Unit 5, Review Dialogue

Lǐ Píng (B), Tom (A), and Lǐ Píng's classmate from Taiwan, Wáng Chéng (D), have just gone to the movie <u>The Dream of the Red Chamber</u>. On their way home, they chat.

B: Tāngmu, ni zenme bù shuō huà?

A: Duìbuqǐ, kàn zhèige diànyǐng, shízài ràng rén bu shūfu, tèbié shi kàn dao nèige dìfangr . . .

D: Năge dìfāng?

A: Jiù shi Dàiyù sĭde shihou . . .

B: Ng, duì le, Dàiyù side shihou zhèng shi Băoyù jiēhūnde shihou. Kân dao zhèli, zhēn shi ràng rén hĕn bu shūfu.

D: Nĭmen yŏu méiyou zhùyidào, hĕn duō nüde kàn dao zhège dìfāng dōu kū le.

A: Wǒ kàndao le. Ài, yǒude shíhou, wǒ zhēnde bù míngbai, wèishenme hĕn duō shūli háishi shuō Zhōng-guó chuántŏngde dà jiātíng yǒu bù shǎo hǎochu, hǎochu zài náli? Wèile bǎochí dà jiātíngde chuán-tŏng, ràng niánqīngde yídài huò-zhĕ jidài chī nàme duō kǔ, zhè jiù shi dà jiātíngde hǎochù ma?

D: Dà jiātíngde hǎochù xiànzài bu duō le. Nǐmen zhīdào Zhōngguode dà jiātíng gēn lìshǐ yǒu guānxī. Zhōngguó shi nóngyè shèhuì, shēng-chǎn dōu yào kào rénlì, shéi jiāde láolì duō, shéi jiāde shēnghuó jiù huì hǎo yìdiǎn. Lǐ Píng, nǐ xiǎng shì bu shi zhèyàng ne?

B: Shì, shì zhèiyangde.

A: Name, xiànzài qingxing bù tóng

How come you aren't talking, Tom?

I'm sorry. Watching this movie was really distressing. Especially when it got to that part . . .

Which part?

The part when Daiyu dies . . .

Mm, right, Daiyù dies just when Băoyù is getting married. At that point, I really felt uncomfortable.

Did you notice, a lot of women started crying when it got to that part.

Yes. (Sigh) Sometimes I really don't understand why a lot of books say that there were many advantages to the traditional Chinese large family. What advantages? Just in order to preserve the tradition of the large family, the younger generation or generations were made to suffer so much. That's the advantage of the large family?

The large family doesn't have many advantages any more. You know, the large family has to do with Chinese history. China was an agricultural society, and production depended on manpower. If a family had a larger labor force they had a better life. Lǐ Ping, do you think that's right?

Yes, that's right.

But now the situation is different.

^{*}This novel by Cáo Xuěqín (1724?-1764) tells of the twilight years of the Jiă family, grown wealthy in the service of Qīng Dynasty emperors. The story revolves around the spoiled and effeminate young man of the house, Jiă Păoyù (Precious Jade), and his love for his cousin, Lîn Dàiyù (Black Jade).

le, xiànzài gōngshāngyè fādá le, wèishenme hái yŏu rén shuō dà jiātíng hǎo ne?

D: Dā jiātíngde guānniān yĭjīng yŏu jĭqiānniānde lìshĭ le, yào găibiàn tā, xūyào bĭjiào chángde shíjiān. Dālùde qíngxing wŏ bù qīngchu, Táiwānde qíngxing shi dà jiātíng yuè lái yuè shǎo le. Suīrán Zhōngguó rén xǐhuan dà jiātíng, juédé dàjiā zhù zai yìqĭ, hùxiāng yŏu zhàogu, dànshi gōngshāngyè fādá le, gōngzuòde jīhuì duō le, xiǎo jiātíng yĕ jiu yuè lái yuè duō le.

B: Xiànzài dà jiātíng yuè lái yuè shăo, zăohūnde fēngsú yĕ jiu méiyŏu le.

A: Zăohūn hé dà jiātíng yǒu shénme guānxi ma?

D: Yŏu guānxi. Zhè zhuyào shi láolìde wenti.

B: Nĭ xiăng, zăohūn, zăo yŏu háizi, jiāli láodònglì duō, lăorén yĕ jiu kéyi zăo yidiăn dédào zhàogu.

A: Kĕshi zài gōngshāngyè shèhuìli, duōshù lăorén dōu yŏu shōurù. Xiànzài Táiwān yĭjīng shi gōngshāngyè shèhuì, zhèiyangde wèntí yĕ jiu méiyŏu le.

B: Dànshi, nǐ biế wàngle, dàlù hái shi nôngyè shèhuì, zhàogu lăorénde wènti hái shi dà wènti, zăohūnde fēngsú yĕ háishi yŏu.

A: Nǐ dàgài nôngcuôle ba, dàlùde zhèngfǔ zĕnme huì tóngyì rénmen zăohūn ne?

Now that industry and commerce are highly developed, why do some people still say that the large family is good?

The concept of the large family has already existed for several thousand years. It'll take a rather long time to change it. I don't know about the situation on the mainland. But on Taiwan, the situation is that there are fewer and fewer large families. Although the Chinese like big families and think that if everyone lives together they can take care of each other, industry and commerce are flourishing and there are more job opportunities, so there are more and more small families.

Now as large families grow fewer and fewer, the custom of child marriage will disappear.

Is child marriage related to the large family?

Yes. It's mainly a question of labor force.

After all, with child marriage, children are born sooner, the family has more work hands, and the old people can get taken care of sooner.

But in an industrial-commercial society, most of the old people have an income. Today Taiwan is already an industrial-commercial society, so that kind of problem doesn't exist there anymore.

But don't forget that the mainland is still an agricultural society. Caring for old people is still a big problem, and the custom of child marriage still exists there.

You must be mistaken. How could the government on the mainland agree to let people marry as children?

zh<u>ŭyão</u>, "mainly"

B: Wŏ shuōde shi nóngcūn, shénme zăohūn na, zhòng nán qīng nữ a, zhèizhŏng shì zŏng shi hé jīngji bù fādá yŏu guānxide.

D: Wŏ shízài bù xĭhuan zăohūn. Wŏ xiăng duōshù zăohūnde rén hòuláide shēnghuó dōu yŏu diăn wèntí.

B: Tèbié shi fùnữ.

A: Duì le, wŏ tīngshuōguo zhèiyang yìzhŏng shuōfă: Zhōngguo fùnu méiyou jiēhūn yǐqián yào tīng fùmude, jiēle hūn dĕi tīng zhàngfude, zhàngfu sĭle dĕi tīng érzide. ² Qĭngwèn, Zhōngguo fùnu shénme shíhou cái néng yŏu tāmen zìjĭde xiăngfă, shénme shíhou cái néng yŏu yìdiănr zìyóu ne?

B: Ou, xiànzài méiyou rén jiăng zhèixiē le.

A: Suīrán méiyou rén jiăng, kĕshi zhèizhŏng chuántŏng sīxiăng³ háishi yŏu a!

D: Nǐ shuōde yĕ yŏu dàolǐ, háishi nàjù huà, jĭqiānniánde lăo guānniàn bú shi hĕn kuài kéyi găibiànde.

B: Ng, búguò wö xiăng, dàlù yĕ hão, Táiwān yĕ hão, jĭshínián lái dōu yŏule hĕn dàde găibiàn, fùnude dìwei yĕ dōu yŏule tígāo, 4 chuántöngde guānniàn yĕ zài biàn.

A: Ng, zhèyidiğn wö tóngyì.

I'm talking about rural areas, Things like child marriage or regarding males as superior to females always have to do with an undeveloped economy.

I really don't like child marriage. I think that most people who are married as children have problems later on in life.

Especially women.

Right. I've heard a saying to the effect that before a Chinese woman gets married she has to obey her parents, after she gets married she has to obey her husband, and after her husband dies she has to obey her son. I ask you, when will Chinese women be able to think for themselves? When will they be able to have a little freedom?

Nobody is strict about those customs anymore.

Nobody is strict about them, but the traditional thinking is still there!

That's right. It's still the same old story. Ideas which are several thousand years old can't be changed very quickly.

Yeah, but I think that both the mainland and Taiwan have undergone big changes in the past few decades. The status of women has improved, and traditional ideas are changing.

Mm, that I agree with.

¹<u>nóngcūn</u>, "rural area" (See Unit 6)

²Zhōngguo fùnữ méiyou jiēhūn yǐqián yào tǐng fùmǔde: (1) méiyou jiēhūn yǐqián is completely equivalent to jiēhūn yǐqián "before getting married". The méiyou does not change the meaning. (2) Tǐng fùmǔde is equivalent to tīng fùmǔde huà, "to obey one's parents."

 $³_{\tt S\bar{I}xireve{a}ng}$, "thought, thinking" (See Life in China module, Unit 4)

 $[\]frac{1}{1}$ tígão, "raise, improve(ment)" (See Traveling in China module, Unit 2)

B: Hão, wŏmen dào jiā le. Wáng Chéng jìnqu zuòzuo ba!

D: Hao, jìnqù yíxià.

Okay, we are at my house. Come in for a while, Wáng Chéng, okay?

Okay, I'll come in for a while.