

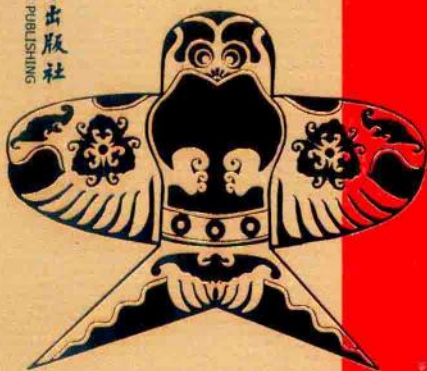
# Traditions of the Capital

An Exhibition  
of Old Beijing  
Folklore



首都博物馆  
CAPITAL MUSEUM

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## Conclusion





◎ Marriage is one of the major events in one's life. This is always true. It marks the initial phase of setting up a family and developing a lineage. The natives of Beijing are particular on the rituals and observe all the etiquette in the ceremony, so a wedding involves lots of etiquette details. Here is the process of a wedding ceremony in old Beijing.





Chapter 1

Nuptial Chamber for  
a Happy Marriage



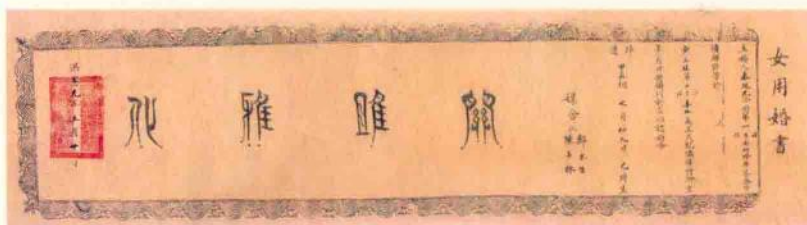
# Betrothal Gifts

The bridegroom's family sends betrothal gifts to the bride to indicate that he is to engage her into a marriage. The social status of the bride is confirmed and the matrimony relationship is actually established prior to the wedding ceremony. Some betrothal gifts are articles with symbolic meanings. Delivering betrothal gifts is the last and the most important part before wedding ceremony.



**Marriage certificate**  
Republic of China

— Marriage certificate is the "Certificate of Betrothal Bond" in the old days. The pattern of dragon and phoenix certificate indicates the extremely good fortune for the new couple. It is put on top of the pastry box as a token for announcing good news.



**A gold ring with plum flower**

Qing Dynasty

— The gold ring is a present to the bride from bridegroom to take her as a member of his family. Meanwhile, it is expecting her to have slim fingers for good sewing jobs.



**A gold bracelet with a pattern of numerous children**

Ming Dynasty

— The pattern engraved on this pair of bracelets is a common folk custom. Besides it's the ornamental effect, it conveys the wish for a prosperous family with many children.



### A Ruyi with the pattern of asparagus fern

Qing Dynasty

— An additional Ruyi is presented in the betrothal gifts as a token of happy life, especially if the couple is of the Manchu.



### Double happiness ceramic urn

Qing Dynasty

— In company with goose coops, it serves as liquor jar. Its number is equal to the goose coops. In the Republic of China, this ceramic urn was replaced by foreign wine bottles, 2~4 for one load.



### Goose coop

Qing Dynasty

— The cage is to keep goose as the symbol of faithfulness. The plumages of the goose are dyed in rouge. As a symbol of trustiness for its punctual migration, wild goose is often used to exhort the couple to be loyal in marriage. Since wild geese fly in perfect formation, they also symbolize the hierarchic order and rules in family which women are asked to observe after marriage. Wild goose is a special gift bearing the function of extortion and enlightenment. It is an indispensable part of the betrothal gifts. Later, the wild goose was replaced by domestic goose.





# Dowry

The bride's family sends dowry to the bridegroom's in the previous afternoon of the wedding day. The average quantity of dowry from a middle-class family is 24 trunks, 32 trunks, and some families think it is polite to return the gift twice the number of the betrothal gifts from the bridegroom.

Dowry is an etiquette requirement, but in comparison with the symbolic betrothal gifts, it is more of practical usage or value.



## Pouch

Republic of China

Pouch is a traditional garment ornament which is a small pocket to hold perfume, money, cigarette, key etc.. The companion pouch is a token of love. Additionally, pouch is a propitious article for donation and prayer for happiness.

