Indifference or just silence?

-- GENDERCIDE IN CHINA

The most basic of all human rights is the right to live.

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• Written and presented by Talia Carner, author, “China Doll”
• Representing International Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPWI)
• For the NGO Committee on the Status of Women
• The U.N. Conference on the Status of Women, New York
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• “…will review research and findings of UN agencies, consider recommendations from NGOs, and most especially, listen to girls themselves.”
Girls in China who cannot speak for themselves:

Sources: Brian Woods’ “The Dying Rooms” Research-China.org

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• Media and political attention is given to the issue of “missing” females in China—
  • In connection with the potential social unrest of estimated 40 to 60 million bachelors unable to find a bride.
  • New restrictions on foreign adoptions
Population Crisis in China

• 22% of the world population lives on 7% of the arable land.

• Still growing at 1.3 billion to projected 1.7 billion in 2050
One-Child Policy

• In 1979, the Chinese government initiated a policy that permitted only one child per couple.
• The policy excludes minorities (9% of population)
• In some rural areas, families are allowed to have two children, if the first child is female, or disabled.
Results of One-Child Policy

• China’s population growth curtailed:
  • Projected 300 million were NOT born – the same as all of USA population
  • Reported improved standard of living for smaller families
  • China feeds its people (“One bowl of rice a day.”)
Consequences of One-Child Policy

1) Second generation of single children -- with no aunts, uncles, siblings or cousins

2) A set of parents and two sets of grandparents cater to one child (“Little Emperor”)

3) Later, all 6 adults rely upon this one child to work the land and support them
One-Child Policy collides with tradition...

• Generations-old tradition of highly-skewed preference for boys
• Girls still called "maggot in the rice"
• A girl will live and serve her husband's family = waste of limited resources
Total adult women missing:

- 653,000,000 males and
- 612,000,000 females

= 41,000,000 fewer females

Source: 2000 census People’s Republic of China
• Industrialized and developing nations’ (including Africa) boy-girl birth ratio is 105:100

• Industrialized nations’ overall male-female ratio (adults and children) is about equal
China: Male & Female Population
1981-2005

China: Comparison Between Male & Female Population (adults and children)
1981 - 2005

![Graph showing the comparison between male and female population in China from 1981 to 2005.](image-url)
Myth: Scarcity of women increases their value

• Fact:
  Sexual violence, kidnapping and trafficking of girls and women have been increasing in China

• Documented characteristics of “bachelors”: violent, under-employed, poor, low social status, no family resources
Increased trafficking from Southeast Asia countries

• From Vietnam alone, captured trafficking doubled in 2006
1.7 million girls are “missing” in China each year

- **Unicef** reports total births in 2005: 17,310,000
- China Ministry of Civil Affairs reports boy/girl birth average ratio across the nation — 120:100
- = 9,520,000 boys vs. 7,789,500 girls

= 1,700,000 fewer female births reported
Male- female births in China 1981-2005

The Comparison Between Males and Females Birth Population

Year

- Males Birth Population
- Females Birth Population

Number of Population (10,000)
Where are the missing 1.7 million babies each year?

- Due to secrecy and control of information and access to research of a totalitarian government, there is no estimated figures of each of the following categories:
1. Living “illegally” with their or foster families
2. Gender-selection abortions
3. Fatal neglect by family
4. Outright killing
5. Abandonment
6. Institutionalized fatal neglect in orphanages
1) Living “illegally” with their or foster families

- “The fees of registering a foundling with the Family Planning office is several thousand yuan, dissuading the finders from keeping or registering the child.”

Source: research-China.org
• Foundlings are kept as future servants or brides
• Unregistered girls do not have access to health and education services—nor later for work or residency permit.
• They are subject to life of illiteracy, poverty, and sexual slavery within a marriage.
2) Gender-selection abortions

- Sonograms, widely distributed to help local officials ensure that women are NOT pregnant or that their IUDs are intact, are being used for sex-selection abortions
- Sex-selection abortions are NOT illegal (law banning it withdrawn)
• Ascertaining the sex of a fetus can only be done at 18 weeks of gestation or later
• Frequent reports in Chinese media of sex-selection abortions at 7th, 8th or 9th month of gestation
3) Fatal neglect

- Due to limited family resources, girls suffer more from
  - Deliberate malnutrition
  - Medical neglect

(Limited healthcare resources for China’s population: Overall the death rate in rural areas up to 9 times that of urban)
4) Killed outright

- With China’s improved health-care and food supply, reported overall decline in infant mortality rate – Yet...

- History of infanticide
Source: Gendercide Watch

• “…no overall statistics on the numbers of girls who die annually from infanticide. Calculations are clouded by the ambiguity of the data. Nonetheless, a minimum estimate would place the casualties in the hundreds of thousands.”

• Several Western authorities concur:
Source: 2005 U.S. State Dept report:

• “…the practice of infanticide continues.”
Source: World Health Organization

• Girls are at higher risk than boys of dying before the age of five
Source: Congressional-Executive Commission on China (2006)

- "China's population planning policy has also resulted in infanticide of female infants, though the rate at which female infants are killed or die of neglect is uncertain."

- Sex ratio of second birth: 152:100
Source: Unicef

- The death rate in the first year of life puts girls:
  - at twice as high as that of boys
  - up to 3 times more in rural than urban provinces
Risk of death increases with birth order:

- Rate for second girl apx. three times that for first girls (121 vs. 44 per 1,000 births)
- Second girls more commonly die in the first week of birth than boys (69 vs. 29 per 1,000 live births)
• Perinatal mortality rate in rural China is higher than urban areas, or in other developing countries
Killed by family members…

- Anecdotal evidence reveals that the practice is far from eradicated
- Methods talked about: drowning, suffocation, starvation

  - Source: China Population and Information Research Center
Killed by the state...

- Doctors kill third children or infants born without permission from the mother's work unit.
- Physicians or health-care workers smother babies to avoid punishment of "refusing to carry out family-planning policy."

(The risk of punishment for not killing the child greater than the risk of punishment for killing it.)
5) Abandonment

- Female infants and disabled boys are being abandoned
  - At birth
  - Later, upon the birth of the desired boy
  - When she is 3rd, 4th, or later birth order
  - Upon remarriage of mother
  - Sold to traffickers
Source: 2005 U.S. State Dept report:

- In 1994 there were apx 1.7 million abandoned children. “The number may have grown over the subsequent decade.”
Myth #1: Babies are abandoned where they can be found

• Fact: In remote rural area there may be no busy public places
• Punishable *
• Anonymity is impossible in a tight society and close dwellings

* Abandonment is punishable, but killing is not
Myth # 2: Domestic adoption by parents seeking to love a child

- Often, domestic adoptions are by couples whose one son has grown and they would like a girl

However....
Fact:

• Female infants sold to those seeking future brides for their sons
• Chinese officials uncovered massive baby-selling schemes. Newborns found in bags in the back of trucks on their way to be sold
• Poor parents of unwanted newborn girls sell babies for as little as $8

Source: LifeNews.com
Source: 2005 China Quarterly

- 95% of 200,000 - 400,000 abandoned children in rural areas are outside state controlled institutions.
- They are not entitled to *wu bao* [social protection system]: if the parents are known, they continue to be responsible for their children, if the parents are not known, the children are not local orphans and hence not entitled to *wu bao.*
6) Institutionalized fatal neglect in orphanages

• Abandoned babies living in Chinese orphanages have an extremely high mortality rate
  (The 1995 Chinese-reported rate of 80% is estimated to have dropped)

• Orphanages not under Western charities suffer from extreme shortages of food, heat, hygiene, staff, medical care—and even electricity and running water
Source: Unicef

• “Chinese government’s budget for children’s health insufficient”
Source: Asia-Pacific Research Network

• China’s social protection system can cover only 5% of all of China’s welfare needs
• Orphanages are in remote areas, isolated from community contact—and scrutiny
Source: Deputy Director, Civil Affairs Bureau, Anhui province:

- The central government does not allocate funding for orphan population. It leaves the responsibility to the local government.
- Many local governments cannot provide consistent and reliable financial aid to orphans.
Source: China Ministry of Civil Affairs (2005)

- Fewer than half of China’s orphans receive [central] government subsidy.
- Of those received [local budget], amount per year/per child in orphanages:
  - Large urban – Beijing, Shanghai $500
  - Henan, Gansu, Ningxia provinces $120
  - Guangxi, Guizhou & Hunan provinces $80
  - Seven unidentified provinces $50
  - Two other provinces <$30
  - Qinghui $12
How many orphanages are there?

• No recent data available
• The government of the People’s Republic of China’s figures in 1995 – 40,000
• Under Western charities – 300-600
How many orphans per orphanage?

- Average number of abandoned babies brought to orphanages in Guang Xi – 2,000 per year

Source: Xinhua news agency 2004
How many orphans are there in China?

- 2005 study by Chinese Ministry of Civil Affairs and School of Social Development in Beijing:
  - There are 573,000 orphans in China
  - Only 69,000 of them live in orphanages
• The above figures only bring up the questions—
  • What happened to the rest of the orphanages (apx. 39,000) reported in 1995—and to their populations?
  • Where are the rest of the cumulative abandoned female infants?
What does the world do about gendercide in China?

- It is not covered in Human Rights Watch's report released January 2007
- Acknowledged in five words in the 2005 U.S. State Department report
- Gets a passing nod in the World Health Organization report
- Not mentioned in any Amnesty International reports
- Not touched in Human Rights in China organization’s projects
• Acknowledged—but not investigated—in each of 2002-2006 reports by U.S. Congressional-Executive Commission on China
• --and it is not covered in the Convention of the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) publications and releases
What does the future hold?

• In 1979, upon the establishment of the one-child policy, China had almost 1.2 billion people.
• Population growth was expected to level off in 2014.
• Revised estimates put the population at 1.7 billion in the year 2050.
Projected continuing trend of “missing” girls – per year
Cumulative “missing” girls to 2050

Cumulative Missing Females in China from 2005 to 2050

Year
0.00 20.00 40.00 60.00 80.00 100.00 120.00 140.00 160.00
000 005 010 015 020 025 030 035 040 045 050 055 060 065 070 075 080 085 090 095 100

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How many girls will go “missing” until then?

- Total of 133,610,000
This research was accomplished thanks to the groundwork done for the writing of the novel

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  - http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjgb/