

Incomplete draft, please do not cite

Trafficking in Women in China*

Quanbao JIANG Ph.D

Institute for Population and Development Studies

School of Public Policy and Administration

Xi'an Jiaotong University

Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, 710049

China

Email: recluse_jqb@126.com

Tel./Fax: +86-29-8266-8384

Paper prepared for the 26th IUSSP International Population Conference

Marrakech, Morocco

27 September to 2 October, 2009

* The paper is supported by the Humanity and Social Science Foundation of Ministry of Education of P.R.C(08JC840013) and the President's Foundation of Xi'an Jiaotong University

ABSTRACT

Abstract: Based on the existing data and former researches, this paper reviewed studies of and investigations into woman trafficking in China conducted by scholars both at home and abroad. To begin with, the “industrial chain” of human trafficking was analyzed. The analysis indicated that owing to marriage squeeze caused by sex imbalance and female marriage migration, the “buyers market” showed a strong demand for trafficking in women. The scale of trafficking is escalating: originally the crime mainly existed in a few provinces but has by far spread to almost every province in China. Besides, large numbers of women are being trafficked into the provinces where women used to be trafficked out. And human trafficking organizations are showing the characteristics of collectivization and specialization. Although the Chinese government has launched a series of rescue actions, the effort has run into tremendous difficulties due to dilemmas met by the “buyers”, local citizens, grass-roots organizations and the trafficked women. To completely eradicate woman trafficking, the Chinese government has to make long-term efforts in cracking down on the “buyers market” and redressing sex imbalance.

Key Words: Trafficking in Woman, Human Trafficking Organization, Male Bare Branches, Marriage Squeeze, China

BACKGROUND

In the recent 20 years or so, the prevalence of trafficking in women and children has become a worldwide issue. The international community has worked out some explicit laws and regulations against the crime. For instance, *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*, formally enacted in November, 2000, stipulated that “trafficking in human beings means the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability”. And *Palermo Protocol against Trafficking in Women and Children 2000* defined the crime as “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.”

Trafficking in women and children is taken as a modern version of slavery and a brutal abuse of basic rights by the international community (Li, 2003). In mainland China, it has become a social problem seriously affecting the stability of society (Wang, 2005; Pochagina, 2007). As an extremely savage and brutal social evil, trafficking in women and children severely trespasses upon the legitimate rights and interests of the victims, ravages their physical and mental health, undermines public security and the drive of socialist cultural civilization, and endangers social stability (Chen, 2000). In the first years of the People’s Republic of China (after 1949), the Chinese government launched a ruthless campaign against human trafficking. As a result of more than 10 years’ unswerving effort, the phenomenon was almost completely eliminated on the mainland. Nevertheless, after slumbering for a time, human trafficking rose again as a crime in the 1970s. By then, more and more women

from mountainous and outlying areas were thinking about improving their living conditions through marriage, and the simple wish became “the most proper excuse” and “the fanciest lie” of traders in human being. At that time, the trafficked were mostly women in their twenties from the southwest (Sichuan, Guangxi, Guizhou and Yunan etc.) and were sold to farmers in central or north China as their wives at rather low prices (Zhang, 2006). Since the 1980s, the crime has begun to arouse attention of society and the government carried out three large scale “counter-trafficking” actions in 1991, 1993 and 1995 respectively. However, the crime was stopped. Since 1998, the government has intensified its efforts, as a result of which the number of registered cases of human trafficking has increased and the form of the crime has changed greatly (Tan, 2007).

The female may be abducted or trafficked when they are in deficiency (Hudson et al, 2004). Some Chinese scholars are in the opinion that woman trafficking since the 1990s is mainly caused by social economic factors rather than a higher sex ratio at birth (Deng, 2000). Recently, human trafficking aimed at marriage is declining while trafficking aimed at labor and sex exploitation is increasing. Trafficking cases involving the “entertainment” industry are showing a rising trend (accounting for 50-60% of the total trafficking cases), which is especially true among the age group of 16-20 of the trafficked (Cai, 2005). Nevertheless, more and more scholars are reaching a consensus over marriage squeeze among the male in the marriage market, which is resulted from sex imbalance due to China’s ever rising sex ratio. The male, especially those from poverty-stricken areas, are becoming underprivileged in the marriage market (Shi, 2006). Sex imbalance has fueled trafficking in women (Wang, 2004), and the ever increasing number of male bare branches has provided it with an enormous buyers market (Wang, 2004). As “bare branch groups” and “bare branch villages” are popping up, the potential “market” demand for females has taken shape drawing the attention of greedy criminals. As the current rural government is not functioning very well, the villagers are not well controlled. In addition, there is only a faint notion of law in the countryside, for the law is often subjugated to ritual and the power of local families. All this has provided human trafficking with an actual

“support” and “guarantee” (Peng, 2004). Consequently, the evil phenomenon of selling abducted women to those who can afford as their wives has begun to revive (Hudson et al, 2004).

This paper will review studies of and investigations into woman trafficking in China conducted by both Chinese and foreign scholars in a retrospective manner. For one, the “industrial chain” of human trafficking, including the characteristics and distribution of the trafficked women, the buyers market and trafficking organizations, will be analyzed in detail; secondly, rescue actions by the Chinese government, especially the Ministry of Public Security, will be introduced; thirdly, resistance from all aspects will be given to explain why woman trafficking cannot be stopped. Finally, the paper will elaborate on trafficking in women caused by marriage squeeze and will come up with some policy proposals for the Chinese government to crack down on the “buyers market” and to redress sex imbalance.

THE “INDUSTRIAL CHAIN” of WOMEN TRAFFICKING

1. The Trafficked Women

A. The Scale of the Trafficked

From late 1970s to early 1980s, the crime of human trafficking was rampant for a quite while. Starting from 1977, the crime experienced a peak period, a rally period and a declining stage, following the pattern of a saddle. According to incomplete data of 14 regions, the accumulated number of trafficked women reached 97,000 in 1977. In 1983, 12 times more traders in human beings were arrested compared with the previous year. Thus this can be taken as the first peak period of human trafficking. From 1988 to 1990, the crime showed a rising trend. So it may count as a rally period. After entering the 1990s, especially since 1992, human trafficking in China has been decline from year to year (Sun, 2004).

National statistical data indicated that the number of registered trafficking cases was 9194, 7465, 5039 and 4235 in 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004 respectively, of which 7539, 5599, 3225 and 2499 were woman trafficking cases (Zhang, 2006). Regional data showed that within five years time more than 20,000 women had flown into the

counties of Sanhe, Xianghe and Dingzhou in Hebei province, of whom above 1/4 or 5,000 were estimated to have been trafficked there (Cui, 2000). In the second half of 1988, 509 women flowed into the 23 townships of Hunyuan county in Shanxi province and 456 or 86% of them were trafficked there. Starting from the 1970s to the mid 1990s, only in Sichuan province, more than 180,000 women and children had been abducted and trafficked and less than 40% were rescued (CCTV 1, 1994). After 1995, Jiangsu province gradually became an important buyers market of trafficked women and children and the number of trafficked victims entering Jiangsu from Yunnan province rapidly increased, reaching a peak period from 1998-1990. In Yuzhou city, for instance, 25,347 women from other places had flowed into its six counties from 1985 to 1988 and 5,991 or 24% of them were trafficked there. During the peak period, 2000-3000 women were trafficked to Yuzhou in a single year (Wang, 2005). In Xiaolou village of Suining county (in Jiangsu province), the most outlying village of the county, there were merely 60 households. Except for those rescued in 1996, there were still 40 or so trafficked women not rescued in the village, which meant there was almost one trafficked woman in each family (Cheng and Song, 1996). According to statistics given by the Public Security Bureau of a county on the Yellow River, 2803 women from places like Sichuan and Guizhou were trafficked into its 1,021 villages, each village receiving 2 or 3 (Wang, 2004).

B. Distribution of inward and outward Human Trafficking Areas

Outward human trafficking areas are mostly found in economically backward provinces and regions, mainly including Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan, Guangxi and Shaanxi Provinces and are spreading into other provinces like Henan, Hubei, Hunan and Inner Mongolia (Gao, 1998); while inward human trafficking areas are mostly found in economically developed provinces and regions, including Jiangsu, Henan, Hebei, Guangdong and Fujian etc. (Cui, 2000; Zhong et al, 2000). The crime of human trafficking was originally concentrated in several provinces but has by far spread to almost every province, especially southeast coastal regions. The originally inward human trafficking provinces, like Henan, Hebei, Shanxi, Anhui and Jiangsu, have become outward trafficking provinces. On the contrary, in some outward

trafficking provinces like Sichun and Chongqing, large numbers of women are trafficked in (Sun, 2004).

An investigation targeting Shandong province showed that women from other places mainly flowed in during two periods: from 1982 to the mid and late 1990s, women flowed in from other provinces were mostly trafficked marriage migrants; after the late 1990s, women flowed in can be divided into two categories: marriage migrants and migrating workers. During the second period, the number of trafficked marriage migrants has declined but is still considerable, and trafficking using working opportunities as bait has immerged (Wang, 2005).

C. Group Characteristics of the Trafficked Women

The Tendency of Low Age

In the 1970s, more and more women from poverty-stricken and outlaying regions longed for improving their living condition through marriage and the outflow of large numbers of country women provided the traders in human being with an “excellent” opportunity. During this period, the trafficked women were mainly in their 20s and were from southwest provinces (Sichuan, Guangxi, Guizhou and Yunan etc.), and they were sold to farmers in central and north China as their wives (Li, 2000). In the 1980s, the trafficked women were mainly adults while young girls below 18 accounted for less than 10%. Since the 1990s, especially in recent years, more and more girls below 18 are being trafficked. According to data of Hunan, 46% of women trafficked out of the province were young girls. This is even worse in Yunnan province, where 60% of the trafficked women were non-adults. Except for being sold to poor regions to be wives of male bare branches, these young girls are also into the porn industry (Ding, 1999).

China Agricultural Policy Center of the Chinese Academy of Sciences found that the ratio of female migrating workers aged from 16 to 20 increased from 13% in 1990 to 76% in 2000. A worrisome phenomenon is that, of this age group, the age of those trafficked and sold into the “entertainment industry” is becoming lower and lower. The low age of these migrating females speaks of their lack of educational opportunities. Many young girls have quit school too early and have even gone to

work to pay for the tuition of their brothers. Poor education means they are not intellectually or technically prepared for working outside. Besides, the lack of life and social experience makes them extremely vulnerable to traders in human beings and easily trafficked and exploited. The distribution of their original places also shows a “terrace feature”: the remoter is the region and the scarcer is information, the more dangerous it is for girls to outside (Cai, 2005).

Comparative Disadvantage in Economic and Educational Status

Researches done by some scholars showed that: among the trafficked women, 70% are from densely populated rural and mountainous areas, where arable land is scarce, traffic is inconvenient and economy is relatively backward; 37% are illiterate or half illiterate; and 46.5% are primary school or secondary school graduates. Originally, these women suffered from poor living conditions, low income, high working intensity and outlying environment. As a result, they were discontent and were resolved to leave home to improve their living conditions. However, owing to the constraint of their life experience and the limit of their knowledge, their ability of recognizing and analyzing problems is extremely restricted and they lack a basic understanding of society. Due to urgent need on the one hand and the lack of awareness of self-protection on the other, they are easily cheated by traders in human beings (Sun, 2004). An investigation into the counties of Chuzhou, Tianchang and Shucheng showed that of the 15,000 women who had flowed into the region from Yunnan, Guizhou and Sichuan shared the following features: poorly educated; having many brothers and sisters; the original home is poor in economic conditions; their marital status is not legally verified; and most of them have no ID nor registered as a member of the household (Wang, 2005).

An investigation into trafficked women (from 1995 to 2000) in Yulin City of Guangxi Autonomous Region also found that: they are generally poorly educated, with the illiterate and primary school graduates accounting for 90% of them; they rarely read books, newspapers, watch TV, nor care about politics or state affairs, as a result of which they lack a correct outlook on life, on the world and values; as the trafficked women are mainly from the countryside, especially such western provinces

as Sichuan, Yunnan and Guizhou and such mountainous regions like Hechi and Baise in Guangxi province, they usually have a strong sense of self-contempt; thinking that as long as they leave the mountains happiness will be weaving at them, they are often blind in what they pursue; they have relied too much upon marriage – having fastened their own fate on the rope of marriage, they are willing to leave the mountain as soon as possible so as to marry a good husband and live a happy life (Yang et al, 2001).

2. Trafficking Organizations

A. Collectivization of Trafficking Organizations

In the form of organization, traders in human beings fall into three categories. The first category is “individual traders”, who work by themselves and are mostly first offenders. As a matter of fact, many female traders were themselves trafficked women. They often target at their acquaintances and their “business” is not of a scale. The second category is “guerilla traders”, who work together as a group of three or four or a dozen of people. Members of such groups play specific roles and collaborate with each other. There is a third category called “the legion”, in which dozens or hundreds of people work together. They are highly organized and members from the city and the countryside collude together by dividing their work clearly and committing crimes from place to place. Members of such groups are respectively in charge of steeling, robbing, trafficking, finding “sources”, transporting and “sales” (Cui, 2000).

Since the 1990s, trafficking in women and children committed by criminal groups has increased rapidly, accounting for more than 90% of all the cases. Criminals usually bind together based on family and blood relations. In most criminal groups, there is certain percentage of women members (functioning as so-called “intermediates”), strict organization, and professional tendency (Ding, 1999). During 1991 and 1998, Anhui province alone captured 788 such criminal groups and seized 3317 criminals. These organizations were made up of dozen or even hundreds of members.

Case study:

In 1995, a major woman trafficking case was cracked on May 22 in Woyang

County. There were as many as 151 members in this group. The head of the group was from Yu'an Village of the Country (in Anhui province), where 80% of the 600 villagers were involved in women trafficking. In this case and related ones, 334 trafficked women were rescued. On November 28, 1996, the Supreme Court of Anhui province sentenced 61 members of the village to death penalty, death penalty with a reprieve, life imprisonment and set terms of imprisonment respectively (Jiang, 1997; Gao, 1998)

B. The Professional Tendency of Trafficking Activities

Not only have trafficking organizations developed into criminal groups of considerable members and varying forms, but they have also transformed into some professional criminal groups. Local criminals are gradually colluding with those from other places in trafficking activities, turning them into a criminal network and separating abduction from trafficking. Within a huge human trafficking network, there is usually “transfer station”, “transportation route” and “hiding places”. So from abduction to purchase, delivery, transfer, harboring and selling, each step is strictly organized, forming a unified “flow-line” type crime chain and a trade market of independent steps, as a result of which the crime can succeed very easily (Sun, 2004). Most of the trafficking groups are now strictly organized, clearly dividing “abduction”, “delivery”, “transfer” and “selling” among their members. There is now not only first-hand, second-hand and third-hand traders, but also different sales forms like “retail” and “wholesale”. And some trafficking groups have developed into “professional” modern gangster organizations (Gao, 1998).

Case study:

In Rich Family Village, there was a “market” of trafficked women. The formation of the “market” not only relied on the “incubation” and “cultivation” of Miao Buhuang, but also his whole set of “rules”. For instance, when meeting each other, the criminals seldom used real name but code numbers or secret signs as if they were spies. An example is that when transferring trafficked women, both sides would hold the same issue of a certain magazine in their left hands. When a trafficked woman was sold out, Miao would also give the buyer a “warranty”, promising that should she run

away within a year he could get another for free (the sole premise is that she was given a price higher than 6000Yuan). Within several months of “purchase”, if the buyer found himself unsatisfied with the bought woman, he could also come to Rich Family Village for another (depending on the original price he had given). In 1998, Zhu Chenchang of Luojaoshan Village bought a young girl for 6000 Yuan and changed her for another a month later because she refused to yield to him. Lin Jiazhang of Stone Drum Village (in Nanyang Town of Shouning County) spent 6000 Yuan on a young girl, who later escaped into the mountains. Miao then gave Lin another woman for only 2000 Yuan’s “commission charge”. Owing to Miao’s sound “credit”, local traders in human being all went to him and his business “flourished” (Chen, 2000).

With the passage of time, the means by which traders in human beings work have also changed. Although they used to “work” by cheating and stealing, they are now robbing and kidnapping openly. Besides cheating in the labor market and other public places, they are so founding temporary factories as transfer stations so that they may allure women there in the name of hiring female workers. As soon as they find “buyers”, they will sell the “workers” to them (Li, 2000). In addition to the original purpose of making money, their motivation also includes rape, roguery, and blackmail. The criminals are now showing a violent tendency. Most women are raped, raped by turns, or hurt in the forms in the process of trafficking. Some traders in human beings even pretend to be the police so that they may “rescue” the women they have sold to sell them again at high price.

Case study:

In 1992, Xiao Huang, an 18 year old girl from Lejia Village (in Shengyuan Town of Guixi County) followed her girlfriends to work in Fujian province. Unexpectedly, she was brought to Steel mountain Town of Zhenghe County, where she was sold to A, who was twenty years’ her senior and old enough to be her father, at the price of 1500Yuan. Several months later, the greedy trader in human beings, regretting having sold so her so cheap, assembled a gang and grabbed her away and sold her to a disabled person from Yangli Town for another 2500Yuan. (Cheng and Song, 1996).

C. Complication of the Participants in Trafficking Activities

Members of trafficking organizations were mostly farmers in the past. However, increasingly more workers, cadres, teachers, idlers and “reformed criminals” (those being reformed labor and education) are involved in such criminal cases. And a phenomenon worth special attention is that relatives of the victims are increasingly committing the crime (Sun, 2004).

In most trafficking groups, there are a certain number of women members (Ding, 1999), who themselves used to be the victims of human trafficking. Some data showed that owing to strong external shocks they were subject to, the trafficked women would live in an unstable and unbalanced state once victimized. As a result, they might develop a vindictive mentality or accept the crime. Then, they might imitate the criminals and become traders in human beings themselves. In another word, those who were originally abducted and sold would later actively participate in trafficking in other women. For instance, in 1987, Yunnan province spent thousands of Yuan and rescued 77 abducted women. However, in less than half a year, all 77 of them were gone together with 200 other women (abducted by them) (Sun, 2004).

Case study:

27 year old Ma Xiaoxia, a native of Xuchang, Henan Province, was a Second School graduate. She was once abducted and sold by Zhaoming. Having noticed that Zhaoming could make big money by trafficking in women, she escaped from the buyer and found Zhao by overcoming all difficulties. Then she proposed to Zhao and suggested continuing “the career” together. Zhao’s wife Zhu, who was also bought from a human trafficker, refused to join Zhao when he asked her to help him with his “business”. A year later, Zhao sent Zhu to her father’s home in Shaanxi province, after she gave birth to their child. Having been told of all this, Ma didn’t care about it at all and took Zhao to her relatives telling them that Zhao was her husband. Soon the two cohabited, and Ma eventually transformed from a victim to a sheer criminal. In April, 1994, Ma abducted and sold more than 20 women from Zhengzhou, Shangqiu and Luoyang of Henan Province and gained more than ten thousand Yuan in profit (Jiang, 1997).

3. Wife Buying

The “ladder-pattern” marriage migration of Chinese women resulted in different degrees of marriage squeeze in the city and the countryside and among different regions. As poverty-stricken and outlying areas suffered gravely from the loss of marriage resources, the male there are subject to severe marriage squeeze. Males suffering from marriage squeeze are mainly concentrated in poor and remote rural regions. Due to personal disadvantages (disease and poverty etc.) and poor education, such men have limited abilities and opportunities to secure economic resources (Shi, 2006).

Traditional notion and practice make some people think that human being can be traded like at commodities (Li, 2000). The existence of aged male bare branches in the countryside is the potential buyers market. Making a living on farming, these men possess fewer existing skills and are poorly educated. As their families are mostly poverty-stricken, it is very difficult for them to marry a local girl. Due to poor education and a faint notion of law, some of them think it a “fair deal” and a natural act to buy a wife (Li et al, 1998). As a result, they are willing to run into debt to commission others to buy them a wife from still poorer regions, creating a huge “buyers market” (Cui et al, 2000). This active “buyers market” is one of the key factors that explain why the business of human traffickers is so flourishing (Mao, 2000).

Case study:

In Tongguan Town, Zhen'an County, Shaanxi Province, there is a Coldwater Village lying in the Qilin Ridge. In August, 2005, a “wife buying” craze swept across the village: 11 villagers, divided into 5 batches, bought wives from Yunnan province within three months. In mid August, 2005, 31 year old Xie Junda, a member of the village, bought a wife from Yanshan County in Yunan province for 2400 Yuan. For a quite while, other male bare branches came to Xie to learn how he did it. They, determined to buy a wife, all raised money by borrowing or even asking for a debt. Soon, Gao Changsheng, Xie Dahui and Zhang Xinjun went south to Kunming together to buy wives. Xie Guangbao, seeing that his son had brought home a wife,

spent 4,000 Yuan on a banquet. According to investigation, of the 11 villagers, 10 had bought wives by raising high-interest debt (www.huash.com, 2006).

RESCUE ACTIONS BY THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT

1. Laws and Regulations

The Chinese Government has enacted a series of laws and regulations against trafficking in women. The 240th article of China's *Criminal Law* stipulated that "Trafficking in women and children means abducting, kidnapping, purchasing, trafficking and transferring of women and children for the purpose of selling them." *Suggestions about Laws and Regulations Applicable to Trafficking in Women and Children by Public Security Ministry* pointed out that "Trafficking in women and children, as long as it is for the purpose of selling them and belongs to one of the steps of abducting, kidnapping, purchasing, trafficking, delivering and transferring, it should be investigated as a human trafficking case." *The Notice about a Combined Combat against Trafficking in Women and Children by the Supreme People's Court, Public Security Ministry, Civil Administration, Ministry of Justice and All-China Women's Federation* mentioned that "Trafficking in women and children, as long as it is for the purpose of selling them and belongs to one of the steps of abducting, kidnapping, purchasing, trafficking, delivering and transferring, it should be investigated as a human trafficking case regardless of the number of the victims and the profit gained through it."

Since the 1980s, increasingly rampant trafficking in women and children has aroused much attention of the Chinese Government. The State Council, Public Security Ministry and other related authorities have issued orders more than once to guide combats against the crime in various regions. In 1987, the General Office of CPC Central Committee and the State Council together issued *the Notice about Combating Trafficking in Women and Children Unswerving according to the Law*; in 1988, Public Security Ministry, Ministry of Justice and All-China Women's Federation together issued *Suggestions for Rescuing Trafficked Women and Children*; in 1989, the State Council issued *Notice about Unswervingly Combating Trafficking*

in Women and Children; in the same year, *the Symposium on Combating Trafficking in Women and Children and Banning Prostitution* was held in Beijing. In 1991, Public Security Ministry and All-China Women's Federation held a "Telephone Conference on a Nation-wide Combat against Trafficking in Women and Children" in Beijing and the first large scale nation-wide combat against trafficking followed immediately. In 1993, the Security Commission of CPC Central Committee held a symposium in Haikou City, starting the second combat against trafficking and prostitution. In 1994, Public Security Ministry and All-China Women's Federation together issued *Notice about Looking for Lost Children and Women and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children*; on April 23, 1999, *the Cooperative Program on Combating Trafficking in Women and Children* was inaugurated in Beijing, which was signed by the Public Security Ministry and UN Children's Fund as an agreement. According to the agreement, China would cooperate with the UN in combating trafficking in women and children in the four aspects of personnel training, propaganda and social mobilization, establishing transfer center and carrying out social appraisalment. Participants of the ceremony included officials from Public Security Ministry and other authorities headed by Minister Jia Chunwang and UNICEF officials headed by director Carol Bellamy (Ding, 1999). On March 20, 2000, six administrations including Public Security Ministry and Ministry of Justice jointly issued *Notice of Combating Trafficking in Women and Children*, initiating another unprecedented nation-wide battle against trafficking, which was also the 10th combat against trafficking since 1988.

Since 1990, the Chinese government has been increasing the intensity of combating against trafficking in women and children by enacting and enhancing its laws and regulations. In 1991, the National Congress discussed and approved *Decisions on Strictly Punishing Criminal Involved in Abducting and Trafficking in Women and Children* and amended the *Criminal Law* by adding articles concerning trafficking in women and children and raised the standard of penalty measurement.

Besides all kinds of laws and regulations, the Chinese government at various levels has also established Anti-trafficking Offices, welcoming active participation of

different NGOs. In order to severely punish trafficking in women and children and to rescue abducted and sold women and children, the Ministry of Public Security has established an “anti-trafficking” hotline for people to report on the crime. The ministry announced that the hotline would deal with reports on trafficking by abducted and sold women and children, their relatives and the mass in general. Such hotline will also be established gradually by local Public Security Bureaus. According to the unified deployment of the Ministry of Public Security, an office specializing in anti-trafficking has been established in local governments above county level. At the end of 1999, the Public Security Bureau of Yunnan Province together with the Provincial Women’s Federation (representing social organizations of the mass) and British Save the Children Organization (representing international NGOs) jointly initiated the *Community Anti-trafficking Program through Cooperation of Multi Organizations* in Longmie Village of Guangnan County, Wenshan District. The program was meant to experiment on preventing trafficking by integrating the efforts of different governmental organizations and the social efforts of each villager.

2. Rescue Actions

Ever since 1988, when China initiated the first “anti-trafficking” campaign, Public Security Authorities have carried out 9 nation-wide “anti-trafficking” combats in 10 years time, through which a large number of criminal were punished and more than 50,000 women and children were rescued. From 1988 to 1999, public security authorities investigated an average of 20,000 trafficking cases each year. During 1991 and 1996, Chinese police rescued 88,000 abducted and sold women and children and arrested 143,000 policemen involved in such exploiting business (Elliot, 1998). In 1995 alone, 10,531 trafficking cases were investigated and 13,935 women were rescued; in 1996, 11,000 women were rescued; in 1997, 6,425 cases were investigated and 7,051 women were sent home. In 1998, 6,247 trafficking cases (3,798 were major cases) were investigated, 1,958 trafficking organizations were broken, 10,647 human traffickers were seized and 5,242 women were rescued. During 1997 and 1998, the police rescued altogether 23,000 abducted and sold women and broke 8,000 trafficking organizations^{Error! Bookmark not defined.}. In the first half of 1999, 2,890

trafficking cases were investigated, 710 trafficking organizations broken, 4,949 human traffickers arrested and 3,099 women rescued (Li, 2000)^{Error! Bookmark not defined.}. In the year of 1999, the country investigated more than 6,800 trafficking cases in total, of which 1,600 were specialized in trafficking in children. For the year, 7,600 women and 1,800 children were rescued. From April to June, 2000, another 43,527 women and 9,959 children were rescued in the “anti-trafficking” special campaign initiated by the Ministry of Public Security (Dong, 2001).

In 2003, Chengdu City Public Security Bureau made outstanding achievements in combating trafficking in women and children and helping the rescued with their household registration, education and employment. The 100 or so policemen of the city took more than 2,000 actions, running after human traffickers and rescuing trafficked women and children. In the year, 25 trafficking cases were investigated, 5 trafficking organization broken, 44 human traffickers punished and 140 women and 10 children rescued (Xiao et al, 2003).

OBSTACLES AGAINST THE RESCUE ACTIONS

1. Buyers' Attitude

Since the 1980s, the cost for wedding and bride-price has risen by times. Marriageable young men could not find their wives and their age kept growing, but they need to get married, so they chose to buy a wife at the cost of thousands of Yuan. Without a wife and home, those young men would be troublemakers, because if they failed to find themselves a wife, they would choose to abduct and traffic women. Furthermore, the problems will be much severer in the future if not addressed properly.

In the large women trafficking case uncovered of a syndicate that had trafficked and sold more than 60 women to Guoyang county of Anhui province, Zhaozhuang is a village characterized with blocked communication, lagged culture and undeveloped economy. In addition, the proportion of men to women is very abnormally high in the adjacent villages. Since Zhaozhuang is very backward and poor, few girls are willing to marry men here, so the number of unmarried men in Zhaozhuang has been

increasing and their marriage has turned out to a problem that bothers their parents, relatives and friends the most. In Zhaozhuang, more than ten thousands of Yuan have to be spent on bride-price, house and wedding feast for a man to marry a woman, but it usually costs only about three thousands Yuan for a man to buy a trafficked woman. Taking the reduced cost and the convenience of operation into consideration, many bare branches chose to buy trafficked women as their wife. Some other men are physically or mentally defective or too old in age, so it's very difficult for them to find a woman who is willing to be their wife. But they also need to get married and carry on the family lineage, so they also choose to buy trafficked women (Sun, 2004). In poverty-stricken areas, "buying a wife" is regarded as "normal" practice for "continuing the family lineage". In case a woman from other place was abducted or trafficked to a remote and backward village, the villagers will undertake the "obligation" to prevent the trafficked woman from escaping and even pull together to impede the work for rescuing the trafficked woman (Peng, 2004).

In cracking down the crime of abducting and trafficking women and children, strong measures and penalty have been taken against "the trader in human being", which has alarmed the criminals involving in trafficking women. However, there have been few penalties against the buyer of trafficked women, because people tend to have pity on the buyers and take them as victims too because they lost their money and "bought wives" (Yu, 2000). In the buyers' point of view, a bought wife is a lawful one and they are also the "victims" and the deceived. So the buyers often besiege, abuse and attack the police when they come to rescue the trafficked women (Mao, 2000).

Case Study:

Han Yonglai is a resident in East Haibuzi village of Jujinhao town, Siziwang county, Wulanchabu city, Neimenggu, China. In 1991, he bought a woman trafficked from Sichuan province at the price of 3,600 Yuan. Later the woman escaped by chance. In 1998, Han Yonglai bought another woman who is also trafficked from Sichuan, but they had never registered for marriage. At the noon of April 10, 2000, Saiyin Buyaer and two other polices from the police office at Jujinhao town were investigating the

situation of purchase of trafficked women in local villages. When the three polices were inquiring about the woman from Sichuan and into her background, Han Yonglai shouted invectives against the town government. Saiyin Buyaer and the other two polices tried to persuade Han to receive investigation but made no effect, so they paused the investigation into the Han's and left to inquire into another two families. However, Han followed them and continued to chase and shout at them to interrupt into their collection of evidences. When Saiyin Buyaer opened the door, Han drew a knife and stabbed it into his chest. Saiyin Buyaer was attacked down to the ground right and then and died on the way to the hospital (Mao, 2000).

2. Protection from Local Villagers for the Buyers

In some areas, woman trafficking does not pay its legal punishment and penalty, so more and more people will also choose to buy a wife to realize their marriage. The neighbors of the buyers show no objection against such behavior of buying wife. They think buying wife is neither illegal nor shameful, making woman trafficking a custom in that area. People around the buyers often reach a consensus and the whole family or even the whole village turn out to be the accessories of the buyer. They will help to watch over and persuade the trafficked women (Mo, 2005).

Local protectionism is the concentration of narrow parochial ideology, the long-standing feudal patriarchal remains, the kinship, neighborhood and friendship. Every time the interests of one clan/place is in conflict against that of another clan/place or the collective interests, such local protectionism will come out to create trouble and often overwhelm the laws and hinder the implementation of the laws. Cracking down trafficking in women matters the interests of different areas, so local protectionism plays the most important role in this course. In some areas where trafficking in women and children is rather grave, there are many people harboring the buyers and the trader, giving them information, blanking information off public security agencies, monitoring the bought women. They will make joint efforts to chase the escaping women back; if someone wants to rescue the trafficked women, they will devise all means to hinder the rescue work or even bar it by joint violence (Cui, 2000). In some areas, polices found that they seemed to be working in an area

occupied by the enemies when they came to rescue the trafficked women and arrest the traders; people there made little of understanding and some even detained the police and judicial officers as hostage(Hu, 1991; Zhuang, 1991). The rural grass-root organizations and people have very dim legal consciousness, which leads them to oppose the work of combating women trafficking and results in the support of such illegal action of the whole village or town (Li, 2000).

In addition, for the interests of themselves, some villagers choose to cover or even aid the traders in women. For example, in the case of women trafficking in Zhao village of Maoan town, Guoyang county, Anhui province, there are more than six hundred people in the village where Zhao Ming, leader of the gang is from, and about 80% of the villagers participating in the trafficking in women (Jiang, 1997; Gao, 1998). Miu Buhuang was arrested in the first women trafficking case uncovered in Fujian province in 2000. In fact, all villagers of Miu's knew he was a trader in human being at the beginning of his first "deal" in the mountain, but none of them reported to the public security office. Many villagers were envious of Miu's way of making money and then asked to watch over the trafficked women for Miu to receive his "commission". The villagers became the accessories of Miu. At first, Miu hired his villagers to watch over the tents in which the trafficked women were tracked at the price of about 200 Yuan for each tent. Later, Miu organized a transportation team with the "profit" made from sales of the trafficked women. He hired quite a few persons to joint in his illegal trade of women and formed a well-organized gang to kidnap and traffic women in Zhejiang, Jiangxi, Guizhou, and Yunnan provinces. Therefore, a large number of tents for locking up trafficked women appeared in the mountains around the Fujiazhuang village. Bare branches and marriage-makers around the village rushed to mountains to see and buy the women or girls they liked (Chen, 2000).

Case Study:

Shi Huashan is a policeman. He went to Zhenghe county of Fujian Province to rescue Xiaohuang, a trafficked woman with some other polices. Xiaohuang had been locked up in house by the buyer. Shi found Xiaohuang and took her to escape. At

first, he wanted to go back to the county seat immediately, but decided to drop by the village committee. They had never thought of that the buyer led tens of people to run after them to the village committee, with weapons like shoulder pole, hoe, broadsword and blunderbuss in hands. It seemed that two of were in command. "Hit him, the tall one", they gave orders. Those people ran after Shi and surrounded him to beat him. His cap was blown to the ground and the uniform torn into pieces. Shi's wrist was bleeding; Xiaohuang's face was lacerated and hair ripped away in wisps. They found that the two commanders were the retired director-general of county court and head of the village committee, a deputy to the local people's congress of the town (Cheng and Song, 1996).

3. Indifferent Treat of Local Grass-root Organizations

Household register management in some areas where the buyers are from is so lax that even a certificate of household registration can be bought. This causes increasing number of buying women and children in some areas, which in reverse stimulate the growth of crimes like trafficking in women and children. Moreover, some marriage registration offices at the grass-root level reduced the necessary procedures for marriage registration at will and made it very easy for the buyer and a trafficked woman to get a legal marriage certificate from the local office, which shrouded the illegal acts with a "legal" coat and caused big troubles for the public security forces to rescue the trafficked women (Yu, 2000).

Many buyers, masses and even grass-root cadres are in lack of legal knowledge and elementary ethics so that they often treat the trader in human being as kindhearted matchmakers. They even think that buying women is an easy way to address the issue of local elder men's marriage as well as a good act to help fulfill others' wishes and it can help the stabilize local society. Therefore, the village cadres choose to inform the buyers when the police go to rescue the trafficked women and collude with the buyers to hinder the rescue work (Li and Wan, 1998). In some towns, although the cadres knew that some women and children were trafficked there, they still issued the marriage certificate to their buyers and registered them as permanent local residents. In many villages, the village cadres not only took no measures to

prohibit villagers from trafficking or buying women, but also provided information for the villagers or acted as their guarantor, or even took the lead in trafficking in women and children. When the police come to rescue the trafficked women, those cadres of local town or villages and local polices often come up with different excuses and measures to delay and hinder the rescue work (Cui, 2000). The public security agencies, party and government organizations of some areas where the buyers are from also obstruct the progress of investigation and rescue work in the name of “protecting the interests of local mass”. They even dodge, create difficulties for and jointly attack those who come to rescue the trafficked women, causing much more difficulties against the rescue work (Hu, 1991; Zhuang, 1991).

4. Dilemma of the Trafficked Women

After trafficked, those women were brought from one place to another, sold at a marked price, and finally forced to marry with their buyers. They were often illegally locked up by the buyers. Without personal freedom, they turned out to be nothing but the buyers’ “tool” for having sex with and bearing children. Their resistance obtained no result but more and severer violent act, abuse or humiliation. If any trafficked woman attempted to resist her or escape, immediately his husband would beat and outrage her until she became completely desperate and gave up the idea to go back home forever (Mo, 2005). Some of them, in the case that they cannot escape, get rescued or felt ashamed to go back hometown, had to endure the humiliation and yield to the buyers to live a numb life and accept it; some of them chose suicide as the way to resist when they lost all hope; some of them, fed up with abuse and resulting hatred, chose to kill the buyers and transformed into criminals; while some others

In fact, in the later years, tens of years or so after being forced to marry with the buyers, the trafficked women set “escape” as their life goal in their minds. Some women made their escape by chance, but their families were left in breakup. In such broken families, children suffer the most. Therefore, those women who were trafficked and finally escaped were called “chicken that discards its eggs” (Wang et al., 2004). However, those women who made their escape still have many worries. In

Wangxia town of east Fujian province, more than half of the population is under the poverty line and 40 families are still living in caves. In recent years, 35 women were trafficked from that town, but 11 of them were forced to leave their hometown after rescued, because their natal families were so poor. Some trafficked women are willing to return to their hometown. They said they don't want to suffer the poor life any longer (Cui et al., 2000). Most of the trafficked women had been to the local police office or court to express their stand that although they were trafficked here, they were living an affluent life and they don't want to go back to the poor hometown (Jiang, 1997).

Case study:

Among the two hundreds women rescued by the Public Security Bureau of Shouning county, fewer than twenty of them are willing to go back to their original home. According to a police from the Public Security Bureau, although Shouning has been a poor and backward county in the past years, it is still richer than most counties in Guizhou and Yunnan province. In Shouning, women needn't to do labor work and they can make preferable income out of tea and mushroom planting. What's more important, many women have had children after trafficked to Shouning and forced to get married there. The love between those women and their children made it very hard for them to leave. Many women chose to stay in order that their children won't suffer hardships. They think their life may change after their children grow up and the children are their hope. A woman trafficked from Guizhou said: "What difference will it make to go back hometown? My natal family is very poor and looked down in my hometown, so I would rather stay here". She can't help shedding tears while talking of these. It's really hard for those women to make a decision on leaving or not (Chen et al., 2000).

CONCLUSION

In China, the deleterious effect of female deficiency caused by the abnormally high SRB on Chinese men's spouse selection and marriage will concentrate into poverty-stricken areas. As the "underprivileged group" in spouse selection, the

marriageable men in those areas will become the immediate victims of the effect of imbalanced sex structure of China's population on people's marriage. The increase in number of those unmarried elder men in rural China may make it hard for some of them to satisfy their sex desire in a normal way in the long run. When their sex desire has been inhibited too much and too long, they may resort to abnormal ways to satisfy it and then various sex crimes and women trafficking may in turn get increased. Meanwhile, the large unlawful interests in women trafficking stimulate the criminals' "motivation and fanaticism", leading to the increase of women trafficking cases and growth of gangs in human being trading. Chinese government has implemented a series of laws and regulations and launched several special actions to crack down women trafficking and rescue trafficked women. Achievements have been made and women's legal interests and rights are protected with those efforts. However, in the practical work of rescuing the trafficked women, the obstruction made by local people, grass-root organizations created great difficulties against the rescue work.

Trafficking in women is a rather barbarian and inhumane social evil. It is against the women victims' will and done by means of wile, trap, and violence to abduct, kidnap, buy, take over, transfer and traffic women and children, which not only severely violates the victims' personal rights, but also causes endless pains for their families as it breaks up the entire family, creating vast hidden trouble or danger against the social security (Wang, 2007). Therefore, it should be a matter concerned by the whole society to combat trafficking in human being. Chinese government should attach importance to the following fields when making efforts to crack down women trafficking in future.

First, more attention and efforts should be devoted to uncover and crack down crimes related to women and children trafficking.

Second, the cooperation between different departments should be strengthened to combat human trafficking crimes and the whole society should be mobilized to participate in such action. The cooperation between public security forces and organs like women' federation, mass, working, FP and news medias should be enhanced to advocate combat against and prevention of human trafficking and improve women's

consciousness of avoiding being trafficked, so that the whole society shall be mobilized to make joint efforts to combat, prevent human trafficking crimes and protect the interests and rights of women, especially the trafficked ones.

Third, the punishment against the buyers should be intensified. “The buyer” is an important link in the criminal “biological chain” of women trafficking. Therefore, “the buyers market” should be fiercely cracked down so that the traders couldn’t receive the expected “profit” from women trafficked and then such crimes can be effectively prevented and reduced (Mao, 2000). For the sake of complete eradication of women and children trafficking, not only fierce actions need to be taken to eliminate the traders in women and children trafficking, but also punishment against the purchase of trafficked women shall be intensified to destroy the buyers market (Yu, 2000).

Finally, in order to eradicate women trafficking from its origin, it must be known and recognized that women trafficking is closely related to marriage squeeze caused by imbalanced sex ratio. Proactive and substantial efforts should be taken to improve the wellbeing of elder unmarried men in poverty-stricken areas to help them to develop production. In China, the severe squeeze against men in marriage market mainly results from discrimination against women. In order to address the abnormally high SRB and excess female child mortality, Chinese government is taking some social policies and interventions such as national projects called “New Culture of Marriage and Childbearing Entering into Families” and “Care for Girls” to gradually weaken people’s preference for son. Those efforts have promoted the improvement of girls’ survival environment significantly. In the long run, the ideology of equality between men and women shall be advocated and popularized to promote the harmonious and sustainable development of Chinese society.

References

1. Cai Yiping, 2005. New Challenges to China's Eradicating Violence against Women: Trafficking in Girls and Young Women for the Purpose of Labor Exploitation, *Collection of Women's Studies*, S1:83-87.
2. Cheng Juan, Song Shan, 1996. It's Him, Who Rescued 41 Trafficked Women, *Police World*, 1996, 9:4-8.
3. Cui Xiaofeng, Cheng Binru, Zhong Zhifen, 2000. Why Our Cracking down Women Trafficking Sees No End: An Investigation into the Characteristics, Roots of Women Trafficking and Countermeasures, *Beijing Statistics*, 10:13-14.
4. Cui Shixin, 2000. Why It's So Difficult to Crack down Women Trafficking: Thoughts about Cracking down Women Trafficking, *Chinese Times*, 6:26-28.
5. Chen Shiqu, 2000. Climate and Countermeasures for Cracking down Trafficking in Women and Children, *Policing Studies*, 4:37-40.
6. Deng Guosheng, 2000. The Price for the Decline of China's SRB: Marriage Squeeze, *Social Sciences*, 7:58-60.
7. Ding Xiaolu, 1999. Cracking down Women Trafficking Has Become an International Course, *People's Police*, 10:16-19.
8. Chen Tanxiang, Huang Yiwei, Sang Yang, 2000. Surprisingly, There Is A "Specialized Market" for Women Trafficking, and Most Trafficked Women Are Unwilling to Go Back Hometown: A Survey of the First Case of Women Trafficked Uncovered in Rural Fujian Province, *Earth In Weekly*, 11.
9. Gao Qingkui, 1998. Review of Cracking down Women Trafficking in Anhui Province in the Past Seven Years, *Policing Studies*, 3:49-50.
10. www, huash.com, 2006. Peasant of Shaanxi Province Accept Usury to Buy Wives, But Half of the Wives Escaped, <http://news.sina.com.cn/s/p/2006-05-24/17019956590.shtml>.
11. Hu Jianhui, Trafficking in Women and Children Is Prevalent in Current China, and Immediate Measures Are in Urgent Need to Punish the Criminals, *Legal Daily*, Aug. 23, 1991.

12. Jiang Pengfei, 1997. The Cruelty and Collapse of “The First Village Specialized in Human Trafficking in China”, *Modern Women*, 3:28-31.
13. Li Dong, 2000. Concern and Worries About Cracking down Women Trafficking, *Law & Life*, 12:10-13.
14. Li Yanqing, Wan Cuishan, 1998. Put forth Efforts to “the Buyers market” in the Battle of Cracking down Women Trafficking, *Journal of Beijing People’s Police College*, 4:34-36.
15. Mao Lei, 2000. An Oppressive and Worrisome Issue: View on “Cracking down Women and Children Trafficking”, *Chinese Times*, 6:7-9.
16. Mo Lixia, 2005. Research on the Consequences of High Sex Ratio at Birth, China Population Press, Beijing.
17. Li Qiaoping, 2003. Implementation Status & Relating Issues of Sino-Vietnamese Mutual Efforts on Prevention of Transnational Trafficking in Women and Children, Around Southeast Asia, 6:49-51.
18. Peng Yuanchun, 2004. An Explorative Study on Elder Men’s Failure in Marriage in Poverty-Stricken Areas, *Youth Studies*, 6:18-20.
19. Shi Renbing, 2006. Influence of Out-floating Young People on the Marriage in Rural Area, *Population Journal*, 1:32-36.
20. Sun Long, 2004. Study on the Crime of Trafficking in People of Contemporary China, Thesis for Mater’s Degree of East China University of Political Science and Law.
21. Tan Shen, 2007. Safety and Health of In-Migrated Women Workers, <http://www.sociology.cass.cn/shxw/xstl/xstl7/P020041103339361099292.pdf>.
22. Tong Chenxian, Qiu Donglu, 2001. Characteristics of, Reasons for and Countermeasures against Trafficking in Women and Children, *Journal of Sichuan Police College*, 1:33-36.
23. Wang Jinling, 2005. Case Study on Trafficked or Abducted Women and Children under Legal Age from Yunnan and Guangxi Provinces and Their Final Places in the Five Provinces of East China, *Zhejiang Academic Journal*, 4:200-215.
24. Wang Jun, 2007. Ethic Norms for News Reports on Combat against Human

- Trafficking, *Media Observer*, 3:42-43.
25. Wang Xiaoou, Han Xuan, Ji Jinzi, Li Guodong, Debut of “Chinese Bare Branches Threat”, *International Herald Leader*[N], 4th Section, Jul. 30, 2004.
 26. Xiao Kunyou, Chen Ke, Yu Yiyong, 2003. Police of Chengdu Exert Their Best to Combat Human Trafficking, *Sichuan Daily*, T00, Dec. 27, 2003.
 27. Yang ChuangChuang, Li Jinghua, 2001. Investigation into the Personal Quality of Trafficked Women in Yulin of Guangxi Province, *RENMIN ZHENGXIE BAO*, 006, Jun. 11, 2001.
 28. Yu Bin, 2000. The Key for Combating Women Trafficking Is to Crack down the Buyers market, *Outlook Weekly*, 16:30-31.
 29. Zhang Bin, 2006. What’s the Way for China to Break through the Maze of Combating Women Trafficking, *People’s Police*, 2:18-21.
 30. Zhuang Ping, 1991. Analysis of Women Trafficking in China, *Sociology*, 5:101-108.
 31. Zhong Zhifen, Chen Binru, 2000. Characteristics, Origin of Women Trafficking Crime and Countermeasures to Crack down It, *JURIDICAL SCIENCE JOURNAL*, 6:48-49.
 32. CCTV 1, Evening News, Dec. 22, 1994.
 33. Elliot, Dorinda, 1998. Trying to Stand on Two Feet, *Newsweek*, June 29, 48-49.
 34. Hudson V., Den Boer, A. M. 2004. *Bare Branches: The Security Implications of Asia’s Surplus Male*. Population (MIT Press, Cambridge, MA).
 35. Pochagina, Olga. 2007. Trafficking in Women and Children in Present-Day China. *Far Eastern Affairs* 35(1): 82-101.