中国文化——现代婚姻观中的旧思想

男女差别，后代问题，同性恋态度。

Marriage in modern China

These days witnesses a great change in the views of marriage, which is affected by parental pressure and social norms. During the country’s reform period, some people start to realize that marriage is more of a personal choice than a willingness of their parents. However, traditional views of marriage, established by faithfulness to husband till death and prearrangement between families, are still common senses within eldership.

According to the text above, because Confucian view of marriage holds that marriage can bring families from different surnames together, people who believe in Confucian philosophy, especially parents and grandparents, regard marriage as family affairs rather than individual.

Besides, families, as basic units of the society, play an important role in economy growth and social stability. With more couples satisfied with their lives, the society will function in a harmony and stable way.

In ancient times, political, economic, personal and social rights belonged to men, and women are supposed to stay at home and take care of their babies. These views have been popular and rooted in ancestor’s mind and still have a big influence in people’s belief nowadays. Sons get more care, respect and fondness from their family members compared to that of daughters. According to Confucianism, the Three Obedience and Four Virtues are a set of basic moral rules and way of conduction specifically for women. One of the three obedience for women is to obey her husband after she marries. Some people nowadays place more emphasis on the virtue of chastity, which requires women have faithfulness to husband and cannot remarry if their husbands die. This moral principle becomes a restraint to women and make them lose their rights to chase happiness.

Domestic violence is another common practice in marriage. In most cases, the victim of domestic violence is women, and women have to suffer more severe forms of violence. In some rural place in China, people are not well educated and have no concept of protecting and respecting the rights of their wives. Therefore, domestic violence is regarded as justified behavior and relatives would tell the victims that they should learn to endure and think about the future of their children.

When it comes to the age of marriage, parents are more likely to urge their son or daughter to get engaged.

According to marriage laws, women are allowed to marry at their 20, and legal marriage age of men is 22 in China. However, people choose to delay their first marriage in these days. For example, the average age for marriage was 24 for men and 23 for women in 2001. In these days, the average age of first marriage is close to 30, especially in urban cities. Young people think that postpone of marriage can reduce the pressure on their daily life, for they need to work hard, behave well and make a good impression in front of their bosses when just entering into job market. Then, promotion would be easier and salary would be higher.

However, their parents do not agree with the choice they make. In their parents’ minds, getting married early and having kids are a virtue. Sheng nu, or known as leftover women, is a term describing a kind of women who remain unmarried and single in their late twenties and beyond in China. The equivalent term for men, guang gun, is as widely used as that of women and refers to men who are not married. Guang gun which means bare branches is a vivid expression of not adding branches to the family tree.

Economic inequality offers an explanation of the phenomenon that men and women are left over in their late twenties. Parents of the bride’s side usually take it for granted that their daughter marry to a husband with a similar or even higher social status and believe only in this way can create a better living condition for them and their children. At the same time, men tend to marry down the socio-economic ladder. "There is an opinion that A-quality guys will find B-quality women, B-quality guys will find C-quality women, and C-quality men will find D-quality women," says Huang Yuanyuan. "The people left are A-quality women and D-quality men. So if you are a leftover woman, you are A-quality." A University of North Carolina demographer who studies China's gender imbalance, Yong Cai, further notes that "men at the bottom of society get left out of the marriage market, and that same pattern is coming to emerge for women at the top of society". For instance, Lin Chi-ling, a model, film, and television superstar, is a representation of well-educated and financially successful women remained single beyond her twenties. Those A-quality women have difficulties in finding men who meet their needs and choose not to marry. But their parents stick to the opinion that the behavior of remaining single is abnormal and would like to arrange some men they know from their company and on the website. And prearrangement between families is regarded as an efficient tool to get their children engaged. Furthermore, the pressure from the society also make those women embarrassed and even anxious. The Sheng nu are afraid of being asked by their friends, colleges and neighbors about their marriage. And their parents would also feel that they are losing face when they do not have grandchildren.

Another thing remain unaccepted by the entire society is homosexuality. Homosexuality means sexual attraction and behavior between members of the same gender. In China, societal attitudes towards same-sex behavior varies over place and people from different generation. Approximately 40 million people are homo-sex, which means two or three per hundred people around us attracted by those of the same sex. Because of the social pressure and misunderstanding of homosexuality, those people remain largely underground and do not want to be recognized as tongzhi or lesbian. Since 1991, homosexual intercourse has been legal in Hong Kong, while in mainland China, homosexuality was considered as a crime and a mental illness. In 2001, the Chinese Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from its list. However, some Chinese still stick to their original opinions and think that their gay children are not interested in girls simply because they are shy and quiet.

