

101. How to Guide Uyghur Villagers to Hold Weddings?

For a period of time, a few Uyghur villagers have not been singing or dancing at weddings. Colorful clothes and cheerful laughter have also been absent from their weddings. It is an important task for working groups (*gongzuo zu* 工作组) to guide Uyghur villagers in singing and dancing at weddings under the direction of modern culture, and while reducing the space for religious extremism.

First, guide religious people to return to a secular lifestyle. By strengthening positive propaganda and education help the villagers to realize the reactionary nature of extremist religious thinking, to expose its forms and dangers, and to voluntarily resist such thinking. Hold a variety of cultural entertainments. Encourage villagers to wear colorful ethnic clothes and to take off “burqa-style” head and body coverings that restrict the people’s mind. Liberate their thinking and unleash the jubilant Uyghur spirit of singing and dancing. Guide the masses to stride toward modernization in spirit, interests, and lifestyle.

Second, encourage villagers to hold weddings at official “service centres” (*fuwu zhongxin* 服务中心).¹ Construct service centres for villagers with a variety of essential equipment. Encourage villagers to organize orchestras. Create a positive atmosphere. Make sure the service centres fulfill their role on this front by offering quality services free of charge for villagers’ weddings and attracting more of the grassroots masses to hold weddings there.

Third, set an example by attending village weddings. Cadres should set an example by attending village weddings, sending good wishes, and actively taking wedding photos, happily singing and dancing with the grassroots masses, and creating a positive atmosphere. At the same time, they should take advantage of the opportunity to do good propaganda work, understanding the thoughts and feelings of the people, building contact and trust with the villagers, and increasing their connections and affection toward the masses.

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¹ These “service centres” were set up to offer a state mandated alternative to traditional Uyghur marriage ceremony practice which were autonomously organized and took place in the homes of the bride and groom. The centres should be viewed as part of an effort to secularize Uyghur social life and prevent the transmission of Islamic knowledge.