words, introduces the bride to into a ritual hierarchy whose intricate patrilineal gradations determine her legal rights and obligations."[14] With the Civil Code, children's legal rights were protected, wedding ceremony or no, a change that fundamentally altered parents' relationships to their children: before, it was parents who ushered their children through the rites of marriage and into adulthood. The Code consciously acknowledged this change in paternal status, where now parents had the "right and duty of the parents to protect, educate and maintain their children."[15] Care of children was one thing, but arranging their nuptials was no longer seen as a parental right; in fact it was an infringement on a child's right. Furthermore, parental authority could be legally challenged – and revoked – if parents were deemed unfit by the court. "Where the parents have abused their right over their children, their nearest ascendants or the family council may correct them, and, where such correction is of no avail, they may apply to the Court for an order suspending their right in part or *in toto.*"[16] Now, family members could appeal to a third party – a state legislated body – to mediate disputes.

With the Civil Code, the Nationalist state emerged as a rational lawgiver, where people who participated in civic rituals, such as marriage rites, received the benefit of its protection through this participation. Those who were beholden to superstition, those who betrothed their children were not only "backward" - now their actions were also illegal. Secretly marrying one's cousin, arranged through a matchmaker, was not the mark of an upstanding member of Chinese society under the Nationalist regime.

It is worth noting that many of the changes being codified under Nationalist authority - choosing one's own spouse for example - were hallmarks of the new-style wedding and were already underway in urban areas. Indeed, the paradox for the Nationalist government was that those who practiced new rites were more likely to be enjoying the new rights the Nationalists hoped to impart to all. As we will see below, one of the main problems for those in charge was that in the early 1930s, those who practiced the new rites most likely did not need Nationalist government protections of new rights. How to unite the two?

We will ultimately find this convergence in the New Life Movement group wedding, where standardized rituals were created by the state, a third party entity that could legally protect a couple's rights. Ceremonies would be carried out in the open and certified by municipal agencies. The goal, as Susan Glosser aptly notes, was uniformity and consistency,[17] here to be achieved through the insertion of the state into the ritual and legal life of the individual. Rites would afford individuals with legal rights; this in turn would serve as the foundation for both Chiang's revolution and for China's modern reform as envisioned by the drafters of the Civil

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[14] Christian De Pee, *The writing of weddings in middle-period China: text and ritual practice in the eighth through fourteenth centuries* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 189.

[15] *The Civil Code of the Republic of China*, article 1084.

[16] Ibid, article 1003.

[17] Susan Glosser, *Chinese visions of family and state, 1915-1953* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 93.

Code. The construction, codification and definition of ceremonies themselves marked an unprecedented level of government involvement - beyond "minor matters" - in personal ritual practice. Why did the Nationalist government think this means of ritual reform was necessary? First we will examine how youth, particularly young women, understood their new legal rights and navigated the changing marital landscape.

Rights in Practice: Linglong Magazine

Advice columns in women's magazines, particularly *Linglong* (玲珑), presented a myriad of suggestions to their readers, often acting as guide in both matters of the heart and the practicalities of life. Published in Shanghai from 1931 to 1937, *Linglong's* target audience was a young city woman, perhaps interested in fashion and the movies, eager to continue her education, not overtly interested in politics, and concerned with legal matters only in as much as they affected her own daily life. Through advice columns and editorials, the magazine positioned itself as a "big sister" and a confidante to the readers, an empathetic listener decoding relationship troubles and providing advice. The magazine served a practical purpose, as well, informing readers of their new legal rights in the wake of the Civil Code. This was a change from the tone of *Funü zazhi* (妇女杂志) which addressed issues in a more theoretical, studied and heady way, or *Funü shibao* (妇女时报 1911-1917), where issues like women's rights were presented as an illustration of worldwide trends and eventual possibilities for Chinese women after reform.

Among periodicals of the day, *Linglong* shared many similarities with *Shenghuo zhoukan* (*Life Weekly* 生活周刊), whose editor, Zou Taofen, championed letters to the editor with his "Readers' Mailbox." According to Wen-hsin Yeh, Zou "linked the personal plights of thousands of individual readers with the perceived plight of the country as a whole, thereby helping transform urban middlebrow anxieties about oneself into political concerns about the nation."[18] This phenomenon - shared personal experience, sympathy and unity through print - occurred in *Linglong* on a lesser scale. The magazine, which likely had a much smaller and predominately female readership, featured two different advice columns: one for personal matters and one for legal questions. We find that in *Shenghuo* and *Linglong* the tone of many letters was urgent and desperate, the advice given in return both measured and reasoned. And, as in *Linglong*, "When *Shenghuo* invoked the law in defense of the young, it implicitly accepted the new party-state of the Nationalists as an active participant in the articulation of cultural norms."[19]

In *Linglong* it was common for legal issues to blend with romantic troubles. General questions included what constituted a legal wedding ceremony (you must have at least two witnesses, the ceremony should be open, both parties must be of legal age or have parental consent); whether marriage contracts set by parents alone were legal (they were not); what to do if your partner refused to get engaged (talk to him and see if you can figure out why); how to

[18] Wen-hsin Yeh, "Progressive Journalism and Shanghai's Petty Urbanites: Zou Taofen and the Shenghuo Weekly, 1926-1945" in *Shanghai Sojourners* (Berkeley, CA: Institute of East Asian Studies, 1992), 189.

[19] Ibid, 216.

nullify an engagement (consent from both parties) and whether an engagement should be nullified due to a couple growing apart.[20] A typical advice column read something like this:

> Two years ago, I had already met a boy; after our friendship grew, emotions became heartfelt. But, after a year he still had not proposed. Unexpectedly, in March of this year my parents arranged a marriage for me through a matchmaker. At that time I did my best to oppose it, but in the end to no avail . . . engagement is the first step towards marriage and if you are engaged you should not be in love with someone else. But I firmly believe that this boy [her boyfriend] is the only one for me (literally, the only good friend in my life), moreover, we have the same spirit. I am oppressed by the old family system, we are not allowed to even be in contact because of it, but I do not want to end things with him. What should I do?
>
> Judging from your situation, you should continue with your current boyfriend. You have been with him for two years, and moreover your feelings have not lessened. Of course your feelings towards him are more heartfelt than they are towards the person your parents have found. If you are acting on behalf of your own future happiness, you should select a person who can make you happy. Yielding to your parents and letting them order you around is not right.
>
> It's not that you agreeing to an engagement is absolutely untenable: if you have not reached an age to marry without parental consent no one can force you to get married. As long as you are able maintain the attitude that no one can "sell off your goods" and discuss things with your boyfriend, this is a good method. If your are already at least twenty, and he is able to be economically independent there are no obstacles to your getting married. But you must wait until this time.[21]

In most cases the respondent, a Miss Zhenli, was careful to point out the legal rights of the reader, here treating the young woman's relationship with her boyfriend with the utmost respect, while gently reminding her of the importance of maintaining a cordial relationship with her parents. Only in the most outlandish cases did parents receive outright condemnation. One such case was a heartbreaking column where a young woman detailed her family's downfall after her father's death and her mother's subsequent opium addiction.[22] Her drugged-up mother had betrothed her to a forty year old and with the wedding approaching, after crying to her neighbors, she appealed to the magazine. Miss Zhenli's reply began with a scathing critique of the mother as "deficient and ruthless" and pointed out ways the girl could legally appeal the case, as she was under age. And though it continued with sympathy, the reply ended on a somberly practical note:

> But what can you do? This is a pervasive social problem, a family problem and a personal problem. For example . . . we can teach you how to protest the autocratic marriage and family system, but if you actively protest, your family will be bound to abandon you and not care for you. If you have no means of livelihood, isn't this a dangerous situation? So it can be said, with women's problems, women must understand themselves, and their ability to solve or manage a detestable situation. The solution to a majority of women's problems starts with a hail of bullets in the struggle for victory. We weep with you; aside from these guiding words and showing our endless compassion, we are willing but unable to help.[23]

It was this fine line between practical reverence for the parental role as caretaker and sympathetic outrage at a broken system that *Linglong* often walked. Clearly the magazine was a confidant - perhaps the last place many young women could turn to in times of crisis: there were a number of letters about losing one's virginity, and marriage or relationships after rape. By

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[20] See: "Airen jujue dinghun 爱人拒绝订婚," *Linglong* 玲珑 3 no. 17 (1933): 768 for an example advice column. "Fumu dai dinghun shi 父母代订婚事," *Linglong* 玲珑 3 no. 23 (1933):1218-1220. "Dai dinghun yue 代订婚约," *Linglong* 玲珑 3 no. 25 (1933): 1295. "Yao quxiao hunyue ma 要取消婚约吗?" *Linglong* 玲珑 4 no. 6 (1934): 336-8. The magazine also contained much more salacious columns, too such as: "Biaoxiong mei yi lingrou yizhi, fumu turan qiangpo dinghun 表兄妹已灵肉一致,父母突然强迫订婚," *Linglong* 玲珑 5 no. 2 (1935): 85-88.

[21] "Fumu daiban hunshi 父母代办婚事," *Linglong* 玲珑 3 no. 42 (1933): 2324-25.

[22] "Ma po wo jiagei yi ge sishi duo ye de lao'er 妈迫我嫁给一个四十多岁的老儿," *Linglong* 玲珑 5 no. 8 (1935): 535-38.

[23] Ibid.

addressing and publishing such letters, the magazine - rather than one's parents or even friends - became a place to spill your deep secrets; a place you could turn for help on both an emotional and a practical level.

Only a few years after the promulgation of the Civil Code parents might not necessarily know or understand their children's new legal rights. This, in turn, prevented children from participating in new ceremonial rites. For those who were allowed and those who had the means, new-style weddings were opportunities for consumerism and display beyond just choosing one's own spouse. In 1930s Shanghai, for some weddings were more than just rituals, they were now events in their own right. When considering these ceremonies, we should keep in mind the tension that was illustrated by the magazine: on one hand modern ceremonies were presented as a model, yet on the other hand the majority of legal and advice columns were about nullifying marriage contracts, mainly because they were drawn up by parents without consent of their children. In that sense, the difficulty of implementing legal rhetoric in the shape of new-style weddings rites and in the face of entrenched social customs becomes clearer.

Rites on Paper: Linglong's New-Style Weddings

Aside from legal and personal advice, the magazine made it its business to explain new trends and social matters. Not surprisingly, when it came to weddings, there was much advice to dispense. While the cost of weddings was always an issue, more lavish new-style ceremonies were in vogue in the early 1930s, before the New Life Movement. Even though new-style weddings were increasingly commonplace, adults still worried about young people finding an appropriate spouse. The concerns printed in *Linglong* are familiar: lacking guidance from their parents and striking out on their own, how would young men and women know who made the grade? The brief article, entitled "How to choose your spouse" marks a departure from past advice where now it was assumed that young women, rather than their parents, would be at the forefront of such choices and could make the right decision if they were well informed. Here, the editors at *Linglong* begin by suggesting someone with a "healthy appearance" who could "establish themselves in society."[24]

> Too fat and your spouse will be clumsy, too thin and they will be weak. Those with hereditary diseases, TB, leprosy, or mental illness are to be avoided because 1. You don't want to harm the family's honor and 2. This can harm social and national progress. With respect to their personality, choose someone who has willpower and an earnest heart, common sense and stability, upright moral character, scholarly achievement, the ability to empathize, general competence in life and no "irregular" hobbies.[25]

Editors noted "if he has an excellent school education and a rigorous familial education then his knowledge, ability and moral character are definitely all good." Young women were also cautioned to carefully examine prospective spouse's friends, because "whether his friends are good or bad will have a definite influence on his own moral character."[26] Readers were instructed to consider whether prospective partners had regular employment, because "if he is out of work

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[24] "Zenyang xuanze ni de pei'ou 怎样选择你的配偶," *Linglong* 玲珑 5 no. 5 (1935): 203-4.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.

he is certainly not a lofty or noble personality and lacks good moral character, so you must pay attention to this."[27]

Furthermore, youth were urged to appeal to reason rather than wild, romantic fantasies. An article from 1931 entitled "Marriage under the limits of Republican law" cautioned young readers that heeding to emotion alone could lead to trouble, the trouble discussed here being marrying one's cousin, which was now illegal. "At a time when free love is talked about glibly, the two sexes just rely on congenial feelings and marry. But relying only on feeling often goes beyond the boundaries of the law . . ."[28] The article appealed to reason, and insisted that readers "understand legal limits of the marriage contract and marriage." Readers were cautioned: "those young people looking forward to and hoping for love are better off following the rules of law, which will help them avoid wanton love and social pitfalls."[29]

It is not surprising that the advice given to readers is similar to what we have seen in the past; it stands to reason that most people want to marry a healthy, well mannered individual with good social standing, a nice relationship with their parents, and some degree of ambition. What is different about the information conveyed in *Linglong* is that now, beyond explaining the steps of new-style ceremony or how to find the proper spouse, the etiquette surrounding the ceremony - parties, clothing, food, seating - was detailed. Aside from new legal rules there were also proper modes of behavior and things to know to avoid social embarrassment. In short, the new-style wedding had become more than just a ceremony: by the 1930s it was a social event in its own right - and not just for politicos or intellectuals, but potentially for everyone - that is everyone who could afford it and was allowed to participate.

Acting on behalf of its "little sisters," *Linglong* provided crucial details to help young women prevent embarrassing social situations and allow them to put their best foot forward.

> "Fall is wedding season, with more than a few young people preparing to embark on one of life's important journeys, right? After many problems, such as finances and family, have been solved they are able to head to the altar without worry, right? But for those who have never had this type of experience, with respect to the wedding ceremony, what should they plan on? Here, we want to talk with young people thinking about getting married about what they ought know; naturally we want to talk about this so-called new-style wedding."[30]

Those whose families had means probably already knew the ropes; rather it was the up and coming petty urbanites with well paying, or at least stable jobs who could truly leverage such material to their advantage. Of course there were also those readers who could only dream of holding such an event who likely pored over every word.

Little was said in the magazine about courtship or engagement. The advice picked up after the couple was engaged, where it was suggested that they put "the happy news in the paper."[31] A typical announcement would include the couple's names and the date of engagement; sometimes it also included the venue, who had introduced the couple, and the fact that the couple had gained

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[27] Ibid.

[28] "Hunyin guanyu minfa xianzhi 婚姻关于民法限制," *Linglong* 玲珑 1 no. 25 (1931): 912-14.

[29] Ibid.

[30] "Qingnian xuzhi de hunyin liyi 青年须知的结婚礼仪," *Linglong* 玲珑 3 no. 33 (1933): 1789-90.

[31] "Dinghun he jiehun qian de zhunbei 订婚和结婚前的准备," *Linglong* 玲珑 1 no. 15 (1931): 522-3.

consent from their parents. A published announcement was seen as the most modern way to get the word out because "after it's in the paper you don't need to tell everyone. You only need to write close friends a short note, as this seems more friendly."[32] After the engagement was announced, it could be celebrated with a more formal tea party and a ceremony, if desired. The party should include a big cake "like a birthday cake, decorated with, among other things, little bells and branches from plants that do not wither and the sweetheart's names; this represents eternal happiness."[33] Superstition, or perhaps simply good luck charms, was now found in the form of decorative bells fashioned from cake frosting.

At the engagement party young men and women mingled freely, as a coed party was acceptable for "today's modern boys and girls."[34] Not that certain rules didn't apply, however. For example, invitations had to be sent out from both parties' parents, and the bride should not use her own name to invite guests, this was apparently a major breach of etiquette which would result in "ridicule from her fiancé's family."[35] There were careful instructions for party behavior, too: "When it is time for introductions at the tea party, first introduction of the girl is given by the boy. If the girl wants to introduce her fiancé to her close friends and relatives, she must say, Miss So-and-So, may I introduce you to [my fiancé] Mr. So-and-So. . ."[36] It is hard to know how strictly the rules were interpreted, if at all. Nonetheless, they offer us a glimpse of what *Linglong* editors saw as essential information for a successful soiree and what was possible now for young people in Shanghai - if your family had the means and the right mindset. We remember from the "ideal spouse" essays published ten years earlier in *Funü zazhi* that even *discussing* the qualities of one's ideal partner in mixed company was difficult for many. Now, coed engagement parties were socially acceptable - even fashionable. One cannot help but think that some of the "ideal spouse" contributors would have just ached to attend such a party.

If someone did snag an invite to an event - like an engagement party - where Western food was served they could rest easy: *Linglong* had published an article about Western dinner party etiquette that included tips about seating (men and women should alternate seats), which utensils to use for soup and meat (the soup spoon goes in the right hand, the fork stays in the left), toasting (stop eating and talking if a toast is given), when to serve fruit and coffee (end of the meal), the importance of chewing silently, and smoking etiquette (only after the meal, and if female guests agree).[37] As with the engagement party, we now see guidelines for social behavior extending beyond just staging a new-style ceremony, to the events that surrounded it.

After the party, attention now turned to a flurry of wedding preparations. With respect to clothing, Western-style dress was encouraged; "White is the most suitable because this color represents purity. The best clothes are long and slender, this gives a solemn look. The groom's

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[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid.

[36] "Dinghun he jiehun qian de zhunbei 订婚和结婚前的准备," *Linglong* 玲珑 1 no. 16 (1931): 560-1.

[37] "Xi yan li xuzhi 西宴礼须知," *Linglong* 玲珑 2 no. 64 (1932): 637.

clothes have no particularities, he wears and a striped tie, a white collar . . . bridesmaid's dresses have a color similar to the brides."[38] With the exception of the Provisional Republican Government's proposed ceremonial dress (1914), guidebooks and magazines did not describe wedding attire in detail, again focusing more on the ceremony itself. *Linglong's* description of bridal attire marks one of the first times - if not the first - that the form and meaning of a new-style wedding dress was detailed explicitly for readers. This also put the bride at the forefront of the experience where, as we saw with Soong Meiling's wedding to Chiang Kai-shek, the new-style wedding was about her.

Not that the groom was neglected entirely - he was instructed to prepare flowers for his mother and his future mother-in-law, and presents for the bridesmaids and the bride herself. He was also responsible for the wedding rings. Here the groom was cautioned to take care and make sure the ring was the right size, to avoid embarrassment. Furthermore, "the ring and the finger must match, otherwise it spells never-ending trouble in the future."[39]

On the day of the wedding specific rules applied. The bride and groom were not supposed to catch a glimpse of each other until the ceremony. The bride's family was to be seated in one section of the hall, the groom's in another. In a church wedding, the groom waited for the bride at the front of the hall with his groomsmen to his right and an open spot for the bride on the left. "Under the presence of the priest, the bride takes the ring, giving her gloves and flowers to her bridesmaids . . . After the ceremony is completed, the bride and groom, bridesmaids and groomsmen and parents all enter the priest's side room and sign the marriage certificates. Then the ceremony is complete."[40]

Another article, similarly concise, stated that: "For those believe in Christianity, the wedding should use established Christian practices. Most simply, a ceremony can only be performed in a church with a priest. After rings are exchanged the ceremony is complete. Naturally, those with money who wish to be ostentatious will do so."[41] Documents were signed and sealed in private, not read aloud to the public. The couple did not bow to witness, guests, or each other. Again, we find that the new-style wedding encompassed a wide range of possibilities where the content of such ceremonies was open to interpretation depending on the predilection - and purse strings - of the bride and groom. After the ceremony, the new couple received guests and served cake. Then "guests must wait until the new couple departs before they can go home."[42] *Linglong*, ever the "big sister" added: "After this is the sweetest time for the new bride and groom. I hope all unmarried readers can enjoy this happiness." Marriage here was synonymous with happiness rather than despair, as many "ideal spouse" writers felt had ten years earlier.

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[38] "Dinghun he jiehun qian de zhunbei 订婚和结婚前的准备," *Linglong* 玲珑 1 no. 16 (1931): 560-1.

[39] "Qingnian xuzhi de hunyin liyi 青年须知的结婚礼仪," *Linglong* 玲珑 3 no. 33 (1933): 1789-90.

[40] "Dinghun he jiehun qian de zhunbei 订婚和结婚前的准备," *Linglong* 玲珑 1 no. 16 (1931): 599-600.

[41] "Qingnian xuzhi de hunyin liyi 青年须知的结婚礼仪," *Linglong* 玲珑 3 no. 33 (1933): 1789-90.

[42] "Dinghun he jiehun qian de zhunbei 订婚和结婚前的准备," *Linglong* 玲珑 1 no. 16 (1931): 599-600.

Indeed, the ceremony was a far cry from traditional practices. A bride in a *Linglong* style wedding may choose to marry in a church, a restaurant, or another public venue. She would arrive separately from the groom and would not necessarily get ready with her family. She and the groom would exchange rings; in some cases they would not bow either to each other or to family and friends. Cake may be served at a small reception rather than a large banquet. The couple left the venue together, rather than paying respects to family members. A young couple's friends, rather than one's family, played a large role in the new-style ceremony, illustrating the type of support system an urban couple could construct in the wake of changed and changing relationships with their parents who may not live nearby. Groomsmen, for example, were supposed to watch over the groom before the wedding because "at the time of the wedding, the bridegroom will be at a loss. At that time, the best man will have to be a calm and clear-headed person."[43] Such friends ensured that the groom's clothes looked good, and most importantly, kept the wedding rings safe until the time of the ceremony. And "if far flung friends send telegrams of congratulations, the groomsmen should read the telegrams aloud in the hall."[44] In this way, a chain of friends, rather than one's family, constituted, participated, and performed in the ceremony.

Good friends, of course, also gave wedding gifts. But what was deemed appropriate? *Linglong*, declaring both money and appliances were too "cliche" suggested "publishing" a personal wedding book instead. "To prepare the book, it's best to have four or five people and give it together. The materials for the book are: 1. Picture of the bride and groom 2. A short history of the bride and groom 3. The bride and groom's love story 4. Well wishes, songs and poems 5. Any other extras."[45] Materials should be collected a month in advance, with the layout imitating *Linglong* itself. Enough copies should be made for the bride and groom as well as their friends and relatives and could be handed out after the wedding ceremony, where "this type of groundbreaking present will definitely be welcomed!"[46] The author went on to say "I have already made this gift twice, girls who want to send friends a good wedding present should try this!"[47] Images were key social currency, procured by friends to help commemorate the couple's wedding day and tell the story of their love and courtship.

Through an examination of *Linglong's* treatment of new-style wedding ceremonies we can trace a move towards a new culture of etiquette and behavior that encompassed more than just choice of spouse and a simple ceremony capped by the "free marriage" anthem. Now, for those with means new-style weddings encompassed an even wider range of celebrations - engagement parties, cakes, friends, special dresses - despite the hopes of early reformers to rein in costs and streamline practices. One cannot help but wonder if this tendency was unavoidable as far as weddings were concerned; where there were once sedan chairs now there were fancy cars,

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[43] "Qingnian xuzhi de hunyin liyi 青年须知的结婚礼仪," *Linglong* 玲珑 3 no. 33 (1933): 1789-90.

[44] "Dinghun he jiehun qian de zhunbei 订婚和结婚前的准备," *Linglong* 玲珑 1 no. 16 (1931): 560-1.

[45] "Qujia de liwu 出嫁的礼物," *Linglong* 玲珑 1 no. 36 (1931): 1403.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid.

banquets were replaced with engagement parties and wedding cakes, a red dress swapped for a white one. The form of such ceremonies may have changed but the consumerist element remained. Such a wedding - which was decidedly apolitical - was a far cry from Nationalist draft regulations of the late 1920s and early 1930s. Indeed, these drafts - similar to the basic new-style ceremony of the mid 1910s - and what was presented as popular, fun and a "must read" for urban youth were not one and the same. Let us turn now to a more detailed examination of the consumerist aspects of 1930s new-style weddings. The costs of these ceremonies and the businesses behind them are crucial to understanding the next municipal ritual reform: Nationalist attempts to link weddings, legal rights, and model behavior through New Life Movement group wedding ceremonies.

PART TWO

The Business Behind the Image

Linglong gave us a glimpse of the glamorous nature of new-style weddings, and for the first time enough information is available to produce a comprehensive budget estimate for such events. Increasingly, wedding photography was a major component to such a budget. For some, pictures of the action were a must; for others photographs were given as gifts to wedding guests; still others, who were more famous, enjoyed publicity shots published in periodicals of the day. In the wake of Soong and Chiang's well publicized wedding, wedding photographs had taken on a new social currency.

When portraits were first published in the 1910s on the pages of *Funü shibao*, there were fewer studios and less equipment available - making these images quite notable in their own right. They were also probably very expensive and had likely been taken for the purposes of personal commemoration. At that time portrait aesthetic was not standardized: backdrops included a variety of outdoor scenes and participants posed however they saw fit. In a sense, the purpose of these photographs was to record and to illustrate, but not to display. In the 1920s, with the rise of pictorial magazines like *Liangyou* and the incorporation of photographs into newspaper articles and advertisements in periodicals like *Shenbao,* photography was increasingly incorporated into popular - and political - life. Photographs in print marked a boom time for the industry, which began to taper off by the mid 1930s due in part to economic instability and increasing conflict that gripped the city. A rare business survey entitled, "A survey of recent developments in Shanghai's photo industry," gives us insight into city climate at the time, but more importantly it helps us to better understand the economics of new-style weddings and who would be able to participate.

For many the photograph contained a certain allure; one *Linglong* contributor wrote:

> A few days ago, I went past 713 Nanjing Road and saw many photographs at the entrance. They were especially pretty. Children, especially, found them wondrous . . . If one enters and takes the elevator to the second floor you will see a sign for Shanghai Fine Arts Photography (*Shanghai meishu zhaoxiang guan* 上海美术照相馆). The shop is set up to showcase artistic ability, with the newest equipment . . . Look around the store, there are all kinds of products that make one extraordinarily happy.[48]

[48] "Shanghai de meishu zhaoxiang 上海的美术照相," *Linglong* 玲珑 1 no. 30 (1931): 1136.

Here we find the glamor and wonder of the photo studio. Children are lured in by the glossy modernity of the photographs. An elevator takes customers to the second floor, transporting them to another world: artistic, technological, sleek. Customers could own a piece of that world too, simply by purchasing the products offered there. Prices might be higher in a shop like this, the author warned, but you paid for artistry and quality: both were worth the expense.

But was the expense of a studio portrait something most people could afford? Probably not. The aforementioned 1935 industry report was decidedly low on glamour. The survey paints a picture of a struggling industry lacking capital, taking hits from the global depression, which cut down on people's money for leisure activities, and the palpable sense of economic malaise on Shanghai's streets. Studio photography existed in a market saturated with competitors and driven by advertising. Positioned somewhere between art and entertainment, shops were often run by hobbyists dependent on friends in high places for capital when things got tight. In the 1930s, owning a studio certainly would not provide a lucrative career path for most, despite the glossy facade presented for its customers. In most cases, these enterprises were run on a shoestring budget, with some clever luck and a little hustle - a satin backdrop on a worn floor hid, perhaps, a lack of inventory rather than a cash cow.

While some studios only practiced portraiture, others also sold materials, and most offered developing services. The majority of materials sold in Shanghai were imported from America, Japan, England, and Germany. Many of these were sold by foreign firms in the city, including Agfa and Kodak. As for Chinese merchants selling materials, larger shops had the power to request them directly from foreign importers while smaller ones were left to buy imported supplies from foreign distributers. Only shops doing a good business would have the opportunity to sell supplies as "the photo materials business needs more capital than photo studios, because aside from supplies, you still need to build up an inventory."[49]

Photo studios were generally subject to seasonal business. "Business booms particularly around holidays, where in half a month, one does half a year's business. In the first half of the first month of the lunar New Year [studios like] *Pinfang* (品芳) often have five to six hundred customers a day."[50] But, business was only like this during the New Year, and "with economic panic filling the city air, this industry has been in a slump, with shops this year only reaching half of what they did last year [1934]."[51]

The survey lists over 80 studios in the city. The majority of studios in Shanghai were located on Nanjing Road, Jing'an Temple Road, and in city temples (*chengnei yimiao* 城内邑庙). "As for those who set up shop near temples, they have a long history and their customers are

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[49] "Hushi zhaoxiang ye jinkuang diaocha 沪市照相业近况调查," *Shenshi jingji qingbao* 申时经济情报 part one, no. 624 (March 1935), 2. The survey noted, not without pride, that card stock/cardboard photo paper was now being produced in China and did not need to be imported. Aside from this, though, shops were reliant on imports. The survey listed 10 Chinese stores that sold photo materials, including *Zhonghua*, that produced the studio photo discussed above; two English stores; one American store; three German stores and one Japanese store, 6.

[50] Ibid, 2.

[51] Ibid.

mainly nearby villagers; photographers in Pudong often tend to be at temples."[52] The photo shops on Nanjing Road, historically "had ornate mounting and exquisite artistry and customers from all walks of life, and steady business all year around" but "last year's business was only 3/5 of that of the previous year."[53] The heyday, it seems, was in the late 1920s, and things slowed after 1929 with "only the outstanding artists surviving." Furthermore, "there has been general business decline, people have no means of livelihood and the photo industry has gone downhill."[54] Changes in technology played a key roll as well. Indeed, the survey noted that: "Concurrently, small imported cameras have come into vogue and young boys and girls all like to buy them. Professional photographers have been influenced by this."[55]

To ensure a corner on the market, larger photo studios in Shanghai specialized in wedding portraits: something that could not be easily produced by amateurs in the home. Certainly a professional portrait made the moment special and commemorated the day. However, some may have chosen such a portrait precisely because they did not - for whatever reason - don a white dress or Western-style suit at their new-style ceremony. Indeed, many studios supplied wedding costumes for their customers as part of a packaged deal. In this sense, the relationship between the studio wedding photograph and the ceremony was not necessarily linear, and the viewer is (and was) confronted with questions of both time and reality: was the photo taken before or after the ceremony, and what type of wedding ceremony actually occurred? At the ceremony, did the bride and groom wear the wedding costumes they were photographed in? We must ask: what type of image did couples want to present with a studio wedding portrait, and who was actually buying these photographs? One way to consider this is to assess the cost of such photos. How much were customers willing to pay for these services?

The third installment of the 1935 photography industry survey included prices of photographs, including wedding photos. Only large studios sold wedding portraits.

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[52] Ibid. "Hushi zhaoxiang ye jinkuang diaocha 沪市照相业近况调查," *Shenshi jingji qingbao* 申时经济情报 part two, no. 1765 (1935), 1.

[53] "Hushi zhaoxiang ye jinkuang diaocha 沪市照相业近况调查," *Shenshi jingji qingbao* 申时经济情报 part one, no. 624 (March 1935), 2.

[54] Ibid.

[55] "Hushi zhaoxiang ye jinkuang diaocha 沪市照相业近况调查," *Shenshi jingji qingbao* 申时经济情报 part one, no. 624 (March 1935), 4.

Market Prices for Wedding Photographs, Shanghai 1935[56]

Size of photo	Price per photo	Price per 3 photos	Price per 6 photos	Price per 12 photos
6 cun	5 yuan	10 yuan	18 yuan	30 yuan
8 cun	7 yuan	15 yuan	25 yuan	40 yuan
10 cun	10 yuan	20 yuan	35 yuan	50 yuan
12 cun	12 yuan	25 yuan	42 yuan	75 yuan
14 cun	15 yuan			
16 cun	20 yuan			
24 cun	35 yuan			
32 cun	45 yuan			

Market Prices for Other Photographs from Large Studios, Shanghai 1935[57]

Size of photo	Type of photo	Amount per order	Price per seating	Printing cost	Total
8 cun	Ordinary portrait	4 pictures	Half body: 5.3 yuan Full body: 4.5 yuan	15 yuan per dozen	20.3 yuan for 12 half body 19.5 yuan for 12 full body
8 cun	Special art photo	2 pictures	15 yuan	4 yuan each	23 yuan
8 cun	Ordinary art photo	3 picture	15 yuan	3 yuan each	24 yuan

We see here that ordinary portraits from top level studios were more formal type portraits; they were not small photographs used for student IDs or later, marriage applications. This type of photo would most likely be taken in the smaller shops and were offered at much cheaper prices (six 2 *cun* photos for .45 *yuan*: a .25 *yuan* sitting fee and a printing fee of .20 *yuan*). At a midlevel studio, two copies of an 8 *cun* ordinary art photo (sadly, never clearly defined in the survey) called for a 3 *yuan* seating fee and a .8 *yuan* printing fee per image, or 5.4 *yuan* total.

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[56] "Hushi zhaoxiang ye jinkuang diaocha 沪市照相业近况调查," *Shenshi jingji qingbao* 申时经济情报 part three, no. 1765 (1935), 3.

[57] Ibid.

Special 8 *cun* art photos sold at 7 *yuan* for three. Enlargement was generally priced separately, as was printing. Smaller shops offered color tinting and the shops in temples seemed to specialize costume and dress up photos which were sold to either individuals or to groups.[58]

With this, we can begin to see just how expensive wedding photographs were: almost double the cost of ordinary portraits, though still less than art portraits due to the package pricing that was offered. For comparison's sake, from the pages of *Kodak* magazine, we find that while a video camera ran from 250 to 400 *yuan*, certainly out of reach of most, an Eagle Eye camera only cost 18 *yuan*, and film cost from 1-8 *yuan*.[59] In some cases, a camera was less expensive than a set of studio portraits! When compared with ID photos or prices at midlevel studios the contrast is more striking: wedding photos cost at least twice as much as art photos of the same size there, and were not even remotely comparable to ID photos. They were certainly not something that the unwashed masses would be lining the streets in droves for.

How would this expense figure into the cost of a new-style wedding? Let us continue on, assuming that with cash in hand there was a wedding to plan. Taking cues from *Linglong,* the search for a dress begins. The Hengli Foreign Clothing Company (*Hengli yangfu gongsi* 亨利洋服公司) on Jing'an Temple Road, the ABC Clothing Company on Nanjing Road, the Meimei Company (*Meimei gongsi* 美 美公司) on Jing'an Temple Road and the Hongxiang Company (*Hongxiang gongsi* 鸿翔公司) with a main store on Jing'an Temple Road and a branch store on Nanjing Road all provided dresses for rental, and presumably, purchase. Though all companies advertised in *Linglong*, *Shenbao*, and in other periodicals, little information is know about the Hengli, ABC and Meimei Companies; as the most prestigious company, more is known about Hongxiang.

Hongxiang, opened in 1917 by Jin Hongxiang, was the first Chinese owned Western-style women's clothing store in Shanghai. With Jin's hard work, it became wildly successful and by the 1920s was lauded by our old friend Cai Yuanpei as a "national goods springboard" (*guohuo jinliang* 国货津梁), for its sale of goods produced from Chinese raw materials. Song Qingling praised Hongxiang for its innovative women's attire that conformed to a "new wave woman's liberated expectations."[60] The salesclerks were notable too: Jin Hongxiang eventually insisted that they speak to foreign customers and issue receipts in English. And, in what must have been a major coup for the company, the 1930s screen sensation Hu Die (蝴蝶**)** wore a Hongxiang creation on stage: the result was more name recognition than ever.[61] Hongxiang made a name for itself internationally, too. The company sent a silk and satin dress to England for the marriage of Queen Elizabeth the Second; she reportedly responded with a thank you note.[62]

A high end establishment, Hongxiang was also the only company to included wedding dress prices in their published advertisements. There were three levels of dresses and they were

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[58] For specifics, see: "Hushi zhaoxiang ye jinkuang diaocha 沪市照相业近况调查," *Shenshi jingji qingbao* 申时经济情报 part two, part three, no. 1765 (1935).

[59] See, for example: "Ying yan pai jing xiang 鹰眼牌镜箱" *Kedai zazhi* 柯达杂志 2 no. 6 (1931): 16.

[60] Zhang Yanping 张庶平 ed., Zhongguo lao zihao 中华老字号 (Beijing: Xinhua shudian, 1993), 138-141.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid.

priced accordingly at 80, 60 and 40 *yuan*; dresses could be rented for half price. From the advertisements, it is difficult to tell what the dresses actually looked liked, however, aside from mounds of puffy white fabric.[63] A 1932 advertisement from the Hengli Company provides us with a better picture - literally, a sketch - of what was commonly sold at the time.[64] The sketch features a bride and groom standing side by side. The bride clutches the groom's arm at the elbow. Her white dress, which is largely obscured by an enormous bouquet of flowers, has a lacy collar. She has a cap headdress embellished with puffy, white decorative flowers and a veil. The groom wears glasses (which begs the question: were they props?) and his white shirt has a stiff collar. He wears a striped tie, a black vest and jacket, and has a flower on his lapel. He is holding a pair of gloves in his hand. When we compare this sketch to a *Zhonghua* studio portrait taken at around the same time, the similarities are striking.[65] The size of the bride's flowers, the lacy embellishments on the gown and the headdress, the positioning of the bride and groom's bodies, the way the bride clutches the groom's arm, the groom's tie and collar, even his glasses are the same! Perhaps the bride and groom in the *Zhonghua* portrait were outfitted by Hengli? Regardless, with advertisements and studio portraits, there were now clear illustrations of what dresses *should* look like; increasingly, in the 1930s the wedding dress and the groom's attire became standardized through the market and the consumerist choices of Shanghai residents.

Returning to our wedding budget, we find that ring prices are more difficult to pin down; advertisements for engagement and wedding rings were even more scant than ads for dresses. It is also likely that not everyone used rings during their ceremony. One 1935 ad for a second hand store on Nanjing Road boasts of white gold and diamond rings with prices ranging from 16 to 25,000 *yuan.*[66] For our purposes, suffice to say that cost varied but even secondhand goods were pricy.

Pricing cakes is a bit more vexing as it is difficult to determine how many people one cake would serve; there is also no good data on how much wedding cakes cost. Here, for lack of cake data, we consider the price of *xiguo* (喜果), sweets distributed to friends and family at a wedding. This is clearly not an equivalent substitute, but the fact that such sweets were advertised as something wonderful to give at weddings shows - as we have seen previously - that despite new-style wedding ceremonies and their etiquette, many Chinese traditions were alive and well in Shanghai. It is also quite possible that some weddings featured both a new-style cake and *xiguo.* The most prominent advertisements for these sweets were from the Guanshengyuan (冠生园) bakery, whose 1941 ad for the goodies read: "Marriage is a great event in one's life and *xiguo* are a token of this. To make the wedding day grand, no matter if you are at the bride's or the groom's family home, *xiguo* are indispensable."[67] In 1935, the bakery offered a variety of options for those so inclined, including tins adorned with a variety of auspicious symbols: dragon

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[63] "*Hongxiang gongsi* 鸿翔公司," *Linglong* 玲珑 3 no. 34/5 (1933): 1938.

[64] See Figure 16: "*Hengli yangfu gongsi* 亨利洋服公司," *Linglong* 玲珑 1 no. 50 (1932): 2084.

[65] See Figure 17: Shanghai tushuguan 上海图书馆 ed., *Shanghai tushuguan cang lishi yuanzhao (shang, xia)*上海图书馆藏历史原照 (上下) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chuban she, 2007), 204.

[66] *Shenbao,* "Shanghai jiuhuo shangdian 上海旧货商店" 385-136 (7) 1935.

[67] *Shenbao,* "Guanshengyuan 冠生园," 378-425 (5) 1941.

and phoenix (*longfeng* 龙风), love spirit (*aishen* 爱神), little angels (*xiao tianshi* 小天使), many seeds for fertility (*duozi* 多子), and one hundred birds (*xiao bai niao* 小百鸟).[68] The "love spirit" tin of *xiguo* was priced at 1 *jiao* 5 *fen*, while the "little angel" tin was 1 *jiao* 8 *fen.*

There are many other variables that may have been essential to the new-style wedding but that are still difficult to price including venues (hotels and ballrooms), invitations, and banquets. Some of this information has yet to be unearthed and some is simply unavailable. Below, I have put together a sample budget for a new-style wedding.

Sample Budget for a New-Style Wedding

Cost for high end wedding	Cost for lower end wedding
One dozen 12 cun wedding photos: 75 yuan	One 6 cun wedding photo: 5 yuan
Top of the line Hongxiang wedding dress for purchase: 80 yuan	Lowest level Hongxiang wedding dress for rent: 20 yuan
Wedding ring: 50 yuan	Wedding ring: 16 yuan
Cake: unknown	20 tins of "love spirit" xiguo: 30 yuan
Venue, banquet, invitations: unknown	Venue, banquet, invitations: unknown
Total: 205 yuan, conservatively	Total: 44 yuan, conservatively

Erring on the safe side the result is at least 205 *yuan* for a high end wedding and at least 44 *yuan* for a lower end one. These are very conservative estimates, however, because the banquet and venue are not figured in and the number of guests remains a mystery. We can see how, in an instant, such costs could skyrocket. Taking these rough estimates, the question now is: who could afford such an affair?

To answer this, we turn to a variety of surveys. One, printed in *Linglong* in 1935 provides employment details - and salaries - of Shanghai women.[69]

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[68] *Shenbao,* "Guanshengyuan 冠生园," 328-308 (1) 1935. For details of the "love spirit" and "little angels" tins see figures 8 and 9. There are 10 *jiao* per *yuan* and 10 *fen* per *jiao*, so if 1 *yuan* is a "dollar," a *jiao* represents a "dime" and a *fen* can be seen as one "penny."

[69] "Dushi funü de zhiye shikuang 都市妇女的职业实况," *Linglong* 玲珑 5 no. 11 (1935): 655-8. Just for comparison's sake according to Wu Tiecheng 吴铁城 ed., *Shanghai shi nianjian (shang)*上海市年鉴 (上) (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1936), in 1935 there were 148 lawyers and 66 journalists - so women were making up a good percentage of those professions. And while "Dushi funü de zhiye shikuang" says there were 158,275 women in factory work, it seems that *gong* 工 and *laogong* 劳工 must be defined differently in different surveys (here *laogong* 劳工 total is 148,666). Those registered as engaging in "domestic service" (*jiating fuwu* 家庭服务) at this time number 413,678.

Salaries of Shanghai Women, 1935

Profession	Pay per month	Misc. details
Factory laborers - cloth, cigarettes etc	6-30 yuan	Work at least 10 hours/day
Teachers	40-80 yuan	Best pay at Ministry of Works schools, some city schools pay less than 40 yuan
Shop clerk	Low 10s to 40 yuan	Usual hours are from 9-7
Lawyers	Pay not included	Only 29 female lawyers in the city
Nurses	20 yuan	Must have graduated primary school
Wet nurses	6-10 yuan	Usually work for one year, room and board included
Journalists	30-40 yuan	Only about 34 female journalists

Here, we see that for even more accomplished women - journalists or teachers - a "low end" new-style wedding could potentially use one month's entire salary. Shop clerks, factory workers and nurses would have to save their money over the course of several months, though we should not expect that women would necessarily be footing the bill for a ceremony. This brings up an important question of etiquette: namely, who *did* pay for the new-style wedding expenses? In lieu of a dowry, was the bride's family responsible, or were expenses covered by the young couple?

Factory laborer's salary of about 30 *yuan* per month is corroborated by information in the 1935 *Shanghai Yearbook*. Here, a survey of 305 laborer (*laogong* 劳工) families found the average worker salary for a family was 363 *yuan* (about 30 yuan per month) with up to 50 extra *yuan* made on the side through rent, boarding, side businesses and so on.[70] When family income increased, it was due an increase in the husband's, rather than the wife's, income. A family making between 300 and 399.99 *yuan* per year, on average, spent 210 *yuan* on food, 34 on rent, 15 on clothing, 26 on gas and 96 on miscellaneous needs (a total of 385 per year).[71] This being the case, how likely might it be for a family whose yearly income was 385 *yuan* to spend over 200 *yuan* on a wedding? It is hard to say, but these figures illustrate just how extravagant such weddings were: an upscale wedding could easily cost more than an entire laborer family's yearly

[70] *Shanghai shi nianjian* 上海市年鉴, (Shanghai: Shanghai shi nianjian weiyuanhui,1935), Q10.

[71] Ibid, Q11.

salary. Regardless of means, who might want to have this type of ceremony? For those who could afford it, such an event was certainly a display of one's familiarity with modern customs and the latest trends. And as always, weddings provided an opportunity for social networking on a personal level that was unparalleled.

But for many, the economics of lavish weddings were an endemic problem, even if the wedding was a new-style ceremony. A simple ceremony - meant to save time and money - had been transformed by many into an ostentatious affair. Regardless of form, clearly, cost was still an issue. Indeed, one *Linglong* contributor wrote:

> As far as unmarried men and women are concerned the Chinese marital system, still shrouded in the vestiges of feudalism, is no different than firm shackles. The grand, wasteful ceremonies of the upper levels of society, not to mention the "great wedding ceremony" of the middle and lower classes that require at least 100 to 1000 or more *yuan*; may we ask how young people with nothing at this present time of economic collapse and fear of job loss, can be responsible for a great expense like this?[72]

The Backlash Against Extravagance

The backlash against the potential costs of new-style weddings is not surprising; ironically, now these ceremonies shared a main and much maligned trait with the traditional wedding! Because the new-style wedding naturally lent itself to endless variations - and had never been successfully standardized by the government - as before, those who could afford to flaunt their wealth did, and those who want to make a display or have a grand celebration for one day did, despite the cost and their means. As we have seen above, disapproving sentiments were found even in the pages of *Linglong*. One 1932 contributor, Miss Wen Ying (文瑛), deemed such ceremonies "impractical," only showing friends and relatives "your ostentatious extravagance" when balanced against the cost of living in Shanghai.[73] She suggested paring things down rather than having to "borrow money from family on behalf of such trifling matters."[74] A simple wedding would leave a couple debt free. To help those who wished to follow her lead, she provided a few suggestions on how to save money:

> 1. Do not send out invitations, just invite people by word of mouth 2. Do not prepare wedding sweets (*hunyin xiguo*) 3. Do not take a honeymoon 4. Do not use a diamond ring 5. The bride and groom both wear clean and tidy everyday clothes for the ceremony [rather than wedding attire] 6. Do not have bridesmaids and groomsmen 7. Ask a clergyman to perform the ceremony 8. As soon as the ceremony is over, entertain guests with small refreshments, do not prepare a feast 9. Photographs should be for your own commemoration and memories, do not print them and give them as gifts 10. New furnishings should be useful, not extravagant.[75]

What Miss Wen suggested was much a more informal ceremony than new-style weddings budgeted above, yet even her ceremony is a step beyond merely registering with the municipal government. Miss Wen does not mention the venue, but presumably with a clergyman performing the ceremony it did not occur in the home. The more superficial elements: invitations and gifts for guests, have been downgraded or eliminated. Clothing is not special, now, just clean. Photographs are permitted for commemorative purposes but are not to be gifted

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[72] "Tichang jituan jiehun 提倡集团结婚," *Linglong* 玲珑 4 no. 40 (1934): 2547-49.

[73] "Wo duiyu xinshi hunyin de jianjie 我对于新式婚姻的见解," *Linglong* 玲珑 2 no. 79 (1932): 1351.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid.

extensively (we have seen how pricy they could get!). The emphasis is on practicality: a small gathering rather than a large party, an understated event without a lot of flash.

But even simplicity had a multitude of variations. As we have seen before, the easiest way to marry was to register. According to a 1933 Shanghai guidebook, the Bureau of Social Affairs (*Shehui ju* 社会局) had standardized the most basic wedding procedure, requiring couples to fill out an announcement form and a wedding certificate which were then given to the Public Security Bureau (*gong'an ju* 公安局).[76] Practicality, and perhaps a more intimate experience, was a preference for some to the point where it was romanticized. The story "Wedding March" from *Linglong's* "ideal life" issue (*Wo de lixiang shenghuo hao* 我的理想生活号) is excerpted below.

> One afternoon, she had just returned from school. In her room on top of her make-up case, she suddenly discovered a photograph of a boy. There was a note stuck to the bottom of the photo, and it said . . . "What do you think of this person's appearance? Do you want to meet him? Maybe you already know him? Ha! Let's meet at 3." She lifted the photo with both hands and examined it . . . the person in the photo wasn't much into their teens and though born with good looks, he seemed a little dull. But, his smile was very cute, and yes, she seemed to recognize him a little. Though, it seemed that that they had never talked. After their arranged meeting, they slowly began to communicate and confide in each other. Over time, they began to understand each other's academic background, behavior and personality. Consequently, from their friendship they became lovers. Not long after, with their parent's consent, they set a marriage contract. They have been happily married for three years, but their wedding ceremony was simple, not so exciting like the rich people today have. It also wasn't like rich people in the countryside, lighting big candles . . . They only put an advertisement in the paper, and announced to their parents and friends that on X month they would live together, and that's it . . .[77]

Here, we are reminded of the *Funü zazhi* "ideal spouse" some ten years later. Clearly young people still harbored dreams for their future but now some of the constraints that bound their predecessors were loosened: parents faded largely to the background, children met without adult help or supervision and dictated their own wedding ceremonies. A match and marriage along the lines of the "Wedding March" was something that those who wrote in the 1920s could only dream of.

The story, in the "ideal life" issue of the magazine, presented an alternative to the rampant consumerism that plagued Shanghai's new-style weddings of the early 1930s, displaying here both new legal rights and new, streamlined wedding rites. Without the spectacle - but still to the letter of the law - a young couple found a way to marry. The woman, who was still pursuing her education, was courted by a familiar man - perhaps a classmate - bold enough to leave his photograph and propose a meeting. Over time they became companions, discovering mutual interests. After establishing themselves as a couple they approached their parents for consent on their marriage and a contract was drawn up by all. The wedding ceremony was dictated by the couple. They chose to announce it to their parents and friends in the newspaper, making it public knowledge. They seemed to take satisfaction in the simplicity - and modernity - of it all, and their own independence. They had a good relationship with their parents but also had the autonomy to choose their ceremony and spouse. They understood how to make such a ceremony legal and took pride in distinguishing themselves from both lavish urban ceremonies and wasteful traditional ceremonies in the countryside. We also note how the integration of the

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[76] Chen Huaipu 陈怀圃, *Shanghai zhinan* 上海指南 (Shanghai: Zhonghua Press, 1933), 141-2.

[77] "Hunli jinxingqu 婚礼进行曲," *Linglong* 玲珑 4 no. 22 (1934): 1365-67.

camera into family rituals undoubtedly changed their dynamics: here by aiding a shy boy in courting his crush, imbuing him with a bit of mystery, some bold action, and providing a physical artifact for the girl to ponder. In this sense, the photograph was essentially usurping the matchmaker or one's parents and acting as the go between. And who can fail to see the thinly veiled scorn for wasteful, city weddings or backward country ceremonies? This couple represented an ideal: a union of new legal rights and new tasteful and economical ceremonial rites. Popular practice of both was another matter.

The official magazine of Shanghai's Bureau of Social Affairs - *Shehui yuekan* (社会月刊) - and *Linglong* both cited information from a study conducted by a Japanese sociologist that found wedding expenses in China to be the highest in the world, percentage wise, with respect to income. For families that made 10,000 *yuan*, on average those in England spent .8% on weddings, Germans 1%, Italians 4%, Russians spent 8%, Japanese 10-20%, Americans, 2%, French 1%, Spanish 5% and Chinese a whopping 30% or 3000 *yuan.*[78] Chinese families who made 2000 *yuan* still spent 25-30% for their income - or at least 500 *yuan* - on wedding expenses.[79] If the pattern of a 25-30% expenditure held for all income brackets, those making 300 *yuan* yearly would be spending at least 75 *yuan* on their weddings, well within the range of a lower end new-style wedding. But this expense would no doubt come with looming debt, leaving many young city residents questioning what options they really had. For many, a simple new-style wedding or municipal registration was not yet the norm and the fate of those could not afford a "grand ceremony" seemed bleak:

> Marriage is seen as 'a great event in one's life' handed down from generation to generation to proliferate the family and shouldering this great mission is unavoidable. Consequently, one has to sell off their family property and borrow money to get married. As for those bums who have no property to sell money or no one to borrow money from, well then they have no capacity to marry [in this fashion] . . . They can only waver depressedly, or secretly live together or visit brothels to vent their passion.[80]

The old system, it seemed, trapped both parents - who were forced into debt to finance such weddings - and children who felt obligated to marry, or had little say in their choice of spouse. Clearly, new-style weddings had not led to a wholesale adoption of new behaviors: for many in Shanghai there was still a tendency towards extravagance. Furthermore, those who could afford grand, new-style ceremonies, or who participated in simple ones were already experiencing legal protections afforded by Civil Code - choice of spouse, the creation of one's own marriage contract, and so on. The reach of both rights and rites was limited, at best. For the Nationalists, the economics of new-style weddings were a stumbling block, preventing many from participating in such ceremonies and thus experiencing new rights afforded by the Civil Code.

What was next, politically and socially? The city of Shanghai was about to launch plans of its own. In 1934, *Linglong* reported the following:

> Recently, the Municipal Bureau of Social Affairs has examined this trend of social customs becoming increasingly extravagant and, subsequently, is advocating thrifty wedding ceremonies. [The Bureau] will initiate "group wedding" ceremonies, to be held on a set date and time, with a cost of 20 *yuan*. Weddings will

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[78] "Xin shenghuo yundong xia ying jiesheng jiehun feiyong 新生活运动下应节省结婚费用," *Linglong* 玲珑 5 no. 6 (1935): 273-4; "Hunyin de tiaojian 婚姻的条件," *Shehui yuekan* 社会月刊 1 no. 8 (1934): 29.

[79] Ibid.

[80] "Tichang jituan jiehun 提倡集团结婚."

be held in the Municipal Government hall and the mayor and the director of the Bureau of Social Affairs will act as witnesses and there will be a banquet for new husbands and wives.[81]

Could group weddings reform the so-called Chinese penchant for "grand weddings" while subtly extolling the virtues of new laws?

PART THREE

The New Life Movement and the Municipal Group Wedding

On April 3, 1935 fifty-seven couples gathered at Shanghai's Civic Center to be married by the mayor in the city's first group wedding. Flanked by guests and spectators, Chinese and Western, brides and grooms marched single file up the steps of the building and took their places. The couples, each standing at a designated number, formed long lines down the center of the hall. Brides, wearing fitted dresses and cap veils reminiscent of Soong Meiling each with a lengthy, flowing train, and carrying a substantial bouquet of white flowers in their left hand. Rather than Western-style suits, grooms donned a blue Chinese-style robe and pants, black socks and shoes and white gloves. Facing the front of the hall, the couples stood before the portrait of Sun Yat-sen, former prime minister of the Nationalist party and the country's "founding father." Sun's portrait, flanked by the state and party flags, served as the backdrop for the group ceremony. After a short service, couples were awarded commemorative medals marking their participation in Shanghai's first New Life Movement group wedding.[82]

This grand display of a new-style, standardized ceremony with political overtones linking ritual to state and party would have been unthinkable some ten years earlier. In fact, it was only twelve years prior that Puyi's bride had been paraded through the streets of Beijing in a sedan chair. What had changed? With the Nationalist consolidation of power the political eye could now turn to the social realm, where beyond the Civil Code and appropriation and politicization of popular marriage ritual, political legitimacy and control required the creation of a narrative of family, marriage and state. What was needed now was the appropriate social context. Of love and politics, Haiyan Lee writes, "In the late 1920s and 1930s a conservative ethos permeated much of the social discourse on love, owing in part to the KMT [Nationalist] regime's endorsement of Confucian revivalism tempered with a liberal dose of bourgeois family values. In its quest for a disciplinary society, the regime encouraged the conservative critique of free love as a conduit for unbridled egoism and the celebration of the family the foundation of a new social ethic."[83] This sentiment set the stage for the New Life Movement and Nationalist desires for a convergence of rights and rites under the banner of the party-state.

Launched in 1934, the New Life Movement was designed to be a program of social and cultural regeneration that would lead to economic and political rejuvenation; participation in the movement would shape the Chinese into worthy, law abiding Nationalist subjects. Feeling that the Chinese people had no civic virtue, Chiang was hoping to stoke the flames of civic participation and forge a meaningful relationship between individuals and the state. To Chiang,

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[81] Ibid.

[82] "Wushiqi dui jia ou 五十七对佳耦 *Liangyou huabao* 良友画报104 (April 1935): 10-11.

[83] Lee, 140.

China was mired in tradition and hindered by familial bonds and superstition, all of which were antithetical to modernization. Modern behavior was needed to produce a proactive, aware citizenry. As such, the goal of the New Life Movement was not enlightenment of the general populace but rather tutelage, guidance, and the development of proper conduct: the best and brightest were not needed, modest obedience would suffice. Personal example was paramount in the propagation of New Life policies, which were in themselves mundane and included eliminating "spitting, urinating or smoking in public, casual sexual liaisons, and provocative clothing."[84]

Todays spitters and smokers could be on tomorrow's front lines, or at least assisting there. Chiang was hoping to fashion a certain type of politicized citizen; a patriotic citizen aware of the Chinese nation, a militarized and military-minded citizen. While he may have won the battle that placed him at the head of the Nationalist party, the war was not over. The Communists and the Japanese were both looming. "To pacify the interior and resist external aggression . . . our people must have military training. As a preliminary, we have to acquire the habits of orderliness, cleanliness, simplicity, frugality, promptness and exactness. We have to preserve order, emphasize organization, responsibility, and discipline, and be ready to die for the country at any moment."[85] In theory, model behavior and controlled ritual practice would spread to others.

In the early 1930s Shanghai's Bureau of Social Affairs began trying to reform social customs, with a conscious eye to the historic role of Western influence. By now, we are familiar with the story: "When Western customs infiltrated China, there were differences between the new [from the West] and the traditional [Chinese]. Although the old slowly receded, the new did not immediately take root. Under these circumstances, the new and the old both remained. As a result, custom and etiquette has become increasingly disordered (*cuoluan* 错乱). The same has happened with marriage ceremonies."[86] The group ceremony - simultaneously thrifty and flashy - was meant to make a statement: reform was needed everywhere, times were changing, and Shanghai would lead the way.

According to the Bureau of Social Affairs: "If Shanghai is reformed, the inland (*neidi* 内地) will unconsciously follow their lead. At this time, the city of Shanghai is advocating group marriage, acting as a pioneer in changing the marriage system as part of the New Life Movement. Change Shanghai's marriage system, and the marriage system in every other place will unconsciously follow."[87] Changing the city of Shanghai to prove a point seemed to be a penchant of the Nationalist regime, as was so eloquently - and brutally - illustrated by Frederic Wakeman's *Policing Shanghai.*[88] There, the Nationalists hoped to show the world that by

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[84] Spence, 414.

[85] Soong Meiling, "China's New Life Movement" in *General Chiang Kai-shek on the Communist Crisis: Madame Chiang Kai-shek on the New Life Movement* (Shanghai: China Weekly Review Press, 1937?), 55.

[86] "Xin shenghuo jituan jiehun niyi de qianhou 新生活集团结婚拟议的前后," *Shehui yuekan* 社会月刊1 no 8 (1934): 2.

[87] "Wo duiyu jituan jiehun juxing hou zhi xiwang 我对于集团结婚制举行后之希望," *Shehui yuekan* 社会月刊 1 no. 8 (1934): 15.

[88] Frederic Wakeman, *Policing Shanghai 1927-1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

successfully curbing crime and containing prostitution and drugs they were fit to run the show without foreign assistance. Though policing was "defensive" and weddings were "offensive" the ends were still similar: using the law to tame the wild, extravagant, rotten beast of a city for the betterment of China and more political and social control, first of Shanghai's residents and eventually the country.

The Bureau of Social Affairs cast Shanghai itself as the out-of-control villain, hosting the most vile of contradictions. The cost of living was exorbitant; for those who could afford it there were "theaters and movies, restaurants and towering buildings and for those who could not there was famine, suicide due to financial collapse against the backdrop of economic instability and rampant inequality."[89] Here, extravagance played host to extravagance. In the event of a wedding or a funeral, the report noted, "people would rather go into a few years of debt to put on two to three days of vanity: if a wedding was not extravagant, with bird's nest and shark's fin soup for each guest, the hosts would be ridiculed!"[90] On one hand group weddings were an economic issue: well managed personal finance was seen as the building block of good social economics. There was also the issue of properly educating residents for the greater good of all: when laws about age were ignored and couples married too early or intellectuals, for example, married too late, this was seen not a personal loss but a loss for the nation (*minzu shang jueda de sunshi* 民族上绝大的损失).[91]

One result of this move to reform social customs - and presumably encourage people to register for municipal weddings - was the Bureau's issuance of marriage certificates of "exquisite" design. They featured - among other things - a golden border, a red heart, and an illustration of birds and fish traditionally believed to be extremely loyal to their partners (*jiandie qingshen* 鹣鲽情深).[92] Compared to other customs in the city, the Bureau wrote, "this is totally different (*buke tongri er yu* 不可同日而语)"[93] - as in, refined and sophisticated. We remember from chapter two that in 1913, municipal wedding registration was made mandatory and wedding certificates were sold in cigarette shops throughout Shanghai. However, if wedding certificates were still a matter of concern for the Bureau in the early 1930s, it is likely that residents were not registering their marriages. The grasp of the municipal government on Shanghai's residents must have been weak at best if they were pinning their hopes on an exquisitely designed wedding certificate to entice people to follow rules.

Group weddings were designed for this purpose. The ultimate goal of the group wedding was to produce a ceremony that would attract residents to participate - to lure them into standardized, frugal, and lawful behavior. We have already seen what the market had to offer: white wedding dresses for women and Western-style suits for men, wedding portraits, a ceremony, possibly in a church, hotel or banquet hall, food in the form of a banquet or snacks

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[89] "Xin shenghuo jituan jiehun niyi de qianhou," 1.

[90] Ibid.

[91] Ibid.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Ibid.

and sweets. Group weddings would match this consumerist adversary with refinement. They would be solemn (*zhuangyan* 庄严), efficient (*jingji shijian* 经济时间), and thrifty (*jiesheng feiyong* 节省费用). Ceremonies would thirty minutes long. Group weddings - limited to fifty participants - were to be held four times a year: New Year's, Confucius's birthday (September 28), Double Ten holiday (October 10) and the Premier's birthday (March 12); (days of "national humiliation" were deemed inappropriate).[94] The cost would be twenty *yuan* per couple, and the mayor and the director of the Bureau of Social Affairs would stand witness. After the wedding was over, couples would be treated to a celebratory luncheon, which was part of the affair.[95]

The group wedding ceremony proposed by the Bureau of Social Affairs was as follows: 1. Music plays 2. Guests enter 3. Witnesses enter 4. Guardians lead couples in according to number 5. The ceremony begins, couples face each other and bow three times 6. Witnesses stamp the wedding certificates, guardians lead the couples up and then back to their original places 7. The witnesses say a few words 8. The ceremony is complete.[96] During the ceremony, the brides and their guardians stood in order on the left side of the hall, and the grooms and their guardians were on the right. All faced the witnesses, who stood at the front of the hall. What is most interesting about this proposed ceremony is how it was strictly municipal: there were no mentions of state or party flags, or of hanging Sun Yat-sen's portrait. Simplicity and efficiency were the orders of the day.

By 1935, group wedding ceremonies - now as an official part of the New Life Movement - went from proposal to reality. The ceremony for the first wedding in April 1935 was amended from the municipal draft above; it was now staged as performance with gripping visuals and roles for key and supporting players. Civil officials replaced parents or guardians. When members of the municipal government took the stage, they first bowed to Sun Yat-sen's portrait and the party flags. The ceremony then commenced as follows: 1. Witnesses take the stage 2. Guardians and introducers take their places 3. The bride and groom enter 4. The orchestra plays 5. Couples take their places 6. Singing of the national anthem 7. The emcee reads the names 8. The bride and groom take the stage for the ceremony 9. The witnesses give out marriage certificates and gifts 10. Witnesses are thanked 11. The mayor speaks 12. The head of the Bureau of Social Affairs speaks 13. Music 14. The ceremony concludes.[97]

The group ceremony was a hybrid of earlier Nationalist draft plans and popular new-style weddings: witnesses, introducers and guardians were still present and play bit parts; the wedding was performed in a markedly civic space, with brides and grooms wearing municipally

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[94] Ibid, 3.

[95] Ibid.

[96] Ibid, 4.

[97] *Shenbao*, "Shoujie jituan jiehun zuori xian yanxi hunli 首届集团结婚昨日先演习婚礼" 327-67(1) 1935. Between 1935 and 1937, fourteen weddings were held on the following dates: April 3, 1935; May 1, 1935; June 5, 1935; October 2, 1935; December 4, 1935; February 5, 1936; April 1, 1936; June 3, 1936; October 7, 1936; November 4, 1936; November 4, 1936; December 2, 1936; February 3, 1937; April 7, 1937; June 2, 1937. We notice that the dates of the actual weddings include none of the special days proposed by the Municipal government. Indeed the weddings occurred with much more frequency that originally planned - perhaps due to their popularity. All dates are from *Shenbao* group wedding coverage.

sanctioned new-style wedding attire; witnesses were members of the municipal government; instead of singing the "free marriage song," everyone sang the national anthem. The ceremony was also an homage to Chiang's and Soong's 1927 wedding with the same decor prominently featured and brides outfitted in gowns similar to Soong Meiling's wedding dress. Yet, there was an important difference: Chiang and Soong's wedding had been all about the bride, putting the woman front and center in the ceremony. With Soong's wedding and the persistent, bride-centered, new-style wedding culture in Shanghai this trend could never be fully reversed. By now new-style weddings stood for more than just a revised ceremony: participants were modern - and had been framed as such for some time. They were educated, urban youth with law-abiding parents, they were not betrothed as children and they most likely chose their own spouses. Due in large part to the press, these weddings were increasingly associated with consumerism and a certain sort of lifestyle too; now, beyond the ceremony and choice of spouse, such events included an engagement party, a dress, bridesmaids and attendants, a cake. Precisely because the new-style wedding and the bride were symbols for both urban glamour and for enlightened modern behavior, they were not so easily stamped out. The best that the Nationalists could do was to endorse a ceremony that made the bride one of many, a move that took away her individuality and ceremonial autonomy.

Not just anyone could participate in this new municipal ritual, however. If citizens were to be models, they must first be deemed model citizens. The proper forms must be stamped, signed and submitted; applications required two 4 *cun* full-body photos and one 2 *cun* half-body photo for identification. Brides and grooms needed to complete a detailed health certificate (*jiankang zhenming shu* 健康证明书) - which included questions about their background, sexual and psychological health - to prove their merit.[98] Those with "malformed organs" were deemed ineligible, as were those without a job, who were pregnant, or of the wrong age (either too young or old).[99]

These behavioral expectations created some degree of uniformity amongst participants and formed a link between individuals and the municipality (the logical extension eventually being the larger Nationalist state). The submission of pictures as a means of identification can also be seen - theoretically - as submitting one's own image and one's self to service of the state. In one sense, the act is sense intimate and personal; participants were revealing themselves to their government, and essentially helping it both identify and regulate them. Yet it was also strangely impersonal. The photograph was a de-contextualized snap shot; a singular body against a blank backdrop, either full or half, which was juxtaposed with, and literally affixed to, new state regulations. The relationship between the individual and the municipality takes on yet another cast when we consider that through the marriage application, one's identity was revealed only to the city government; during the ceremony brides and grooms could potentially remain anonymous.

If couples made the cut with their health certificates, they had some degree of choice in their attire as long as it was approved by the Bureau of Social Affairs in advance. Couples could rent or buy their clothing but must follow certain guidelines to maintain relative uniformity. One

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[98] Not surprisingly, the health examination discouraged some from participating. See Glosser, 131.

[99] "Jituan jiehun dengji de xianzhi 集团结婚登记的限制," *Shehui yuekan* 社会月刊 1 no. 8 (1934): 10-13.

example of such rules read: “Brides and grooms are to adhere to dress regulations: men are to wear white socks, plain black satin clothes and white cloth shoes. Brides must wear white gloves, and socks and shoes of the same color. Shoes should use satin laces and the heels should not be too tall. Brides are not to wear their hair down . . . the bouquet should reach the ground . . .”[100] While many of the women’s dresses were similar to Soong Meiling’s wedding gown, men were required to wear satin suits - not Western-style attire. Chiang, we remember, wore a very formal Western-style suit with tails to his wedding, fashioned by his personal tailor.

One company, Meiya, (美亚) advertised in *Shenbao* alongside the coverage of the first group wedding. Clothing was available for rent, with prices of 15 *yuan* for men’s clothing and 5 *yuan* 2 *jiao* for women’s attire.[101] If couples were so inclined to purchase their attire, they could contact Meiya directly. Founded in 1920, Meiya was a “giant of the industry.”[102] By 1927 the company had become the “largest silk weaving concern in all of China . . . to encourage a high level of output among young weavers, the company sponsored production contests, paid generous wages and provided a variety of services: dormitories cafeterias, clinic, library, night schools recreation club, sports teams and the like.”[103] Labor unrest due to increased employee demands began in 1930, and was exacerbated by a decline in silk prices. Labor costs were cut dramatically and in spring of 1934, workers at “all ten of Meiya’s factories - 4,500 men, women and children - went on strike” in what was “the most publicized labor dispute of the Nanjing decade.”[104] The strike - which underscores political and economic tensions in the city - lasted for over fifty days. Despite government suspicions that it was linked to Communists instigators this was not the case. In an internal report one Communist agent wrote: “while the attitude of the strikers is good, our own activities still remain outside the struggles.”[105] Reality was one thing, perception another, and given Chiang’s fervent anti-Communist stance and the highly visible nature of the strike one cannot help question the timing of the Meiya’s advertisement as an official outfitter of a Nationalist sanctioned ceremony.

The first few group weddings were covered extensively in *Shenbao*, *Linglong* and a variety of other publications. Such photos - often taken by *Wangkai* studios who seemed to find a niche here - glamorized municipal group weddings and gave them a larger audience. *Liangyou huabao* (良友画报) the popular and long running pictorial magazine, covered the first and second group weddings with a two page and full page spread, respectively.[106] In these photographs, the eye is confronted by a sea brides and grooms, each couple indistinguishable from the next, marching in

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[100] “Xiugai hou zhi Susheng jituan jiehun banfa 修改后之苏省集团结婚办法,” Funü yuekan 妇女月刊 1, no. 9 (1935): 28.

[101] Ibid.

[102] Elizabeth Perry, *Shanghai on strike: the politics of Chinese labor* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 180.

[103] Ibid, 183.

[104] Ibid, 184, 189.

[105] Ibid, 194.

[106] See Figure 18: “Di er jie jietuan jiehun 第二届集团结婚” *Liangyou huabao* 良友画报 105 (May 1935): 6.

ordered lines into the hall, identified only by a number, and recognizable perhaps only to a relative or family member. Admittedly, this contributed to the majesty of the event and the spectacle that was created by this ordered organism of uniformly dressed brides and grooms. There was a glamourous side to it as well. Brides and grooms streaming down the steps of the civic center, bouquets blowing in the breeze: these people were part of something important, these people could be important people. One wedding did in fact have a movie star groom.[107]

While *Liangyou huabao* printed more newsworthy shots covering the action from a variety of angles, *Linglong* featured more reflective, pensive glamour shots in its coverage.[108] The glamour and the newness of the group ceremony was directly capitalized on by at least one advertiser, *Shiang Ping* cigarettes, who lifted a scene from a group wedding photograph as an enticing selling point, or at least a mechanism to draw the viewer in.[109] Indeed, by the mid 1930s, images of brides were used to sell all sorts of products. Naturally we find them on advertisements for cakes and clothes; they also appeared in ads for face creams, perfume, even medicine to prevent TB (which of course would keep you from participating in a municipal group wedding to begin with).[110] The new-style bride - as a selling point and a model - was here to stay.

But was this so-called thrifty wedding really that affordable? After some calculations, we find that that group weddings were not so "thrifty" after all: a 20 *yuan* application fee, at least 5 *yuan* each for application photos, 15 *yuan* for the groom's rented attire and 5 *yuan* 2 *jiao* for the bride's clothes came to a grand total of at least 50 *yuan* 2 *jiao*! The budget that we previously estimated for a "lower cost" new-style wedding was conservatively set at 44 *yuan*, though admittedly calculated without including a banquet. Regardless: the group wedding, while in some senses economical, was still far from affordable for a majority of city residents. Clearly, these ceremonies were not intended for everyone. In fact there was probably a target participant the government had in mind.

Consider the suggested guidelines proposed at the "New Household Movement" exhibit held in Shanghai in 1935 by the Ministry of Education. A family making 50 *yuan* per month (slightly more than the average laborer) was encouraged to allocate resources in the following way: education 7 *yuan*; personal expenses 5; savings 5; living expenses 22.5; daily expenses 5; special or miscellaneous expenses 5.5 *yuan.*[111] Educational expenses included books, magazines, newspapers; personal expenses included bathing and transport; living expenses included rent, heat, food, clothes; daily expense included water and electricity; special expenses included

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[107] "Hushi jituan jiehun shouci yanchu 沪市集团结婚首次演出," *Linglong* 玲珑 5 no. 14 (1935), not paginated.

[108] "Hushi sijie jituan jiehun 沪市四届集团结婚," *Linglong* 玲珑 5 no. 20 (1935): not paginated; *Linglong* 玲珑 5 no. 33 (1935): 2167.

[109] See Figure 19: Wu Tai, et al ed., *Dushi modeng: yuefenpai 1910s-1930s* 都市摩登:月份牌 1910s-1930s (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Joint Publishing Company Ltd, 1994), 55. From this we may ascertain dresses were pale pink rather than white. Glosser also suggests this.

[110] See, for example: *Shenbao,* 347-100 (1) 1936; *Shenbao,* 347-169 (2) 1936; *Shenbao,* 347-402 (1) 1936; *Shenbao,* 347-322 (1) 1936; *Shenbao,* 347-534 (2) 1936.

[111] "Xin jiating yundong zhanlan 新家庭运动展览," *Linglong* 玲珑 5 no. 11 (1935): 702-3.

medicine.[112] In theory, couples with lower salaries who wanted to join a municipal group wedding could plan ahead and save for it over the course of six or so months. Whether they would or not is another question altogether. While theoretically open to all who were healthy, clearly, a model ceremony was not to be packed with callous-handed, underfed laborers or unwashed country bumpkins. The scruffy, the hungry, and the dirty would no doubt ruin the majestic image of the group ceremony.

Image, of course, was incredibly important. For the municipal government - and by extension the Nationalist government - the group wedding was an expenditure of symbolic capital that allowed for a grand display of authority and came with extended press coverage at minimal cost. The ceremony was not run for profit. The city managed to break almost even, spending an average of 11.8 *yuan* per person or about 24 *yuan* per couple. Expenses included advertising fee, the printing fee for wedding certificates, badges and souvenirs, see below.[113]

The Cost of Municipal Group Weddings, 1935-6

Group wedding	Cost (yuan)	Participants (Couple X 2)	Average cost per person (yuan)
April 3, 1935	1129	57 couples = 114	9.9
May 1, 1935	1319	34 couples = 68	19.4
June 5, 1935	1127	54 couples = 108	10.4
October 2, 1935	2297	141 couples = 282	8.1
December 4, 1935	1651	112 couples = 224	7.4
February 2, 1936	3314	94 couples = 188	17.6
April 1, 1936	1896	100 couples = 200	9.5
June 3, 1936	1490	Info not avail	--

With these factors in mind, who did participate? *Healthy Home* magazine (*Jiankang jiating* 健康家庭), published in Shanghai in 1937, provides useful information about those who participated in the first six municipal group weddings. Participants were young; the largest number married between 21 and 24 years of age. Women, not surprisingly, tended to marry at a younger age; the youngest being 16, and the oldest being 31. In contrast, the youngest man was 18 and the oldest was 44.[114] For men, the most common occupations were: company employee

[112] Ibid.

[113] *Shanghai shi jituan jiehun kaiban fei gui dian shihuiju zhichu de beicha baogao* 上海市集团结婚开办费归垫社会局支出的备查报告 Q123-1-872-33 1935.06 Shanghai Municipal Archives.

[114] "Jituan jiehun de xianshi taolun 集团结婚的现实讨论," *Jiankang jiating* 健康家庭 no. 1 (January 1937): 12.

(249 men); public servant (about 70 men); student (about 30 men); professor (about 30 men). Women were generally unemployed, here noted as "household" (*jiali* 家里, 334 women), were teachers (50 women) or students (50 women).[115] Other male occupations were: banker, technical worker, doctor, postman, journalist, soldier, policeman, cultural worker, lawyer, cinema, general worker, or unemployed. Other female occupations were: company employee, doctor, public servant, worker, midwife, or farmer.[116] Apparently some rules had been relaxed, where those without a job could now marry. Categorized as "household," most women were probably moving from their parent's home to their own new household with their husband. Most men were moderately educated, modest professionals, as were some of the women. They were not intellectuals or politicos, as in the past; women were not their husband's intellectual counterparts either, but rather ready and willing to do housework and raise a family.

We find that most participants were from Central China. The largest numbers of were from Jiangsu province; Zhejiang province registered next.[117] The parents of many brides and grooms were probably still in Jiangsu or greater Zhejiang. By marrying this way, and marrying in the city rather than returning to their natal homes, a child's nexus of personal relationships now spread over a larger space. If their parents did not attended the wedding, children could send a wedding photograph and news back home as both proof and commemoration of the event. Furthermore, the city mayor, a business associate, an uncle or older friend could now assume the role of guardian in a parent's absence.

In a traditional wedding one's parents were central to the entire process: from making the match to agreeing on the wedding contract, to vouching for the union. When new-style weddings first became more common, roles for family members were renamed and reconfigured, but retained. Later, as demonstrated in *Linglong,* familial roles were co-opted by one's friends who played a much larger part in the ceremony, even acting as a literal mouthpiece for family members; reading messages from home in their absence. Now, ceremonies could legally take place in a strictly civic location without the presence of any family. Furthermore, the documents necessary to make a marriage legal could be certified by members of the municipal government, rather than one's parents. The Nationalist regime no doubt hoped to tout such changes as a mark of their modern policies. Yet, given myriad of ceremonial variations, the fact that participation in such ceremonies was voluntary rather than mandated, and expense of group weddings, the grip of municipality - let alone the state - on such processes was weak at best.

The Native Place Association Group Wedding - Variations on a Theme

One way that the natal home and new-style, urban weddings were linked in Shanghai was through Native Place Associations, organizations for sojourners to Shanghai that provided among other things economic assistance, a sense of community, and connections to home. These Associations staged group weddings as part of the New Life Movement, too. Generally these

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[115] Ibid.

[116] Ibid.

[117] Ibid, 12. Guangdong was third with 35 women and 40 men and the city of Shanghai itself was fourth with 40 women and 25 men.

weddings began in 1935, after the municipal group weddings took root. Because of the range and number of the Native Place Association in Shanghai, it is difficult to say whether all associations staged group weddings; it is clear from archival documents that these ceremonies were staged in response to the municipal models. Group weddings were probably seen by Native Place Associations as a good way to demonstrate allegiance to the municipality - adherence to New Life activities - while maintaining connections to home, most often by marrying someone else from one's hometown.

The Huzhou Native Place Association, the Hu She (*Hu She tongxianghui* 湖社同乡会), has extensive records of their group wedding ceremonies.[118] Huzhou, the center of silk production in Ming-Qing China, was famed for its wealth and sophistication. It is likely that these traits carried over to association members in Shanghai. Certainly, members were involved in the silk trade there. According to Bryna Goodman links between native-place and economic functions were often preserved in Shanghai: "In the Shanghai Archives, for instance, the archive of the Hu She (association of sojourners from Huzhou, Zhejiang) includes the meeting records, trade rules and regulations for the Shanghai Municipal Silk Trade Association (*Shanghai tebie shi chouduan ye tongye gonghui*) and the Shanghai Huzhou Silk Gongsuo (*Shanghai Zhe-Hu zhouye gongsuo*)."[119] Furthermore, it is likely that there were connections between Huzhou and Meiya silk, which had outfitted municipal residents at the first group wedding. Participants could a purchase their dresses from Meiya; a drawing of the suggested dress, released through the Bureau of Social Affairs, was found in both *Healthy Home* magazine and in the Hu She Native Place Association files.[120]

For many Native Place Associations, the notion of "group" was rendered on a much smaller scale: there were only six couples in the first wedding Hu She; eight in the second and third weddings; ten in the fourth, and three in the fifth.[121] Registration forms solicited information similar to that of the general forms: age, address, occupation, names and signatures of witnesses, introducers and so on.[122] On these forms the couple's date of engagement and their relationship prior to their engagement (classmates, friends) were also included. Rules and regulations for participation were the same as municipal rules, the only caveat here being that either the bride or the groom must be a member of the Native Place Association. Participants shared similar socioeconomic backgrounds with their municipal counterparts: men had jobs as steamer workers, at the newspaper, in the hospital, the silk factory, doing embroidery. Women were in the home, but were also teachers, worked in the hospital and in one case, engaged in

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[118] The *Hu She tongxiang hui* was also known as the *Huzhou tongxianghui* 湖州同乡会.

[119] Bryna Goodman, *Native place, city and nation: regional networks and identities in Shanghai, 1853-1937.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 45.

[120] See Figure 20: "Jituan jiehun de xianshi taolun,"12; *Hushe tongxiang jituan jiehun zheng* 湖社同乡集团结婚证 Q165-3-27 1935.09-1936.04 Shanghai Municipal Archives.

[121] *Hushe di shisan jie sheyuan dahui tekan* 湖社第十三届社员大会特刊 Y4-1-686 1937.01, chart 8. Shanghai Municipal Archives.

[122] Ibid.

farming.[123] Some couples were friends prior to engagement, others appear to have been coworkers and one couple had no prior relationship. Ceremonies themselves were also basically the same, and included the of singing the national anthem, honoring the party and national flag and the portrait of Sun Yat-sen, though at the Huzhou Association another portrait was added to the mix; most likely the founder of the association.[124]

These variations - the inclusion of the second portrait, the small number of participants, the association hall as venue - are noteworthy. The alterations illustrate that even within the parameters of the New Life Movement, variation both existed and was permitted. For example, with the inclusion of two photographs, participants displayed reverence for others besides Sun Yat-sen. The association hall was certainly civic space but it was also personal civic space, reserved for members of that association who were friends or acquaintances. Whereas participants in municipal group weddings were limited only by health and finances, to participate in a Native Place Association group wedding, the bride or the groom had to be a member of the Association. Members were also connected by a shared natal home. This link to family and a home removed from Shanghai may in fact have been one of the reasons group weddings were allowed in to occur in Native Place Associations to begin with. As we know, the philosophy behind the New Life Movement was model behavior begetting model behavior, and loyalty to the Nationalist regime. Perhaps the hope was that association members who married in Shanghai would the report news back home and practices would spread.

The permission of certain variations to group wedding ceremonies begs another question: what were the limitations for such weddings? What constituted a "group" and where could ceremonies be held? Could two couples hold a group wedding in the courtyard of a friend's house and have it be recognized as part of the New Life Movement? Certainly not at this time, though perhaps this was a final goal. For such weddings to be legitimate, they needed a mediating civic body and some type of administrative structure linked in to the appropriate municipal authorities. Having the wedding at home would not provide that space or that municipal legitimacy; the Native Place Association did.

Though the form of the ceremonies may have been similar, photographs of the municipal group weddings and the Native Place ceremonies are markedly different. This is evident as we examine a photograph of the second Huzhou Native Place Association group ceremony.[125] The venue was much smaller, the camera was close enough to catch the individual faces of the participants. Photos of municipal group weddings featured a sea of brides and grooms. Here, we can find the individual flowers in a bride's bouquet. Child attendants stand in front of the brides and grooms and we see the faces of children in the audience sitting restlessly, some looking bored, others mischievous. What is most striking about the photograph is the ornate and finely wrought backdrop that dominates the image. The tapestry evokes continuity with the past and with Chinese tradition. The party and national flags peek in from the top of the photo, but they

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[123] *Hushe tongxiang jituan jiehun zheng.*

[124] *Hushe di yi jie tongxianghui jituan jiehun yishi* 湖社第一届同乡会集团结婚仪式, Q165-3-16 Shanghai Municipal Archives.

[125] See Figure 21: *Hushe zhuban liu jie tongxianghui jituan jiehun shenqing shu jie heci* 湖社主办六届同乡会集团结婚申请书届贺词 Q165-3-7 1938.12-1942 Shanghai Municipal Archives.

were not deemed important enough to be included in their entirety. It is a luxe display. The image does not evoke notions of efficiency, simplicity, frugality - the cornerstones of the New Life Movement. Instead there is a feeling of grandeur, ceremony, and tradition. This is due to the venue itself, the backdrop, the presence of "double happiness" (*xixi* 喜喜), the proximity of the photographer to the brides and grooms: all elements suggest that this type of wedding was not necessarily a break from the past but rather an altered continuity.

There is one vexing problem that we have not yet addressed. Not everyone who participated in Nationalist group weddings was necessarily acting in the service of the state or held the ideals of the New Life Movement dear. Couples could participate in municipal ceremonies with no clear understanding of the politics that they represented, or the origin and etiquette of new-style weddings. For many, it is likely that such weddings were a means to an end - that end, of course, being different for each individual. Indeed, as Michele Strano writes: "ritualized communication is encoded with conventions and traditions with historically symbolic meanings that may or may not be readily apparent to ritual participants . . . ritual performance does not require the internalization of symbolic meaning."[126] Furthermore, "participants may conform to the conventions of performance while subverting the meaning of ritual symbols in individual ways . . ."[127] Who can say, for example, that every individual in the group wedding was listening to the wedding certificate as it was read aloud, could distinguish between the state and the party flag, or was properly honoring Sun Yat-sen? This was precisely the problem with such weddings, their symbols, and trappings. There was no real way of measuring allegiance to such things - even in the midst of the ceremonies themselves. Clearly, individuals could perform certain behaviors without internalizing them or owning them. For example, with her work on wedding photography in the United States Strano finds that, "most brides do not so much *accept* the virgin bride injunctive norm as *not reject* it. In this way, the recognizable image of the virgin bride is perpetuated without requiring internalization of the injunctive norm."[128] The same, it seems can be said for participation in group weddings where individuals accept the norms of the state - via the municipality - but do not necessarily identify with, perpetuate or understand them.

Conclusion

Practically speaking, if the object of the group ceremony was to save time and money, this was accomplished. There was a certain element of thrift with the rental of the wedding dress, the elimination of the banquet and so on. But did people's perceptions about wedding ceremonies change? The state was trying to sell its own ceremonial rite to compete with market alternatives, encourage the values espoused in the New Life Movement and promote legal rights afforded by the Civil Code. The market put the government in a bind: because the new-style wedding *was* a symbol for both urban glamour and for enlightened modern behavior it was not so easily stamped out. In a city that provided a myriad of choices, the group wedding was, in fact, just

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[126] Michele M. Strano, "Ritualized Transmission of Social Norms Through Wedding Photography," *Communication Theory* 16 no. 1 (February 2006): 37.

[127] Ibid.

[128] Ibid, 39.

another choice. And fundamentally, because of its cost, it did not bridge the gap between those who enjoyed to new legal rights and ceremonial rites and those who did not. Such ceremonies merely offered another choice to people who could already participate in some form or another. Furthermore, the essential economic problems that had always plagued Chinese wedding ceremonies were still not addressed where for those who could afford it - and those who could not - by the 1930s, new-style weddings were a consumerist event in their own right.

We should also note that while the group wedding ceremony was an homage to Chiang Kai-shek and Soong Meiling's 1927 wedding in Shanghai: the ceremony was essentially the same and group wedding brides were outfitted in gowns similar to Soong's wedding dress. And yet, there was a marked difference: in 1927 Soong Meiling - the bride - had been front and center. Their grand wedding, coupled with a persistent, bride-centered, new-style wedding culture in Shanghai was a trend which privileged women and could never be fully reversed. The new-style bride - as a selling point and a model of modernity - was here to stay. The best that the Nationalists could do was to endorse a ceremony that made the bride one of many, took away her individuality and ceremonial autonomy. Would they succeed in defining her - and the wedding ceremony - as their own?

Not so fast. A *Liangyou* cover from 1936 - the tail end of the first round of municipal group weddings - featured an exuberant and smiling woman, her dress was fresh and bright, the green of her bouquet offered a feeling of newness and represented possibilities for the future.[129] By the late 1930s wedding dresses were now accepted as white, brides carried flowers and wore veils. Along with this attire came certain behaviors; choice of spouse, a legal ceremony outside of the home, perhaps a wedding cake. The cover bride was on one hand aspirational - certainly many young women would hope for the opportunity to marry in such a manner - and on the other hand she had become more ordinary. A bride could now grace the cover of a pictorial magazine alone as an accepted female figure; the magazine was not necessarily a "wedding" issue either. Such brides were recognized as something special, not for their "newness" or strangeness but for the possibilities they had come to represent: economic means, choice, independence, and modernity. Such possibilities we note, were separate from politics. As group weddings were halted in 1937, this separation was something that the Nationalists had failed to reconcile.

[129] See *Liangyou huabao* 良友画报 June 1936, no. 117.

Chapter 5. The End of the New-Style Wedding

Introduction

Although New Life Movement group weddings were suspended in 1937, other, commercial options popped up for Shanghai residents. Despite Japanese occupation of the city, wedding companies offered the group wedding experience - sans politics - at bargain prices. The Nationalists were not finished politicizing ritual, however: in 1942 the Bureau of Internal Affairs drafted a proposal to make group weddings national practice, beginning in cities. These weddings, first held under the banner "Group Weddings to Commemorate Victory," were linked to a second iteration of the New Life Movement which was reinstated in Shanghai and other cities in 1945, after the war. The fall of the Nationalist state in 1949 sealed the fate of the new-style wedding, which was phased out under Communist rule - but not before its consumerist trappings were put to use by the Communists to enforce marriage reform policies of their own.

PART ONE

The Commercial Group Wedding

Shanghai experienced war with the Japanese from 1937 to 1945. During the years known as the *gudao* period, from 1937 to 1941, all parts of the city save the International Settlement and the French Concession were under Japanese occupation. The Chinese City was ruined; refugees flooded into the safe haven of the foreign concessions and the city experienced a wartime boom. "War or no war, Shanghai concessions remained a nerve center for business, industry, intelligence and intrigue . . . as time passed, people resumed their old habits and everyday life while the rest of the country continued to struggle and suffer."[1] In 1941, the Japanese seized the International settlement, too, and things took a turn for the worst: from 1942 to 1944 food shortages "pushed the population the brink of starvation."[2] At a time when politicos were concerned with life, death and assassination, drugs and intrigue, weddings were not of prominent strategic or political importance. Little attention was paid to wedding regulations in the city until the early 1940s. Yet, weddings held in Native Place Associations continued all along, and commercial group weddings found a steady stream of customers. Both provided a service for people who wanted a wedding ceremony but were perhaps displaced from family members or could not afford to marry in grand fashion. For others, the wedding may have been a chance to escape from the realities of a wartime existence for a day.

The Group Wedding Society (*jituan jiehun fuwushe* 集团结婚务社), an association of group wedding companies, was founded in Shanghai by Xie Pengfei (谢鹏飞) in 1937. The Society began with three businesses and increased to six by 1949.[3] Though Communist records report that there were only six group wedding businesses in the city, it was most likely that only

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[1] Christian Henriot and Wen-hsin Yeh eds., *In the shadow of the rising sun: Shanghai under Japanese occupation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 5-6.

[2] Ibid, 11.

[3] *Jituan jiehun shangye anpai gaozao fang'an* 集团结婚商业安排改造方案. B182-1-880-37, 1955. Shanghai Municipal Archives.

six businesses were included in Xie's Group Wedding Society. Advertisements in Shanghai's newspapers - especially *Shenbao* - show that there were, in fact, many more group wedding companies in business at this time. Ads for group wedding services ran alongside wedding and engagement announcements in a section of the newspaper - much like today's classifieds - that also included advertisements for rentals and services, real estate and stock market information. Ads increase in frequency in the early 1940s, and not surprisingly we find more advertisements after the conclusion of the war in 1945.

Generally an advertisement for a group wedding company included the name of the company in large, stylized, eye-catching print. Sometimes this was followed by a picture of a happy couple in bridal attire.[4] Then came the special features that set each company apart: brand-name wedding dresses, well known photographers, famous witnesses, private car services. After this, companies listed a series of dates for upcoming weddings and the number of each ceremony. The address and phone number of the company ran at the bottom of the advertisement. With these companies, Shanghai residents now had more choice than ever when it came to their wedding. During the first round of group weddings in the early 1930s, there was a limited number of dates to choose from and all weddings were staged by the municipality under the auspices of the New Life Movement. With group weddings held at clubs or Native Place Associations, there was a good chance at least one participant had to be a member. Now, with so much choice, if one wedding date was not suitable brides and grooms could simply choose another. Want a certain style of dress, a specific witness, or photo studio? That was possible too. Prices for group weddings also varied, so savvy customers could shop around before making a final decision. And while certain catch words like "economical," "simple," "legal" were often included in advertisements, politics was never overtly mentioned: New Life ceremonies these were not.

According to a Communist history of the group wedding industry written in the early 1950s:

> At this time [1937] feudal thinking, mercenary marriage and arranged marriage had not been eliminated. The material burden [of marriage] was great and many were afraid of this burden and did not dare marry. Xie Pengfei saw this suffering and through his own efforts set up an event . . . a thrifty group wedding on behalf of others, and it was welcomed.[5]

While we should calibrate our analysis to what might be a Communist slant on the group wedding industry, clearly, by 1937 marriage reform under the Nationalists had not been a smashing success. This is corroborated by the Nationalist's 1942 draft of group wedding procedures (discussed below) which listed many of the same ills decried by the Communists: bigamy, arranged marriage, expense, and so on. Marriage reform under the Nationalist regime was proceeding at a slow crawl, group wedding or no.

Group wedding companies in Shanghai were brought under the municipal fold through a series of regulations set by the city in 1943. Documentation was the order of the day. Companies were required to register, provide the name, address, age, and birthplace of a

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[4] See Figure 22: *Shenbao*, "Zhongguo jituan jiehun fuwushe 中国集团结婚服务社" 398-593 (10) 1948.

[5] *Shanghai shi jituan jiehun fuwu shangye tongye guanyu zuo shijian de baogao, canjia hunli bude fa gei zhengshu yu shuiju jianding de suo de shui xieshang jiyao yiji gonghui dingli de laozi xieye deng wenjian* 上海市集团结婚服务商业同业关于工作时间的报告，参加婚礼不得发给证书与税局签订的所得税协商纪要以及与公会订立的劳资协议书等文件 S340-4-3 1950.09.16-1953.11.06. Shanghai Municipal Archives.

responsible party; where and when the business was established; its facilities and capital; the number of times it planned to hold ceremonies; the number of ceremonies it had already held, and the circumstances in which they were held.[6] All future wedding dates should be submitted to the appropriate city officers. After each wedding, the names, ages, birthplace, profession of the bride and groom, and the names of guardians and introducers must be reported. Services should be "reasonably" priced and businesses were warned not to "concoct various pretexts" (*qiaoli mingmu* 巧立名目) to charge customers more.[7] Companies that did not follow these rules would be disbanded.

A survey of such advertisements give us a better understanding of these companies and the product - the wedding experience - that they were producing. Unlike municipal group weddings of the mid 1930s, these weddings were much more affordable, which explains the proliferation of advertisements in *Shenbao*. The following companies have been chosen because of the frequency with which their advertisements appeared in the paper. Group weddings were being marketed to everyone, and with promises for all. A 1942 advertisement for Xie Pengfei's own China Group Wedding Company (中国集团结婚服务社) welcomed men and women from all walks of life (*gejie shinü* 各界士女) - rather than reserving spots for model citizens alone - and guaranteed that witness would be "notable."[8] "Save time, save money" a 1943 advertisement for the company promised. A flat fee of 200 *yuan* included the venue, wedding attire, a wedding certificate and a photograph; everything the bride and groom needed would be taken care of was prepared (*suoxu yiqi qibei* 所需一切齐备).[9]

Two hundred *yuan* in 1943 bought a lot less than it would have before. According to the 1947 *Shanghai Yearbook*, a laborer's average clothing expenditure in 1943 was 9145.3 *yuan*.[10] We remember that in the 1930s, the cost of a New Life Movement municipal group wedding would have constituted approximately 25% of a laborer's *entire* yearly salary. Here, less than ten years later, a wedding furnished by a group wedding company would cost less than 2% of a laborer's clothing expense. Two to three hundred *yuan* was most likely the highest price companies could afford to propose while still attracting customers and turning a profit. The group wedding had gone from a political novelty to a commodity, where a steady stream of customers could allow businesses to keep costs down.

Companies were always trying to get a competitive edge or offer something special and unique. This was the case for the *Mingxing* Group Wedding Company (明星集团结婚服务社) and the *Guotai* Photography Studio (*Guotai zhaoxiangguan* 国泰照相馆). In 1943, *Mingxing* offered couples a "notable" witnesses, a wedding photograph, a fancy venue, an attendant,

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[6] "Guanli jituan jiehun fuwushe guize cao'an 管理集团结婚服务社规则草案" R1-17-269 1943. Shanghai Municipal Archives.

[7] Ibid.

[8] *Shenbao*, "Zhongguo jituan jiehun fuwushe 中国集团结婚服务社" 379-5 (1) 1942.

[9] *Shenbao*, "Zhongguo jituan jiehun fuwushe 中国集团结婚服务社" 383-765 (9) 1943.

[10] *Shanghai shi nianjian* 上海市年鉴 Y15-1-37, 1947 Shanghai Municipal Archives. For a very informative chart regarding currency depreciation at this time, see Jonathan D. Spence, *The search for modern China* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999), 499.

clothes, and a wedding certificate, all for 300 *yuan*.[11] Attendants were cleverly called "mingxing" attendants (*mingxing binxiang* 明星傧相), perhaps giving readers pause as to whether attendants would be famous - *mingxing* means movie star - or employees of the studio. In 1944 *Guotai* ran an advertisement for wedding photographs, describing how they catered to their customers with two special departments; one renting formal clothing (*lifu chuzu bu* 礼服出租部) and another specializing in wedding photography (*jiehun zhaoxiang bu* 结婚照相部).[12] The clothing department provided new-style wedding attire for men and women. The wedding photo department had professional wedding photographers; those with appointments were given priority service. There were bouquets available for rent and men received a complimentary flower for their lapel. *Guotai*'s affiliation with the *Mingxing* Group Wedding Company was mentioned at the bottom of their advertisement.

It was common for group wedding companies to team up and share business with a specific photo studio. Another example was the *Longfeng* Group Wedding Company (龙凤集团结婚), located on Jing'an Temple Road. A *Longfeng* group wedding included one *Longfeng* company wedding certificate (the company printed their own and sold them, too), one group photograph, and three tickets for friends and family.[13] Photography was handled by the *Chenglong* Photography Studio (成龙照相馆) which specialized in wedding portraits. *Longfeng* and *Chenglong* were housed at the same address but were, in fact, two separate businesses suiting different needs of the Shanghai population. For those who wanted wedding portraits and a custom wedding certificate but were not inclined to participate in a group wedding, a *Chenglong* wedding photo package was a good alternative. In a 1946 - for a flat fee of 10,000 *yuan* - *Chenglong* offered couples wedding costumes for the shoot, a set of wedding portraits, and one *Longfeng* wedding certificate.[14] We note here that the price - 10,000 *yuan* - was due to inflation, where the same 1947 *Shanghai Yearbook* recorded that in January 1946, an average for laborer's clothing expenditure was 332,215 *yuan.*[15] While these changes in currency value are enough to make one's head spin we find that percentage-wise, the cost of wedding related services - here 3% - was, in fact, relatively stable.

The *Dalai* Group Wedding Company (大来集团结婚服务社) was also a frequent advertiser on the pages of *Shenbao.* A1946 photograph of a *Dalai* group wedding ceremony from the Shanghai Municipal Archives gives us a good sense of what a commemorative group wedding photo was like.[16] The name of the group wedding company was printed at the top of the photo: the one hundred and twenty-first group wedding, dated October 17, 1946. The photograph was taken outdoors, with the hall in the background, trees and a bit of cityscape

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[11] *Shenbao*, "Mingxing jituan jiehun fuwushe 明星集团结婚服务社" 383-781 (2) 1943.

[12] *Shenbao*, "Guotai zhaoxiang guan 国泰照相馆," 385-491 (2) 1944.

[13] *Shenbao*, "Longfeng jituan jiehun fuwushe 龙凤集团结婚服务社" 398-459 (10) 1948.

[14] *Shenbao*, "Chenglong zhaoxiang guan 成龙照相馆," 390-7 (10) 1946.

[15] *Shanghai shi nianjian* 上海市年鉴 Y15-1-37, 1947 Shanghai Municipal Archives.

[16] See Figure 23: *Dalai jituan jiehun fuwu she di yieryi jie jituan jiehun dianli jinian* 大来集团结婚服务社第一二一届集团结婚典礼纪念, 1946 Shanghai Municipal Archives.

peeking in; this was a real urban experience! The couples were pictured in front of the venue in three rows, brides on the left and grooms on the right. In the center of the photograph are two men - most likely the famous witnesses. Most brides in the front row have their hands folded in their laps, grooms hold what look like wedding certificates. Grooms wore Western suits - tuxedos - with bow ties, and many had flowers pinned to their lapels. Brides wore long white wedding dresses, white gloves, and though there is some variation in their veils, most don a large, heart-shaped headdress - most likely the latest fashion. Seventy-six couples participated, and though the photograph is taken from some distance, individual faces can still be made out. Assuming this was a representative number, commercial group weddings maintained a good deal of popularity throughout the 1940s. From my own assessment, there were at least fifteen group wedding companies operating in the city during this time: a considerable number of people were getting married in group wedding company ceremonies.

Aside from commercial group ceremonies, there were two other types of group weddings occurring in Shanghai at this time: small-scale, districtwide group weddings (*jiguan* 机关), and club sponsored group weddings (*tuanti* 团体).[17] Both were required to follow the same registration procedures as the companies were. Native Place Associations, discussed in chapter three, could be categorized under "clubs." As we have seen, these associations wanted to maintain a friendly relationship with the municipality and records show that they took municipal guidelines seriously.[18] Essentially, group weddings at Native Place Associations continued on as they had before the war. Not surprisingly, guidelines for Native Place Association group weddings varied from association to association. At the Pudong Native Place Association (*Pudong tongxianghui* 浦东同乡会), for example, participants did not have to be members of the Association to marry in a group wedding there; we remember for the Huzhou Native Place Association either the bride or groom must be members. Many associations published the names of participants in the paper, though this may not have been related to publicity as much as the requirement that weddings remained "open." Publication of the ceremony fulfilled this.

The boundaries between "club" and "commercial" group weddings were not cut and dried. For example, the Ningbo Native Place Association held commercial group weddings through the Ningbo Group Wedding Company (宁社集团结婚服务社).[19] These for-profit ceremonies began in the early 1940s; in 1943 ceremonies numbered four through six were advertised in *Shenbao*.[20] The Ningbo Company's advertisement boasted "service first" and promised a solemn ceremony. A fee of 150 *yuan* included wedding attire, flowers, gloves, a wedding certificate printed by *Longfeng*, and one twelve *cun* photo from *Wangkai* photography.[21]

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[17] *Shanghai shi di sanshier qu jituan jiehun jianze*上海市第三十二区集团结婚简则 Q6-10-428 1947, Shanghai Municipal Archives.

[18] See for example: Hushe tongxiang jituan jiehun zheng 湖社同乡集团结婚证 Q165-3-27 1935.09-1936.04 Shanghai Municipal Archives.

[19] *Shanghai shi jituan jiehun fuwu shangye tongye gonghui chouweihui ji huiyuan dahui huiyi jilu*上海市集团结婚服务商业同业公会筹委会及会员大会会议纪录 S340-4-2 1950.09.04 - 1955.07.31 Shanghai Municipal Archives.

[20] *Shenbao*, "Ningbo jituan jiehun fuwushe 宁社集团结婚服务社" 383-633 (1) 1943.

[21] Ibid.

Wangkai (王开照相馆), who we may remember from their activities in the 1930s, had demonstrated staying power by specializing in wedding photography. This was illustrated by an advertisement which ran in *Shenbao* in 1941.[22] In the foreground of the image is a new-style bride in a formfitting white wedding dress, with a bouquet and veil. Her groom stands beside her, in black. Behind them is a crowd of well-wishers, women in lively qipaos, men in Western-style suits all smiling and waving. Signs on the wall read "live in perfect union for 100 years" and "happy marriage." It is a drawing in motion. Next to the bride and groom was the company's logo: "a happy marriage needs happy photographs." Below, the text read: "Even life's most memorable moments cannot match a great wedding ceremony. Therefore, with new-style people, every time the wedding is complete, it must be commemorated with photographs."[23] A new-style wedding was modern, worthy of commemoration, and a happy occasion celebrated with friends; we note the couple's parents are indistinguishable from the crowd at large. It is the couple - as a twosome - that were stepping off together towards their new life, or at least to sit for their wedding photographs. For a successful business like *Wangkai*, or an established Native Place Association like Ningbo, this type of pairing was advantageous for all. For studios, deals with group wedding companies meant guaranteed business. Group wedding companies could benefit from the name recognition of the studios provided. Native Place Associations could turn a small profit through dues or other commercial fees. All gained exposure.

Aside from the Native Place Association, there were other types of clubs that held group weddings, though like the associations they were tied to the municipality in some way. The best example of this other "club" was the *Qingnianguan* (青年馆). According to their records, the *Qingnianguan* advocated group weddings as a way to "excise old customs and provide a new atmosphere."[24] Their weddings would be limited to twenty couples, dates and locations of would be posted in the paper. "Virtuous or prestigious" - or perhaps just well-know and famous - witnesses would preside; there would also be lofty (*gaoshang* 高尚) music and couples would receive commemorative photographs.[25] Clothing was provided by the club, and while cost was to be determined, it would include the venue, music, dress, veil, bouquet, gloves, a wedding certificate, attendants, and makeup for the brides. Participants must be of age and engaged at the time of registration. It is unclear whether brides and grooms were required to be *Qingnianguan* members to participate in group ceremonies.

Even clubs could not avoid the commercialization of the group wedding - as evidenced by the Ningbo Native Place Association's own group wedding company. These companies, whose weddings were now more affordable to the everyday person, provided more than just a ceremony. They were packaging the wedding and the goods that surrounded it - photographs, a

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[22] See Figure 24: *Shenbao*, "Wangkai zhaoxiang guan 王开照相馆" 374-136 (8) 1941. See also: *Shenbao*, "Wangkai zhaoxiang guan 王开照相馆" 394-148 (2) 1947; *Shenbao*, "Wangkai zhaoxiang guan 王开照相馆" 394-804 (10) 1947; *Shenbao*, "Wangkai zhaoxiang guan 王开照相馆" 383-632 (9) 1943. None of the advertisements include prices.

[23] Ibid.

[24] *Shanghai shi zhengfu qingnianguan juan, zhuban qingnian jituan jiehun jianzhang*上海市政府青年馆卷, 主办青年集团结婚简章 Q1-12-1519 1947.6 Shanghai Municipal Archives.

[25] Ibid.

dress, and so on - as a product, wartime or not. Commercialization continued to link popular urban practices to a larger fabric of wedding ritual and consumerism, even in an occupied city. Where did the Nationalists fit in now?

PART TWO

Municipal Group Weddings, Take Two

Outside of the occupied city, in 1942, the Nationalist's Bureau of Internal Affairs (*Neizheng bu* 内政部) drafted plans to implement group weddings on a national scale. While such weddings had been held in Shanghai and other cities, including Nanjing, Hangzhou, Jiujiang and Hankou before 1937, this document represented a new effort to standardize practices and procedures and stage group ceremonies throughout the country. As before, group weddings were lauded as a foundation for social reform and legal change. Not only did they save time and money the Bureau noted, they could also prevent illegal marriage practices like early marriage (*zaohun* 早婚), marriage by trickery (*pianhun* 骗婚), and bigamy (*chonghun* 重婚).[26] Despite the 1931 Civil Code, these practices were an ongoing problem, particularly in rural areas. For changes to occur, the Bureau continued, group wedding practices "must be published in standardized form (*ding ban* 订颁) so that they can be sponsored by local government offices without resulting in irregularities, or bringing disgrace."[27] Though the goal was standardization on a national scale, the Bureau of Internal Affairs recognized the need for flexibility at the local level and acknowledged that certain policies may vary from place to place. The hope was to create a bureaucratic structure around accepted and established ceremonies, which would support the goals and ideology of the (albeit shaky) Nationalist state on a national level.

The local public affairs office (*gongsuo* 公所) would be responsible for group wedding registration. The number and dates of ceremonies was left to the discretion of officials, based on the local environment and customs. Two months before the wedding date, ceremonies would be announced publicly. Those participating should register at the appropriate office; registration procedures and forms were also decided by the local government. At the time of registration, both the young man and young woman should be accompanied by their parents or guardians; their registration forms also had to be signed or stamped by the guardian and the introducer; here we note that parental roles had not been eliminated, but rather, redefined. Parents still needed to approve of a child's marriage, but ultimately it was the state who had the final say, and if children could not obtain parental approval for some reason they had legal recourse. Participants needed to submit a health exam signed by a doctor. The form of the ceremony itself differed little, if at all, from municipal group ceremonies of the past. As before, clothing followed set regulations. Family and friends needed tickets to attend the ceremony, which were provided by the public affairs office. Local offices would report wedding registrations to the Bureau of Internal Affairs at the end of each year.

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[26] *Jituan jiehun banfa* 集团结婚办法 (128-1418) 1942 Academica Historica, Taiwan.

[27] Ibid.

These procedures, along with an example health examination form and wedding certificate, were sent to provincial governments who reviewed them and provided suggestions and input. Representatives from Chongqing, Hunan, Shaanxi, Guangdong, Guizhou, Anwei, Jiangxi, Gansu, Qinghai, Henan, Xikang, Sichuan and Ningbo agreed to implement the regulations without any changes. Heilongjiang, on the other hand, reported they could not hold group weddings until the province had recovered the territory it had lost. The Hubei provincial government had suggestions about venues, writing that the ceremonies should be held at the provincial capital, and in prefectures, and that government officials should join the latter to make them more popular and more visible.[28] The Henan provincial government had "serious concerns," related to rule number seven, allowing people to make formal objections about a pending union, which must be investigated before a couple could marry. The problem, they wrote, was that "objections are often unreasonable and obstructionist but occur so close to the wedding date they cannot be considered and resolved before the wedding."[29] In short, unreasonable objections were a way for a spurned lover to throw a wrench in the works! Henan authorities suggested moving the deadline for such complaints so that they did not interfere with wedding plans. Later, this was changed by the Bureau where objections would no longer be heard ten days before the wedding.[30] Different provinces also submitted their own group wedding procedures, too. Clearly, regional variation was acceptable and accepted, and a good degree of discretion was given to local institutions holding such weddings.

The push to institute group wedding ceremonies on a national scale was part of the New Life Movement's second life which began in Shanghai in 1945. This time around, the goal was to "transform the atmosphere" (*zhuanyi fengqi* 转移风气) through New Life policies, which again laid claim to Sun Yat-sen's legacy, while extolling propriety, righteousness, frugality and modesty (*li*, *yi*, *lian*, *chi*) as virtues essential to China's resurgence.[31] Similarities aside, the second iteration of New Life was more intrusive and heavy-handed than the first. It emphasized cleanliness, with inspections planned every two weeks. Uniform clothing was proposed, as were monthly discussions about spirit and work ethic. Punctuality and efficiency were cornerstones. Self-cultivation would be achieved through reading, during free time. Another tenant was order, which would be displayed through traffic control and the prohibition of peddlers. Thrift was crucial, too. Municipal documents noted that there were (unnamed) complaints about "extravagant postwar lifestyle" amongst Shanghai residents; this would be remedied through plans to ban speculation, gambling and narcotics, to demarcate prostitution halls, and limit the scope of theaters, dance halls, tea houses and restaurants and clubs. Recently, the proposal continued, "the city has 'pandered to the Allied forces and now it needs restriction."[32] Dining halls and dormitories would be set up to advocate a thrifty and simple lifestyle. These plans

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[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

[31] *Shanghai shi zhengfu chao zhuan shehui ju shixing xinshenghuo yundong jihua cao'an*上海市政府抄转社会局实行新生活运动计划草案 Q215-1-165 1945.12-1947.02 Shanghai Municipal Archives.

[32] Ibid.

would be promoted through various municipal bureaus and with advertisements, movies and broadcasts. Speeches that extolled the New Life Movement would be given at weddings and funerals. Now, more than even ideology, the emphasis was social control.

On October 10th 1946, these group weddings began. They were held in Nanjing, Changsha, Shenyang, Beiping, Tianjin, and Wuhan as part of the New Life Movement; indeed "after victory in the War of Resistance, most big cities had group ceremonies."[33] These ceremonies continued until 1948. By the mid 1940s, the group wedding was firmly established in the collective consciousness of Shanghai's residents. A Shanghai magazine published the following joke in 1946:

> A pedantic old teacher asked his students during Chinese literature class: "If your friends got married, and you went to congratulate them, should you call it 'joining the wedding' (*canjia hunli* 参加婚礼) or 'visiting the wedding' (*canguan hunli* 参观婚礼)? Without thinking, they all said 'joining the wedding!' The teacher replied: 'Incorrect! Joining the wedding? Doesn't this mean you will be going to join the marriage? Doesn't that change it into a group wedding?' The students all burst out laughing."[34]

The joke illustrates how new ritual behavior was influencing people's language, vocabulary, and social interactions: an older teacher joshed younger students about changing cultural practices and colloquialisms. It is unclear if the group wedding itself was seen as a joke, but it was ubiquitous enough for people of different ages to joke about. This exchange also served as a warning to younger students in some way: watch what you say and do, otherwise you could end up participating in a group wedding ceremony whether you wanted to or not!

The municipal bulletin *Shehui yuekan* (社会月刊) provides background and details about this second wave of municipally sponsored group weddings; this same bulletin had discussed group weddings in Shanghai some ten years earlier. We remember that before, the municipal government hoped to reform Shanghai through the introduction of new customs that would streamline traditional weddings, saving time and money. New Life Movement ideology was not central in these early documents; in fact the group wedding ceremony initially proposed by the Bureau of Social Affairs was devoid of government symbols and political rhetoric; these were added later. Now, according to the bulletin, the "new spirit" that came from group weddings would be a powerful force for the New Life Movement.[35] This "spirit" was based on the recognition of one's place within a larger group: through participation in the group ceremony each couple could "recognize the meaning of the group, appreciate the group's importance, and realize the group's worth."[36] As before, the plan - which was an implicit indictement of the Chinese people as slovenly, wasteful, and selfish - meant reform by example: the sloppy became disciplined, pride and extravagance become economy, mutual help and love evolved from selfishness.[37] The ceremony would be solemn, respectful and grand, but pragmatic. Readers

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[33] Shao Xianchong 邵先崇, *Jindai zhongguo de xinshi hunsang* 近代中国的新式婚丧 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chuban she, 2006), 85.

[34] "Canjia hunli 参加婚礼" *Dadu hui* 大都会 (June 1946): 11.

[35] "Ruhe banli jituan jiehun 如何办理集团结婚" *Shehui yuekan* 社会月刊 no. 5 (1946): 44-50.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

were encouraged to compare this to any other ceremony; the group wedding would "certainly emerge as the most practical."[38]

Before, the New Life Movement aimed to produce militarized citizens for Chiang's revolution, now New Life's spartan values were needed in the aftermath of war and the continued struggle against Communist forces. The report continued: "The war ended in victory . . . now it is time for state building (*jianguo* 建国). Material resources are depleted, people are suffering . . . on one hand we need to see to state building and on the other hand, we need to change the social atmosphere . . . therefore we want to restore the group wedding."[39] The group wedding could serve both ideological and material ends in a postwar, urban environment. The efficacy of such ceremonies was in keeping with another municipal report which found that prior to the war "holding group weddings resulted in each county, for a time, imitating the virtues of thrift and economy; this atmosphere spread. Now that we are victorious, this New Life program needs to be advocated again."[40]

It is not surprising, then, that these postwar group weddings were named "Group Weddings to Commemorate Victory" (*shengli jinian jituan jiehun* 胜利纪念集团结婚). In Shanghai, forty-two couples participated in the first ceremony, held on December 25, 1945, which had been named "National Revival Day" (*minzu fuxing jie* 民族复兴节).[41] Group weddings were now more meaningful - and rhetoric laden - than ever! They marked wartime victory, national revival, and advertised the ideas of the New Life Movement as essential to national reform. By linking the weddings to victory, the Nationalists could claim wartime success. This success would carry over to the home front with group ceremonies.

Details in the *Shehui yuekan* show how Shanghai would implement national plans on the municipal stage. To participate in group ceremonies, individuals needed to be of age, in good health, already engaged, and from the city.[42] This last requirement is interesting: we know that many Shanghai residents were not Shanghai natives. Perhaps this rule was established to encourage sojourners to marry in their own hometowns, which would theoretically spread group wedding practices over a larger area. Ceremonies were capped at 100 couples and one wedding would be held per season with the mayor acting as witness. To join, couples needed to submit two copies of their registration forms, signed by their guardians, their introducers, and themselves.[43] The forms were checked and approved by the appropriate municipal office. The day before the wedding, everyone joined a rehearsal run through; on the day of the ceremony, brides and grooms were to arrive one hour beforehand. Those who did not make it - for

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[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid.

[40] *Shanghai shi shehui ju guanyu jituan jiehun shixiang* 上海市社会局关于集团结婚事项 Q6-10-429 1946-7 Shanghai Municipal Archives.

[41] Shao, 81. In Shanghai, with exception of the first ceremony, (held at the Pudong Building *Pudong dasha* 浦东大厦), all ceremonies were held at the New Life Club (*xinshenghuo yundong julebu* 新生活运动俱乐部) on Weihai Road.

[42] "Ruhe banli jituan jiehun 如何办理集团结婚," 44-50.

[43] Ibid.

whatever reason - would receive no refund. The cost of the ceremony was not mentioned in the *Shehui yuekan*, but participation included wedding attire, flowers, and a photograph. Individuals were also given a certificate of participation and tickets for their guests.

The *Shehui yuekan* report also provided a detailed description of the venue, which was clearly designed for a show. Ideally, the hall would face south. As before, party and national flags were displayed along with Sun's portrait; unlike the past ceremonies, however, this arrangement also included a large red neon sign that read "double happiness" (*xixi* 喜喜).[44] Below this display, seats for the witnesses and other distinguished guests were arranged on a grey carpet. The guests would sit behind a table that was flanked with vases of fresh flowers. Wedding certificates, organized by number, were placed on the table. A red carpet was laid down the central aisle of the hall, and to the left and right of the aisle were seats for journalists and musicians, guests and family; there was also a designated area to broadcast the ceremony.[45] The broadcast area and the seats reserved for journalists were part of a coordinated media effort to publicize the weddings. Documents relating to the fourth municipal group wedding in 1948, for example, included a comprehensive contact list - publisher, editor, address and phone number - for thirty-seven different newspapers.[46]

Unlike previous municipal group weddings, this ceremony was not held in a civic space - like city hall - but in a private (though not necessarily apolitical) club, though this could be because "civic" spaces like city hall were not available at this time. Wedding attire remained the same, as did decor, with the exception of the red neon sign which combined technology, flashiness, Chinese characters, and the traditional color red under the banner of wartime victory and in the name of thrift. The ceremony was planned as follows:

> 1. Ceremony starts, music, brides and grooms divide and line up in the prep room 2. Guests enter, honored guests take the stage, family and guests are seated 3. Witnesses enter and sit 4. Brides and grooms enter, little children with baskets and lanterns lead them in two lines to their numbers and the music stops. 5. Everyone stands as a mark of respect 6. The national anthem is sung 7. All bow three times to party and state flags and Sun's picture 8. The witness reads certificate, someone else reads the names, ages, provenance of couples, which are all in one book 9. Brides and grooms face front and bowing three times 10. Wedding certificate are given in groups to save time, music plays 11. Words from the witnesses and the ceremony is over. Couples all receive copies of Chiang's book *China's Fate* (*Zhongguo zhi mingyun* 中之命运) to show them their responsibilities to China after their marriage 12. Guests make speeches, limited 5 minutes each, due to time 13. Couples bow to the witnesses 14. Music plays 15. Couples proceed by number to the photo room 16. The ceremony concludes.[47]

The ceremony differed little from its 1930s counterpart, save the child attendants with lanterns and baskets leading couples to their places in the hall. This ceremony, we may also remember, was similar to popular practice, which had been adapted from traditional practices. Except, of course, for the presentation of Chiang's book to each couple.

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[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid.

[46] *Shanghai shehui ju di si jituan jiehun gonggao xinwen gao* 上海社会局第四届集团结婚公告新闻稿 Q6-10-423 1948.10. Shanghai Municipal Archives. Taking place in 1948, this wedding occurred under a different bureau but was still a municipal ceremony.

[47] "Ruhe banli jituan jiehun 如何办理集团结婚," 44-50.

With *China's Fate,* it was clear that the wedding day was not about the couple, but about the country and the couple's contribution to a greater cause: state building, strengthening, and restoring national pride. The book was Chiang's assessment of China's recent history. It began with a general discussion of China's culture and territory. Chapter two, entitled "The origins of national humiliation and revolution" covered the fall of the Qing dynast to the 1911 revolution.[48] Chapter three discussed the legal, social, economic, theoretical and psychological influences of unequal treaties drawn up during the Qing dynasty. Chapter four discussed the time from the Northern Expedition to the War of Resistance against Japan. Chapter five discussed new, equal treaties and the "core work" of state building. Chapters six and seven addressed state building in greater depth, and chapter eight entitled "China's fate and the world's future" concluded the work, with Chiang exhorting readers to "follow the route of the people's revolution, rely on the tenants of the War of Resistance and state building, and continue the hard work of bitter struggle."[49] Congratulations on a happy union it was not. If anything, the presentation of *China's Fate* to the bride and groom emphasized the couple's debt to society.

Similar sentiments were found on the marriage certificate itself, which according to *Shehui yuekan* stated that the couples "have joined (number) group ceremony where, as husband and wife, from this time on they will act as sincere and good new people (*xinmin* 新民), of a new era."[50] These certificates were quite different from previous municipal wedding certificates which, as we remember, were lauded for their exquisite design, and featured - among other things - a golden border, a red heart, and an illustration of birds and fish traditionally believed to be extremely loyal to their partners (*jiandie qingshen* 鶼鰈情深).[51] Here, we see a shift away from romance, and towards service.

The second postwar municipal group wedding was held during Spring Festival on March 3, 1946, at the New Life Club, with forty-five couples participating. The New Life Club, it should be noted, was used for other purposes as well. For example, in 1946 the club hosted an event for "Shanghai's newspaper, movie and photo journalists to ally and promote knowledge."[52] The thirty-four people in attendance selected a board of directors and members of an advisory board and passed a resolution to stage a photojournalism exhibition by year's end.[53] Newfound alliances and knowledge aside, given the name of the club, it is hard to imagine that the photographers were unbiased members of the press. Likely, the club provided a venue for those sympathetic with the Nationalist cause.

Opening remarks at this second municipal ceremony echoed political sentiments in the *Shehui yuekan*; both linked group weddings to social betterment and a certain "spirit." Here, the

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[48] Jiang Zhongzheng 蒋中正, *Zhongguo zhi mingyun* 中国之命运 (Chongqing: Zhongzheng shuju, 1943).

[49] Ibid, 219.

[50] "Ruhe banli jituan jiehun 如何办理集团结婚," 44-50.

[51] "Xin shenghuo jituan jiehun niyi de qianhou 新生活集团结婚拟议的前后" *Shehui yuekan* 社会月刊 1 no. 8 (1934): 2.

[52] *Shanghai shi nianjian* 上海市年鉴 Y15-1-36 1948.12 Shanghai Municipal Archives.

[53] Ibid.

future of such weddings seemed bright. "This wedding has forty-five couples, up three from the previous group wedding. From this, we can see that city residents already understand the significance of group weddings. Requests to join will slowly increase. The group wedding . . . already has over ten years of history. If not for the war, the number of such events would certainly have been even more impressive."[54] While an increase of three couples hardly seems noteworthy, remarks on the history of group weddings are. Nationalist policies, including New Life, were placed in a context where group weddings were seen as part of the state's history and new-style weddings were recognized as common Chinese practice.

This practice included a move towards new behaviors and away from tradition, for the betterment of all. "From an economic perspective, group weddings can save money and do away with extravagant and wasteful vices of the past. From a social perspective, they will be a powerful force to enlighten New Life spirit, which can teach each couples to welcome a group perspective, and appreciate the value and importance of a group consciousness."[55] As before, the potential for ceremonies to change individuals was lauded: "one's life can go from careless and sloppy to regulated (*jilü* 记律), extravagance becomes thrift, from selfishness comes a desire to help others."[56] These opening remarks end with congratulations to the new couples, wishes for harmony and happiness, and the hope that they would "make a new life, beginning with marriage."[57] This sentiment harkens back to Chiang Kai-shek's remarks on the eve of his wedding in 1927, where marriage was presented as a foundation for revolution. Now, the trajectory and history of that revolution had been written by Chiang and were handed to each new bride and groom.

Remarks from political figure Yuan Xiluo (袁希洛) came next. Yuan had been at the first Group Wedding to Commemorate Victory, and "felt that it had a lot of meaning."[58] In his remarks, Yuan declared the group wedding was "our country's invention." He continued, claiming marriage itself to be a product of China's unique history, citing Chinese cosmology and the principles of *yin* and *yang*, which he believed showed "the origins of man and wife."[59] Yuan concluded with a metaphor that underscored fecundity and reproduction: brides and grooms in group weddings were like trees with blooming flowers and abundant fruits, both of which would only engender more.

After Mr. Yuan, the Mayor began his remarks, noting the happy atmosphere in the hall which was, of course, a contrast to the unhappiness wrought by a traditional wedding, and the difficulties of war. He continued by explaining how group weddings and the principles of the New Life Movement benefited many people:

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[54] *Shanghai shehui ju di er jie jituan jiehun* 上海社会局第二届集团结婚 Q6-10-417 1946.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid.

> Some people misunderstand this system, believing it is excessively simple. They hardly realize that the most important condition for the wedding ceremony is that it is solemn and respectful, not elaborate and wasteful. The elaborate and wasteful are not necessarily solemn and respectful . . . On one hand, the group wedding system is simple and economical, on the other hand it is also solemn and respectful. Especially because the war has just concluded, and state building has just started. There is a lack of material goods and people face real hardships. We need to eliminate unnecessary expenses to contribute to the state building effort and to improve the social atmosphere. Those who have joined this wedding are worthy of praise and respect.[60]

Participants were praised for their selflessness, their contribution to national growth, their sacrifice for the greater good, and their ability to recognize that a flashy, showy ceremony was not necessarily in good taste. The Mayor concluded his remarks by congratulating the couples and wishing them happiness.

A 1947 account of activities to commemorate the thirteenth anniversary of the New Life Movement gives us a better picture of the role of group weddings within the larger New Life vision. The commemoration schedule was packed, and included activities like a native goods and rural products exhibition, the kickoff of the cleanliness movement, a group wedding, a speech about moral education and a broadcast.[61] Another day featured a speech contest on the topic: "my aspirations." A few days later there were cleanliness inspections in the Nandong district, a basketball game, an event for husbands and wives (*xielao hui* 偕老会) and so on.[62] Group weddings were included here under the umbrella of didactic activities, as a performance of sorts. Taking this schedule as a model for urban life, we see group weddings integrated into a larger municipal "new life" vision of a carefully regimented existence with little privacy, where even one's own home was due for inspection, and ideology and performance were one in the same.

It bears mention this movement was accompanied by other attempts to regulate ceremonies and track residents in the municipality. For example, a new holiday to respect one's elders (*jinglao jie* 敬老节) was proposed as a way to "improve customs" for the elderly and honor their contributions to society.[63] Furthermore, as one contributor wrote, seeing how there was already a "children's day" (*ertong jie* 儿童节), there should be a day to honor the one's elders, raise their spirits and enhance their "comfort and happiness."[64] Newspapers would publish a special issue about the holiday, too.

Sentimentality aside, as with group wedding registration, it seems that this new holiday was a mechanism to keep tabs on the population in the city; all who participated in these festivities were required to register beforehand. Celebrations would be held every February and July at the local district office and registration reports would be submitted to the Bureau of Civil Affairs and the Bureau of Social Affairs. As for the ceremony itself, it would include music,

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[60] Ibid.

[61] *Shanghai shi zhengfu chao zhuan shehui ju shixing xinshenghuo yundong jihua cao'an*上海市政府抄转社会局实行新生活运动计划草案 Q215-1-165 1945.12-1947.02 Shanghai Municipal Archives.

[62] Ibid.

[63] *Shanghai shi jinglao zun? banfa* 上海市敬老尊?办法 Q1-12-1512 1948 Shanghai Municipal Archives. There is some discrepancy in the documents as to what age the honors would begin.

[64] Ibid.

bowing, a red carpet, state and party flags, speeches, and a banquet. The set up of the hall was not unlike that of the group wedding ceremony. There were new regulations for funerals, too, which addressed the types of flags that could be carried during processions, where certain "feudal" colors or "superstitious" flags were prohibited.[65] Musicians' clothing must also be approved, presumably by the district office. We do not know for certain if these New Life commemorative activities occurred, and if they did occur how they were received. The same is true for elder's day and funeral regulations. We can, however, consider all three as part of a more aggressive movement to track the municipal population and regulate ceremonies, rooted in resurgent New Life ideology.

As for the municipal group weddings that did occur, the *Shehui yuekan* bulletin reported that despite the facilities being "perfect" and the weddings being staged "earnestly" there were some problems with the execution of early ceremonies. The author of the bulletin had first hand experience, having attended the first group wedding because his friend was a participant. The ceremony started late because the host had not arrived at the venue. Furthermore, the "so called" famous musicians were more bargain basement than top drawer.[66] The result was disastrous: the ceremony was "almost funny" and "not solemn or serious" at all.[67] Apparently after this, events were better supervised and organized so that would be more economical, timely, and solemn. Missteps in the first ceremony did not deter people from participating, however, and *Shehui yuekan* felt comfortable declaring: "As for the future prospects for such ceremonies: they are becoming increasingly popular . . ."[68]

According to the bulletin, some municipal reshuffling occurred in 1946 where group weddings, originally under the jurisdiction of the city government, were now under the supervision of the Bureau of Civil Affairs.[69] Because of this, what would have been Shanghai's sixth postwar group wedding was now classified as its first Bureau of Civil Affairs group wedding. To make matters even more confusing, this wedding was held with the *Qingnianguan*, the aforementioned city club which also staged its own group weddings at this time. With these changes the commemorative, victory-themed group weddings were also phased out.

Records from the first Bureau of Civil Affairs group wedding held - after some delay - on January 1, 1948, provide a comprehensive picture of who participated in such events. Application forms required a participant's name, age, birthplace, address, profession, education, date of engagement and previous marriages (if applicable). They also required the names, professions and address of one's parents; the name, sex, relationship and profession of both the guardians and the introducers, and photographs of the participants. We note here both the extensive amount of information collected from participants, and the limited but essential role of

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[65] *Hunsang yishi banfa jituan jiehun xingli yishi zhuidao hui yishi* 婚丧仪式办法集团结婚行礼仪式追悼会仪式 Q1-12-1656 1948 Shanghai Municipal Archives.

[66] "Ruhe banli jituan jiehun 如何办理集团结婚," 44-50.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Ibid. See also: Shao, 84.

one's parents where their approval of the match and their signature were still needed, even if the wedding was a new-style, municipal group ceremony.

Unlike the model citizens lauded in group weddings of the 1930s - we remember one groom was a movie star - postwar brides and grooms are notable because of the hardships they endured and the fact that they were not shiny beacons of civic virtue. Couple number one, for example, was clearly the product of an arranged marriage. On their form, the bride and groom wrote that they were engaged in 1933 as children (*zi you dinghun* 自幼订婚); she was three and he was eleven.[70] The bride was uneducated; the groom had an elementary education and worked as a hired laborer (*gugong* 雇工). Couple number four also had a hardscrabble background. While the groom was a teacher who had graduated from middle school, the bride's education had stopped after elementary school. In the "family circumstances" (*jiating qingkuang* 家庭情况) portion of the application, both had written "poor" (*pin* 贫). The groom also noted that his family's income and expenses were equal (*shou zhi xiangdeng* 收支相等), meaning there was nothing left over for savings. Couple six married very young, with him age twenty and her only sixteen. As for couple number seven, the groom's parents were back home in Anwei and he was "responsible for himself," and working at the Shanghai library. The groom's uncle acted as his guardian in his parents' absence. Couple number ten also felt the strains of geography and distance between parents and children, with both sets of parents living in Nanyang. The groom was employed as a policeman and his superior at the police department sent over a letter as guardian, vouching for the young man in his parents' absence. As for the bride, a letter was provided by an acquaintance at a trading company. Couples eleven, twelve, and thirteen had all lost both sets of parents. Loss continued: for couple fifteen, both fathers were deceased; with couple sixteen, the bride's father was also dead. Couple number seventeen was a small bright spot in the bunch; both bride and groom reported their families were in good standing (*xiaokang* 小康), his a family composed of four members and hers a brood of seven. This good fortune, however, seemed to be in the minority. Couple nineteen, for example, both wrote that as far as their families circumstances were concerned, they were struggling to maintain their current standing (*mianqiang weichi* 勉强维持). Couple number twenty-one fared little better, where the groom-to-be reported that he was responsible for four others (*fudan siren shenghuo* 复旦四人生活) while his bride was a peasant.

Many registration forms included letters from guardians; either parents who could not come to the office at the time of registration, or other individuals - relatives or bosses - vouching for the bride or groom. One such letter included a description of how the bride, originally from the countryside, had an old-style engagement ceremony before the war. Now, still unmarried, she was joining the new-style group wedding for economic reasons. The letter served as proof of these circumstances and a permission from the guardians who could not make it down to the registration office before the wedding.[71]

The lot of those who married in the second Bureau of Civil Affairs group wedding on May 12, 1948, was even worse. The ceremony was very small, with only eight couples

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[70] *Shanghai shi minzheng ju si ke di yi jie jituan jiehun canjia ren dengji biao* 上海市民政局四科第一届集团结婚参加人登记表 Q119-5-67 1947.12. Shanghai Municipal Archives.

[71] Ibid.

participating. In what seemed now to be common practice, the guardian for the first couple was unable to personally attend the registration. Instead, he sent a letter explaining that he was "entangled in family matters" in Wujiang, Jiangsu and expressing his agreement with the match.[72] Economic circumstances for this couple were bleak; the groom noted that his five member family faced economic hardship (*jingji qingku* 经济清苦) as did the bride, who simply wrote "same as above" (*tongshang* 同上) in the space to describe family background. Couple number two declared themselves "poor but honest" (*qingpin* 清贫) and couple three both wrote that they were "poor but honest, and self sufficient" (*qingpin zili* 清贫自立). For couple two and couple three, both sets of parents were dead. Couple four was slightly better off, describing themselves as "comfortable" (*sidi* 四地). A commemorative photograph of the group was taken, and an announcement was placed in several local papers.

Other variations of group weddings also fell under the municipal umbrella (generally referred to as *jiguan* 机关); there were district wide group weddings, too. For example, in 1947 and 1948 group weddings were held in Shanghai's thirty-first district. The first was on January 1, 1947, at the district office; music was provided by the district fire brigade.[73] Wedding attire, a wedding certificate, a group photo, the venue, attendants and a bouquet were included. To participate in the district ceremony, brides and grooms must be residents of that district. Procedures for both registration and the ceremony varied from the aforementioned municipal weddings: apparently variety was possible amongst municipal group weddings held in the same city. The rhetoric, however, a familiar and emphatic condemnation of old ways: "Old style weddings are not suitable for modern times. They are not economical and waste time."[74] The simple, solemn ceremony was seen as a "legal way to scrape away social evils and save pointless waste among the people."[75]

Rhetoric aside, there were differences between those who had participated in municipal group weddings in the 1930s and those who participated now. War, poverty, and displacement had changed the shape of the family, and the relationship of a family to a wedding had changed, too. While brides and grooms still needed an adult to vouch for their union, many more people had letters from guardians who could not attend registration - and presumably the wedding ceremony itself. Oftentimes that guardian was not even a parent; we have seen that for participants in late 1940s Bureau of Civil Affairs ceremonies, many of their parents - particularly their fathers - were deceased. Furthermore, beyond just being poor, the majority of municipal group wedding participants were either responsible for themselves, or had the burden of supporting their families. Participation, it seems, was due to affordability of the ceremonies and their flexibility, where uncles or bosses could stand in for absent parents and brides and grooms could have some semblance of a ceremony on their wedding day.

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[72] *Shanghai shi minzheng ju si ki er jie jituan jiehun gonggao ji canjia ren dengji biao deng wenjian* 上海市民政局四科二届集团结婚公告及参加人登记表等文件 Q119-5-68 1948.05. Shanghai Municipal Archives.

[73] *Shanghai shi minzheng ju si ke guanyu jituan jiehun de wenjian* 上海市民政局四科关于集团结婚的文件 Q119-5-148 1946.05-1948.05 Shanghai Municipal Archives.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid.

Regardless of the hardships many participants faced, they did have one thing: their health. To participate in a group wedding, a health exam was mandatory. By 1948, if not before, a plan was floated that would require health exams for *everyone* - not just group wedding participants.[76] It was proposed that within thirty days of registering to marry, the couple would undergo an exam; couples did not have to have the exam at the same time or the same place.[77] To marry, one would have to be of age *and* healthy. This proposal was controversial. The magazine *Funü* (妇女) laid out their case against it in the short article "Not Allowed to Marry" (*buzhun jiehun* 不准结婚). The article began by citing the following newspaper announcement, which read:

> The Bureau of Public Health is advocating eugenics (*yousheng* 优生) for unmarried men and women. To protect against spreading disease they are planning health exams for those who are engaged, in the hopes that before they marry, men and women will first go to the doctor for an exam, which if they pass they can then marry. This method has been standard since group weddings began. It is hoped that those not participating in group weddings will also be willing to accept these exams enthusiastically.[78]

Admittedly, the article continued, there were some benefits to such exams, which were an important way to "ensure China's future" and prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, TB and so on.[79] Furthermore, in Shanghai, "TB is quite dreadful and those with sexually transmitted diseases are numerous."[80] But, if these rules regarding health and marriage were followed, the author estimated that *half* of the city's population would be deemed unsuitable for marriage![81] The prevalence of both TB and sexually transmitted diseases was chalked up to societal factors, where aside from a large population living in close proximity, the air in Shanghai was bad. Many residents faced unsavory working conditions, lack of sunlight which weakened the body, and poor nutrition, which led to ill health.[82] Prostitution halls and unlicensed prostitution led to the "unending" spread of sexually transmitted diseases, too. If health exams were required but people's lives did not improve in some fundamental way, the article concluded, there would be a significant portion of the population who would never be allowed to marry.[83]

The case of the health exam and wedding participation raises important questions. If exams were mandatory, and half of the residents of Shanghai were barred from marriage under Nationalist law, it is hard to imagine people extolling - or even supporting - the politics and policies of the Nationalist government. Furthermore, how would these laws be enforced? What would happen if people married - or lived together in a common law marriage - without registering, to avoid the health exam? What was the fate of unregistered families and their

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[76] *Shanghai shi jinglao zun? banfa* 上海市敬老尊?办法.

[77] Ibid.

[78] "Buzhun jiehun 不准结婚" *Funü* 妇女 (1948) 25.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Ibid.

[81] Ibid. Italics are mine.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Ibid.

children? Clearly this plan would not win the Nationalists friends and allies, so why propose it to begin with? Having exams without any kind of public health reform - as the article points out - failed to address a fundamental problem: that half of the residents in Shanghai were sick in some way. Perhaps it was a case of political priorities, where enforcement took a back seat to securing territory, where health exams - and by extension wedding and ritual reform - were longterm goals, likely beyond the state's current power to enforce.

Proposals for universal, mandatory health exams aside, it was still true that approximately half of the city's population was not eligible to participate in group wedding ceremonies because of illness. Of that remaining half, others would not participate for a variety of reasons: some could not afford the fee for the group ceremony; some wanted an individual ceremony; for some, marriage was not a high priority in the wake of war; still others preferred a traditional ceremony. But the fact commercial ceremonies had found a niche in the city, and Nationalist resources and attention were given to group ceremonies - which were, after all, seen as a way to enact social reform - shows their enduring power, and importance.

One of the functions the group wedding, particularly after the war, was tracking people. Group wedding companies, as businesses required to comply with city regulations, participated in this process. As in the 1930s, the Nationalist government co-opted and legislated municipal activity to keep up with popular trends, have a say in their development, and, they hoped, use these trends to their advantage. Certainly postwar group weddings were an attempt by the Nationalists to spread ideology at a municipal level and to track people through bureaucracy and paperwork, but to what end? One wonders whether the Nationalists were really invested marriage reform through the creation and legislation of group weddings after all, for residents in Shanghai the group wedding was only one choice among many.

Options for Others

As before, the customs (*lisu* 礼俗) section of Shanghai city guidebooks and wedding announcements in *Shenbao* both provide useful information about wedding practices. Many wedding announcements included names of the couple, their parents, and those who introduced them; in this sense, there is a continuity between these announcements and those posted in previous decades, where roles for family and friends remained. What was different now were the types of venues listed for ceremonies. This change was also noted in the guidebooks; even if thrift was still the watchword of the day. According to a 1947 city guide, "Now many try to save on expenses. A sedan chair is rare and most have substituted it with a car."[84] One can only imagine the scene a sedan chair would have caused on the streets of Shanghai at this time! Most weddings were held in hotels or restaurants, rather than a hall (*litang* 礼堂) as was common in the 1910s and 1920s. Other possible venues were clubs or tea houses; both parties invited friends and relatives and after the ceremony, there was often a banquet or refreshments.[85] These changes marked a move from civic spaces to places that were private, and commercial.

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[84] Wang Shanzhang 王善彰 ed., *Da shanghai zhinan* 大上海指南 (Shanghai: Guangming shuju chuban 1947) Y15-1-53-112 1947.1 Shanghai Municipal Archives, 136-7.

[85] Lu Jialiang 陆嘉亮 ed., *Shanghai shouce* 上海手册 (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1949) Y15-1-69-17 1949.05 Shanghai Municipal Archives.

Many of restaurants had their own ceremonial areas; guests would hold their ceremonies at the restaurant and then follow it immediately with a banquet. For example, the ninth floor of the *Jinmen da jiujia* (金门大酒家) featured a "palace hall."[86] The eight floor of the Cathay Hotel (*Huamao dasha* 华懋大厦) was advertised as "suitable for a wedding ceremony" and provided celebratory coffee and food; the venue was lauded as "the most famous banquet spot in the city."[87] Others like the International (*Guoji fandian* 国际饭店) provided entertainment, like cocktails and dancing on the fourteenth floor.[88] The Golden Valley (*Jin gu fandian* 金谷饭店) offered chestnut cake and the one of the more expensive banquets of the day; 3000 *yuan* per person, in 1944.[89] The a wedding banquet at the Golden Valley was likely beyond the reach of most: according to the 1947 *Shanghai Yearbook,* in 1944 the average laborer spent 51,243.7 *yuan* a year on food, which would only provide a banquet for about seventeen people.[90] Others held their wedding or engagement ceremonies in dance halls including the Capital (*Dadu hui wuting* 大都会舞厅) and famed Parliament (*Bailemen wuting* 百乐门舞厅).[91] This change from civic to private venues occurred for both individual ceremonies and group weddings staged by companies, which were also held in dance halls, gardens and restaurants.

While venues may have changed, clothing remained the same. As before, many men wore Western-style attire, which they could rent. Others may choose to wear the "Chinese-style" blue and black robes which, as we remember, grooms wore at New Life Ceremonies of the 1930s. According to a Shanghai guidebook, "without exception" women wore new-style attire; for some, this meant a qipao and veil.[92]

We have seen that the photography industry was an essential part of the wedding industry in Shanghai. Not all studios had deals with group wedding companies, and some - probably either smaller business or more successful ventures - sold wedding packages on their own. According to one Shanghai weekly, photo studios relied on wedding portraits for the majority of their business. Photographs were not nearly as expensive as they had been in previous decades.[93] In 1945, the Modern Photo Studio (*Modeng zhaoxiang guan* 摩登照相馆) offered wedding photographs priced at 4,800 *yuan* for a set, which included the newest clothing and a bouquet.[94] This price was not outlandish, where again, referring to the 1947 *Shanghai Yearbook,* we find that laborer clothing expenditures in September of that year were 42,026

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[86] *Shenbao*, "Jin men da jiujia 金门大酒家" 374-352 (6) 1941.

[87] *Shenbao*, "Huamao dasha 华懋大厦," 383-650 (9) 1943; *Shenbao*, "Huamao dasha 华懋大厦" 383-692 (3) 1943.

[88] *Shenbao*, "Guoji fandian 国际饭店," 379-46 (5) 1942.

[89] *Shenbao*, "Jin gu fandian 金谷饭店" 390-9 (10) 1944.

[90] *Shanghai shi nianjian* 上海市年鉴 Y15-1-37, 1947 Shanghai Municipal Archives.

[91] *Shenbao*, "Dinghun qishi 订婚启事," 385-133 (2) 1944; *Shenbao*, "Jiehun qishi 结婚启事" 387-388 (5) 1945.

[92] Wang, 136-7.

[93] "Zhaoxiang guan de mimi 照相馆的秘密" *Yi zhoukan* 一周刊 (May 1946): 12.

[94] *Shenbao*, "Modeng zhaoxiang guan 摩登照相馆" 387-291 (9) 1945.

yuan.[95] There was also the Yingxiong Photo Studio (*Yingxiong zhaoxiang guan* 英雄照相馆) which offered brand new clothing from designers in a variety of colors for the bride, groom, bridesmaids and children. In 1948, three photos were priced at 20,000 *yuan*; again, this price was not exorbitant given what we know about inflation and prices in late 1946.[96] A bouquet was included for free.

To make extra money, some stores rented out wedding dresses for ceremonies; others hired people to solicit business off the street; still others specialized in group photographs and graduation pictures.[97] This was corroborated by an article in *Haihua* (海花) magazine which described how some photo studios rented various types of clothing (not just wedding attire) as well as bridal attendants and stand-ins for wedding portraits and even the ceremony itself! A shop on Jing'an Temple Road, for example, rented out people to carry a bridal train or throw flower petals.[98] Why might someone want or need this service? Did it matter, now, if one's attendants were not friends or family? Perhaps those who rented helpers on their wedding day had no family or few friends in the area. Once a locus for social interaction the wedding had, for some, become a more solitary endeavor.

To this end the magazine *Shanghai tan* (上海滩) included a far-fetched tale of a young shopgirl new to the photo industry. One day, a young man in wedding attire with "groom" (*xinlang* 新郎) written in red on his lapel came rushing into the store, alone.[99] His bride had not arrived for their wedding portrait. The shopgirl and groom searched for her outside, frantically looking up and down the street. When the bride still did not arrive, the groom asked the shop girl to take the bride's place in the photograph![100] While it may be hard to believe that the wedding photograph as an object in and of itself was more important than the actual bride's presence in that image, this anecdote does underscore the central place such photographs now held in the lives of young brides and grooms, as markers of a wedding ceremony and a representation of the couple's marriage (even if the bride herself was not there!)

By the late 1940s, as is clear from Shanghai guidebooks, the characteristics of new-style weddings were firmly established: the young man and women already knew each other and their feelings were fused; after their parents agreed to the match, they became engaged.[101] At the time of engagement, it was easiest for both parties to post notice in the newspaper to "respectfully" inform their family and friends. Sometimes, an engagement ceremony - rather than a wedding ceremony - was held. This custom was something "unique to Shanghai."[102] Ceremonies were

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[95] *Shanghai shi nianjian* 上海市年鉴 Y15-1-37, 1947 Shanghai Municipal Archives.

[96] *Shenbao,* "Yingxiong zhaoxiang guan 英雄照相馆" 394-99 (6) 1947.

[97] Ibid.

[98] "Zhaoxiang guan chuzu binxiang 照相馆出租傧相" *Haihua* 海花 3 (April 1947): 7.

[99] "Wo zuo le linshi de xinniang le! 我做了临时的新娘了! *Shanghai tan* 上海滩 6 no. 7 (1947): 12.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Wang, 136-7.

[102] Lu, 8.

simpler or more elaborate depending on economic means, social status, and whether the families themselves were extravagant or thrifty. As always, despite calls for thrift, "in Shanghai society, hypocrisy has become common and many do their upmost to be extravagant at any cost, to show off to their friends and family."[103] And though new-style weddings were now commonly accepted, traditional practices had not been eliminated. A guidebook published in 1949 noted that many Shanghai residents still used the old ceremony.[104]

The new-style wedding, once extraordinary, was now ordinary. What began in the early 1900s as reformist drive to eliminate betrothal and the dowry and gain rights for women was now, in cities, a practice driven by consumerism and the market. Not surprisingly, both the form and the utility of the new-style wedding remained contested and the definition and legislation of personal ritual by political forces would continue under Communist rule.

PART THREE

The End of the New-Style Wedding

Despite consumerist trappings, group weddings did not immediately die after the Communist victory in 1949. In fact, according to a Communist history of the industry, in the immediate years that followed there was actually a surge in participation and a boom in group wedding business throughout the city.[105] While "this opportunism was short lived" and many businesses folded as quickly as they had been founded, group wedding companies were permitted because in the short term, they served the needs of the new state.[106]

On April 30, 1950, the Communists promulgated their new marriage law in China. Basic goals of the legislation were to "eliminate bigamy, chauvinism, and a feudal marriage system that ignores women's interests."[107] Free marriage, monogamy, equal rights, and the protection of women and children were promoted; child marriage, concubinage, forced marriage deemed illegal. Legal marriage age was set at twenty for young men, and eighteen for young women.[108] Individuals could not marry if they were blood relatives, had biological "shortcomings" that would hinder reproduction, venereal diseases, psychological problems, or if a doctor deemed them unfit for marriage. Beyond these physical parameters, the new marriage laws included guidelines for the emotional relationship between husband and wife. There should be equality in a household, and men and women would act as partners (*gongtong shenghuo de banlü* 共同生活的伴侣).[109] Relationships should be founded on mutual love and respect, with husband and wife

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[103] Ibid, 9.

[104] Ibid.

[105] *Shanghai shi jituan jiehun fuwu shangye tongye guanyu gongzuo shijian de baogao, canjia hunli bude fa gei zhengshu yu shuiju jianding de suo de shui xieshang jiyao yiji gonghui dingli de laozi xieye deng wenjian.*

[106] Ibid.

[107] *Zhonghua renmin gonghe guo hunyin fa* 中华人民共和国婚姻法, 131-1-1114 Shanghai Municipal Archives.

[108] Ibid.

[109] Ibid.

both acting on behalf of the family's happiness and harmony; by extension both parties would help raise the children. Under the law, men and women would have a degree of independence within the union - freedom in selecting work and joining clubs - and equal status in domestic and financial matters.[110] Women could keep their maiden name and were guaranteed mutual inheritance rights. Those who interfered with these matters or kept laws from being enforced were labeled as such (*ganshe zhe* 干涉者) and were breaking the law.

Along with these laws came registration procedures that would make a marriage legal in the eyes of the state; documents were also prepared to inform staff of new rules and regulations about marriage law and registration. Registration must to be voluntary, brides and grooms must be of age and could not be relatives; it was the duty of the appropriate staff member to ensure that both parties understood this.[111] If so, the bride and groom each received a copy of the form. At the time of registration - which was now, actually, an application for marriage - an approved health form must also be submitted. If someone was applying for divorce or remarriage, they must provide proof of either the previous marriage or its dissolution.

While these regulations shared basic tenants with the Nationalist's Civil Code - equality between men and women, the elimination of oppressive, traditional marriage customs, even health examinations for marriage registration - there were a few notable differences. One was the timeline of events. Under the Nationalist government - group weddings aside - wedding registration could be completed after the actual marriage; it was not necessary to apply to marry, only to register the event.[112] Now, new laws stipulated that marriage applications had to be approved before the wedding. Furthermore, these new applications not only solicited basic information (name, sex, birthdate, occupation) but also asked for family class or status (*jiating chengfen* 家庭成分) and level of one's "cultural" education (*wenhua chengdu* 文化程度), suggesting the importance of political compatibility between husband and wife.[113] Rather than just submitting a series of forms, applicants were interviewed; applications also included a box for staff members to jot down their opinions of the couple, and another space for the final decision of the head cadre. No information was included in documents to the registration staff about possible recourse if one's application was rejected by the staff members.

While registration under the Nationalists required the addresses of the bride and groom, Communist applications now went one step further. Before the application was submitted, proof of residence had to be established; the signature of a worker at the local residence office (*huji jiguan* 户籍机关) was needed.[114] After the marriage, couples were required to register their new address as well.[115] Beyond ensuring equality and family harmony, new laws provided a potential

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[110] Ibid.

[111] Ibid.

[112] Neil J. Diamant "Making Love 'Legible' in China: Politics and Society during the Enforcement of Civil Marriage Registration, 1950-66," *Politics & Society* 29 no. 3 (September 2001): 467.

[113] *Zhonghua renmin gonghe guo hunyin fa*.

[114] Ibid.

[115] Ibid.

mechanism for population tracking and monitoring political leanings of the newly married population. Forms for this very purpose were created for use in each district, county, and province. Information on marriage applications was reentered here, organized to track the name, age, birthdate, family background, occupation, education, and address of each couple. These forms also included a section to report on the interview with the couple, specifically what the two parties had agreed to, most likely regarding the wedding, property, and family matters.[116] This also had to be approved.

Under the Nationalists, unless they were sickly, individuals could marry legally in a nationally sanctioned municipal group wedding; those who were sickly could still marry in private ceremonies. Now the marriage had to be approved, an interview was conducted, health exam required, one's politics assessed. We remember that before, a parent or guardian's signature was required on Nationalist registration forms. Now, while brides and grooms may have to confront a difficult staff member or other officials, there was no legal reason for parents or a guardian to approve a union, as had previously been the case. Another major change that came with this legislation was a shift in the economics of marriage and weddings. Before, it was difficult for those who were poor to marry, let alone marry in style. Now, as we will see, for many registration constituted the ceremony in and of itself.

A new attitude towards marriage was reflected in the latest iteration of a marriage certificate itself, which now read: "both parties are voluntarily tied to each other in the bonds of matrimony, having passed through an examination, and conforming with the marriage laws of the People's Republic of China, in addition to registration."[117] A far cry indeed from the earliest certificates, which we remember were sold in cigarette shops and varied depending on the publishing house that printed them; different also from the marriage certificates for Shanghai's municipal group weddings of the 1930s, with birds, sentimental allusions to love, and designed to be pretty enough to compete with the most popular and fashionable offerings of the day. And different still from the 1940s municipal group wedding certificate that stated couples "have joined (number) group ceremony where, as husband and wife, from this time on they will act as sincere and good new people, of a new era."[118] For the first time, marriage certificates would be standardized on a national level, with no consideration for municipal variation or local tradition.

Each iteration of the certificate itself tells us something about the governing bodies (or lack thereof) and their desires, and needs, for the role of the couple within the larger state. As with the new-style wedding itself, certificates were somewhat of a novelty in the early 1910s and into the 1920s. By the 1930s, with the Nationalist government established in Nanjing, there was a move to reform ritual, largely by co-opting popular trends of the day to harness consumerism and entice city residents to adapt and follow the ideology and principles of the fledgling state; glamour would lead to participation and eventually, standardization. In the wake of the war came a resurgence of New Life ideology coupled with a push for ritual standardization on a national level. This was seen in this next iteration of wedding certificates, with the designation

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[116] Ibid.

[117] Ibid.

[118] "Ruhe banli jituan jiehun 如何办理集团结婚," 44-50.

of brides and grooms as "new people" who would be ready to stand at the service of the state. Even so, participation was still voluntary. Only after the Communist victory was there a concerted push to make certain behaviors mandatory, and to enforce those behaviors. We see this with the language on the marriage certificate which emphasized regulations, registration, and a willingness to marry under these conditions.

Along with the new registration procedures and the wedding certificate, the ceremony itself was drastically altered, too. We remember that many aspects of the new-style ceremony were actually holdovers from traditional practice; roles for the introducer, witnesses, and the guardians were renamed and revised, but retained. With group weddings these positions were still honored, even if they were filled by members of the municipal government rather than one's family. Now, however, these roles were eliminated completely, both on the registration forms and in the actual wedding. Witnesses, for example, were replaced by staff members, where the state became one's guardian. On paper and ideologically, these changes marked the final blow to the traditional marriage ceremony in twentieth century China.

As far as actually implementing new laws, it was recognized that such changes would only be successful with an extended period of "thought education."[119] According to reports which surveyed the atmosphere with a consideration for the new laws, after land reform and the "elevation of the masses' consciousness" there was increased dissatisfaction with the vestiges of the feudal marriage system.[120] Officials noted that family and marriage disputes occurred more frequently because of this. The time was right for change, but success hinged on rural outreach and educational work to make such ideas more acceptable and change the atmosphere to "combat feudalism."[121]

Vestiges of the so-called feudal mindset remained however, and implementation of the new marriage laws and marriage registration was not smooth. Documents from October 1951 emphasized the need to focus on the "spirit of marriage law" (*hunyin fa de jingshen* 婚姻法的精神).[122] They continued with the admission that while reform had produced class consciousness, as far as marriage law was concerned "feudal thought" still remained for many.[123] Apparently men were pleased with changes that came with land reform but were unwilling to follow laws that afforded women new legal standing and rights. On the other end of the spectrum, in some areas there were bands of out-of-control vigilantes torturing people who did not follow these new rules![124] The proposed solution was to increase education about the new laws, and to "correct" the administrative atmosphere which would address the vigilante problem too. The report also included a candid assessment of the registration process. Bureaus were still relatively weak, and

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[119] *Guanyu renzhen guanche hunying fa de zhishi*关于认真贯彻婚姻法的指示 July 21, 1951. Shanghai Municipal Archives.

[120] Ibid.

[121] Ibid.

[122] *Guanyu renzhen guanche hunying fa de zhishi*关于认真贯彻婚姻法的指示 October 4, 1951. Shanghai Municipal Archives.

[123] Ibid.

[124] Ibid.

registration offices were few. Furthermore, there was still general opposition to these policies particularly related to divorce where rather than divorcing, many people were coerced by family members to stay married. The proposed solution was to train knowledgeable staff and to simplify procedures so that they were easier to understand and implement.[125]

While ensuring harmony between husband and wife and protecting the rights of women and children were noble goals there were other fundamental, political reasons for marriage reform and registration too. In her assessment of the 1950 marriage law, Glosser underscores the "coercive force of the government" where the Communist party took a central role in the creation of the conjugal family unit.[126] We have seen this manifested in new wedding ceremonies and marriage certificates where roles for family were eliminated: parents' physical presence and signatures were no longer needed to make a union legal. This certainly was a theoretical penetration of the state into the familial realm beyond what the Nationalists were either capable or willing to do so. In theory, for the Communists, power came not from defining, claiming, or reinterpreting popular ritual (as was the Nationalist's way) but from controlling it, legislating it, and permitting it. Practically speaking, wedding registration served another purpose: tracking the population and asserting control and the legitimacy of the state. In his article "Making Love 'Legible' in China: Politics and Society during the Enforcement of Civil Marriage Registration, 1950-1966," Neil Diamant asserts that registering marriages and divorces was part of the effort to get "a grip on a the vast population and territories" that the Communist party suddenly found itself controlling; another equally important part of the legislation was to "try and make society as *politically legible* as possible."[127]

In December 1952, the campaign promoting marriage registration formally began. Registration was described as a way to "ensure people's freedom of marriage and divorce."[128] Propaganda photographs played a role the registration and marriage law awareness campaign. [129] The photographs present an idealized image of marriage registration. They contain certain visual clues as to how people should act, dress and so on. With figure 25, we have the writing on the wall - literally - pointing couples to the marriage registration station. As with figure 2, bureaucracy looms large. In both photographs a desk dominates the image. The cadre is also a main actor - in fact in figure 25 the bride and groom, who both wear civilian clothing rather than wedding attire, sit with their backs to the camera. The registrar, a young woman, is the focus of the shot. Here, a young woman rather than a male family member certifies a couple's union. And though everyone was smiling and happy, marriage was a bureaucratic process rather than a celebratory occasion.

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[125] Ibid.

[126] Glosser, 172.

[127] Diamant, 465. Emphasis in the original.

[128] *Shanghai shi jituan jiehun fuwu shangye tongye guanyu gongzuo shijian de baogao, canjia hunli bude fa gei zhengshu yu shuiju jianding de suo de shui xieshang jiyao yiji gonghui dingli de laozi xieye deng wenjian.*

[129] See Figure 2, Figure 25: "Xuanchuan guanche hunyin fa 宣传贯彻婚姻法" H1-11-3-53 (1953) Shanghai Municipal Archives.

Pretty pictures aside, how successful was the actual registration effort? As we have seen, having a law on the books was only the first step; communicating it to a public who would, in turn, implement it properly was entirely another matter. We remember after the promulgation of the Nationalist Civil Code in the early 1930s, many advice columns in women's magazines were devoted to explicating new laws to a reading public; clearly, new laws did not necessarily mean an understanding, execution, or an acceptance of new legal rights. Indeed, Diamant finds that while Communists were "far more willing to use state resources to enforce registration" this early registration drive was largely a failure where in rural areas, "numerous reports noted that peasants often didn't bother to register their marriage, and the state had all but given up on persuading them to undergo physical exams, which was one of the main rationales for marriage registration in the first place."[130] There were widespread registration violations urban areas, too. Some were confused about how laws should be interpreted or implemented. Others seemed to think that they were above the law: "getting ordinary people to take registration seriously was compromised when Communist Party members did their utmost to avoid it."[131] Casual enforcement - or outright avoidance - of rules regarding personal ritual was not new, of course. We remember government official Tang Shaoyi's early wedding photograph, discussed in chapter one: Tang's bride was not wearing the new ceremonial dress even though sartorial regulations had just been released by the Provisional Republican Government. Later, we saw Chiang Kai-shek's elaborate wedding, which had little to do with the values of thrift and economy he espoused as crucial to China's revival, and so on.

Ultimately, most people - particularly those who lived outside of urban areas - were just not accustomed to having to register their marriages. Writes Diamant, "In Shanghai, a factory worker who was about to get married was instructed by a female member of her union, 'Do not forget to register with the government,' to which some nearby workers responded, 'Even marriage has to be registered?" and 'From ancient times to today, who's ever heard of registering marriage with a government?'"[132] The anecdote shows not only a basic misunderstanding of new marriage laws, it provides a damning window into Nationalist policy, too. Throughout the 1940s, the Nationalist government was trying to get people to register in urban areas under the auspices of the New Life Movement group weddings but despite publicity drives, photographs, broadcasts, and so on, they had failed to reach the majority of the urban - let alone rural - population. As this anecdote makes clear, factory workers - and probably anyone with little money or education - knew nothing marriage registration, even before the Communists came to power. Clearly, registration policies under the Nationalist regime had been ineffective at best. Furthermore, as Diamant points out, not everyone wanted to eliminate arranged marriage or embrace new-style ceremonies, either. "During the campaign to enforce the Marriage Law in 1953, for example, some bald men were quite worried they would not be able to marry if marriages were no longer arranged."[133]

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[130] Diamant, 450-2.

[131] Ibid, 455.

[132] Ibid, 459.

[133] Ibid, 461.

Change did not - and could not - occur in one fell swoop. Glosser writes that during the Nationalist era, the small family and consumerism were part of an "urban propaganda campaign" to promote Nationalist policy, but that in the early 1950s, these capitalist ideas were a "hinderance."[134] While that may ultimately be the case, we find that during this early, transitional era capitalism - in the form of group wedding companies - was actually seen as a way of promoting and advancing wedding registration in Shanghai. Ultimately, publicizing and encouraging wedding registration in city came first; politics and other policies would follow.

To this end, the group wedding industry would help with registration and the propagation of the marriage law in the city. As was true during the Nationalist regime, those participating in group weddings would register for the ceremony through the group wedding company, which would use the procedures required for government registration.[135] Indeed, Xie Pengfei - founder of the group wedding association and the first group wedding company in Shanghai - reported at an association meeting that he met with a government "comrade" who "wants our industry (*ye* 业) to help in 1951 and 1952, as all who marry in Shanghai, in each district, are supposed to register."[136] He continued that there "no other expectations for us in this respect" and reported to the group that he was planning "research and development" on these matters.[137]

Despite political changes in the city, the group wedding association remained in business. As for individual group wedding companies, business ebbed and flowed, peaking in the early years of the new government only to taper off: in 1949 there were six registered businesses; in 1950 there were twenty-one; by 1952 there were thirteen; by 1954 there were only six again.[138] While the boom in business after the Communist take over may seem counterintuitive, it was due to the fact that group weddings seen by city residents as a compromise of sorts, a way to save money and still have a wedding ceremony. Consequently businesses saw an opening. But these businesses fell away once the rhetoric heated up, and by 1956 they were deemed "no longer suitable for the needs of the masses, and except for a few, [most] city residents feel deep regret after joining these ceremonies."[139]

By the mid 1950s, aside from the China Group Wedding Company, five other companies were still in operation. Four of these were attached to other enterprises: a restaurant, a bar, a photo studio and a theater.[140] Furthermore, one was also a publishing house and another was

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[134] Glosser, 175.

[135] *Shanghai shi jituan jiehun fuwu shangye tongye guanyu gongzuo shijian de baogao, canjia hunli bude fa gei zhengshu yu shuiju jianding de suo de shui xieshang jiyao yiji gonghui dingli de laozi xieye deng wenjian*.

[136] *Shanghai shi jituan jiehun fuwu shangye tongye gonghui chouweihui ji huiyuan dahui huiyi jilu*上海市集团结婚服务商业同业公会筹委会及会员大会会议纪录 S340-4-2 1950.09.04 -1955.07.31 Shanghai Municipal Archives.

[137] Ibid.

[138] *Jituan jiehun shangye anpai gaozao fang'an* 集团结婚商业安排改造方案. B182-1-880-37, 1955. Shanghai Municipal Archives.

[139] *Shanghai shi minzheng ju: tichu guanyu jituan jiehun de chuli yijian qingbiao*上海市民府局: 提出关于集团结婚社的处理意见请示 B2-2-73 1956 Shanghai Municipal Archives.

[140] Ibid.

supplemented by a music teacher![141] When they were staging weddings, the companies operated as before managing and arranging ceremonies, which included providing clothing and securing a venue. But such business was not seen as sustainable in the long run; according to a 1956 report on the state of the industry among the six remaining businesses, only two even had a chance of survival.[142] By this time, less and less people were using their services. "Last year [1955], 47,079 couples registered and only 987 of them (2.09%) had group weddings. Given this situation, my office [Shanghai Bureau of Civil Affairs] feels that the group wedding companies are not needed by the masses, and the government does not want to establish mechanisms on behalf of wedding and ceremonial services (*hunyi fuwu* 婚仪服务)."[143] The office also did not want support the group wedding enterprise because this would constitute a mix of state and private ownership.

Economics aside, it was clear that after registration practices were firmly established in the city, group wedding companies were no longer of use to the party. The 1956 report on the industry concluded: "After wedding registration is complete, there is no need to continue group wedding ceremony."[144] Those employed at the three shops with side businesses would be allowed to enter those enterprises. As for employees at the remaining three businesses, they were left to "go down other roads . . . "[145] But, even as these companies were being phased out, it seems this "spirit" of marriage registration was not translating as intended. Writes Diamant, "In Shanghai, a 1956 report complained about registrars who failed to understand 'the connection between marriage registration and socialist construction and transformation' while a 1957 report complained that registrars failed to quiz couples about their marriage, failed to conduct propaganda among them, and generally 'failed to understand the political dimension of registration.'"[146] There was still much work to be done; in this light we can better understand the party's initial allowance of group wedding companies as a mechanism to spur urban registration. Frankly they needed all the help the could get!

While initially, there was some degree of leeway with respect to both wedding ceremonies and attire, it is most likely that as group weddings were phased out, expectations for wedding ceremonies changed as well. Registration was the new the order of the day, and white dresses were no longer common or, one imagines, socially acceptable. With both registration and new wedding certificates eliminating any remaining vestiges of traditional ceremonies, what was to take their place? By 1956, organized labor, party members, cadres, school administrators and students would "have a get together at a trade union or club on a weekend evening" after

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[141] Ibid.

[142] Ibid.

[143] Ibid.

[144] Ibid.

[145] Ibid.

[146] Diamant, 454.

their wedding registration.[147] The report continued by noting that "this method has been increasingly welcomed by the masses."[148]

While was no indication whether refreshments were served or not, this new gathering certainly did not include a banquet. There was no mention of a dowry or wedding gifts, of negotiation between the bride and groom's families, or the groom fetching the bride from her house - in a car or sedan chair - before the wedding. Parental involvement was nil and with respect to venue, what had been held in a hotel, bar, or dancehall a few years prior was now celebrated in a union hall - a very different type of civic, public space.

Diamant points out that these events may not have been as spartan or as devoid of fun as they seemed; people were finding all sorts of ways to bend rules and enjoy themselves. "In late 1954 a report on the marriage situation in a Shanghai factory complained that there were 'very many illicit affairs' among workers. Because workers 'liked to dance' they would take off early from work and go to various places of entertainment until the wee hours of the night."[149] And, "in Shanghai's Number One Cotton Mill, party officials complained that workers were "irresponsible towards love," because they "wanted to have a good time," "chose boyfriends at random," and "left work to go to dances."[150] Diamant concludes that even in a new political climate it was proving difficult to regulate morality, fun, and love. The same was likely true for wedding celebrations, too, even if on their face they conformed to new requirements.

Conclusion

While it may seem counterintuitive, we find continuity between the Nationalist and Communist governments: rules for new marriage law, the registration process and forms - minus political leanings - were essentially the same. There is a practical symmetry needs to be addressed, too: both the Nationalist group wedding and the Communist wedding registration drive used the allure of flashy wedding ceremony to draw in participants and entice people to follow new rules. What was different? Were the Communists more invested in enforcing their new policies? According to Diamant, while the Chinese state under Mao is commonly perceived of as "strong," such strength did not manifest itself in marriage and divorce registration, nor in "politically correct" relationships; furthermore, the legitimacy of the state was unevenly distributed: the state failed to politicize relationships.[151]

The registration process may not have been so smooth, but the Communists did score a major success: cutting down on consumerist aspects of the wedding itself by eliminating all alternative ceremonial options. But lack of effective communication regarding new policies created problems for both Nationalists and Communists when it came to standardizing wedding ceremonies, enforcing registration, and making people comply with new regulations.

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[147] *Shanghai shi minzheng ju: tichu guanyu jituan jiehun de chuli yijian qingbiao*.

[148] Ibid.

[149] Diamant, 476.

[150] Ibid.

[151] Ibid, 472-3.

Bureaucracy aside, the difficulties that both governments encountered show that challenges to reform stretched beyond politics and were related to something more fundamental: an unprecedented intervention by the state into the personal realm that was both foreign and, in most cases, unwelcome.

Chapter Six. Conclusion

We began with two photographs - one of a traditional wedding ceremony in the early 1900s, the other of a Communist wedding registration in the early 1950s - and the question: how to get from here to there? We took up the challenge to look behind and beyond the image to its production - practical and rhetorical, popular and political - to explicate new, urban wedding rituals in twentieth century China.

Agitation against the traditional wedding ceremony began prior to the fall of the Qing dynasty and was not associated with any specific political movement rather, individuals with political connections, links to foreigners, or who were educated abroad made personal critiques of established practice by marrying in new-style ceremonies. As far as reform of personal rituals is concerned, 1911 was not a watershed moment that ushered in dramatic change. Instead, what occurred was incremental and personal and only began in earnest after the establishment of the Nationalist regime in 1928. Furthermore, political involvement in ceremonial rites was unprecedented. Beyond wanting to construct a small family, the Nationalist state hoped to codify and legislate the very rituals which would form that unit. But despite promulgating the Civil Code in 1931, and publicizing group weddings with the New Life Movement, there was no real commitment to enforce such changes until after the Communist takeover, when both legal rights and ceremonial rites were mandated nationally.

Though the Communists were ultimately successful in codifying marriage practices, they have played a limited role in our tale. In fact Mao Zedong is only mentioned by name once - in the introduction. The central political figure here is Chiang Kai-shek, whom we first met in chapter two. Though this project has undergone various formulations, Chiang's wedding was always crucial to its telling.

Chiang's 1927 wedding was a turning point the development of the new-style wedding ceremony. Before this, new-style ceremonies had been practiced by a select few and were discussed and documented in women's magazines and Shanghai newspapers as an ideal or an abstraction. Chiang's actions explicitly endorsed new-style rites as a Chinese rites, framing them as modern, enlightened, urban behavior, and beneficial for China's revolution. At his wedding Chiang had introduced a new marriage aesthetic that linked personal ritual practice to a trajectory of national progress: a hall decorated with party and state flags, and Sun Yat-sen's portrait where Sun - as China's founding father - supplanted one's own ancestors. The Nationalists, the Chinese nation and the rites that made the family were to be one and the same.

The ceremony itself was similar to new-style ceremonies that had been practiced in Shanghai for some twenty-odd years. Chiang's wedding would not have been possible without individuals reforming their own personal, ritual practices which began even before the fall of the Qing, or without the new-style wedding dreams of urban youth which laid a framework for what was deemed acceptable in the city. Similarly, Communist penetration into personal ritual was only possible due to groundwork laid by the Nationalist regime. This process is best encapsulated by Figure 20; a drawing of bride wearing a new-style group wedding dress, produced by the Shanghai Bureau of Social Affairs in the mid 1930s. As a drawing (rather than a photograph), Figure 20 becomes a representation of what a dress and a bride should look like.

The image is open to interpretation and serves as a suggestion for one's type of veil, dress, bouquet, rather than a mandate.

We note that the bride did not wear the ceremonial attire first designed and prescribed by the Provisional Republican Government in the mid 1910s. Rather, this new-style look was adapted from popular practice and also modeled after Soong Meiling's wedding dress: popular consumerist practice had been co-opted by the government. This same co-optation of the consumerist trappings of new-style ritual occurred again when Communists permitted group wedding companies to operate in Shanghai in an attempt to make wedding registration palatable to city residents. Consequently, the evolution of the new-style wedding in Shanghai came not just from the reform of personal practices, or from political mandates but through the forces of the market which made the new-style wedding an attractive product. But that product meant something different to every consumer. In fact, lack of consensus about the form and shape of new-style ceremonies was probably - other than the white bridal gown - their defining feature.

By the mid 1930s, new-style weddings were considered the norm in Shanghai. Materially, this meant that a white, new-style gown and veil were accepted and acceptable. Betrothal had gone by the wayside, too: generally, participants in new-style ceremonies had chosen their own spouses, though in most cases with parental consent. The dowry was eliminated and weddings were now held on convenient days, rather than auspicious ones. Yet the forms of these ceremonies were familiar. New-style ceremonies were, as we know, skillful adaptations of traditional ceremonies, preserving but redefining roles for family and friends while shifting authority away from one's parents. Rather than two heads of household coming to an agreement, a marriage certificate - however it was rendered - certified a union.

This - the changing relationship between parents and their children in the face of new-style ceremonies - has been an underlying theme to our tale. Where was authority vested in a family and who made choices about personal rituals? An early new-style wedding could not have occurred without parental approval. In fact, parents - as diplomats or politicos - may have been more familiar with such ceremonies than their children. Even if children had input in their choice of spouse, it was likely that the young man and woman were not well acquainted. Generally, participation in such a wedding hinged on parental permission. By the early 1920s, in the wake of the May Fourth Movement, more young people themselves were agitating for changes to the marital system but again, new behaviors needed parental sanction. This was in due in part - as many youths themselves pointed out - to lingering vestiges of a Confucian mindset.

Chiang's 1927 wedding and the Nationalists' 1931 Civil Code accelerated this process: Chiang's ceremony increased the visibility and acceptability of new-style weddings, while the Civil Code fundamentally altered children's legal rights and a parent's role. Before, the performance of ceremonial rites granted participants legal rights. Now, children were afforded legal rights and protections regardless of their marital status. Consequently, a parent's role in their child's wedding ceremony changed, too. Parents no longer had the final say in a child's choice of spouse: if both the bride and groom were of legal age, they could wed. With group weddings, the roles of guardian and witness were supplanted by municipal officials. Now parents were spectators in their children's wedding rites, rather than participants. Even so, the signature of a parent or guardian was needed on many municipal wedding certificates, and this

continued into the 1940s. It was not until Communist wedding registrations of the 1950s that parental permission was eliminated from the process entirely.

Another aspect to our tale is the changed and changing place of women in the new-style ceremony. While facilitating his political rehabilitation and setting the groundwork for preliminary attempts at ritual reform under the Nationalist regime, Chiang's wedding had an unintended consequence: it was the first high profile new-style wedding where the bride was front and center. Previously, men had defined the terms of the new-style wedding and women tagged along as willing participants. Chiang, on the other hand, had sailed to Japan to ask Soong's mother for permission to wed. Their first ceremony had taken place at the Soong residence, rather than Chiang's family home. Chiang and Soong were out together, as a couple, before the wedding day and Chiang was equally deferential to Soong when discussing their relationship with the press.

In the past, separation of the sexes made betrothal a necessity. Agitation for the new-style wedding in the wake of the May Fourth Movement had loosened these restrictions, and allowed young men and women to meet and interact before the wedding day. Chiang and Soong's relationship, coupled with publication of photographs and information about new-style weddings in women's magazines ushered in the rise of the bride, and women were now the consumerist and ritual focus of many new-style ceremonies. This trend could not be reversed completely: group weddings limited the scope of the bride as an individual actor, making her an anonymous participant and one of many, even if her bridal attire was similar to Soong Meiling's. Only after the Communists came to power was the figure of the bride redefined completely.

The Communists were also successful at curtailing the expensive "grand wedding" of the past. From the outset, popular and political attempts at wedding reform aimed at reducing costs - of the banquet, the dowry, betrothal gifts and so on - which often sent families into years worth of debt. The new-style wedding may have eliminated dowries and gift giving, but as these ceremonies gained popularity, other expenses - dresses, a venue rental, photographs, wedding gifts, dinner - became common. As before: those who could afford to spend - and in some case those could not - did, and in Shanghai the new-style ceremony became an opportunity of a new type of lavish extravagance. The group wedding was an attempt to rein in these costs but for city residents with means, group weddings remained one ceremonial choice among many. Furthermore for those who were destitute, even the group wedding was out of reach. Only after Communist marriage reform in the early 1950s was the "grand wedding" finally restricted.

Why did Nationalists, and later the Communists, choose to intervene in this matter? As we have seen, there was no legal or practical precedent for the definition, codification and legislation of personal ritual by the government. Furthermore, if the Communists succeeded where the Nationalists had failed, why spend so much time on the Republican Era? And why was the reform of wedding ritual so difficult to accomplish? It is precisely because Republican Era was a transitional time where there was no consensus over the form and the future of such rituals. The new-style wedding was up for grabs: practiced by a variety of individuals - including political actors - for a variety of reasons. While such rituals were being defined and established as popular practice, there was an opening and an opportunity to imbue them with political symbols of state, party and nation. The notion that the construction of personal ritual was both acceptable and necessary, as service to the state, developed along with the

Nationalists's social and political agenda. This move represented an emphatic intervention of the state in what had previously been a personal matter.

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Figures

Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



章以吳君與朱慵如女士合影
（女士爲內務總長朱啓鈐君之次女公子）

Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 13

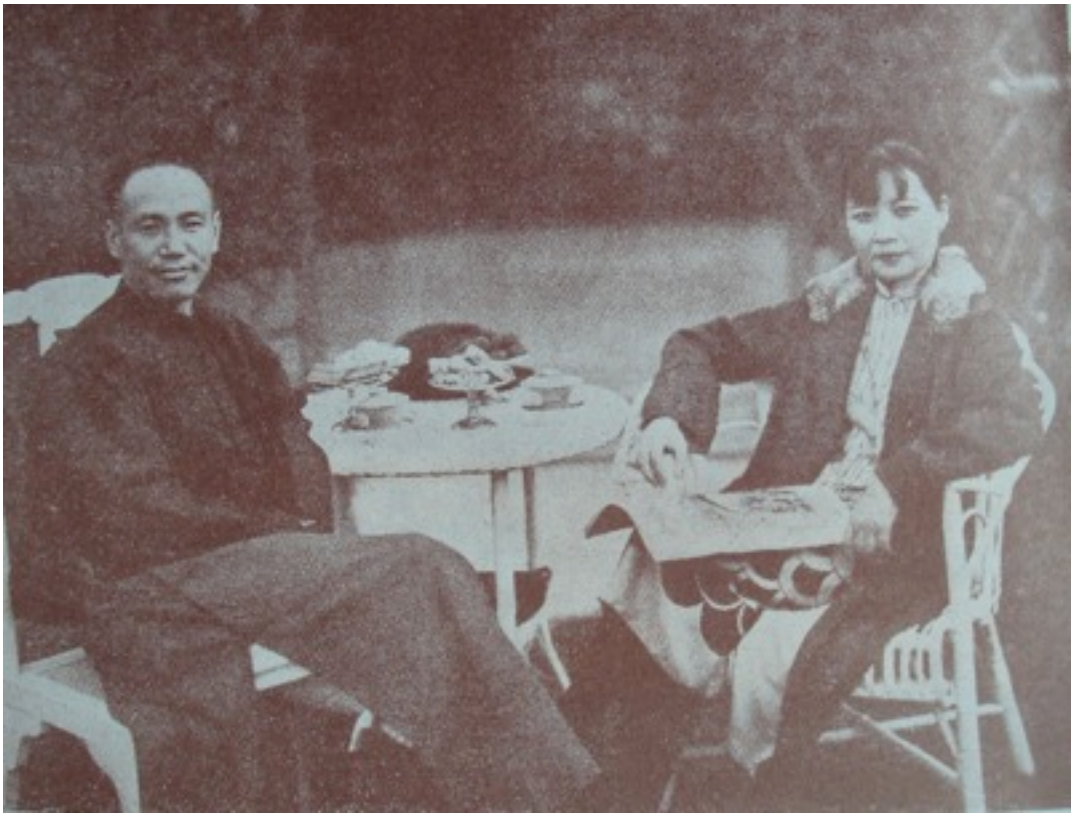


Figure 14

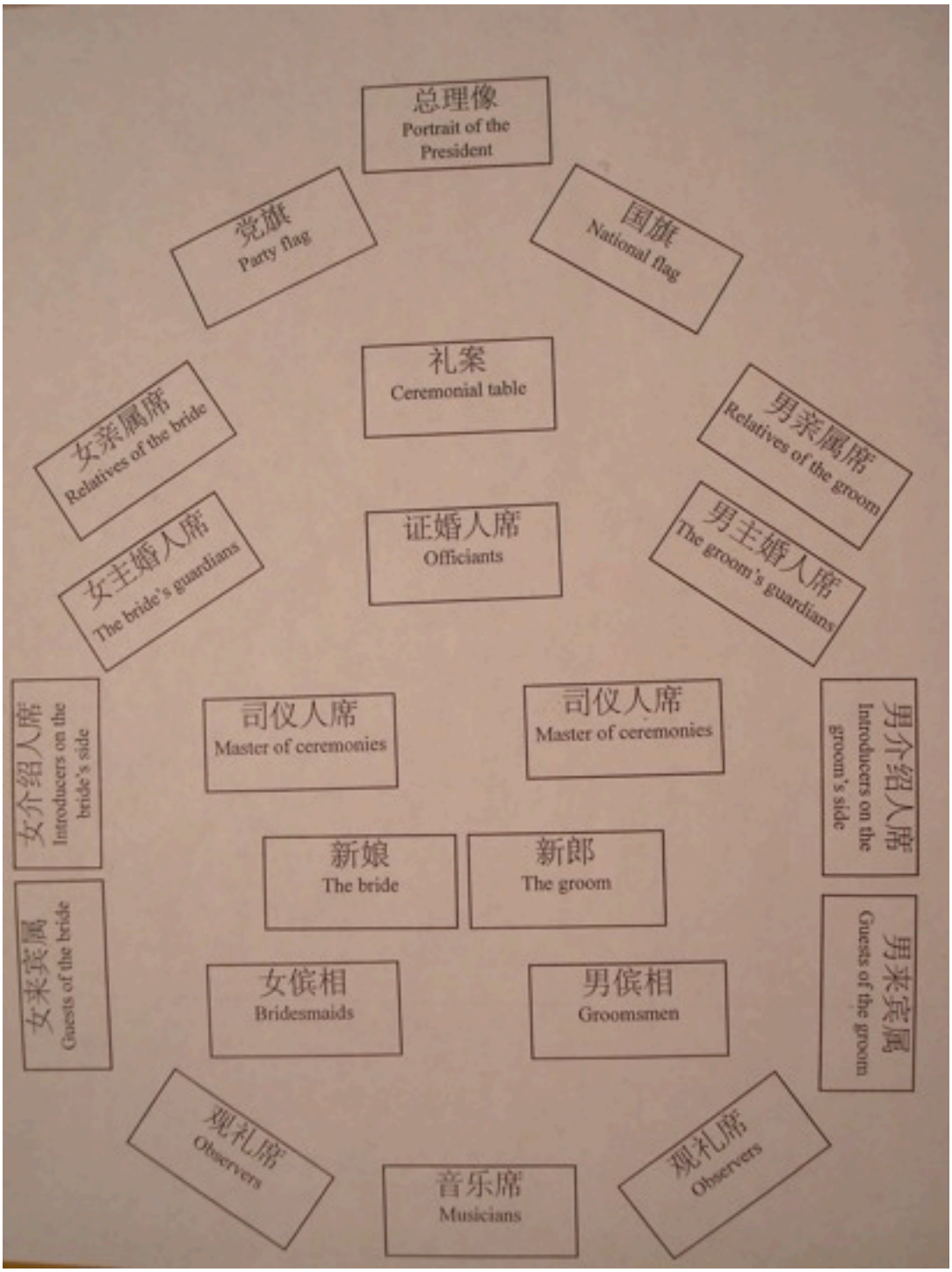

总理像
Portrait of the President
党旗
Party flag
国旗
National flag
礼案
Ceremonial table
女亲属席
Relatives of the bride
男亲属席
Relatives of the groom
女主婚人席
The bride's guardians
证婚人席
Officiants
男主婚人席
The groom's guardians
女介绍人席
Introducers on the bride's side
司仪人席
Master of ceremonies
司仪人席
Master of ceremonies
男介绍人席
Introducers on the groom's side
新娘
The bride
新郎
The groom
女来宾属
Guests of the bride
女宾相
Bridesmaids
男宾相
Groomsmen
男来宾属
Guests of the groom
观礼席
Observers
音乐席
Musicians
观礼席
Observers

Figure 15



Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18

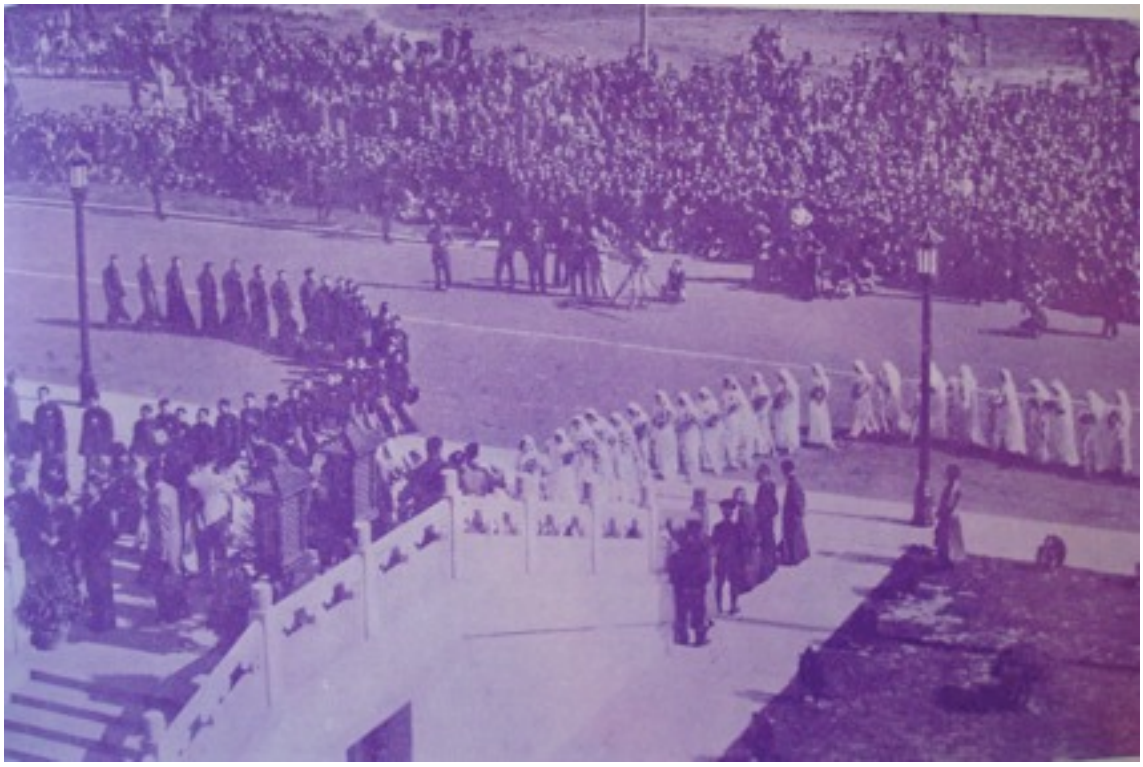


Figure 19



Figure 20



Figure 21



Figure 22



Figure 23



Figure 24



Figure 25

