

Wedding procession at the foot of the Himalayas

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A bride riding a pure white horse. Altitude 1,900m. A seven-hour wedding procession on the mountain road. The groom's villagers accompany newly-weds.

Peee-papapaa-don-don, day and night, the blaring performance of drums and brass instruments in the wedding procession resounded across the mountains. This is Bojpur District, Koshi Zone, East Nepal. A large hilly area with an altitude of 600m to 2300m. In order to get to the town of Dharan where cars pass, people literally had to walk for two days, crossing mountains and valleys. Fifteen years ago, the grandmother at my lodging house said that she had to cross mountains with an altitude of 2,000 meters several times over 13 days one way to go on a pilgrimage to the Pashupathinath Temple in Kathmandu.

This month is late November of Mansir month (mid-November to mid-December). In Hinduism, there are certain months in a year that are not allowed to get married. This month is a time of joy and peace for farmers who have completed harvesting rice, and it is the peak marriage season of the year nationwide.



The wedding procession progresses with the loud sounds of drums and brass instruments.

Right photo: From the right, my horse, a large landowner growing fruit saplings in the groom's village Pyaule, myself, my horse caretaker, the landlord's servant and the landlord's younger brother.

The wedding procession I attended was for the eldest son of the mayor of the village where the citrus nursery I guide is located. The groom was 19 years old and the bride is 16 years old. First, about 70 men from the groom's village and the groom came to the bride's house. In Nepal marriages are arranged between same castes and by parents. After staying at the bride's house for two nights, various ceremonies were held in splendor at night, and today it is finally time to march with the bride.

Around 10:00 in the morning, I was waiting under a big tree called Chotara. Don Don Pa-papa-, the bride in the gold crown and crimson dress came on a pure white horse with an expression of anxiety and tension on her still young face. When the head group playing music found out that I am a Japanese, they made a big fuss, asking me to play once. The march then climbed down from the altitude of 1500m to a valley of 1000m and then steeply up to a hill top of 1900m.

There was a teahouse where people can take a break with tea, Rokishi, alcohol drink, meal, and cigarettes at a place called Murabari on the top of this hill, and we could have a nice view with a full view of the long way we just came. As we went further ahead, we saw the majestic Himalayan as we marched. There were precipitous cliffs below our feet, and sometimes the mist flowed quickly, and on the other mountainside, farmhouses could be seen scattered. According to the passers-by, today's wedding procession was the third.

In this way, the procession looked up at the Himalayas, overlooked the mountains on all sides, hears the birds singing in the forest, met herds of goats, cows and buffaloes, played musical instruments and continued the procession. At sunset with the red sky, we finally arrived at Pyaule, the groom's village.

The women of the village gathered, too, and the playing performance became grander, too. And some have begun to dance cheerfully. This evening, only the women were invited from the neighborhood and a feast was served. Vegetables, pickles, rice, and bean soup only. This caste does not drink alcohol.

A room was set up for the bride and groom, and visitors performed celebratory ceremonies with rice grains and red powder on their foreheads and heads, and gave them coins. At night, I joined the group and chatted with the women around the fire at the hearth.



Rice planting scenery in Bhojpur.



About 30 women plant at once. Men's job is plowing.



There are no wedding ceremonies during the rice planting and harvesting seasons, and most are held in the following month.

The next morning, the men in the village were finally called, one goat was decapitated, and was cooked immediately. Straw mats were spread out in the front yard, and plates made of leaves were lined up, and guests were seated there. Dozens of villagers sat cross-legged on the straw mat, form a circle, and hand it to mouth. Meat alone was a feast for them.

After that, I was invited to several wedding ceremonies, and each time, when the villagers sat in circles in the rice paddies, and the rice and meat were served by hand on leaf plates for them by the women serving. They just ate, and after eating, they went home. In some cases, a bride came walking for two days.

In this way the bride takes root in the village.



Rice harvesting is done with family



Festival of Tihar in Autumn



Corn that is roasted and eaten all year round