

# **Abortion and Ghost Weddings**

by James Sicree

When we hear the term 'Infanticide' you may picture something done in ancient Sparta by exposing unwanted or sickly children. Today, we know unwanted babies are not killed by exposure but more commonly by abortion. What you may not know is that many of these babies that are killed are girls, more commonly known as 'femicide'. This is very apparent in a large portion of Asian cultures. Parents in these cultures prefer boys over girls. And the results of this are shocking.

Sex-selective infanticide has been present since ancient Greece. Back then they threw unwanted girls into the sewers or exposed them. This caused a huge sex imbalance estimated to be seven boys to five girls, or a sex ratio of 1.4. The natural sex ratio at birth is 1.05. Modern China is developing the same problem as ancient Greece. It has the worst sex ratio in the world, with 115 boys for every 100 girls.

Now why would Chinese families not want daughters? Among many other reasons for this are that a male child will carry on the family name and legacy. But the modern crisis in China was in large part caused by the government's previous One Child Policy. This forced families to choose between having a son and having a daughter. Having a daughter would be seen as 'watering a neighbor's plant'. This is because a daughter would be married off and become part of her husband's family, leaving no child to take care of her parents in their old age. The bride's family wouldn't benefit from raising a daughter in this culture. In India the situation gets worse: the brides' families may have to pay huge dowries, again making girls look like an expense. This is why both families would choose to have a son instead.

Even though China has gotten rid of the One Child Policy, it didn't make it much better by just moving the number up one to the Two Child Policy. What happens now is parents may have a daughter for one of their children, but never for both, while no one minds having two sons. For the same exact reasons, Chinese families still want a son. This means that baby girls will still be aborted in larger numbers than baby boys. The male-to-female ratio is so bad that as of now over 33.59 million men will never have the chance

to get married, solely because there are not enough women. In India there are now 37 million men who cannot get Indian wives.

In China, the result of having too many men in a society has a huge negative impact. Other than just loneliness, this imbalance has many negative effects on the economy causing a drop in consumption and a rise in savings rates because families are saving to attract a wife. More important than that is the effect on crime: the sex imbalance has been accompanied by a rise in violent crimes, especially kidnappings, sex-trafficking, and prostitution. This effect can reach all the way to the European countries and even the Americas.

This shortage of women in Asian countries has caused more unique effects on the culture. One example is the rise in corpse brides and “ghost weddings”. This custom was found in Chinese history and in rural areas. Some superstitions say that an unmarried son, who was considered a “dead branch” of his family tree, could not be buried in the family grave as it would bring bad fortune. In mining town this was more common because young men often died in mining accidents. Now if a family had a son that just died in one of these accidents, they would then buy the corpse of a dead woman. They would then hold a ‘wedding’ ceremony so that the ‘couple’, who may have never known each other while alive, would be married in the afterlife. They even went as far as to pay dowries to the bride’s family. This solved the problem of burying a deceased, unmarried child for both families.

Unfortunately, there is such a shortage of females that there is a market for dead women. There is even a shortage of dead women. There are cases of auctions being held for the bodies of dead girls, which can reach \$5000. Some auctions are held while the girl is still dying in the hospital. This shortage has been the motive behind many cases of grave-robbing. In 2015 fourteen female corpses were stolen from a graveyard in Shanxi, China, probably for sale for ghost weddings. Unfortunately, the custom of ghost weddings has proven fatal to living girls, as some girls are now seen as more valuable dead than alive. In 2016 police arrested a man in northwest China for killing two women with mental disabilities so that he could sell their bodies for ghost weddings.

Another disturbing result that made the news recently is mandated dating. In South Korea the birth rates and number of people getting married is dropping. This has resulted in South Korean colleges having courses that mandate students to date each in hopes of increasing marriage rates and the population. While South Korea does not have population control like the Chinese One Child Policy, it does share the same cultural preference for having male children over female children.

Right now there are an estimated 70 million missing women and girls around the world. Killing baby girls is a bigger problem now than it ever was in the past. Legal abortion and population control are the main culprits, but local customs preferring boys can contribute to the problem. For people who support population control this may look good on paper: a shortage of women will always bring the population of the next generation down even faster. Some people may even think that a shortage of women is a good thing for women, believing that having fewer women will make them more valued. In reality, it just makes things worse, as you can see in the horrors of corpse brides and similar practices. There is difference between being valued as a person and being valuable as a commodity.

Why is this important to us? To us as Americans we have to make sure we don't do anything to make matters worse. America has a huge influence on the Third World, such as when President Barack Obama successfully campaigned for abortion to be legalized in Kenya. We need to make sure that our tax money doesn't go toward funding abortion or population control in other countries. We need to educate Americans saying that abortion hurts women, especially in the Third World. This is an example of how abortion can have horrible effects unseen in America.