

## 03.13-Family relationships

### Family relationships

#### Divorce: a love story

While the government **talks up** family values, marriage **break-ups** are soaring  
Jan 23rd 2016 | CHONGQING | From the print edition

#### Vocab

1. **talk up** PHRASAL v. 夸大;过分夸奖;吹捧 If someone **talks up** a particular thing, they make it sound more interesting, valuable, or likely than it originally seemed.

e.g. He'll be **talking up** his plans for the economy. 他会大肆吹捧自己制定的经济计划。

2. **break up** PHRASAL v. 婚姻关系) 破裂; 结束 (婚姻关系) If a marriage **breaks up** or if someone **breaks it up**, the marriage ends and the partners separate.

e.g. Fred has given me no good reason for wanting to **break up** our marriage. 弗雷德没能给我一个想要结束我们婚姻的正当理由。

YANG YOURONG's wife kicks him as they walk upstairs and he falls back a few steps, then follows again at a distance up to the **cramped** offices of a district-government **bureau** handling divorces in Chongqing, a region in the south-east. After more than 20 years of marriage, Mr Yang's wife has had several **affairs**; she is "quick tempered", he says (she had **slapped** him earlier, he claims). At the bureau, divorce takes half an hour and costs 9 yuan (\$1.40). It is administered a few steps away from where other couples get married and take celebratory photographs. Mr Yang and his wife have **second thoughts**, however; they return home, still arguing. Most couples hesitate less.

#### Vocab

1. **cramped** adj. a **cramped** room, etc. does not have enough space for the people in it 狭窄的; 狭小的

e.g. working in cramped conditions 在拥挤的环境里工作

2. **bureau** n. (in the US) a government department or part of a government department (美国政府部门) 局, 处, 科

e.g. the Federal Bureau of Investigation 联邦调查局

3. **affair** n. a sexual relationship between two people, usually when one or both of them is married to sb else (尤指已婚男女的) 私通, 风流韵事

e.g. She is **having an affair** with her boss. 她跟老板有暧昧关系。

4. **slap** v. =**smack** to hit sb/ sth with the flat part of your hand (用手掌) 打, 拍, 掴

5. **second thoughts** 重新思量; 重新考虑

Divorce rates are rising quickly across China. This is a remarkable transformation in a society where for centuries marriage was universal and mostly permanent (though convention permitted men to take **concubines**). Under Communist rule, traditional values have retained a strong influence over family relationships: during much of the Mao era, divorce was very unusual. It became more common in the 1980s, but a marriage law adopted in 1994 still required a reference from an employer or community leader. Not until 2003 were restrictions removed.

### Vocab

1. **concubine** n. (especially in some societies in the past) a woman who lives with a man, often in addition to his wife or wives, but who is less important than they are (尤指旧时某些社会里的) 妾, 姨太太, 小老婆

### Sentence

Under Communist rule, traditional values have retained a strong influence over family relationships: during much of the Mao era, divorce was very unusual.

主干: traditional values have retained a strong influence 这里 retain 可以译为, 仍然具有

The trend reflects profound economic and social change. In the past 35 years, the biggest internal migration experienced by any country in human history has been tearing families apart. Traditional values have been giving way to more liberal ones. Women are becoming better educated, and more aware of their **marital** rights (they now **initiate** over half of all divorce cases). Greater **affluence** has made it easier for many people to **contemplate** living alone—no longer is there such an **incentive** to stay married in order to pool resources.

### Vocab

1. **marital** adj. 婚姻的 **Marital** is used to describe things relating to marriage.

e.g. Her son had no **marital** problems. 她的儿子没有婚姻问题。

2. **initiate** v. =**set in motion** to make sth begin 开始; 发起; 创始

3. **affluence** n. 富裕; 富足 **Affluence** is the state of having a lot of money or a high standard of living.

4. **contemplate** v. =**consider, think about/of** to think about whether you should do sth, or how you should do sth 考虑; 思量; 思忖

5. **incentive** ~ (for/ to sb/ sth) (to do sth) something that encourages you to do sth 激励; 刺激; 鼓励

e.g. There is no incentive for people to save fuel. 没有使人们节约燃料的鼓励办法。

**OPP=disincentive**

### Sentence

In the past 35 years, the biggest internal migration experienced by any country in human history has been tearing families apart.

主语: the biggest internal migration experienced by any country in human history 这里的by any country in human history 是用来修饰这个人口迁移是在人类历史上和任何国家中最大的

谓语: has been tearing tear 撕, 撕裂了家庭

As long as both sides agree on terms, China is now among the easiest and cheapest places in the world to get a divorce. In many Western countries, including Britain, couples must separate for a period before **dissolving** a marriage; China has no such constraints. In 2014, the latest year for which such data exist, about 3.6m couples split up—more than double the number a decade earlier (they received a red certificate, pictured, to prove it). The divorce rate—the number of cases per thousand people—also doubled in that period. It now stands at 2.7, well above the rate in most of Europe and approaching that of America, the most divorce-**prone** Western country (see chart). Chongqing's rate, 4.4, is higher than America's.

### Vocab

1. **dissolve** v. to officially end a marriage, business agreement or parliament 解除 ( 婚姻关系 ) ; 终止 ( 商业协议 ) ; 解散 ( 议会 )

e.g. Their marriage was dissolved in 1999. 他们于 1999 年解除了婚姻关系。

2. **split up** PHRASAL VERB-RECIP-ERG(使)分手;(使)离婚 If two people **split up**, or if someone or something **splits** them **up**, they end their relationship or marriage.

e.g. Research suggests that children whose parents **split up** are more likely to drop out of high school...研究表明, 父母离异的孩子更容易从中学中途退学。

3. **prone** adj. likely to suffer or do the thing mentioned 有做...倾向的 ; 易于遭受...的

e.g. error-prone 容易出错的 injury-prone 容易受伤的

### Sentence

In 2014, the latest year for which such data exist, about 3.6m couples split up—more than double the number a decade earlier (they received a red certificate, pictured, to prove it).

主干: 3.6m couples split up

In 2014, the latest year for which such data exist 时间

more than double the number a decade earlier 修饰主语 3.6m couples

Helped by the huge movement of people from the countryside into cities, and the rapid spread of social media, the availability of potential mates has grown with astonishing speed, both geographically and virtually. But many migrants marry in their home villages and often live apart from their spouses for **lengthy** periods. This has contributed to a big increase in **extramarital liaisons**. Married people previously had limited opportunities to meet members of the opposite sex in social situations, according to research by Li Xiaomin of Henan University. Peng Xiaobo, a divorce lawyer in Chongqing, reckons 60-70% of his clients have had affairs.

### Vocab

1. **lengthy** adj. very long, and often too long, in time or size 很长的 ; 漫长的 ; 冗长的

e.g. the lengthy process of obtaining a visa 获得签证的漫长过程

2. **extramarital** adj. happening outside marriage 婚外的

e.g. Her husband has admitted having an extra-marital affair.她丈夫承认有婚外情。

3. **liaison** n. 私通 ; 私情 ; 通奸 You can refer to a sexual or romantic relationship between two people as a **liaison**

### Sentence

Helped by the huge movement of people from the countryside into cities, and the rapid spread of social media, the availability of potential mates has grown with astonishing speed, both geographically and virtually.

主干: the availability of potential mates **has grown** with astonishing speed 潜在伴侣以一个令人惊讶的速度增长

Helped by... 前面这部分是原因

both geographically and virtually. geographically 原来是地理上的, 但是这里和 virtually 搭配使用, 可以理解成现实中的, 但是包含了地理的因素在里面

Such behaviour has led to much **soul-searching**. The notion that “**chopsticks** come in pairs” is still **prevalent**; **propaganda posters preach Confucian-style family virtues** using pictures of happy, multi-generation families. (President Xi Jinping is on his second marriage but this is rarely mentioned.) Many **commentators** in the official media talk of **separation** as a sign of moral failure; they **fret** that it **signifies** the decline of marriage, and of family as a social unit—a threat, as they see it, to social

stability and even a cause of crime. The spread of “Western values” is often blamed.

### Vocab

1. **soul-searching** n. the careful examination of your thoughts and feelings, for example in order to reach the correct decision or solution to sth 反省；内省

e.g. My year was really spent doing a lot of **soul-searching** and trying to find out what had gone wrong in my life. 这一年来，我真的进行了许多深刻的反思，努力地找出自己的生活中到底哪里出了问题。

2. **chopstick** n. 筷子 **Chopsticks** are a pair of thin sticks which people in China and the Far East use to eat their food.

3. **prevalent** adj. =**common, widespread** ~ (among sb) | ~ (in sb/ sth) that exists or is very common at a particular time or in a particular place 流行的；普遍存在的；盛行的

4. **propaganda** n. 政治组织的) 宣传 **Propaganda** is information, often inaccurate information, which a political organization publishes or broadcasts in order to influence people.

5. **poster** n. =**placard** a large notice, often with a picture on it, that is put in a public place to advertise sth 招贴画；海报

6. **preach** v. to tell people about a particular religion, way of life, system, etc. in order to persuade them to accept it 宣传，宣扬，宣讲（教义、生活方式、体制等）

7. **Confucian** adj. based on or believing the teachings of the Chinese **PHILOSOPHER** Confucius 儒家的；儒学的；孔子学说的

8. **virtue** n. behaviour or attitudes that show high moral standards 高尚的道德；正直的品性；德行

9. **commentator** n. 评论员 A **commentator** is someone who often writes or broadcasts about a particular subject.

10. **separation** n. a decision that a husband and wife make to live apart while they are still legally married 分居

11. **fret** ~ (about/ over sth) to be worried or unhappy and not able to relax 苦恼；烦躁；焦虑不安

e.g. Her baby starts to fret as soon as she goes out of the room. 她一走出房间，婴儿就躁动起来。

12. **signify** v. =**mean** to be a sign of sth 表示；说明；预示

e.g. This decision signified a radical change in their policies. 这个决定表明了他们的政策发生了根本的变化。

### Sentence

Many commentators in the official media talk of separation as a sign of moral failure; they fret that it signifies the decline of marriage, and of family as a social unit—a threat, as they see it, to social stability and even a cause of crime.

主干：they **fret** that it signifies the decline of marriage

But marriage is not losing its **lustre**. In most countries, rising divorce rates **coincide with** more births **out of wedlock** and a fall in marriage rates. China **bucks** both these trends. Remarriage is common too. The Chinese have not fallen out of love with marriage—only with each other.

### Vocab

1. **lustre** n. the quality of being special in a way that is exciting 荣光；光彩；荣耀

e.g. The presence of the prince added lustre to the occasion. 王子的出现给那场面

增添了光彩。

2. coincide v. ~ (with sth/ sb) to take place at the same time 同时发生

e.g. The strike was timed to coincide with the party conference. 那次罢工选择在召开政党大会的同一时间举行。

3. wedlock n. the state of being married 婚姻；已婚状态

e.g. children born **in/out of wedlock** (= whose parents are/are not married) 婚生/非婚生子女

4. buck v. to resist or oppose sth 抵制；反抗

e.g. One or two companies have managed to **buck the trend** of the recession. 有一两家公司顶住了经济滑坡的势头。

#### Sentence

The Chinese have not fallen out of love with marriage—only with each other.

not fallen out of love with marriage 表示并没有不喜欢结婚

然后用 —only with each other 来表示，不再喜欢的只是彼此

It is tradition itself that is partly to blame for rising divorce rates. China's legal marriage age for men, 22, is the highest in the world. But conservative attitudes to **premarital** relationships **result in** Chinese youths having fewer of them than their counterparts in the West (they are urged to concentrate on their studies and careers, rather than socialise or explore). Living together before marriage is still rare, although that is changing among educated youngsters. People still face social pressure to marry in their 20s. Their **inexperience** makes it more than usually difficult for them to select a good partner.

#### Vocab

1. premarital adj. happening before marriage 婚前的

2. result in 导致

3. inexperience n. lack of knowledge and experience 缺乏经验；经验不足

e.g. His mistake was due to youth and inexperience. 他的失误原因是年轻没有经验。

#### Sentence

It is tradition itself that is partly to blame for rising divorce rates.

强调句，强调传统自身才是导致离婚率上升的部分原因

Couples' ageing **relatives** are part of the problem too. Yan Yunxiang of the University of California, Los Angeles, says "parent-driven divorce" is becoming more common. As a result of China's one-child-per-couple policy (recently changed to a two-child one), many people have no siblings to share the burden of looking after parents and grandparents. Thus couples often find themselves living with, or being watched over by, several—often **contending**—elders. Mr Yan says the older ones' interference fuels **conjugal** conflict. Sometimes parents urge their children to divorce their partners as a way to deal with **rifts**.

#### Vocab

1. relative n. =**relation** a person who is in the same family as sb else 亲戚；亲属

2. sibling n. a brother or sister 兄；弟；姐；妹

3. contend v. to compete against sb in order to gain sth 竞争；争夺

e.g. Three armed groups were contending for power. 三个武装集团在争夺权力。

4. conjugal adj. connected with marriage and the sexual relationship between a husband

and wife 婚姻的；夫妻间的

5. rift n. =breach, division a serious disagreement between people that stops their relationship from continuing 分裂；分歧；严重不和

#### Sentence

1. As a result of China's one-child-per-couple policy (recently changed to a two-child one), many people have no siblings to share the burden of looking after parents and grandparents.

主干：many people have no siblings to share...

As a result of... 这里引导了原因状语从句

2. Thus couples often find themselves living with, or being watched over by, several—often contending—elders. Mr Yan says the older ones' interference fuels conjugal conflict.

主干：Thus couples often find themselves living with elders.

or being watched over by, several—often contending 有伴随的意味，living with elders，然后被几个 elders 监视，后面破折号又引入一个 contend

Women are more likely to be the ones who suffer financially when this happens. Rising divorce rates reflect the spread of more tolerant, permissive values towards women, but legislation tends to favour men in divorce settlements. A legal interpretation issued in 2003 says that if a divorce is disputed, property bought for one partner by a spouse's parents before marriage can revert to the partner alone. That usually means the husband's family: they often try to increase their child's ability to attract a mate by buying him a home.

#### Vocab

1. permissive adj. allowing or showing a freedom of behaviour that many people do not approve of, especially in sexual matters 放任的；纵容的；姑息的；（尤指两性关系）放纵的

2. favour v. to treat sb better than you treat other people, especially in an unfair way 优惠；特别照顾；偏袒

e.g. The treaty seems to favour the US. 这个条约似乎偏向美国。

3. divorce settlements 离婚协议

4. revert to v. 恢复，回复(到以前的状态、制度或行为) When people or things revert to a previous state, system, or type of behaviour, they go back to it.

e.g. Jackson said her boss became increasingly depressed and reverted to smoking heavily. 杰克逊说她的老板情绪越来越低落，又开始拼命抽烟了。

#### Sentence

Rising divorce rates reflect the spread of more tolerant, permissive values towards women, but legislation tends to favour men in divorce settlements.

主干：Rising divorce rates reflect values towards women.

In 2011 the Supreme Court went further. It ruled that in contested cases (as about one-fifth of divorces are), the property would be considered that of one partner alone if that partner's parents had bought it for him or her after the couple had got married. In addition, if one partner (rather than his or her parents) had bought a home before the couple wed, that person could be awarded sole ownership by a divorce court. This ruling has put women at a disadvantage too: by convention they are less often named on deeds.

#### Vocab

1. contested adj. 有争议的



2. **sole** adj. only; single 仅有的；唯一的

e.g. My **sole** reason for coming here was to see you. 我这儿唯一的原因就是来看你。

3. **deed** n. a legal document that you sign, especially one that proves that you own a house or a building (尤指房产) 契约，证书

e.g. the deeds of the house 房契

### Sentence

It ruled that in contested cases (as about one-fifth of divorces are), the property would be considered that of one partner alone if that partner's parents had bought it for him or her after the couple had got married.

主干: It ruled that 这里 it 指代上一句的 the Supreme Court. 动词 rule 在这里的意思是规定了 that in contested cases (as about one-fifth of divorces are), the property would be considered that of one partner alone 这个 that 从句的主语是 the property 谓语是 would be considered 后面的 that 是指代 the property

if that partner's parents had bought it for him or her after the couple had got married. if 后面的 that 是指代 him or her, if 从句的主语是 parents, 谓语是 had bought, it 是指代 the property

In practice, if the couple has children the person with **custody** often keeps the home — more often the mother. Yet the court's interpretation sets a worrying **precedent** for divorced women. Their difficulties may be **compounded** by the two-child policy, which **came into effect** on January 1st. If couples have two children and both partners want custody, judges often assign parents one child each. Marriage and the family are still strong in China—but children clearly lie in a different asset class.

### Vocab

1. **custody** n. the legal right or duty to take care of or keep sb/ sth; the act of taking care of sth/ sb 监护；保管；监护权；保管权

e.g. Who will **have custody** of the children? 谁来负责监护这些孩子？

2. **precedent** n. a similar action or event that happened earlier 先前出现的事例；前例；先例

e.g. Such protests are **without precedent** in recent history. 这类抗议事件在近代史上没有发生过。

3. **compound** v. to make sth bad become even worse by causing further damage or problems 使加重；使恶化

e.g. The problems were compounded by severe food shortages. 严重的食物短缺使问题进一步恶化。

4. **come into effect** 开始生效

From the print edition: China

## Family relationships

### Divorce: a love story

#### 家庭关系：离婚，一个爱情故事

While the government talks up family values, marriage break-ups are soaring.  
在政府倡导家庭价值观的时候，离婚率却在上涨。

YANG YOURONG's wife kicks him as they walk upstairs and he falls back a few steps, then follows again at a distance up to the cramped offices of a district-government bureau handling divorces in Chongqing, a region in the south-east. After more than 20 years of

marriage, Mr Yang's wife has had several affairs; she is "quick tempered", he says (she had slapped him earlier, he claims). At the bureau, divorce takes half an hour and costs 9 yuan (\$1.40). It is administered a few steps away from where other couples get married and take celebratory photographs. Mr Yang and his wife have second thoughts, however; they return home, still arguing. Most couples hesitate less.

一起上楼梯的时候，杨友荣的妻子踢了他一脚，他倒退了几步，然后依然隔着一段距离跟着他的妻子来到了重庆市（中国西南部）处理离婚的狭小地方政府办公室。在结婚20多年里，杨先生的妻子曾多次出轨。杨先生称她是个“急性子”（他妻子早前曾经扇了他一巴掌）。在离婚的办事处办理离婚程序，需耗时半小时，花费9元（大约1.4美元）。处理离婚的地方距离其他夫妻结婚以及拍结婚照的地方只有几步远。杨先生及其妻子对离婚仍有迟疑，但他们回到家，依然争吵不断。大多数夫妇不会这样迟疑。

Divorce rates are rising quickly across China. This is a remarkable transformation in a society where for centuries marriage was universal and mostly permanent (though convention permitted men to take concubines). Under Communist rule, traditional values have retained a strong influence over family relationships: during much of the Mao era, divorce was very unusual. It became more common in the 1980s, but a marriage law adopted in 1994 still required a reference from an employer or community leader. Not until 2003 were restrictions removed.

中国各地的离婚率都在快速上涨。对于一个几世纪以来婚姻都是普遍且稳定的社会来说（尽管过去习俗允许男人纳妾），这是一个巨大的转变。在中共的治理下，传统观念对家庭关系的影响依然重要：在毛泽东时代，离婚极其罕见。离婚从20世纪80年代开始变得普遍起来，但1994年开始实施的婚姻法依然需要雇主或者社区领导开具的证明文件才能办理离婚，直到2003年这一规定才被废除。

The trend reflects profound economic and social change. In the past 35 years, the biggest internal migration experienced by any country in human history has been tearing families apart. Traditional values have been giving way to more liberal ones. Women are becoming better educated, and more aware of their marital rights (they now initiate over half of all divorce cases). Greater affluence has made it easier for many people to contemplate living alone—no longer is there such an incentive to stay married in order to pool resources.

这一趋势体现了深刻的经济和社会变化。在过去的35年里，中国发生的国内人口转移是有史以来全球范围内规模最大的，而这也正在导致更多家庭破碎。传统观念正在被更为自由的理念所取代。女性受教育程度越来越高，也更加了解她们在婚姻中的各种权利（现在有超过半数的离婚申请都是由女性提出的）。财富的增长让人们敢去思考独居的可能性，因为他们不再需要为了共用资源而保持结婚的状态。

As long as both sides agree on terms, China is now among the easiest and cheapest places in the world to get a divorce. In many Western countries, including Britain, couples must separate for a period before dissolving a marriage; China has no such constraints. In 2014, the latest year for which such data exist, about 3.6m couples split up—more than double the number a decade earlier (they received a red certificate, pictured, to prove it). The divorce rate—the number of cases per thousand people—also doubled in that period. It now stands at 2.7, well above the rate in most of Europe and approaching that of America, the most divorce-prone Western country. Chongqing's rate, 4.4, is higher than America's.

只要双方都达成一致意见，中国的离婚程序现在是最简单、最低价的。在包括英国在



内的许多西方国家，夫妻在离婚前需要分居一段时间，而在中国就没有这样的限制。根据现存最新的2014年数据显示，2014年约有360万对夫妇办理离婚手续——这一数字是十年前的两倍以上（他们会得到一份红色证件来证明离婚生效）。离婚率（每千人中离婚数）在同一时期同样也翻了一番。现在中国的离婚率达到2.7，比欧洲大多数国家都高得多，正在逐渐接近美国这个离婚率最高的西方国家。其中重庆地区的离婚率高达4.4，比美国都要高。

Helped by the huge movement of people from the countryside into cities, and the rapid spread of social media, the availability of potential mates has grown with astonishing speed, both geographically and virtually. But many migrants marry in their home villages and often live apart from their spouses for lengthy periods. This has contributed to a big increase in extramarital liaisons. Married people previously had limited opportunities to meet members of the opposite sex in social situations, according to research by Li Xiaomin of Henan University. Peng Xiaobo, a divorce lawyer in Chongqing, reckons 60-70% of his clients have had affairs.

大量农村人口进入城市，以及社交媒体的广泛使用，使得不论是真实生活中还是在虚拟网络空间中，潜在伴侣的数量都以令人惊讶的速度增长着。其实许多外来人口在家乡已经结婚，但是同他们的配偶长时间异地分居。这使得婚外恋情大量出现。根据河南大学李晓敏的研究表明，过去已婚人士在社会中接触异性机会很有限。重庆的一位离婚律师彭小波估计，他的客户中60%到70%都有过婚外情。

Such behaviour has led to much soul-searching. The notion that “chopsticks come in pairs” is still prevalent; propaganda posters preach Confucian-style family virtues using pictures of happy, multi-generation families. President Xi Jinping is on his second marriage but this is rarely mentioned. Many commentators in the official media talk of separation as a sign of moral failure; they fret that it signifies the decline of marriage, and of family as a social unit—a threat, as they see it, to social stability and even a cause of crime. The spread of “Western values” is often blamed.

这样的行为让人们开始深刻地反思。“筷子成双”这样的观念依然普遍，且宣传海报用多代同堂式的家庭幸福来宣扬孔儒式的家庭观念。习近平主席也是二婚，但这件事却很少被提及。许多官方媒体的评论人士将分居视作道德失败的一种表征，他们担心这意味着婚姻和家庭一类的社会单元的衰落——他们将这看做威胁社会稳定甚至是导向犯罪的不良因素。“西方观念”的传播常常被认为是罪魁祸首。

But marriage is not losing its lustre. In most countries, rising divorce rates coincide with more births out of wedlock and a fall in marriage rates. China bucks both these trends. Remarriage is common too. The Chinese have not fallen out of love with marriage—only with each other.

但婚姻并没有失去它的荣光。在大多数国家，离婚率的上升会伴随着非婚生育率的上升和结婚率的下降。中国却在这两方面都有相反的表现。再婚同样也是普遍现象。中国人没有对结婚不再热衷，只是曾经的结婚对象彼此不再相爱。

It is tradition itself that is partly to blame for rising divorce rates. China's legal marriage age for men, 22, is the highest in the world. But conservative attitudes to premarital relationships result in Chinese youths having fewer of them than their counterparts in the West (they are urged to concentrate on their studies and careers, rather than socialise or explore). Living together before marriage is still rare, although that is changing among educated youngsters. People still face social pressure to marry in their 20s. Their

inexperience makes it more than usually difficult for them to select a good partner.

恰恰相反，离婚率的上升应该部分归因于传统观念本身。中国男性的法定结婚年龄为22岁，是全球最高。对婚前关系的保守态度还导致中国年轻人比西方同龄人在感情方面经验更少（他们被敦促要把注意力投入到学习和工作中，而忽略了社交和探索）。婚前同居依然很少见，尽管情况正在从受过教育的年轻人那里开始发生变化。社会压力依然要求人们20多岁结婚，然而他们的经验不足常常让他们很难为自己选择一位好的伴侣。

Couples' ageing relatives are part of the problem too. Yan Yunxiang of the University of California, Los Angeles, says “parent-driven divorce” is becoming more common. As a result of China's one-child-per-couple policy (recently changed to a two-child one), many people have no siblings to share the burden of looking after parents and grandparents. Thus couples often find themselves living with, or being watched over by, several—often contending—elders. Mr Yan says the older ones' interference fuels conjugal conflict. Sometimes parents urge their children to divorce their partners as a way to deal with rifts.

年轻小两口的长辈亲属也是部分问题所在。位于洛杉矶的加州大学的闫元祥称“父母逼迫的离婚”越来越普遍。由于中国独生子女政策（最近变成了二孩政策），许多人没有兄弟姐妹来分担照顾父母和祖父母的负担。因此许多夫妻不得不跟几位父母长辈同住，受到他们的监视，很多时候这些长辈还想要在家里争权夺势。闫先生说，老人们的干预加剧了婚姻关系内的冲突。有时候父母甚至会要求他们的子女与其伴侣离婚，来处理两代人之间关系的裂痕。

Women are more likely to be the ones who suffer financially when this happens. Rising divorce rates reflect the spread of more tolerant, permissive values towards women, but legislation tends to favour men in divorce settlements. A legal interpretation issued in 2003 says that if a divorce is disputed, property bought for one partner by a spouse's parents before marriage can revert to the partner alone. That usually means the husband's family: they often try to increase their child's ability to attract a mate by buying him a home.

当这类事件发生时，女性更可能在财务方面吃亏。尽管离婚率的上升反映了对女性更宽容、更自由的态度，但法律似乎在离婚协议方面更倾向于男性。2003年发布的法律条文解释称，如果离婚双方存在争议，由一方配偶父母在婚前为其子女购买的房产可以只回归到该配偶名下。这通常就是指夫妻中男性的家庭：男方父母通常为儿子购买房产来提升其对吸引异性的吸引力。

In 2011 the Supreme Court went further. It ruled that in contested cases (as about one-fifth of divorces are), the property would be considered that of one partner alone if that partner's parents had bought it for him or her after the couple had got married. In addition, if one partner (rather than his or her parents) had bought a home before the couple wed, that person could be awarded sole ownership by a divorce court. This ruling has put women at a disadvantage too: by convention they are less often named on deeds.

2011年最高法院进一步规定：在有争议的案件中（离婚案中约五分之一是有相关争议的），如果一方配偶的父母为其子女在婚后购买房产，那么该房产会被认为是该方配偶所独有。此外，如果一方配偶（而不是其父母）在双方婚前购买了一处房产，那么离婚法庭会判决其拥有房产的完全产权。这样的规定同样让女性吃亏：事实上根据习俗，她们的名字通常不会出现在房产证上。

In practice, if the couple has children the person with custody often keeps the home—more often the mother. Yet the court's interpretation sets a worrying precedent for divorced

women. Their difficulties may be compounded by the two-child policy, which came into effect on January 1st. If couples have two children and both partners want custody, judges often assign parents one child each. Marriage and the family are still strong in China—but children clearly lie in a different asset class.

在实际操作中，如果离婚夫妇有孩子，有抚养权的一方通常保留房产——一般来说会是母亲。然而法院的解释还是为离异的女性设下了令人担忧的先例。她们的困境或许会因1月1日起实施的新计划生育政策而更加恶化。如果一对夫妇有两个孩子，同时双方配偶都希望要孩子的抚养权，法官通常会判定夫妻二人各自抚养一个孩子。婚姻和家庭观念在中国依然很强——但很明显，孩子就被当做了一种资产。