

Eugenics Discourse and Racial Improvement in Republican China (1911-1949)

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1. Introduction

As the imperial pressures of Western powers were realized in the last half of the 19th century, East Asian countries, which perceived themselves as facing a crisis of national decay and racial extermination, felt the necessity of racial improvement with national prosperity and military power to survive. Informed by the increasing acceptance of Social Darwinism, eugenics, the new discipline for racial improvement, became regarded as a practical plan to achieve national prosperity and military power with hygiene and physical education.¹⁾

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1) Francis Galton (1822-1911), the inventor of eugenics, defined eugenics as the science which deals with all influences that improve the inborn qualities of a race; also with those that develop them to the utmost advantage. Francis Galton, "Eugenics: Its Definition, Scope and Aims," *The American Journal of Sociology* vol.10-1, 1904, p.1.

Eugenics discourse could justify social discrimination and support racism and imperialism due to racial improvement. But because the state and society acquired rights to interfere with the personal body through eugenics, East Asian countries intended to accept eugenics in order to assist nation building. Eugenics was translated as Shanzhongxue (Good Speciology), Hunyin Zhesixue (Marriage and Progeny Studies), Renzhong Gailiangxue (Racial Improvement Studies), and so on in late imperial China. This means that eugenics was understood as the study of the improvement of races through good genes.

Sinology research has recently concentrated on eugenics in republican China. Frank Dikötter drew attention to the transition from Confucian discourse on morality and metaphysics to eugenics and sexuality discourses (Frank Dikötter, 1995; 1998). Yuehtsen Juliette Chung suggested eugenics discourse had been intertwined with the issue of race, gender, nationalism and scientific technology in the domain of national survival, emphasizing understanding of eugenics in the transnational and comparative perspective of China and Japan (Yuehtsen Juliette Chung, 2002). Hiroko Sakamoto pointed out the diffusion of eugenics and sexuality discourses in the course of transition from Confucian family discourse to a nation-state culture and discourse (Hiroko Sakamoto, 2004). Yu Yeon-sil argued that the eugenics discourse developed from the themes of freedom of love and sexual liberation in 1920s into themes related to the nation in the 1930s and 1940s (Yu Yeon-sil, 2008). Lee Bo-gyeong regarded eugenics as the essence of Chinese modernity and the way of internalized thinking of imperial logic in the course of Western modernization (Lee Bo-gyeong, 2008). Cheon Seong-lim noted the role of eugenics discourse in women's liberation and social renovation through an writings on Ellen Key (1849-1926) and Zhang

Jingsheng (1888-1970) in the 1920s (Cheon Seong-lim, 2008).

These studies have made important contributions in that they illuminate the intellectual space and role of Chinese eugenics in republican China. However, existing studies have not concentrated on the role of eugenics as a medical discourse and have not been able to explain how eugenics in China related to nation, social transformation, and health discourses such as the improvement of race, freedom of love, birth control, and the management of disease without the regulation of sterilization. This paper will be contributed to analyze how different theories surrounding eugenics as a racial discourse were incorporated into larger social concerns of the time such as Social Darwinism, freedom of love, and population problem.

2. Mixed Marriage and Eugenics

It was Yan Fu's (1854-1921) translation *Tianyanlun* (Evolution of Heaven, 1898) that first presented eugenics discourse in China. *Tianyanlun* systemically translated and introduced Social Darwinism. The book was consisted of eighteen arguments and seventeen subjects. Yan Fu translated eugenics as Zhezhongliuliangzhishu ("the principle of improvement by selection" 擇種留良之術) in the 10th argument of "Zen'an" (The Difficulty of Selection) among eighteen arguments. The original author of the book, Thomas Henry Huxley (1825-95), argued that eugenics allowed for the adaptation of plants and animals and produced good results in his book, *Evolution and Ethics* (1893). However, if it was adopted by humans and society through artificial selection and elimination, he argued that it would only bring about the degeneration of the race. Huxley pointed out that human society faced the struggle for existence, as well as overpopulation,

and noted the necessity of education to overcome this (Yan Fu, 1898: the 9th and 10th arguments). In contrast, Yan Fu criticized Huxley using Herbert Spencer's (1820-1903) perspective. Spencer thought that inferior species gave birth to many descendents but they died young; superior species had few descendents, but they died old (Yan Fu, 1898: the 15th argument). Spencer did not openly support eugenics, but it was obvious to him that eugenics initiated science for the development of mankind.

Yan Fu's concept of eugenics was presented as "Baozhongyuyi" (preservation of the race) in the journal *Guowenbao* (National News) in 1898, and he suggested that the preservation of the race and the evolution of the world order would occur under the law of the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest. He pointed out the rapid progress of the white race and the degeneration of the "red," "black," and "brown" races for the last two hundred years. To escape the crisis of Chinese extermination and degeneration, he thought "Jinzhong" (the advancement of race) was needed. How would the race evolve? Yan Fu's conclusion was the improvement of the genes. It does not appear that he advocated mixed marriages between the "yellow" and the "white" race to create a superior gene. He thought that the white race had persecuted other races, and had improved itself through eugenic marriage. According to his logic, the Chinese race could achieve the improvement of the race by eugenic marriage among local residents, not through mixed marriage with the white race. He argued that the genes and the environment of the Chinese race could be improved, through abolishing early marriage and improving environment and nutrition (Yan Fu, 1898).

Liang Qichao (1873-1929) viewed "intermingling of the race," or "mixed breeding" positively, arguing the elimination of early marriage. He viewed

Han people as being of mixed blood. He promoted a greater nationalism (daminzuzhuyi) which included all yellow people dwelling on the soil of empire. The Han race could unite the globe. While the white race was degraded by fragmentation, the yellow race will be aggrandized by integration. His argument of mixed marriage was just on the yellow people, not on the yellow and the white races (Frank Dikötter, 1992: 82-91).

In contrast, Yi Nai (1875-?), who belonged to the 1898 reformers group in Hunan province, presented four tactics for the accomplishment of Ziqiang (self-strengthening) in the *Xiangbao* (Hunan Gazette). These were Gaifa (reformist law), Tongjiao (communication of learning), Qucun (sovereign and subject), and Hehun (mutual marriage). These four tactics would allow for the accomplishment of Ziqiang (self-strengthening). Gaifa meant abiding by both domestic and international law. Tongjiao meant learning Western and Chinese scholarship. Quchun emphasized both civil and monarchic rights. Finally, Hehun referred to marriages between the yellow and white races. These arguments brought about social repercussions that caused *Xiangbao* to cease publication.²⁾

Kang Youwei (1858-1927), the teacher of the 1898 reformers, presented the idea of encouraging the fit and eliminating the unfit to improve the race in his *Datongshu* (Book of the Great Community, 1919). He classified civilization and barbarianism according to skin color. He argued that the African black race evolved into the yellow race via the Indian black race or the brown race, and the yellow race would be assimilated into the white

2) Yi Nai, "Zhongguo yiyiruoweiqiangshuo (China should take its weakness for strength)", *Xiangbao* (The Hunan Gazette), 20, 1898; Cai Lesu ed, *Zhongguo sixiangshi cankaoziliaoji wanqingzhi minguojuan* (The Material Collections of Chinese Thought History from Late Qing to Republican Period), vol. 1, (Qinghua Daxue chubanshe, 2005), pp. 107-110.

race through mixed marriage between the yellow and the white race. This would result in the emergence of a great communal world. Kang Youwei argued that inferior races such as the black and brown races should die out through sterilization to improve the human race (Lee Bo-kyeong, 2008: 12-13).

The 1898 reformers regarded the white race as superior; whites always won the war. The Japanese victory against Russia in the Russo-Japanese War (1904~1905), however, demonstrated the superiority of the yellow race all over the world. This war was a sort of racial war and changed the white race's conception that it was superior to the yellow race.

It was in the May 4th Movement period that eugenics discourse newly entered the spotlight as an intellectual discourse geared toward improving the race in the 20th century. New cultural intellectuals who supported democracy and science concentrated on a criticism of Confucian patriarchy. The leaders of the new cultural movement attacked patriarchy in journals such as *Xinqingnian* (New Youth) and *Shaonian Zhongguo* (The Young China).

Shaonian Zhongguo particularly sought to promote social transformation by remodeling modes of thought and lifestyles; these were the journal's targets to bring about human reform (Jeong Mun-sang, 2003). The journal published a special issue on women in October 1919, criticizing traditional Chinese patriarchy and spreading a new cultural movement through the idea of "Mofan Jiating" (exemplary family), which was based on a small family system of monogamy. This special issue carried articles that criticized large family systems and the legitimacy of the small family system. One of the articles suggested that Mofan Jiating should be based on monogamy. This was contrasted with "E Jiating" (bad family), which was based on the

large family system. The purpose of Mofan Jiating was to improve the race and reform the environment. The parents in Mofan Jiating ought to have healthy bodies and noble personalities. It was believed that, in this way, the race would be improved.³⁾

While the criticism of large, patriarchal family system brought about advocacy of the small family system and Mofan Jiating, eugenics strengthened the necessity for Mofan Jiating. New cultural intellectuals' criticism of the patriarchal social order reached its peak in the freedom of love and the liberation of individuality. Eugenics advocated the legitimacy of the freedom of love and the liberation of individuality as well as the small family system.⁴⁾

Ellen Key (1849-1926), a Swedish feminist writer, had an impact on Chinese intellectuals from 1919. She argued that freedom of love not only increased the individual's happiness, but also produced superior descendents from the eugenic perspective. This argument acquired the powerful support of Chinese intellectuals (Cheon Seong-lim, 2008: 189). It was Zhou Jianren (1888-1984) who introduced the freedom of love into Chinese society from the eugenic perspective. Zhou Jianren, the youngest of Lu Xun's four brothers, had taken the lead in the introduction of eugenics discourse in *Dongfang Zazhi* (The East Journal) and *Funü Zazhi* (The Woman Journal).

New cultural intellectuals such as Zhou Jianren no longer pursued mixed marriage as the 1898 reformers did. Zhou Jianren warned that contact with

3) Wu Ruonan Nūshi, "Lun Zhongguo jiating yinggai gaizao (Discussion for Reconstruction of Chinese Family)," *Shaonian Zhongguo* (The Young China) 1-4, 1919.

4) Huang Ai Nūshi, "Mofan Jiating wei Shehui jimbude zhongxin (The Exemplary Family is the Center of Social Progress)," *Shaonian Zhongguo*, 1-4, 1919.

the white race would result in the ruin and the degeneration of the Chinese race. Because the Chinese people could not adapt to the environmental change brought by the white race, he predicted that they would eventually be exterminated. Thus, it was necessary to consider genetic and environmental elements. Zhou Jianren argued that freedom of love based on beauty and optimism should become the criterion for selecting spouses in order to improve the race from the genetic perspective.⁵⁾

However, not all new cultural intellectuals denied the necessity of mixed marriage. Zhang Jingsheng (1888-1970), the author of *Xingshi* (Sexual History, 1926), propagated Waihunzhi (the external marriage system). Waihunzhi was represented in *Meide Shehui Zuzhifa* (A Method of Organizing Beautiful Society) in 1925. The concept of Waihunzhi was to improve the race by liberal mixed marriage with other races. Zhang Jingsheng's purpose was actually to increase mutual understanding among races and reach the great world commune rather than improving the Chinese race.⁶⁾ Thus, he did not only propose marrying white people, but also expanded the mixed marriage concept to include intermarriages with minorities. Furthermore, he argued that Disanzhongshui (the third water), a female hormone occurring through the female orgasm, played an important role in producing superior descendents. Despite his argument of mixed marriage, mixed marriage was not integral way for him to improving the race any more.

5) Zhou Jianren, "Du Zhongguozhi yousheng wenti (Reading Eugenics Problem in China)," *Dongfang Zazhi* (The East Journal), 22-8, 1925.

6) Zhang Jingsheng, *Zhang Jingsheng Wenji* (Collections of Zhang Jingsheng's Works), vol. 1, (Guangzhou: Guangzhou chubanshe, 1998), p.156.

3. The Eugenics Debates in the 1920s

The eugenics debate between Pan Guangdan and Zhou Jianren was representative of the eugenics debate as a whole in 1920s. They developed this interchange in *Dongfang Zazhi* from November 1924 to April 1925. The argument was initiated in Pan Guangdan's paper about the "Zhongguozhi Yousheng wenti (Eugenics problem in China)." His arguments were: first, with the development of the health care system, the possibility of survival of the inferior and the weak went up, and negative selection and the anti eugenic consequences increased. Second, as individualism had diffused since May 4th Movement, individual selection of love and marriage had increased. This did not fit eugenic criteria. Rather, Chinese traditional familism and parents' selection of spouses for their offspring agreed with eugenic criteria. Third, the obsession with posterity helped to maintain the number of China's population proper. With the introduction of the idea of birth control, the Chinese superior gene decreased. Pan Guangdan endorsed the theory of birth control, but he argued that the implementation of birth control resulted in the degeneration of race.⁷⁾

To address this point, Zhou Jianren argued in April 1925 that the good environment and social action had had important effect on national survival. He thought that the genetic element was secondary, and that birth control had no relation with the degeneration of the race. Moreover, while traditional familism was anti-eugenics, he argued that an individual selecting a healthy spouse accorded with eugenics. Because social class and economic ability could not become criteria for eugenics, and the social

7) Pan Guangdan, "Zhongguozhi yousheng wenti (Eugenics Problem in China)," *Dongfang Zazhi*, 21-22, 1924.

class system rather dismissed superior genes, he thought that reformist socialism did not conflict with the eugenic ideal and that a systemic reform was needed for the nation to develop.⁸⁾

Pan Guangdan criticized Zhou Jianren's perspective. While Zhou Jianren put excessive emphasis on social elements, Pan Guangdan argued he neglected biological elements. That is, while Zhou Jianren underlined environmental elements in eugenics, Pan Guangdan emphasized genetic elements.⁹⁾ The debate between environmentalism and biological determinism was extended to the debate between Pan Guangdan and Sun Benwen (1892-1979).

Trained from the cultural sociologist William F. Ogburn (1886-1959), Sun Benwen critiqued and denounced four fallacies in Pan Guangdan's eugenics in "Culture and Eugenics" in 1929.¹⁰⁾ These included the fallacy of applying animal breeding as a model for human rearing, the fallacy of considering cultural influences as biological determinism, the fallacy of using the Intelligence Quotient test as a sufficient criterion to distinguish the superior from the inferior, and the fallacy of measuring a person's ability by standards of wealth and power. Pan Guangdan responded eugenicists did not agree with considering human rearing as animal breeding, and the biological components were difficult to segregate from cultural influences because human activities were conditioned by both elements. He argued IQ test were not absolute criteria and denied eugenicists judged people's

8) Zhou Jianren, "Du Zhongguozhi yousheng wenti (Reading Eugenics Problem in China)," *Dongfang Zazhi*, 22-8, 1925.

9) Pan Guangdan, "Du Zhongguozhi yousheng wenti: Da Zhou Jianren xiansheng (Reading Eugenics Problem in China: Reply to Zhou Jianren)," *Dongfang Zazhi*, 22-8, 1925.

10) Sun Benwen, "Wenhua yu Youshengxue (Culture and Eugenics)," *Shehuixuegan* (Sociological World), 1-2, 1929.

ability by wealth and power (Yuehtsen Juliette Chung, 2002: 80-81; Lü Wenhao, 2009: 76-77).

The public debates between Sun Benwen and Pan Guangdan, and Pan Guangdan and Zhou Jianren, were commented on and evaluated by the pen-named Rusong (Ren Zhuoxuan: 1896-1990). He divided Zhou Jianren and Sun Benwen's environmentalism with Pan Guangdan's biological determinism. Ren Zhuxuan supported Zhou Jianren and Sun Benwen's emphasis on environmental improvement, and thought of Pan Guangdan as a halfway reformer who lingered on the old values of cultural institutions such as the examination system, arranged mating and familism.¹¹⁾

Their eugenics debate was also discussed in *Funü Zazhi*. The eugenics and birth control debate developed in *Minduo Zazhi* (The People's Voice) and *Funü Zazhi* from June 1924 to October 1926. Chen Jianshan started the discussion first in "Eugenics and Several Problems about Sex." This paper argued that blind love made people feel happy but ignored individual disease and physical condition, and finally resulted in harmful effects from the national perspective. He said that freedom of love did not accord with eugenics, while arranged marriages were consistent with eugenics. This conclusion allowed Chen Jianshan to reach a consensus in relation to the issues brought up by Pan Guangdan. He pointed out that birth control was logically a good theory but, practically, had a lot of problems. He argued that birth control encouraged adultery and sexual abuse. Because only the upper class practiced birth control, he thought the number of superior

11) Rusong (Ren Zhuoxuan), "Ping Youshengxueyu huanjinglunde lunzheng (Evaluating the Debate Between Eugenics and Environmentalism)," *Ershishiji* (Twentieth Century) 1-1, 1931.

people was decreasing, while the number of inferior people increased.¹²⁾

Zhang Xichen criticized Chen Jianshan's perspective in February 1925. He was appointed as the main director of *Funü Zazhi* in 1921-1925, and positively introduced the concept of love and sexual desire of Western society into Chinese society. He regarded the discovery of the individual as the essence of modern civilization, and the freedom of love as progressive and modern. He argued that the happiness of love should not be sacrificed from the perspective of emphasizing the individual. Zhang Xichen thought that birth control could become a powerful instrument for preserving the superior members of society. Although there were drawbacks to birth control that became evident as it was implemented, he thought that it would gradually be practiced by all classes.¹³⁾

Zhou Jianren also criticized Chen Jianshan's opinion in *Funü Zazhi* in April 1926. He argued that freedom of love and birth control were main issues related to modern morality and became the base of racial progress and individual health. He emphasized that neither freedom of love nor birth control was contrary to eugenics. He advocated individuals selecting spouses based on beauty, health, and virtue, and thought that this selection was more eugenic than parents' selecting a spouse for their offspring in accordance with the stability of large families and economic criteria. He considered birth control a factor in reducing the number of superior genes, not because it was anti-eugenic, but because the method of its propaganda

12) Chen Jianshan, "Youshengxue he jige xingde wenti (Eugenics and Some Sexual Problems)," *Minduo Zazhi* (People's Voice), 5-4, 1924, pp. 7-8.

13) Zhang Xichen, "Du Chen Jianshan xiansheng de youshengxue he jige xing de wenti (Reading Mr. Chen's Eugenics and Some Sexual Problems)," *Minduo Zazhi*, 6-2, 1925, pp. 4-9.

was unfavorable.¹⁴⁾

Pan Guangdan participated in the debate in *Funü Zazhi* in October 1926. He endorsed the theory of birth control, but thought that there was little reasonable ground for a birth control movement. The population problem should be considered in terms quantity and quality, but the supporters of birth control only emphasized a decrease in the population. He thought the development of the race would be delayed if they ignored the quality of population.¹⁵⁾

The essence of the eugenics debate in 1920s had to do with freedom of love and the liberation of individuality as well as environmental improvement. Progressive intellectuals anticipated the development of a new cultural movement through the advent of eugenics. Even they thought that eugenics would contribute to the diffusion of socialism. In contrast, conservative intellectuals tried to point out the problems of the freedom of love and the liberation of individuality from the perspective of eugenics. In relation to this, familism, the target of a new cultural movement, was regenerated by eugenics.

Zhang Jingsheng suggested the third water theory to strengthen the legitimacy of the freedom of love. While Ellen Key argued that love marriages resulted in healthy and smart babies, Zhang Jingsheng claimed that women with the third water delivered superior babies. Because women emitting the third water had no hysteria, he thought that they had energetic ova, resulting in healthier and superior babies. Because most

14) Zhou Jianren, "Lianai xuanzhe yu youshengxue (Love Selection and Eugenics)", *Funü Zazhi* (The Woman Journal), 11-4, 1926, pp. 597-608.

15) Pan Guangdan, "Shengyu xianzhi yu youshengxue (Birth Control and Eugenics)", *Funü Zazhi*, 11-10, 1926, pp. 1560-1569.

European people emitted the third water during sexual intercourse, their descendents were healthy and smart. To make a superior nation, it was not necessary for superior men and women to reproduce; rather, superior sperm and ova needed to be created. If a man and woman were involved with each other but could not emit the third water, the sperm and ova could not see each other or the new living thing would not be full of energy.¹⁶⁾ Zhang Jingsheng's book was involved with pornography, but his third water theory contributed to the legitimacy of the idea of freedom of love in the 1920s.

The eugenics debate in the 1920s developed the concepts of freedom of love and birth control as the main issues in the eugenics discourse. Despite the controversy, intellectuals did not doubt the science and objectivity of eugenics. Chinese intellectuals in the 1920s accepted eugenics as an absolute truth, and they believed that the improvement of the race within the race itself rather than through mixed marriage could result in the reform of both genes and the environment.

4. Birth Control and Medical Practice in the 1930s

Pan Guangdan again took the lead in the eugenics discourse in the 1930s, and published eugenics journals such as *Yousheng Yuekan* (Eugenics Monthly). The point of the eugenics debate in 1930s was related to the cultural identity and the population problem. The former was popularized by the inauguration of New Life Movement and the ensuing Cultural

16) Zhang Jingsheng, "Disanzhongshui yu luanzhu ji shengji de dian he yousheng de guanxi (The Relation among Third Water, Ova, Vital Electronics and Eugenics)," *Xinwenhua* (The New Culture) 1-2, 1926; Zhang Jingsheng, *Zhang Jingsheng Wenji*, vol.2, pp. 249-251.

Reconstruction Campaign. Eugenic ideas were prevalent in scientists' discussions on Chinese racial revival (Yen Xiao-pei, 2006: 717).

The emergence of the population problem in Chinese society was related to the social transformation of the 1930s. After the Manchurian Incident on September 18, 1931, the northeastern region of China was incorporated into the Japanese empire. The northeastern region was an overpopulated settlement in China. The world economic crisis, the ruin of the rural economy, and concerns about overpopulation brought about interest in the population problem here.¹⁷⁾ The main issue related to the population problem was how to resolve this issue in terms of both the quantity and quality of the population. The solutions put forward were migration, industrialization, birth control, and so on.¹⁸⁾ Migration solved the quantity part of the population problem by moving people from overcrowded to uncrowded areas. Industrialization settled the quality issue by increasing output and income. Birth control resolved both the quantity and quality problems by decreasing the number of the population.

The main theme of the eugenics debate in the 1930s was the possibility of solving the population problem by birth control. This debate started in *Renyan Zhoukan* (The Human and Language Weekly) from March to June 1936. Zhang Baiyan argued that the quantitative problem of the Chinese population ought to be solved through body training and improving hygiene, and could not be solved by birth control.¹⁹⁾

17) Li Youyi, "Rekouron gangyao shuping (Book Review on The Outline of Population Theory)," *Beiping Chenbao* (The Peiping Morning Post), (May 5, 1935).

18) Fang Xianting, "Renkou guosheng yu gongyehua (The Overflow of Population and Industrialization)," *Dagongbao* (L'impartial), (April 11, 1937).

19) Zhang Baiyan, "Jieyu de huaiyi (Doubt about Birth Control)," *Renyan Zhoukan* (Human and Language Weekly), 3-4, 1936, p. 68.

Up to this point, Xu Rihong argued that birth control was the only solution to the population problem. Because it was difficult to enforce positive eugenics - which aims to encourage reproduction among the genetically advantaged -, he claimed that negative eugenics - which aims to lower fertility among the genetically disadvantaged by compulsory measure such as abortion and sterilization - of birth control should be practiced. This would allow unhealthy, married couple's to have sexual lives while preventing them from creating unhealthy children; for him, artificial contraception was inevitable.²⁰⁾

Zhang Baiyan responded to Xu Rihong, pointing out the problems of birth control and that the field of genetics was only in its infancy. He warned that the implementation of birth control could harm national health. Artificial contraception would break out and have a bad effect on babies' health.²¹⁾

Pan Guangdan had suggested that he already endorsed the theory of birth control, and he took a serious attitude toward birth control in the 1920s.²²⁾ He presented the criteria of birth control and limited the practice of birth control. His six criteria of birth control were the mother's physique, children's education, good and bad genes, household economy, individual convenience, and social morality. The most important criterion was the mother's physique, followed by the children's education.²³⁾ In contrast,

20) Xu Rihong, "Zhongguo zhi renkou wenti: Da Zhang Baiyan xiansheng de jieyu de huaiyi (Population Problem in China: Reply to Mr. Zhang Baiyan's Doubt about Birth Control)," *Renyan Zhoukan*, 3-9, 1936, p. 175.

21) Zhang Baiyan, "Yichuan yu jieyu: Jianda Xu Rihong xiansheng (Heredity and Birth Control: Reply to Mr. Xu Rihong)," *Renyan Zhoukan*, 3-11, 1936, p. 207.

22) Pan Guangdan, "Zhongguozhi yousheng wenti (Eugenics Problem in China)," *Dongfang Zazhi*, 21-22, 1924.

23) Pan Guangdan, "Shengyu jiezhi yu jige biaoqun (Birth Control and Some Standards),"

Zhou Jianren argued that social class and economic ability could not become the criteria for birth control in 1920s. Because the upper class was not necessarily superior and the lower class was not always inferior, he suggested restricting the propagation of feeble-minded children, the insane, and unhealthy people through birth control.²⁴⁾

Anticipated to be a means to reach national prosperity and military power through the improvement of the race, the eugenics discourse in republican China spread into intellectual society. The freedom of love and the liberation of individuality became the main issue in the eugenics debate of the 1920s.

Physicians suggested the necessity of birth control and organized birth control associations. Yang Buwei (1889-1981), a female physician from Tokyo Imperial University, opened birth control clinic (Shengchan zhixian zhenchasuo) in Beijing in 1925, propagating birth control and contraception. But Chinese society did not pay attention to their arguments and activities. As long as eugenics as a social reformist discourse overwhelmed China in 1920s, eugenics as a medical discourse could not intervene in eugenics debate. After birth control made at issue from the 1930s, physicians started to discuss eugenics and play the important role in the medical practice. Perceiving overpopulation problem, physicians passed a resolution of birth control for mothers and children's happiness and health and public health in Guangzhou conference of Chinese Medical Association in 1935.²⁵⁾ For

Beiping Chenbao Renkou Fukan, vol.39, (June 2, 1935); Pan Naimu·Pan Naihe eds., *Pan Guangdan Wenji* (Collections of Pan Guangdan's Works), vol. 9, (Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2002), pp. 56-61.

24) Zhou Jianren, "Du Zhongguozhi yousheng wenti (Reading Eugenics Problem in China)," *Dongfang Zazhi*, 22-8, 1925, p. 18.

25) "Chinese Medical Association Third General Conference, Canton, November 1-8, 1935", *The Chinese Medical Journal* 49-12, 1935, p.1333; J. B. Grant, "Jiezhishengyuyu

them, birth control meant contraception as negative eugenics.

The solution to the population problem and birth control became the main issues in the eugenics debate of the 1930s, especially among civil organizations whose doctors, nurses, public health specialists, and sociologists participated in established birth control associations in the 1930s. Birth control associations such as Beiping fuying baojianhui (Beiping Mother and Children Health Association, Feb. 1930) and Shanghai jieyu yanjiushe (Shanghai Birth Control Research Association, May 1930) propagated birth control and spread contraception over the whole country. The target of birth control movement was all married people of the middle class in Beiping.²⁶⁾ In contrast, the main target was the female of the middle and upper class in Shanghai.²⁷⁾ While male patients wanted birth control due to economic burden, female patients wanted birth control because of body weakness and suffering (Yu Yeon-sil, 2009: 78-79).

Compulsory sterilization was not practiced in republican China. However, the Guomindang government regulated “Minzu baoyu zhengce gangling (The Principle Act of National Nurture Policy)” in May 1945. Article 4, Section 9 in the Act regulated that “the government guide relevant contraception to promote the soundness of married couple’s birth and nurture, and anticipate the increase of superior descendents through keeping pregnant women’s safe.” Article 4, Section 10 regulated that “the government prevent and treat sexually transmitted disease through practicing premarital physical

zhongguo (Birth Control and China)”, *Zhonghua Yixue Zazhi* (National Medical Journal), 22-5, 1936, p.354.

26) Shen Jiying, “Beiping jieyusuo babaiwushier lianzhi yanjiu (The Research of 852 Cases in the Beiping Birth Control Clinic)”, *Zhonghua Yixue Zazhi* (National Medical Journal), 22-5, 1936.

27) J. B. Grant, “Jiezhishengyuyu zhongguo (Birth Control and China)”, *Zhonghua Yixue Zazhi* (National Medical Journal), 22-5, 1936, p.355.

inspection, and cut off defaulter's reproduction through isolation and birth control on the genetic defective" (Zhejiangsheng zhonggong dangshi xuehui, 1986: 67-68). The Guomindang government legislated eugenic laws related to contraception, eugenic marriage, and sterilization and the isolation of hereditary defaulters in 1945. Eugenics movement attained the legislative product in republican China.

Existing research explaining eugenics discourse transformed the idea from dealing with the personal sphere of freedom of love to dealing with the national sphere of national improvement (Yu Yeon-sil, 2008: 143). However, this argument missed the key point of eugenics discourse. The eugenics in China was racial improvement discourse from its introduction in the last half of the 19th century, when Chinese intellectuals discussed the necessity of mixed marriage. Though the freedom of love and the liberation of individuality discourse induced the eugenics in the May 4th period, the basic logics of eugenics still underlined the national survival and racial improvement. As it were, all of progressive and conservative intellectuals thought of eugenics as a universal truth for racial improvement. As the 2nd Sino-Japanese War, 1937~1945, broke out, Chinese people was interested in the national survival. Eugenics made birth control point at issue. Moreover, the development of contraception technology made birth control feasible solution to the population problem. Eugenics did not transformed eugenics from individual discourse to national discourse, but was still universal truth and became substantial solution for racial improvement in 1930s. Especially negative eugenics–birth control–as a solution to population problem was supported by physicians as well as progressive intellectuals. While literary intellectuals supported eugenics as a social reformist discourse, physicians upheld eugenics as a medical discourse in 1930s.

5. Conclusion

Eugenics which researched divergent conditions and hereditary factors to inherit good genes for next generations was introduced into China as a discourse to preserve and improve race by the 1898 reformers such as Yan Fu and Yi Nai. It was not until the republican period that eugenics discourse started to combine with the discourse and movement related to social reform. The May 4th intellectuals put forward criticisms of Confucian patriarchy, propagating science and democracy. They pointed out that the large family system was a source of every social evil, and argued the need for a small family system based on monogamy. The aim of the small family system was to improve both the race and the environment. Such thinkers argued that freedom of love and the liberation of individuality were necessary for this end. Zhou Jianren, Lu Xun's youngest brother and representative eugenicist in the May 4th period, combined eugenics with freedom of love and the liberation of individuality.

Pan Guangdan and Zhou Jianren debated the eugenics controversy in the 1920s. They raised the freedom of love and the liberation of individuality as central issues related to the eugenics controversy. The eugenics debate was developed into the controversy between biological determinism and environmentalism in the late 1920s. However, these issues did not continue to be brought up in the 1930s. The main issues concerning the eugenics controversy in the 1930s were cultural identity and the population problem. Particularly in the 1930s, the scope of birth control as the solution to the population problem was extended from the individual person and family to nation and race.

For eugenicists like Pan Guangdan, birth control violated the aim of

eugenics and brought about the degeneration of the race. However, such theorists did not deny the value of birth control itself. The supporters of birth control thought that selecting superior descendents and eliminating inferior descendents fit with the ideals of eugenics. They thought that the propagation of contraception could suppress the increase of inferior and weak descendents, and result in the improvement of the race.

Physicians suggested the necessity of birth control and organized birth control clinic, Chinese society did not pay attention to their arguments and activities in 1920s. After birth control made at issue from the 1930s, physicians started to discuss eugenics and play the important role in the medical practice. Chinese physicians passed a resolution of birth control for mothers and children's happiness and health and public health in 1930s.

As a result, Chinese intellectuals supported eugenics and supported the proposition that eugenics could improve the race. On the basis of this situation, the Guomindang government legislated eugenic laws related to contraception, eugenic marriage, and sterilization and the isolation of hereditary defaulters in 1945.

Key Words : Eugenics, Yan Fu, Zhou Jianren, Pan Guangdan, birth control, population problem, contraception

투고일 2010. 8. 20.	심사일 2010. 9. 1.	게재확정일 2010. 10. 22.
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GLOSSARY

Baozhongyuyi 保種餘義

Beiping Chenbao 北平晨報

Beiping fuying baojianhui 北平婦嬰保健會

Chen Jianshan 陳兼善

Dagongbao 大公報

Daminzuzhuyi 大民族主義

Datongshu 大同書

Disanzhongshui 第三種水

Dongfang Zazhi 東方雜誌

E Jiating 惡家庭

Funü Zazhi 婦女雜誌

Gaifa 改法

Guangzhou 廣州

Guomindang 國民黨

Guowenbao 國聞報

Hehun 合婚

Huanian 華年

Hunyin Zhesixue 婚姻哲學

Jinzhong 進種

Kang Youwei 康有為

Liang Qichao 梁啟超

Lu Xun 魯迅

Meide Shehui Zuzhifa 美的社會組織法

Minduo Zazhi 民鐸雜誌

Minguo Yixue Zazhi 民國醫學雜誌
Minzu baoyu zhengce ganglingfa 民族保育政策綱領法
Mofan Jiating 模範家庭
Pan Guangdan 潘光旦
Qucun 屈存
Renyan Zhoukan 人言週刊
Renzhong Gailiangxue 人種改良學
Ren Zhuoxuan 任卓宣
Shaonian Zhongguo 少年中國
Shanghai jieyu yanjiushe 上海節育研究社
Shanzhongxue 善種學
Shengchan Zhixian Zhenchasuo 生產制限診查所
Sun Benwen 孫本文
Tianyanlun 天演論
Tongjiao 通教
Waihunzhi 外婚制
Xiangbao 湘報
Xingshi 性史
Xinqingnian 新青年
Xu Rihong 徐日洪
Yan Fu 嚴復
Yi Nai 易簪
Yousheng 優生
Zhang Baiyan 章柏庵
Zhang Jingsheng 張競生
Zhang Xichen 章錫琛
Zhenan 擇難
Zhezhongliuliangzhishu 擇種留良之術
Zhongguozhi Youshengwenti 中國之優生問題
Zhou Jianren 周建人
Ziqiang 自強

-Abstract-

Eugenics Discourse and Racial Improvement in Republican China (1911-1949)

SIHN Kyu-hwan*

This paper aimed to examine the advent of eugenics and its characteristics in republican China. Although eugenics was introduced into China as a discourse to preserve and improve race by the 1898 reformers such as Yan Fu (1854-1921) and Yi Nai (1875-?) in the late imperial period, it was not until the republican period that eugenics discourse started to combine with the discourse and movement related to social reform. The May 4th intellectuals put forward criticisms of Confucian patriarchy, propagating science and democracy. They pointed out that the large family system was a source of every social evil, and argued the need for a small family system based on monogamy. The aim of the small family system was to improve both the race and the environment. Such thinkers argued that freedom of love and the liberation of individuality were necessary for this end. Zhou Jianren (1888-1984), Lu Xun's youngest brother and representative eugenicist in the May 4th period, combined eugenics with freedom of love and the liberation of individuality.

Pan Guangdan (1899-1967) and Zhou Jianren debated the eugenics controversy in the 1920s. They raised the freedom of love and the liberation

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of individuality as central issues related to the eugenics controversy. The eugenics debate was developed into the controversy between biological determinism and environmentalism in the late 1920s. However, these issues did not continue to be brought up in the 1930s. The main issues concerning the eugenics controversy in the 1930s were cultural identity and the population problem. Particularly in the 1930s, the scope of birth control as the solution to the population problem was extended from the individual person and family to nation and race.

For eugenicists like Pan Guangdan, birth control violated the aim of eugenics and brought about the degeneration of the race. However, such theorists did not deny the value of birth control itself. The supporters of birth control thought that selecting superior descendents and eliminating inferior descendents fit with the ideals of eugenics. They thought that the propagation of contraception could suppress the increase of inferior and weak descendents, and result in the improvement of the race.

Physicians suggested the necessity of birth control and organized birth control clinic, Chinese society did not pay attention to their arguments and activities in 1920s. After birth control made at issue from the 1930s, physicians started to discuss eugenics and play the important role in the medical practice. Chinese physicians passed a resolution of birth control for mothers and children's happiness and health and public health in 1930s. As a result, Chinese intellectuals supported eugenics and supported the proposition that eugenics could improve the race. On the basis of this situation, the Guomindang government legislated eugenic laws related to contraception, eugenic marriage, and sterilization and the isolation of hereditary defaulters in 1945.

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