

****Supplementary Instructions from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Implementing the Marriage Law Campaign Month****

Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (February 18, 1953)

Supplementary Instructions on Implementing the Marriage Law Campaign Month

On November 26, 1952, and February 1, 1953, the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the State Council of the Central People's Government issued directives regarding the implementation of the Marriage Law, designating March 1953 as the Marriage Law Campaign Month. During this campaign month, a nationwide effort (excluding minority regions and areas where land reform has not been completed) will be launched to promote the Marriage Law and assess its implementation, laying a solid foundation for the continued enforcement of the Marriage Law in the future. With March approaching, party committees at all levels must actively prepare in accordance with these directives and urge local governments and people's organizations to make necessary preparations to ensure the campaign is conducted decisively and correctly.

To prepare for this campaign month, various regions have conducted focused trials. The results of these trials have demonstrated two key points: on one hand, the promotion and implementation of the Marriage Law across the country are highly uneven; in many areas, not only the general public but also numerous Communist Party members and government officials lack a thorough understanding of the Marriage Law and the current campaign due to insufficient and incorrect educational outreach and oversight. This has led to misunderstandings and even resistance. However, once proper education and oversight were conducted, there was a significant change in the awareness of these officials and the public. This indicates that it is entirely necessary to adopt the approach of a Marriage Law Campaign Month to promote the Marriage Law and assess its implementation. Any negative or sceptical attitudes towards this approach are completely misguided.

On the other hand, some officials underestimate the influence of feudal thoughts and customs related to marriage that have persisted from the old society. They approach the situation with impatience, attempting to resolve all issues in a short time or through a single campaign, mistakenly applying methods such as "struggle meetings," "confession meetings," "household surveys," "family evaluations," "line divisions," and "family alignments" to address these issues. This has led to some social confusion and poses a risk of deviating from the correct path and established goals of the campaign. This is also erroneous and must be prevented and corrected.

Lenin stated, "The power of the habits of millions is a most formidable force." Issues of marriage and family affect every household and individual, and the feudal thoughts and customs in this area have been deeply rooted in people's consciousness for thousands of years. They cannot be "eliminated" through rough methods in a short time; rather, continuous educational efforts (including the punishment of a very small number of serious offenders) over a long period are necessary to gradually eradicate them. The purpose of this Marriage Law Campaign Month is to conduct widespread educational outreach, systematically critique old thoughts, systems, and customs regarding marriage, and establish a stronghold for new thoughts, systems, and customs, enabling officials and the public to clearly delineate their understanding of the old and new marriage systems.

To ensure that the work during this campaign month can be effectively carried out without any confusion, the Central Committee hereby issues the following supplementary instructions:

1. During the Marriage Law Campaign Month, aside from actively investigating and addressing a very small number of serious offenders who interfere with marriage freedom or abuse women, the general public should primarily focus on promoting the Marriage Law. Checks on the implementation of the Marriage Law should be limited to officials at various levels of party committees, as well as personnel in marriage affairs from courts and civil affairs departments at the county level and above, and should not be conducted among the general public. To ensure the campaign is well-prepared and methodical, local staff should first study the Marriage Law and assess their own implementation of it, then widely promote the Marriage Law to the public and address the very few serious offenders.

2. The aforementioned officials should study the Marriage Law in detail at the county level and above, and this should be conducted separately in each agency. In townships and villages, the focus should be on the basic principles of the Marriage Law and the promotional outline (to be published soon), with concentrated efforts at the district level under the guidance of responsible officials at the county level. After their studies, these officials should assess the following: (1) Have they studied the Marriage Law in the past? Do they understand it? Do they support it? After this study, do they understand it? Do they support it? (2) In the past, when handling public issues related to marriage and family, did they correctly implement the provisions of the Marriage Law? (3) Have they interfered with others' marriage freedom? (4) Have they failed to assist persecuted women, ignored their plight, or even participated in their persecution? During the assessment, those who have correctly implemented the Marriage Law should be praised; those who have made general errors in implementation should be criticized and corrected; those who persist in errors and refuse to amend should face appropriate administrative penalties; and those who directly participate in the persecution of women should be handed over to the people's court for legal punishment. This assessment should be limited to the items listed above and should not involve the personal marriage issues or relationships of these officials to avoid confusing the goals of the campaign and hindering its proper conduct. If these officials have violated the provisions of the Marriage Law in their own marriage issues, they should be treated by the people's court in the same manner as the general public, and not handled by party committees or other agencies. In addition to the aforementioned officials studying the Marriage Law and assessing its implementation, other general agencies, military units, and schools should also hold reports on the Marriage Law during the Marriage Law Campaign Month.

3. The primary method of promoting the Marriage Law to the public should involve prepared speakers or other selected and trained personnel delivering reports on the implementation of the Marriage Law to all residents or the general public in urban and rural grassroots units. These report meetings should be organized in a way that is convenient for the public, convening in batches without forcing attendance. At the same time, party propagandists and active members of various people's organizations should be organized to conduct guided promotional and explanatory work, utilizing wall posters, blackboard news, loudspeakers, cultural stations, cultural centers, theater troupes, folk artists, slide show teams, film projection teams, cinemas, radio stations, newspapers, and other means for coordination. The promotional content should focus on the following points: (1) Explain the harms of the old marriage system and the benefits of the new marriage system, calling on people of all ages to unite and consciously support the Marriage Law. When criticizing the old marriage system, it is generally advisable not to name specific local individuals; however, when promoting the new marriage system, exemplary figures who embody marriage autonomy, family harmony, productive engagement, and political progress can be praised. (2) Clarify that the implementation of the Marriage Law does not aim to dismantle family relationships established under the old marriage system, nor does it advocate for divorce. Even if past marriages do not

comply with the Marriage Law, as long as the parties involved do not firmly request divorce, no one should interfere or force them to divorce. However, it should be emphasized that undemocratic and disharmonious families should improve the relationships between spouses and in-laws to become democratic and harmonious families; for the very few couples with extremely poor relationships who cannot continue even after mediation, divorce should be permitted. If members of the public request mediation for family relationships, work teams and officials should do their utmost to assist in improving those relationships; any cases that should be handled by the people's court must be taken to the court for processing at the request of the parties involved, rather than being handled by work teams or other officials. (3) Strictly prohibit the killing or harming of women. Women, whether married or unmarried, regardless of their satisfaction with their husbands or in-laws, whether they request divorce, or regardless of any shortcomings, must have their lives and bodies protected equally, and no one is allowed to kill or harm them. Anyone who kills or harms a woman is committing a crime and will be punished by the government. Anyone who commits murder must pay with their life. (4) Call on officials and the public to respect active revolutionary soldiers and retired disabled veterans, protect their marriages and families, and oppose any destruction of these. Other complex issues related to marriage and family relationships should not be casually promoted during the campaign month, nor should incorrect and irresponsible answers be given.

4. Call on officials and the public to respect and support active revolutionary soldiers and retired disabled veterans, protecting their marriages and families, and opposing any destruction of these. Other complex issues related to marriage and family relationships should not be casually promoted during the campaign month, nor should incorrect and irresponsible answers be given.

5. Marriage cases involving the public and officials should be handled according to normal legal procedures by the district people's government or the county/city people's courts. The committees and working groups for implementing the Marriage Law at all levels, as well as the democratic women's federations and other people's organizations, should support women who have been severely persecuted and assist them in filing complaints with the people's courts. The district people's government and people's courts at all levels must promptly and seriously address appeals for marriage freedom and complaints regarding interference with marriage freedom and abuse of women, and must not adopt any laissez-faire or bureaucratic attitudes. To ensure that people's courts at all levels can correctly and swiftly handle marriage cases during and after the campaign month, and to ensure that local governments can properly manage marriage registrations, higher-level party committees and governments must immediately assign and train a group of officials with the correct viewpoints to handle marriage-related adjudication and registration, or train existing personnel to fully understand the Marriage Law and execute it faithfully and correctly. Those who still cannot perform their duties correctly after education should be replaced.

6. The implementation of the Marriage Law involves a wide range of issues and is very complex; therefore, party committees at all levels must strengthen their leadership of this campaign, especially maintaining close contact with rural areas. If any confusion or bias is discovered, it must be addressed promptly, and if necessary, the campaign may be temporarily halted. In areas with insufficient manpower, it is preferable to temporarily reduce the scope of public promotion with higher-level approval to gain experience and gradually expand, rather than allowing impulsive and reckless tendencies to develop unchecked. In some areas, if the campaign does not proceed well in March and is halted or its scope reduced, it should continue after March. After the Marriage Law Campaign Month has concluded, party committees at all levels should establish practical measures to ensure that the implementation of the Marriage Law becomes an ongoing task in the future.