Wedding, Etiquette, and Traditional Songs of the Minhe Region Tu

MA GUANGXING

Note: This translation is of MA (1981) and has been prepared by Hu Jun 胡軍 (Qinghai 青海 Medical College) and Kevin Stuart (Qinghai Education College). Notes not by the author but by the translators are enclosed in square brackets, as also are intertextual comments. The reader should realize that many wedding songs sung in the Sanchuan 三川 Region are sung in Chinese, others are sung in a mixture of Tu 土 and Chinese, and still others are sung only in Tu—which may well not be true in other Tu areas (e.g., Huzhu 互助 Tu Autonomous County, Datong 大通 Hui 回 and Tu Autonomous County). The Tu show considerable variation; see, for example, the wedding songs listed in CHINGELTAI et al. (1988) for examples of songs collected from Huzhu County.

The reader should also be aware of the fact that wedding songs show considerable variation within the Minhe 民和 Region. While following a generally accepted structure, specific content may vary considerably from village to village, and indeed within the same village from family to family. Thus the songs presented by Ma are only a small portion of the universe of possibilities. Additionally, the Minhe Tu wedding is a long one, and Ma discusses much less than half of what a wedding entails—there is no mention of the very complex engagement process (which includes both songs and " good words "), and the wedding in toto may last as many as ten days. Ma gives only a fragment of most songs and has nothing to say ahout the third day of the wedding, which is as complicated and rich in songs as the two days he does discuss.

The Guanting Tu wedding may be briefly described as follows:

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matchmaking, which, if successful, will require several trips by the matchmaker to the young woman's home; preparations by both the bride's and groom's families, which culminate in the actual wedding ceremony; the first day of the actual wedding ceremony, which may be further divided into two parts—preparatory activities at both the bride's and groom's homes; the second day of the wedding, during which the bride and her entourage are taken to the groom's home by two representatives of the groom, the bride's entourage is entertained for most of the day, and the maternal uncle of the bride and the maternal uncle of the groom are seated together in chairs of greatest honor; and the third and final day of the wedding ritual, also held at the groom's home. Like the second day, the third day features many wedding songs virtually identical in content and structure to that of the second day; the guests of honor on this day, however, are the bride's father and the groom's most respected maternal relative. It is these two relatives who are praised in song rather than the two maternal uncles of the previous day.

We emphasize that our translation should not be construed as agreement with Ma's arguments concerning the origins of Tu weddings or matriarchy / patriarchy. His article was written only five years after the formal conclusion of the Cultural Revolution. During that most regrettable period, such activities as are herein described were deemed superstitious, which may help explain why Ma at times seeks for a Marxist base from which to write about Tu weddings.

We have used ZHAONASTU (1981) for reference in writing the Tu in International Phonetic Symbols. Words not followed by Chinese characters should be understood as Chinese transliterations of the Tu (which Ma used). Square brackets give the translators' rendition of the Tu language. Tu language shows much dialectical variation, and we do not pretend that the Tu language we present would be reflective of other Tu areas.

The Tu, recognized by China as one of its 55 minority nationalities, are also known as Monguor; they number approximately 160,000 in China. Some 130,000 dwell in Qinghai and about 30,000 live in Minhe County.

Ma Guangxing, a Tu himself, is 37 years old and a native of Zhongchuan 中川 Commune, Guanting region, Minhe Hui and Tu Autonomous County. In 1977 he graduated from the Chinese Department of Qinghai Nationalities Institute, whereupon he was assigned to work in the Chinese Department in the field of nationality folk literature. In 1985, he was transferred to the Qinghai Province Literature and Art Association, Folk Artist Society, where he worked in the field of

nationality folk literature study. In early 1989 he was elected vice-president of the Qinghai Branch of the China Folk Artists' Society.

Ma has published widely in China, writing primarily about various aspects of nationality folk literature. One of his more recent efforts has been collaboration in collection and compilation that has led to a volume concerning the legend of Taer 塔爾 (Kumbum) Temple (one of the more famous temples of the Yellow Sect of Tibetan Buddhism).

TRANSLATION

The Sanchuan Region of Minhe County located in Qinghai Province is a Tu area. Over a long period of historical development, the Tu, inheriting and continually enriching and developing their own culture, have retained their own distinctive customs and language. Wedding songs, *daola* [*daula*], which are sung from the beginning to the end of the wedding, have a special and important content when one considers the entire marriage process, and in the Tu folk literature treasurehouse may be likened unto pearls and jade radiating splendor.

Daola means singing. Tu refer to all songs sung during the wedding process as *daola*. *Daola* are characterized by a variety of content and forms, have graceful tunes, and have a unique style. They embrace ancient myths and folk customs. If we compare and inspect wedding customs that appear "strange and peculiar" with etiquette and traditional *daola*, we get a slight inkling of this people's early history, with regard to the source of Tu wedding songs and the relationship between them (wedding songs) and Tu wedding customs. This article provides a shallow discussion by way of an introduction and the author asks for comments from comrades who have done related research.

1. Regarding Legendary Sources of *Daola*

There is a legend concerning the origin of *daola* in the local area.

> People say that in the Liancheng 連城 area of Yongdeng 永登 County, Gansu 甘肅 Province,[1] there were once two brothers who lived by gathering firewood. One day, when the younger brother was drinking water from a river, he accidently swallowed a small fish, which was really the transformed Dragon King playing in the river, and immediately obtained inexhaustible power. Meanwhile, a monstrous serpent came out to injure man, and the younger brother then fired one arrow, killing it. For this reason people called him Wang 王 Mang 蟒.[2] Later, under the influence of some

evil men, he embarked on a life of banditry. In order to eliminate Wang Mang, Liancheng Lu 鲁 Tusi 坷[3] had his second wife, Mrs Lu, dress very beautifully and trick Wang Mang by saying she wanted to marry him and bringing him to her home. During the " wedding," Mrs Lu had the under-*zhihu* 支戶 sing and offer liquor.[4] The two *zhihu* came and sang: " One knife draws, knife you, *zhihu* come up and gaze on the cups," signalling the headsmen to hide. After one song they offered liquor, but Wang Mang was not yet drunk, so the *zhihu* sang another line: "After singing, come back." They came back then and let other *zhihu* sing new songs to continually offer liquor, until Wang Mang was drunk as a pile of mud, whereupon the headsmen killed him.[5] Afterwards, people said, " Mrs Lu beheaded Wang Mang and handed down *daola* to this day."

Does this legend really explain the source of *daola*? " If one wishes to understand the real meaning of wedding songs and folk etiquette, one must know the customs of the patriarchal family."[6] The patriarchal family marked by monogamy is produced in tandem with the production of the primary classes' tyranny and the oppression of the lower classes. Engels wrote, " The overthrow of matriarchy is the failure of the female which has worldwide historical significance."[7] This failure signifies that the female in male-centered families has always been enslaved and maltreated, with males exercising power over the females' life and property. Therefore, between the desperate resistance of females when marrying out and the males managing all difficulties in the course of completing the duties of greeting and marrying, there appeared numerous customs and folk songs which seem to be curious and strange. Very obviously, Tu wedding *daola* can only be the moral creation of the broad Tu masses after they entered patriarchal society. In fact, the legend about Mrs Lu cannot provide the answer as to the real origin of *daola*. Additionally, the reason for this legend, beyond the direct influence of the thought of the rulers, such as Lu Tusi, might also include other factors. Specifically, the Qinghai Tu area's *tusi* policy, rooted formally in the Qing 清 Dynasty, returned many privileges of the primary patriarchal family that were also equally evident in the rich and powerful families such as Lu Tusi's, and women's status in such families might not necessarily have been higher than that of others. LAFARGUE (1936, 12) pointed out:

> The fear of marriage expressed in the songs quoted above was not a feeling engendered by the fear of economic misery, because it

was shared by girls from classes that did not know poverty; no, it was engendered by the terror that life in the patriarchal family inspired.

Mrs Lu was the second wife of Lu Tusi and also was a female slave. Wang Mang, who appears as a monster—exaggerated by people—bullied males, dominated females, and stopped at nothing. He might have wantonly injured or killed people and also might have been thought likely to kidnap Lu Tusi's wife or daughter to make her his wife, and so Lu Tusi might in fact have forced his wife to marry Wang Mang. If this tragedy did indeed befall Mrs Lu, she was unwilling to yield, and that created the opportunity for holding the wedding feast. Because of her brave action of eliminating Wang Mang and at the same time resisting male-powered rule, her name henceforth was connected with Tu wedding customs. This may be possible. If this legend tells things as they really happened, Mrs Lu used her beauty to create a sex-trap in order to behead Wang Mang and rid the people of a scourge; this agrees with local people's versions: "*Daola* was left by Mrs Lu after she had beheaded Wang Mang, so singing *daola* during children's weddings is not propitious." Thus, if this was the case *daola* could not be handed down from one generation to another. This leads us to conclude that we must seek the real reason for the creation of this legend from another angle—from the social background on which patriarchy is based.

2. An Early Tu Wedding Legend

The entire Minhe wedding process may be divided into preparations to receive the bride on the part of the groom's side, sending the bride, greeting the bride, holding the wedding and thanking feasts, etc.—in other words, several episodes. Depending on a wedding's particular timing, the content and form, and the motion and tone of the *daola* vary greatly. Of particular note are the majority of *daola* sung by women during the night when the bride is taken to the groom's house; these songs are out of harmony, to the point of clashing, with the modern dignified and solemn wedding ceremonies. The reason for such a "strange and peculiar" etiquette and custom is rooted in a historical change in Tu marriage policy that gave new content and a different character to wedding customs. We will first examine a Tu folk legend concerning the wedding, and this may help us find the strands of wedding development.

On the day the bride marries out,[8] her family hosts a sumptuous feast to entertain all male and female guests who come to see the bride

off and bid her farewell. In the courtyard are placed a pair of beautiful variegated cabinets on which are placed white felt, a new silk quilt-cover, clothing, towels, shoes, socks, etc.; these constitute the bride's dowry and gifts from well-wishers. When the bride marries, why must she be dowried with a pair of variegated cabinets? An ancient legend told widely in the area explains:

> In ancient times, it was not the bride who married out, but rather, the groom entered the bride's home. When young men were going to the girl's home, they were given a horse.[9] But not long afterwards, the young men would ride back to their parents' home and the bride's family had no way to persuade them to stay. What was to be done? Only when men and women live together can younger generations multiply! The young men could not be persuaded to stay, so it was decided to send the bride to the young men's homes; but then the young women were not agreeable. Then families invited the most skilled carpenters and painters, who made as the girl's dowry a pair of cabinets on which were painted the most beautiful patterns. When the girl went to the young man's she felt homesick, but when she gazed at the variegated cabinets, she was reluctant to leave, so continued to live with the young man. A contemporary *daola* says: " First marry in the son then marry out the daughter, marry in the son and marry out the daughter, success and happiness are in every field," which indicates this occurred in ancient times.

This ancient legend reflects in a lively and vivid manner the transformation process from the matrilineal commune to monogamy. " Following the wife to her home "[10] indicates men going to live in the woman's home; this could only happen in the matrilineal commune, when productive forces were not well developed. That men rode on horses to women's homes indicates animal husbandry was developed and the tribe within a matrilineal commune excluded consanguineous marriage. This sort of unstable marriage pattern exhibits the characteristics of spouse marriage [i.e., one husband had one wife]. As social productive forces continued to develop, social divisions of labor went further, including for example the carpenter and painter—the professional handicraftsmen—as is seen in this legend. In activities of social production, men came to have more and more important roles. They possessed personal property and their social status was continually raised. Thus males then had the economic means to purchase wives and/or kidnap them in order to organize families and set up a separate

kitchen (make a fresh start). This also suggests matriarchal society was in the process of gradually crumbling. The girls in the legend above went on to live with the young men in order to retain the variegated cabinets, which indicates that monogamous patriarchy had defeated the forces of matriarchy. However, during the time when Tu wedding patterns were undergoing fundamental changes, kidnapping marriages also occurred, and this continued in some form or other until liberation.

People say that when there was either a solar or a lunar eclipse, the engaged young man could race to the girl's home to " kidnap " her.[11] The young man had to be mounted on a fast horse, and he took one comb wrapped in a piece of red cloth. When he reached the girl's home, he first threw the comb on the roof of the house and then shouted, " Quickly send out the girl who is engaged to me! " He shouted this several times, then turned the horse and galloped away. Meanwhile, the girl's family would realize the young man had come to kidnap the girl, and while scolding the young man they would mount a horse to run after him. If they did not have a horse, they had to run after him on foot. The next day, the young man would invite the matchmaker and several old men and go to the girl's home to ask for the girl, and the father of the bride had to send her to the groom's home. In the case of a kidnapped girl there was no need to send betrothal gifts, and the groom's family was not required to host a feast. There also was no need to choose a propitious date, because at the time of solar and lunar eclipses the world had returned to the state of an earlier, turbid world, and during such eclipses kidnapping a girl did not violate the law; hence there was no need to send betrothal gifts or host a banquet.

People say that before liberation " eclipse kidnappings " happened mostly among people too poor to afford marriage. This suggests that, the poorer people were, the more dependent they were on the early form of kidnapping marriage, and so the kidnapping form of marriage was retained. Not only does Tu folk legend indicate this, but also from present-day wedding customs we can still see some remnants of early Tu wedding patterns.

3. *Daola* and Tu Wedding Customs

The wedding prologue begins on the morning of the day the bride is to marry out, when the matchmaker appears bearing the chest of a sheep,[12] forty large, steamed bread buns, and several betrothal gifts loaded on a donkey. This represents the successful conclusion of the matchmaker's efforts to build a bridge and act as intermediary between the two families. The matchmaker acts as judge between the

two families in situations where, on the one hand, the bride's side has demanded certain betrothal gifts on the basis of the bride's social status, and, on the other hand, the groom's side has paid a certain amount of bride-price. The matchmaker must act as judge and pass judgement as to what is right and wrong, and he " sets the tune with one beat of the gong " [i.e., his judgement is final]. Thus, on this day, the matchmaker shoulders an all-important task. If the betrothal gifts brought by the matchmaker prove unsatisfactory to the bride's side, or if the sheep chest is not so attractive, this will anger the bride's side's guests and the *agu* (girls who share the same surname and are from the same village as the bride), who will then form a group and *laomei siguo* (abuse the matchmaker)[13] and heap all their resentment upon the matchmaker. Of primary significance is the fact that the matchmaker is the middle witness in the " buying and selling " marriage, thus there has been the custom of abusing the matchmaker.[14] Today, following the development of the times, free marriage in Tu areas has gradually replaced the buying and selling marriage, and the custom of abusing the matchmaker is seldom seen.[15]

When dusk falls, the groom's side sends two people to the bride's home to greet and bring the bride back to the groom's home. The two are generally young men closely related to the groom. The two carry out whatever instructions they have been given by the groom's family, lead one horse,[16] bring ornaments (golden flower and silver hair clasps or hairpins), the " redeeming " clothing (such clothing might include an expensive silk robe that the groom's family has borrowed from others and must return, hence the name), several yuan 元 of many small coins, and several packs of needles. In the darkness of night, they set off for the bride's home. When they draw near the bride's home, they must turn off whatever light they have and hide in some nearby place. One of the two holds the horse and waits while the other secretly attempts to enter the central room of the bride's home without being seen. If the first is able to enter, then the second, leading the horse, can come a bit later without much difficulty.

But generally it is very difficult for the two *xike* (horse-leading men)[17] to enter the bride's courtyard secretly. When the two *xike* leave and near the bride's home, many female relatives and all the village *agu* have gathered about the bride. The bride laments grievously and repeatedly sings *aihou* (bitter marriage):[18]

Aihou . . .
Today I, a know-nothing daughter, am married out; how can I gain all Mother-in-law's family's satisfaction?

In another's home how can I wander about?
I'll be just like a poker jabbed here and there!
I'll be just like vegetable oil, poured here and there . . .

Female guests and *agu*, who have come to see the bride off, sit with the weeping bride and plan and prepare ways to savagely punish the two *xike*. Several girls will be posted in the distance to keep watch, and as they discern some signs of the *xike's* approach, they race back to report and lock the courtyard gate tightly, forcing the *xike* to pace about outside. Some girls climb up on the roof and pour water down on the *xike*. The *xike* continually plead with the girls, but the girls continue to taunt them and refuse to open the door. Finally the hostess of the bride's home comes out, has the *xike* give the girls some money and needles, and then permits them to enter.[19] But it is to the advantage of the *xike* to be alert, for some *agu*'s hand may reach out and snatch away their hats or something else, which proves extremely embarrassing!

The two *xike* then proceed to the central room, where they first offer three cups of liquor to the bride's maternal uncle and explain that they have come to take the bride and are respectfully representing the groom's side, and they invite all the bride's guests to the groom's home, then present the redeeming clothing and the ornaments to the bride's parents. They also announce the time the bride will be taken away and the time she should mount the horse, and then they sit on the *kang*. But they have hardly been seated before the *agu*[20] swarm around the window opening onto the *kang* and a sound consisting of tens of tones mixed together gushes over the *xike*. In Tu, this is called *mori kudiao ni siguo* (abuse the fellows who lead a horse to take the bride away). An example follows:

If the two of you are mute,
Now's the time to make some sound;
If the two of you are deaf,
Now's the time to hear;
If you are wild dogs,
Now's the time to bark!
Like uncivilized savages,
(Do you) come to rob people?
Like conscienceless bandits,
(Do you) come to steal?
Such savages as you,
Must be severely scolded!

This is left by Śākyamuni Buddha,
Left by Mrs Lu.
Grab the wooden shovels and come,
Quickly shovel them out;
Grab the broom and come,
Quickly sweep them out . . .

The more the women scold the angrier their hearts become, and the angrier they become, the higher the pitch of their voices. If no family clan men protected the two *xike*, the *agu* would desire to swallow them! Though the atmosphere is very intense, the abuse has order as well as melody. Its content is, except for the above paragraph of abuse, generally improvised—especially when the *agu* seize on some weak point or scandal involving the groom's parents or families. In such cases, they are exposed incisively and vividly and with acrimonious penetration.[21] To summarize, women dominate everything at this point and launch spirited attacks on a male-biased marriage policy!

Although this is a custom, at this moment the two *xike* feel as if they were sitting on a bed of nails; observing their pitiful figures, people do not know whether to laugh or cry. In order to lessen the tension, the two *xike* take out thread and needles from their pockets and give them in turns to the *agu*. But how can this solve the problem?! The abuse, characterized by a violent quality, continues for a long time. Later, songs become more relaxed, and it is only toward the conclusion that there is some suggestion of violence. The songs, etiquette, and customs which appear at this time have the obvious character of showing the females set on defeating the *xike* with their wits. At one point several young *agu* hold a serving tray in their hands on which are two large pieces of bread, and beside each a cutting knife. The *agu* carry this before the *xike* and, in a long, thin, soft tune sing:

Fetching-bride brothers, come to cut the steamed bread,
(If you) know how then with one cutting knife, cut into four pieces,
(If you don't know) how,
Then take the redeeming money to hire others to cut.[22]
With an ebony handle and a blade of steel,
(If you) know how then with one cutting knife, cut into four pieces
Two cutting knives cut into eight pieces . . .

If the two *xike* are clever, they hurry to think of self-deprecating things to say in order to avoid cutting, and put some small change on the tray and plead with the *agu*. If the *xike* actually cut the bread with two

cutting knives into eight pieces, then the two *xike*'s heads will be covered with the tray [i.e., the women push the tray down on top of the *xike*'s heads], and they will be forced to eat all the bread. Also, the females will sing an abusing tune to ridicule them. Such tunes compare the *xike* to dogs and cats. The " Gnawing Bones Song " goes as follows:

In the river, waves rose up,
In the river, waves rose up.
On the crest of the wave drifted a pile of wood,
Quickly dredge up the wood,
Carry home and build a pigsty,
Feed one big fat pig,
Slaughter then hold a sumptuous feast.
Who to invite to attend?
The bride's maternal uncle.
The cats that crawled up on the table to lick and eat are from where?
(They've) run from the groom's home.
The wild dogs that are gnawing the bones have run here from where?
(They've) run from the groom's home.

At this juncture the *agu* place several pig bones on the tray as they sing and force the *xike* to gnaw the bones. If they do not wish to gnaw the bones, they must take out redeeming money, otherwise they will be scolded again.

" Bayang Ninth Month Song " differs from the foregoing in both form and tune but the main meaning is the same. The content and singing form demonstrate more fully the creative ability of the females. The *agu* turn one square table over, mould five vegetable-oil flour lamps,[23] and place one lamp on each of the four legs as well as on the table's center. The lamps are lit and, circling the table, the females sing:

Bayang ninth month, nuoyan ninth month,[24]
From which place left on the ninth month?
Beijing Wutai left ninth month,[25]
Took what and left on the ninth month?
Took gold and left on the ninth month.
. . .

In Tu *bayang* means " rich " and *nuoyan* means " officials," and

are the same as in Mongolian. The ninth month is the time for various industrial crops to ripen and be harvested and the season for grain to be stored. It is also a time for people's life to be very full and for people's spirits to be high, so the ninth month is a theme Tu women delight in and sing about during weddings. The five lit lamps indicate sacrifice and praise to such deities as the Earth God, Gate God, Kitchen God, and so on, but the last lamp is dedicated to the *agu* on the bride's side, which undoubtedly indicates that during a certain period of social development, the social status of women was high.

This song has six stanzas altogether; the *agu* place their hands on one another's shoulders and circle to the left when singing one stanza, then circle to the right when they sing the next stanza. The place-name Beijing is sung first, then Lanzhou 蘭州,[26] then Nianbo 輾伯 (presently situated in Ledu 樂都 County, Qinghai), Guanting 官亭,[27] and their own village. The song not only mentions the place-names from higher status to lower but also praises various precious goods, such as gold, black tea, cotton, grain, vegetable oil, etc. When this song is about to end, the *agu* have the *xike feng* 封 the lamps.[28] At this moment the tune suddenly becomes rapid and abusive and they begin to scold the *xike* again: " (If there is) no vegetable oil then (go to) the oil press one time; (If there is) no flour then (go to) the mill one time. We've got dry mouths and sour stomaches, why not come to *feng* the lamps? " With the *xike* unable to *feng* the lamps, the *agu* won't desist abusing until the *xike* pay some redeeming money.

If the *xike* hand out redeeming money at this time, the *agu* can tolerate the situation. But when the time comes for the song " The Five-Colored Bird," the *agu* order the *xike* to leave without any regard for politeness! This song is sung in the form of questions and answers. A few people disguise themselves as those driving the bird, and how ingenious the bird is! The five-colored bird refuses to leave, and the *agu* try to drive it through the door:

Drivers: Red bird,
I'll let you go away quickly and fly away!
Red bird,
Over what sand will you fly?
Red Bird: Red bird,
I'll fly over land holding the red-chopstick eating feast!
Drivers: Red bird,
You'd better fly happily before it's too late!
If you stay and refuse to leave,
I'll take the red willow branch to drive you!

This song has a total of five stanzas, and the bird appears as red, yellow, green, white, and black—altogether five colors—and the drivers hold in turn a narrow-leaved oleaster thorn, a green willow-branch, a piece of firewood, and a black poker to drive the five-colored bird away. This song originated years ago, is sung purely in the Tu language,[29] and can only be heard in some rather remote areas. If people are puzzled by these eccentric and unusual customs, then the following two wedding songs just happen to explain why the females are so cruel to the *xike*.

Before they marry out, how free the girls live, how special and beautiful their clothing is![30] The song " Muji Bird " goes:[31]

How black the propitious bird's feathers are,
The girl's hair is blacker.
How red the propitious bird's red corona is,
The girl's knitting wool is redder.
How yellow the propitious bird's neck is,
The girl's neck is yellower.
How black the propitious bird's two shoulders are,
The girl's short gown is blacker.
How green the propitious bird's waist is,
The girl's short variegated coat is greener.
How beautiful the propitious bird's feet are,
The girl's variegated shoes are more beautiful.

The propitious bird, very beautiful, resembles a woodpecker, with its body a riot of color and a red corona on its head. When it merrily sings, the red corona fans out. Tu girls compare themselves to the propitious bird, praising themselves with a light and lively tune to demonstrate their noble and pure beauty. But as soon as the time comes for the girls to marry out, how sorrowful and bitter life is and how melancholy the mood!

The song " Kara Kajigai " (Black Magpie) is dreary and very brief and sung in a voice that almost weeps;[32] one woman's miserable situation and plaintive feeling is unburdened.

Black magpie,
Black magpie,
Please land here,
Take a message for me.

Tell my grandfather:
Let him well preserve my headwear;

How beautiful I am when wearing that headwear!
But today my head is wrapped in only a piece of tattered cloth.

How fond my grandfather has been of me,
His heart has been as long as a cotton thread.
But the grandfather in Mother-in-law's home,
(His) heart is just like a black thorn jabbing, hurting me!

I run up a high steep mountain,
Longing always for my homeland where I was reared as a child.
But I can't even cross the Yellow River before me,
Further away lies the obstructing Datong River.[33]

I can only squat on the banks,
The moon rises up, scattering white light on the water surface.
From the girl's eyes,
Tears flow without end. . . .

This wedding song has five paragraphs; in the course of the song, the girl asks the magpie to take the message to her former home and give it to her grandfather, grandmother, father, mother, and older sister to keep such clothing as headwear, short gown, long robe, skirt, chest, scarf, and so on that she used to like to wear, in the hope that one day she will be able to return to her former home and dress up. The lines between the songs are filled with nostalgia and boundless love for the members of the home she has left; she also grieves over all the maltreatment she has suffered in her mother-in-law's family. Judging by the ideological content of this song, I would say this girl was literally stolen from her former home by males using some sort of violent force; at this time she must still be quite young for she still has an older sister at home,[34] and besides, generally Tu girls take all of their clothing and ornaments to their mother-in-law's home when they marry, but if this girl was kidnapped, if would explain why the clothing and ornaments she was not wearing were left at home. When she arrived in such circumstances and suffered various torments, she often longed for her homeland, but the river blocked the way home, so when she saw the magpie in the sky she began singing this sad song.

When the bride is about to mount the horse and set off, *agu* of the same village tightly grasp the horse's reins so as to prevent the horse from moving and sing the above song, for they realize what type of situation the bride will be living in from this moment on. The scene this song describes is the destiny of a woman enslaved in the patriarchal family.

Nowadays only a few old women among the Tu can sing the song "Kara Kajigai," but they only sing the words and do not know the meaning of what they are singing, or can only guess at the meaning of a few lines of the song, for the song is in an early Tu language. Today, following the development and evolution of the Tu language, it is very difficult to translate the song; from this we may infer that this song dates to antiquity.

On this night, the bride's family has the two *xike* do "obeisance to the five directions." First two gifted singers from the bride's side invite the *xike* to come down from the *kang*:

In the sky what sounds three times?
Then what has left? What hasn't left?
In the sky thunder sounds three times,
Then Thunder God and Thunder Goddess left,
The Jade Emperor didn't leave.
Tonight what sounds three times?
What has left? What hasn't left?
Tonight *daola* sounds three times,
The *zhihu* left,
The two *xike* haven't left. . . .

At this time, the two *xike* cannot continue to refuse to leave the *kang* and must accede to the other side. They do "obeisance to the five directions" with the bride's side's singers leading and kneel and do obeisance to the east, west, south, north, and middle—the Five Direction Lord, the Gate Lord, the Kitchen Lord, and so on. At this point, the two *xike* must continue suffering because they must answer all sorts of difficult questions put to them by the bride's side, all the while kneeling to do obeisance to the lords and also to beg the pardon of the bride's side. Though the two *xike* now have two new rivals (i.e., the two singers representing the bride's side), the women's vengeance is not ended; in some remote mountain villages, when the *xike* are doing obeisance to the Five Direction Lord, some girls pass a large frozen bun of steamed bread through the end of a stick and beat the *xike* with it. The *xike* must endure this, while kneeling and pleading with the women.

Additionally, females sing "Alima" [Alimar]. In Tu, this word means "fruit"; not only is *alima* the first word of each line of the song, but use of the word also heightens the spirit of the wedding and suggests young men and women have the pronounced flavor of life. When performed, "Alima" is a combination of singing and dancing.

It is a graceful and sweet song accompanying a graceful and plain dance. Activities associated with production are also introduced, as well as the clothing style of the Tu, Hui, and Tibetan peoples. This is done in the form of asking and answering questions and carefully imitating the poses of various tasks and stages in the growing of crops, e.g., scattering dung, ploughing, seeding, growing green seedlings, the blossoming of flowers. At the end, dye is made with large red flowers, a large piece of cloth is made, and this cloth is made into national dress and put on. It is all performed remarkably true to life! The beauty of the female Tu is extolled and praised endlessly:

Alima, Tu women wear on their heads,
Alima, pearl hats;
Alima, Tu women wear on their bodies,
Alima, green cotton coats;
Alima, Tu women slipping over their bodies,
Alima, black short gowns;
Alima, Tu women wear on their bodies,
Alima, red skirts;
Alima, Tu women wear on their feet,
Alima, pointed shoes.

Additionally, a description and imitation of Hui, Tibetan, and other national folk clothing are vividly reproduced in a lifelike manner —even the way in which they walk and their postures are reproduced. You can see the Tibetan woman putting on her pointed hat, wearing a dark coat and black cattlehide shoes. The Hui woman puts on a green veil, wears a variegated coat and flat shoes. If the earlier wedding songs always have a distinct mood of female resistance to males, then songs such as "Alima" bring people into a happier atmosphere, which matches the wedding's happy and harmonious mood, leading people to feel that holding a wedding is also a happy thing for the bride's family. This is because tunes such as "Alima" originated at a later time, and also because they are sung in Chinese. This kind of time boundary line is evident in the fact that wedding songs are continually being composed and have a completely different spirit and artistic style as compared with such sorrowful songs as " Kara Kajigai."

Other than the above-mentioned songs, on this night the *agu* also sing " Round Eggs," " Planting Highland Barley," etc. Then the guests happily turn to the moment for the bride to mount the horse. According to Tu custom, a square table is placed in the north main room, and the bride is helped out of the room where she has been lam-

enting, and she sits on the table. She is given a handful of new chopsticks to hold in her left hand, which she throws behind her with her right hand. Meanwhile the bride laments: " This handful of red chopsticks sister holds, she tosses them into younger brother's golden storehouse." If the thrown chopsticks land one upon another, this betokens that the old home will later become luckier and happier. Very clearly this ritual indicates that the power of managing family property and distributing food—following transformation of the marriage system—has been transferred from the sister's control to the brother's hand.

When the bride mounts the horse, the *agu* sing " The Mounting Horse Song " in addition to the " Kara Kajigai." The words of the song are:

Your horse doesn't have rabbit ears,
My girl won't mount;
Your horse doesn't have bright-star eyes,
My girl won't mount;
Your horse doesn't have a chimney nose,
My girl won't mount;
Your horse doesn't have a cart-wheel back, [i.e., is not fat]
My girl won't mount;
Your horse doesn't have post legs;
My girl won't mount;
Your horse doesn't have a broom tail,
My girl won't mount;
Your horse doesn't have a golden saddle,
My girl won't mount;
Your horse doesn't have silver stirrups,
My girl won't mount.

This song is not as sorrowful as " Kara Kajigai " and suggests that to greet the bride, the bride needs a horse with a raised head,[35] golden saddle, and silver stirrups, and shows that the bride wishes the groom's family were wealthier.

The bride mounts the horse. Assisting the bride, the two *xike* then lead the horse and hurriedly rush to the bride's mother-in-law's home. The guests who have come to see the bride off carry the pair of variegated cabinets and arrive at the groom's gate at the same time. The greeting that follows is a humorous skit in the wedding process.

The bride is taken to the groom's home, where the women of the groom's family, dressed in beautiful clothes, gather in front of the

bride and, raising their graceful voices and smiling bright smiles, sing:

The bride's *bayang shangtu* is raised![36]
Moved one pine tree from Big X Family's back garden,[37]
Plant in Small X Family's back garden,
Roots penetrate thousands of *zhang* 丈 deep,[38]
Branches spread thousands of *zhang* high.
The bride's *bayang shangtu* is raised!
The parrot wrapped with green silk,
Is greeted on the silver trellis of Small X Family . . .

On an intersection of lanes or paths only several steps away from the bride's home, a flaming fire has been lit. The bride is assisted off the horse by three male guests who have accompanied her; she is carried over the fire, making sure her feet do not touch the ground in order to avoid evil.[39] After avoiding evil, "golden *dou* 斗 and silver *sheng* 昇" are carried out from the groom's home and the bride sits on them.[40] At this time the groom's side asks a middle-aged woman who has both children and grandchildren, and who has experienced no disease or misfortune, to come and comb the bride's hair three times with unusually soft and fast strokes.[41] The two females who have accompanied the bride then quickly stretch out their hands in an effort to snatch away the comb. But at all costs the comb must be kept away from the people of the bride's side! People say that once the comb is snatched away, later the bride will not accept any discipline in her mother-in-law's home and will be her own master. This seems to be one detail that is out of character, but it indicates whether or not the bride, who has just been brought to the gate of the groom's home and who has not yet begun the life of a wife to her husband, can triumph and so gain supremacy in her future life as a wife, and for this reason the groom's family try with all their might to force her to be completely submissive. It is this conflict that is referred to in this custom of fighting over the comb.

After this ritual of hair combing, the bride is carried into the straw room,[42] where her hair is recombed; she is dressed up again, and all her hair is coiled up high and ornamented with golden flowers and silver hairpins. She then puts on a long silk robe, and, finally, she is assisted into the bridal chamber.

Meanwhile, guests who have accompanied the bride are stopped by the guests from the groom's side, who hold a big, square table in the doorway to keep the bride's guests from entering. As the groom's side blocks the gateway, some men representing the groom sing:

The first song, we sing for you,
On this happy day's wonderful moment,
Greeting, greeting, busily greeting,
Big X Family's maternal uncles enter quickly. . . .

The bride's side quickly unloads the dowry of the pair of variegated cabinets, places them on the doorway table, and sings in response:

Little men set off from Small X Family's lowly earth,
Come to Big X Family,
Raising our heads to gaze,
On the green dragon's waist is a village nest,
In the phoenix's mouth opens a rich door
At the moment of entering the door we won't enter empty-handed
We bring gold, silver, money, and valuables and enter the door,
Heaven and earth location, celestial bodies' location,
In which direction lies your rich storehouse?
Where to place the most variegated cabinets?. . . .

Following this song, the groom's side leads the way and the bride's side files in and the variegated cabinets are placed in the bridal chamber by people from the two sides.

By this time dawn is breaking, so to the sound of firecrackers the groom and the bride come out and do obeisance to the Sky and Earth. After this marriage ritual, the groom's family entertains the bride's side with liquor and tea.

The groom's family has arranged a sumptuous feast. First the bride's maternal uncle is invited to sit on the left-side seat of the most important table in the main room. The groom's maternal uncle is invited to sit on the right side, to accompany the bride's maternal uncle. The matchmaker is invited to sit on the *kang* with some older relatives of the groom, and then other guests take their seats in order.

Two ***zhihu*** sing ***daola***, asking guests to sit in their seats and offer liquor. After guests have had some cups of heated liquor, the ***zhihu*** return and sing facing the two maternal uncles at the most important table (the first table).

. . . . . .
People leave children and grandchildren, trees leave roots,
At children's weddings, maternal uncles are dear.
Two maternal uncles, please open golden mouths, leave golden words,
Two little [insignificant] men go up three steps,

Carrying the fragrant tray on their heads to draw golden words. . . .

The two maternal uncles then do open their mouths (i.e., sing), expressing their thanks to the host for his lavish hospitality; praying for blessings to come after this happy day, that the home's larder be filled with grain and the fold be filled with sheep; and blessing the new couple with the hope that they live happily and live to a ripe old age in conjugal bliss. When the two maternal uncles are singing *daola*, the groom must appear and bow three times. When this ends, *zhihu* come up and sing: " Two little men go back three steps, carrying the fragrant tray on their heads to draw golden words." In this way, between the host and the guest, one gives and the other receives, and thus the *daola* never stops. When the matchmaker's turn to present *daola* comes, the two *zhihu* sing in this way, expressing gratitude:

Above there is a Milky Way Bridge,
The Thunder God and Goddess built the bridge,
The sun and moon, two lucks, crossed the bridge.[43]
Below there is a golden rocky bridge,
Sage Lu Ban built the bridge,[44]
Zhang Guo Lao 張果老 rode a donkey and crossed the bridge.[45]
In the home there is a marriage bridge,
His Excellency Matchmaker built the bridge,
The two sides' relatives crossed the bridge. . . .

Then the matchmaker sings the usual, blessing the groom's family with the hope that they will be lucky, that their wishes will come true, and that they will be happy. *Zhihu* appear and draw the matchmaker's golden words [i.e., the *zhihu* accept the good wishes from the matchmaker] and then in order they present *daola* and accept good wishes from the other guests at all the tables. During this the *zhihu* come in pairs constantly to add richer and more varied content, offering guests liquor to liven things up. Here is the drinking song " Seven Comparisons ":

Parents are as the overhead blue sky,
Children are as a golden mountain;
Brothers are as an arrow plumed with a vulture feather touching the string,
The arrow shaft is to shoot and the feather is to help sustain;
Sisters-in-law are as a peony tree in the back garden,
Peony flowers are to blossom and the green leaves help sustain;
The clans are as a courtyard lamp[46]

That hangs up high and illuminates inside and outside [affairs inside and outside the family];
Relatives and friends are as a sailing ship on South Ocean
Crossed the ocean on the same ship, thus forged 500 years of predestined fate;
Maternal uncles are as pine trees on a green rocky mountain,
Green in winter and summer, always green all ages.

When the two *zhihu* come and with sonorous and sweet voices sing heartily " Five Persuasions," the noise and uproar from those seated suddenly stops and all quietly listen:

The first persuasion is for parents to hear,
Parents' hearts are turned to the children,
Children's hearts are turned to stone;
More children reared the more trouble,
Less children reared the less trouble,
No children reared worries rotting hearts. . . .

This drinking song advises children to be filial to parents, advises brothers and sisters-in-law to live in harmony but not separately. Planting crops, doing business, getting along with people should all be done by making a division in labor and taking turns. Younger brothers who are attending school are advised to write large Chinese characters in squares and write small characters in bright beauty as well as study diligently. Girls are advised to learn superb embroidery skills.

The *zhihu* also sing the following songs: " Offering Grapes," " Maternal Uncles Want To Consume Rice-Grain Wine," " Eight Immortals," " Ten Scenes," etc. There are too many songs to give all their words here.

When the drinking feast is about to finish, guests from the bride's side take out from the bride's variegated cabinet many pillows, shoes, socks, etc., that have been made by the bride for the groom and old and young people of the groom's family and the guests. To show appreciation of the mother's good will, the groom sends two pieces of cloth and some amount of money to the bride's mother.

When all the guests who have escorted the bride (to the groom's home) are feeling good from drink, they begin bidding farewell and set off from the groom's home. In pairs, they link arms and sing *daola* as they leave. And as one song falls, another rises to resound over the village . . .

At the leaving-gate moment we don't leave empty-handed,

Disease, pain, and calamity are brought out through the gate.
On today's happy day,
Big X Family's lanes,
The raised dust is three *chi* 尺 thick,[47]
Within three days, will change into gold
For all generations to enjoy. . . .

The entire wedding, up to this point of the marriage, thus comes to a satisfactory conclusion.[48]

NOTES

1. [Now in the Honggu 洪固 Region of Gansu Province, which neighbors Minhe County.]

2. [*Mang* is Chinese and translates as " monstrous serpent " (also often translated as python and boa). It is also worthwhile to note the similarity between this explanation of the origin of Tu wedding songs (there are many and the one given by Ma differs in some respects from others) and a legend concerning the origin of Dongxiang 東鄉 wedding songs. In the latter version, a Mrs Lu defeats an evil boa who has ravaged the people and whom she seduces with the promise of marriage. After getting the boa dead drunk, she calls in soldiers who have been lying in wait and they slay the serpent.

We suspect, however, that SCHRAM (1954, 90–91) offers the best explanation for the mythification of Mrs Lu:

> The women of the Monguors have legends that are in this [assertive] tradition. I have recorded one of them in my previous study, *Le mariage chez les T'ou-jen*, describing the captivating song sung at Monguor marriages and all festivals, recalling the daring exploit of the wife of the chief of the Lu clan, who killed a brigand chief and was rewarded by the emperor. The story goes that the county between Liangchou and P'ingfan was infested by the brigand Ta Kuan-ch'un and his followers and all communications between the two cities were cut. In this crisis, the wife of the Lu T'u-ssu lured the bandits into an ambush. She pitched a tent, spread red felt rugs out on the ground, and dressed some of her maids in transparent gowns. Wearing golden bracelets, playing musical instruments, and singing local songs, they " welcomed " the bandits. When the bandits were drunk, the maids beat copper cooling cauldrons as a signal and the soldiers who had been lying in ambush rushed out and loaded the chief of the bandits, his lieutenants, and seven others with chains. When the captives recovered from their drunken stupor and began to struggle, the soldiers flogged them to death, cut off their heads, and set them up on posts along the highway of Wuchaoling. The brother of the brigand chief, when he heard the news, cut his own throat. The brave wife of the T'u-ssu then sent troops to exterminate the rest of the brigands or force them to submit.
>
> When the emperor heard of this exploit, he presented the noble lady with a thousand ounces of silver, precious golden ornaments, a complete set of hairpins, and earrings and four pieces of flowered silk. He ordered his officials to build her a seven-storied mansion at Lien-ch'eng. She was also presented with an inscription reading " She displayed faithfulness," and given a grant of fifty *ch'ing* of land,

the revenues of which were to provide her with " toilet expenses," the Chinese expression equivalent to the English " pin money."

Ma also seems unaware of the following account concerning Wang mang (SCHRAM 1954, 27):

> According to still another version, the Lu clan is assigned an even more ancient origin; the story is that the chief of this tribe was responsible for capturing the terrible usurper Wang Mang, who was responsible for the interregnum between the first Han dynasty, ending in A.D. 9, and the second Han dynasty, beginning A.D. 23. The privileges of the Lu clan chiefs are said to date from this time. To this day two human hands, shrunken, dry, and blackened, reputed to be the hands of Wang Mang, are preserved in the temple of the protecting deity of the Lu clan. I have myself seen them more than once, tied on a stick and covered with a " scarf of felicity " (*khatag*).

More research is certainly needed, however, to explain how the above moved into the universe of Dongxiang folklore (if in fact it did).]

3. [Qing Dynasty feudal title.]

4. Under-*zhihu* are runners for the *yamen* 衙門 (government office in feudal China). Here, *zhihu* refers specifically to boys and men who, at weddings, bring flagons of heated liquor to guests. *Zhi* is Chinese for " hold " or " carry " and *hu* refers to " person."]

5. [This sentence, translated literally in the text, has two meanings, stemming from the fact that many Chinese words have the same sound but different meanings. Wang Mang thought the *zhihu* were singing, " The first sound is a song for you, *zhihu* come up and gaze upon the liquor cups (in order to be ready to offer more liquor to you)." But in the mind of the *zhihu* the song meant, " One knife slashes you, *zhihu* come up and gaze upon the liquor cups (to see if Wang Mang is drunk enough so that he can be slashed and killed)." The original sentence: *yi daola ya dao ni zhe*, appears in the first sentence of virtually all *daola* and may be translated as: " The first sound is a song for you."

" Headsmen " refers to local leaders who were hiding, waiting to dispatch Wang Mang.]

6. LAFARGUE (1936, 22). The full sentence in the original is: " Pour comprendre le sens réel des chansons et des cérémonies populaires du mariage, il faut connaître les mœurs de la famille patriarcale, telles que nous les ont préservées les pays slaves."

7. Friedrich Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, p. 54.

8. [Here, " marry out " has the literal meaning of the bride leaving her home and going to live with the groom's family. It is in a very real sense a final farewell to her home and family; opportunities for future visits may be very infrequent.]

9. Some say they were also given delicious food.

10. [We assume Ma is referring here to the line of the *daola* quoted just above, which could be restated as: "A long time ago the son-in-law came to live with our daughter, but later, daughters left their parents' home and went to live in their husbands' homes."]

11. [In this watered-down form, this only amounted to the groom's side foregoing many of the usual wedding expenses.]

12. [To the translators' knowledge, the giving of a hunk of sheep meat is virtually unknown in Minhe Tu regions.]

13. [We have two comments here. Ma often refers to those who abuse the matchmaker and the *xike* as *agu*, which is rather misleading, as all females present may join

in abusing, and these females may range in age from the very young to those more than sixty years of age. In Tu, *agu* would be *a:gu*. Secondly, Ma says *laomei siguo*, which in Tu would be *laumuii sugoo*. In Tu, *laumuii* means matchmaker and *sugoo* is the verb " abuse."]

14. [We gather that Ma is suggesting that in the " beginning " the gifts brought by the matchmaker were not satisfactory, the *agu* were angered, and so the matchmaker was abused, which then became customary.]

15. [The translators are at a loss to understand why the author writes that abusing the matchmaker is seldom seen. (Perhaps the abusing is seen as " backward "?) To our knowledge, in the Tu villages of Minhe, the matchmaker is always abused; this is regarded as an integral part of any wedding. In 1989, the time of this translation, abusing the matchmaker was considered mandatory at weddings. The only exception to this would be the rare case of a bride being from an area that does not have this custom (rare cases of Tu-Hui marriages or, more frequent, Tu-Han marriages), or marriages taking place in cities such as Xining, the provincial capital. Additionally, we are at a loss to understand why the author writes that free marriage has replaced the other form of marriage. Virtually all marriages are arranged by parents (1989), most of the exceptions being a very few of the young people who have government jobs and are working out of the area.]

16. [In fact there are very few horses in these Tu areas today, and if an animal is used it is most likely to be a donkey or mule. In plain areas, tractors, trucks, and jeeps are increasingly being used. In some remote mountain areas, animals must be used.]

17. [In Tu, the two men who come for the bride are called *çike*, which translates as " happy guests " or " rare guests." However, these two men may also be called *tçuguan*, which translates as " taking-bride people ", and more rarely may be called *mori quder ni*, which translates as " horse-leading people."]

18. [To the translators, rendering *aihou* (pronounced the same way in Tu) as " bitter marriage " is improbable. We argue it is a mood verb and is the sound of weeping used to express grief about the approaching " undesired " marriage, grief at leaving parents, apprehension about going to a new, unknown place to live with a stranger, and also fear of sexual relations.]

19. [To our knowledge, it is not girls who are sent to watch for the arrival of the *xike* but, rather, young boys, and pouring water on the *xike* is almost never seen. Also, the hostess does not come out to reconcile the *xike* with the abusing women. The *xike* are generally not allowed in until they proffer a certain amount of money and needles.]

20. [Again, not merely the *agu* but the female guests.]

21. [The acid nature of the scolding is severe. The *xike*'s parentage may be questioned (sacred to the Tu on any other occasion) and scoldings may turn scatological, e.g., " Where were you just now, eating in the toilet? " However, the *xike* must remain stoic, for any indication on their part that the scolders have touched a raw nerve is met with great glee on the part of the latter, who then seek to expand on that theme.]

22. [Here, " redeeming money " refers to the small change the *xike* give the scolding women to pacify them.]

23. [Lamps are made by hand out of flour, vegetable oil, and cotton wicks.]

24. [The ninth month refers to the lunar calendar and not the Gregorian calendar. In Tu *bayang* would be *bajaŋ* and *nuoyan* would be *nojan*.]

25. [Wutai 五台 refers to the famous Buddhist shrine, Wutai Mountain, located in Shanxi 山西 Province. We have no explanation for Beijing Wutai.]

26. [Capital of Gansu Province.]

27. [A general term for the southern part of Minhe County where most Minhe

Tu dwell.]

28. [*Feng* the lamps may be translated as " seal the lamps " (which means to put a cover or shade around the lamp) or more probably as " confer the lamps upon the deities or places."

29. [No Chinese is used.]

30. [In fact, the Tu of Guanting/Sanchuan dress in a manner identical to that of peasant Han. The Tu of this region (quite unlike the Tu of Huzhu County) gave up/lost almost all national dress decades ago.]

31. [The author's *muji* bird is difficult to translate. *Mu* 木 signifies " wood " and *ji* 吉 signifies " luck." But to our knowledge, most Tu sing the song " Dʐindʐə ʂəbau " (Tu for " peacock bird "), which may also be translated as " golden bird," referring to the peacock.]

32. [In Tu, *qara sadʐiɑaii* means " black magpie," and in some areas people say *qara qadʐiɑaii*. This song is commonly sung in eastern Tu regions.]

33. [The Datong River is on the border between Minhe (Qinghai) and Gansu. It is also pronounced Daitong by some.]

34. [The fact the older sister is still at home means she is probably not married, for the norm is that sisters marry in order of their age.]

35. [I.e., a horse that holds its head high.]

36. Before marrying out, Tu girls plait their hair. After marrying, they undo their hair and coil it on top of the head in the shape of a snail. In Tu this is called *shangtu*. [But most refer to it as ʂaŋtou.]

37. " X " represents the bride's home village.

38. [One *zhang*=3 1/3 meters.]

39. According to Tu religion, it is thought that on the road between the bride's home and the groom's home some evil could attack the bride. Those whose animal year is in contradiction to that of the bride must hide themselves as the bride mounts the horse. A bonfire is lit before the groom's courtyard, therefore, so that carrying the bride over the fire will avert evil and thus luck will come. [" Lighting a bonfire before the groom's courtyard " seems to imply the fire would be lit in front of the courtyard gate. A fire is built, to our knowledge, at the intersection of the lane before the home with a larger lane running outside the home. Villages, where virtually all homes are located, have many lanes connecting every home with larger lanes.]

40. This is a ritual held before the bride enters the gate. A square *sheng* is filled with grain or beans and inside money wrapped in red cloth is hidden. The bride then sits on top; this portends that the groom's family will afterwards be happy. [*Dou* is a measure of capacity equalling ten litres, and one *sheng* holds one litre.]

41. [The comb is passed through a part of the bride's hair three times, not the entire mass of her hair.]

42. [Room where straw is stored.]

43. [We doubt the sun and moon are ever likened to luck. More probable is " two extremes." " Luck " 吉 should probably be " extremes " 極. The reason for confusion here may be that the two words have the same sound.]

44. [Lu Ban was an ancient legendary carpenter.]

45. [Zhang Guo Lao is one of the Eight Immortals and is often depicted riding backwards on a donkey.]

46. " Clan " refers to those people within one village who are on intimate terms with the groom's family.

47. [One *chi* equals thirty centimeters.]

48. [The next day will see another full wedding day at the groom's home, with

the main purpose of entertaining the bride's father and another retinue of guests, and it is as complex as what has been described above.]

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