Refugee Review Tribunal
AUSTRALIA

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

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Questions

1. Please obtain updated information on the situation of children born outside the PRC in breach of the Family Planning Regulations. If current information suggests that they are in fact forgiven and welcomed back to China, please try to establish the rationale for this.
2. Please obtain information as to whether parents of children born overseas, who appear to have breached the Family Planning Regulations on a number of bases, including being under age, are considered to have breached the regulations multiple times and if so, how their penalty is calculated. Please focus on Fujian and Guangdong provinces.
3. Please find information about the situation of children born overseas out of wedlock, whose parents cannot marry in China because they are too young, according to the Family Planning Regulations. Are they treated as illegitimate children, and their mothers treated as single mothers?
4. What would happen if the parents got married in Australia?
5. What is the annual per capita disposable income in Guangdong and Fujian?

RESPONSE

1. Please obtain updated information on the situation of children born outside the PRC in breach of the Family Planning Regulations. If current information suggests that they are in fact forgiven and welcomed back to China, please try to establish the rationale for this.

Available information indicates that Chinese nationals returning to China are generally required to pay family planning fees for children born in breach of family planning regulations. Advice from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), however, indicates that there are two circumstances in which couples returning to China are exempt from family planning fees. The first exemption applies to couples who have permanent
residency rights in another country, also known as “Overseas Chinese”. The second exemption applies to Chinese nationals who have returned to China with a second child after studying overseas for more than one year. DFAT have advised, however, that Chinese students who return from overseas with a third or subsequent child would incur family planning fees (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2008, DFAT Report No. 861 – China: RRT Information Request: CHN33538, 8 August – Attachment 1; Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2007, DFAT Report No. 746 – China: RRT Information Request: CHN32483, 6 December – Attachment 2; Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2007, DFAT Report 691 – China: RRT Information Request: CHN32173, 31 August – Attachment 3; DIMIA Country Information Service 2006, Country Information Report No.06/54 – China: Return of failed asylum seekers: family planning policies in Liaoning province. (sourced from DFAT advice of 22 September 2006), 26 September – Attachment 4; Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2005, DFAT Report 404 – China: RRT Information Request: CHN17471, 6 September – Attachment 5; Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2004, DFAT Report No. 327 – China: RRT Information Request: CHN17017, 7 October – Attachment 6).

For a more detailed examination of the above DFAT reports and sources please see the following information:

- On 8 August 2008 DFAT reported that some “affluent couples try to have a second child abroad so that the second child might obtain a foreign passport and will not be counted by family-planning officials” (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2008, DFAT Report No. 861 – China: RRT Information Request: CHN33538, 8 August – Attachment 1).

- On 6 December 2007 DFAT advised that in order to register an out of plan child, Chinese returnees are required to pay a family planning fee. However, DFAT reported that exemptions apply to Chinese nationals who have had the second child overseas and have been either studying abroad for more than one year or hold permanent residency in another country and are classified as “Overseas Chinese”. The DFAT report states that:

  According to the official policy, parents wishing to obtain a residency permit for their children in a particular area will generally be subject to the one child policy, regardless of where their children were born. This means that a Chinese person wishing to register their overseas born children would generally be required to pay the stipulated fine. However, a person holding Chinese nationality returning from overseas may be exempted from the one child policy under two circumstances. First, where Chinese students have studied overseas for more than one year, and if their second child is born overseas, they may obtain a residency permit for that second child upon returning to China without having to pay the fine. Second, Chinese who have a right to permanent residency in another country, and still hold their Chinese nationality, may be defined as “Overseas Chinese”. If so, they will not be required to pay the fine in order to obtain a residency permit for a second child upon returning to China. All other returning Chinese must pay a fine to register a second child (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2007, DFAT Report No. 746 – China: RRT Information Request: CHN32483, 6 December – Attachment 2).

- On 31 August 2007 DFAT provided advice regarding Chinese nationals returning to Shanghai with a second child. DFAT reported that in order to register a second child born overseas the parents would be required to pay a family planning fee. Exemptions apply to students but not to returning professionals or repatriated asylum seekers. DFAT state that:

  Second children born overseas who have returned to China are Chinese nationals if they have not acquired foreign citizenship, and are therefore still subject to the family-planning policy.
According to Shanghai Population and Family Planning Commission, returning students who have had a second child overseas can apply to local family-planning authorities for exemption from the fine, if they have lived and studied in a foreign country continuously for over one year. Unlike returning students, returning professionals who have retained their Chinese citizenship and repatriated asylum seekers would not be exempted from paying the fine if they had a second child overseas and sought to register the child in Shanghai (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2007, DFAT Report 691 – China: RRT Information Request: CHN32173, 31 August – Attachment 3).

- On 22 September 2006 DFAT reported that Chinese returnees are required to pay fines for the registration of out of plan children. National regulations, however, stipulate exemptions from family planning penalties for Chinese students returning from abroad with a second child. The following is an extract of the DFAT report:

  The National Population and Family Planning Commission promulgated special regulations regarding overseas Chinese students in 2002. The regulations stipulate that overseas students who have lived overseas for more than one year and who have given birth to or are pregnant with a second child, upon returning China, do not have to pay fines or face other penalties.

  There are no specific regulations that apply to Chinese citizens who have resided overseas for other than the purpose of study. According to the Laws and Regulations Department of the National Population and Family Planning Commission, this group of people would be treated in the same way as ordinary Chinese citizens, that is they would have to pay the fine in order to register the extra children. That said, we have no information to indicate that these regulations are or are not applied in practice (DIMIA Country Information Service 2006, Country Information Report No.66/54 – China: Return of failed asylum seekers; family planning policies in Liaoning province, (sourced from DFAT advice of 22 September 2006), 26 September – Attachment 4).

- A September 2005 DFAT report provides advice on the situation of an out of plan child born in Australia returning to China. DFAT advised that “students studying overseas were allowed a second child, but would have to pay penalties (at the level set by the province) for a third and any subsequent children” (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2005, DFAT Report 404 – China: RRT Information Request: CHN17471, 6 September – Attachment 5).

- On 7 October 2004 DFAT advised that provincial family planning regulations would apply to Chinese citizens returning to Lianjiang County. The report states that “the only exception is in cases where one or both of the parents had traveled overseas for study in which case a couple are allowed to have two children, but fees would be charged on return to China for the third and any subsequent children” (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2004, DFAT Report No. 327 – China: RRT Information Request: CHN17017, 7 October – Attachment 6).

2. Please obtain information as to whether parents of children born overseas, who appear to have breached the Family Planning Regulations on a number of bases, including being under age, are considered to have breached the regulations multiple times and if so, how their penalty is calculated. Please focus on Fujian and Guangdong provinces.

No information was found in the sources consulted which indicates that couples who have a child while under the legal age of marriage incur multiple family planning fees. The Population and Family Planning Regulations of the Province of Guangdong do not specify a

The Population and Family Planning Regulations of the Province of Guangdong do not provide any information on the situation for couples who have a child while they are under the legal age of marriage. Article 55 of the regulations does however, state that couples who have one child out of wedlock are subject to a social compensation fee which is twice the amount of the fee levied on couples who have an unauthorised second child. The regulations state that couples would incur larger penalties for subsequent children born out of wedlock (Population and Family Planning Regulations of the Province of Guangdong (Promulgated 25 July 2002, Effective 1 September 2002), Translation by Public Works and Government Services Canada – Attachment 7).

Article 14 of The Population and Family Planning Regulations of Fujian Province indicates that it is “forbidden” for couples to have children “before the time stipulated by this regulation”. The regulations state that couples considered to have had a child before the stipulated time include couples who have a child before marriage. The regulations state that this also applies to “those who become pregnant before they reach legally marrying age”. Article 39 of the regulations states that a social compensation fee of “zero point six to one time shall be imposed on those who give birth to a child ahead of schedule”. The following are the relevant excerpts from the regulations:

Article 14 It is forbidden to give birth to a child out of an extramarital affair or before the time stipulated by this Regulation.

Under any of the following circumstances, the child born is regarded as born before the stipulated time by the Regulation:

1) Those who give birth to a child before they get married (including those who become pregnant before they reach legally marrying age):

...Article 39 Anyone who violates this Regulation by one of the acts listed below shall be ordered to pay the corresponding number of times of the average annual disposable income of the urban residents or the net average annual income of the rural peasants of the county in the previous year when the child is born in violation of this regulation as social compensation fee by family planning administrative department of the county or by township people’s government or urban neighborhood office appointed by such administrative department:

1) A social compensation of zero point six to one time shall be imposed on those who give birth to a child ahead of the schedule (Population and Family
Planning Regulation of Fujian Province (Promulgated 26 July 2002, Effective 1 September 2002). UNHCR website – Attachment 8).

A report by DFAT, dated 28 October 2004, states that according to the Fujian Province Family Planning Commission the fee for having a child below the legal age of marriage is “between 60 and 100 per cent of the family’s previous year income”. DFAT advised that:

According the Family Planning Commission, women are required to obtain a birth permit prior to giving birth. Any child born without a birth permit attracts the same fee as a child born to parents below the legal age of marriage (20 for women and 22 for men). The fee is between 60 and 100 per cent of the family’s previous year income. If the family earned no income in the previous year the fee is calculated using the annual per capita income from their place of residence in Fujian (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2004, DFAT Report No. 336 – China: RRT Information Request: CHN17066, 28 October – Attachment 11).

The US Department of State (USDOS) reported in February 2009 that the minimum age for marriage in China is designed to “delay childbearing”. The report states that “it continued to be illegal in almost all provinces for a single woman to have a child”. The USDOS provides the following relevant information:

In order to delay childbearing, the law sets the minimum marriage age for women at 20 years and for men at 22 years. It continued to be illegal in almost all provinces for a single woman to have a child. In November 2007, Fujian Province adopted new penalties for children conceived out of wedlock, requiring violators to pay 6 to 8 percent of their income from the previous year, in addition to the standard social compensation fee (US Department of State 2009, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2008 – China, 25 February, Section 1 f – Attachment 9).

A 2007 journal article published by the Northwestern University Law Review provides information on the US Board of Appeals treatment of Chinese asylum seekers who claim to have had a child out of wedlock. The article provides the following information on the situation for underage couples who have a child out of wedlock:

In addition to the direct population control methods discussed above, the restrictions China places on marriage represent another significant component of its population control system. Most countries set statutory minimum ages for marriage to ensure physical and emotional maturity as well as both spouses’ ability to consent. China’s elevated standard, in contrast, is designed to further limit population growth. China’s minimum marriage ages of twenty years for women and twenty-two years for men—codified in the Marriage Law of the People’s Republic of China—are easily the highest in the world. In addition, these figures are merely national floors; many provinces trying to meet local population growth targets have set minimums as high as twenty-three years for women and twenty-five years for men.

In China, those prohibited by age from marrying are prohibited from becoming pregnant as well. It is illegal in almost every province for unmarried couples to bear a child, and single women who become pregnant may be forced to have abortions or pay very high social compensation fees. Local officials require unmarried women to undergo frequent gynaecological exams to ensure that they are not pregnant; if they are, they are required to have abortions (Rabin, K. 2007, ‘The Zero-Child Policy: How the Board of Immigration Appeals Discriminates Against Unmarried Asylum-Seekers Fleeing Coercive Family Planning Measures’, Northwestern University Law Review, vol. 101, no.2, pp. 971-972 – Attachment 10).
3. Please find information about the situation of children born overseas out of wedlock, whose parents cannot marry in China because they are too young. Are they treated as illegitimate children, and their mothers treated as single mothers?


The following reports provide information on societal attitudes towards pre-marital pregnancy in China:

- A 2008 journal article titled “Unintended pregnancy and its risk factors among university students in eastern China” reports on the increase in pre-marital pregnancies in China. The articles states that:

  In unmarried young women, especially young students, being pregnant is still considered unacceptable in Chinese culture. Data from China have [sic] shown that the primary reason for unmarried women to undergo induced abortions is simply that they are unmarried, and this could be true in the present study as well (Ma, Q., Ono-Kihara, M., Cong, L., Xu, G., Pan, X., Zarnani, S., Ravari, S.M. & Kihara, M. 2008, ‘Unintended pregnancy and its risk factors among university students in eastern China’, Contraception, vol. 77, no. 2, p.111 – Attachment 12).

- On 5 March 2008, The Toronto Star reported on the increase in sex before marriage in China. The report also states that there are a “rising number of abortions among younger Chinese”. According to the report “abortion is readily available and viewed as a much better alternative to the searing shame of being an unwed teenage mother in China” (Chang, A. 2008, ‘China hooking up with love hotels, bars; Young Chinese are embracing their own version of the sexual revolution’, The Toronto Star, 5 March – Attachment 13).

- On 13 May 2007, The New York Times reported on increased abortions among young single women in China. The report states that:

  For single women, confidentiality is a major concern. A single, pregnant woman faces enormous social stigma and shame and has few options beyond abortion. Single motherhood is almost nonexistent, and unmarried pregnant women rarely carry a pregnancy to term in order to place a child up for adoption (Yardley, J. 2007 ‘Today’s Face of Abortion in China Is a Young, Unmarried Woman’, The New York Times, 13 May)
On 8 August 2008, China Daily reported on rising teenage pregnancy. The report states that “getting pregnant before marriage is definitely considered as something extremely “immoral” and “indecent” (Fangchao, Li. 2005, ‘Hotline of hope for pregnant girls’, China Daily, 8 August – Attachment 15).

A 2004 research article titled “Unintended pregnancy and induced abortion among unmarried women in China: a systematic review” reports that “premarital sex is more common in some urban areas that we expected, and that abortion is the main response”. The report states that studies on premarital pregnancies in three areas showed that “most women who had become pregnant had an induced abortion”. The rates of induced abortions for unmarried women in the three areas were 86%, 90% and 96% (Qian, X., Tang, S. & Garner, P. 2004, ‘Unintended pregnancy and induced abortion among unmarried women in China: a systematic review’, BMC Health Services Research, vol. 4, no. 1, p.3 – Attachment 16).


4. What would happen if the parents got married in Australia?

No information was found in the sources consulted regarding the situation for Chinese returnees who have a child out of wedlock and get married overseas. However, a DFAT report dated 28 October 2004, provides advice on the situation for a Chinese couple who were married and subsequently had two children while in Australia. DFAT advised that the couple would have to pay a fee in China in order to get their first child registered. DFAT advised that this was due to the fact that “women are required to obtain a birth permit prior to giving birth”. DFAT provided the following advice on the situation for the returning couple and the recognition of overseas marriages in Fujian province:

A. Fujian Province Family Planning Commission has advised that the Fujian authorities do not recognise overseas marriages.

B. The Fujian Judicial Administration has advised that a couple married overseas would need to go first to a PRC Embassy in the country where they were married to have their marriage notarised. On return to China they would then need to go to the Notary Authority of the Judicial Administration to have the marriage notarised. With the two notarisations the marriage would be accepted.

D. The first child’s birth would be registered but only on payment of a fee (see below).

E. According the Family Planning Commission, women are required to obtain a birth permit prior to giving birth. Any child born without a birth permit attracts the same fee as a child born to parents below the legal age of marriage (20 for women and 22 for men). The fee is between 60 and 100 per cent of the family’s previous year income. If the family earned no income in the previous year the fee is calculated using the annual per capita income from their place of residence in Fujian. Assuming that the mother did not apply for a permit before the child was born, the parents would be required to pay the fee outlined above (Department of Foreign...
5. What is the annual per capita disposable income in Guangdong and Fujian

Information provided for this question has been divided into the following subcategories:

- Annual per capita disposable income in Guangdong
- Annual per capita disposable income in Fujian.

Annual average disposable income in Guangdong


A report dated 13 February 2009 published by News GD, a Guangdong news website reports that:

The urban residents’ disposable income rose to 19,733 RMB, up 11.5 percent year-on-year, and the rural residents’ disposable income was 6,400 RMB, up 13.8 percent year-on-year (“Guangdong to maintain sustainable development in 2009 amid financial crisis” 2009, News GD, 13 February http://www.newsgd.com/news/guangdongl/content/2009-02/13/content_4913587.htm – Accessed 13 October 2009 – Attachment 19).


A report dated June 2009 on the International Conference on the Future Economic Development of Guangdong Province website states that:


Annual average disposable income in Fujian

The following reports provide information on the per capital disposable income in Fujian province for urban residents:


No information was found in the sources consulted regarding the per capita disposable income for rural residents in Fujian. The Fujian Statistical Yearbook 2008 states that in 2007 the per capita net income for rural residents in Fujian was 5,467.08 Yuan. The Fujian Statistical Yearbook 2008 does not provide the per capita disposable income for rural households.

List of Sources Consulted

Internet Sources:

Government Information & Reports
Immigration & Refugee Board of Canada http://www.irb.gc.ca/
UK Home Office http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk
US Congressional-Executive Commission on China http://www.cecc.gov/
US Department of State http://www.state.gov/
United Nations (UN)
UNHCR http://www.unhchr.ch/
Non-Government Organisations
Amnesty International website http://www.amnesty.org/
Freedom House http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=1
Human Rights Watch http://www.hrw.org/
International News & Politics
BBC News website http://news.bbc.co.uk/
Region Specific Links
Caijing Magazine http://english.caijing.com.cn/
Fujian Provisional Bureau of Statistics website http://www.stats-fj.gov.cn/
News GD http://www.newsngd.com/
Search Engines

Databases:
FACTIVA (news database)
BACIS (DIAC Country Information database)
REFINFO (IRBDC (Canada) Country Information database)
ISYS (RRT Research & Information database, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, US Department of State Reports)
RRT Library Catalogue

List of Attachments


25. ‘Fact Sheet* – Fujian Province – China’ 2008, Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada website, December