

Deadlock on wedlock?

Colleges, parents and students hold debate on student marriages

By YU NAN
China Daily staff

Do students have the right to get married whilst still at college? Is it a good or bad idea to permit them to get married at this stage?

Much debate on this issue has been the talk of the town on college campuses. The result? Colleges can make their own decision on whether to give the green light to student couples who want to marry, according to Qu Zhenyuan, an official from the Ministry of Education.

In the past and even in some cases now, college students are forbidden from getting married. The legal age at which students can tie the knot is 22 for men and 20 for women. However, undergraduates who decide to get married must quit from their colleges before doing so.

Undeniable rights

The current management provision was issued in 1990 by the then State Education Commission and has been strictly carried out by all Chinese colleges.

College students are told on their first day that marriage is utterly prohibited, although few had thought about it before anyway.

However, when the Ministry of Education dropped the limit of age and marital status for students to sit college entrance examination, problems appeared — if grandparents and parents could study in college, then why couldn't college students get married?

Legal professionals complain that the current rule takes away the right to marry at the legal age, which must be protected.

They argue that the 1980 Marriage Law and its newly-passed revision stipulates that no organization or individual is allowed to interfere in people's right to marry.

College students of legal marriageable age have the right to take their college to court if their legal rights are inappropriately forbidden," said He Weifang, professor at the Law School of Peking University. "The colleges will undoubtedly be the losers," he said, adding that "citizens' rights cannot be denied and that there are no exceptions for college students."

Disturbance on campus?

Legal rights cannot be denied but potential problems cannot be ignored, either.

Yang Deguang, principal of Shanghai Normal University, argued the current management rule enacted in colleges does not really conflict with the rights of students.

Although some university

students are old enough to request a marriage application, most of them are unprepared psychologically and are not secure enough financially to begin a family, Yang believes.

"Marriage and childbearing are distractions and disturb the normal order of school," said Tian Lin, professor at the research centre of higher education at Peking University. "Nowadays colleges are totally unprepared for managing a large number of student's families."

Until now, Wuhan University has been the only one that publicly approves marriage on campus.

Hao Xiang, who is in charge of students' affairs at Wuhan University, said the rules were changed because the limit of age and marriage status for people studying at college were dropped.

"If more and more single, older people enter our school, problems will begin sooner or later," he said. "We have to make our rules fit the coming new situations."

"But this does not mean that we are encouraging our students to get married," Hao added.

He said only 5 per cent of graduate students in the university have got married and most younger undergraduates have their own rational considerations which will not be influenced by the new rule.

Most universities stick to their traditional rules — no marriage on campus.

"We do not encourage undergraduates to get married at any time," said Sun Li, president of the students' management department at Peking University.

"Marriage is too big a decision," she said. "No application from undergraduates students have been turned in yet. I believe the majority of students would not risk it without careful thought," she added.

Parents worried

Perhaps the most worried people involved in the debate are parents who have placed great hopes on their children's future.

Fang Guoqing, a father of a college student, firmly supports the schools' restriction.

He believes that college is a place only for study, and that "the prime responsibility for school is to encourage students to study."

"I cannot imagine how my son would concentrate on his studies if he has a wife and a family at such a young age," Fang added.

Zhang Shuyan, a mother of a college student hopes her daughter and other students can all treasure the precious time in college and use the time to absorb as much knowledge as they can when they are still young.

"I do not deny that marriage is their right," she said. "But if they ask me, I will persuade them to wait. I believe that more sweet



fruits await them in the future." Many parents are also worried that getting married at such a young age could lead to many more divorces.

Students remain sane

Most college and university students responded calmly to the debate on marriage.

Guo Tong from the Guanghua School of Management of Peking University, said students' rights with regards to marriage should be protected in line with the law, but he is not considering marriage himself whilst at college, largely because of the pressure from his studies and his worries about finding a job after graduation.

"I could not risk my girlfriend's future if my own future remains uncertain," he said. A survey conducted in Wuhan, capital of Central China's Hubei Province, revealed that half of the city's college students would prefer to wait for at least five years after graduation; less than one-third of students would marry within three to five years after leaving college. Most of them do not want to sacrifice to be a golden bride. "There have been many students applying to get married, although 40 per cent of them are ineligible," said Liu Shuiku, director of the Student Office at the University of Science and Technology of Beijing.

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It appears that even if restrictions on marriage at school were abandoned, it is unlikely that marriages on campus would increase. But we still need to prepare for potential problems, she said.

Zhu Xiao, a student at the University of International Business and Economics has been dating his girlfriend for two years and they have touched on the topic of marriage. "We won't get married until after graduation," Zhu said. "If we want to have a happy life in the future, we need to study hard together."

The debate on the rights of college students to get married is just one problem that China has to face in its gradual reform of higher education, said Tian Lin, professor from Peking University.

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TODAY'S RADIO

AM 640 kHz	09:00 Chinese Billboard	11:00 Readers' Club	12:00 Chinese classic opera	19:00 Happy 30 Minutes	22:30 Music and Audio System
FM 90.0 MHz (all stereo)	12:00 Conversation	15:00 Peking Opera excerpts	16:00 Literature Cafe	16:30 Popular CD	18:00 Chinese folk music
FM 87.6 MHz (all stereo)	20:00 Into Music	08:30 Happy songs			

TODAY'S TELEVISION

CCTV-1 Channel 2	16:10 Xiqu programmes	17:00 World Express	19:00 News; Weather	20:06 31-part serial: Granary of the Country (3)	23:27 Documentary serial
CCTV-2 Channel 8	12:00 Businessmen	16:05 Arts Investment Guide	19:35 China Financial Report	20:00 Life	20:40 Net Age
CCTV-3 Channel 15	16:33 Symphony World	18:30 Elementary Art	19:30 Arts Scope	20:33 Performance Arena	
CCTV-4 Channel 32	18:30 China Today	19:30 Chinese Art	20:30 Across the Straits	21:00 China News	
CCTV-6 Channel 18	19:45 Chinese movie	21:25 Profile of Film Market	21:45 French movie		
CCTV-8 Channel 29	19:00 Around the World	21:45 Australian drama	23:35 Midnight Theatre		

BRIDGE (By Phillip Alder)

In "The Importance of Being Earnest" Oscar Wilde wrote, "I never travel without my diary. One should always have something sensational to read in the train."

East made a sensational play in this deal. First, though, look only at the West hand. What would you lead against three no-trump after a Stayman sequence has told you that the dummy will have four hearts and declarer four spades?

You have nine points, and the opponents presumably have some 26. So, partner has about five points. Leading a spade, a heart or a club might work, but each is surely unwise. It is most sensible to select the diamond eight, the high card to deny an honor.

Given that lead, how should the play proceed? Declarer starts with seven tricks: one spade, four hearts and two diamonds. He will presumably play on clubs to get the extra tricks he needs.

To defeat the contract, the defenders must establish and run the diamonds first.

Declarer calls for dummy's diamond jack. Now is the critical moment. Suppose East wins with his king and returns a diamond to dummy's ace. Declarer loses a club to West, wins the

diamond continuation with his queen, loses another club, and claims an overtrick when West is out of diamonds.

Instead, East played an encouraging diamond 10. Now the play went: club to West's queen, diamond to dummy's ace, club to West's ace, three diamond tricks to East for one down.

The guideline: If you are trying to establish a suit in which declarer has two stoppers, make him use them up as quickly as possible.

North ♠ 7 5
♥ K Q 6 3
♦ A J
♣ J 9 7 6 4

West ♠ K 8 6 3
♥ 8 5 2
♦ 8 7 2
♣ A Q 2

East ♠ J 9 4
♥ K 10 7
♦ K 10 9 6 3
♣ 8 5

South ♠ A Q 10 2
♥ A J 4
♦ Q 5 4
♣ K 10 3

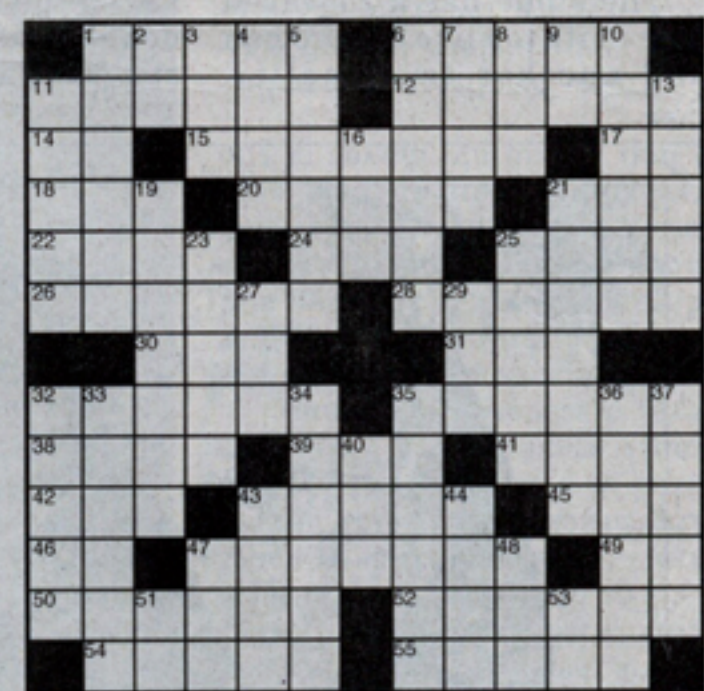
Dealer: South
Vulnerable: Both

South 1 NT
West Pass
North Pass
East Pass
Opening lead: ??

CROSSWORD (No 6488)

ACROSS

- 1 Cannon boom
- 6 Quit
- 11 Vampire repellent
- 12 Unruly crowd
- 14 Um cousin
- 15 Pounds
- 17 Kind of radio
- 18 Gloomy
- 20 Big ponds
- 21 Bird beak
- 22 Half of seis
- 24 Head movement
- 25 Sand hill
- 26 New Englander
- 28 Cup holder
- 30 Litigate
- 31 Md. neighbour
- 32 Reeks
- 35 Dozing
- 38 Small job
- 39 That yacht
- 41 — wrestling
- 42 Quick to



- 54 Guide
- 55 Having a weapon
- 1 Large desert
- 2 Little Rock's st.
- 3 Lawyer's deg.
- 4 Glass bottle
- 5 Fuel rating
- 6 Doctrines
- 7 Corn units
- 8 Strain muscles
- 9 Antimony's symbol
- 10 Seinfeld pal
- 11 Windy
- 13 Fire residue
- 16 Sugar Ray stat
- 19 Thickest 53
- 23 Lurk
- 25 Sword fights
- 27 Slippery fish
- 29 Pitches
- 32 Discolor
- 33 Shade trees
- 34 Tot
- 35 Grammy-winner
- 36 Waxed melodramatic
- 37 Tough question
- 40 — out (scrape by)
- 43 Sly trick
- 44 "Faint heart — won ..."
- 47 Map abbr.
- 48 Shady
- 51 MI or TX
- 53 Iron, in formulas

Solution to No 6487

FED LON PANG
LIE ARIA ELBA
IRE CONGENIAL
TEPEE JEAN
LE GAD ANAT
BOY BUS SNUB
OS ZEN LIT LP
OLLIE BAT LES
TOOT BAG TY
HEIR PORCH
MILESTONE ILE
ODOR ENOS CUR
PAWS SGT SEE

WHAT'S ON

STAGE

Keep it in the air: The Chaoyang Theatre is one of the Beijing theatres to present acrobatics all year round.

Top acrobatic artists invited from all over the country perform for Chinese and foreign tourists. The programme features trick cycling, leaping through hoops and Chinese magic tricks. Some of the artists have won prizes in international competitions.

Time: 7:15 pm, daily
Place: 36, Dongshanhuan Beilu, Chaoyang District
Tel: 6507-2421, 6507-1818

Joyful jugglers: The China Acrobatic Troupe is staging a nightly variety show at the Tiandi Theatre, where the seemingly impossible is made real.

Spinning plates, juggling umbrellas, contortionists and acrobats fill the air. Integrating superlative juggling, unicycling, balancing and jumping through hoops with the finest ancient Chinese dancing, the star-studded cast will amaze.

Time: 7:15 pm, daily
Place: 10 Dongzhimen Nandajie, Chaoyang District, Beijing
Tel: 6502-3984

Opera excerpts: The Lijuan Theatre presents traditional Peking Opera excerpts specially packaged in short programmes for foreign audiences in the original style.

The theatre revives the ambience of Old Beijing by setting up Ming-style tables that enable guests to sample snacks during performances.

With an explanation in English, the performances are from the Beijing Peking Opera Theatre.
Time: 7:30 pm, nightly

Place: Qianmen Hotel, 175, Yong'an Lu, Xuanwu District
Tel: 6301-6688 ext 8867

'Blue Romance': To celebrate the 40th anniversary of the founding of the East Song and Dance Ensemble, a large-scale variety show will be given.

Called "Blue Romance," the show will be presented by more than 100 stars and performers from the ensemble, and will feature exotic songs and dances from countries all over the world.

In addition, the lighting, and stage sets will utilize high-tech equipment, which is sure to add to the excitement of the show.

Time: 7:30 pm, January 11, 12, 14, 15
Place: Poly Theatre, on northeast corner of the Dongsi Shitiao Viaduct
Tel: 6520-1188 ext 5176

Food for thought: This drama is set in a famous restaurant that forms the backdrop for a series of tales about different customers.

Chinese food is delicious and it is especially so in this restaurant. Diners come and go, leaving lots of sensational stories that have as many different flavours as the food served in the restaurant.

Time: 7 pm until January 15
Place: Capital Theatre, 22 Wangfujing Dajie
Tel: 6525-0996, 6524-9847

Indian dances: The Indian Dance Company will visit Beijing soon to give two performances.

Some of the numbers are pure traditional Indian dances, in which each finger gesture has its own meaning.

Others will be newly created modern dances which combine folk elements with pop culture.
Time: 7:30 pm, January 18, 19

Place: the Grand Theatre of the Cultural Palace of Nationalities
Tel: 6602-2530 or 6602-2770

Foreign drama: A foreign drama will be staged in Beijing by director Wang Xiaoying, who is said to be China's first director that holds a doctorate degree.

The play, "Death and the Maiden," is a story about hurt and revenge, insanity and reason, set in South America.

To protect her husband during the reign of the fascists, the heroine allows herself to be raped by a fascist to the music of Schubert's "Death and the Maiden." She lives in shadow of the event for years and then suddenly meets the fascist again.

Time: 7:15 pm until January 22 except Mondays
Place: small playhouse of the Beijing People's Art Theatre
Tel: 6525-0123

CONCERTS

Classical Chinese music: The Folk Orchestra of the China Song and Dance Ensemble will give a concert.

It will feature 10 famous pieces of Chinese traditional music, including "Ambushed on All Sides," "Plum Blossom Melody," and "Spring Night on a Moonlit River."

Time: 7:30 pm, January 11
Place: Forbidden City Concert Hall
Tel: 6559-8315

From Russia with love: The Russian Philharmonic Orchestra will bring their skills to Beijing's stage with three performances at the Poly Theatre.

Founded in 1992, the orchestra has a relatively short history but

international recognition and quality works. It is a collection of many prizes for the orchestra will present haikovsky and Chinese played.

The concert will feature Hector Berlioz's "La Damnation de Faust."

Time: 7:30 pm, January 22, 23
Place: Beijing Concert Hall, 1 Beixinhuajie, northeast corner of the city

Grand concert: The China Philharmonic Orchestra will give a concert, conducted by Yu Long.

The concert will feature Hector Berlioz's "La Damnation de Faust."

Time: 9 am-5 pm until January 27
Place: east side of Tian'anmen Square
Tel: 6526-3355

EXHIBITIONS

Emotions on call: Wangfujing Art Gallery painting show — "The Artists include Li Se, Li Chunyao and express their opinions through their viewers' emotional world."

Time: 9 am-5 pm until January 13
Place: 136, Nanchizi Dajie, Dongcheng District

Solo exhibition: Han Meilin, a renowned artist, is giving his one-man show at the China Museum in Beijing.

The show features 10 pieces of Han's recent works, including ink painting, sculptures, industrial designs, Chinese calligraphy and folk art.
Time: 9 am-5 pm until January 13
Place: 1 Wusi Dajie, Dongcheng District, Beijing
Tel: 6401-6234

Cultural envoys: More than 40 embassies in China are putting on show pieces from their art collections that best represent their nations' cultures at the Museum of the Chinese Revolution.

Called "One World, One Home," this is a special show bringing together the best and most representative art works reflecting the unique cultures of these countries.

The 300-odd exhibits fall into several categories including painting, sculpture, folk arts and some real objects used in daily life.

They are made by famous artists as well as ordinary people in different times.

Time: 9 am-5 pm until January 27
Place: east side of Tian'anmen Square
Tel: 6526-3355

Picasso prints: An exhibition displaying print works of the most important art master Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) is on at the China Millennium Altar.

Titled "Black and White Imagination," the exhibition presents 161 original prints that are free and flexible expressions of the artist's bold and wild imagination.

All the prints were made during his stay in Paris from 1942 to 1968, a period involving the Second World War and the following decade in southern France, said to be the most mature period of the great master's artistic life.

Time: 9 am-5 pm until February 15
Place: 9A Fuxing Lu
Tel: 6853-0257