

Department of Studies in Culture and Religion

Author: Qiu Yue

Title: Mosuo Matrilinear Society, Their Kinship System and Mainstream Chinese Society: Possibilities of Integration and/or Preservation of Traditional Cultural Aspects in China

Supervisor: Mgr. Luděk Jirka, Ph.D.

Bachelor thesis deals with the last matrilinear society in China – so-called Mosuo. Author Qiu Yue analyzed changes of traditional Mosuo matrilinear kinship system (due to modernization, influences from China, but also by tourism). Author also realized a qualitative research in Mosuo in Southeast China to conduct data. Qiu Yue concluded that traditional matrilinear society is changing into modern type of nuclear family.

Bachelor thesis brings about visible effort to present whole history of Mosuo and it is not therefore aimed only at the Mosuo matrilinear system. This is somehow contradictory to the title, but historical introduction needs to be seen as necessary guidance for those readers who are not familiar with Mosuo and/or ethnic composition of China. Description of matrilinear kinship system itself started just on the page 20 and the mismatch between title and content could be little bit confusing for readers; however I do not consider it as a huge problem.

Following chapters are already about matrilinear kinship system. Author wrote this part of bachelor thesis descriptively and she provided clear understanding about important aspects of Mosuo matrilinear disposition. It should be noted that their matrilinear system is not the “clear form” which we know from the Anthropology of Kinship. Authors’ huge interest in the research of Mosuo is perceptible and information about this group is exhaustive, but more abstract theorizing could bring more enlightenment for understanding.

I should mention two critical points important during the process of writing. The first one is connected with terms “matriarchal” and “matrilinear.” At the beginning, author in her first draft clearly stated matriarchal, but the problem is that there is not an entire agreement among anthropologists whether matriarchal society ever existed. Therefore I give author an advice to rewrite it into matrilinear. Second point is connected with qualitative research. In the first draft were not results from qualitative research appropriately undertaken because citations from interviews were not utilized and the whole part was simply short. This could be considered as the most problematic part, at least from my point of view, but it was fixed in the final submission.

I would highlight four positive points – author added “basic terms” to introduction, she communicated extremely flexible, her effort given to her work was enormous and anthropologically relevant value of conclusion should be appreciated. Bachelor thesis encompasses some points which could be more analyzed, such as individualization of Mosuo society or interconnectedness of participants to other ethnic or social groups.

Bachelor thesis fulfills the requirements for successful defense and according to the whole content **I would ask the author what makes the Mosuo not matriarchal, but matrilinear group?**

Mgr. Luděk Jirka, Ph.D.

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