

A Study on the Changes of Marriage Relations in Xuzhuang Village, Suining County, Jiangsu Province, China since the Reform and Opening up

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Abstract: In the 1980s and 1990s, the marriage relationships of single young people in Xuzhuang Village, Shaji Town, Suining County, Jiangsu Province mainly took the form of blind date, free love, burdensome marriage, exchange of parents, and bride purchase. After entering the 21st century, the marriage relationship of single young people in Xuzhuang Village has changed greatly, mainly in the form of blind date, free love, incumbency, etc. Due to the significant increase in divorce rate, second marriage has become an important form of marriage. The reasons for the changes in the marriage relationship of single young people in Xuzhuang Village mainly include the outflow of unmarried women under the tide of working, fewer children and gender imbalance under family planning, and the general improvement of people's educational level.

Keywords: Xuzhuang Village, Single youth, Marriage relationship, Change.

1. Introduction

Since the 1980s, with the comprehensive promotion of reform and opening up, great changes have taken place in Chinese society, and people's production methods, lifestyles and values have been impacted unprecedentedly. In this process, people's concept of marriage and marriage relations have also undergone important changes. Xuzhuang Village, Shaji Town, Suining County, Jiangsu Province, is my hometown. I lived in the town with my parents when I was young, but I always went back to my hometown on holidays and festivals, and spent most of my winter and summer vacations in my hometown. I am very familiar with the local customs. In the process of my growth, I deeply experienced the changes of people's marriage concept and relationship in Xuzhuang Village. Through interview and observation, combined with my own personal experience and experience, this paper attempts to study the marriage concept and marriage relationship in Xuzhuang Village, in order to explore the reasons for the change of marriage relationship in Xuzhuang Village. The marriage relationship mentioned in this article refers to the form and way of single men and women forming marriage.

2. Marriage Relationship in Xuzhuang Village in the 1980s and 1990s

2.1. Basic Profile of Xuzhuang Village, Shaji Town

Shaji Town is a town under the jurisdiction of Suining County, Xuzhou City, Jiangsu Province. It is located in the east south of the county, about 18 kilometers away from the county seat. It borders Gengche Town of Suqian City in the east, Gaozuo Town and Qiuji Town in the west, Lingcheng Town in the south, and Wangguanji Town of Suqian City in the north. The total area under its jurisdiction is 65.18 square kilometers. Shaji Town governs 3 resident communities and 13 administrative villages, with a permanent population of 60700. The main crops in Shaji include wheat, rice, soybean, corn, cotton, rape, etc. In 2018, Shaji Town has an annual

grain planting area of 85000 mu, with a total grain output of 83 million jin. In recent years, private enterprises in Shaji Town have developed rapidly, emerging a number of pillar industries such as plate processing, farm tool processing, grain processing, mining, cement, bricks and tiles, silk weaving, and pesticides. Shaji Town has developed e-commerce economy and is a nationally famous Taobao Town. In 2018, Shaji Town has 15800 online stores, more than 3000 product categories, 1260 physical enterprises and 136 logistics express companies. In 2018, Shaji Town achieved a GDP of 2.69 billion yuan.

Xuzhuang Village is a natural village subordinate to Yangwa Administrative Village of Shaji Town, which is 5 kilometers southeast of Shaji Town. Xuzhuang Village borders Huzhuang Village, Dingchen Village, Wangzhuang Village and Tangzhuang Village in the east, west, south and north respectively. Xuzhuang Village has 149 households, 685 people, 398.6 mu of arable land, 4 life supermarkets, 25 e-commerce enterprises and 9 wood processing enterprises. Among the 149 households in Xuzhuang Village, 51 are Xu, 39 Dong, 35 Wang, 15 Li, 6 Ji and 3 Hu. It is said that the surname Xu was the first settler of Xuzhuang Village. The ancestors of the surname Xu were originally artists of the Pi people, who later settled down in Xuzhuang Village. Later, the ancestors of Dong, Wang, Li, Ji, and Hu also settled in Xuzhuang Village. The current Xuzhuang Village is the result of the reproduction of these ancestors.

Before the 1980s, Xuzhuang Village was a famous poverty-stricken village. As it is far from the market town and the transportation is inconvenient, farmers mainly work in agriculture. After the 1980s, with the implementation of the contract responsibility system, Xuzhuang Village gradually moved towards prosperity. Especially in the 21st century, with the establishment of the market economy, Xuzhuang Village gradually integrated with the market economy, and its economy developed rapidly. At the same time, people's lifestyle and values have undergone unprecedented changes. In this process, people's concept of marriage and marriage relations have also undergone important changes.

2.2. The form of marriage

In the 1980s and 1990s, the marriage relationship of people in Xuzhuang Village mainly took such forms as blind date, free love, incumbency, exchange of parents, bride purchase, etc.

2.2.1. A blind date

The so-called blind date is the form of marriage formed through the introduction of a matchmaker. This is the most traditional form of marriage in China. In Xuzhuang Village in the 1980s and 1990s, blind date was the main form of marriage for young men and women. The matchmaker, commonly known as the introducer, first compares the basic conditions of single men and women, such as age, appearance, family background, education, work, etc., and introduces the young men and women he thinks are suitable to each other. Then the young men and women get to know each other through dating and getting along, cultivate feelings, and enter the marriage palace when the water comes. My three aunts are not well educated. Two of them graduated from primary school and one from junior high school. They met their spouses through matchmakers' introductions and got married. Although my father went to college, after graduation, he met his mother who worked in the bank through the introduction of a matchmaker, and then got married.

2.2.2. Free love

Free love refers to the unmarried men and women who meet the right person, from meeting to meeting, have a good feeling and develop into a love relationship. Being able to love and marry the person you like is not only the best embodiment of your personal will, but also the biggest source of happiness in life. On the other hand, blind dates are somewhat helpless. Free love will pay more attention to your emotional needs. When you like a opposite sex, you will be together regardless of everything, without too much consideration of other aspects. Through the introduction of the matchmaker, we will pay more attention to our own life needs. When considering being with a opposite sex, we will use many criteria to measure (economic basis and family conditions, etc. In China, free love is a product of modern times and a symbol of social progress. In Xuzhuang Village in the 1980s and 1990s, only one family entered into marriage through free love. Dong Xingwang, when he was in high school, fell in love with his classmate Sha Bing freely and married later. At this time, people's production activities in Xuzhuang Village were still agriculture, and the production site was farmland around the village. Few people engaged in other business activities. People's activity area was mainly limited to the villages where they lived. In addition to regular market trips, most villagers have activities within a radius of 10 kilometers. In this case, due to the limitations of old customs and experiences, free love is naturally very rare.

2.2.3. Burdensome

Burdensome refers to the situation in which a man gets married and settles down in a woman's home after marriage. The main purpose of the incrustation is to solve the problem of the continuity of the female family. In ancient times, the continuity of the family was an extremely important problem. The reason why Chinese civilization has been passed on for thousands of years is inseparable from the importance of the family. The Chinese civilization is a patriarchal social civilization, which is mainly based on the continuity of the family. When the family extends to a certain generation and there are only women left but no men, they will consider

recruiting son-in-law to continue the family. When a man comes to a woman's home to marry and settle down, he should follow her family name, which is also called "reverse door". Men's marriage and women's marriage are two different marriage modes. They come to the same end by different routes. As a result, two people live together. However, influenced by traditional concepts and social values, there are still differences between them. To a certain extent, men in burdensome marriages should bear more pressure and make more efforts. Generally speaking, burdensome marriage is affected by some objective factors. There is asymmetry in the families of both parties. The marriage model adopted to achieve balance, therefore, compared with the marriage model of men and women, there is a certain particularity. Both families need to reach an understanding to overcome difficulties. Among them, burdensome men bear greater responsibilities; In addition, if a man in a burdensome marriage is burdened with the wife's family life, the man should not only adapt to his wife, but also his wife's family, so he has to pay more. Therefore, in people's traditional concept, the man will not consider the burden unless it is absolutely necessary. In the 1980s and 1990s, there was only one household in Xuzhuang Village who was engaged in unwanted marriage. Hu Hai, whose parents died early, has only two brothers in his family. Because of poverty, his life is difficult. However, the farmer surnamed Wang has no male offspring, and lacks male labor in field work and daily work. Hu Hai went to the Wang family and changed his surname to Wang.

2.2.4. Change parents

Changing marriage is also called "exchange marriage". It refers to the marriage mode in which a man gives his sister as his wife to his brother in exchange for his wife, commonly known as "sister-in-law exchange". The exchange of parents originated from the ancient clan exogamy, that is, two clans exchanged sisters for wives or daughters for wives. This kind of marriage is against the wishes of the parties, with a serious nature of arrangement and coercion, and also violates the principle of freedom of marriage in the Marriage Law of the People's Republic of China. However, in Xuzhuang Village in the 1980s and 1990s, marriage exchange was once popular. There was a farmer surnamed Wang in Xuzhuang Village. The son of this family, due to his poor looks and poor family economic conditions, had not found a target at the age of more than 30. Later, he exchanged marriage with the farmer surnamed Shi in Shizhuang Village and the farmer surnamed Tang in Tangzhuang Village. The way was that the daughter of Wang married the son of Shi, the daughter of Shi married the son of Tang, and the daughter of Tang married the son of Wang. There were three families in Xuzhuang Village at that time.

2.2.5. Buy a daughter-in-law

In the 1980s and 1990s, trafficking in women was rampant. By means of deception, traffickers kidnap women from economically underdeveloped areas to eastern regions, and then sell them to men in rural areas who cannot marry a wife. The men who buy daughter-in-law are generally disabled or have poor family conditions, so it is difficult to find a partner in the local area. In this case, buying a daughter-in-law is often their choice. In Xuzhuang Village in the 1980s and 1990s, there were three families buying daughter-in-law, mainly from Sichuan, Yunnan and other places. Some of these daughters in law live in the local area, while others eventually escape. Dong Gaoshan, who was guilty of polio, could not

find a target. Later, he bought a Yunnan woman from a human trafficker. After a month of marriage, the woman ran away and ended up with nothing.

3. Marriage Relationship in Xuzhuang Village in the 21st Century

After entering the 21st century, with the establishment of China's market economy system, people's production and life styles have changed greatly. At the same time, people's education level has also been constantly improved, and the consequences of family planning have begun to appear in the 21st century. In this case, the marriage concept and marriage relationship of people in Xuzhuang Village have also changed significantly.

3.1. A blind date

In the 21st century, blind date, namely matchmaker introduction, is still the main form of marriage in Xuzhuang Village. However, compared with the 1980s and 1990s of the 20th century, the blind date marriage in this period has undergone great changes.

First, the emergence of professional matchmakers. In the 1980s and 1990s, there were no professional matchmakers. They were usually relatives, friends, neighbors and other acquaintances. They helped unmarried men and women to meet each other. After entering the 21st century, the matchmaker has a tendency of professionalization, and there are professional matchmakers who live by talking about the media. Before the matchmaking, clearly mark the price and introduce how much a pair costs. There is a professional matchmaker in Xuzhuang Village who charges 2000-5000 yuan to introduce a target. If the introduced man or woman succeeds, an extra thank you fee will be charged, as well as gifts such as clothes and shoes for the matchmaker. This adds up to a considerable expense. As professional matchmakers hold a large number of information about single men and women, there are more and more people introducing their partners through professional matchmakers.

Secondly, it is difficult for men to find partners. In the 1980s and 1990s, it was not particularly difficult for unmarried men in Xuzhuang Village to find a partner. Although there are cases of changing parents and buying daughters in law, the number is very small, mostly because the conditions of men themselves are too poor. After entering the 21st century, it is increasingly difficult for single men in Xuzhuang Village to find a partner. There are not few men with good family conditions and their own conditions who cannot find a partner. According to statistics, there are more than ten unmarried men aged over 30 in Xuzhuang Village, one of whom has a college degree. On the contrary, it is very easy for single women to find a partner. Single women with poor looks often have high requirements. The marriage market has completely become the women's market.

Thirdly, the man's family has great economic pressure. In the 1980s and 1990s, there was no "bride price" in Xuzhuang Village. Generally speaking, before marriage, there is a saying of "over posting", that is, holding an engagement ceremony. When "over sticking", the man needs to buy something for the woman, including watches, sewing machines, washing machines, jewelry, clothes, etc., most of which are used by the woman herself or by the family after marriage. In the 21st century, when men and women are engaged, they need to pay certain "betrothal gifts" to the

women, which are mainly paid in cash. The number of "betrothal gifts" is increasing year by year. Before 2010, it was generally 50000 to 80000, but now it is 100000 to 200000, and some even 200000 to 300000. At the same time, the woman also has requirements for the man's housing. Before 2010, the woman generally required the man's family to build a building. In recent years, the woman asked the man to buy a house in the county before he could get married. The "betrothal gift" plus buying a house will cost about one million yuan.

3.2. Free love

In the 1980s and 1990s, only a few people in Xuzhuang Village got married through free love. In the 21st century, more and more unmarried men and women in Xuzhuang Village have entered into marriage through free love. In terms of form, there are three main ways of free love. The first is free love during the period of study. My aunt married to a Wang family in her village. Both of her daughters fell in love with each other freely during their studies. The eldest cousin fell in love with her classmate in high school, and neither of them passed the college entrance examination. After graduating from high school, the two went out to work for several years, and then went home to get married. The second cousin passed a vocational college in Lianyungang. During her study, she fell in love with classmates of the same major and is now married in Dafeng County, Yancheng. The second is free love during working. After graduating from high school, Xu Yunfang from Xuzhuang Village did not pass the college entrance examination. She went to work in an electronics factory in Suzhou and fell in love with Zhang Feng, a local from Suzhou. Later, she married in Suzhou. Dong Lei, a cook in a restaurant in Nanjing, met Fu Yan, a waiter in a restaurant. The two married. Now Xuzhuang Village runs a supermarket. The third is free love in the local area. Hu Zhong from Xuzhuang Village went to other places to work after graduating from high school, and later opened a wood processing factory at home. Wang Li from the neighboring village works in the processing plant of Hu Zhong. The latter two were in free love and married last year. According to statistics, there are about ten households in Xuzhuang Village who enter into marriage through free love.

These men and women in Xuzhuang Village who entered into marriage through free love have higher general cultural level, most of whom are above senior high school. Their experience and vision go beyond the limitations of the village, and they have more opportunities to choose emotionally.

3.3. Burdensome

After entering the 21st century, Xuzhuang Village has witnessed another marriage. Xu Zhongxin, who works on construction sites all year round, has two sons, both in their thirties. According to the matchmaker, the eldest son has a partner, but the woman asks for 200000 "betrothal gifts" and buys a house in the county. After paying the "betrothal gifts" and buying a house, I was in debt. In order to pay off their debts, the whole family went out to work. In this case, there is no power to take care of the marriage of the youngest son. Later, the younger son was introduced to Gu Zhuang Village. The woman is an only child with good family conditions and has bought a house in the county. Although the man, as a member of the woman's family, was registered in the woman's household register, he did not change his name, but kept his original name, except that the children born must follow the

woman's name.

3.4. Divorce and second marriage

In the 1980s and 1990s, it was extremely rare to divorce in rural areas. In Xuzhuang Village, divorce has not yet occurred. Although the conflicts between husband and wife and family often occur, some of them are even fierce, people do not choose divorce because of this. The main reason is that people discriminate against divorcees. After divorce, it is difficult for both men and women to find a spouse. Even if they find a spouse, they are generally inferior to their predecessors. Of course, it is also an important factor to consider in order to give children a complete home or to take into account face. Therefore, for the contradiction between husband and wife and family, they generally choose to tolerate and make do with it.

In the 21st century, the phenomenon of divorce in Xuzhuang Village has gradually increased. According to statistics, nearly 20 families are divorced, especially those married in recent years. Almost one third of them are divorced. The main reasons for Xuzhuang Village's divorce are as follows: First, family conflicts. After Dong Xiaobin got married, the couple often quarreled and sometimes fought in the middle of the night, which made the neighbors uneasy. Once, Dong Xiaobin's wife scolded her father-in-law and mother-in-law, and Dong Xiaobin broke her arm. The wife's mother's family went to Dong Xiaobin's house and beat Dong Xiaobin and his parents. Finally, both parties divorced. Second, derailment. Xu Aimin is a long-distance truck driver. His wife is dating a man from a neighboring village. After knowing this, Xu Aimin divorced his wife. Third, gambling. Ji Shangshan likes gambling, but his wife hates it very much, so they often quarrel. During the 2018 Spring Festival, Ji Shangshan lost all the tens of thousands of yuan he earned from working as a part-time worker. When the wife knew about it, she returned to her parents' home the same day with her children, and then resolutely divorced. From the perspective of reasons, family conflict is the most important reason for Xuzhuang Village's divorce, followed by infidelity and gambling.

The increase in divorce inevitably leads to the phenomenon of second marriage. In Xuzhuang Village, there are more and more married families, nearly ten. After the divorce, Xu Aimin brought back a woman who was also divorced. Li Tao ran the wood processing industry, and his wife was sterile. Later, he divorced his wife and married the working sister of the factory. Hu Juan, who was originally married out of town, returned to her parents' home in Xuzhuang Village after divorce from her husband, and later married Wang Wei, who was the first to marry.

According to the situation of the second marriage family, the second marriage men generally have good family conditions or own conditions, while those divorced men with poor family conditions or own conditions are hard to have the chance of second marriage. However, divorced women do not have the problem of being unable to find a partner. They can even find unmarried men to marry.

4. Reasons for the Change of Marriage Relationship in Xuzhuang Village

The change of marriage relationship in Xuzhuang Village is mainly after the 21st century, which is a gradual process. The main reasons for this change are as follows.

4.1. The influence of the outflow of unmarried young women under the tide of working

In the 1980s, China entered the period of reform and opening up, and China's rural areas also changed from the original collective production to the land contract responsibility system. In the 1980s and 1990s, China's reform was mainly concentrated in cities. At that time, the market economy was just at the beginning. When workers in urban state-owned enterprises were laid off, farmers were still very few. At this time, although the rural area started the production mode of "one family, one family", there was little change in the life of farmers. The production and life of farmers were concentrated in the local area, inheriting the life style of their ancestors, which worked at sunrise and rested at sunset. In this case, unmarried young people in Xuzhuang Village are mainly looking for partners in nearby villages, which generally do not exceed ten kilometers.

After entering the 21st century, with the establishment of China's market economy system, the urban economy has become increasingly active, and a large number of migrant workers have started to work in cities, while the market economy has gradually incorporated rural areas. For Xuzhuang Village, almost every household has migrant workers who leave their hometown after the Spring Festival and can return to their hometown before the Spring Festival. However, under the influence of the market economy, many people who stayed in their hometown began to engage in industry and commerce, and agricultural production became a sideline. Under the influence of urban life and market economy, people in Xuzhuang Village have expanded their activity areas and broadened their horizons. Some young women working in cities have found targets in cities or other places. Although some young men who work in cities also look for urban or foreign targets, the number of young men who work in cities is far less than that of young women who work in cities. Therefore, like other villages, there is an outflow of unmarried young women in Xuzhuang Village. According to statistics, in recent years, there are more than 20 young women in Xuzhuang Village who have come to work in the city and settled down in other places, while only a few young men who have come to work in the city and married wives from other places. In this way, the outflow of unmarried women inevitably led to the "involution" of local men's search for partners. The marketization of women in the marriage market has made unmarried women's demands on men constantly improve. High "betrothal gifts", buying a house and a car have become the basic requirements for unmarried women to find partners. Men with poor self and family conditions are basically excluded from the marriage market. The phenomenon of remaining male has become a serious problem in Xuzhuang Village.

4.2. The impact of fewer children and gender imbalance under family planning

Most of the people married in Xuzhuang Village in the 1980s and 1990s were born in the 1960s and 1970s, and some were born in the 1950s. These people are not affected by the family planning policy and generally have several brothers and sisters. Those men who really can't find a partner, have sisters to "change parents" for them. The unmarried young people in Xuzhuang Village who married in the 21st century are mostly those born after the implementation of the family planning policy in the 1980s. These people usually have few

brothers and sisters. According to statistics, most of the families married in Xuzhuang Village after the 1980s were two child families, and some were one child families. There was only one family with three children, and no family with more than four children. As there are few brothers and sisters, those men who can't find a partner have no sisters to "change parents" for them. Even in a two child family with one boy and one girl, because of the small number of children, parents cherish them more, and they don't have the heart to let girls "change parents" for boys. Therefore, after the 21st century, Xuzhuang Village has never seen the phenomenon of "changing relatives".

The traditional concept of relying on boys to carry on the family line still has a profound impact in Xuzhuang Village. In the 1980s and 1990s, when the family planning policy was vigorously implemented, people in Xuzhuang Village took various artificial control measures to give birth to boys. These measures have led to a serious gender imbalance, with boys far outnumbering girls. This directly aggravates the phenomenon of remaining male in Xuzhuang Village in the 21st century.

4.3. The influence of the general improvement of people's cultural level

In the 1980s and 1990s, junior high school graduates in Xuzhuang Village were considered highly educated. Most of them graduated from primary school or were illiterate. Few graduated from high school, while those who passed the college entrance examination had left the rural area, not Xuzhuang Village. In the 21st century, with the implementation of national compulsory education, junior high school graduation has become a basic education, while senior high school graduation is a normal education. Some college students who have not found a job also move their hukou back to Xuzhuang Village and become a member of Xuzhuang Village again.

The general improvement of cultural level has improved the population quality of Xuzhuang Village, and also changed their marriage concept and relationship. With the

improvement of education, people's self-consciousness is enhanced, and they pay more attention to their feelings and feelings. Different from those who married in the 1980s and 1990s, they no longer chose to be patient when their marriage was full of pain. Instead, they solved the problem by divorce, which led to the increase of the divorce rate in Xuzhuang Village. At the same time, these highly educated people, when conditions permit, are more willing to find their partners through free love, so as to enter the marriage palace.

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