

The Influence of "Pastoral Feminism" on Women's Values in Terms of Bride Price -- A Case Study of Little Red Book

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Abstract. With the development of the economy and the improvement of people's education level, Chinese women are constantly awakening their awareness of rights and fighting for their own rights under the influence of feminism. However, as the influence of feminism has expanded in China, some Chinese people have distorted it and developed it into pastoral feminism, using it as a tool to compete for interests. The problem of betrothal prices has become more pronounced in recent years due to the imbalance of the male-to-female ratio. Betrothal price often leads to conflicts between the families of men and women, and the negative impact of rural feminism on Chinese women has increased. Influenced by rural feminism, some Chinese women have increasingly strict requirements on betrothal gifts. The outrageous dowry happened. Some provinces are even known for their high betrothal prices. The research object of this paper is the bride price and rural feminism. This paper analyzes the influence of rural feminism on women's values in terms of bride price, and uses qualitative research methods to research, and draws the conclusion that rural feminism makes women attach too much importance to the quantity and form of bride price, and regard marriage as the result of a transaction. The author hopes to deepen readers' understanding of rural women's rights and the bride price through this paper.

Keywords: bride price, pastoral feminism, women.

1. Introduction

Bride price refers to the money and goods paid by one party (mainly the man) and his relatives to the other party (mainly the woman) and their relatives according to custom, which is part of the traditional Chinese betrothal marriage. Betrothal marriage is based on family status and family wealth. Therefore, the betrothal price becomes a kind of wealth transferred from the groom's family to the bride's family or the newlywed's family in the form of cash or in kind, which is an accessory in arranged marriage [1, 2]. In ancient times, as the traditional patriarchal ideology dominated the society and economy, it was difficult for women to survive without marriage, so parents married as much as possible to ensure their daughters' married life. After the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the effect and function of bride prices have been replaced by a relevant legal system of the country. The General Principles of the Civil Law of the People's Republic of China clearly stipulate "the sale of marriage and the use of marriage to ask for property", but bride price still exists as a custom.

With the improvement of economic conditions and living standards, people pay more and more attention to material satisfaction, and pay more attention to spiritual needs, especially to love and marriage. Women's values are greatly influenced by the times. Traditional ideas are changing, and some modern ideas have occupied the mainstream. For example, women's mate selection standards are no longer simply the pursuit of beauty in appearance and figure. The value orientation of women has changed a lot. Because of the different levels of education and knowledge, they have obvious differences in thinking mode and behavior, showing different characteristics from ordinary people. For example, some women have a strong tendency toward self-actualization and like to change their own situation through self-struggle; other women are more trusting and willing to accept endless "help" from others. In this fertile land of economic prosperity and intellectual liberation, the ideological trend of "Chinese pastoral feminism" came into being. It not only reflects the psychological state and values of contemporary women, but also directly relates to the ideology and moral sentiment of the vast majority of ordinary people, becoming the heaviest stumbling block on

the road to stagnation of equal rights. Pastoral feminism emphasizes women's unilateral enjoyment of rights and propagates extreme sexism of male-female opposition [3]. It requires men to have the consciousness of unconditional devotion to women [4]. This is a kind of radicalization and alienation of feminism. Marxist feminism emphasizes economic liberation, political liberation and ideological liberation, and pursues equal social status between men and women [5]. Pastoral feminism does not belong to women's rights. It does not pursue equal rights between men and women. Instead, it pursues female privilege. The essence of rural feminism is a kind of concept that is dependent on the patriarchy to seek its own interests. Rural feminism cannot make Chinese women get rid of the plight of oppression, but it can only make the contradiction between men and women more intense.

Zhou Ying (2022) believes that there are three main reasons for the spread of rural feminist rights: the rampant fear of women under media violence, the lack of media literacy, and the trap of desire under consumerism [6]. For these reasons, some feminists and women whose values have not yet been formed become or tend to be pastoral feminists. For example, the development of consumerism with the help of microblogs affects women's understanding of feminism [7]. This makes some women choose to pursue their own interests in rural feminism. Since the topic of women can arouse wide attention in society, the feminist marketing account has the wealth code. Feminist marketing accounts are widely available on Little Red Book, Weibo, and other forums. They promote rural feminist rights and use feminist discourse to package themselves. This not only propagated rural feminism, but also caused the stigmatization of feminism, and led to the intensification of misogyny [8, 9]. This is not conducive to women's liberation and people's unity.

"Pastoral feminism" uses gender discourse to regard betrothal price as "paternity money" compensated by men to women's families and demands an unreasonable amount. This paper takes Little Red Book as an example to study how "rural feminism" distorts women's values on bride price. Through this research, the author hopes to find the right way to treat the bride price and avoid the influence of rural feminism.

2. Method

The author based on qualitative research. The specific platform selected is Little Red Book. Therefore, the author uses "bride price" as the keyword to search on Little Red Book software. Then the author selected posts with high discussion degrees (more than 1,000 likes), and randomly selected 100 posts for research.

3. Result

3.1. Attitude

Among them, 69 were in favor of the bride price, eight were against it, and 23 were neutral. As the agreed post said, "The bride price is not money, but an attitude of the man. I think giving birth to a baby is terrible, and the bride price should be given. " Neutral posts said, " It doesn't matter whether the bride price is there or not, as long as the couple loves each other, " while those opposed said, "The bride price is a feudal custom and should not exist in modern society."

3.2. Frequently Occurring Words

Words like the cost of marriage, and attitude come up very frequently. The cost of getting married appeared at least 168 times in 100 posts and attitudes at least 214 times. There are many posts about breaking up with men because of the bride price, and they refuse to budge on the bride price. The family conditions of the men are not enough to support the high betrothal price.

3.3. Content of Comments

The comments focused on betrothal price, but the values of betrothal price varied. Some believed that the betrothal price was related to the economic strength of the husband's family, while others directly demanded a high betrothal price. Most of the comments discussed the amount of bride price, which they believe is a given and something women should strive for. According to the content of the post and the comments in it, women's opinions on bride price are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Concept Extraction process

Original text	Concept	Description
The bride price is a test of his parents' financial strength, but also to see if he is potential. Think about it. His parents struggled for 20, or 30 years and they can't even make \$200,000. What do you think the odds are that he's potential?	Betrothal price and the economic strength of the male family.	The bride price is used as a tool to test whether a man is sincere about getting married, as well as a tool to test the attitude of the man's family of origin towards the woman. The bride price is used as a tool to screen the financial ability of the man's family.
I have the bride price and dowry in my hands, my parents didn't want to give them to me. This is my money to live on. I will save the expenses and maintain financial stability. I will not give it to my husband, because he has his own money. I will not do any business or investment, only work. I don't like risk. I don't feel safe about anything. Only money can give a sense of security, because women are responsible for giving birth to children. Women are most vulnerable when they are giving birth and raising children. If a woman gets divorced at this time, she will be left with no one to rely on. But when you have money, you don't have to be afraid of that.	Bride price and living security.	The bride price was high to guarantee a sense of security and the woman's family status. Use the bride price as a safeguard against being left alone after a divorce.
First of all, the bride price is a must. This is for you to bear the risk of birth after entry, and part of the bride price can be given to the parents, and how the parents want to use it is the parent's business.	Bride price and birth.	The idea is that fertility is a kind of labor, and the bride price is what men pay for that labor.
The parents raised their daughter, leaving the bride price to the parents as comfort and pension security for the parents.	The bride price and the woman's family.	The bride price is regarded as the man's compensation to the woman's family for raising the woman.

4. Discussion

4.1. Reason for the Bride Price

In China, women have been oppressed for a long time, and because of the rampant fear of media violence, they lack a sense of security when they get married. Therefore, it is easy to be influenced by the emphasis of rural feminism on women's material benefits. So, they use the bride price as a tool to ensure their sense of security and claim it as the woman's private property. In order to maintain their low-income and high-consumption life, women make up for their income imbalance by marrying men with high income and low consumption. But nowadays the divorce rate is so high, they have to consider the possibility of accidents or divorce. When they go back to single, the imbalance will come back. So, the bride price is the security deposit to ensure that they can maintain a low-income and high-consumption lifestyle.

Because pastoral feminism emphasizes women's privilege, women regard reproduction as a kind of power and labor that men cannot do. The bride price is believed to be a way for men to compensate women for having children. They sell themselves as a commodity, allowing men to pay a bride price in exchange for the right to procreate themselves. They think giving birth is a kind of harm to themselves, and there is a fear of giving birth. In addition, they believe that reproduction is a kind of gender oppression and exploitation by men on women. So, they ask men to compensate them with high dowry prices.

Pastoral feminism is spread by the feminist marketing account, which takes the pastoral feminist discourse as an excuse to ask for a high bride price. In addition, pastoral feminists usually uphold the concept of egoism. They also regard the bride price as the compensation of men for the oppression of women for years, a tradition worth preserving, and the exchange for women's reproductive rights. Women's view of mate choice changes with the social changes, but in essence, it is upward compatible. Most of them choose highly recognized social occupational groups [10]. This also led to the discrimination of rural women against men at the bottom, who also took the high bride price as a way to discriminate and reject men at the bottom.

Influenced by the pastoral feminist demand that men have the consciousness of unconditional devotion to women, some women do not see men as being on an equal footing with themselves. They believe that the value of female youth is greater than that of male youth, and it costs more to raise women than men. They see the bride price as a sunk cost for the woman's family to raise her and accompany her to the south. Therefore, they demanded high betrothal prices for women to compensate for the youth of women's families and women's companionship with men. This allows women to objectify themselves to betrothal value in marriage.

The author thinks that the sky-high dowry price and so on should not exist. But through the survey, women think that the dowry price can bring them very rich material benefits. Because of the influence of rural feminism, some women pay more attention to material benefits. They think that the bride price is a measure of whether the man loves them, but often ignore the economic condition of the man's family. When the man's family cannot come up with enough money, they think that the man's family does not value them or the man's family conditions do not deserve to marry them. They don't see the man and themselves as a family. They are more likely to think in terms of their own interests and only consider the interests of men if they have satisfied their own interests. Most of them keep the betrothal price as their private property, seeing it as a way out of future marital bankruptcy. Moreover, most women do not believe that dowry should be equal to the bride price. Some women believe that the size of the dowry is determined by the free will of the woman's family. But they also demand a high bride price from the man's family. This is a form of asset transfer and exploitation of the man's family. Women take the bride price as a given. They do not accept that the bride price is a relic of the traditional feudal marriage. The author believes that this is the influence of rural feminists' emphasis on material benefits. It distorts women's values about the pursuit of wealth. She made women more inclined to get something for nothing. This makes it easier for women to get rich quickly.

4.2. Suggestions

The author believes that the sky-high bride price should be abolished. The sky-high bride price is a one-way exploitation of the husband's family. On January 4, 2022, the Opinions of the CPC Central Committee and The State Council on Comprehensively Promoting the Key Work of Rural Revitalization in 2022 proposed that special measures should be taken to address prominent problems in key areas of changing customs, such as high bride price. That suggests the government is also pushing back against sky-high bride prices. And the betrothal gift is a feudal relic left over from the patriarchal society. Something that should have been abolished. The bride price is still widely used as a custom, and the author thinks it should be retained as a ritual. People shouldn't ask for a lot of money. And women should correctly study Marxist feminism, correctly view women's rights and bride price, and reject and resist pastoral feminism. The country should improve and strengthen education, increase support for female education, vocational training and other aspects and strengthen

economic construction, to create more job opportunities for women. It is women who are truly independent and push for women's liberation.

5. Conclusion

Through this study on the values of rural feminism for women in the bride price, this paper has argued that rural feminism makes women pay more attention to material benefits and objectify themselves. Therefore, they attach more importance to the bride price in marriage. They believe that the bride price is the threshold of marriage, and the price a man must pay to get a wife. Since there are few kinds of research on betrothal price and rural women's rights in the past, this paper provides an angle to study betrothal price. The study contributes to the understanding of the relationship between rural feminism and women's attitudes towards betrothal prices, as well as the reasons for the occurrence of sky-high betrothal prices. This paper can also give some thoughts to those who support the discourse of sky-high betrothal price and hope to make people adopt the right attitude towards betrothal price.

However, there are some limitations. A limitation of this study is that the research methods in this paper are not perfect enough. The data channels collected in this paper are too single, and the data collection is only limited to the network platform of Little Red Book, and the data collection is not enough. Secondly, the research on the channels through which rural feminism influences women's values on the bride price is also insufficient. Thirdly, the author's attitude towards the bride price is too subjective from the point of view of criticizing the feudal marriage system, ignoring the research on the bride price as a local custom. More broadly, research is also needed to determine the validity of the existence of betrothal prices.

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