

On Destruction of the Family

by Han Yi

Heaven's Decree, 4th issue; July 25, 1907

All social matters are man's doings, and when it comes to human, there are males and females. Therefore, in order to carry out social revolutions nowadays, one must begin from making revolution on the existing relations between the two sexes. This is similar to the situation in which if one wants to reform China, one must first overthrow the Manchu government, which would allow all things (in China) to develop and succeed. Otherwise, if we have no idea about cause and effect, we would be spreading ourselves too thin and very rarely effective in what we do. However, the subject of revolution in male-female relations is bound to generate ample confusion and doubt for the masses. Since we take it upon ourselves to advocate such a revolution, we are not without a plan to address the fundamental questions. What is our plan? It is to destroy the family, which is the root of all evils. Ever since there was family, people became selfish; ever since there was family, women became men's slaves; ever since there was family, meaningless and trivial matters began to multiply with no benefit but only harm; ever since there was family, the world that belonged to the whole mankind began to be owned by a few; ever since there was family, women began to shoulder the burden of caring for all world's children. Such are the undeniable facts about the family. Let's examine this further by looking into Chinese etymology. In the *Dictionary of Words and Phrases*, it says, "family is a place of residence, written with a 'roof' radical on top and 'pig' radical below, in which lies its original meaning and from which the word 'family/home' derives its current meaning as a place of residence for people. Likewise, the word 'cow-pen' (written with the same radical 'roof' on top and 'cow' radical below) means originally a place in which cows are kept. Such is the way many characters derive their meanings and the word 'cow-pen' has come to mean prison or a place for holding convicts. 'Family' is no exception, because domesticated animals reproduce most rapidly, people congregate and take up dwellings because of it, which is how the word has derived its current meaning." So, is it not slightly demeaning to people that we have to use the word "pigs" as a metaphor for places where people gather in large numbers? The explanation in the dictionary states, "domesticated animals reproduce most rapidly" begs further scrutiny and reflection. The popular saying today for marriage is "to become a family", signifying joining together a husband and wife in order for the woman to procreate and to form an expanding crowd. Is this not a comparison (of humans) with the domesticated animals raised for the purpose of breeding? Moreover, the connotation of the word "family" is also somewhat demeaning to women as if they were herds and I wonder if today's women are able to tolerate this. Besides, the future of the world will be a harmonious society of communism in which everyone is free to travel, and in which there is no need for people to emulate their ancestors in the past who did not interact with one another their entire lives. With equality for all, there is no reason for strong-minded women to stay at home as slaves and servants. With all the land belonging to the public and no borders or boundaries, the word "family" should undoubtedly be abolished. In the journey of human progress, there is no way to return home. This is because when there is family, men who indulge themselves sexually tend to prey on concubines and maids to satisfy themselves, or to adopt other people's sons as their own heirs. If we destroy family today, then people in the future will have no excuses; in other words, by destroying one's own family, people in the future will be public rather than private citizens, and men will have no excuse to bully and humiliate women. That is why those wishing to draw open the curtain for social revolutions must begin by destroying their own families.

《毁家论》 汉一

社会万事，赖人而成，人之孳生，实有男女。故今日欲从事于社会革命，必先自男女革命始，犹之欲改造中华，必先逐满洲，而后众事克举也。否则不揣其本而其末，顾此失彼，鲜克有济矣。顾一言及男女革命，则群疑众难因以横生。然我辈既提倡此事，亦不可不筹及拔本塞源之计。其计维何？则毁家是已。盖家也者，为万恶之首，自有家而后人各自私，自有家而后女子日受男子羁縻，自有家而后无益有损之琐事，因是丛生。自有家而后世界公共之人类，乃得私于一人，自有家而后世界公共之婴孩，乃使女人一人肩其任。略举数端，而家之罪恶已如铁案之不可移易矣。试更即中国字义考之。考说文，“家居也，从公猪省声，段注家字本义，乃倒之居，引申假借，以为人之居，字义之转移多如此，牢牛之居也，引申之而罪人拘系所为牢，家字庸有异乎？盖豨豨之生子最多，故人居聚之所，借用其字。”夫欲取聚处众多之义，而必以豨为喻，得非含轻贱之意耶？况段注所谓“豨豨之生子最多”一语，尤耐人寻绎。考今之俗语，谓结婚曰“成家”。盖家之起点，即以夫妻二人成之，渐次而女子乃有生育，子息渐次，而丁口遂众，岂非与豨豨生子之多为比例耶？然则家字之义，尚含有以女子喻畜之微意矣。试问女子甘受之乎？况今后世界大同，人人行踪自由，必不能如上古之世，老死不相往来。且人类平等，断无强女子守家之理，亦无用奴婢守家之理。则人生逆旅，无往非家。土地属之公有，无此疆彼界之分，是家之一词，实应消毁，无可疑也。矧既有家，则男子之纵欲者，必强之为妾媵，供其淫欲，或取他人之子，攘为己嗣。今既毁家，则彼无所凭借矣。故自家破，而后人类之中，乃皆公民无私民，而后男子无所凭借以欺凌女子，则欲开社会革命之幕者，必自破家始矣。

《天义报》第四期，1907年7月25日出版