

Note on A Wedding in Kau Lau Wan

辛慧思(Kate Sandweiss)

Introduction

From 1980-1982, Kate Sandweiss was a Yale-China Association teaching fellow at The Chinese University of Hong Kong. She was a Tutor in the English Department and lived and worked at New Asia College. As a recent graduate of Yale University in interdisciplinary cultural studies, she spent her free time studying Cantonese and exploring traditional folk practices in Hong Kong.

Sandweiss was invited by Professor Barbara Ward, and Choi Chi Cheung to join CUHK's anthropology students in documenting life in Hong Kong fishing villages. The following account, her first field notes, was from one of their visits to Kau Lau Wan. Sandweiss and photographer Joan Law continued to visit Kau

Lau Wan numerous times over the following several years.

Sandweiss used the Yale romanization system for Cantonese words and names.

Biography

Kate Sandweiss has both a Bachelors and a Masters of Business degree from Yale University. She maintains her life-long interest in exploring diverse cultures. Currently, she is owner and lead consultant with Sandweiss & Associates, a management consulting firm based in Minneapolis, Minnesota. In addition, she is Treasurer of the Yale-China Association, a U.S.-China educational exchange organization founded in 1901. Yale-China has sent teaching fellows like Sandweiss to New Asia College since 1956.

Lee Tung's Wedding Kau Lau Wan (KLW 交流灣、高流灣)/ Wedding

3/11/81

17:05

Arrived KLW. Many people were in front of Lee Tung Tak's house. (Lot 22) There was an awning covering the concrete area in front of the Lee house. Electric light bulbs were being affixed to the metal frame on which the awning was hung. From the far corners of the awnings up to the roofs of the house (Lots 22, 23) were 2 strings with many small flags on them. Hanging against the house were two red blankets given as wedding presents which had painted foil Double Happiness characters attached to them, and signs with the names of the givers.

Above the doorway to Lot 22 was a fresh pork shank with hoof. One person (Shek who

rented us the house in the summer) told us later that these objects were hung early a.m., on Nov.3 (not *verified*), after Lee Tung ritualistically changed from old clothes into new ones, and took a bath. (A form of tyuht hohk? diao 調服 [福]) (Shek Kwong Nin claims that this ceremony never takes place nor took place in K LW, although it does in Kau Sai 濶西) There was a group of middle-aged to older men sitting at the table set up between Lots 22 & 23 when we arrived. They all got up shortly after Ah Ping (Lau Ping-lun) and I came and were asked to sit down.

First Big Meal

Lee Tung Tak seemed to be using this area to greet people. Shortly after we sat down, another group of men came and sat at the table. (They did not come all together.) They included Shek Kwong Nin, Shek Fuk Tin, Ho Heung Man, Shek Kwong Yee, Shek Kwong Man and Lee Tung Tak.

10 (sic) dishes were placed on the table: 3 fish bladder and pork; 2 taro with pork fat (and meat); 1 celery with pork (?); 3 melon with tuna? (sai ?); 1 medium sized and 1 large steamed fish were placed in the center of the table.

18:15: Rowing a new tradition. How widespread?

The women who had been preparing food in the area in front of the Lee's (which is closest to the harbor, hereafter referred to as the "Cook area") began to practice "rowing" with pink and yellow striped sticks approx. 4 feet long. The sticks or "oars" had four pink stripes (incl. on top and bottom) and 3 mustard-yellow colored stripes. A Double-Happiness character was painted near the bottom in gold-colored paint.

There were 6 pairs of married women practicing "rowing" in parallel lines. Lee Tung Tak was the first to accompany them by clapping flat cymbals. Lee Tung's younger sister (Lee Yuk Nin) later took over and others rotated. It didn't seem to make any difference who played the cymbals.

The cymbals only accounted for a part of the noise for the women were yelling and joking. They would often say that they hadn't arrived yet. They were also fairly serious about the way in which they were rowing. If one person wasn't rowing vigorously enough, the others would point this out to them.

The women wore flat hats covered with a pink and white plastic material which had a trim of small, silk-like flowers along the top outer brim. Thin, light colored cotton-type cloth hung down (scalloped edges) replacing the black cloth which is used when the women are working. Approx. 8 inch strands of plastic beads hung from the brim approx. every four inches, and the neck tie was made of beads as well.

One woman attached 2 oranges to the ends of a piece of strings and hung it around her neck so that the oranges hung like breasts.

18:35

The "Rowing" had continued until now when someone asked who hadn't eaten yet and a few women left.

18:40

Firecrackers were set off on the steps by the Lee House. Mrs. Lee Tung Tak waved a red flag vigorously by the bow of the boat. The "Rowing" broke up but the joking continued with Lee Yuhng Da. (Lee Tung Seuhng's son, Lee Tung's cousin) putting on baggy black women's work pants, and the string with oranges around his neck. The women made fun of him by pulling down his extra pair of pants, and poking at his "breasts". Ah Ping told me that LYD was pretending to be the mediator (muih yahn 媒人). One person tells me that the muih yahn is the wife of Lee Tung Tak's brother. (Not verified)

Several women also put on black clothing and one pretended to be pregnant, holding her belly, needing help getting into the House.

18:55

They finished. Meanwhile, in Lot #?, Lee Yuk Nin, and the other sisters, and Mrs. Lee Tung Tak's (sisters?) were making red flags.

Several hours

Joan Law and I spent time talking to a group of the young women in the village. Details from discussion with young (20-24 yr. old) women including Ho Gam Lin, Shek Mei Chun, and Lee Yuk Nin. Lee Yuk Nin took off from work for one week to help with the wedding. She works at a clothing factory in Kwun Tong 觀塘. The bride and groom met on picnics. She was originally from Kat O 吉澳.

Organization of food preparation:

The groom's father bought all food on Nov. 2 in Sai Kung 西貢. A few men including the groom's father organized the food preparation. Women helped with the preparation (most but not all were in the Lee family) and men did the cooking. The cooks (manning 7 large woks 鑊) were not all Lees and included several Chans who had experience in restaurants.

Gifts given to Bride's family from the groom's family?

Gwó lái 糪禮: cake (I was not clear whether it was láih béhng 禮餅, chat séng béhng, or other,) peanuts, 4 yát jíh (椰子 two pairs of cocoanuts) a hen & cock (taiyahn gai) wóo yóu, hòhng jóu 紅棗, fa behng 發餅, western style cakes 西餅, dried lychee 荔枝乾, dragon eyes 龍

眼, wohng tóng 黃糖

Bride Price: \$30,000; Lycee 利是:\$1,000

Nov.4, 12:15

The boat carrying the groom and his "brothers" was spotted approaching the ice factory pier. The young women went to the pier. The "brothers" came on shore with a large basket of crabs - which they would eat later that night. The married women came out trying to keep the groom from going to his house.

12:22

The married women came out in force with their oars trying to prevent the groom from getting to his house. Gongs were beaten. Then the "brothers" were allowed to approach the groom's house but they continued to try to keep the groom away.

12:26

The groom broke through the weakening barrier of women, went into his new room. Groom and "brothers" all loosen clothing and relaxed. The mahjong which was being played in front of the groom's house and interrupted by his return continued after the initial excitement.

There was a joking dispute between Lee Tung Tak and his wife about the timing of the "seung touh" 上頭. They decided to do in the morning before groom went to Tsuen Wan.

The bride's and groom's new room:

Full size bed with new spreads, 2 new pillows with embroidered cases, dressing table (vanity) with cosmetics, bride's photo and dolls on it, a bureau, new blankets (at least 3 not including those hung outside the house, in the main room, and those on the bed.) The walls and ceiling had new wallpaper on them and there was new linoleum in the floor.

Main room of Lot #?

Many new blankets hanging on rope strung approx. 8 ft. high on one side of the room. Women inside making red flags.

In front of the altar (I was not sure when it was put there) was a fresh, uncooked pig's head with the tail lying between its ears.) On the altar, besides fresh oranges, electric red candles, (tea? wine?) was a conical-shaped puffed rice and peanut "food-stuff". (*incomplete observation*)

KLW 4/11/81

Early A.M.

Ah Ping reported that last night the groom and "brothers" started drinking, but the groom's

father interrupted them because he didn't want the groom to be drunk. The brothers were shoed away.

5:50A.M.

Photos were taken with the groom and 6 "Brothers", the groom's eldest sister and Lee Tung Gaai's wife before they all went to get the bride. They took with them a plastic bag with two chickens in it, decorations for the car (incl. plastic cylinders containing dolls) and a black umbrella with a red strip of cloth (approx.2-3 ft long) attached to the top and wrapped around it.

6:00

Procession to the main dock with Lee Tung in the lead with Lee Tung Gaai's wife, who was carrying the 2 chickens. Many firecrackers accompanied the procession. (*Boat leaves*)

6:15

In front of Lee house banners were brought out which were later attached to the boat which fetched the bride from the ferry pier Wong Shek 黃石.

Approx.7:00

Major cooking operations were already under way with 7 large woks over oil barrel burners. More than 16 women were helping to prepare the food.

In the food preparation area were 2 large refuse-sized baskets of taro, 4 large ceramic barrels of winter mushrooms (soaking since the day before) and 1 large plastic bucket of celery. Food stored at the ice factory and brought to the cooking site that morning included 3 plastic drums of oysters, 2 large baskets of broccoli, western lettuce (quantity not specified), 2 large baskets of pork fat and meat cubes.

The people were in high spirits and every now and then there would be cries from a woman in the kitchen for the bride to give birth to a son.

7:15

2 square folding tables were set up in front of the Lee house in preparation for breakfast, (and I'm told a candle lighting ceremony which I didn't see.)

DISHES: 3 dishes pork ribs, 3 fish bladder with pork, and 2 steamed chicken. Total of 8 dishes on the table. Total of 13 people at the table, excluding A Ping and I. The guests were all men. (Have photos but no names) (The 1st woman to sing was the groom's father's eldest sister-surnamed Ho)

Seating Arrangement: order of Singing

Lee Tung Tak

(1) (3) (2)

Lot 22 Lot 23

8:15-9:00 (Tape recording available)

Eating and singing by men at table and women dragged from cooking area. (I was tape recording)

9:00A.M.

After the Tai Po Kau 大埔滘 ferry arrives, 4 tables of people including the C.U.H.K. students ate breakfast in front of the Ho House.

9:15

Procession of young men began with gong and cymbal to the boat which will go to Wong Shek pier to get the wedding couple. The boat was decorated with flags. (not special)

9:20

Young men boarded the passengers style (rented?) boat playing the gong and cymbal all the while. 7 middle-aged and one younger woman also went on the boat. (Lee Tung Tak's sisters?)

9:23

As the boat pulled away from KLW, firecrackers were thrown behind the boat and rough yellow paper (not burned) was thrown over the side by a woman. There were no apparent markings on the paper.

The women had brought with them, their flat, decorated hats, oars and a brioche-shaped fisherman's hat draped in a 2-3 yards of red cloth (for the unicorn's costume.) (*Unicorn or "False Lion" dance*)

WAITING AT WONG SHEK PIER

10:28, All on boat

The bridal party arrived. The bride had "a sister" holding her arm and a red umbrella above her. The bride was in a traditional wedding gown, and carried a pink feather fan. The groom was protected by the black umbrella tied with red cloth that had been brought from his house that morning. The couple walked slowly to the boat preceded by 2 ladies rowing, 1 lady crossing 2 red flags, a lion and a unicorn dance (involving 2 ladies).

There were many firecrackers before the couple stepped onto the boat, and as the boat departed. Also, as the boat departed from the pier, women burned paper (money?) and prayed (*baai san* 拜神). Meanwhile of course, the gong and cymbals were continuing. The "brothers" went to the top deck of the boat, and the couple, several of the KLW women and the people who

came with the bride went to the main deck. The bride, groom, and the bride's main "sister" sat together in a row of chairs facing the bow of the boat.

10:40

The "Brothers" were given lycee. I'm not sure by whom. As we approached K LW, the K LW women assembled on the bow. Two women in the very front waved red flags (2 each) with 1 flag above their head, and one arm across the front of their body. The unicorn began dancing again; lunging forward towards the bow of the boat and K LW.

10:44

2 women began "rowing". Now there was only one woman waving red flags. She was waving both above her head vigorously. (The night before we'd been told the manner of waving the flags was significant, but the women wouldn't tell the male student what was being signaled by the different motions.)

At K LW

There was a dragon dance and the pier was crowded with people. A woman was on shore waving two red flags together from side-side. Many firecrackers, particularly before the bride stepped onto the shore. The dragon came down the steps of the pier before the boat's arrival.

On the steps of the pier right near where people would step off the boat was a quarter of a taro root with 6 incense sticks burning in it and 2 red candles. 3 of the sticks may have been burning since the boat went to Wong Shek. 3 had been lit recently, perhaps when the boat was sighted? (*From "Candle Lighting" ceremony?*)

A woman carrying a teapot covered with red paper greeted the boat along with the dragon. I believed she poured some water out onto the steps before people came ashore but I'm not certain exactly what she did or when.

A red suitcase of the bride's (?) was brought with the bride.

On the K LW pier were 22 women with decorated flat hats and painted oars. They lined up in parallel lines in front of the couple, and "rowed" them to their new house/ room. The two women closest to the couple attached a third oar to the bottom of their oars and it dragged in front of the couple as though a boundary line which the couple shouldn't pass. While all of the other women were rowing in a front-to-back motion, these two women operated their oars like sculls, in a figure-eight type motion.

Being in the back of the wedding procession, I couldn't clearly see the front of the procession. I did see 2 women at the front with 2 red flags each, which they crossed above their

heads. I believed that the lion, unicorn and woman with oranges hanging on her chest were near the front of the "parade". It was a festive occasion with the pier lined with children in their school clothes, and others, more women than men.

11:08

The women began to row in a different manner; on the back swing, they would cross and hit sticks with the woman across from them. This change in rowing style seemed to be directed by one of the leading flag wavers who waved her flags in a downward motion - raised at her chest and lowered at her side.

11:15

The procession was very raucous with many firecrackers and the women joking. At 11:15 the lion, at the lead, passed the pier near Lot #?. The women who were sculling were joking and hitting each other in playfulness.

11:18

2 lions and the unicorn preceded the couple to their "new" house, bowing three times at the threshold (towards the shrine). Then they bowed towards the sea. The gongs, cymbals and drums were quite loud, as were the numerous firecrackers.

It was at this time that I first noticed the pig's head in front of the altar. There were 2 candles burning on the top shelf and 4 candles at the (earth god?) shrine below it. A live chicken was tied to the table leg of the table in front of the shrine and on which the pig head was placed facing the shrine.

11:21

The groom's mother threw water at the shrine.

11:20

The women with oars came onto the canopied area in front of the couples' "new" house, yelling, "Faster!"

11:25

The rowers came to the threshold of Lot 22 joking with the groom's mother and poking their oars against her legs. The women then used their oars to try to prevent the couple from entering their new abode. Tea/water with red bean seeds in it was spilled on the floor (intentionally or not?) just before the couple came in, bowing 3 times as they entered.

From a small bowl of water with burned out incense in it, the groom's mother sprinkled more water on the shrine as the couple entered their new room. MANY FIRECRACKERS!

(Couple to their new room, sit on bed.)

People stood around the front of the house and soda was brought out and offered to everyone.

11:38

Incense lit at shrine in Lot 22. A tray was prepared with 4 cups each of water/ wine and tea with the red seed - hòhng jóuh 紅棗 in it. Baai san then a clear liquid was poured into cups in the shrine. Then Baai san (and offerings?) in Lot 21, then Lot 23. Returned to Lot 22.

11:44

A new round of firecrackers, cymbals and gongs as "brothers" brought out the red plaque with Lee Tung's "Dàaih Méng" (大名 "big name") on it from Lot 23. The plaque was presented to the couple under the threshold of Lot 22 (facing outside for all to see). The name plaque was then placed over the doorway into their new room.

11:47

Offerings were made by women at the shrine in Lot 22. Preparations for tea offering ceremony took place inside main room of Lot 22. 9 cups, and a bowl of cut oranges. A small amount of liquid from each of the cups was placed in 4 glasses; 2 were tea, 2 were a clear liquid.

Peanuts, dried lychee, and hòhng jóuh were prepared and put on the table for the people who would receive tea.

12:02

KLW women teased the couple in front of Lot 22, showing them how to dance cheek-cheek and kiss. Then they made the couple did the same. Hilarity all around, especially as people began to sit down to be offered tea. Bibs and pacifiers were given to the groom's parents and several others. More sweets were brought out.

12:07

The newlyweds began to offer tea. They started a short time earlier with the groom's indigent grandmother, who was in bed in the house. Then they began with the groom's parents. (Father first?) In offering tea they had all four hands on the tea cup. I couldn't see well enough to follow the order (búi fahn 輩份) in which they offered tea. To the first 4-6 people they offered tea to, they also gave them a new article of dark colored clothing. In the meantime, a gold necklace was fastened around the groom's neck. (12:13) I believe he got one of these small gold chains for each round of offerings he made, total 3.

The second round of tea offerings included the groom's father's sisters. 2 cups (1 tea, 1

wine?) were offered to each person seated at the tables facing out towards sea, and the couple who stood facing their relatives (and the house).

During this ceremony, many people took the opportunity to tease the couple further by pretending not to hear them offer tea. Before offering each person tea, the bride (and groom?) were instructed how to address the person. The ceremony took over an hour, and the bride looked none too happy. The people who weren't offered new clothing were given a pair of towels to symbolically cleanse themselves. Most of the people offered tea were women. Many of the men were busy cooking. The bride finished the last round of offerings by herself. The groom chatted with friends.

After each complete round of tea offerings, the recipients handed over a red packet of money. I learned from the bride later that the money was technically hers, and that she had collected around \$2,000. I also saw a woman who was not offered tea, who seemed to have come during the middle of this ceremony from a fishing boat docked at the ice pier, give the groom's mother a red packet. (Was she a relative?)

14:17

Large meal-Second

In front of the Ho house there were 12 tables set up, 5 were across from the Lee's house Lot 22, one inside a house near the Ho's, and one near the outdoor shrine. People seemed to be sitting by age group and for the most part, at single sex tables. Total number of tables#?

[Not everyone in the village was sitting at tables] (There were at least 3 other tables in the area in front of Lot #?, on the other side of the Lee kitchen area.) Those not at the meal included the wife and daughters of Mr. Shek who owned the store near the main pier, some elderly Chan women (*in front of Chan Lots*), and one elderly woman outside of Lot 36

Approx. 14:30

Firecrackers, gong and cymbal, then drinks and food brought around to each table. The food was served on large wooden trays mostly by men.

Food served: Total 9 dishes on the table.

1 steamed chicken, 1 plate with 2 steamed fish on it. 1 shrimp fried in shell with a reddish sauce, 2 bowls taro root with pork (fat mostly). 1 broccoli with long-necked clam, 1 abalone with duck's feet and lettuces, 1 fried oysters in sweet and sour sauce, 1 winter mushroom and meat.

No other events before 5:00. Bride, groom, groom's father (?) go from table to table toasting. (Bride changed into Cheung saam 長衫 after tea ceremony). (*CUHK students documented who was at which table*).

編者按：

本文由蔡志祥校對，並給予簡短的介紹，本刊深表謝意。以下為蔡志祥所作的介紹。

蔡志祥按：

本文作者辛慧思(Kate Sandweiss)女士在1980年代初期擔任香港中文大學新亞書院耶魯中心的英語講師。1979年冬，新亞書院人類學的輔系同學在故華德英教授(Prof. B.E.Ward)和故王崧興教授的鼓勵和推動下，開始在香港東北部的高流灣，進行社區研究。1980年人類學正式成為學系後，一部份輔系的同學轉到該系，而高流灣研究計劃也因此而繼續下來。辛慧思女士在課閒之餘，多次參與現地調查，並與鄉民建立良好的關係，並多次參與鄉民的婚、喪、祭祀活動。據辛女士表示，二十年後，她仍然和一些鄉民保持聯繫。

高流灣是一個漁民社區。居民主要是石、李、陳三姓。本文描述的是1981年當時高流灣村村長的兒子的婚禮。辛女士記錄了11月3及4日兩天的婚禮活動。

故華德英教授(Prof. Barbara E. Ward)在其有關意識模型的論述中指出，在中華帝國的歷史中，蛋民雖然長期被受歧視，然而，在其研究的滯西的蛋家漁民社區，卻認為他們的家庭和婚姻等生活方式最符合中華文化的大傳統內涵，從而是中國大傳統的一部份。¹其次，如Turner指出，通過儀禮有三個重要的過程：和日常社會斷裂、邊緣化和與社會再整合的過程。邊緣化的過程中，人們離開了他的常軌生活和身份，但又未能獲得新的身份時的混沌狀態和與日常生活顛倒的環節。²

本文描述的婚禮，讀者可以生動地體驗對在婚姻這個關口，鄉民的社會如何和日常生活不一樣。

首先，婚禮時陸上扒舟，並非鶴佬族群特有的儀式行爲。我們並沒有證據證明陸上扒舟究竟是鶴佬族群和蛋家族群長期以來各自共有的、是通過學習的、或是水上居民上岸後演繹出來的儀式行爲。從我們口述資料，最晚在1960年代，高流灣的鄉民上岸後，已有在婚禮時陸上扒舟的風俗。

其次，婚禮是一種通過儀禮，我們可以在婚禮時見到一些和日常生活倒錯的現象。1980年編者在高流灣參加過一個陳姓的婚禮。除了陸上扒船外，整個儀式進行的過程中，也觀察到如本文描述的身份倒置的現象：首先是男性擔負了平日女性在廚房的工作，女性則非常歇斯底裡的耍樂。這無疑是通過儀禮時的性別倒錯的現象。此外，編者也觀察到兒子和新媳婦用羹匙喂食帶著口水肩的父母。這也許是一種輩分倒錯的展現。辛慧思女士非常生動地描述了整個婚禮的過程。並且把觀察者耳聞、目睹、以及自我思考各方面條理細緻地展陳。本文不但記錄了漁民社區的婚禮，而且是一篇極具參考價值的人類學參與觀察的田野記錄。

註釋：

¹ Barbara E. Ward, *Through Other Eyes* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1985), pp. 52 and 58.

² Victor W. Turner, *The Ritual Process* (England: Penguin, 1974).