Chinese Folklore Culture Series
中国民俗文化丛书



Marriage

婚嫁

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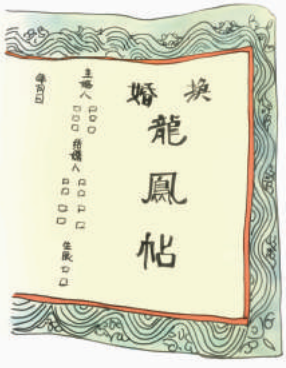

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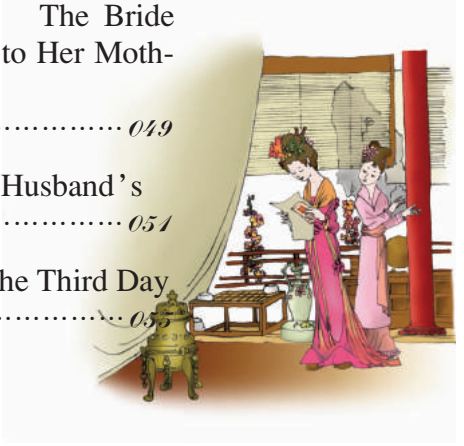



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第一章 婚庆前奏：相亲

Chapter One
Wedding Prelude: Blind Date

In ancient times, under the restriction of feudalism rituals, people awesomely believed in some established sayings, such as “ignorance is a woman’s virtue”, “males and females cannot be close to each other”, and so on. Because of these, their connections were cut off, then the matchmaker appeared and played a very important role.“Three intermediaties and six witnesses”, and“birth date matching”are the very standard and way to judge if a marriage fits. Both males and females should go through the intermediate bringing-together by matchmakers generally, then they can“be intertwined together as roots of trees”, and “connect both families”.

在古时，男女在封建礼教的束缚下，对“女子无才便是德”、“男女授受不亲” 等说教都心生敬畏，缺少与异性的交往，因此成婚的时候就离不开媒人了。“三媒六证”、“八字相合”是成就婚姻的唯一标准和渠道。男女双方一般都要经过媒婆从中说合，才能“结连理”，“通二姓之好”。

Section One A Perfect Union
第一节 天作之合

Ⅰ. Parents' Agreement

In *Mengzi*, a literature in the Warring States Period, it mentions that one's marriage should followed one's parents' opinion, and with matchmaker's help. The ritual opinions, "filial piety to parents" and "males and females should be treated differently", which were popular in the Western *Zhou* Dynasty, became strengthened in the Spring and Autumn Period. That is to say that the son is obliged to support and obey his living parents, when this was made connections to the marriage rites, such marriage rituals were shaped as "One's marriage should followed parents' opinion, and with matchmaker's help."

In ancient times, parents were the final speaker to their children's marriage, as they were regarded as their spokesman for children's destiny. While the destiny was something intangible and in fact, it only exists on people's mind, so it needed a person to speak for him. And in this case, the parents from

一、父母议定

"父母之命，媒妁之言"来自于战国文献《孟子》。西周提倡的"孝亲"与"男女有别"等礼制思想在春秋时期得以强化，儿子要奉养、顺从在世的父母，这使其与婚姻礼仪相结合，从而形成婚姻礼制："父母之命，媒妁之言。"

旧时婚姻中，"父母之命"是婚姻的终极权威，父母要成为"天命"的代言人。"天命"是看不见摸不着的抽象的东西，实际上它只存在于人的想象中，因此仍然需要借助人

both parties were going to arrange the marriage on behalf of the destiny. As the historical premise of marriage was the establishment of patriarchy, family mode and private ownership, the sons and daughters were not only themselves, but also part of their families or the private fortune of the family. What's more, their marriage meant more than the pure sex relationships. To make a marriage was considered as a way to maintain and continue this family or the benefit of this family, in this sense, the right to decide the marriage establishment undoubtedly fell in parents' hands. So, generally speaking, the destiny turns to be subject to parents' opinions.



Marriage was treated as a holy thing because it was believed to be the embodiment of "Law of Heaven" that connects *Yin&Yang* and gives birth to all things on earth, which is the basis for all kinds of human relations. In this way, whatever connections between males and females in the form of marriage, they are all arranged by the god's opinion, imperceptibly which is also called "perfect match" or "connected by fate". Under the control of such minds, the mind that marriages were arranged by the god's opinion, imperceptibly which is also called "perfect match" or "connected by fate". Under the control of such minds, the mind that marriages were ar-

来表达。这个"人"就是缔结婚姻双方的家长。由于婚嫁产生的历史前提是父权制、家族制和私有制的确立，因此儿女除了是自己本身，还是家族或家庭私有财产的一部分，而且他们的婚姻也超越了单纯的个人性爱关系，缔结婚姻成为保持和延续家族或家庭利益的手段，所以婚姻缔结的控制权便不可避免地被双方家长掌握。于是在一般情况下，所谓"天命"就成了"父母之命"的代称。

古人视婚姻为神圣之事。之所以神圣，是因为他们十分相信男婚女嫁是阴阳交感滋生万物的"天道"的体现，故为人伦之本。一切人世间的事物和现象，都是在婚姻基础上产生发展而成的。所以，任何一对男女以婚姻形式结合，都是上天意志在冥冥中的安排，即所谓"天作

ranged by the god had become the most basic one in guiding a marriage, and parents thus spokesperson for God of Destiny.

Ⅱ. The Word of a Matchmaker

In ancient times, under the restriction of feudalism rituals, people awesomely believed in some established sayings, such as "ignorance is a woman's virtue", "males and females cannot be close to each other", and so on. Because of these, their connections were cut off, then the matchmaker appeared and played a very important role. "Three intermediaties and six witnesses", and "birth date matching" are the very standard and way to judge if a marriage fits. Both males and females should go through the intermediate bringing-together by matchmakers generally, then they can "be intertwined together as roots of trees", and "connect both families". This kind of intermediating work is called "matchmaking". And people who are engaged in matchmaking are called "the moon god" as their elegant name, and "matchmaker", "go-between" as



之合"或"命中注定"。在这种认识支配下，姻缘天定成为指导婚姻的最基本观念，而父母就是代言宣"天命"的人。

二、媒妁之言

在古时，男女在封建礼教的束缚下，对"女子无才便是德"、"男女授受不亲" 等说教都心生敬畏，缺少与异性的交往，因此成婚的时候就离不开媒人了。"三媒六证"、"八字相合"是成就婚姻的唯一标准和渠道。男女双方一般都要经过媒婆从中说合，才能"结连理"，"通二姓之好"。这种说合，就叫"说媒"。做这种说合工作的人，被人们雅称为"月老"，俗称为"媒人"、"红娘"。媒人还有其他的叫

their common names. There are some other ways to call them, such as the icy person. After the PRC was found, all various names are changed into "introducer".

After marriage system was fixed, the function of a matchmaker was reflected in three parts:

First, the connections between unmarried males and females had become more and more restricted, along with the status of confucian ritual opinions becoming more and more strengthened in social ideology, especially the daughters in some families who attached great importance to elegance, and were nearly isolated with the society. In this way, their characters, appearances, the female's skills, and other conditions would not be known to others than their family members. The matchmaker visited families often, and got a general idea of the situation of each, including their status, their wealth and power, social relationships, the character and appearance of their children and so on. So if the parents wanted to arrange their sons and daughters' marriage according to the standards of similar conditions, such as status, talents, appearance, wealth and so on, they should surely choose the way of entrusting a matchmaker.

Second, the ancient people treated mar-

法,比如"冰人"等。新中国成立以后改称为"介绍人"。

关于媒人的作用,在婚嫁确立之后体现在三个方面。

其一,随着中国儒家礼教观念在社会意识形态中的地位日益加强,未婚男女间的交往禁忌越来越严,特别是那些讲求"体面"人家的女儿,几乎完全隔绝了与社会的联系。反过来,其品德容貌优劣、女红技艺高低等条件,对外人来说也一概是"养在深闺人未识"。而媒婆经常出入各门各户,各家的情形,包括身份财势、社会关系、儿女容貌品行等,心里都大致有底。家长们欲按门户相对、才貌相当、财力相尚之类的标准来包办儿女的婚姻大事,这条托媒的渠道便不可或缺了。

其二,古人把婚姻看

riages as an significant affair which would build relationships between two families, and be responsible to the ancestors and descendants. The realization process on marriage, that is to say, the complicated series from discussion on marriage, engagement and the wedding ceremony, is just an manifestation of this mind. And whatever process between this series, it needs a go-between to communicate between these two families. Therefore, whether there was a matchmaker or not became a scale-plate to judge whether this series of marriage was ritual or not.

Third, a basic feature of Chinese feudal society is that "the rites" and "the laws" also go together. Things that are lawful should be in accordance with the rite. As far back as the early *Qin* Dynasty, matchmakers were divided into official matchmakers and private matchmakers. The duty of an official matchmaker is similar to the wedding registration office of department of civil affairs in modern times and they offered protection for lawful marriage. Later on, the private matchmaker became popular and took the same duty as the official matchmaker.

The functions of matchmakers were written into laws from the *Tang* Dynasty. *Explanations on the Laws of Tang Dynasty* regulated

成是"将合二姓之好，上以事宗庙，而下以及后世"的重大事件，聘、娶、婚的实现过程，即从议婚、订婚到完婚的一整套繁琐程序，就是这种观念的表现形式。而在此过程中的任何一个阶段，都需要有一个中介在"二姓"之间起串联作用。这样，结婚用不用媒人，就成了其全套进程是不是合乎礼仪的标尺。

其三，中国封建社会的一个基本特征，就是"礼"与"法"互为表里，凡是合法的，必然是合礼的。远从先秦时代起，媒妁就有官媒、私媒之分，官媒的职掌类似现代的民政局结婚登记处，为因媒缔婚提供法律保障。后来私媒兴盛，同样具有官媒的效用。

唐代起，媒妁的这种作用正式载入法律。《唐律疏议》规定："为婚之

that the basic rule of a marriage is a matchmaker. At the same time, it regulated that if a marriage violated the rules and laws, the matchmaker will take some responsibilities for this. They meant that the matchmakers were protected by the laws, and at the same time, they should bear the corresponding legal responsibilities. Later, in the laws of the *Song*, *Yuan*, *Ming*, *Qing* dynasties, there were also some explicit regulations on the statues, functions and responsibilities of matchmakers similar to the *Tang* Dynasty, which made the legal significance of matchmakers in a marriage more and more obvious.

法，必有行媒。”同时又规定：“诸嫁娶违律，……媒人各减首罪二等。”即媒人不仅使婚姻得到法律保护，同时又应该为其承担相应的法律责任。其后宋、元、明、清历代法律，都有与唐律大致相同的明文规定，媒妁在婚姻缔结中的法律意义益加彰显。

III. Silk Balls for Matching a Marriage

Silk balls made of different colors of silk were once a tool for the palace band to dance, and it could also be used as a decoration in a female's bedroom or bed. In some places in ancient times, there were some customs that if a girl reached her marriage age, she would on a certain day, commonly January 15th or August 15th, throw a silk ball toward the candidates who gathered downstairs, and her husband



三、绣球招亲

绣球，是用五色丝绸扎成的，曾是古代宫廷乐队舞蹈用的道具，亦用作女子居室或床上的装饰品。古时在某些地方，当姑娘到了婚嫁的年龄，就约定一天，一般是正月十五或者八月十五让姑娘抛绣球。求婚者集中在绣楼之下，姑娘抛出一个绣球，谁得到这个绣球，谁就可以成为这个姑