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"TYING THE KNOT" IN CHINA!

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According to various media reports, last year, 68,000 mixed couples registered for marriage in China. Per Ningbo Civil Affairs Bureau's data, there were 170 Sino-foreign marriages registered in Ningbo in 2007. As the numbers are undoubtedly on the rise, understanding the requirements and the procedure for registering a marriage in China is important for foreigners and Chinese alike.

Under the current Marriage Law, marriage registration procedures are administered by the local civil affairs office, if one of the partners is a Chinese citizen,

the appropriate civil affairs office will be the one in the jurisdiction in which the Chinese citizen is registered.

The law regulates that a woman must be twenty and men must be twenty-two years old to legally marry in China. Both partners should have no mental disease or serious hereditary condition. The law also forbids relatives up to the third degree of kinship to get married.

Before registering a marriage, the couple needs to appear in person at the respective marriage registration office and provide documents establishing the identity, residential status, as well as marriageability of each of the partners. Foreigner must submit a valid passport, Chinese residency

permit, three photographs of the couple taken together as well as a "Notarial Certificate of Marital Status" issued by the foreigner's relevant governmental authorities and authenticated by the Chinese consulate.

All documents in a foreign language must be translated into Chinese and authenticated by the Chinese Embassy. Generally speaking, at least one of the partners must reside in China. Two foreigners on a temporary visit with tourist visas will not be able to register a marriage in China.

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