

# **Cross Cultural Studies Review**

A journal for comparative studies  
of culture, literature, and the arts

Vol. 1, No. 1/2 2019

# **Cross - Cultural Korea**



# Weddings in Korea and Ukraine\*

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## Abstract

Koreans and Ukrainians are two different nations in many aspects, such as geography, language, ethnicity, culture, and so on. It may seem difficult to find something in common between them. However, in terms of folk culture, especially wedding rituals, I would say that the two nations have many things in common. This study attempts to compare the traditional wedding rituals of the two nations which were performed among commoners between the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. Through this study, we can understand that the basic structure of the wedding rituals of both cultures have much in common. Even though the ritual forms and contents are different from each other, both cultures use many similar objects and symbolic expressions for the wedding ceremony. This study also deals with how women's work, romance and new aspirations of social class transformed the marriage tradition, and how rituals were influenced by the intervention of the governments' authority in personal life.

**Keywords:** Korea, Ukraine, wedding rituals, tradition, folklore

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Statement of the Problem

The study of wedding rituals makes it possible to understand the problem which may happen when individuals have a life-cycle crisis and are forced to accomplish transitions in their life. If we study the nature of an individual crisis, such as a marriage, and the relation between crisis and ritual, we can find cultural and social regularities in relation to individual deviancy. Also, we can have a foundation on which many disciplines could cooperate. Besides these, wedding rituals reflect many other things, such as gender, kinship systems, social structures, the economy, and others. Through the study of wedding rituals, contemporary anthropologists try to explain gender, historical change, social dynamics, and other topics.

\* This study is based on my previous work "A Comparative Study of Ukrainian and Korean Wedding Rituals" from 2010. I have modified and revised it in English for this new publication.

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Koreans and Ukrainians are two different nations in many aspects, such as geography, language, race, culture, and so on. It may seem difficult to find something in common between them. However, in terms of folk culture, I would say the two nations have many things in common and suggest a comparative study of their cultures. In this paper, I aim to compare the traditional wedding rituals of the two nations which were performed among commoners between the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries and passed on from generation to generation, leaving some elements among contemporary wedding customs.

While I deal with the diversity of marriage rites of two peoples, I also raise the following question: Are there fundamental aspects of these rituals common to both cultures, or are they shared by some, but lacking in others? This question will be examined through a structural study of wedding rituals. While I conduct this structural study on wedding rituals, I also pay attention to how women's work, romance and new aspirations of social class transformed the marriage tradition, and how rituals were influenced by the intervention of the governments' authority in personal life.

## **2. Research Method and Literature Review**

In order to compare the structure of the wedding rituals of both cultures, first of all I need to discover or define a minimal structural unit, and to understand how these minimal units combine into traditional patterns. In a previous study on the structure of Korean and Ukrainian wedding rituals, I notice such a minimal structure. I then set the structure of Ukrainian wedding rituals on the basis of a comparison and compare both wedding rituals, dividing them into three phases, such as pre-wedding rituals, wedding day rituals, and wedding rituals after the wedding ceremony. If the given instance of structural analysis is valid, then it ought to be possible to replicate the analysis.

If I am successful in comparing the isolated and described structural patterns present in the traditional wedding rituals of both nations, I may have provided a useful aid in understanding the nature of culture at large as well as the cognitive categories, ideological commitments and concrete behavior of the people sharing that culture. If the identification of structural patterns in wedding rituals can be of service in articulating the basic nature of one's own worldview and the worldviews of others, then the study of wedding rituals would be absolutely indispensable to a better understanding of humanity.

This study is based on written sources, such as historic and ethnographic writings. The previous studies on Korean and Ukrainian wedding rituals tend to have three tendencies:

1. Attempts at exhaustive description, with data specified as to time and locality
2. More comprehensive picture of wedding customs and history
3. Analytic approach to the data, aiming at investigating socio-cultural change

Several materials suggest the structure of Ukrainian wedding rituals. While M. Mushinka divides wedding rituals into twenty-four stages, Z. Kuzela explains them in about twenty. Both provide encyclopedic information and generalize the sequence of Ukrainian wedding rituals, admitting local varieties. V. Shukhevych also describes *Hutsul'* wedding rituals in *Materyialy do Ukrains'ko-Rus'koi Etnol'ogii* (1904), dividing them into twenty-one parts. The study of the structure of wedding rituals is also found in more recent literature, such as *Vesil'ni zvychai ta obriady na Ukraini* (1988), written by V. Borysenko. She examines local variants and provides a minimal structural unit of Ukrainian wedding rituals, which can be found all over the country. It is the following: (1) *svatannia, zaruchyny, ohliadyny*, (2) *pryhotuvannia vesil'noho khliba* (3) *dibych-vechir*, (4) *shliub, posad molodykh*, (5) *pokryvannia molodoi i pereizd ii v dim cholovika*, (6) *vesil'na hostyna v domi narechenoho*, (7) *pisliavesil'na obriadovist'*, and (8) *obriadovi dii ochysnoho kharakteru ta obriady pryiednannia narechenoi do novoi sim'i*. I intend to use her structure of Ukrainian wedding rituals for this study and divide them into three parts: pre-wedding rituals (1), wedding day rituals (2, 3, 4), wedding rituals after the ceremony (5, 6, 7, 8).

Studies on the structure of Korean wedding rituals are also plentiful. However, previous studies tend to give too much emphasis to formal rules and "ideal" *yangban* (nobility) procedures pertaining to marriage. Also, many studies were confused between the ritual model and ritual practice. However, several studies, such as *Study on Korean Traditional Wedding Rituals* (1988), written by Hyein Park, provide useful and analytic information on the wedding rituals of commoners. The author explains how Korean wedding rituals have been made on the basis of the Chinese Confucian ritual model. However, she distinguishes the former from the latter, and also explains the difference between the Korean ideal ritual model, which was made by the government, and the ritual practice of commoners. Then the author provides a minimal structure of Korean wedding rituals: (1) *Hondam*, (2) *Sasung*, (3) *Tagil*, (4) *Ham*, (5) *Chohaeng*, (6) *Jaehaeng*, (7) *Sinhaeng*, (8) *Hyungugorae*, (9) *Geunsadang*, and (10) *Geunchin*. I will compare this structure to the structure of Ukrainian wedding rituals, explaining the meaning of Korean wedding terminology in a later section.

The main body of this study consists of four parts. First of all, the condition of both societies will be examined because wedding rituals are closely related to social conditions. This section may suggest the possible

factors that make both wedding rituals similar and different. The next three sections will examine the structure of wedding rituals according to the sequence of ritual procedures.

### 3. The Condition of Society

The change of traditional family customs and rituals is closely related to the change of the political, social, economic and religious conditions of the time. Reviewing the conditions of both societies may provide various factors that make Korean and Ukrainian wedding rituals similar and different. In the 19th century and the beginning of 20th century, Korea and Ukraine were similar to each other because they both consisted of various social estates. While the social strata of Ukraine were the nobility, the Cossacks, the peasantry, the townspeople and the clergy, those of Korea were the nobility (*yangban*), the clergy (*chungin*), commoners (mostly peasantry) and lower-class people (*chonmin*). Except for the Cossacks, most Ukrainian estates are found in contemporary Korean society. However, it is a characteristic of Korean society that the law prohibited marriage between people of different social levels. Equal social status between the two concerned parties was considered to be of prime importance in marriage. Under this restriction, provincial officials were forbidden to marry commoners' daughters residing within the districts of their jurisdiction. Apart from the desire to maintain the class distinction, the prohibition probably came into existence to prevent provincial officials from forcing women under their rule to marry them. Marriage was also forbidden between commoners and the lowest social level, the *chonmin*. A commoner woman could not marry a slave, because their offspring would inherit the father's low status. Thus, the slave population would increase while the commoner population would decrease. This would lead to a serious cutback in the state's income, as it was the commoners who paid taxes while the *chonmin* were exempt (cfr. Park).

The intervention of the government in people's lives is another factor which may influence wedding rituals. In 1392, when a new dynasty, *Choson*, was established in the Korean territory, the government established Neo-Confucianism as the new ruling ideology against Buddhism, which was the ruling philosophy and religion of the former dynasty, *Koryo*. Since then, the government changed the rites of daily life on the basis of Neo-Confucianism and forced people to follow the new ritual form. The new Confucian rituals caused many changes in traditional Korean wedding rituals. Influenced by Confucianism, which emphasizes the absolute power of the patriarch and assents the unequal role between men and women, the free courtship tradition became forbidden and sometimes

it was regarded as a shameful tradition to perform wedding rituals in women's houses, which was not allowed in Chinese Confucian wedding rituals (*ibid.*).

In the 19th century and the early 20th century, Ukrainians were subjected to two imperial rules. While eastern Ukrainians were under the rule of tsarist Russia, western Ukrainians were in the Habsburg Empire. The tsarist government consistently and systematically attempted to obliterate most traces of Ukrainian distinctiveness. However, it does not seem that the Russian government intervened in wedding rituals of the people. Moreover, since the Habsburg Empire provided Ukrainians with more liberal economic and politic policies, western Ukrainians were able to preserve their traditional customs and old-fashioned ways of life. Although foreign regimes did not intervene in Ukrainian wedding rituals, the process of the capitalistic development of social relations caused a change in wedding rituals during the later part of the 19th century. In central and southeastern regions, which were ruled by the tsarist government, the rapid development of capitalist industry took place. The peasantry was stratified very rapidly and they began to migrate to industrialized cities, such as Donbas, Kyiv and Kharkiv. Therefore, the old family and social systems, which were based on a rural economy, began to collapse because of industrialization and economic modernization, thus family customs and rituals began to change.

One of the important factors that make Korean and Ukrainian wedding rituals different is religion. Ukrainian Orthodox and Catholic churches have a different ritual structure from the Korean Confucian ritual structure. Ukrainian religions influence wedding rituals in many ways. The wedding ceremony is held at a church on a Sunday, when the church mass is performed. The wedding calendar is also influenced by the church calendar, so that during Lent the wedding ceremony is not supposed to be performed. Also, a church service provides juridical recognition of the marriage of a new couple. However, Ukrainian marriage customs consists of more folk elements than religious ones. Korean wedding rituals are also influenced by religion of Confucianism. As I mentioned before, the government established an ideal ritual model and forced people to follow it. However, the commoners did not always observe the ideal model. Korean wedding rituals also contain many elements of early folk religion and sorcery; so do Ukrainian-wedding rituals.

The marriage system is another factor that explains differences between Ukrainian and Korean wedding rituals. According to the family law of Ukraine, monogamy was established in an early period. In the pre-Christian times of Ukraine, the seizure, purchase and transfer of women were the basic forms of marriage, which was the main institution of family law. However, the introduction of Christianity brought

about a gradual acceptance of monogamy as the dominant principle of family law. The principle of monogamy became firmly established in the Lithuanian Statute, and marriage came to be regarded as both a contract and a sacrament. To make marriage binding, both sides had to enter into it voluntarily.

In the history of the marriage system in Korea, the primary characteristic can be found in its long recognition of polygamy, which is deep-rooted in a society based on paternal lineage under which the head of a family has absolute authority over his family members. History tells us that polygamy in Korea can be traced back as far as the Koguryo Kingdom (37 B.C. – 668 A.D.). But it seems that concubines were treated nearly the same as slaves or serfs at that time. In addition, concubinage was restricted within a segment of upper-class families. In the later history of Korea, by the end of the Koryo era, the government adopted a policy which resulted in government officials and even common people keeping a wife and concubines, and they lifted the ban on the entry into government service of the offspring of a concubine. Although polygamy began to collapse during the Choson era, concubinage continued to receive public cognization. The legal institution of monogamy was not firmly established until the entry into the family register of a concubine was prohibited by Japanese rule for the first time on August 7, 1915.

The marriage system may reflect the patriarchic characteristic and the status of the female in the two cultures. Although both Ukrainian and Korean societies were patriarchic, the head of the Korean family seems to have been a more powerful authority. Also, women's roles in Korea remained relatively unequal in comparison to Ukraine. These examples are easily found in many parts of wedding rituals

#### 4. Pre-Wedding Rituals

Pre-wedding rituals generally contain the rites of the selection of a bride, the marriage proposal, negotiations and the engagement. Although the terminology of rituals is different from each other, we can find a similarity in rituals by examining the meanings of them. According to Borysenko, the minimal structural unit of Ukrainian pre-wedding rituals is matchmaking (*svatannia*), the "survey" (*ohliadyny*) and the engagement (*zaruchyny*). However, she says that in many areas, matchmaking is preceded by courtship, which is facilitated by various social meetings between the young people of both sexes. Also making inquiries" (*dopyty*) preceded the ceremony of matchmaking at the home of girl's parents (Borysenko 21).

Korean pre-wedding rituals are performed in the following order: *Hondam* [matchmaking, investigation (*tammun*), *Gunghap* (analyzing the



date and time of the birth of the people to marry, based on the five elements that make up the universe in order to predict the couple's happiness and unhappiness in advance), *Seon* (visit of the groom's representatives to the bride's family)], *Sasung* and *Tagil* (the engagement). The following table shows the structure of the pre-wedding rituals of both cultures.

Table 1

Terminology	Ukraine	Korea	Terminology
	Courtship	-	-
Svatannia	Matchmaking		Hondam
Ohliadyny	Inspection, Investigation	Investigation (Tammun)	
	-	Gunghap	
	-	Seon	
Zaruchyny	Engagement	Sasung and Tagil	

According to the table, the Ukrainian minimal structural unit is found in Korean wedding rituals. However, this table shows two differences between Ukrainian and Korean wedding structures. First of all, Korean weddings do not have a courtship. Secondly, in Korea, the matchmaking and inspection rituals are performed under the name of *Hondam*, which literally means 'discussion about the wedding,' and it includes two more procedures, such as *Gunghap* and *Seon*. Now in the following sections, I explain the similarity and difference of both structures and examine the reasons that make them similar and different.

#### 4.1. The Selection of a Partner: Courtship

In terms of courtship, a Ukrainian wedding is different from a Korean wedding. In both cultures, the bride and groom had different degrees of freedom in choosing their partners. According to Borysenko, at the end of the 19th century, the custom of pre-arranged marriage was still popular in Ukraine. However, in this period it happened that young people between neighboring villages married at their will.

The tradition of pre-arranged marriage was much stronger in Korea than in Ukraine. Marriage in Korea was contracted without the free will of the persons concerned. One of the most crucial reasons is that Confucianism created a strong patriarchy, which emphasizes ancestor worship and the preservation of the family lineage. Because of the Confucian cord, procreation was more emphasized than love. Also, it made Korean society stick to the preservation, development and bequeathal

of a 'jib' (literally 'house,' hence the traditional Korean family). To bequeath a jib to his descendants, a man was required to pay tribute to his ancestors; and to preserve the house and property handed down from ancestor to ancestor a man had to enlarge them; and to expand the family genealogy a man was required to beget male heirs (Choi 10). These constituted the supreme filial duty to one's ancestors as well as to one's parents. Since the supreme goal of any family was to secure the perpetual preservation of its jib, marriage developed into a means of ancestral worship and of begetting sons, and for this purpose all the members of a family were subjugated to a powerful form of patriarchy. Therefore, a marriage was not decided by the free will of the couple concerned but was arranged by the consent of the heads of the two families concerned. Any pre-marriage association between the bride and bridegroom was absolutely forbidden (ibid.).

#### 4.2. Matchmaking

Although both wedding rituals contain matchmaking, they are quite different in form and content. The meaning of Ukrainian matchmaking is larger than that of Korean matchmaking. In Ukraine, all aspects of nuptial agreements and arrangements were discussed during the matchmaking visit. These arrangements had legal force. Their disruption or violence on the part of either side had juridical and material consequences (Borysenko 29) Therefore matchmaking rituals are regarded as very important and sometimes took place at the same time as the betrothal in the house of the future bride in the presence of all the relatives. On the contrary, in Korea, matchmaking, which is called *Jungmae*, is the process of introducing one family to another. The discussion and negotiation of the wedding are performed in a later procedure, called *Seon*, which is a visit of the groom's mother or relatives to the bride's house.

Concerning the matchmaker, in both cultures the groom's family members become matchmakers. In Ukraine, the matchmakers are called *svaty* and play a great role not only in performing matchmaking rituals, but also in discussing and negotiating the wedding. In Korea, family members also take part in matchmaking, however their main role is not as important as in Ukraine. Non-family members, such as female *Bobusang*, who carry products on their back and visit the house, selling things from one village to another, sometimes also conducted matchmaking (Lee 64). The matchmaker usually gives a description of the persons in question and their family background to the parents of both families. Therefore, in Korea many aspects of the nuptial agreements and arrangements were not discussed during the matchmaking visit.

### 4.3. Inspection

After the matchmaking, both nations perform an inspection rite. In Ukraine, the bride's father and family go to look at the home which the prospective bridegroom will offer the bride and assess his material situation, living conditions and wealth (Borysenko 29) According to Shukhevich (11), in the *Hutsul'* area, the inspection is performed by the groom's side to see how bride-to-be takes care of the house and how her family lives. Borysenko says that this is a popular ritual all over the country, called various terms, such as *ohliadyny*, *rozhliadyny*, *vyhliadyny*, *obzoryny*, and so on.

In Korea, this process is called *tammun*. One of the groom's family members goes to the village of the bride-to-be and collects information on her. Sometimes the investigator spreads an untrue story about the groom-to-be and examines the reaction to know the real intention of the bride's family concerning the marriage.

The Korean inspection rite has almost same purpose as the Ukrainian inspection rite. However, while the inspection of Ukrainian weddings is followed by the engagement, that of Korean weddings is followed by two more steps, such as *Gunghap* and *Seon*, which will be examined in the following section.

### 4.4. Engagement

One of the most different parts between the two countries is the engagement. While the engagement of Ukrainian weddings is performed as a drama, with accompanying ritual songs and dances, the Korean engagement is established through an exchange of formal letters between the two parties.

In Ukrainian folksongs, the betrothed are linked to the moon and the stars, and wishes are bestowed on them that they shall be "*as rich as the earth and as healthy as the water*" (Kuzela 335). During the singing of the wedding chorus by the prospective bride's attendants, who now play an active role in the rite, the principal elements of matchmaking are repeated: the speeches, the binding with ceremonial towels, the showing of the fiancée and the exchange of gifts. Following this engagement, the pair is blessed with bread. Either the fiancé's closest companion, the *druzhko*, who at the wedding acts as a sort of master of ceremonies, or more frequently, the fiancée's *starosta* (usually her uncle), leads them, bound by a towel, to the wedding seat (*posad*) in the corner of honor. When the guests have departed, the betrothed pair is either left to retire or the celebration is continued in the home of the fiancé, where another series of ceremonies are held which last throughout the night and are called *zapoiny* (335-6).

Since Koreans believe that the future life of the bride and groom can be predicted on the base of four pillars, which are called *sasung* or *saju* (the year, month, day, and the hour of birth), both families go to a diviner's house to check whether the two will be a good match. This custom is called *gunghap*. The matching of the combination of a couple is usually divined on the basis of the year, month, day and hour of one's birth to find out what the chances are for happiness, prosperity and success, according to the old Chinese philosophy called *ohaeng* (five elements). The divination of the *gunghap* often becomes an excuse for breaking up a relationship, mainly established by the efforts of a matchmaker before sending *sasung* to confirm the engagement (Yang 56). If the *gunghap* is favorable and both parties reach an agreement on the proposed marriage, the bridegroom's family sends an official letter with a marriage proposal to the house of the future bride, in which the four pillars of the bridegroom were written. With the receipt of the *sasung* by bride's family, the engagement between the bride and groom is automatically accomplished. Upon receipt of this letter, the house of the bride informs the family of bridegroom of the wedding day by letter. This ritual is called *tagil*, which literally means, 'setting the date.'

## 5. Wedding Day Rituals: The Ceremony and Festivities

Ukrainian and Korean wedding days generally contain wedding ceremonies themselves as well as various festivities, including preparation rituals, performed a few days before the wedding. According to Borysenko, the minimal structural unit of this stage is the preparation of bread, the girl's night, the church wedding service and the sitting together of the bride and groom during the feast. Depending on the area, she says, several rituals are added to the basic structure. For example, the preparation rituals of making green tree and wreaths are performed along with baking the ritual breads. Also, the invitation of guests to the wedding is performed before the girl's night. Before going to the church, the bride's brother performs the ritual combing the bride's hair. Also, the bride's parents conduct the blessing ceremony for the couple. After the church wedding, the groom and his family visit the bride's house, performing various rituals. Finally, the wedding ceremony ends with a big feast, which consists of a series of rituals.

The minimal structural unit of the Korean wedding ritual is the *ham* and *chohaeng*, which is followed by such wedding rituals as the *Jeonanrye*, *Gyobaerye* and *Habgunrye*. Besides these, Korean wedding rituals also contain the preparation rituals for the wedding ceremony and the feast;

these rituals do not have a special terminology. The following table shows that the wedding rituals of both cultures take place in the order of: preparation rituals, the wedding ceremony and the feast. However, while the girl's night is unique to the Ukrainian wedding, delivering the *ham* is a characteristic of the Korean wedding. In the following sections I examine the content and meaning of the wedding rituals of both nations.

Table 2

Terminology	Ukraine	Korea	Terminology
Pryhotuvannia Vesi'noho khliba	Preparation of breads	Preparation of foods	-
Dibych-vechir	Girl's night	-	-
		Gift delivery from groom's house	Ham
Shliub	Wedding Ceremony		Chohaeng; Jeonan, Gyobae, Habgun
Posad molodykh	Newlyweds - sitting together during the feast	Reception	

### 5.1. Preparation Rituals

In both cultures, wedding ceremonies require a complicated preparation process. First of all, in Ukraine, on the eve of the wedding, usually on a Saturday, a branch or a small tree was decorated with flowers, rue, periwinkle, colored ribbons and small candles. Later it stood on the table during the entire wedding or was set in the wedding loaf (*korovai*). On Saturday night the bridesmaids came to the house of the bride's parents. They would pick periwinkle (*barvinok*), an evergreen plant, which was regarded as a symbol of everlasting affection. The bridesmaid would then make a little wreath out of the periwinkle with which to decorate the head of the bride at the wedding. Also, the shape of the wreath was believed to have a symbolical meaning. It was round like the sun and was thought to assure the newlyweds' fertility and good luck (Zdoroveha 84). With the wreath on her head, the bride would be dressed in her wedding costume. Besides them, the *korovai* and its decorations had to be prepared before the wedding. On Sunday, the *korovainytsi* (*korovai* makers) decorated the top of the *korovai* with shapes modeled out of dough in the form of pinecones, doves, geese, etc. The *korovai* has a sacrificial and kinship significance. It was made of flour which was contributed by all the kin (Kuzela 336).

In Korea, before the wedding, the bride's family had to prepare many items for the wedding ceremony. In the backyard of the bride's house, a folding screen is placed, and a big grass mat is spread out. On the mat, there is a ritual table, between which the bride and groom are supposed to stand and perform the wedding rituals while looking at each other. On the ritual table, the following items had to be prepared: red and blue candles, a pine tree or branch and a bamboo or its branch, chestnuts, jujube, rice and hen and a cock which were wrapped by blue and red cloths. Besides them, red beans and liquor are prepared. While the pine tree and bamboo symbolize everlasting affection and loyalty, chestnuts, jujube and chickens are regarded as symbols of fertility. Red beans are believed to protect bride and groom from evil spirits. Blue and red are symbols of the harmony of the universe according to Chinese philosophy. A wooden goose is another prerequisite item to be prepared. On the wedding day, the groom is supposed to bring it and take it over to the bride's mother. The goose is regarded as a symbol of truth, rightness, or loyalty (Park 75-77). Depending on the area, bird-shaped food, made of cooked rice, is placed on the table. Water is also set beside the table for the purification ritual (Chosonilbo 13).

This review of the preparation items for the wedding ceremony shows that both cultures have several things in common. Both cultures use trees, plants and birds to symbolize specific meanings and desires, such as everlasting affection, loyalty, truth and fertility. The following table shows the items and symbolic meanings which both cultures share.

Table 3

Ukraine	Korea	Symbolic meaning
Green tree with flowers and a ribbon, wreath	Pine tree or its branch Bamboo or its branch	Everlasting affection or loyalty
Doves or geese on the <i>korovai</i>	Goose, chickens, or bird-shaped food	Loyalty, faith rightness
Candles on a green tree	Red and blue candles	Purifying or calling gods

## 5.2. Girl's night and the Ham

According to Borysenko, the girl's night and its equivalent, the bachelor's evening, were rites of separation. The girl's night was the culmination of the pre-marriage rituals and was usually held on a Saturday night. A characteristic element was the preparation of the wedding tree and un-plaiting the bride's hair. These rituals were performed in the bride's house after the invitation of the guests for the wedding ceremonies, which was performed by the bride-to-be and a number of her girlfriends. (Borysenko 61-68). An important part of the girl's night was the presentation of gifts.

The bride was given a pair of boots (*cherevyky*). The evening usually ended with the blessing of the couple, offered by the parents.

In Ukrainian weddings, the closest friends of the bride and groom had special roles. The unmarried friends of the partners constituted a separate group and had specific functions associated with their social status and rank. The rank of each role was indicated by means of special decorations and clothing (40-42) The invitation of the guests, making ritual trees and wreaths and the girl's night are good examples of where the bride's girlfriends played important roles. Compared to Ukrainian wedding rituals, the close friends of the bride and groom did not play a major role in Korean wedding rituals. Korean wedding rituals tended to be performed by family members. However, instead of close friends, such people who had good fortune in their life or have a boy as their first baby, were also asked to play important roles (Park 69). A good example is shown in delivering the *ham*, which took place on the wedding day before the ceremony. In many areas the person who had a boy as their first child carried the *ham*. The *ham* is a gift box, which is sent by the groom's family to the bride. It basically contained the blue and red cloth for the bride's dress. Depending on the area, the *ham* contained the bride's coronet and the list of presents, such as jewelry, bedding and clothes which would be given to the bride on the wedding day. In Ukraine, the exchange of gifts was performed during many parts of wedding rituals. Especially during the feast after the wedding ceremony, two parties performed an exchange of gifts.

### 5.3. The Wedding Ceremony

While the Ukrainian wedding ceremony is performed on the basis of Christian church rituals, the Korean wedding ceremony is conducted on the basis of the Confucian ritual order. Since the ritual procedure of Ukrainian religions is different from that of the Korean Confucian religion, the structures of the wedding ceremonies seem to have very few commonalities. However, similarity is also found in the fact that the wedding rituals of both cultures are performed on the bride's side with old folk elements.

In Ukraine the wedding ceremony usually takes place on a Sunday morning at a church. However, the church wedding ceremony had been performed among the noble class for a long time. The form of the church wedding was transplanted into the life of commoners under special orders by the ruling class in the 16th century (Zdoroveha 50-55). However, the previous wedding rituals did not disappear and were performed after the church wedding service and gave the newlyweds the official sanction as a family.

Before going to the church, a brother combs the bride's hair and the parents and relatives give her their blessing (*blahoslovennia*). When the bride says her good-byes to her parents, the bridegroom's party and the bride's party join together, and, accompanied by the musicians, go to the church to participate in the ceremony. The senior groomsman leads the bride and the senior bridesmaid leads the bridegroom. The mother douses all of the members of the procession with consecrated water and sprinkles them with grain. On their way to the church the members of the procession sing emotional wedding songs. In some villages, the parties of the bride and bridegroom meet only in the front of the church.

At the church door, the bride joins her bridegroom and they enter together. Interestingly enough, it is believed that the one who steps into the church first would have the first and last word in the family's affairs (Shukhevych 36). It is worth noting that customary Ukrainian church wedding rituals are mixed with many elements of the folk wedding, which is rooted in an older, mainly pagan past: the exchange of wreaths and rings; walking around the *tetrapod* (center table) with a burning candle; drinking wine from one cup; and so on. Also, when the priest is marrying the couple, the senior *svashka* (the senior female member of the bridegroom's party) holds above the couple's heads a loaf of bread bound with yarn (Borysenko 72; Shukevych 36).

In Korea, the wedding ceremony begins with the groom's arrival at the door of the bride's house. The groom is led into the house and performs the *jeonanrye*, which is to give a goose, wrapped in red cloth, to the bride's mother. The bride's mother receives it and wraps it well in her skirt. It is said that she does this ritual in order not to lose the goose or to let the goose have many eggs. Then she leaves it inside of a (rice) jar, or brings it into the room, where the bride-to-be is waiting and throws it before her to predict the sex of the first baby (Park 73-75). After this ritual, the bride comes out of the room and goes to the *choraechong*, where the ritual is supposed to be performed. In the *choraechong*, the ritual table is prepared for the ceremony. The groom and bride separately stand on the east and west sides of the table and have their first meeting. The ritual is led by a person who can read the ritual text. The ritual begins with the *kyobaerye*, which means the exchange of bows between the bride and groom, and it ends with the *habgunrye*, which is to drink wine, their hands tied with threads, or exchanging cups tied with threads.

There are several rituals which are common to both cultures. First of all, water is used as a purification ritual. While the Ukrainian bride and groom are cleaned by consecrated water before going to church, the Korean bride and groom wash their hands before the wedding ritual. Second, incorporation rituals to unify the bride and groom are performed in the form of drinking wine and using threads or yarn for



tying cups or binding bread. In both cultures the church service and the Confucian ritual service have legal power and serve as a juridical sanction of the union. However, the content of the rituals consists of many folklore elements.

#### 5.4. *Wedding Feast*

After the wedding ceremony at a church, the most important part of the wedding ritual takes place in the evening. According to Borysenko, one of the most significant elements of the traditional wedding ritual is the so-called *posada molodykh*, which means 'the seating of the newlyweds.' The moment that the bride and the groom are allowed to sit together at the table indicates the couple's official sanction as a new family (Borysenko 72). This ritual is also the rite of separation of the bride and the groom from the group of the unmarried people and their introduction to the status of a married couple.

In Korea, the wedding feast has a different look from the Ukrainian wedding feast. While the Ukrainian bride and groom are sitting together with guests during the feast and perform the ritual of a communal meal, the Korean bride and groom cannot sit together until the first night ritual. Although they have a brief chance to greet each other in a room just after the wedding ceremony, they are soon separated and remain so throughout the whole feast. The feast is performed in several separate places. While general guests are treated well with various food in the backyard, the groom and the guests from his family are treated with the *kunsang*, which means a big table with food. The food which is offered to the groom is supposed to be delivered to the groom's house after the groom pretends to eat it. The groom then his family and the bride's family. The moment that the bride and groom can sit together does not happen until the first night ritual in Korea (Park 84-86).

Typically, the Ukrainian wedding feast is preceded with a symbolic 'purchase' of the bride by the groom and a symbolic 'fight' for her. Before the groom and those who accompany him arrive at the bride's house, the young men from the bride's village bar their passage and demand the so-called *pereima* (treat and ransom). Then the groom must ransom himself with money. This process happens several times. Only after the 'fight' and long negotiations are the groom and his companions are allowed to enter the house, but he must overcome the resistance of the brothers of the bride and pay an appropriate ransom to obtain the right to sit beside her (Kuzela 337).

In Korea, the tradition of a 'treat and ransom' or 'fight' does not exist. However, there is another type of ritual: hanging the groom and beating

his feet. A few days after the wedding ceremony, young men from the bride's village perform a ritual – the *silangdarugi*, which is "treating the groom." During the ritual, the young men tighten some cloth around the groom's ankles and hang him upside down. Then they ask him some tricky questions, asking the bride's family for drinks and food. If the groom cannot give the right answer, his soles are beaten by the young fellows (Park 91-92). In my opinion, from the perspective of the villagers of the bride's side, the wedding results in a loss of one of their members. Therefore, they ask the groom to pay the price. "Treating the groom" seems to be a kind of ritual where the groom pays a price.

During the feast in Ukraine, changing the bride's hairstyle and covering of her head with a scarf mark the transition of the bride to the group of married women. Changing the hairstyle is also an important ritual in Korea. At the wedding ceremony, which initiates Korean men and women into adulthood, the groom's childhood pigtail is bound up into a topknot and the bride's hair is pinned into a chignon at the nape of her neck. This ritual indicates their new standing in a delicate hierarchy of status and deference.

## **6. Wedding Rituals after the Ceremony:**

### ***Obriadovi dii ochysnoho kharakteru ta obriady pryiednannia narechenoi do novoï sim'i* (Rites of a purifying nature and the rituals for joining the bride to her new family)**

While Ukrainian wedding rituals after the wedding ceremony and festivities consist of four minimum structural units, this part of Korean wedding rituals consists of five units. According to the following table, the two cultures seem to share only one ritual, "bringing the bride to the groom's house." However, both peoples have more in common than the table shows. Although the greeting between the bride and the parents-in-law is not noted as a minimal unit of Ukrainian wedding rituals, this is performed in a different form. In the same way, Koreans also do not only have the wedding feast at the groom's house, but also post-wedding and purification rituals.

Table 4

Terminology	Ukraine	Korea	Terminology
		Groom's second trip to the bride's house	<i>Jaehaeng</i>
<i>Pokryvannia molodoi i pereizd ii v dim cholovika</i>	Bringing bride to the groom's house		<i>Sinhaeng</i>
		The first time the bride greets the parents-in-law	<i>HyunGuGoRye or Paebek</i>
<i>Vesil'na hostyna v domi narechenoho</i>	Wedding feast at the groom's house	-	-
<i>Pisliavesil'na obriadovist'</i>	Post-wedding rituals: on the bride's side	-	-
<i>Obriadovi dii ochysnoho kharakteru ta obriady</i>	Purification ritual		
		The respectful bow to ancestors in a shrine	<i>sadangchambe</i>
		Bride's visit to her parents' house	<i>Geunchin</i>

### 6.1. Bringing the Bride to the Groom's House

Although in Ukraine, the departure of the bride to the groom's house is actually performed at the last moment of the feast on the wedding day, I distinguish this ritual from the wedding day rituals. In Ukraine, after the supper at the feast, the bride says farewell to her maidens and parents and, to the accompaniment of songs and music, departs for the home of the groom, taking with her a "chest" or *skrynja* with her dowry (*posah*) in it and a black hen (Kuzela 337).

In Korea, the bride goes to the groom's house a certain number of days after the wedding ceremony. According to the old records, in 1 A.D., the groom even built a small place after the wedding and stayed there for years before bringing the bride to his parents' house (Kim82) Due to tradition, the bride still stayed at her parent's house after the wedding and the groom had to make several trips between the bride's house and his. In the 19th century this tradition still remained, but the bride stayed in her house for a shorter period of time than before, for example, for three to seven days. Therefore, the groom had to go back home and come again to bring the bride to his parent's house. This custom is called the *Jaehaeng*, which literally means 'the second trip.' After the *Jaehaeng*, the bride can

perform the *sinhaeng*, which means 'the new trip,' to the groom's house. The bride rides in a *Gama*, a carriage which is carried by two people, and the groom rides on a horse in front of the carriage. The new trip custom is accompanied with a lot of rituals which are performed to protect the bride from evil powers during the way to the groom's house.

## 6.2. *The Greeting between the Bride and the Parents-in-Law*

The greeting between the bride and the parents-in-law is performed under the name of *pryhoshchuvaty molodu* (receiving the bride") in Ukraine and *Hyngugorye* (the rite of the bride greeting the parents-in-law") in Korea. While the parents of the groom in Ukraine meet the bride on the threshold of her new home with bread and salt and solemnly welcome her into her new family, the parents of the groom in Korea receive big bows from the bride in their room. During the *Hyngugorye* the bride pays her respects with two traditional bows and one light bow. Then they throw chestnuts and jujubes on the bride's skirt, saying, 'have many boys.' The custom of a gift exchange between the bride and the parents-in-law is observed at this time (Park 98-102).

The rite of receiving the bride in both cultures is accompanied by many prohibitions as well as rituals which promote fertility and offer protection from evil powers. In Ukraine, the bride, who must keep silent during the entire time, is taken into the house where she at once releases the black hen which she has brought with her under the stove. She is then seated in the place of honor. Her head covering is removed with a stick and is thrown on the stove. In some places she is given a piece of *pechyna*, a piece of clay from the oven, or a piece of a raw beet, and she silently throws it under the table. These rituals seem to be designed to promote fertility. In Korea, when the bride comes into the house, she has to come in, kicking some straw which is set fire on the threshold of the gate. Sometimes red beans or salt are thrown to the bride. These rituals are performed for the purpose of warding off evil power (97).

After the greeting rituals in Ukraine, the married couple is taken ceremoniously to the storeroom (*komora*) where the nuptial bed has been made on some straw and a sheepskin coat, and a sheaf of rye and a holy icon placed at its head. There the ancient rite of "breaking the guelder-rose" (*lamannia kalyny*) is performed (Kuzela 337-338). In the old ritual all of the groom's kin would wait in the house throughout the wedding night when, to the singing of erotic songs, the bride's shirt with the signs of her virginity was opened for the public. However, later this procedure was limited to hanging a red banner on the house of a true bride on the next day and

decking the *boiary* (male wedding attendants) with red belts and ribbons. The first night ritual in Korea is performed not in the groom's house but in the bride's house on the evening of the wedding day. The women of the family gather in an adjoining room trying to observe what will happen, sometimes poking holes through the paper of the door. One of reasons to perform this ritual is that it is believed that if people do not watch it, evil will (Park 87). Instead of proving the virginity of the bride, Korean people performed this ritual to protect the new couple from evil powers.

### 6.3. *The Wedding Feast at the Groom's House, the Post-Wedding Ceremony and Purification Rites*

In Ukraine and Korea, the wedding ends with a wild, festive entertainment, which used to last for several days. The honoring of the bride's family was the last event that took place during the wedding ceremonies *per se*. According to Borysenko (84), after the wedding ceremony other rituals follow, which the author defines as 'post-wedding' ceremonies. Their purpose was to unite and bond the in-law's families. These celebrations have different local names. She says that the last ritual of uniting the two families is often performed a week after the wedding in the bride's house, where the bride and the groom's closest family members attend. Korea also has a similar 'post-wedding' ceremony *geunchin*, which means the bride visits her parents. While the Ukrainian post-wedding ceremony is usually performed a week after the wedding, the Korean one is performed a month, two months, or a year later. When the bride visits her parents, the father-in-law and the groom, bringing a lot of food for the neighborhood of her village, accompany her. While the father-in-law usually comes back on the same day, the groom stays several days more. But the bride can stay until the parents-in-law call her back.

In both cultures, the wedding also ends with various purifying or incorporation ceremonies. In Ukraine the wedding ends with the purifying ceremony of the *vyvid* in the church or the ritual pouring of water from a river or spring. These rituals aim at securing the socialization of the married couple and they function as the introduction of the bride to her new family (Kuzela 338). The bride is supposed to perform a number of household duties such as making a fire in the stove, bringing water from the well, and others. The system of marriage rituals, especially in Eastern Ukraine, end with the so-called ceremony of beating the porridge (*byttia kashy*). The meaning of this ritual was to ensure the well-being of the new family, its continuation and the multiplication of cattle and wealth (Borysenko 82-83). This ritual has a very ancient origin. The porridge symbolized the happy unity of the marriage partners and was

also encountered in Ukrainian birth rituals as a fertility symbol. One of the different types of rituals which is performed in Korea is the *sa-dangchambe*, which mean "the respectful bow to ancestors in a shrine." The purpose of this ritual is to provide ancestors food and ask them for the safe incorporation of the newlyweds into the family, as well as for fortune and productivity.

## 7. Conclusion

In terms of the structure of wedding rituals, both cultures share the following basic units: matchmaking, investigation, engagement, preparation rituals, wedding ceremony, wedding feast in the bride's house, bringing the bride to the groom's house, feast in the groom's house, post-wedding ceremony, purifying or incorporation rituals.

The basic characteristic of the structural minimal unit is to perform the wedding ceremony on the bride's side and then bring the bride to the groom's house. Although ritual forms and content are different from each other, the basic structure of the wedding rituals of both cultures have much in common. Here we can raise a question: Do they reveal deep, necessary process of culture? It is now difficult to generalize that the minimal wedding structure of both cultures reflects a necessary process of culture. However, it must be worth developing a discussion about this question.

The wedding rituals of both cultures also share several other common features. An essential element of wedding ceremonies is the symbolic expression of the union between the individuals marrying. For example, the tying of the bride and groom's garments signifies this union. Other rituals emphasize the function of the marriage as the foundation of the family. Feasting at weddings by family and friends signifies the community's blessing of the marriage. The marriage rites of both cultures draw on civil and religious authority to sanctify the union of a man and a woman and establish the parentage of any children born of the marriage. The rites include the formal removal of one party (usually the bride) from the family group, feasts and exchanges of gifts between the families, as well as the reentry of the newlyweds into society. Both cultures use many similar items for the wedding ceremony, such as green trees, bird-shaped decorations, and so on. More commonalities are found in their rituals, which are performed for the purpose of fertility, productivity and protection from evil powers.

Despite those common features of wedding rituals, different marriage rites have developed in each nation. One of them is the religious ceremony. Ukrainian religions have distinctive wedding customs which are different

from Korean Confucian wedding customs. While Ukrainian religious ceremonies involve a nuptial mass, during which many scriptural texts concerning marriage are read, a man, who reads the Confucian ritual orders, leads the Korean wedding ceremonies. In Ukraine, the presence of a priest and at least two witnesses are essential, as they are the expression of consent by the bride and groom. These rituals are not found in Korea. Since Korean Confucianism emphasizes the absolute patriarchic order of the family, Koreans have no freedom in choosing their own partners. Therefore, while Ukrainian wedding rituals contain courtship rituals, Korean wedding rituals do not. Also, while Ukrainian wedding rituals and feasts are dramatically performed, accompanied by songs and dances, Korean wedding rituals and feasts do not contain dramatic performances.

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