
中国现代婚礼习俗

Wedding Conventions in Modern China

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随着社会的进步，中国的婚礼习俗也在发生着变化。如今，婚礼习俗不像过去那样复杂，简单的结婚方式更受欢迎，但即便如此，一些经典的习俗多多少少延续了下来。

一般来说，现代婚礼分为两个阶段——婚礼前及婚礼当天。那么在这两个阶段，人们需要做些什么呢？

婚礼前，男方首先要到女方家送聘礼。聘礼的形式多样，礼金或金银首饰等。聘礼的贵重程度代表男方的经济条件。过去人们比较看重聘礼的多少。如今，社会在发展，人们的思想逐渐开明，送聘礼时男方也会量力而行。其次，在男方送了聘礼后，女方也会回礼，回礼的多少也视女方的情况而定。

婚礼前一天晚上，女方的亲戚朋友会来家里帮忙布置闺房，多用红色、金色或粉色的气球，以及喜庆的窗花进行装饰。男方亲戚朋友会到婚房布置，在新床上放很多红枣和花生，寓意早生贵子。

婚礼当天的活动主要有以下六大环节：

第一，迎亲。当天上午，男方及亲朋好友来女方家接亲，男方会预先准备数个小红包以迎接女方亲朋好友设置的难关，男方必须一一通过才能成功见到女方，寓意“得到你不容易”。

第二，敬茶。男方到了女方家，双方得向女方父母敬茶，而后女方到了男方家或者婚房，也行一样的礼。敬茶后，双方父母一般会给新郎、新娘红包，寓意大吉大利。

第三，撑红伞出门。一般由伴娘撑着红伞陪新娘出门，坐上婚车，然后女方家会放鞭炮，寓意顺顺利利。之后，新人会和亲戚朋友到附近风景优美的地方摄影留念。

第四，入席。如今新人的婚礼仪式大多在酒店举行。参加婚礼的人会准备好红包在进门时给新人表示祝贺，随后观看新人结婚仪式。

第五，敬酒。仪式结束后，新人会到各桌向大家敬酒致谢。

第六，回礼。婚礼当天，新人会准备一些红包给婚礼中帮助了他们的亲朋好友以表示感谢。此外，也会给每位客人准备一份小礼物。

其实，关于中国现代婚礼习俗，各地会有自己特有的规矩，家庭背景也会影响婚礼细节，但以上提到的习俗一般必不可少。鉴于社会在不断进步，或许中国的婚礼习俗还会有所改变。

生词 Vocabulary

Nouns

习俗	xísú	custom; convention
聘礼	pìnǐ	betrothal gift (from the groom's family to the bride's); bride price
首饰	shǒushi	jewelry; head ornament
闺房	guīfáng	woman's bedroom
婚房	hūnfáng	the newly wedded couple's bedroom or new home
红枣	hóngzǎo	jujube; red date
环节	huánjié	segment; stage of a process
难关	nánguān	difficulty; obstacle
新娘	xīnniáng	bride
新郎	xīnláng	groom
伴娘	bànniáng	bridesmaid
仪式	yíshì	ceremony

Verbs

延续	yánxù	to continue; go on; last
设置	shèzhì	to set up
布置	bùzhì	to arrange or decorate
留念	liúniàn	to commemorate; keep as a souvenir
迎亲	yíngqīn	to send a party to escort the bride to the groom's house (a traditional Chinese wedding custom)
接亲	jiēqīn	to move in with the groom (of a new bride)
入席	rùxí	to host a banquet (a traditional Chinese wedding custom)
寓意	yùyì	to hold symbolism; impart a lesson or moral through an activity or story

Adjectives

开明	kāimíng	open-minded; enlightened
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Adverbs

预先

yùxiān

beforehand; in advance

多多少少

dūodūoshǎoshǎo

to some extent; more or less

Idioms

量力而行

liànglì'érxíng

to do what one can; to act in accordance
with one's capabilities

大吉大利

dàjídàlì

great luck; great profit

必不可少

bìbùkěshǎo

indispensable; essential

早生贵子

zǎoshēngguìzǐ

to give birth to a child soon

语法点 Grammar Points

1. 即便 jíbiàn

conj. “even if,” “even though” or “although”

即便 (jíbiàn) is a conjunction meaning “even if,” “even though,” or “although.” It clarifies that even though one condition exists, another contrasting condition is also true. 即便 (jíbiàn) is the advanced form of 即使 (jíshǐ), a common intermediate conjunction, and mostly appears in written Chinese.

即便 (jíbiàn) frequently conjoins two contrasting conditions or clauses in a sentence. When used in this way, it typically follows the below pattern:

Background Condition + 即便 (jíbiàn) + Counter Condition

Let's look at an example:

如今，简单的结婚方式更受欢迎，但即便如此，一些经典的习俗多多少少延续了下来。

Rújīn, jiǎndān de jiéhūn fāngshì gèng shòu huānyíng, dàn jíbiàn rúcǐ, yīxiē jīngdiǎn de xísú duōduōshǎoshǎo yánxù le xiàláí.

Nowadays simpler weddings are usually preferred, though certain traditional customs have been preserved to some extent.

In this sentence, the first clause introduces the background condition, “如今，简单的结婚方式更受欢迎,” or that simpler weddings are preferred nowadays, and works to contextualize the next clause.

Placed after “但,” “即便” helps to indicate a shift in thought and emphasizes the counter clause, “一些经典的习俗多多少少延续了下来,” which states

that the fact that traditional customs remain preserved to some extent is still true regardless of the background condition.

Here's another example:

那个地区的人民过着幸福的生活，即便经济水平不是很发达。

Nà gè dìqū de rénmín guòzhe xìngfú de shēnghuó, jǐbiàn jīngjì shuǐpíng bù shì hěn fādá.

People in that area live happy lives even though the economic conditions there aren't very good.

In this sentence, the background condition, namely that “那个地区的人民过着幸福的生活,” appears as the first clause in the sentence. Because 即便 is used, we know that this statement will remain true regardless of the counter condition presented in the second clause, which is that “经济水平不够发达,” or that the economic condition of the area isn't very good.

即便 is also commonly placed at the beginning of a sentence to introduce a background condition, which is followed by a counter condition accompanied by 还 (hái) or 也 (yě).

When used in this way, 即便 (jǐbiàn) follows the below structure:

即便 (jǐbiàn) + Background Condition + 还 (hái) / 也 (yě) + Counter Condition

Let's take another look at the example sentence above, now restructured to present 即便 (jǐbiàn) at the beginning:

即便经济水平不是很发达，那个地区的人民还过着幸福的生活。

Jíbiàn jīngjì shuǐpíng bù shì hěn fādá, nà gè dìqū de rénmin hái guòzhe xìngfú de shēnghuó.

Even though the economic conditions in that area aren't very good, the people there live happy lives.

In both of the example sentences above, the meaning remains the same whether 即便 links the first and second clause, or appears at the beginning of the sentence.

2. 视... 情况而定 shì... qíngkuàng ér dìng

grammatical pattern. "depending on the situation"

视 ... 情况而定 (shì... qíngkuàng ér dìng) is a grammar pattern that suggests a decision, action or event will occur based on the terms of a separate circumstance. In this construction, 视 (shì) means "to consider," 情况 (qíngkuàng) means "circumstance" or "situation," and (ér dìng) means "to decide."

Sentences with this pattern typically follow the below structure:

Subject + 视 (shì) + Modifying Phrase + 情况而定 (qíngkuàng ér dìng)

Let's look at an example:

讲座的日期视教授的情况而定。

Jiǎngzuò de rìqí shì jiàoshòu de qíngkuàng ér dìng.

The lecture date depends on the professor.

In this example, the subject “讲座的日期,” or lecture date, will be decided by the modifying phrase “教授,” or the professor. This grammar pattern emphasizes that a decision cannot be made yet and will instead depend on an external factor.

Here's another example:

其次，在男方送了聘礼后，女方也会回礼，回礼的多少也视女方的情况而定。

Qícì, zài nánfāng sòng le pìnlǐ hòu, nǚfāng yě huì huílǐ, huílǐ de duōshǎo yě shì nǚfāng de qíngkuàng ér dìng.

Additionally, after the groom has given a gift, the bride will give a return present that accords with her own financial situation.

In this example, the subject “回礼的多少,” or how much money the bride usually spends on the gift for her husband, depends on “女方的情况,” or her own financial situation.

Note that if the speaker wishes to express that something will be decided based on a general circumstance without specifying which circumstance that is, the modifying phrase between 视 and 情况而定 can be omitted. In this case, the full phrase 视情况而定 is used as a fixed expression to simply mean “it depends.”

For example:

Speaker A: 今年春节咱们去哪里过呢？

Jīnnián chūnjié zánmen qù nǎlǐ guò ne?

Where are we going for Spring Festival this year?

Speaker B: 视情况而定。

Shì qíngkuàng ér dìng.

It depends.

In the example above, Speaker B uses the fixed response “视情况而定” to tell Speaker A that her question can’t be answered right now. Instead, wherever they spend the Lunar New Year will depend on the situation later on.

3. 鉴于 jiànyú

prep. “considering that...” or “in light of...”

鉴于 (jiànyú) is a preposition that usually appears at the beginning of a sentence to introduce context, reasoning, or background information in the first clause. It is then followed by a result or effect in the second clause.

Sentences with 鉴于 typically follow the structure below:

鉴于 + Background Condition + Resulting Condition

Let’s look at an example:

鉴于上次发生的错误，今后大家都要更慎重。

Jiànyú shàngcì fāshēng de cuòwù, jīnhòu dàjiā dōu yào gèng shènzhòng.

Because of the mistakes made last time, everyone needs to be more careful from now on.

In this example, 鉴于 is used to introduce important background information, namely “上次发生的错误,” or the mistakes that were made last time. Because 鉴于 (jiànyú) begins the sentence, we know that the first clause causes the result mentioned in the second clause, that is, “今后大家都要更慎重,” or that everyone needs to be more careful from now on.

Here's another example:

鉴于社会在不断进步，或许中国的婚礼习俗还会有所改变。

Jiànyú shèhuì zài búduàn jìnbù, huòxǔ Zhōngguó de hūnlǐ xísú hái huì yǒusuǒ gǎibiàn.

In light of ongoing social change, it is likely that wedding customs in China will continue to transform in the future.

Here, the preposition 鉴于 helps set the stage for the rest of the sentence by introducing important background information, “社会在不断进步,” or that society is rapidly changing. This helps us understand that the second clause, “或许中国的婚礼习俗还会有所改变,” or the fact that wedding customs in China will continue to change, is influenced by the country's larger trend of ongoing social progress as introduced previously.

测试 Quiz

1. 随着社会的进步，现在送聘礼时男方会：
 - a. 看重聘礼的多少
 - b. 不送女方聘礼了
 - c. 量力而行
 - d. 先收女方的聘礼

2. 为什么要在婚房的床上放红枣和花生？
 - a. 祝福他们早日生出孩子
 - b. 祝福他们顺顺利利
 - c. 祝福他们早日赚大钱
 - d. 祝福他们大吉大利

3. 男女双方的父母一般会在哪个环节送新人红包？
 - a. 迎亲
 - b. 敬茶
 - c. 入席
 - d. 敬酒

4. 根据文章内容，在入席环节中，新人会：
 - a. 向双方父母敬酒
 - b. 摄影留念
 - c. 收参加婚礼的人准备的红包
 - d. 在酒店门口放鞭炮

5. 文章里提到的婚礼习俗现在：
 - a. 人们很少会做
 - b. 只有中国人会做
 - c. 像过去那样复杂
 - d. 一般都不能缺少

Answer key on final page of PDF.

Zhōngguó Xiàndài Hūnlǐ Xísú

Suízhe shèhuì de jìnbù, Zhōngguó de hūnlǐ xísú yě zài fāshēngzhe biànhuà. Rújīn, hūnlǐ xísú bù xiàng guòqù nà yàng fùzá, jiǎndān de jiéhūn fāngshì gèng shòu huānyíng, dàn jǐbiàn rúcǐ, yī xiē jīngdiǎn de xísú duōduōshǎoshǎo yánxù le xiàlái.

Yībān lái shuō, xiàndài hūnlǐ fēnwéi liǎng gè jiēduàn — hūnlǐ qián jí hūnlǐ dāngtiān. Nàme zài zhè liǎng gè jiēduàn, rénmen xūyào zuò xiē shénme ne?

Hūnlǐ qián, nánfāng shǒuxiān yào dào nǚfāng jiā sòng pìnlǐ. Pìnlǐ de xíngshì duōyàng, lǐjīn huò jīn yín shǒushì děng. Pìnlǐ de guìzhòng chéngdù dàibiǎo nánfāng de jīngjì tiáojiàn. Guòqù rénmen bǐjiào kànzhòng pìnlǐ de duōshǎo. Rújīn, shèhuì zài fāzhǎn, rénmen de sīxiǎng zhújiàn kāimíng, sòng pìnlǐ shí nánfāng yě huì liàngli'érxíng. Qícì, zài nánfāng sòngle pìnlǐ hòu, nǚfāng yě huì huílǐ, huílǐ de duōshǎo yě shì nǚfāng de qíngkuàng ér dīng.

Hūnlǐ qián yī tiān wǎnshàng, nǚfāng de qīnqī péngyǒu huì lái jiānlǐ bāng bùzhì guīfáng, duō yòng hóngsè, jīnsè huò fěnsè de qìqiú, yǐjí xǐqìng de chuānghuā jìnxíng zhuāngshì. Nánfāng qīnqī péngyǒu huì dào hūnfáng bùzhì, zài xīnchuáng shàng fàng hěnduō hóngzǎo hé huāshēng, yùyì zǎoshēngguìzǐ.

Hūnlǐ dāngtiān de huódòng zhǔyào yǒu yǐxià liù dà huánjié:

Dì-yī, yíngqīn. Dāngtiān shàngwǔ, nánfāng jí qīnpéng hǎoyǒu lái nǚfāng jiā jiēqīn, nánfāng huì yùxiān zhǔnbèi shù gè xiǎo hóngbāo yǐ yíngjiē nǚfāng qīnpéng hǎoyǒu shèzhì de nánguān, nánfāng bìxū yīyī tòngguò cái néng chénggōng jiàn dào nǚfāng, yùyì “dédào nǐ bù róngyì.”

Dì-èr, jìngchá. Nánfāng dào le nǚfāng jiā, shuāngfāng dǐ xiàng nǚfāng fùmǔ jìngchá, érhòu nǚfāng dào le nánfāng jiā huòzhě hūnfāng, yě xíng yīyàng de lǐ. Jìngchá hòu, shuāngfāng fùmǔ yībān huì gěi xīnláng, xīnniáng hóngbāo, yùyì dàjídài.

Dì-sān, chēng hóng sǎn chūmén. Yībān yóu bànniáng chēngzhe hóng sǎn péi xīnniáng chūmén, zuòshàng hūnchē, ránhòu nǚfāng jiā huì fàng biānpào, yùyì shùnshùn lì. Zhīhòu, xīnrén huì hé qīnqī péngyǒu dào fùjìn fēngjǐng yōuměi de dìfāng shèyǐng liúniàn.

Dì-sì, rùxí. Rújīn xīnrén de hūnlǐ yíshì dàduō zài jiǔdiàn jǔxíng. Cānjiā hūnlǐ de rén huì zhǔnbèi hǎo hóngbāo zài jìnmén shí gěi xīnrén biǎoshì zhùhè, suǐhòu guānkàn xīnrén jiéhūn yíshì.

Dì-wǔ, jìngjiǔ. Yíshì jiéshù hòu, xīnrén huì dào gè zhuō xiàng dàjiā jìngjiǔ zhìxiè.

Dì-liù, huǐlǐ. Hūnlǐ dāngtiān, xīnrén huì zhǔnbèi yī xiē hóngbāo gěi hūnlǐ zhōng bāngzhù le tāmen de qīnpéng hǎoyǒu yǐ biǎoshì gǎnxiè. Cǐwài, yě huì gěi měiwèi kèrén zhǔnbèi yīfèn xiǎo lǐwù.

Qíshí, guānyú Zhōngguó xiàndài hūnlǐ xísú, gèdì huì yǒu zìjǐ tèyǒu de guīju, jiāting bèijǐng yě huì yǐngxiǎng hūnlǐ xìjiē, dàn yǐshàng tídao de xísú yībān

bìbùkěshǎo. Jiànyú shèhuì zài búduàn jìnbù, huòxǔ Zhōngguó de hūnlǐ xísú
hái huì yǒusuǒ gǎibiàn.

Wedding Conventions in Modern China

As society continues to evolve, China's wedding conventions have also undergone significant changes. Wedding customs aren't as complicated as they used to be and nowadays simpler weddings are usually preferred, though certain traditional customs have been preserved to some extent.

Generally speaking, modern weddings can be divided into two parts: before the wedding and the day of the wedding. So, what do people usually do during these different stages?

Before the wedding, the groom visits the bride's home to deliver a betrothal gift to her. Betrothal gifts can come in different forms, such as cash, gold and silver jewelry, or something else. The gift's value represents the groom's financial status. In the past, people attached a great deal of importance to the betrothal gift's economic value. Today, as society has advanced and people have become more open-minded, it is acceptable for the groom to give a gift that reflects his financial circumstances. Additionally, after the groom has given a gift, the bride will give a return present that accords with her own financial situation.

The night before the wedding, the bride's family and friends head to her home to decorate her bedroom, usually with red, gold or pink balloons and festive paper cuttings. The groom's family and friends also decorate the couple's shared bedroom, placing red dates and peanuts upon their bed to symbolize the wish that they'll quickly give birth to a child.

Traditional activities on the day of the wedding are usually divided into six main steps:

The first step is to "fetch the bride." On the morning of the wedding day, the groom, along with his friends and family, travels to the bride's home to escort her as she symbolically moves out of her former residence. Before arrival, the groom will first prepare some cash-filled red envelopes in order to help him overcome various challenges that the bride's family and friends

will present him with before he will be allowed to see his bride. This process is meant to symbolize that getting the chance to marry one's wife isn't easy.

The second step is "serving tea." During this step, the groom's family pays a visit to the home of the bride, where the couple serves tea to her parents. The same ceremony is held again at the couple's new home or when the bride moves into her husband's house. After tea is served, both the bride and groom's parents gift the couple cash-filled red envelopes to symbolize their anticipated good fortune.

The third step is to "leave home with a red umbrella." During this step, the bride, accompanied by her bridesmaids, carries a red umbrella while exiting her home and then boards a traditional wedding sedan. Next, her family sets off firecrackers to symbolize that everything will go smoothly. After this process, the couple, along with their families and friends, head to a nearby scenic spot to take photos and commemorate the event.

The fourth step is to "hold a dinner banquet." This step usually occurs in the restaurant of a hotel or banquet hall. Dinner guests prepare red envelopes containing cash to congratulate the new couple and watch the wedding ceremony while eating dinner.

The fifth step is to "propose a toast." After the dinner ceremony, the newly-wedded couple visits each table at the banquet to make a toast and drink with their guests.

The sixth step is to "return gifts." On the day of the wedding, the couple prepares several cash envelopes as tokens of appreciation for the friends and family members who helped them throughout the wedding ceremonies. They usually also give all the banquet guests a small present.

In reality, contemporary Chinese wedding customs are determined by a number of factors, including unique regional customs, individual family backgrounds, and so on. However, the customs presented here are almost always observed. In light of ongoing social change, it is likely that wedding customs in China will continue to transform in the future.

Quiz Answer Key:
1. c 2. a 3. b 4. c 5. d



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