

# WEDDING TRADITIONS OF THE ISLE OF KIHNU - ROOTS AND DEVELOPMENTS

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We have been observing the changes of tradition on the Isle of Kihnu over a lengthy period of time. It has been a relatively isolated community where the traditional culture (folklore, customs, folk costumes, handicraft) has been preserved until the present day, although the tendency of decay is to be met in all its forms, which are being replaced by modern mass culture. Despite that, lots of archaic features are still to be noted on the island and today the folk culture of the Kihnu island constitutes a unique cultural phenomenon in Estonia as well as in contemporary Europe in general.

## The Kihnu Wedding as a Clan Wedding

The central event that has brought together various genres and forms of traditional culture and helped them to survive is the wedding ritual. In principle, the Kihnu wedding is a so-called clan wedding confirming an alliance between two lineages that is based on pre-Christian beliefs and bears the characteristics common to all Baltic-Finnic peoples. A Kihnu wedding is characterised by the following Baltic-Finnic elements of a clan wedding:<sup>1</sup>

1. Confirmation of the alliance of two clans by betrothal, mutual presents, etc.
2. Rites of passage (the bride leaves her previous life - girlhood, paternal house, family, and she is taken to her new home as a daughter-in-law in a wedding procession). Here belongs:
  - a) the ceremony of sending off the bride (customs, songs and lamentations on sending the bride off from her paternal house) characteristic of patrilocal weddings;
  - b) customs connected with protective and preventive magic in the period when the bride is 'without a status', i.e. taken from her paternal house to her husband's house (e.g. hiding her head);
  - c) The so-called uniting customs connected with her joining another clan (removing the *uig*, dances with the bride, etc.)
3. Initiation rites - preparation of the bride and the bridegroom for the acquisition of a new status (teaching them new social and ethical norms and rules of behaviour, confirmation of these rules in special instructive and admonishing songs, the bride's adorning, head-dress of a married woman, the new name of a 'young wife'.

4. Confirmation of the social responsibility and sense of duty, facilitation of adaptation into new environment, overcoming the feelings of clan antagonism with songs of mutual praise and lampooning.
5. Charms, songs and customs for the young couple starting a new life and to ensure procreation.
6. Functionaries of the wedding representing both lineages and their specific roles in the wedding customs (including wedding singers on both sides).

Several elements of the Baltic-Finnic wedding customs have parallels among other Fenno-Ugric peoples. It is difficult to decide at the present stage of research whether these are original Fenno-Ugric or more general religious and ritual elements connected with clan system and mythological world view. The presence of the same magical symbols among different nations in a similar, or perhaps also different, ritual context is not accidental. 'Symbols acquire a considerable degree of independence from their cultural context and function not only on the synchronic level of the culture but also on the diachronic verticals /—/. In this case, a symbol represents an isolated text that is freely resettled in the chronological field of the culture, every time being in a complex correlation with the synchronic levels of culture'.<sup>2</sup> It must also be taken into account that multiple meanings are characteristic of a symbol, as it is associated with different contexts.

In the following article, we are trying to find parallels to the Kihnu wedding customs from other Fenno-Ugric peoples, particularly in cases when these have retained some information about magical symbols and underlying religious ideas that have been lost on the Isle of Kihnu.

The so-called 'two-end' or 'two-part' wedding is celebrated separately at the farmsteads of both the bride and the bridegroom, whereas the central events take place with both parties participating, accompanied by old runo-verse wedding songs. At present, not all the weddings are traditional ones, as often one of the couple (either the bride or the bridegroom) comes from mainland Estonia (in this case, a simplified, 'one-part' wedding can be celebrated). If both sides are from Kihnu and they have decided to celebrate their wedding in the traditional way, the fundamental pattern of an ancient Kihnu wedding in its traditional order has survived until the recent years, although there are less customs and, especially, less songs when compared with what there used to be. Also, the body of customs and songs that are used differs from wedding to wedding. In the following article, the ritual elements that could be observed in the wedding ceremonies of the 1980s and 90s are described in a generalised way (mainly relying on audio and video recordings made with the participation of the author as well as some oral reports and written notes from Roosi Karjam). By way of comparison, I added information about the ancient Kihnu wedding rituals, observing its process of change. It should also be mentioned that when

compared with a wedding in 1975, the tradition has decayed noticeably, especially as regards the songs. Also, some new phenomena have been added.

The following treatment excludes marriage proposal, customs of preparation of the dowry (so-called 'young wife's house') and customs of inviting to the wedding ceremony that would require a separate treatment. Only the wedding traditions will be discussed.

## Preparations for Wedding

Preparations for the wedding ceremony and for the reception of guests begin at both the bride's and the groom's farmstead already before the wedding. Animals are slaughtered, some of the food (e.g. bread, meat jelly, etc.) is prepared, rooms and courtyard are cleaned and decorated; in recent times they often erect a special dancing house. It is an old custom to bring birch trees to the door and to tie bunches of coloured slivers or yarn to it. Similar decorations were tied to the great triumphal gateway of the wedding made of birch branches.<sup>3</sup> (Photo, p. 399).

Noteworthy is the custom of decorating the wedding house (and also the wedding procession, as we can see later) with birches. A similar custom can be observed in the Setu wedding. On the Isle of Kihnu, a power of 'scaring off the evil' was attributed to birch trees (punishing children with birch twigs is associated with the same belief) (R. Karjam).

Originally, however, it may have had a different meaning. As we know, Estonians as well as Slavonic and Germanic tribes a.o. have had the custom of bringing birch trees into the chamber on Whitsuntide, which is associated with the wake of the reproductive power of nature in spring and fertility magic.<sup>4</sup>

It is remarkable, however, that in winter (-autumn), in the Kihnu wedding traditions birches were substituted by pine trees. Thus, it seems that it was more important to have a tree as such rather than a birch. By way of comparison, let us remember that the Mansi take a woman to a special place to bear her child, which is called 'women's birth-giving tree' and which is seen as an ancient semantic association between a dwelling-house and a tree (a tent and the world tree).<sup>5</sup>

Birch has been an offering tree for several peoples.<sup>6</sup> While in the Kihnu wedding birches were replaced with pine-trees in winter, in Udmurtian offering rites birches or birch twigs were substituted by fir-trees. Several Siberian peoples, including the Fenno-Ugric ones, associated the offering tree with the idea of the world tree (*pillar of the world*).<sup>7</sup>

By now, it is impossible to establish the original meaning of birches (trees) as magical symbols in a Kihnu wedding ceremony, but obviously they are not occasional details. At this point, we should also keep in mind the custom of

decorating the birch trees (in Setu weddings, spruce trees) with coloured slivers. Decorating an offering tree is known among many nations. There is information about decorating an offering lime-tree with coloured garters by Livonians and Latvians.<sup>8</sup>

A new custom is decorating the rooms of the wedding party with various comical pictures and slogans commenting on the change of status of the bride and bridegroom, just like these are used in other places in Estonia.

## The First Day of the Wedding at the Bride's Place

On the wedding day the bride's and bridegroom's guests (formerly only relatives, as a rule, today also friends) gather separately in the bride's and the bridegroom's homes. There is an ancient custom of collective assistance - taking food (bread, butter, meat, fish, nowadays also cakes, sausages, alcoholic beverages, in most recent years sugar, etc.) along to the wedding party. An analogical custom is known among the Mordvinians.<sup>9</sup> The tradition stems from the agrarian village community.<sup>10</sup> The custom of mutual aid, being one of the foundations of a communal way of life, is nowadays very much alive in everyday life on the Isle of Kihnu. For instance, when animals are slaughtered or a catch of fish is brought from sea, definitely some of it is given to neighbours and friends. The **arrival of the wedding procession** is announced by the groomsman (the closest unmarried male relative of the bridegroom) who in former times arrived on a horse, nowadays on a motorcycle. He knocks three times on the doorjamb with his wooden sword and gives the bride's mother a mitten with beads in it. She exchanges these for money, which is a sign that the



*Wedding procession of Kihnu.  
Photo: A. Mikk 1954.*

wedding procession may come. Stone beads (nowadays mostly glass pearls) are an ancient amulet belonging to the women's clothing in the archaeological finds that are also worn with the traditional clothes of the Isle of Kihnu. Formerly, the groomsman struck with his sword three crosses in the eaves and one on the door.<sup>11</sup>

The actual wedding begins with the festive arrival of the bridegroom and his relatives (*saajad, peiud*) in the courtyard of the bride's homestead. The procession is headed by the groomsman, the bridegroom and the 'ironhand' - a married male relative of the bridegroom's, whose duty is to guard and protect the bride until she becomes a young wife. In former times they rode horses, nowadays usually they arrive on motorcycles. They are followed by the rest of the bridegroom's relatives in cars and vans (earlier in horse-carriages). The horses were decorated with white linen, birch twigs and coloured slivers. Motor-cars are also decorated with birch twigs. On the way, they sang special wayfaring songs that nowadays have disappeared, the procession being on motor vehicles. What has also disappeared is the custom of firing guns on the way, which evidently had a preventive magical background (cf. noise-making in the Mordvinian wedding ceremony with an analogical function.)<sup>12</sup> In the courtyard, **the reciprocal singing of the bride's and groom's ceremonial singers** takes place. The number of songs varies from wedding to wedding and has decreased with every year (the Kihnu nuptial songs form an individual subject that will not be discussed in detail here). In former times, ceremonial singers were relatives, as a rule, nowadays they invite also others who can sing well;



*Wedding procession of Kihnu in 1975.*

*Photo: O. Kiis 1975.*



*Welcome singing before the gate of the bride by the relatives of the groom.  
Photo: A. Vissel 1986.*

however, relatives are still preferred. There is no special status of a wedding singer, although some of the elderly women (e.g. Marina Roosleid) are readily invited to wedding ceremonies to sing and see to the rites.

Singing in the courtyard is followed by the **entertainment of guests** in the chamber at long tables; the bride's singer women traditionally stand at the table. The functionaries of the wedding are placed in a certain order. Women are in their festive arrays, in their white shirtsleeves with red embroideries. The embroideries are at the back-side only, as the front side of the shirtsleeves is covered with a fringed red scarf of fine wool with a rose design that is fastened with brooches in front. Round the neck there are beads with three silver coins attached, and *kudrused* - a special necklace of small pearls. Married women wear a high, richly ornamented coif, over which (when they are wearing the so-called *blue skirt*, which is actually blue and red-striped) an unfringed scarf-like shawl is tied in a special way, with three folds or drapes on the sides. Nowadays not all women wear shirtsleeves and coifs, but only everyday cotton jackets or blouses, sweaters or blazers. *Kudrused* are also rare. Girls wear red-coloured cotton shawls. The attribute of male functionaries of the wedding was (and is, sometimes) a piece of fringed white linen with red embroidery. An obligatory element of the ornaments is the so-called *kukesed* ('cockerels'). The piece of linen is fastened with a brooch in front. Men also wear a hat with ribbons. On their breasts they wear rosettes of coloured ribbon.

The wedding-table is richly laid, as a rule; it is also held to be prestigious to have lots of beer and wine. 10-13 bushels of malt were needed to make beer; nowadays they mostly use maltose. The mug of beer is passed on from hand to

hand, as was the common custom in the Estonian weddings as well as on solstice festivities on Christmas and St. John's Day. Be it mentioned that among the Swedes and on the Isle of Ruhnu such custom was unknown. There the beverages were served on a special table in the corner where everybody could go to have a drink (information from Marina Roosleid). However, the custom of passing on the mug of beer is known to other Fenno-Ugric peoples. For example, it is passed on in a similar manner in Udmurtian wedding parties, being also pointed out as a peculiar custom.<sup>13</sup> Beer has been ritual beverage among many nations, having been attributed the effect of releasing the creative forces.

Initially **the bride is hidden**. Eventually, accompanied by a special song, the 'ironhand' and the bride's brother bring her to the table. Earlier it was the so-called 'empty table' with a vase of flowers and two burning candles decorated with bows on it. At the table, the most important functionaries of the wedding sat in a fixed order. These days, the bride is usually brought simply to the feast-table.

**The bride's face is hidden by a ritual head-dress *uig*** that is connected with protective and preventive magic as is the usual custom in the wedding traditions of several nations. On the Isle of Kihnu people interpret it usually as 'the bride should not remember her way home', which is symbolic, of course. Nowadays, *uig* is not obligatory any more, but many young women want to wear it, as it 'helps to hide you from the eyes of the wedding guests'.

*Uig* is a white, high shawl with a red and blue zigzag ornament, which is put on bride's head conically (photo, p. 384 - 386), and under which there is usually a small white coif with a white embroidered kerchief over it. Such magical triad was to enhance protection against the evil eye and witchcraft.<sup>14</sup> Nowadays they sometimes use only the *uig*, or, for example, there may be a bridal wreath under it. The *uig* was fastened with three brooches. This is also not obligatory any more (it may be fastened with one or two only).

One of the oldest and most important moments in the wedding traditions of the Fenno-Ugric tribes (appearing also among those peoples who have developed no elaborate wedding traditions with the accompanying song-lore, such as the Lapps of the Kola Peninsula, Ob-Ugrians) was the bride's leaving the paternal house. **The ceremony of seeing off the bride** is accompanied by a whole cycle of songs on the Isle of Kihnu. In addition to the traditional runo-songs (*Home Crying for the Bride, Husband and Sea to be Looked After*, a.o. seeing-off songs) people have been using the Orthodox Lord's Prayer, the Baptist *Like a Flower in the Valley* and various newer popular songs as wedding songs, the repertoire being constantly updated, new pieces added or old ones replaced. In most recent times, people have ordered songs from the local song-maker Virve Köster and asked her to sing them on this occasion. Her



Singing at seeing off the bride.  
Photo: A. Mikk 1954.

songs (*Little Girl* a.o.) have also been used more widely on the isle.

On the Isle of Kihnu, lamentations are unknown, but on seeing off the bride, they sing a song that includes the following motif:

*Cry, cry, young maid,  
If you cry when adorned  
You will laugh in your life;  
If you laugh when adorned  
You will cry in your life.*

which suggests obligatory ritual lamenting connected with preventive magic and can be viewed as a song of lamentation. According to some reports (M. Roosleid a.o.) the same song was sung with the initial line ‘adorn yourself, young maid’ while adorning the bride as a young wife.

The wedding procession with the bride moves clockwise, as a rule, whereas a certain inauspicious hill (Arumägi) and the so-called Vanakurase road are definitely avoided. Again, the procession is headed by the groomsman and the bridegroom. The latter lifts the bride on the ‘ironhand’s’ lap.

## **The First Day of the Wedding at the Bridegroom’s Place**

Upon arrival at the bridegroom’s homestead the comers are greeted with a traditional wedding cheer. The cheer is started by somebody and instantly the others join in. Cheers are also uttered on the way and on other occasions. Coming into the courtyard, they sing to the mother-in-law: ‘Come out to see/ whether your daughter-in-law is to your liking...’. The mother-in-law comes and





*The bride is taken to the groom's home under the uig.  
Photo: O. Kiis 1975.*

lays a piece of white cloth at the threshold, where the groom lifts the bride. The custom is thought to be connected with the tradition of many nationalities (including the Fenno-Ugrians) of taking the newlyweds to the nuptial bed (among some peoples, the bed is replaced by a rug), since which the marriage was regarded as consummated.<sup>15</sup>

The guests are invited to the table where the singers again stand singing. Accompanied by an appropriate song, the mother-in-law removes the *uig* with



*The bride under the uig in a Kihnu wedding in 1975.  
Photo: O. Kiis 1975.*



*Removing the uig. Mother-in-law lifts the uig with a pole.  
Photo: O. Kiis 1975.*

a stick (which substitutes for the formerly used sword) and places it on a hook on the wall. The custom was called ‘**singing off the uig**’. In former times, the *uig* was removed at the so-called ‘empty table’ and thrown on the on the bars, as said in the song - this may have had a magical meaning of some kind. Let us remember that throwing on the bars is also connected with other customs (e.g. foretelling the crop in the New Year traditions). There are reports from the Isle of Muhu that a sword was placed on the bars over the bride’s and bridegroom’s heads for the meal-time (ERA II 70, 60 (5)). Among those peoples who have retained their traditional world view, such as the Ob-Ugrians, until quite recently the upper part of the house had the obvious function of a mediator between human beings and the world of the upper gods (spirits) and ancestors’ souls. Among the Ob-Ugrians, attic was also a place for the tutelary spirits of the family, to whom shawls and pieces of cloth were offered.<sup>16</sup>

Mother-in-law circled the bride’s head three times with the *uig* before putting it away (nowadays this is not practised any more). After removing the *uig*, spiritual songs are sung again, just as it was done on seeing off from home, as well as instructive and admonishing songs to the bride and bridegroom to remind them of their duty, to confirm their new status and to ensure further luck in their married life (photo, p. 401).

The alliance between two lineages is confirmed with mutual presents. Such exchange of presents is an ancient tribal custom characteristic of the wedding traditions as well as funeral traditions of many peoples (cf. the ritual of reburial of the deceased, one of the central tribal rituals on Northern Sumatra).

Some time after the arrival of the newlyweds at the bridegroom’s place the bride’s relatives (*saundjarahvas*) arrive with the dowry chest. The chest used

to be brought with a horse, nowadays in a van. Customarily, the bride's father sits on the chest. Spirits are demanded for lifting it down. Beer or wine is also used as a ransom for the chest when it is stopped on the way by tying ribbons across the road. This is one of the few moments in the Kihnu wedding where villagers step in. It is an ancient custom and was connected only with the dowry chest, as the wedding procession was stopped neither upon going to fetch the bride nor upon coming with the bride.

Before they arrive at the courtyard, the bride's brother meets the procession and knocks with his sword at the chest, signifying that they may enter. In former times, such sword strikes may have had a magical meaning (cf. following).

Formerly, villagers - 'onlookers of the wedding' - (self-invited guests) used to come and have a look at the dowry, they were offered food and drink. The 'onlookers' were regarded as a sign of prestige: 'He who has no onlookers is not respected' (R. Karjam). Today this custom has disappeared.

The dowry chest is taken to the granary where the bride, helped by bridesmaids, distributes the dowry to the mother-in-law and other bridegroom's relatives as well as to the functionaries of the wedding. Mother-in-law and the bride's mother stand at both ends of the chest holding burning candles (nowadays the candles can also be held by other persons). The bride is standing in the middle, with the singers standing at her side and behind her.

The dowry has already been tied in bundles with a piece of string or a belt and nowadays they also attach a label with the name of the person to whom the bundle is meant. The first and greatest bundle is traditionally for the mother-in-law - four pairs of stockings, two belts, cloth for jackets, shawls, aprons. The 'ironhand's' wife gets two or three pairs of stockings, two belts, the groom's sister also two pairs of stockings and two belts, his aunt gets a pair of stockings and a belt, grandmother two pairs of stockings and a belt, etc. Male relatives also get a certain amount of things, so do the assistants of the wedding (*talitajad*). In earlier times, bridesmaids (*umbrukad*) got a belt, in recent times they have been given mittens, the musician gets mittens, whereas they are tied over his right shoulder under the left armpit with a garter. This detail is noteworthy because this is just the way the bride's mother ties the belts of the bridegroom's guests at a Setu wedding<sup>17</sup>. A garter is tied to every musical instrument. In earlier times, the bridegroom's sister got a belt that was tied round her neck (for helping) and another round her stockings (a present given into somebody's hands was to signify kinship). All wedding assistants without exception are given braided tasselled garters (in former times, wedding singers got 'singing laces' instead - red or white shoe-laces).<sup>18</sup>

The whole ceremony of distribution of the dowry is accompanied by old songs. The chest is opened with the accompaniment of a traditional chest-

opening song. Accompanied by certain words, the bride lifts the lid of the chest three times before opening it. Before opening she throws a pair of mittens over her shoulder uttering 'Throw these mittens to the oxen'. The custom was evidently connected with cattle profit. There are reports from other parts of Estonia saying that the young wife gave presents to the animals when arriving at the bridegroom's home - mittens, tasselled ribbons and other things (cf. ERA II 191, 153 (6); H II 41, 717 (6) a.o.).

Hand-woven ribbons that girls used to make on common weaving evenings called *young wife's house* (these are held nowadays as well, although rarely) and tassels of coloured rags are important items in a Kihnu wedding ceremony. These are tied around the dowry and, as said above, given also as individual presents. In former times, horses, wedding-house, etc. were also decorated with these. The meaning of the custom is not known. There are several reports from various places in Estonia (including isles) that the young wife had to place a belt or braided tasselled ribbons in various places upon arrival at her bridegroom's house and on various things when using them for the first time - on the threshold, on the draw-beam of the well, into the granary, etc. (q.v. H III 18, 439/40 (3) Vigala; ERA II 189, 528 (29) Kullamaa, ERA II 166, 388 (8) Varbla, E 83492 Saarde, Hurt 1905, etc.) There is a custom on the Isle of Kihnu that when the procession of the bridegroom's relatives arrives at the first house of the bride's home village, and also when the procession with the bride arrives at the first house of the bridegroom's village, the bridesmaids take a belt (nowadays a ribbon) to the well. A Setu bride also gives a belt to the well and to the keys of the granary.<sup>19</sup>



*Distributing the dowry in Kihnu wedding.  
Photo: A. Mikk 1954.*

Relying on information of the other Fenno-Ugrian peoples, one may believe that offering belts, ribbons and tassels represents ancient offerings to the ancestors and tutelary spirits of home and family.<sup>20</sup> It is known that tassels and shawls of red cloth as well as red woollen yarn were originally substitutes for blood sacrifice.<sup>21</sup> Similar items were being used only recently in the funeral traditions of Balto-Finnic and Volga-Finnic peoples.<sup>22</sup> Among many nationalities, funeral and wedding traditions have had common features as rites of passage,<sup>23</sup> whereas offering as a special way of confirming an alliance between humans and spirits is one of the oldest rituals both at funerals and weddings. For example, the Mansi who have no elaborate wedding rituals consider offering made at establishing a new family a particularly important one, whereas both blood and food sacrifices are made.<sup>24</sup>

A remainder of an offering in the Kihnu wedding ritual may also be the custom of throwing a coin into the wash basin where the bride and bridegroom wash their eyes in the bridegroom's farmstead (the custom has disappeared, but it did exist as late as in the 1950s); also, the bride was to throw money on the white cloth spread at the door when entering the bridegroom's house; when rising on the next morning she laid some money in the bed and on the seat where she sat for the first time. Replacement of offerings with money is a more general tendency that can be observed among Estonians as well as many other nations. Often, things and coins are offered parallelly.<sup>25</sup> There is a report from Vigala: when the bride was taken to the wedding house, she threw tasselled ribbons into every hole, including those in the fence; when she stepped over the threshold for the first time, she laid coins on the doorstep, and also in the wash basin, bed, yard, well or corner, on the sauna stove, in the cattle-shed, granary, on the table before eating for the first time and on the chair before sitting for the first time (H III 18, 439/40 (3)).

Actually, the most important ritual in the Kihnu wedding tradition is the so-called **adorning of the bride**, since **from this moment on she is considered to be a married woman**. This takes place unseen by the wedding guests - in the granary or any other room, with only the 'ironhand's' wife and some other elder women present. In fact, here the bride changes all her overclothes, starting from her feet and legs - stockings, skirt, shirtsleeves. The attributes of a married woman - apron and a young wife's coif - are put on by the ironhand's wife. Before putting the coif on her head, she strikes her three times on the head with the coif and utters a special coifing formula:

*Forget your sleep*  
*Remember your hat*  
*Remember your young husband!*

This is a spell with which the bride enters into the status of a young wife and which is to guarantee that she remembers and fulfils the duties of a wife.

Coifing is an exceptional occasion during the wedding ceremony where the bride participates actively in the rituals: namely, she throws the coif on the ground three times (some reports say that twice), before allowing it to be put on (an analogical custom of the Mordvinians, see Fedyanovich 1984:36). Some information suggests that in former times, this ceremony with the corresponding spell belonged to the ritual of putting on an ‘empty coif’ before leaving the paternal house.<sup>26</sup>

‘The empty coif’ was a simple white coif without embroidery, whereas a young wife’s coif was richly embroidered and high, with a bunch of tow in it so that the tip would cock up. The embroidery of a coif (as well as that of shirt-sleeves) varies, but as a rule it contains a wheel (of the sun?), the meaning of which, as well as other ornaments, is not remembered. In ornaments as well as in the whole array of the bride, red is the prevailing colour, as it is considered the colour of youth and mirth on the Isle of Kihnu. Even nowadays, a red-striped, so-called *red skirt* is worn daily by women and girls, but only on festive occasions by elderly women. Even if the family is in mourning and the wife is wearing a black mourning skirt, she has to put on a so-called *blue skirt* with some red stripes in it when going to a wedding, otherwise it may cause ill fortune to the newlyweds. A *blue skirt* is generally worn by elderly women, a *semi-red* one (with one or two wide blue stripes) by middle-aged women, younger women wear it only when they are in some sort of trouble. Such a hierarchy of



*Coifing the bride.*  
*Foto: A. Vissel 1985.*

Kihnu skirts is adhered to even nowadays, although the red one is being used more widely among elderly women.

The first time for the bride to put on her *semi-red skirt* was on the first day of the wedding when leaving home or going to church to the wedding ceremony, which could take place before the actual wedding ceremony. When adorned to become a young wife, she exchanged it for a red skirt, which belonged together with the young wife's coif. Customs and songs connected with the prevention of evil, protective and preventive magic were by now finished. She enters the status of a wife in clothes of joy. At the same time, male functionaries of the wedding cast away their white shawls (in former times, white was the colour of mourning for the Fenno-Ugrians, which became manifest especially in funeral traditions).

The festive young wife's coif was later replaced by an ordinary white coif, which was an obligatory item in a married woman's clothing as late as at the beginning of this century. At nights it was kept on the bed-post and in the morning a woman had to put it on before she laid her feet on the ground. Nowadays, everyday coif has been replaced with a cotton shawl, but it is obligatory for a married woman to wear an apron. A white coif was worn on some occasions, such as going to church, as late as in the 1950s.

At the present time, the ceremony of adorning the bride has been simplified, charms are not uttered any more and the bride does not necessarily cast away the coif.

Adorning is followed by ritual **dancing with the bride**. This custom is known in North and West Estonia and it obviously manifests Swedish influence. In Swedish wedding traditions (e.g. in a Ruhnu wedding) there are more ritual dances and they play a more important role in the ceremony than dances in an Estonian or Balto-Finnic wedding, which is first and foremost a 'singing-wedding'. However, young wife's dance as the first public appearance of a young wife in her new home is a custom known to many nations.

On the Isle of Kihnu the bride dances the first dance with the groomsman (the reason is not known), the next one with the bridegroom. The third dance is started by bridesmaids (in general, on the Isle of Kihnu women often dance with women), then they are joined by other guests. At the end of the dance, both the bridegroom and the groomsman lift the young wife up three times, which may have something to do with fertility magic, just like lifting up sheaves after reaping was connected with fertility magic.<sup>27</sup>

It is probable that the groomsman's dancing with the bride was also connected with fertility magic. Likewise in a Ruhnu wedding the bride danced at first with the groomsman. It is probably a remnant of the *ius primae noctis* - an ancient custom known to many peoples, according to which the bride laid the



*The groomsman dances with the bride.*

*Photo: A. Vissel 1985.*

first wedding night with the groomsman or other wedding guests.<sup>28</sup> On Kihnu, people still remember an old saying: ‘The first night is for the groomsman’ (R. Karjam).

In fact, the important role of the groomsman and perhaps also that of the ‘ironhand’ (the role of the bridegroom is fairly inconspicuous in comparison) may be a relic of endogamous hetairism (an ancient custom, preliminary stage of monogamous marriage, according to which a woman belonged to everyone or certain men of the tribe, for instance, the elders, and not to the bridegroom only.<sup>29</sup>

The survival of ancient legal standards as relics in later wedding traditions is characteristic of many peoples. This should be viewed primarily as an aspiration to ensure progeny, with was vital to the whole clan.

When dancing, the bride is coy - she covers her face with her hand and bows her head down behind the shoulder of the groomsman or the bridegroom (they say: ‘The bride is shy’, but also, ‘that an evil eye would not be able to bewitch her’). After the dance, the young wife was accepted into the family of the bridegroom. After that, the bride’s wedding guests left.

Dance tunes, like dances and instruments, have changed with times. In the past few years, mostly waltz has been played, the most common instruments being accordion or harmonica. In former times, tunes of *Labajalavalss* (triple-metre pair dances) were played on the fiddle, and before that, probably, bag-



pipe was played. The Estonian triple-metre pair dance tunes have several common features with the melodies of wedding dances of the inhabitants of Ruhnu and other Estonian Swedes living by the sea-shore.

Dancing with the bride is followed by the game 'The Bridal Wreath', at the end of which the bride gives her wreath to the potential next bride. The song is of German origin (which acquired its popularity from Weber's opera *Freischütz*) and it spread in Estonia at the end of the previous century when its words were published in popular printed collections of songs. The melody was transmitted orally.

According to an earlier custom, the bride tied the scarf she was on her head before she was adorned as a young wife on her sister's head, so that she might be married soon. There is a well-known saying: 'The first gets (married) because of the mother, the next because of her sister'.

## The Second and Third Days of the Wedding

On the second and third day of the wedding (sometimes the wedding was celebrated only two days), the stress is laid on various wedding jokes and money-collecting, with which the bridegroom's relatives customarily pay for the dowry. Nowadays, non-relatives are also invited to the money-collecting. The money is given to the newlyweds.

An ancient custom of collecting money is the distribution of *young wife's bread*, which later was evidently supplemented by distribution of *young wife's spirits*. These customs are usual until the present day. The bride and the 'ironhand's' wife sit in the courtyard at the table that is placed there specially for this purpose. On the table covered with white cloth there is a big bowl for money and, respectively, a bread of rye flour or a bottle of wine. The bride cuts bread and gives it to the guests (nowadays, cakes bought from a shop are mostly used), for which the guests lay any sum of money (banknotes) or a scarf, apron, etc. into the bowl. The ceremony is accompanied by wishes of luck and humorous comments. Other jokes are also made (for example, a woman laid a great parcel of banknotes of Czarist Russia into the bowl, commenting on it wittily).

Similarly, the young wife distributes *the young wife's spirits* (usually wine or some other sweet drink, but sometimes also vodka). Money is thrown into garbage when the young wife sweeps the courtyard, and guests pay for a 'cure' in the wedding *sauna*, but the latter money is not given to the newlyweds, but sweets and alcohol are brought to the guests for it.

Nowadays, money-collecting is organised both in the bridegroom's and the bride's parents' house. Formerly, the *young wife's bread* was distributed only at the bridegroom's place and it must have had a magical meaning.

The guests are invited to the collection of money by the groomsman who knocks at the wall or table with his sword three times, shouting: 'Wedding! Wedding!'

At this point, we should stop at the **wedding sword**, the meaning of which is also forgotten in the Kihnu wedding (as said above, the groomsman's sword is replaced by a wooden one, but people remember a Turkish sabre being used; the 'ironhand's' wife now removes the *uig* with a stick, instead of a sword, etc.) There are reports from other parts of Estonia, including the isles, that a sword has also been an important attribute of the bridegroom and the best man (suit-or's proxy) who crossed the doors and various items three times with it against evil spirits when arriving at the bridegroom's homestead. The sword was said to be 'a tool of magical cure' (H II 53, 516/7 (579), Simuna) that during the mealtime hung on the bars over the heads of the young couple (ERA II 701, 60 (5), Muhu). Be it mentioned, by way of comparison, that the Ob-Ugrians accredited a sword with a power of setting up contacts between human world and that of spirits and made offerings (ribbons, pieces of cloth, coins) to it as a fetish in its own right.<sup>30</sup>

In former times, other functionaries of a wedding had swords, too - the bridegroom, the 'ironhand', whose duty was to protect the bride from being abducted, which is also common in Kihnu as a wedding joke. Usually, there are no excesses on this occasion, the bride is not taken far, as a rule, and the 'ironhand' soon finds her with his assistants. The bride may be stolen only in the period between *singing off the uig* and distribution of the dowry. From then on, the bride belongs to the bridegroom's clan and the 'ironhand' need not guard her any more.

This custom is considered to be a relic of the ancient abduction of the bride, which occurred in Estonia in some rare cases as late as in the 17th century.<sup>31</sup> However, it has also been regarded as a rite of passage manifesting the dramatical quality of separation and protection against potentially threatening forces.<sup>32</sup> There is a third possibility. Namely, it may be viewed as a competition and matching of forces between two lineages, similar to the reciprocal lampooning songs, the function of which was considered to be the mitigation or prevention of antagonism between the two lineages.<sup>33</sup> This is the more probable that the bride is generally abducted not by the relatives of the bridegroom, but, on the contrary, the 'ironhand' guards and protects the bride until she is firmly attached to the bridegroom's lineage. The custom may be considered analogical with that of stealing back the items given as dowry by the bride's relatives (it was considered to be most shameful when the wedding flag was allowed to be stolen). Abduction of the bride obviously belongs to the same category of customs.



*Singing thanks to att (bride's father).*

*Photo: A. Vissel 1985.*

Special wedding presents to the young couple are a quite new phenomenon on the Isle of Kihnu, as is their demonstration in the courtyard with jocular comments. The presents are demonstrated by the bride, one of her friends is commenting.

The **wedding sauna**, which among Karelians, Votians, Mordvinians, etc. has retained its ritual meaning throughout the whole process of decay of the wedding tradition, has long since become a wedding joke on the isle of Kihnu. While among other kindred peoples the *sauna* was connected primarily with the preparation of the bride and bridegroom for the wedding, with corresponding songs and customs attached, there is no special custom of ritual bathing or whisking of the bride and the bridegroom on the Isle of Kihnu. They only say that before the wedding people used to go to sauna. Old people remember, however, the obligatory sauna for the *strangers* or the bride's guests (*saundjarahvas*) when they arrived at the bridegroom's home and vice versa, when the bridegroom's relatives (*saajad, peiud*) were received at the bride's place (M. Roosleid). The wedding sauna has had a purificatory effect, ritually also in a figurative sense, i.e. it has been a means of protection against evil. Hence, a modern wedding joke - on the second or third day of the wedding, both at the bride's and the bridegroom's homes every 'stranger' is taken to the sauna, i.e. to a tent erected particularly for this purpose, where they are smoked, whisked, 'cured' in various other ways, subjected to 'gynaecological examinations', etc.

The purificatory effect of smoke ('all insects, illness and evil was driven away with smoke') was connected with the custom of the so-called *fraternal smoke* and the accompanying songs that elderly people remember since their youth: on the second day of the wedding, as the bride's relatives ('*saundjarahvas*') go to visit the young wife, the bride's brother heats a room, closing all apertures so that smoke will not get out (formerly, when people lived in a house with no chimney - doors and windows were closed. Later, the chimney was stopped up first). On arrival, the bride's relatives sing a special song in the smoky room, moving in a circle (when coming to visit the other clan, some other songs are also sung in a circle (photo, p. 399), whereas the majority of songs are sung standing in a semicircle, stumping from foot to foot.<sup>34</sup> Fraternal smoke was made as late as in 1975 (RKM II 321, 556/73).

Another wedding joke is **sprinkling the wedding guests with water**. The young wife throws nuts and sweets on the lawn and as the guests (in former times, mostly children, but nowadays adults, too) go to pick them up, bucketfuls of water is thrown on them. This is again a custom, the meaning of which is not known. However, this is comparable with the sprinkling of the herdsman on the day of turning out the cattle to grass for the first time in spring, which was a well-known custom in Estonia and which was done in order that the herdsman were diligent and alert. As a remote parallel, one can point out the custom of bathing in the snow or stuffing snow inside each other's coat on the Hanti bear feast that has a similar meaning. Sprinkling is considered to have connections with fertility magic.<sup>35</sup>

One of the wedding jokes is the so-called **wedding auction**: items of clothing a.o. things stolen from the guests at night while they sleep have to be ransomed for money. Usually, the money collected in this way is used for buying alcohol. This is a new custom and has not been obligatory in the past years.

An old custom that later on was used as a wedding joke were the so-called *pulmatõngid* ('wedding chaffers') - masked people who were offered to the bridegroom instead of the bride. This is probably a contamination of the custom of the so-called **false bride**, the original aim of which was to protect the bride from evil forces, and on the other hand, the custom of making the *Metsik* (a straw doll) which has been taken over from the calendar rituals (in the earliest recordings of the Kihnu wedding traditions, the chaffers were always straw dolls<sup>36</sup>). Both customs, the false bride and *Metsik*, were widespread in Estonia (the latter specifically in West Estonia) as well as in Europe. *Metsik* was connected with field and cattle profit and the awakening of the reproductive power of nature in spring.<sup>37</sup> Their association in the wedding traditions is a peculiar feature of the Isle of Kihnu.

At the end of the wedding, the hosts and the cook of the wedding are thanked with a song, which today, sad enough, is not obligatory any more. The final meal of a wedding party is milk or pea soup.

## The Decay and Innovation of the Wedding Traditions

An absolutely new custom in the Kihnu wedding is the reception of the young couple in the harbour when they return (in a small boat, as a rule) from the official registration of their marriage in Pärnu. The ship is decorated with birches; the motor vehicles that have come to meet the newlyweds are also decorated. The young couple is greeted with a wedding cheer, they are given flowers and wished good luck, new popular songs and sometimes also old wedding songs are sung. From the harbour, they drive on their cars and vans to the bride's and bridegroom's house, if the wedding is to be a 'two-part' one, or to the bridegroom's house, if it is a 'one-part' wedding.

A 'one-part' or 'one-end' wedding is celebrated if the bridegroom (or the bride) is not a native of Kihnu but comes from mainland Estonia, which is very common nowadays. In former times such weddings were held when either the bridegroom or the bride was an orphan or poor (e.g. when his/her father was dead), as in this case his/her family could not afford a wedding party on the required level. Such a wedding ritual is simplified, reciprocal singing in the courtyard and some other customs are omitted. A 'one-part' wedding is usually celebrated at the bridegroom's house, the bride's family give their contribution of some additional food, etc.

As far as **Christan wedding** is concerned, as there has been no priest in the church of Kihnu for a long time, young people used to go to Pärnu to be married. In 1991, the church of Kihnu saw the first wedding ceremony over many years; the priest was invited specially for this purpose. In general, registration of marriage and the wedding ceremony have been quite loosely connected with wedding traditions. Today, like in former times, this could even take place separately, earlier or later, as **the bride was regarded as a wife from the moment when she was coifed and aproned**. A wedding ceremony was rather an act of confirmation and blessing of the marriage.

As mentioned above, the foundation of the Kihnu wedding tradition is clearly tribal and pre-Christian. Although old wedding customs and songs had long since lost their religious-magical basis, their symbolic meaning has survived. They help, especially the bride, to get accustomed to her new status and environment, preparing her for a life in a new social role and the difficulties that she may encounter (warning songs that have an obvious background of anticipatory magic), etc. The ritual has helped to find a balance within the person himself as well as to arrange the relations within society. The primordial goal of

any ritual is to imitate the cosmic harmony (i.e. that of the universe) on the earth. **Faith in the power of word and in the effect of ritual**, even if subconscious, **was preserved longer than the underlying beliefs.**

And yet, **loss of the religious background** is one of the main reasons of the decay of wedding traditions. With the decay of the religious background, several customs that used to be taken seriously have been reduced to wedding jokes, as we could see above. Many customs and songs have disappeared, even if compared with the 1950s when the Kihnu wedding traditions and the accompanying song-lore was much more elaborate.<sup>38</sup>

Changes in the wedding traditions have also been caused by the decay of tribal relations. The function of a *saajavanem* ('elder of the wedding', the most important representative of the bridegroom's lineage) and the related customs and songs have disappeared.

One of the reasons of changes in the wedding traditions is the **changed ethnographical and everyday milieu**. Thus, besides home-made handicraft items, a contemporary dowry chest contains manufactured items of clothing, scarves, pieces of cloth, etc., the young wife distributes shop cake instead of home-made bread, horses have been replaced by motor vehicles in the wedding procession, etc. In connection with that (as well as with the decay of religious background), several old customs have disappeared, for instance that of the bridegroom and the groomsman spinning round three times with their horses and making three crosses on the ground with the tips of their swords.<sup>39</sup> This magical symbol was used in the same context in the Setu wedding ceremony where the *truuska* drew three crosses in front of the horse with his left heel, for the trip to be lucky.<sup>40</sup> There is no singing on the way and the wayfaring songs have also disappeared. People do not sing in cars or on motorcycles. In the truck box they may sing various newer songs, make music or even dance (unfortunately, in this case they never think about traffic safety regulations and fatal accidents with motorcycles on weddings are not infrequent).

The Kihnu wedding has retained the **melody of old wedding songs** which is the same for all songs but has different versions and variants and also is varied during a song.<sup>41</sup> Different versions of different singers form a heterophony in a principally one-voiced song which is quite usual in collective singing. It may also happen that somebody starts a song in a lower *tessitura* than the others and continues like that for several songs. It is, however, an exception.

W. Anderson has mentioned that runo-verse and new songs have lived side by side in Estonia without being blended, 'as oil and water'.<sup>42</sup> Today, something like that may be observed on the Isle of Kihnu where historically and stylistically different layers of music exist side by side, without disturbing each other. The polyphony of the Orthodox church has been transferred to the

stylistically close new folk songs, but neither these nor those have influenced the way of performing the old wedding songs. It is remarkable, however that the Lord's Prayer has acquired a special function in the wedding ritual, it has been attached to the ceremony of seeing off the bride, as well as to the ceremony of receiving the young couple at the bridegroom's home.

It is paradoxical that it was the ceremony of seeing off the bride, perhaps one of the oldest components of a Fenno-Ugric wedding with very archaic songs (and, among some peoples, lamentations), which turned out to be the main point of inrush of new songs in a Kihnu wedding. It probably lays more stress on the importance, and emotional charge, of the situation.

Today, as the traditional folk song and music are disappearing together with old customs, ethnographic milieu and the traditional way of life, **folklore ensembles** have become the principal mediators between the traditional and contemporary culture. One of these groups is *Kihnumua*, which has been working for several years and which includes representatives of different generations - the old and the young as well as children. Although the group is oriented to the non-Kihnu audience, this has turned out to be an acceptable way for young people and children to consciously acquire the culture of their ancestors and to continue the tradition. Members of the group (sometimes the whole group) are often invited to wedding ceremonies to sing and there they usually function as ceremonial singers. At the same time, young girls function as *umbrukad* (bridesmaids) - they help to lay the table, cook food, clear the



*Singing in a circle in the wedding in Kihnu.  
Photo: A. Mikk 1954.*

table and wash up the dishes (which is done continuously in the yard, because the wedding guests cannot be placed at the table all together, therefore they take turns), and participate in wedding songs if they can.

On the other hand, some of the older members of the group are among the best connoisseurs of wedding customs and songs and often they play a leading role in the wedding ceremony, starting songs, etc. On the one hand, they bring their knowledge into the activities of the group and thus ensure the continuity of tradition, on the other hand, their participation in the group has some effect on their behaviour as ceremonial singers. The repertoire acquired in the ensemble affect the choice of songs and motifs as well as the version of the melody which is considerably more limited within the group when compared with what the tradition has to offer. So, the group uses only two of the many variants of the melody and does not vary them during the song (except some changes in the rhythm in verses with 3-syllable words, as a rule). All that has an effect on their manner of singing at a wedding ceremony. At the same time, one cannot deny that in several wedding ceremonies the group has been one of the main forces which has helped to uphold the tradition.

In this way, the members of the group fulfil two different functions: they are ceremonial singers at wedding parties and singers in an amateur ensemble that performs on a stage and at modern festivals which are quite different from old traditional ones, and often outside their natural environment - in towns, abroad, etc. In the performances of the group, traditional folk songs have lost their function and context where they are born and which they reflect, and this feature is characteristic of the whole contemporary folklore activities. Relations between the traditional culture and folklorism in the Kihnu culture would require a special treatment.<sup>43</sup> A separate subject is also the recording of the Kihnu culture by folklorists, cameramen a.o. and its presentation on TV, radio, etc. This has brought up some delicate issues (especially in connection with films), but at the same time, attention paid to the Kihnu culture from outside has certainly contributed to its appreciation by the natives of the isle, especially the young ones.

As regards the Kihnu wedding songs, they represent a singular situation where, on the one hand, old wedding songs have lost their primary connection with weddings and became the repertoire of performances of amateur ensembles, and on the other hand, several songs that have originated in another context (the Orthodox Lord's Prayer, the Baptist song, new popular songs) have acquired the **function of wedding songs** in a contemporary Kihnu wedding, being associated with certain wedding customs.

Naturally, this is, on the one hand, a sign of decay of folklore (especially the situation where folk song becomes amateur art and folklore is replaced by





*The just married couple listens to the advice of brides relatives.  
Foto: A. Vissel 1985.*

folklorism). The addition of new elements into the tradition does not necessarily mean breaking of the tradition, when these are assimilated according to the tradition and fused into it. They may function as progressive innovations that enable the tradition to survive. But in the above-mentioned cases, these new songs (and also, new customs) come from outside, they are based on alien poetic and musical patterns and world view that are quite different from the traditional ones. Their being linked with the wedding tradition can be regarded as a sort of compromise between the new and the old, the familiar and the strange, the traditional and the contemporary. One cannot deny that such compromises help old customs and songs to survive. The whole wonder of the survival of the Kihnu culture actually lies in the fact that in the course of times, it has assimilated different elements, changed while maintaining itself. New phenomena and different historical strata have lived side by side, without ousting the old.

One of the reasons of decay of the traditional culture today is, above all, the **changed socio-economical situation, changes in the way of life and in the world view**, which, in turn, bring about changes in the way of artistic self-expression. This is to a great extent caused by a greater degree of openness of the Kihnu community when compared with what there used to be, primarily by young people going to study and live on the mainland. At the same time, they retain their ties with the isle, bringing contemporary urban culture with them. On the other hand, it is connected with the inevitable invasion of the mass media and, through them, of the contemporary international mass culture, to the Isle of Kihnu.

In most recent times, a new important reason has emerged for not celebrating the wedding - namely, general poverty and shortage. In the early years of the *perestroika*, the number of traditional weddings was reduced by alcohol ban, later on the fact that there was not enough sugar to make beer (the system of rations!) became pivotal. In 1992 and 1993, the main reason is said to be general poverty caused by the dissolution of the kolkhoz and the consequent boom of unemployment.

It was usual already years ago that the young couple had lived together for a long time, they even had children, but the wedding ceremony was postponed for a better time when they had enough money for that. Today, several wedding ceremonies seem to have been postponed indefinitely. In summer 1990, only one wedding was celebrated on the isle. Unfortunately, today weddings are mostly celebrated in a modern way - without ancient customs and songs. Owing to a smaller number of guests, this is also the cheaper way. Sometimes wedding parties are held in a restaurant in town.

With the decay of ancient wedding traditions, something very important is about to disappear - namely, the communal feeling of the inhabitants of Kihnu, their traditional ethical values and integral harmonious world view. Its decay can be observed during the past forty years parallelly with the gradual decay of the wedding traditions and profound, all-encompassing socio-economical changes in the life of the population of Kihnu: foundation of a kolkhoz with the accompanying state dotations and growth of economic welfare, later on incorporation of the kolkhoz into *Pärnu Kalur*, diminishing of the fish resources, limited fishing permits - with the resulting unemployment of men, drain of qualified workers, lack of opportunities of investment and economic and administrative independence, prescriptions from above, increasing alcohol addiction and general feelings of indifference, and finally, regained independence with its new socio-economical problems. This is, however, a subject requiring individual treatment.

True, some elements of the popular culture, such as traditional costumes and handicraft are still somewhat alive in a normal situation, whereas others - songs, dances, melodies - partly survive in a new situation and function, being cultivated in amateur groups (there are three such groups on the Isle of Kihnu), but the losses in the integral complex of the traditional culture and cognition of the world are irretrievable and it will probably take some time before something of aesthetically, ethically and cognitively equal value will come to replace it.

Translated by Kai Vassiljeva

## The Basic Pattern of Kihnu Wedding

At the bride's home	At the bridegroom's home
<b>The 1st day</b>	
Arrival of relatives, breakfast	Arrival of relatives, breakfast. Departure of the wedding procession
The groomsman brings a message about the arrival of the wedding procession	
Reception of the procession on the courtyard with reciprocal singing; the bride is hidden	
Entertainment of guests in the chamber, the bride (under an 'uig') is brought to the table, songs	
The ceremony of seeing off the bride, with songs	
	Reception of the newlyweds in the courtyard
	Entertainment of guests in the chamber, singing off the 'uig' instructive a.o. songs (abduction of the bride) and the bridegroom
	Arrival of the dowry chest in the courtyard, arrival of the bride's relatives, fraternal smoke
	Distribution of the dowry in the granary, accompanied by songs
	Adorning and coifing of the young wife (in the granary or elsewhere unseen by the guests)
	Dances with the young wife (and the game of the 'Bridal Wreath')
<b>The 2nd (and 3rd) day</b>	
Breakfast	Breakfast
Dances	Dances, money-collecting, wedding jokes: distribution of young wife's spirits and young wife's bread; scattering of nuts, etc. on the courtyard lawn and throwing water on those who pick them up; wedding sauna; auction, 'tõngid' (chaffers), etc.

	Departure of the young couple and the closest relatives of the bridegroom
Arrival of the young couple and the relatives of the bridegroom	
Entertainment of guests	
Dances, money-collecting and wedding jokes like at the bridegroom's house	
Departure of the young couple and the relatives of the bridegroom	
	Return of the newlyweds a.o.
Final meal of the wedding, thanksgiving songs to the hosts	Final meal of the wedding, thanksgiving songs to the hosts and the wedding cook
Departure of guests	Departure of guests

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