

commercial commodities for mass tourist consumption, and most of them have changed styles and forms for sale to tourists; traditional artistic designs are disappearing and the deep religious and mythical affiliations are missing. The commercialization of cultural traditions is not only making the culture meaningless, which once had great importance for the natives, but is also offending the dignity of the people because their culture is being used primarily to attract tourists who feel no respect for them.

Successful tourism with local participation could have a particular ethnic flavor in keeping with traditional host cultural values and customs. To satisfy the tourists' cultural desire some cultural forms which may have been forgotten can be revived, thereby rejuvenating the cultural heritage of the native people. The host participators can make their artistic productions draw upon their ancestral lifestyles and use traditional technologies; they can perform their programs with deeper cultural beliefs and symbolic significance (as in cases of Yi handicrafts in Sichuan, or aboriginal art in Australia); and they can avoid harmful trends toward specialization, standardization and simplification which have occurred in many host societies.

Cultural preservation and resurgence based upon the innermost meaning and association with the past can awaken the host minorities' awareness of their own history and cultural continuity, alleviate their sense of inferiority, strengthen their ethnic identities, and promote pride in their heritage.

Only when hosts with full understanding of their culture feel self-confidence and self-respect, can they successfully help visitors to understand and accept the meaning of their culture. In this way, host participation in tourism will greatly benefit both tourists and hosts.

Anthropologists should accept the responsibility for helping host minorities to participate in tourism for the survival of their own cultures. The Hainan Centre for Economic and Cultural Development of Chinese Nationalities initiated by the Institute of Nationality Studies of The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, in cooperation with local governments and ethnic peoples, is a new type of organization combining research, development, consultation and training in Chinese minority areas. Important tasks of the Center are: (1) to organize research, experiments and production activities directly related to cultural resource development through tourism; (2) to establish an institution for tourism expertise training from among minorities; and (3) to offer services and facilities for overseas anthropologists and visitors coming to these areas to do field work or to have cultural visits with local peoples involved.

## Marriage, Family and Social Progress of China's Minority Nationalities

T. C. ...  
8100 ...  
Ruxian YAN

The Chinese nation consists of many nationalities which have a variety of forms of marriage and family. Whatever forms it may assume, the family is always an important link in the social structure. Whether it is harmonious with society not only determines the happiness of the individual and family, but also plays the role of either promoting or slowing down the social progress of man's quality and quantity, which are elements conditioning social development.

At present, Chinese society is faced with drastic changes and the times have made higher demands on man's quality. This has made it necessary to put the issue of making the marriage and family of China's minority nationalities suited to the demands of the times on the agenda of applied ethnology. This author maintains that the fraternal nationalities' population explosion should be curbed, the reform of their backward matrimonial customs be supported and that ethnologists should follow and investigate closely developments in the evolution of their matrimonial customs and try to use ethnology to promote the common progress of all nationalities in China.

The original manuscript of this paper consists of two parts. The first part expatiates upon the imbalance of the social development of the minority nationalities and the diversified forms of their marriage and families. It also briefly discusses the successes and failure of the past reforms of their matrimonial customs. Because of the limited space of this paper, this part is omitted here. The second part discusses my thinking on the problem and suggests paying close attention to two essentials. One is to reform the traditional outlook on marriage, i.e., marriage for giving birth, in order to curb the population explosion and improve the quality of the population. The other is to acquire a thorough understanding of the relative stability of the matrimonial customs of the minority nationalities and the protracted nature of the reform; it suggests that the departments concerned strengthen their efforts in the

investigation of the problem and actively support the initiatives of the minority nationalities in reforming their backward matrimonial customs.

## I

Many nationalities in China regard marriage as a means to produce male heirs to continue the family line. For them, to have more male heirs means more blessing for the parents. The major cause for the emergence of such a view is that in the traditional production areas of farming, livestock husbandry, fishing and hunting, man is the principal productive force. Before the founding of the People's Republic of China, the low reproduction rate, or even the diminishing of the population, had been crises among many minority nationalities. Let us give a few examples.

According to a 1953 investigation by the Department of Health of women and children under the Ministry of Health among 5,497 women of the Tibetan, Hui and Han nationalities in three districts in Jiulong County, Sichuan Province, of the 19,627 children they had given birth to, only 12,008 had survived. The mortality rate was nearly 40 percent. Half of the new-born babies in Wangongsumu, Cenbaerhu Banner, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, got tetanus and 55 percent of them were born with congenital syphilis. In the Naxi nationality in Yongning, Ninglang County, Yunnan Province, the **Azhu** marriages prevailed, and about a quarter of the women were sterile and venereal disease spread for a time. The Ewenki, Oroqen and Hezhen nationalities, which had the smallest populations among the Chinese nationalities, showed a trend of diminishing in population. All these could not but arouse the worries of the nationalities concerned and the concern of the government. Therefore, immediately after the founding of the People's Republic, the "Program for the Health Work Concerning Women and Children in Minority Nationality Regions" was adopted and necessary conditions were gradually provided on an enlarged basis year by year. These, plus the development of production, the improvement of cultural life, and so on, combined to bring about an unprecedentedly rapid growth of the population for all the minority nationalities. Table 1 shows statistics of a census of 14 minority nationalities.

This table shows that from 1953 to 1964, the minority nationalities on the whole had a high birthrate, high death rate and low growth rate; some of them needed more than a century to double their populations; some even had their populations declining year by year. On the other hand, the growth of the population of all the minority nationalities accelerated from 1964 to 1982. All of the nationalities that had a negative growth rate or needed more than a century to double their population now doubled it within three decades. Such a rapid growth is rare even in

Table 1. Population Growth of Some Minority Nationalities After 1949

Nationality	Number of People		(million)	1964/1953		1982/1964	
	July 1, 1953	July 1, 1964		July 1, 1982	Average Annual Growth Rate (%)	Time Needed to Double Itself (Year)	Average Annual Growth Rate (‰)
The Whole Nation	579.603	691.220	1003.937	1.6	44	2.1	33
Zhuang	6.617	8.386	13.388	2.2	32	2.6	27
Yi	3.254	3.381	5.453	0.3	233	2.7	26
Tibetan	2.776	2.501	3.870	-0.9	-78	2.5	28
Miao	2.511	2.782	5.031	0.9	78	3.3	21
Hui	3.559	4.473	7.219	2.1	33	2.7	26
Uygur	3.640	3.996	5.957	0.9	78	2.8	25
Mongol	1.463	1.966	3.412	2.7	26	3.1	23
Bouyei	1.248	1.348	2.121	0.7	100	3.0	23
Korean	1.120	1.340	1.764	1.6	44	1.5	47
Yao	0.666	0.857	1.403	2.3	30	2.8	25
Hani	0.481	0.629	1.059	2.5	28	2.9	24
Bai	0.667	0.707	1.131	0.5	140	2.6	27
Qiang	0.036	0.049	0.103	2.8	25	4.2	17
Oroqen	0.0023	0.0027	0.0041	1.5	47	2.3	30

(Calculated according to three censuses)

the history of the world population. The reproduction of population had for the most part turned into the type of high birthrate, low mortality and rapid growth. Only the Korean nationality distinguished itself from all the others, since its population reproduction belonged to a modern type of low birthrate, low mortality and slow growth. This was because of the relatively more vigorous development of its economy and higher level of education, and also because it took the lead in practising family planning in 1972. Such a modern type rationally adjusted the reproduction of the population of the Korean nationality and made it more beneficial to social production and the improvement of living standards, thus forming a fine cycle. On the contrary, the population growth of some other minority nationalities surpassed what their economic development could support, and the quality of their population was not able to improve correspondingly although the State rendered them help every year. Now please look at the following table:

Table 2. Level of education and Occupational Make-up of China's Minority Nationalities with Populations of More than one Million

Nationality	College Graduates per 10,000	College Students per 10,000	Senior Middle School Students per 10,000	Junior Middle School Students per 10,000	Primary School Pupils per 10,000	Brain Workers %	Technicians among Them %	Physical Workers %	Industrial and Transport Workers among them %	Percentage of Illiterates and Semi-illiterates in People Over Age of 12 Inclusive
Whole Nation	42.8	15.5	662.2	1,775.8	3,577.7	7.9	5.1	92.1	15.9	31.9
Minority Nationalities	26.9	10.1	455.0	1,116.0	3,021.0	6.1	4.0	93.9	7.4	42.6
Mongol	50.5	36.9	759.0	1,664.0	3,462.0	14.2	9.1	85.8	9.8	26.6
Hui	50.4	18.1	630.0	1,639.0	2,600.0	9.0	5.6	91.0	22.7	41.2
Tibetan	11.7	1.5	95.0	323.0	1,630.0	5.5	3.4	94.5	3.9	74.8
Uygur	18.6	7.0	350.0	1,017.0	3,318.0	4.0	1.0	96.0	7.2	42.1
Miao	8.9	2.1	198.0	712.0	2,485.0	2.9	1.8	97.1	1.8	58.0
Yi	6.1	1.3	107.0	603.0	2,347.0	3.1	2.0	96.9	2.0	61.6
Zhuang	16.9	4.1	539.0	1,383.0	3,683.0	4.6	3.1	95.4	3.5	31.4
Bouyei	10.9	2.4	191.0	855.0	2,638.0	3.2	2.1	96.8	1.8	55.8
Korean	157.4	65.2	1,857.0	3,017.0	2,877.0	16.9	10.6	83.1	20.4	10.5
Miao	68.1	21.0	915.0	2,319.0	3,828.0	12.9	8.4	87.1	23.1	17.0
Dong	18.8	6.2	305.0	1,068.0	3,345.0	4.0	2.5	96.0	2.2	44.6
Yao	9.3	5.4	296.0	770.0	3,184.0	7.0	1.8	93.0	1.6	47.7
Bai	30.2	8.0	348.0	1,254.0	3,436.0	6.3	4.0	93.7	8.9	40.8
Tujia	10.5	2.4	472.0	1,106.0	3,971.5	4.4	3.0	95.6	3.2	33.4
Hain	2.7	0.9	93.7	166.4	1,807.0	2.8	1.8	97.2	1.6	70.4

(Calculated according to 9, 10-percent sample of the 1982 national census)

From the table above it can be seen that, judging from the population quality of the various nationalities in China, only one or two of them had the qualifications to turn their traditional economy into a modern economy. Therefore, a major task confronting the minority nationalities is to raise their population quality as much as possible through improving various types of education and make it gradually suited to modern production.

Here it is necessary to pay attention to the passive role of some conventional ideas. For instance, the fact that women accounted for 70 percent of the illiterates and semi-illiterates of the minority nationalities was directly related to the prejudice against women and the old idea that "daughters will go to other families." If the quality of women, who make up half of the population, is not suited to the needs of the society, it will not only obstruct the development of production, but also adversely influence the happiness and stability of the families and the social status of women, finally slowing down social progress.

Besides, the restriction on economic development by the coefficient of family support must not be overlooked either. Look at Table 3 :

This table shows that the total coefficient of family support is low in the developed countries but high in the developing countries and that the minority nationalities in China, except the Korean nationality, had a coefficient of family support higher than the average level of the country and the developing countries. To lighten the burden on the family and society and lower the support coefficient to benefit the cultural and economic development of the minority nationalities' regions, the only way is to carry out family planning programs and curb the population growth. At present, although the minority nationalities feel the urgent need for accelerating their economic development, they do not attach due importance to the improvement of their population quality. The traditional outlook on reproduction still prevails in the outlying regions in the particular. This deserves the particular concern of the authorities concerned.

## II

Matrimonial customs, as a product of history, are quite stable rather than changing drastically with the changes in their social and economic basis. Here is a unique instance. The Naxi nationality in Yongning, Ninglang County, Yunnan Province, where I made three investigations in twenty years, had entered the feudal lord system at least in the Yuan Dynasty (in the middle of the 13th century). After a few hundred years of

Table 3. Coefficient of Support of 1982 Nationality

Nationality	Total Coefficient 0 to 14 years old and those 65 15 to 64	Coefficient of Supporting Children 0 to 14 15 to 64	Coefficient of Supporting Old People above 65 15 to 64
World average	69.5	59.3	10.2
Developed Countries and Regions	51.5	34.8	16.7
Developing Countries and Regions	75.4	68.4	7.0
China	62.6	54.6	8.0
China Minority Nationalities	77.6	69.6	8.0
Mongol	75.1	69.0	6.1
Hui	69.2	62.3	6.9
Tibetan	80.5	71.8	4.8
Uygur	83.8	74.3	9.5
Miao	86.8	78.9	7.9
Yi	85.5	78.5	7.0
Zhuang	83.6	74.2	9.4
Bouyei	80.8	71.8	9.0
Korean	47.7	41.7	6.0
Dong	76.4	68.4	8.0
Yao	81.5	73.3	8.2
Bai	77.9	69.8	8.1
Hani	85.2	78.7	6.5
Qiang	93.8	86.8	6.8
Oroqen	82.5	76.8	5.7

feudal rule and more than three decades under the socialist system, it still keeps its time-honored matriarchal traditions in the field of marriage and the family, and many people still live with their male or female *Azhu* friends without bothering to get married. However, a little more attention will enable us to find that the matrimonial customs are also undergoing a reform in this region. The following two points are the most noteworthy. One is that the officials, teachers and medical personnel, whether they work locally or outside of their hometown,

1. Statistics involving areas outside China are calculated according to the World Population Statistics of 1982 published by the Population Information Agency of the United States.

2. Statistics concerning China are calculated according to a 10-percent sample of the 1982 national census.

whether male or female, no longer accept the life of visiting marriage; instead, they formally register marriages according to the new-type matrimonial rites. The other is that the *Azhu* relationship among other people also tends to be more stable than in the past. Such a trend of development shows that once people have had the material basis to support themselves, most of them will like to establish stable monogamous families rather than regard it as happiness to change their sexual partners constantly. We closely followed and studied such changes and expressed our support of their desire to reform the old tradition and pursue a new life. Since their new-style families are built upon the basis of free love, they seldom break up in divorce.

Similar reforms of social traditions have occurred in various regions, but towns have taken the lead in terms of places, and the public employees and those who have attended schools and engaged in trade outside of their hometowns or visited other places have taken the lead in terms of personnel. However, we should notice the fact that a lot of conventional customs that impair people's physical and mental health and show no respect for the aspirations of the persons involved still exist in the customs concerning marriage and the family in many minority nationalities, which can be seen in the following aspects.

Firstly, arranged and mercenary marriages still prevail to a great extent. The most harmful of such practices is the preference given to marriage between cousins and close relatives. Cases of child brides, the mature wife and immature husband, or even engagements of newborn babies, in arranged marriages were already rare a few years ago, but they have been on the increase with the development of the individual economy in the countryside. In the outlying regions, the conventional customs have always been shackling people's minds, since the country fellows still live in an enclosed society and some of them have never even been to the county towns. So it is not strange that women there are still at the mercy of the conventional customs.

Secondly, traces of the old custom of group marriage can still be seen. For some of the minority nationalities, people enjoy sexual freedom both before and after marriage. However, the custom of group marriage in modern times often brings misfortune to local people. A clear proof of this argument was the serious spread of venereal disease among the Naxi people in Yongning, Yunnan Province before 1949. In some villages, over 50 percent of the adults got the disease. It was not until the government dispatched medical teams there to carry out energetic treatment after the founding of the People's Republic of China that the disease gradually disappeared. However, it has emerged again in recent

years. This cannot but arouse our high vigilance. The "walking" marriage (visiting marriage) ought to be improved under the relationship of fixed spouses which has been practised for a long time. Many people have felt that after all it is not a happy life that the spouses live separately.

Thirdly, early love and early marriage are rather wide-spread. In the Zhuang (Chuang), Dong (Tung), Bouyei (Puyi), Miao, Yao, Yi, Va (Wa) and Jingpo (Chingpo) nationalities, pre-marriage social intercourse is open, which is called "playing girls" or "playing boys". When the night has fallen, the youngsters, male and female, will gather together to have love affairs. In the mountain areas where life is monotonous, people regard this period of romantic life of young people as a golden period of life and society and their parents do not interfere with them. However, when the youngsters loiter out their golden time in sexual play, their normal study will inevitably be affected. Such practice is related to the custom of some nationalities that girls do not attend school. Since girls mature earlier, they begin to concentrate on learning the traditional songs, dances, songs in antiphonal style, sewing, tailoring and embroidery from childhood so that they may not fall behind others in social intercourse. Their parents, under the influence of traditional prejudices against women, are for the most part reluctant to support their daughters' education. Of the girls who have entered school, few are serious in their studies. The age of puberty is a major junction for youngsters of all nationalities. However, many of them get married before they mature and follow the footsteps of their older generation onto the same road of life. To discard the pursuit of knowledge will inevitably affect their pursuit of life, and the final result is that the population quality cannot be improved and local social progress will be obstructed.

Fourthly, feudal superstition still influences marriages. For some of the minority nationalities, betrothal is determined by the parents, matchmakers and fortune tellers. For some other nationalities with all their people being religious, the religious canons also influence marriage. For instance, in the nationalities which believe in Islam, the man can desert his wife at will while the wife has no freedom to seek divorce. Such bad customs have been discarded to a great extent in towns, particularly among intellectual women, but still prevail in the countryside.

Fifthly, polygyny and polyandry have not vanished completely. In the past, polygyny was a widespread matrimonial form among the upper strata of the minority nationalities and polyandry was merely the matrimonial custom of the Tibetan and Pumi nationalities, and also the Naxi people in one or two regions. Now they are still in open practice in

some outlying places of Muli county, Sichuan Province. In 1981, this author made a comprehensive investigation of the 131 households of 1,055 people in a village named Eya in the county and found that of the married people there were 76 monogamous couples, accounting for 53.3 per-cent of the total marriages, 46 marriages in which brothers shared a wife, accounting for 31.7 percent of the total, and 13 cases of sisters sharing a husband, accounting for 16 percent of the total. Although the monogamous marriages constituted the majority, the number of people involved in the polygynous and polyandric marriages was larger than that of people in the monogamous marriages. And, the percentage of such marriages was also much higher than that of the well-known Tibetan polygamous marriages, which usually account for less than 20 percent. Some local women once poured out to me their suffering caused by polygamy and polyandry. Obviously it is necessary to reform such outmoded matrimonial customs which impair people's mental and physical health and hinder the establishment of a happy family life.

In short, investigations show that the matrimonial customs of China's minority nationalities are a mixture of the past and present in a state of changing and evolving. At present, the whole world is faced with the challenge of the pressure for modernization. For the developing countries, it is high time to accelerate their process of modernization. This author thinks that it is also high time for ethnology to play an important role in the modernization process. We should keep a close watch on the developments and changes in the customs and culture that are happening every day in the minority nationality regions, investigate the trend of these developments and the conditions for their change, the mental bearing capability and adaptability of different nationalities, accelerate the process of reforming the prevailing customs and help reduce the pains of the reform by means of linking up the channels of information and evaluating the reforms.

Reform is the demand of the times. It will spread to all fields. The reform of traditional customs and culture is bound to be accelerated. To maintain good customs and habits amid the historical reform and discard the bad old customs and habits harmful to people's mental and physical health, people of all the Chinese nationalities should learn from each other and draw on each other's experiences. In this process, applied ethnology can and ought to play an even greater role.