

ON CHINA

An Up-to Date Announcement

A Shanghai message of December 30 says: the trend towards modernism in China was never more clearly illustrated than by an announcement in this morning's native news papers by a wedded Chinese couple: "Why go to all the bother of having a wedding ceremony in the presence of witnesses and with the permission of the elders? This is to announce we are now husband and wife, having married yesterday."

Simplification of marriage ceremonies and the avoidance of unnecessary wedding expenses is one of the pressing problems that has got to be faced by every progressive nation to-day. We in India are not very much behind hand of the Chinese as some may imagine. Somebody in Calcutta recently conceived the idea of issuing invitations to his friends on the occasion of his marriage in the following terms: "Mr. So-and so and Miss. So-and-so have agreed to live together as man and wife. You are invited to tea on such-and-such (date) at such-and-such (hour)." The Chinese have evidently found out that invitations and tea are a costly affair. They have therefore sought the aid of the Press and have taken to matrimonial announcements. We in South India have done one better. We have realized that advertisements in the Press are too costly for us. Again we should seek freedom from the thralldom of the Press magnates and advertisement managers. We have wisely taken to the platform. Numerous weddings are to-day celebrated all over the Tamil Districts at *ad hoc* public meetings assembled under the auspices of local branches of the Self-respect league. One fine morning the tom-tom goes round the village announcing a public meeting at the local *chavadi* during the afternoon. The village folk assemble at the appointed hour. They choose a chairman who presents the couple to the audience and announces the fact of their marriage. Speeches are made wishing prosperity for the happy pair. The meeting dissolves and that ends the ceremony. No flowers, no sandal paste, no pansupari. No lighting charges incurred, the meeting is during daytime. No feasts; no, not even tea. But then there is one bill to be paid. Four annas is due to the Vetti with the tom-tom. Well, until communism comes to stay, publicity must cost something or other. The poor Vetti is a necessary evil. We need not grudge him the four annas. Shall we

recommend the prudent economy of the Self-respect League to those self conceited “up-to-date” Chinese?

-Revolt, 23rd January 1929

(This article was collected from the weekly ‘Revolt’ by Prof.S.V.Rajadurai, Head, Centre for Periyar Studies, Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirapalli-600 0024, Tamil Nadu)