

Marriage, Vedic Style

The Core Vedic rites as translated in the book 'The Vedic Experience: Mantramajari' by R. Panikkar et al. [U. of Calif. Press, 1977].

Ofcourse, there are many regional, linguistic etc. additional variations/traditions.

1. Pani-Grahana [The Grasping of the Hand]
Himself facing the East while she faces the West, the bridegroom takes the bride's hand..
"O Sarasvati, gracious one, rich in offspring, you whom we hymn first of all the Gods, may you prosper this marriage." "I seize your hand."
2. Asmarohana [The Treading on the Stone]
The bridegroom says the words while she stands up: "Come, beautiful one." And lets her put the tip of the right foot on the stone, saying: "Come, step on the stone; be strong like a stone. Resist the enemies; overcome those who attack you."
3. Lajahoma [The Oblation of Parched Grain]
The bridegroom pours some parched grain into the bride's joined palms :
"This grain I spill. May it bring to me well-being and unite you to me. May Agni hear us."
He then causes the bride to spill the grain into the fire, saying:
"This woman scattering grain into the fire, prays: Blessings on my husband. May my relatives be prosperous. 'Svaha!' "
4. Agnipradakshina [The Circumambulation of the Fire]
Then they walk around the fire, the bridegroom repeating:
"First now they bring to you in bridal procession this Surya, guiding her steps in circular motion. Return her now, O Agni, to her husband as rightful wife, with hope of children to come."
Then the entire rite is repeated twice more, beginning with the rite of the fried grain.
At the fourth round she pours into the fire all the fried grain from the mouth of the winnowing basket saying: "To Bhaga svaha!"
5. Saptapadi [The Seven Steps]
While the bride takes the seven steps to the North-east, the bridegroom sings the following verses:
"One step for Vigour, Two steps for Vitality, Three steps for Prosperity, Four steps for Happiness, Five

steps for Cattle, Six steps for Seasons, Seven steps for Friendship. To me be devoted."

After the seventh step he makes her remain where she is and says:

"With seven steps we become friends. Let me reach your friendship. Let me not be severed from your friendship. Let your friendship not be severed from me."

6. Hrdayasparsa [Touching the Heart]
He then over her right shoulder touches her heart saying:
"I hold your heart in serving fellowship, your mind follows my mind. In my word you rejoice with all your heart. You are joined to me by the Lord of all creatures."
7. Grahapravesa [The Departure]
She then abandons her father's house; they let her depart.
They carry behind the couple the sacred fire in a vessel. They should keep the fire constantly alight.
When they reach his house, he says:
"Enter with your right foot. Do not remain outside."
They sit in silence until the stars are visible.
8. Dhruvadarsana [Looking at the Polestar]
After sunset he shows her the polar star, saying:
"You are firm and I see you. Be firm with me, O flourishing one! Brhaspati has given you to me, so live with me a hundred years bearing children by me, your husband."