A Study on the Cultural Differences Reflected in Chinese and American Wedding Feasts

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Abstract: With the globalization of the social economy and the increasingly frequent cultural exchanges between countries, China has gradually been understood by the world, and at the same time has been subjected to the influences of foreign culture, which involves the impact of foreign marriage customs and traditions on our society. Whether in China or America, marriage is an essential thing. Since modern times, my country's marriage customs and traditions have gradually evolved and become more Western, but due to an eclectic mix of history, religious beliefs, and social core values, these caused a plethora of marriage practices in several places in China. The exchange and integration of different cultures is an inevitable part of cultural development. The Western touches in Chinese wedding cultures are clearly seen in many elements of contemporary Chinese weddings. Through the analysis of the characteristics of marriage customs between China and the United States, this paper draws out the reasons for the differences and the common development trend, in order to better understand the way of life of the two countries. The reasons for these differences were excitingly explored and summarized through the comparison of Chinese and Western wedding venues, decorations, wedding dresses, the entourage, color motif and theme, wedding banquets/meals, table manners, superstitions, and a lot more. This paper hopes that through the analysis of cultural differences between Chinese and Western weddings, we can better understand the cultural fusion between Chinese and Western cultures, and promote the exchange and integration of different cultures.

Keywords: Chinese Wedding, Western Wedding, Cultural Differences, Cultural Fusion

1. Introduction

As an ancient civilization with a history of 5,000 years, China's excellent traditional culture has always been praised by the world. In the 1990s, China welcomed foreign friends with an open mind. During this process, not only was Chinese culture carried forward and passed on but also the ancient civilizations and excellent cultures of the West were spread to China. Chinese and Western cultures can penetrate and influence each other. On the other hand, the process of globalization promotes cross-cultural communication. China is known to the world, and countries from all over the world are gradually entering China. Cultural exchanges between countries are becoming more and more frequent, international friendship is deepening day by day, and the world has achieved cultural sharing and integration. The process of cultural collision, naturally also includes the blending of Chinese and Western wedding banquet cultures. It is not difficult to find that Chinese wedding banquets have more or less integrated Western cultural touches today, and the shadow of traditional Chinese culture can also be seen in Western wedding culture. Chinese and Western cultures bear the cultural characteristics and cultural information of different nationalities, which are closely related to and inseparable from. Taking the cultural differences between China and the West as the starting point, this topic makes a more in-depth cultural comparative study, reflecting the performance of a nation's etiquette, religious beliefs, customs, diet, and other characteristics.

This contradiction can be alleviated only through a certain understanding of the culture of the other country. As the wedding banquet is part of the wedding which is the beginning of a marriage, understanding the wedding banquet customs is also an indispensable step. This topic takes the cultural differences reflected by etiquette culture, diet concept, customs, religious beliefs, and language expression
as the research object, and combines Hofstede’s cultural dimensions theory with case analysis.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Studies on Chinese Traditional Wedding Banquet Culture

Chinese marriage custom culture is an important part of social culture, which is closely related to human life. Since the beginning of the 20th century, people have begun to study Chinese marriage customs and culture. The research is mainly conducted in four aspects: the first is to study Chinese marriage customs as a whole, the second is to textually research certain marriage customs existing in a place's history, and the third is to study marriage customs from a historical perspective, and the fourth is to investigate marriage culture from a unique perspective.

The history of Chinese marriage systematically introduced the origin, development, and formation of Chinese marriage custom culture from the perspective of sociology and law. The course of Chinese cultural history said that ancient marriage customs were a marriage system of "parents' orders and media's words", and Chinese marriage customs culture was an important factor in the super stability of China's social structure.

The origin and evolution of marriage introduced the conditions for the formation of the Chinese marriage custom culture, the national marriage forms, and other aspects, and introduced existing China's marriage custom culture. [15]

The cultural details of Chinese marriage, and customs introduce what are the Chinese marriage customs, the relationship between Chinese marriage customs and traditional ethics, the relationship between Chinese marriage customs and national cultural psychology, the artistic value, and the important components of the Chinese marriage customs.

Liang ShiBian's book, Married Life Taboo. [11], divides China's marriage customs and cultural taboos into six aspects: marriage negotiation, engagement, invitation, wedding ceremony, and after marriage, and introduces and analyzes mainly introduces and analyzes bride taboos which have four aspects: engagement, marriage, wedding ceremony, and after marriage.

2.2. Studies on Western Traditional Wedding Banquet Culture

When we mention western weddings in the 21st century, we first think of Western elements such as wedding dress, wedding ring, and church. Predecessors on this topic have also done a lot of research on Western wedding customs and culture. The first is the study of Western wedding history and culture, the second is the study of Western wedding costumes, and the third is the study of Western wedding religious beliefs.

The Western wedding customs and culture fun talk in the year 2019, introduced Western traditional marriage customs and culture from the perspectives of wedding clothes and wedding music.

In Western wedding talk in the year 2018 on the other hand, analyzed the cultural background of the formation of Western wedding customs by introducing the wedding process. Sources from Western wedding customs introduce the origin and national cultural connotation of Western wedding customs, such as ring and veil customs.

Qin Bo, in his article, Chinese-Western Intimacy, and Marriage – An Invisible International Hierarchy introduced all kinds of American marriage customs in detail and also introduced American love and marriage concepts in talking about American wedding customs and expounded on American marriage customs before and during weddings. [16]

2.3. A Comparative Study of Chinese and Western Wedding Banquets and Wedding Customs

An earlier record of the spread of Western marriage custom culture in China was found in a marriage notice in Shanghai in 1902: " First, we should have sufficient talent; second, we should be familiar with Chinese and western academic approaches; third, we should follow the general rules of civilization and eliminate the old bad customs in China.". The third article clearly states that the wedding ceremony should be held in accordance with Western marriage customs and traditions. This shows that since entering modern times the Western marriage vows have gradually begun to form a cultural impact on China's traditional marriage ceremonies.

The introduction of wedding customs was introduced in detail, especially the characteristics of Chinese and Western wedding customs, and describes the similarities and differences between Chinese and Western wedding customs. Xi Xiao introduced the similarities and differences between Chinese and Western wedding cultures. [18]

Xu Meng analyzes that the differences between Chinese and Western marriage cultures under the religious background are mainly due to the differences between Chinese Confucian cultural consciousness and Western Christian culture. [19] Zhao Hong analyzes some reasons for the differences between Chinese and Western wedding customs through a brief comparison between Chinese and Western wedding customs.[20] Marriage custom is the embodiment of a nation's traditional culture and the indicator of the degree of civilization of the nation.

2.4. Critical Review

These documents record in detail the difference in marriage customs and culture in values, religion, love, marriage, aesthetics, and national psychology. The marriage customs of a nation can reflect the face of the social life of this nation. Due to the differences in cultural origins of different ethnic groups, different countries have formed their own unique marriage customs, and these customs are people's different views and attitudes towards marriage. In order to better analyze the reasons for the cultural differences in marriage customs between China and the West and give a detailed explanation.
This research draws on Hofstede's cultural dimension theory. From the perspective of Chinese sociology and law, this paper introduces the historical and cultural origin and evolution of Chinese marriage customs, the relationship between Chinese marriage customs and traditional logical thought, and the taboos of marriage customs culture. It also introduces the cultural background of Western traditional marriage customs, the origin of marriage customs, national cultural connotations, and marriage concept from the perspective of Western wedding costumes and music.

3. Comparison of Chinese and Western Banquets

3.1. Chinese Wedding Banquet

3.1.1. Chinese Wedding Place

In China, weddings are grand and lively. Chinese traditional wedding venues choose open courtyards, where family and friends gather, gongs and drums are loud, and firecrackers are blaring, presenting peace and prosperity. Influenced by Western wedding culture, Chinese wedding venues are gradually relocated. For convenience and grandeur, most modern weddings are held in hotels, but "lively" has always been the main feature of Chinese weddings [5]. After the wedding, the wedding venue has also become a place where relatives and friends tease the bride and groom. The most important factor in holding a Chinese wedding is the location of the wedding. It is not easy to choose a wedding location with traditional Chinese elements. Today's young people prefer trendy or relaxed dining places, but traditional Chinese-style weddings still need to reflect the atmosphere and dignity, and it is best to choose Chinese-style restaurants. Choosing a wedding hotel also needs to consider whether the transportation is convenient, whether it provides free parking, etc. In traditional marriage customs, marriage is a lifetime event, and the time of marriage is very particular. Generally, both parties will choose an auspicious day to hold the wedding. But in today's society, young people generally hold more weddings on holidays, so they often hold weddings during peak seasons, so wedding hotels must be booked in advance. Choosing a wedding banquet hotel also needs to consider the number of guests. It is best to make a return visit before determining the venue of the wedding banquet to see how many people will attend the wedding banquet. After the number of people at the wedding banquet is counted, you can choose the venue to hold it, so that it will not be embarrassing.

3.1.2. Chinese Formal Attire

Chinese traditions are not only reflected in ceremonies, but traditional costumes are equally important. In China, red is an important symbol, representing luck and joy, and wishing the newlyweds a prosperous future. Dragon and phoenix are important auspicious symbols in China, and the meaning of dragon and phoenix in wedding dresses has been passed down to this day. Chinese wedding dresses mainly include dragon and phoenix gowns, Xiuhe clothes, cheongsams, phoenix crowns and robes, and Hanfu [8]. Each of them has its own unique characteristics. The bride can choose the most suitable one according to her own preferences, body shape, budget, etc. The Chinese wedding dress is a sight to behold. 1. The dragon and phoenix gown is also a style of Chinese wedding dress derived from the Xiuhe suit where in modern times the density of the silver wire is considered. 2. Xiuhe clothing is based on the improvement of Manchu clothing, usually with dragon and phoenix embroidery, birds, mandarin ducks, and other themed patterns, with strong Chinese elements. 3. The cheongsam is the quintessence of China and precious artwork. In the past two years, the cheongsam has also become one of the women's favorite wedding dresses. 4. Fengguan Xiapi is the most traditional Chinese wedding dress that only children of ancient officials and wealthy families can wear when they get married. It is a symbol of identity and glory. The phoenix crown is a ceremonial crown worn by ancient noble women at their weddings, named after the phoenix embellishment. Xiapi also refers to a kind of shawl worn by ancient women. It has a beautiful shape and is as gorgeous as colorful clouds.

3.1.3. Diet of Chinese Wedding Banquet

The number of Chinese-style banquet recipes should be even numbers. Most areas of our country have unwritten traditional red and white wedding events. Usually, 8 dishes are used to symbolize wealth, 10 dishes are used to symbolize perfection, and 12 dishes are used to symbolize happiness. The popular 88 Dafa in the Jiangnan area consists of eight cold dishes and eight hot dishes, and on the day of the wedding, it is usually chosen on the eighth, eighteenth, and twenty-eighth of the Chinese Lunar calendar. Inseparable from eight, adding eight on top of eight, has auspicious meaning. The recipe for the banquet is as follows. Full of festivities - welcoming guests with eight colorful butterflies, good luck - big red sucking pig, sweet and sweet - braised lobster, golden branches and jade leaves - stir-fried flower branches with colorful peppers, grand show - braised shark's fin with Xueha, golden jade full boat - braised abalone, year More than a year - steamed fish, beaming - white chopped chicken. Flowers are full of moon-green vegetables, happiness is full of happiness - five-spice fried rice, a hundred years of harmony - lotus seeds, a red bean soup, and He Huan fruit plate [5]. Most of the recipe names at Chinese banquets will use auspicious words to express good wishes to the new couple, and psychologically delight the guests to set off the atmosphere. For example, the pearl double shrimp, we can name it flying with wings, and the milk soup fish ball is named water dragon depending on each other. Red dates, longan, lotus seeds, and peanut soup, we can name it Zaosheng Takako. Our country is a multi-ethnic country, and each ethnic group has its own unique customs and dietary taboos. When choosing recipes at the banquet, we should first understand the ethnic and religious occupation of the guests and some wisdom to flexibly master and match the recipes that the guests are satisfied with.
3.1.4. Table Manners of Chinese Wedding Banquet

Everyone are happy, and people avoid whispering. Most banquets have many guests, so try to talk about topics that most people can participate in, and get the approval of most people. Because of different personal interests and knowledge, the topic should not be too biased as much as possible, to avoid self-centeredness, the world is far from the perfect marriage must be done in the witness of God. The banquet, you should first look around at everyone's feelings of the original friends. Toasting is also a science. Under normal circumstances, toasting should be in the order of age, position level, and guest-host status. Before toasting, you must fully understand the order of toasting, and distinguish the priority and the secondary.

3.2. Western Wedding Banquet

3.2.1. Western Wedding Place

Regarding the choice of venue for a Western-style wedding, it depends on what kind of Western-style wedding the couple chooses. If it is a church wedding, the couple should contact the church where the wedding will be held, and the church will contact the priest. The priest is the one who will perform the wedding ceremony. If it is a non-church wedding, the newlyweds should contact the church where the wedding venue will be held, and the priest will perform the wedding ceremony.

3.2.2. Western Formal Attire

White wedding dresses are an integral part of Western wedding culture. In fact, wedding dresses are not only popular in the West, but in many countries in the world, in addition to retaining their own national wedding dresses, white wedding dresses have also become the choice of many new couples. The meaning of white represents purity is far more than that [2]. Therefore, white is usually the preferred color for dresses, and it symbolizes the beauty and holiness of the bride. White wedding dresses have become the first choice for brides' wedding dresses, but different countries will have different customs. In many traditional weddings in the United States, there is a special requirement for the bride's wedding dress, that is, it must have four characteristics: new, old, borrowed, and blue. This means that the white wedding dress worn by the bride must be the old blue used by her mother, which is to thank her parents for their upbringing; The white handkerchief in the middle, as a way to express the value of friendship; as for the blue, Then the ribbon on the bride's body must be blue, symbolizing the bride's loyalty to love that will never change and will stay until forever.

3.2.3. Diet of Western Wedding Banquet

Western-style banquet recipes are not as particular and detailed as the Chinese-style ones. Western-style banquet dishes generally include appetizers, salad soup, main dishes, and desserts, and some have the opportunity to cook with some snacks before meals. The dishes are usually steak, machine-fish, and lobster. In addition to the fixed menus, guests can also choose their favorite dishes from several sets of main menus provided. Appetizers include bread, flavored macaroni gravy, and lasagna with spinach and cheese. Desserts include green tea cake, Viennese fruit tart, and brownie cake with seasonal fruit plates cut on site. Drinks include cola, sprite, orange juice, and cocktails.

3.2.4. Table Manners of Western Wedding Banquet

Preparation before the table: Westerners do pay attention to etiquette when dining. First of all, let's talk about the knowledge of tableware placement in Western table manners. Western cutlery is mainly based on knife and fork, and the meal-sharing system is implemented. Knives, forks, spoons, etc. are placed next to the plate, and some small plates are generally placed in the center of the table. On the left is a loaf pan and butter knife, and on the opposite side of the decorative plate are small spoons and forks for coffee or snacks. Napkins are generally placed on top or to the left of the decorative plate. Glasses and tableware are placed in the
upper right corner for easy access. Seating etiquette: Western food etiquette is very particular, and the location of the banquet is generally already arranged. Other guests are seated in men and women. After everyone is seated, no matter what happens, wait for the host to take the napkin before taking the napkin. When wiping your mouth, gently press the end of the napkin along your lips and roll the soiled part inward. Wiping sweat or snot on a napkin and putting lipstick on a napkin is against table manners.

4. Analysis of the Root Causes of the Differences Between the Chinese and Western Wedding Culture

4.1. Power Distance

4.1.1. Individualism

The West is individualistic, so its marriage customs focus on both parties' confirmation of marriage and individuality. Along with the process of socialization, each culture gradually establishes its own unique value system, in order to help people establish a correct view of good and evil. At the same time, unique judgment criteria have also been formed. [7] Existence is reasonable. They are different. Their existence and value cannot be denied by virtue of a standard of value. People advocate individual heroism, and the idea of "going with the flow" suggested by the golden mean is interpreted as a lack of risk-taking and enterprising spirit, and more of a manifestation of laziness and incompetence, which is despised by the whole society and individuals.

4.1.2. Collectivism

Chinese culture is exactly the opposite. Exploring the reasons why there is such a big difference in traditional marriage customs between the East and the West can be considered from a cultural perspective. Different marriage concepts and religious beliefs between China and the West have a great influence. China attaches great importance to the role of the collective, and marriage customs are more importantly reflected in the collective identity of a new member recognized by the collective. China has been dubbed "the state of etiquette" since ancient times. Chinese culture emphasizes that one should be humble and pay attention to etiquette, let nature take its course, and not like a competitive social environment. In China, people who like to compete in the limelight and express themselves too much are often opposed and rejected. [13]. In addition, the Chinese are firmly committed to collectivism. The Chinese believe that the excessive pursuit of individualized development direction will inevitably be condemned by society.

4.2. Feudal Traditional Thought vs Humanistic Thought

4.2.1. Confucian Culture

The Chinese people are deeply influenced by Confucian and Mencius's thoughts. Emphasis on "match made in heaven". The Chinese lack firm beliefs and human behavior are mainly constrained by morality, and moral standards are mainly derived from Confucianism. Confucianism says that "men and women are different and then married" [14]. Sex forms the idea that women's status is lower than men's in marriage and family. Moreover, the concept of marriage in a Confucian culture that "there are three things without filial piety, and having no descendants is the greatest" has led people to pay more attention to the reproduction of children in marriage, resulting in increasingly solemn formalities and cumbersome ceremonies. From a deeper perspective, marriage in ancient China was just a product of obedience to ethical arrangements, and true love could hardly exist.

4.2.2. Christian Culture

The establishment of the marriage ethics relationship of modern free love is the result of the fusion of the Christian culture from the Greek culture and the Hebrew culture in the western marriage ethics. Western marriage advocates personal freedom and pursues an independent personality. In order to fully grasp natural tendencies and maintain freedom of choice. Men and women are attracted to each other, pursue and love each other, and are willing to make sacrifices for each other. Under the witness of God, they made a commitment to work together for the reproduction of mankind and a better life, which can be seen in the story of God's creation of Adam and Eve, God also regards marriage as a covenant relationship. The idea of marriage is based on the words of Jesus Christ, in other words, the "Bible" is where marriage exists.

4.3. Differences in Marriage Concepts

4.3.1. Parents' Orders and Matchmakers' Words

In the traditional Chinese concept, marriage has a very sacred meaning. Ruler and subject, father and son, husband and wife, brother and friend are the five relationships. Born in the Western Zhou Dynasty, the "married couple" was particularly emphasized among the five relationships, and the "virtuous wife's room" and "the first priority" were proposed, which implied the traditional concept of marriage as the foundation of ethics and had serious ethical significance, and also made marriage one of the most important things in China. traditional ethical foundations. Matchmaker, an extremely important role in traditional Chinese wedding activities, was born [16]. The "matchmaker" plays an important role in the whole process of the wedding. First and foremost, she is the bond that connects both men and women. Secondly, matchmakers are also indispensable in the process of engagement and marriage. The role of matchmakers is similar to that of Western priests. They are both witnesses to the weddings of men and women, so when people talk about old marriages, it is inevitable that they will be associated with the phrase "the life of the parents, the words of the matchmaker" [17]. China has had a feudal society for more
than 2,000 years, and feudal ethics bound people. In order to coordinate the relationship between the sexes and prevent adultery, the rulers had to pay attention to the concept of "propriety" in marriage to educate the people. It ignores and limits people's normal instinctual desires. The purpose of marriage lies in the continuation of the lineage. It has the utilitarian significance of maintaining the family, giving birth to children, and also increasing the labor force of the family.

4.3.2. Marriage for Love
The formation of western marriage ethics is the result of the blending of Greek culture and Hebrew Christian culture. Therefore, it is also further developed into the foundation of the establishment of modern free love marriage ethics relationship. Western marriage advocates for individuals to freely express their wishes, release human nature, and pursue the natural development of human nature. All behaviors originate from people's natural inclinations, so people can make free choices. In daily social life, when men and women meet, they can't help being attracted and admired by each other, and then pursue each other until love arises. From the development of love to the peak of love that is hard to part, we are willing to fully dedicate ourselves to each other. Under the marriage relationship of mutual commitment, we will organize a family together and work hard for the common ideal life in the future, for reproduction, harmony, and the improvement of life. The concept of marriage is based on the words of Jesus Christ, in other words, the Bible is its basis. In the Christian view of marriage, marriage is established by the sovereign God who created the universe. The formation of the concept of marriage is the inheritance of the fusion of Greek and Hebrew cultures. And the western concept of marriage ethics is a further development of the blending results of Greek culture and Hebrew Christian culture. Therefore, it can be called the foundation of the establishment of the marriage ethics relationship of modern love.

4.4. Integration of Chinese and Western Wedding Cultures

4.4.1. How to Integrate Chinese and Western Wedding Cultures
For a person, a wedding is not a purely personal affair. Personally, a wedding is just a union of two people. From the social point of view, it can reflect the integration of different social thoughts, national consciousness, and national culture to some extent. [4] On the one hand, the wedding meets the needs of people to get married, it also inherits the rich culture of my people, and interprets the understanding of modern life. With the increasing exchanges and interactions between Chinese and Western countries, the cultures of China and the West are gradually becoming integrated. Today's world is a period of great fusion of Chinese and Western coexistence, ancient and modern coexistence, and together they constitute a unique and modern society culture. When Chinese and Western cultures coexist at the same time and space collided, although there are conflicts from time to time, it is a greater degree of integration. [6] Nowadays, people can pursue novel and creative weddings, such as Chinese and Western weddings. Chinese Western Weddings; Contemporary New Weddings. Now, more and more Western weddings are loved by the Chinese people and have become popular. Today's young people believe that Western-style weddings can better reflect each other's love, and are more practical and special in expressing love, and their effects are often more memorable. Therefore, more and more young people tend to adopt the Western model to design their own weddings. This combination of Chinese and Western weddings not only reflects the sacredness and solemnity of Western weddings but also expresses the grand and warm Chinese weddings. The traditional ceremony can be combined with the free and open atmosphere of a Western-style wedding. [9]

4.4.2. How to Rationally View the Integration of Chinese and Western Wedding Culture
With the pace of globalization and China's rapid development, the gap between China and Western developed countries has gradually narrowed, and economic cooperation has become increasingly frequent. Economic exchange brings cultural integration. For example, many young Chinese people today wear white wedding dresses and suits for wedding ceremonies in churches. At the same time, many Americans who love traditional Chinese culture will travel thousands of miles to China to hold Chinese weddings, sitting in sedan chairs, worship heaven and earth, and have fun. Under the influence of cultural integration, weddings in China and the United States also have many common development trends: (1) The age of marriage is generally pushed back, due to the increasing pressure of life and the higher cultural quality of young people, not only in China but also in the United States. It is a common phenomenon, there are many reasons for late marriage, such as the pursuit of self-improvement, immaturity of the economy, unwillingness to give up one's own freedom, etc.; (2) The wedding process is from complicated to simple, which is reflected in Chinese weddings. It is especially obvious that many traditional projects have been omitted, not only due to the influence of modern fast-paced life but also a phenomenon of cultural loss; (3) The number of naked marriages is increasing. The huge pressure of economic life and the rapidly rising housing prices and prices have made many young people born in the 1980s of marriageable age become "no house, no car, no savings", and they have to choose naked marriage. At the same time, naked marriage is also a kind of progress in thinking. It pays more attention to spiritual life rather than material life. When two people fall in love with each other, they get married and ignore the material basis. [3]

5. Conclusion
Weddings between China and the United States have differences in history, culture, religious beliefs, core values, etc., and globalization is constantly narrowing the differences. The narrowing of the differences is beneficial to the exchanges and common development of both. At the
same time, a certain loss of traditional culture has also arisen. China and the United States have attractive marriage traditions, which should be protected in the process of cross-cultural communication. Western weddings are now Chinese-styled, and vice versa, which greatly enriches the wedding celebrations. Wedding culture is an engaging topic in the cultural encyclopedia, which combines the essence of rich Chinese and Western cultures. In the mutual penetration of these cultures, the wedding reflects the collision and fusion of Chinese and Western union. Whether it is the Westernization of Chinese weddings or the Sinicization of Western weddings, it shows that the forms of weddings are changing towards the trend of fusion and integration of Chinese and Western styles. In the process of mutual influence and penetration between the splendid and time-honored Chinese traditional culture and the unique and charming Western culture, both sides have achieved further development in economic, cultural, international exchanges, and cooperation.

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