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**The Family and Freedom
Anarchist Discourse about Love, Marriage, and the Family
in Japan and China, 1900s – 1930s**

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Except where otherwise acknowledged, this thesis is based on my own original research.

Yanku Shi



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Abstract

From the early 1900s to the late 1930s, anarchists in Japan and China formulated revolutionary social changes related to the family, including issues of love, marriage, child-rearing and sexuality. A proposed “family revolution” in the late Qing period has often been quoted as representing the social impact of Chinese anarchists, but anarchist debate over fundamental family issues in both Japan and China continued into the 1930s, ranging over wider aspects, and reflecting a variety of radical approaches.

Anarchist ideas and debates challenged conventional social norms and value systems, and rejected traditional ethical systems. Anarchists criticised and sometimes wholly rejected the family as an oppressive system; they proposed instead a society without authority and oppression, based on a spirit of mutual aid, in forms of various idealistic alternatives. These included a family consisting of free individuals, anarchistic village communities, and a *datong* (great harmony) society without family which combined modern anarchist ideals with indigenous traditions. From its beginnings, anarchism emphasised the essential importance of the individual and of individual will. Anarchist radicalism exerted a subversive effect in society through its critique of oppression in daily life. However, its influence may be seen as much in the lives of individual anarchists as in the tangible effects of anarchism as a political and social movement.

Material for this study has been derived mainly from contemporary anarchist writings, including magazines and other publications, official records and anarchist memoirs. It is based not only on the statements of prominent anarchists, but also on the opinions of ordinary people, gathered from a variety of sources.



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