

Incorporate ancient customs into your wedding

By **CAROL ROBERTS**
Copley News Service

Every culture has its wedding traditions intended to symbolize the good things marriage means to a couple: happiness, commitment, sharing. Such customs offer a couple the opportunity to personalize their celebration, perhaps even with traditions of their ancestors. Following are some ideas from "Bride's" magazine.

AFRICA - Some tribes still perform the ancient rite of binding the bride's and groom's wrists together with plaited grass. Show your new ties by exchanging matching woven bracelets before you walk back up the aisle together as husband and wife.

BERMUDA - Even today, islanders top off their wedding cakes with tiny tree saplings. Plant your little tree in a place where you can watch it grow along with your marriage.

CHINA - Red, the color of love and joy in China, is the favorite choice for the bride's dress and accessories. Tuck a red rosebud in your husband's lapel or wrap bridesmaid's gifts and wedding favors in red.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA - Country brides wear wreaths of rosemary woven for them on their wedding eve. Include a sprig in your bouquet to symbolize wisdom, love and loyalty.

ENGLAND - The village bride and her wedding party used to walk together to the church, led by a small girl strewing blossoms along the road. Walk to your

reception site if it's nearby. If you have young friends or relatives or are young parents marrying again, let the children head the parade.

FRANCE - Couples drink the reception toast from an engraved two-handled cup, the coupe de marriage, which is passed on to future generations. You might engrave a silver cup with your initials and then use it not only for the champagne toast at your reception but also for all future special occasions.

GERMANY - Both bride and groom hold candles trimmed with flowers and ribbons. A late afternoon or evening wedding is perfect for saying vows by candlelight. And you can save one of the tapers to relight for a romantic first anniversary dinner.

INDIA - To ward off evil, the groom's brother sprinkles flower petals on the bridal couple at the end of the ceremony. After your ceremony is over, have a special relative or friend hand a single flower to every guest.

IRELAND - The traditional wedding cake of the Emerald Isle is a heavy, rich fruitcake with golden raisins, ground almonds, cherries and spice. In true Irish

spirit, lace your reception cake with brandy or bourbon.

ITALY - For centuries wedding guests have tossed confetti - sugared almonds - at the couple to symbolize the sweet and bitter in life. Decorate reception tables with pretty boxes or bags brimming with almonds.

JAPAN - Bridal couples take nine sips of sake, becoming husband and wife after the first. The two of you could drink together from a wine cup then ask your parents to exchange sips, too.

MEXICO - Reception guests gather around the couple in a heart-shaped ring. Your friends and relatives might do the same as you whirl through your first dance together as husband and wife.

POLAND - Guests customarily have pinned money on the bride to "buy" a dance. Collect your pin money in a white satin purse.

RUSSIA - Wedding guests not only give presents - they receive them, as well. Favor your guests with tiny picture frames, bud vases or instant photos of themselves.

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