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Wedding Ceremonies

Khmer wedding ceremonies are traditionally performed over a period of 3 days and are composed of seven parts: *Sout Mun*, Monks' Blessings, *Hae Koun Kamlah*, Groom's Processional, *Kat Sak*, Cleansing Ceremony, *Sein Neak Ta*, Call to the Ancestors, *Bang Chhat Madai*, Honoring Mother, *Bongvul Popul*, Passing the Blessings, and *Chang Dae*, Knot Tying Ceremony. Because of peoples' busy schedules, the wedding ceremony has been reduced and now only four of these are usually performed: *Sout Mun*, *Hae Koun Kamlah*, *Kat Sak*, and *Chang Dae*.



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Sout Mun

The first ceremony performed is the Monks' Blessing, *Sout Mun*. Three to five Buddhist monks come to the house of the bride where the wedding is being held. They invoke blessings for long life, health, and strength as well as blessings specially chosen for the bride and groom. During this ceremony the monks also bless a bowl of water that will be used in later ceremonies.



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Hae Koun Kamlah

The next ceremony is Groom's procession, *Hae Koun Kamlah* which symbolizes the journey of prince Preah Thong to meet his bride the nagi princess, Neang Neak. This ceremony usually starts outside the bride's house. Family and friends of the groom carry platters of food and gifts for the bride's family.



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Kat Sak

The third ceremony is *Kat Sak*, the cleansing ceremony. Cambodian weddings are overseen and directed by a male and female couple referred to as *tevoda* (angels). During this ceremony the *tevoda* sing and dance while symbolically cutting the wedding couple's hair and spraying them with perfume. When the *tevoda* finish, wedding guests are invited to do the same.



ចងដៃ Chang Dae

The final ceremony is *Chang Dae*, which literally means hand tying. During this ceremony the bride and groom are officially married. Everyone present ties a piece of red string that was blessed by the monks during the Sout Mun ceremony around the bride and groom's wrists. After everyone has tied the couple's wrists, the *meiba*, who is a well respected older woman of the bride's family, recites some marriage conditions and pronounces the couple man and wife.

