

Sentiments and Interests in Marriage Ceremonies in the Late Qing Period

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Abstract

Sentiments are part of the symbolic system of social relationship, they can be characterized as having a social meaning. Therefore they have to be analysed within the context of social praxis. As far as the social praxis is concerned it is determined by material interests. Therefore in analysing sentiments one has to take into account the reciprocity of sentiments and economic interests of the actors. Starting from these premises I will show in my paper how sentiments and material interests of the bride and groom and their respective families are interconnected. Material interests have been determined by the requirements of family economy which was agrarian, hierarchical and patriarchal. Since late Qing and throughout the first half of the 20th century the interests of family economy determined the dominant marriage strategy: the patriarchal homogeneous arranged marriage, which means the exchange of bridal presents between families of equal social status. Marriage in this sense means the exchange of “property” between two families.

Keywords: Marriage, Late Qing, Family History, Social History, Ritual

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The publicly demanded and openly shown sentiments of the bride during marriage ceremonies corresponded for instance with the separation rites of the bride when leaving her family and the initiation rites when entering the new family. The separation rites included openly shown sentiments of sorrow and grief expressed by tears whereas the initiation rites demanded the expression of female virtues connected with the future familial role of the bride as daughter-in-law. These included the suppression of negative sentiments of the bride when being teased verbally and being touched by young members of her new family during the *nao dongfang* (naughty behaviour in the bridal chamber) rite. During these acts the bride had to show passivity and helplessness, while her inner “ private ” sentiments that is clearly to be seen in autobiographical documents were characterized by the feeling of shame and humiliation. But the *nao dongfang* rite indeed intended to evoke these negative feelings of the bride since the head of the new family and his wife (or their representatives) were interested in showing the bride and her new daughter-in-law her future low position in family hierarchy. The nicely dressed up bride just had been transferred to the new family in a bridal chair almost like a queen but during this initiation process it was seen as necessary by the elderly to deprive her of this privileged status and to let her know her new low status.

Looking at these examples it is necessary to differ between “ private ” sentiments and “ public ” sentiments, the latter meaning openly shown and socially and publicly demanded sentiments, which are connected with material interests. Altogether making this difference may help to analyse social change and the subjective factor in history from a new point of view.

Marriage is a subject that sociologists and anthropologists, literary specialists and historians, continue to study under diverse aspects. The

theme of love, the emotion directly associated with weddings and marriage, has also been studied, especially with respect to the status of and changes in arranged marriages since the early twentieth century¹. But love as an emotion is not what interests me today. When I speak of emotions within the context of marriage, I am referring to a reinterpretation of matrimony and marriage rites from the bride's perspective, from her perceptions and sentiments, as well as the status of these marriage rites and the feelings they evoke in keeping the tradition of the patriarchal family economy. I would like to examine how the material interests of the two family economies during the marriage rites relate to the perception and feelings of the bride.²

In the first part, I will explain my methodology and outline the main characteristics of the sentiments and interests. Then in the second part I will demonstrate the meshing of these sentiments and interests and present a few examples.

Let me start by explaining my basic assumption of the connection between interests and sentiments. My first point is that emotions and material interests are not separate, much less diametrically opposed; instead, there is a reciprocal link. It is not a matter of people's actions marked by feelings, on the one hand, and those marked by interests, on the other. I view sentiments not in their colloquial sense of psychologi-

1 This subject is an integral element in a series of presentations of modern history. See the most recent papers on this subject by 呂芳上, *兒女情短英雄氣長*, presented at the conference 中國歷史文化中的「私」與「情」國際學術研討會, in Taipei, 2001; see also the bibliography in 羅梅君, *北京的生育婚姻和喪葬*, 北京, 2001. Which also includes extensive references that comprise the basis of source materials for the present article.

2 My point of departure is the position that, in addition to macro-social structures, contexts of actions and experiences of individuals and social classes at the micro-level also constitute the course of history. This also includes subjective perception and the emotional experience of historical actors. They comprise the "collective memory" and are integral parts of social reality and historical experience (Medick and Sabeau, 1984: 12).

cal feelings, the origin of which can be found in the irrational, indescribable sphere of human nature, but rather “as part of a culturally determined emotional ‘grammar’ or a symbolic system of social relationships.” (Medick and Sabeian, 1984: 17) Sentiments are based on subjective experiences and are an expression of them. At the same time they determine human social practices (Rosaldo, 1980). However, sentiments are not identical with the expressed subjective self-image of the actors. Means of emotional expression thus always have to be perceived within the context of social practices. They are influenced by social factors. And they are determined essentially through the material interests of the actors (Medick and Sabeian, 1984: 17). I would like to demonstrate this close link between sentiments and material interests in their interaction with respect to marriage. I will limit my analysis to marriage practices in a narrow sense, with reference to and from the perspective of the bride. Individual marriage practices can be used to clearly illustrate and decode both these material interests and the sentiments.

My second point is that in defining sentiments specifically, further differentiation is necessary. Marriage practices involved two categories of emotions: (1) publicly demonstrated sentiments, that is, the feelings and non-feelings that participants and observers of the rituals expected of the bride, the ones she had to demonstrate explicitly and publicly, and (2) the internal, private sentiments of the bride, which were to be evoked by the actors through the common practices consciously and deliberately, but which the bride was not allowed to show under any circumstances.

My third point is that marriage in China during the late Qing period was determined by the interests of the family economy. The main focus was on subsistence, maintenance and reinforcement of the family economy based on farming and trades, in which production and consumption formed a unit. There were four main interest complexes: first,

from the side of the man's family, reproduction especially of male heirs and successors to assure care in old age and to continue the family lineage; second, the acquisition of an additional female worker; third, from the side of the woman's family, the future material security of the daughter, that is, life-long care by the man's family and the receiving of bridal gifts and the indirect dowry that was often used to finance the marriage of sons or to co-finance the bride's dowry. Fourth, for both families, expansion of kinship and solidarity relations in general. "It [marriage] served to expand the membership of the kinship system and to create solidarity among its members by translating biological connectedness through common descent into social bonds." (C. K. Yang, 1959: 84)

This logic of the family economy was also tied to a social elite that, like the poorer classes of society, saw marriage as a transaction involving property and workers or reproductive capacity between two families that was planned, organized and financed by the two heads of the family. Though different marital forms or strategies developed corresponding to and satisfying the interests of the respective families, patrilocal homogamous marriage predominated and was thus idealized, including the exchange of bridal presents. This took the form of an arranged marriage between members of families³ of essentially equal standing as a transfer of goods and obligations.⁴ Also, this type of marriage was

3 A modification of this form of marriage took place with the female strategy of the kinship marriage, that is, when children of sisters are married to one another. In this modified marriage type, the bride's mother could strengthen her own family status with the help of the daughter-in-law whom she helped to raise or who came from her own family. The reinforcement of the family economy as a whole by expanding the solidarity relations for increased political and economic benefits receded into the background, see 羅梅君, 2001: 175.

4 For the Peking area in the late Qing period, I was able to identify five further types of marriage, all of which resulted from the specific family interests: 1. strengthening of already existing solidarity relations; 2. the marriage of one man with two main women,

especially suited to accumulate symbolic capital for the family by publicly demonstrating the wealth and economic strength of the two families through the public transfer of the dowry and bridal gifts and through the elaborate wedding celebration. Marriage in this sense meant that in calculating mutual interests the bride and groom were objects and integral elements of this transfer. Ideally the respective family interests were seen as identical with those of the bride and groom, who were well off in a material sense when their respective families were well off, or the bride and groom accepted the fact that their interests were subordinate to those of the family.

Fourth, I assume that marriage practices clearly show that such a marriage, and thus the choice of the bridegroom and his family, was determined by the material interests of the respective family economy. These material interests were apparent in the individual actions and rituals (defined as repeated, immutable actions according to a fixed order) that could be observed during the marriage procedures. The most important elements were the presenting of the dowry and gifts to the bride's family, the transfer of the bride into the new family, the wedding feast that served to strengthen kinship and solidarity relations, the acceptance of the bride into the new family and demonstration of her subordinate status.

who were daughters-in-law in different families, for the purpose of producing heirs to continue two family lineages with separate family economies and, accordingly, separate households; 3. marriage with two main women among businessmen with two branch offices, or with farmers in order to recruit an additional worker for the family economy; 4. also for reproductive considerations, marriage upon death of the fiance; the deceased is represented by his soul-tablet, in order to maintain a daughter-in-law, who then raises an adopted boy as a son; 5. raising a child to be a daughter-in-law (童養媳, minor marriage) as a female strategy; this did not serve to expand the solidarity relations, though it did reduce the threat of family division (and thus it also affected the family economy) due to the fact that the same woman was both daughter-in-law and daughter. See 羅梅君, 2001: 222-230.

My fifth point, in line with the theories of Pierre Bourdieu,⁵ is that the material interests of the marriage bond were supposed to remain disguised. Consequently, the individual practices and rituals were often explained on moral, ethical, magical, or religious grounds and given corresponding meanings. The elite of the late Qing period explained the elaborate and codified system of marriage rites 婚禮 as necessary for a number of reasons: first, to prevent social chaos. The notion of maintaining family and social order was juxtaposed with that of maintaining a cosmic order in which humanity, heaven, and earth formed a unity and in which marriage between man and woman symbolized the harmonious bond of yin 陰 and yang 陽 within this cosmic order. Unmarried persons were perceived as a source of friction to this order (林定川, 1893: II, 12; 陳懷禎, 1933. 11ff; 婚禮 1). The idea of marriage as a fated bond played an integral part in maintaining the cosmic and social order, as passed down in the popular folktale of the man in the moon. According to this notion, the man in the moon was a personification of fate, connecting the respective threads of fate of man and woman; thus he predetermined their marriage and made the bond indissoluble (Kulcickij 1908: 2ff). Furthermore, marriage was considered an act of filial piety and obedience toward the parents in continuing the family lineage. Even this explication, which most closely identifies material interests, focuses on factors that appear immaterial, such as emphasis on the ancestral offerings. Finally, marriage rites and matrimony were explained as necessary in regulating and ordering human emotions (see 陳懷禎, 1933: 11f).⁶ “All in all it can be concluded from the above that the sentiments

5 See especially Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge, 1979) and *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford, 1990), p. 80ff and 147ff. Bourdieu's theories have been modified with respect to marriage in China, see 羅梅君, 2001: 15-18.

6 It has also been stated that the marriage rules were necessary to maintain gender separation. This argument requires further analysis.

情 are the main foundation of the rules (禮), and it seems that sentiments possess great power 勢力. Although the sages have determined the rules in keeping with human sentiments 情, they have nevertheless ordered human sentiments by means of the rules.” (陳懷禎, 1933: 11f.) Sentiments are explained here as something to be controlled through the rites and ritual practices, since they pose a threat to the social order. In this passage the author brings together sentiments and a form of explication which to stress once again serve to conceal the material interests associated with marriage.

My sixth point, going beyond the scope of Bourdieu’s theories, is that similar to the means of explication, the sentiments themselves also serve the purpose of concealing the material interests. Evoking certain internal sentiments, however, had a dual function. It served at the same time as a means to place the bride in an emotional state of humiliation and powerlessness so that she would adapt to the new family and subordinate herself to its order. Sentiments were used to correspond to the material interests of the patriarchal, hierarchical family economy in order to maintain it. They were employed as a means of humiliation and discipline.

Beyond general explications of marriage, this can be shown by the bride’s publicly demonstrated and internal private sentiments. On the one hand marriage was described, especially for the bride and groom but also for all other participants, as a “happy event” and celebrated as such. Mere participation in such an event was perceived as “being able to get a piece of the happiness” happiness was seen as divisible and transferable (羅梅君, 2001: 194). In order to be able to make use of this good fortune, manifested in favorable constellations of the stars, points in time and space viewed as favorable and lucky were taken into consideration in making the wedding plans. Red as a color of happiness and dragons and phoenixes as symbols of good fortune, and even numbers were an expression of this invoked happiness. Bride and groom were also

assigned this “happiness.” This is most clear with respect to certain highly symbolic factors: the ornamentation and magnificent clothing worn by the bride on the wedding day, the make-up of even the lowest peasant girl and the fact that the bride was carried in a sedan chair, which aside from weddings was permitted only as means of transportation for the elite. This is precisely what weddings had meant for Ning Lao Taitai: “To be married was to wear pretty clothes and ornaments in the hair.” (Pruitt, 1967: 33) To be treated as a queen once in a lifetime!

This celebration of marriage as a “happy event” served in fact to conceal the material interests of both families, which consisted in the exchange of labor, reproductive capacity, and property for lifelong care and the secure livelihood of the bride, plus perhaps presents or property for the bride’s family. At the same time it served to cover up the evoked sentiments, since the entire wedding and the publicly demonstrated sentiments were public acts, even if certain sequences, such as those taking place in the bridal chamber, were limited to family and friends. No individual meetings of the bridal couple took place and no private space⁷ existed for the bride or groom. Even the wedding night and the deflowering of the bride were not private acts, but because of the necessity to demonstrate the bride’s virginity prior to marriage were aspects of the family marriage ceremony.

The explication of marriage as a “happy event” (喜事) can be seen only as one side of the story. The other side was the idea that the marriage could bring bad luck. Numerous symbolic precautions served to prevent any possible future misfortune. Many inauspicious influences were attributed to the bride, which had to be warded off and were seen as

7 In the context of marriage “private space” refers to the couple, whereas “public space” refers to the family members, neighbors and kin attending the wedding. In other contexts the family may be referred to as “private space.” It is obvious that the concepts “private space” and “public space” are not strictly fixed, but are flexible and must be contextualized.

particularly threatening during the entire phase of transferring⁸ the bride from her birth family to the new family (周恩慈, 1940: 35-37). The bride was perceived in this interim phase as especially vulnerable to evil influences. In fact, this illustrated the fears especially of the head of the family toward the new daughter-in-law who had to adapt to her new position at the bottom of the existing hierarchical order of the new family. This was more than just a short-term reorganization of the family hierarchy and order; instead, it could mean a serious, long-term threat to the family's existence, with the birth of sons and grandsons and the possible premature separation of this newly formed nuclear family from the extended family. These fears and ritual practices aimed to prevent future misfortune were based on motives with economic interests that were by no means expressed openly. The marriage rites thus always incorporated the material interests as well, even if the explications attributed to these actions and rituals were supposed to remain hidden.

However, the marriage rites also contained an emotional dimension. A public exhibition of certain sentiments, or the control of them, was an integral part of the rituals. It was expected by participants and observers alike, and certain practices were even carried out precisely to evoke such an exhibition. This public display of sentiments or control of these sentiments by the bride stood in opposition to many internal, private sentiments that certain rituals evoked during the wedding ceremony. This aimed to prepare the bride for her new status as the (youngest) daughter-in-law and thus the subordinate role she was to assume in the family hierarchy. It included feelings of shame, humiliation, helplessness, passivity, and powerlessness, the feeling of being at the mercy of others and of being objectified. At the same time, however, convention demanded that she controls these internal sentiments and not let them be seen.

8 A. van Gennep, *Les rites de passage* (Paris, 1909), first drew attention to these transition rites, which have since become a major topic in ethnographical studies.

Moreover, expression of these negative sentiments and the required control of them were reinterpreted by the actors, responsible parties and observers as fun, as a testing of the bride's virtuousness, and even as a cover-up of the true interests and sentiments of the bride, as falseness, as expressed in the saying, "A bride who leaves her parent's home is really laughing when she cries."⁹

From the bride's perspective, marriage was by no means a "happy event." From her point of view and with respect to the "sentiments," the wedding the entry ritual to marriage must be described anew as the entrance to a new family economy, and the rituals named only with respect to the obvious way in which they were performed, must be decoded.

In the second part of my paper I will discuss certain rituals to demonstrate the importance of the evoked internal sentiments and publicly demonstrated sentiments, and their relation to the material interests grounded in the marriage. Especially the status of sentiments in a socio-historical context will become evident.

1. The transfer of the bride as a passive and helpless object:

A central element in marriage was the fact that the bride was not an active subject in this transfer, but that she was degraded to a passive object. All rituals aimed to demonstrate the passivity and helplessness of the bride. This was concealed, first of all, through the magnificent clothing, the jewelry and the splendor the magnificence was supposed to veil the interest intentions and secondly, through efforts to protect the bride and the future family connection from inauspicious influences. The public demonstration of the bride's helplessness and her in this

9 The saying continues: "A candidate for the public service who fails the state examination is really crying when he laughs" (羅梅君, 2001: 202). Interpretations of this crying as a relict of ancient rites when brides were violently carried off have been convincingly rejected, see 羅梅君, 2001: 318.

case, parallel internal feeling of helplessness began at the moment she left her family. The bridal robe, with its various layers, restricted her physical freedom of movement and possibly caused her to sweat; the dense bridal veil obscured her vision and the bound feet considerably restricted her movement as in her everyday life. But to clearly demonstrate the helplessness and thus the object nature outwardly, she was also carried over the threshold, raised to the wedding sedan chair and after an oftentimes difficult and extended journey in the sedan chair, which was closed tight and rocked back and forth then led or carried from this into the house and the bridal chamber of her new family. The bride received some support only from members of her family who accompanied her and the sedan chair, supporting her on the rough and bumpy roads. It was also representatives of her family from whom she could expect aid when teasing and attacks during the “mischief in the bridal chamber” (鬧洞房) became too aggressive (羅梅君, 2001: 207-208). They were her “supporters,” not representatives of her new family, in whose interest it was to evoke feelings of helplessness and humiliation in this new family member, in her future, as yet undefined but in any case subordinate, role in the family.

This is clearly depicted in Ning Lao Taitai’s description from the late Qing period of her being picked up when she was married off at fifteen years of age to a fisherman: “I sat on the k’ang, bathed and dressed, in my red underclothes and red stockings. The music sounded and they took me off the k’ang. I sat on the chair and the matrons combed my hair for me into the matron’s knot at the nape of my neck. They dressed me in my red embroidered bridal robes and the red embroidered bridal shoes and put the ornaments in my hair. An old man whose parents and wife are still alive carried me out and put me in the wedding chair that was to carry me to my new home. I knew only that I must not touch the sides of the chair as he put me in, and that I was dressed in beautiful clothes.”

(Pruitt, 1967: 33) A neighbor, dressed in his ceremonial black carried the red-robed bride to the chair: “She knelt on his arms and her head, heavy with ornaments, drooped over his shoulder. She was a bow of red arched over a bow of black. He sat her on the broad low seat of the sedan chair.” (Pruitt, 1967: 36). She was carried and led, protected from evil spirits by her brother with a piece of red felt: “He must protect her from the hungry ghosts, the souls of those who have drowned themselves in the wells. He must protect her from the elements that lurk in dark corners, the weasel spirits and the fox fairies, and from the little demons in the temples who might follow her home and possess her and make her leave the path of reason and do those things which people do not do.” (Pruitt, 1967: 37)

Even the bride’s tears upon leaving her parents’ house were a symbolic demonstration of her helplessness: “Parents are proud of their daughter’s weeping as this shows not only her maiden’s helplessness but also is a reflection of the happy relationship that had existed between parents and daughter” (Lowe, 1983, II: 220). The bride was supposed to cry, to show reluctance, and even to shed tears: “For a bride not to weep indicates trouble ahead,” remarked an anthropologist on this practice in 1930s Peking (Lowe, 1983, II: 220). These parting tears would remain the only expression of emotion during the entire wedding ceremony that was demanded socially.

2. Body language served as a symbol of humility and obedience and a demonstration of virtuousness:

The bride’s object character was already laid down at the time of the engagement, when the female representatives of the groom’s family officially had a close look at her. The bride sat “on the k’ang in a red robe, dressed and made up beautifully, with her legs crossed and her head lowered.” (Grube, 1901: 13) Despite her jewelry, her entire body language symbolically expressed the bride’s future role as the obedient daughter-in-law: she was passive, humble, modest (羅梅君, 2001: 187-

188).

3. Emotional distance was required as a dissociation from material interests:

Physical distance to the entire family of the groom was required from the engagement on. Distance in general was an essential characteristic of the marriage rites: first, the painstakingly demonstrated dissociation from material interests by the two families by using a marriage broker to lead the negotiations on the conditions for the marriage. This eliminated the need for direct negotiations and allowed both families to save face in case the matrimonial bonds failed to materialize and with respect to expressing material demands. For example, the bride was not allowed to show any material interest whatsoever and could not be present when engagement presents or gifts from the bride's family or the indirect dowry were presented. The demonstration of emotional distance by the bride (or the groom) was publicly demanded. Except for firmly defined ritual exceptions, the bride was not allowed to show any feelings, whether negative or positive, throughout the entire marriage process.

4. Rituals of ridiculing and humiliating the bride as means to destroy her inauspicious influences, that is, her individuality, willpower, sexuality, and to prevent the potential threat of family division:

A series of practices and rituals began with the arrival at the locked gate of the escorts coming for the bride. Outwardly, these practices appeared to observers as funny, but their aim was to make the bride appear ridiculous and to humiliate her. The ethnologist 周恩慈(1940: 36) described how the bride's escorts repeatedly requested entry at the locked gate, how they made obscene jokes that should not be made in front of women, and how the accompanying musicians played funny songs with sexual innuendoes, with titles such as "the cockroaches climb up the bamboo little by little." The explanation for such behavior, "to

destroy the character/sexuality of the bride” (殺性)¹⁰ in certain respects hits the nail on the head. Intended was a symbolic act of destroying not only the possibly inauspicious sexuality, but also her individual character as a person, which she had to give up in favor of her new role as a daughter-in-law. For the young, and as a rule sexually inexperienced, bride these suggestive remarks could only be perceived as embarrassing and shameful. A similar situation took place after the completion of the wedding ceremony, in the decorated wedding chamber during the already mentioned ritual of “mischief in the bridal chamber.”

The gate to the residence of the groom’s family remained initially closed as the bridal sedan chair approached, as a symbolic act of driving off “evil omens, demons and devils.” To this end, firecrackers were also set off (周恩慈, 1940: 5; 張琦翔, 1984: 212). This demonstrated not an open welcome, but symbolic resistance to accepting a new family member and the interference of the family order that might come with it. Even the bridegroom was not allowed to show any sign of welcome acceptance toward his future wife, and reluctantly let himself be led into the bridal chamber to remove the bride’s veil.

Sitting for hours on the k’ang 炕, that is, “sitting under the curtain” (坐帳), silently, with lowered head and crossed legs, was itself a test of the young bride’s capacity for suffering. Her feeling of helplessness and being at the mercy of the groom’s family was only reinforced: first, by virtue of the fact that her escorts took away her shoes, and second, that she was not allowed to use the toilet, or rather the container that served as a toilet which was part of her dowry. In order to adequately prepare herself, the young bride would already stop eating normally three days prior to the wedding, eating only the fruit sent to her by her future family.

10 The ethnologist continues that this behavior actually served to give the bride time to finish getting dressed. Such explications were in keeping with Zhou’s general efforts to give “practical meaning” to rites observed during his field research.

Even on the wedding day itself, the bride only partook symbolically of the ritual meal of the bridal couple. Hunger and thirst also weakened her physically. Last but not least, she was helpless in the face of the staring and “harassment” by the family members who filed through the bridal chamber, as well as the ritualized “mischief in the wedding chamber” (鬧洞房), with its sexual innuendoes. She had already been touched by men she did not know at all (ritualized in some regions as the “shaking of the bride” in which the young woman is held at the head and feet by several young men and shaken), which represented an even greater breach of gender and generational taboos ¹¹ (羅梅君, 2001: 205-208).

Zhang Youyi gave a fitting description of this situation and her feelings on the occasion of her marriage with Xu Zhimo in 1915:

I had to sit in the middle of the room and not say anything while Xu Zhimo’s relatives and friends walked around me and poked fun at me. If I cried or laughed or spoke out, I would have been considered bad-tempered. ‘Let’s hear you sing,’ one said. ‘Let’s make her dance,’ another said. ‘My, but you are ugly,’ one said. ‘Let us see those big feet,’ another said as he lifted my robe above my ankles so everyone could look and laugh. I did not say anything when he did that. I just let him do it. One of Xu Zhimo’s friends even suggested they check to see the color of my underpants. Luckily, my brothers, hovering around me for protection, stopped them. Otherwise I would not have been able to object. This kind of teasing went on for many hours. Most of it Xu Zhimo did not see because he was in and out of the room joking with different people. Really, I think that everyone at my wedding had more fun there than I did. (Chang Pang-mei, 1996: 80f)

11 There was a saying, that for three days there is no difference in age (三天不分大小) (see 馬之驩, 1981: 229), which emphasizes the necessity of breaking the generational taboos that were strictly observed at other times.

In Ding Ling's 1928 story "阿毛姑娘," the mocking and teasing that protagonist A-mao was forced to endure were the main elements of her wedding.

"She was continually teased and laughed at by all the people in the large group (after being accepted into the family of the groom), as if she were a strange animal. She wanted to cry more than anything else, but controlled herself. She had never before been the target of such teasing. That is why she kept thinking, 'When I go home the day after tomorrow I will definitely not come back'." (丁玲, 1928: 794) The loud and inebriated guests were not considerate towards the bride: The bride's dowry is meager and thus "hardly suited to cause them to exercise restraint, and so they act very thoughtlessly and make a lot of trouble for the host," (丁玲, 1928: 795)¹² "Everyone scared her; no matter where she went, she was afraid. Most unpleasant for her were those who just came to gape at her." (丁玲, 1928: 795)

In a society with a strict separation of the sexes, the teasing, obscene innuendoes, and physical touching overstepped the social norms for relationships between the sexes, with respect to women and with respect to an otherwise tabooed sexuality. The generation hierarchy had also been broken here. It was especially peers or younger members of the new family, who were actually subordinate to the young woman in status,

12 All of this is embarrassing for A-mao and she is very frightened: "This is very embarrassing for A-mao, but she knows that besides herself, someone else is also being teased constantly, someone who shares her fate, for whom she cannot help feeling sympathy." It is the groom, her husband, who the young bride is thinking of. But her initial sympathy is quickly replaced by the feeling of wanting to escape the situation when the groom approaches her: "The only thing she is thinking of is how she can escape immediately and go home, because she had not suspected that she would have to let herself be embraced and wildly kissed by this strange man. She merely turned to the side with a start and silently swallowed her tears" (丁玲, 1928: 795).

who were permitted to attack her in this way.¹³ On the one hand it was a test of her self-control and the future capacity for suffering and tolerance shown by the young woman, who was not allowed to bat an eye despite the verbal and physical attacks (Ayscough 1937:37). On the other hand, these “attacks” and “struggles” – these were the terms used by the participants in the field research – were intended to humiliate the woman, scare her, and finally to break her willpower – perhaps symbolically for all women who could threaten men and thus the patriarchal structures of the family economy through their powers of sexual attraction. This overstepping of social norms could also be observed in the ritual of the nightly “listening at the bridal chamber door,” (聽房) where young men tried to follow what was happening in the bridal chamber, the deflowering of the bride. Removing the bride’s clothing from the bridal chamber during the night also contributed to her further humiliation (Serruys, 1944, 1: 98ff).

5. Kowtowing was a sign of subservience and assignment of lower status in the family hierarchy:

The physical and mental anguish for the bride went further than the practices and rituals mentioned so far in trying to explicate the good fortune of the future couple. The ceremonial acceptance of the bride (or the couple) into the new family and into the lineage and therefore her assignment into a subordinate position in the family hierarchy were physical torture which corresponded to their purpose. The bride had to demonstrate her subservience and her willingness to be obedient through kowtows. Zhang Youyi described her feelings when she married Xu Zhimo,

13 The reverse of this ritual, the teasing, and insinuations of the young male members of the new family by the bride can be observed in Lin Yutang’s novel *Moment in Peking*. The protagonist Mulan (name of the heroine!) is then described by the surprised “bride teasers” as “a truly modern girl” (Lin Yutang, 1938: 328).

“At our wedding Xu Zhimo and I stood in front of two red armchairs and kowtowed to each couple names called off a long list who sat in the armchairs. There were so many people we had to kowtow to that we could not do it all on our own; we actually each had a man behind us who helped push us down and pull us up. Push down and pull up; again and again for hours. I lost track of the faces. My legs ached so much that I could barely walk the whole next week.” (Chang Pang-mei, 1996: 79f)

Kowtowing served not only as a symbol of subservience and humiliation, but also as a means of concealing the function of marriage. The groom kowtowed also in front of the bride’s father after the dowry had been presented. This transfer of material goods was the prerequisite for “accepting the bride” in return. After the bridal procession departed, the bridal couple kowtowed again (羅梅君 2001:197).

In closing, let me briefly summarize.

All of the marriage rites showed not only the material interests of the family that were determined by the family economy; the sentiments as well in the examples mentioned, those pertaining to the bride were closely connected to these material interests and played a central role in the marriage rites. This involved two closely related categories of emotions that were intended to prepare the bride for her future subordinate role in the family hierarchy as the subservient and obedient daughter-in-law: First, the socially demanded and publicly demonstrated sentiments: the parting tears when the bride left her family, the demonstrations of helplessness, powerlessness, and passivity, of obedience and virtuousness, of self-control and capacity for suffering throughout the physical strains of the marriage rites, the verbal attacks and psychological hurt and not least the demonstration of subservience, as demanded through the physical posture of the bride, including kowtows. Second,

the internal, private sentiments deliberately stirred in the bride through the marriage rites, which she was not allowed to show. These were feelings of powerlessness, helplessness, humiliation and vulnerability, and especially fear of what happened and what was expected of her in the future. "I was frightened." With these words, Ning Lao Taitai expressed the prevailing feelings she had at her wedding (Pruitt, 1967: 34).

The connection between sentiments and economic interests are most apparent regarding the marriage rites pertaining to the bride, but similar findings apply also with respect to the groom (see, for example, the autobiography of Guo Moruo 郭沫若, *少年時代*) as well as the respective heads of families and their wives, who must also be seen as integral elements of the family economy. As individuals, they too were subordinate to the material interests of the family. This can be seen especially in sources that refer to the representatives of the May Fourth Movement. They rejected arranged marriages as subordination of the individual to the interests of the family economy. Instead they defined relationships between man and woman as private, individual relationships grounded in love and mutual respect, and no longer as a transaction within the family economy. This conflict between the interests of the family economy in an agrarian society and the interests oriented toward the individual in a society that was becoming industrialized, which was grounded in labor, property, and the relationships of the individual, was experienced by the representatives of the new intelligentsia. The confrontation can be clearly observed in their individual fates and those of the protagonists in contemporary literature. The private sentiments described above that oppose arranged marriage, the feelings suffered during the marriage rites, and the helplessness and humiliation, the degradation to an "object," to "goods," mark this shift to pursuit of one's own individual interests and liberation from subordination to the family. Yet it was dependence upon the family that led many to accept such arranged marriages despite

their rejection of the marriage system in principle.

The sentiments of the groom, who had to bow to family interests in much the same way as the bride, are vividly depicted in Guo Moruo's autobiographical portrayal of his marriage. Guo, who was reluctant to break with his family for reasons of economic dependence, consented to the marriage his parents had arranged, but his description of his wedding was nothing but a "report of his suffering" (郭沫若, 1951: 339). He saw himself in the role of "an actor in a tragedy" (郭沫若, 1951: 332). The marriage rites that were carried out, which he did not name explicitly, seemed to him to come from "primeval times." He cursed to himself when he—contrary to assurances by the marriage broker—saw the bound feet of the woman and again when he lifted the bridal veil and felt as if he were looking "into the nostrils of an orangutan." Then he withdrew emotionally, deadened his senses, and tried to repress what had happened, so that later on he had only vague memories of the event. He was totally desperate and apathetic until his mother angrily accused him of being inconsiderate. He got blind drunk while the wedding guests amused themselves. Guo felt even more abandoned on the day following the wedding, when social etiquette required him to visit the parents of his bride. On the journey there by boat his wife fulfilled her duty by sending her bridesmaid to him when he became seasick, to bring him nutmegs and, later, her waterpipe. He practiced the required physical distance, both bodily and spatial, which only served to reinforce his feelings of loneliness and abandonment.

In the house of his in-laws, he was met with polite distance. Guo was not paid any attention whatsoever; initially there was not even any conversation. The groom was simply an object in a transaction and was not interesting at all as an individual: "No one had even the slightest interest in sharing a sentence or two with me." (郭沫若, 1951: 335) Only the socially required courtesies were exchanged; the father of the bride

later had a polite conversation with him about the rising price of opium, and about his hopes in a ruler sent by divine providence.

Then Guo was required to greet and kowtow the wedding guests: “I felt like a monkey who had to do tricks. But the monkey had not yet seen much of the world and was confused by the eyes of the audience. It didn't dare to raise its head or even glance to the side. How many guests I greeted and how many kowtows I performed, I don't know.” While here, too, the guests were loud and amused themselves, playing and smoking opium, Guo ate “something or other and then sat back down sadly.” “But I felt like a beggar lost in the desert.” (郭沫若 1951 : 334) He spent the night alone, sitting in a chair reading; his bed had been taken over by guests.

Jue Xin 覺新, a central character in 巴金 Ba Jin's novel 家, also felt like a passive victim. When he was informed by his father of the father's decision that Jue Xin was to marry a daughter of the Li family, it was a great shock to him: “His future was finished, his beautiful dream (that is, to marry his beloved Mei 梅) shattered.” But he accepted his fate and did not rebel; only in bed did he let out his pain, crying under his blanket: “He cried his disappointment and bitterness.” (巴金, 1977: 37). He experienced the day they were engaged as a “comedy” “He was teased and pulled about like a puppet.” Ba Jin's protagonist also thought the marriage was like “theater” and Jue Xin was a manipulated “actor” “He had to perform for three days before he was able to obtain his bride. Again he was manipulated like a puppet, again he was displayed as a treasure or rare worth. He was neither happy nor sad he was only tired, though roused a bit by the general excitement.” And even when the performance was over and the guests had gone home, he had to continue to play his role; laying in the bed next to him was his bride, a “strange girl.”

Members of the new generation of the May Fourth Movement, which rejected arranged marriages as subordination of the individual by the

interests of the family economy, were well aware of these different levels of sentiments. They criticized publicly demonstrated sentiments, which they viewed as an inner contradiction to internal sentiments, and saw them as an expression of hypocrisy and falsehood. They attacked them in novels and autobiographies. The intellectuals saw themselves, as Guo Moruo wrote, as “actors in a tragedy” (郭沫若, 1951 : 332)., and marriage as “theater,” a “comedy,” and the bridegroom as a “manipulated actor” (巴金, 1977 : 37) But perhaps they could only guess the extent to which the two categories of sentiments were integral parts of a social system that served to maintain and pass down the hierarchically structured patriarchal family parallel to the hierarchical social order. Thus, the sentiments were subordinate to these material interests which maintained the family and social orders. Their criticism of this type of sentiment was grounded primarily in moral indignation.

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婚禮中的感情和利益： 晚清以來家庭和社會等級制的延續和變遷

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摘 要

我認為感情是社會關係象徵系統的一個組成部分，是由社會所決定的，所以應該在社會實際的關聯中進行分析。人類的社會實際首先是由物質利益決定的，是一種感情和經濟利益相互交叉的關係。從這個前提出發，我在這篇論文中將闡述新娘新郎和他們的家庭代表的感情和利益的相互關係。這個利益主要是通過農業的、等級制的和父權制的家庭經濟所產生的壓力和要求來決定的。它們在清末和民國時期的婚姻決策中占主導地位。這種以彩禮為交換的父權制的婚姻是家庭狀況相當的門當戶對的婚姻，並且由此產生相互的義務。婚姻可以看作兩個家庭之間「財產」的轉移。在婚禮中所展示的和社會所要求的，是新娘應該表現離開自己家庭的感情和進入丈夫家庭的感情。離別儀式要求表現離別父母的悲傷，進入新的家庭的接受儀式要求表現新娘的賢慧，這是作為未來的兒媳婦所必須具備的。與此相關的還有新娘對年青的男性家庭成員詞語上，甚至動手動腳的「鬧洞房」儀式的反應，這是新娘負面感覺的壓力。儘管新娘充滿屈辱和害羞的感覺，正如眾多傳記資料所描述的那樣，但是仍然要裝出被動和孤立無援。正是這種「私下」的感覺應該在這裡被喚醒，因為儀式的主持人的目的就是通過這些活動展示新娘將來在家庭中的低下地位。在轎子中

關鍵詞：婚姻、晚清、家庭史、社會史、禮儀

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被作為女王「運輸」來的新娘，現在必須放棄她被「提升」的地位。她應該展示她作為兒媳婦的賢慧和在家庭經濟中的勞動能力。

以上思考的結果是：這種「私下」的感覺和「公開」的感覺之間的區別，也就是顯現的和社會要求的感覺，在對社會變遷和主觀感覺的歷史分析中提供了新的解釋的可能。