



## Wayist Matrimonial Ceremony

### Wayist philosophy about the institution of Marriage

*In the west, the time when people got married “just to get out of the house”, or to have access to sexual intercourse without societal scorn and disrepute, or to do “due diligence” to take care of an accidental pregnancy, is pretty much over. Children born out of wedlock (and their parents) used to suffer discrimination, but those days are mostly over. Nowadays, couples pretty much don’t have to get married.*

*In the West, couples can share accommodations, enjoy one another’s company and sexuality, yet maintain autonomy of their individuality and personal income. Some countries have laws that regard cohabiting couples as legally married after a certain period. In the eyes of the State, marriage effects a change in legal status upon individuals that has far reaching legal consequences. Couples, who require this, have researched their options and chose to continue their relationship in this manner.*

*Wayists in the East, however, generally follow different standards because some communities react against unwed couples and their children. Wayists conform to societal norms if it becomes clear that their free-thinking actions and Wayist beliefs may cause undue hurt or discomfort to loved ones—or they would leave the community.*

### Spiritual Marriage

*Spiritual marriage is something different than marriage in the eyes of the State. It is an additional bond, a spiritual bond under spiritual laws but is not recognized in the eyes of the State. It brings about additional vows; about different expectations and outcomes. This may not be everyone’s cup of tea.*

*It is possible to come to temple or church to request a spiritual marriage without it being a marriage legal in the eyes of the State. On the other hand, it is also done every day, where couples seek a bond of marriage legal and binding only in the eyes of the State, without the element of spiritual marriage. The latter is commonly referred to as a secular marriage. Secular marriage rules regulate matrimonial affairs according to State laws; how an estate will be managed, who has rights to what property, and especially laws in terms of children.*

*Spiritual marriage is all-encompassing. It goes far beyond the laws of the land.*

*Wayist spiritual marriage is when otherwise unrelated people get together to form a new legal partnership, to enter into a social and spiritual contract with each other.*

*What differentiates this partnership from a business partnership is primarily that the marriage partnership establishes a new extended family, fusing together several parties from the wedded couple's respective backgrounds (some unwittingly) in a new bond and familial relationship. This is an important aspect of the marriage. It will play a crucial role in the future lives of all people affected by this. As with other partnerships, the partners in marriage pool property and resources, and share everything. Bank accounts, movable property and real estate is shared in common as are responsibilities for children and one another's well-being and best interests are shared. Marriage partnerships are intimate and all-encompassing. It is not something to engage without guidance and deep reflection.*

*The Wayist traditional view of matrimony is communal, democratic, egalitarian and pragmatic. From a Wayist view of the realities of the world, monogamy is not ideal; some Teacher even describe it as cruel and unrealistic, since it typically creates orphans, widows, and liquidation of assets upon disagreements which inevitable end in disastrous divorce.*

*From a Wayist view, instituted polygamy is as imbalanced as polyandry, and neither is equitable and both systems have been proved to be damaging and potentially cruel.*

*The Wayist view of an ideal marriage is today nothing if not just an ideal because the laws of countries have changed over the years. Wayist ideals are still rooted in the days of the longhouse communities where women and men alike reached consensus to marry men and women who would band together to love and cherish one another, form larger families of people who vow to care and support the family and the children of the family. Traditionally, and even today in practice, Wayists do not value the "bloodline" or "seed" as much as do advocates of the popular social systems in this regard. The Wayist marriage partnership is a spiritual affair which, even in a monogamous marriage involves a wider community of extended family.*

*Wayists always follow the laws of the country where they live. In some countries, ministers of religion are not allowed to officiate weddings on behalf of the state. Typically, those countries do not hold to the principle of freedom of religion. Different countries have different (and changing) laws with regards to matrimonial contracts. However, even when contracts are recorded by state officials, Wayists traditionally secure the blessing from monks at the local temple after the civil registration formalities have been completed. In countries where freedom of religion is instituted, Wayists prefer to exercise their privilege to have their wedding officiated and blessed by an officer of their local sangha with whom they have a personal relationship—a relationship that*

*may serve many future purposes in the married couple's life. Wayist ministers of religion officiate monogamous weddings in countries where the law place such limitations, and no more. As stated in our Primary Text, Wayists always follow the law of the land whether or not we agree with it; when we don't agree, we may exercise our democratic rights to lobby for change, or leave the unjust country, but for as long as the law stands and we are resident in the country we must follow the law.*

*In view of the traditional importance of the marriage ceremony, isolated Wayists without access to a temple, shrine or an ordained monk may want to adopt the standard service that could be performed by relatives and friends of the bride and groom.*

### ***Prescribed format of the standard officiating process of a Wayist matrimonial ceremony:***

(i) Before a shrine specially erected, complete with an Avalokitesvara image, candles and flowers, the bridal couple and assembly should recite dharani and mantras of their choice, and the community should partake in the Nectar Dharani in the language of their preference.

(ii) The couple should light the candles and incense sticks and offer the flowers, placing them on and around the table on which stands the image.

(iii) The bride and groom should then, in turn, read the poems of their choice to one another.

(iv) The assembly or perhaps the parents only, should recite a poem as a sign of their blessings..

(v) Scarves and gifts of spiritual significance are exchanged between the wedded couple and between in-laws. The extended family gather to give gifts of spiritual significance to the newlyweds. The bond of the newly-formed extended family is formed.

### **STANDARD WAYIST MATRMONIAL CEREMONY**

*Minister addresses assembly:*

*Today we come together in the presence of spiritual beings and our community, to witness the solemn promise of two people to dedicate themselves completely to each other in body, speech, and mind.*

*In this life, in every situation, in wealth or poverty, in health or sickness, in happiness or difficulty, they will promise to work to help each other perfectly.*

*The purpose of our relationships in matrimony is to attain enlightenment by perfecting our kindness and compassion toward all sentient beings.*

*\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, are happy today not only because they can share the joy of their love for each other with friends and family, but also because they have the opportunity to express their aspirations for the future.*

*Minister addresses couple:*

*[Minister to] \_\_\_\_\_, will you have \_\_\_\_\_ as your lifelong partner, to live together in the holy estate of marriage? Will you love him/her, comfort him/her, honor and keep him/her, in sickness and in health, in sorrow and in joy, and be faithful to him/her, as long as you both shall live.*

*“I will”*

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*“I will”*

*\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, do you pledge to help each other to develop your hearts and minds, cultivating compassion, generosity, ethics, patience, enthusiasm, concentration and wisdom as you age and undergo the various travails of life and to transform them into the path of love, compassion, joy and equanimity?*

*“We do”*

*Recognizing that the external conditions in life will not always be smooth and that internally your own minds and emotions will sometimes get stuck in negativity. Do you pledge to see all these circumstances as a challenge to help you grow, to open your hearts, to accept yourselves, and each other; and to generate compassion for others who are suffering? Do you pledge to avoid becoming narrow, closed or opinionated, and to help each other to see various sides of situations?*

*“We do”*

*Understanding that just as we are a mystery to ourselves, each other person is also a mystery to us. Do you pledge to seek to understand yourselves, each other, and all living beings, to examine your own minds continually, to guard against culturally conditioned thinking and to regard all the mysteries of life with curiosity and joy?*

*“We do”*

*Do you pledge to preserve and enrich your affection for each other, and to share it with all beings? To take the loving feelings you have for one another and your vision of each other's potential and inner beauty as an example, and rather than spiraling inwards and becoming self absorbed, to radiate this love outwards to all beings?*

*“We do”*

*When it comes time to part, do you pledge to look back at your time together with joy—joy that you met and shared what you have—and acceptance that we cannot hold on to anything forever?*

*“We do”*

*Do you pledge to remember the disadvantages of ignorance, anger and clinging attachment, to apply antidotes when these arise in your minds, and to remember the kindness of all other beings and your connection to them? Do you pledge to work for the welfare of others, with all of your compassion, wisdom and skill?*

*“We do”*

*Do you pledge to work to develop the understanding of the nature of things, and the wisdom that the true nature of existence is empty, and that attachments and things and debts weigh your soul down? And to remember the laws of cause and effect?*

*“We do”*

*Do you pledge day to day, to be patient with yourselves and others, knowing that change comes slowly and gradually, and to seek inspiration from your teachers not to become discouraged?*

*“We do”*

*Do you pledge to continuously strive to remember your own spiritual nature, as well as the true nature of all living beings? To maintain the awareness that you can achieve your greatest potential and lasting happiness.*

*“We do”*

### ***Exchanging of Rings***

*Minister addresses the couple and the assembly:*

*The wedding ring is the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual bond which unites two loyal hearts and soul mates in partnership. Please join now in silent prayer as we call on the spiritual witnesses to this ceremony to bless these/this ring(s) as \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ give rings to one another, to seal their vows.*

### ***Exchange of Gifts and Blessings***

*“Will the in-laws please step forward for the exchange of blessings and gifts.”*

*Once assembled*

*Offering of scarves to wedded couple:*

*In-laws offer scarves to \_\_\_\_\_ in his/her hands. S/he refuses to accept it in hand as among equals, but bows his/her head to receive it as a blessing, as one subservient to the in-laws. In-laws put it around his/her neck. All parties involved may do this at the same time.*

*Offering of scarves to in-laws:*

*Each in-law father/mother/step-father/step-mother/guardian offers scarves to the newly acquired in-laws who have become part of their own extended family. After initial pleasantries, the newly wedded couple is called over. The mothers and fathers on all sides present to the newlyweds gifts for their altar/home shrine at home. Appropriate gifts for home shrines are statues and/or tanghka of Amitabha, Avalokitesvara and Tara, incense burners, incense, and other altar furnishings.*

*Signing of the register and marriage certificate:*

*For this to be legal, certain states stipulate particular circumstances to be present upon signing. You may sign these effects at a later time if appropriate.*

*When all is said and done, the entire family with the newly wedded couple at center turn to face the assembly.*

### ***Pronouncement***

*“By the power vested in me through the wishes of this assembly, [and State], I now pronounce you Partners for Life.”*

*“You may now kiss one another to seal your vows.”*

### ***Conclusion: Presenting and Congratulating the Couple***

*“Ladies and gentlemen please join me in congratulating \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ on their beautiful life together as a couple, and wish them Godspeed.”*

## **Wayist Wedding Elements**

### **Scarves, Katakas, Krama**

*Wayists typically offer scarves with holy symbols, or plain scarves as a sign of respect to all and sundry. There are a few traditional “rules” to scarves-giving but it is not complicated. With regards to weddings, scarves are offered primarily by the two individuals getting married, and secondarily after the proclamation.*

*Depending on the community, Scarves, Katakas, or Krama are offered to the bride and groom to signify good luck, health, happiness, and prosperity.*

*Common gifts are scarves, malas, and other objects of spiritual and personal significance. Sometimes, the minister may give the gift back to you, or give it to someone else, or use it for him/herself—there is no rule or common practice in this regard as it all depends on the spiritual guidance that the minister receives (if any) at the time. It may be awkward for you if you don’t expect it, to get the gift back, or see it being given away, so be prepared. One way of rationalizing this is to know that the minister is deeply grateful for your gift. Your gift enabled the minister to own something of value that s/he would not otherwise have. S/he can now be guided by spiritual beings to either enjoy your gift for his/her own spiritual use, or to put it to use for the spiritual benefit of someone—who could be anyone, now or later.*

### **Blessing**

*Minister: \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_, may the vows for your life together include the intention to continually break through pre-conceived views of each other, which arise naturally, but are so damaging to the way of clarity and love. May your vows include seeing through those feelings that arise from selfish desires, attachments, and fears. May your vows include compassion for each other and for all beings. May you refrain from speaking harshly or deceptively. May you live peacefully in this world, finding work to support each other that is in harmony with the great way. May you support each other in creating a compassionate and loving home, a shining light in this poor world. And at all times may you be mindful of each other. May your walk together be a manifestation of the bodhisattva way.*

### **Optional Conclusion of Service**



*The minister, causing the bride and groom to join their hands, and with the minister's hand placed on theirs, pronounces the admonition and declaration.*

*Minister: \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_, have chosen one another from the many men and women of the earth, have declared their love and purpose before this gathering, and have made their pledges each to the other symbolized by the holding of hands and the giving and receiving of rings. Therefore, I declare that they are husband and wife.*

*Let all others honor them and the threshold of their house. May they find here the good beginning for the spending and the fruitfulness of many years. Amen.*