

*Socio-Anthropological Analysis of Marriage and Family Among
Mosuo Community in China*

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Abstract

The Mosuo people live in the mountainous region of southwest China, on the border of Yunnan and Sichuan provinces, in the Lugu Lake area. This group has been under-represented in the field of research which often resulted to exclusion of some social services. Marriage has often been the subject of study among anthropologist all over the world. This study investigates the construction of marriage, familial patterns of Mosuo rural community and analyze their special marital status, practices, and functions of marriage using Matrilineal system theory. This research utilized a qualitative approach through ethnographic study, to enable the researchers to identify some unexpected issues that may arise during data collection. In this research, a theoretical paradigm has been established as a frame of reference in interpreting research findings. The researchers employ ethnographic methods to understand the phenomena on how Mosuo families interact within their proximal environment. The researchers played the role as virtual participant observers for a couple of weeks and conducted unstructured interviews, focus groups, and textual analysis to qualitatively collect anthropological data. The expected outcome of this study is a systematic analysis of the family structure and marriage system of the Mosuo people from the socio-anthropological perspective and can be used by future academics in the field of Sociology and Anthropology as their frame of reference on the changes of marriage patterns and norms. In addition, this may improve the record of racial and ethnic groups in China for societal awareness and future involvement of Mosuo community for policy formulation and practices implications.

Keywords: Family, Mosuo Community, Socio-Anthropological Analysis

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Introduction

Background and Context

In the vicinity of Lugu Lake, in the hilly southwest region of China between the provinces of Yunnan and Sichuan, reside the Mosuo people (Mattison, 2010).¹ It is a Tibetan-Myanmar descendant of farmers and herders and the only matrilineal clan still in existence in China, with a population of 40,000 (Wen et al., 2004).² This study aims to delve into the intricate marital status and family structure unique to the Mosuo people by examining the family and marriage patterns within the rural community of Mosuo. Academics are pursuing a deeper understanding of these topics due to the lack of literature on the Mosuo family structure and marriage customs.

According to Mattison (2011),³ the Mosuo family structure is typical mainly, with the mother's side of the bloodline establishing the family and the father resuming his matrilineal links. The mother's brother also plays a significant role in the nuclear family. In other words, according to Mattison (2010), the uncle must assume responsibility for the child's upbringing. The "walking marriage" is the type of marriage that only Mosuo people use. A man enters a woman's chamber late afternoon and leaves the next day (Mattison, 2011). As a result, Mosuo created a system of lawless marriage in which couples were only intended to be temporary (Chen & Lu, 2019).⁴ At present, the research on the Mosuo marriage customs and family structure is relatively limited, and there is a lack of many written materials. While there is growing interest in this indigenous community, there has not been enough in-depth study of their cultural practices and social dynamics. Previous studies have only provided surface-level observations without a thorough analytical or theoretical framework. We need to apply anthropological and sociological theories to a deeper study of family and marriage patterns in rural Mosuo communities. By filling this research gap, we can better understand Mosuo culture, help us understand different family structures, and explore what is unique about the Mosuo marriage and family system. This research study holds tremendous significance for students pursuing social science courses as it enables them to gain profound insights into the humanity exhibited by borderless communities and traditional cultures that persist amidst our rapidly advancing society. The purpose of this study is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the family and marriage patterns among the Mosuo community.

Methods

This study focuses on the Mosuo, a minority group in China, and employs a qualitative approach using the ethnographic method commonly used in anthropology. By conducting an ethnographic study, the researchers can explore social phenomena in real-life settings. The study utilizes virtual participant observation, online interviews, and textual analysis as data collection techniques. Ethnography, which is the qualitative investigation of culture, behavior, and human expression, distinguishes anthropology from other sciences. This approach enables

¹ Mattison, S. M. (2010). *Demystifying the Mosuo: The behavioral ecology of kinship and reproduction in China's "last matriarchal" society*. University of Washington.

² Wen, B., Shi, H., Ren, L., Xi, H., Li, K., Zhang, W., ... & Xiao, C. (2004). The origin of Mosuo people as revealed by mtDNA and Y chromosome variation. *Science in China Series C: Life Sciences*, 47(1), 1-10. doi:10.1360/02yc0207

³ Mattison, S. M. (2011). Evolutionary contributions to solving the "Matrilineal Puzzle". *Human Nature*, 22(1), 64-88. doi:10.1007/s12110-011-9107-7

⁴ 陈荟 & 鲁奕利.(2019).摩梭人传统婚姻家庭文化的当代境遇及未来抉择——基于木里和泸沽湖地区的实地考察. *青海民族研究*(04),101-105. doi:10.15899/j.cnki.1005-5681.2019.04.016

anthropologists to gain unique insights by studying the issue over time and from various perspectives (Creswell, 2009).⁵ Additionally, extensive exploration of documents related to the Mosuo has been conducted, primarily sourced from libraries and local bookshops in China.

Sampling Strategy

The selection of appropriate study participants is crucial in ethnographic research, as they provide data to answer the research questions. For this qualitative study, purposive sampling was employed by selecting 21 Mosuo individuals and key informants as secondary sources relevant to the case. The participants were chosen based on their perceived usefulness to the study. Consultation with a tour guide helped the researchers determine the number of interviewees.

Participant Observation

Participant observation is widely recognized as the standard method for fieldwork in anthropology. Anthropologists engage in different levels of participant observation, actively participating in events or passively observing interesting locations. This method proves valuable in various stages of the research process, including identifying issues for further investigation, reviewing and validating existing data, and observing specific events firsthand. In larger projects involving multiple observers, an observation template may be used to ensure consistent note-taking on key occurrences and additional comments on other events. Due to COVID-19 restrictions in China during data collection period, physical access to the research site was restricted, the researchers decided to use virtual participant observation to gain ore insights on this study. Before conducting virtual observations, participants were informed to protect their privacy and confidentiality.

Interview Data

In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with the 21 participants, including key informants who possess relevant field experience with the Mosuo people. Key informant interviews involve a relatively small number of informants selected based on their knowledge and ideas relevant to the research. Open-ended questions were used to capture the informants' thoughts and experiences. The virtual interviews were conducted using an interview schedule composed of a list of open-ended questions and follow-up inquiries. Prior to online interviews, participants were asked to sign a consent form and were informed of their rights to withdraw from the research study at any time without consequences. The virtual interviews were conducted in Chinese language with the assistance of the tour guide, and all data were translated into English for research publication purposes.

Limitations and Challenges

One limitation of this Mosuo research is the lack of practical visits to the Mosuo community. On-site visits could enhance the validity and breadth of the study by allowing for firsthand experience and observation of their marital customs and family structures. Additionally, the relatively small number of people interviewed may be a constraint in terms of time and resources. Changes in family structure, with increased emphasis on parents and offspring rather

⁵ Creswell, J. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. . Thousand Oaks ,California: SAGE Publications Inc.

than the traditional matrilineal relationship, have been observed in areas affected by tourism (Mattison, 2010; Yang, 2008).⁶ These changes complicate researchers' ability to accurately reflect the traditional Mosuo people's matrilineal descent in areas where both matrilineal and parental offspring relationships exist.

Results and Discussion

Formation of Mosuo Community

Mosuo nationality does not belong to 55 ethnic minorities in China. Mosuo living in Ninglang, Yunnan, and other places are classified as Naxi nationality, and Mosuo living in Yanyuan, Muli, Yanbian, and other places in Sichuan are classified as Mongolian nationality. But most Mosuo people do not recognize their Naxi identity. In addition, the results of the Y chromosome and mitochondria study of Wen (2005)⁷ show that the paternal genetic structure of Mosuo people is closest to that of Yunnan Tibetans, while the maternal genetic structure is closest to that of Lijiang Naxi people. Its language also belongs to Naxi but belongs to different dialect areas. Their similarity in maternal genetic structure is consistent with the similarity in language and history. Mosuo people are the only remaining matriarchal society in China. Up to now, they still maintain the walking marriage system. However, with the social changes and development of Chinese society from traditional society to modern society, from agricultural society to industrial society, and from a closed society to open society (Cai, 2011),⁸ Mosuo society has also undergone a transformation, its culture has undergone corresponding changes, and the traditional extended family and marriage mode, which are the cornerstone of Mosuo people's social culture, have changed. Tourism is the biggest driver. In terms of culture, the houses near the lake have been built into tall buildings with three floors or more, the building materials have also been changed from traditional wood to reinforced concrete structure, and the structure of the "Grandmother house" has also changed. In addition, it is the marriage model (Chen, 2012).⁹ According to the survey of Xu (1998),¹⁰ 75% of the people of marriageable age around HuGu Lake still maintain "aha occasional marriage" (walking marriage). However, in a recent survey (Wu et al., 2018),¹¹ only 29.6% of Mosuo people still choose "walking marriage." This also shows that with the transformation from traditional to modern in terms of economic structure and cultural tradition (Chen, 2012),¹² Mosuo culture has been greatly impacted by Han culture, including the walking marriage system.

⁶ Mattison, S. M. (2010). Economic impacts of tourism and erosion of the visiting system among the Mosuo of Lugu Lake; Yang, Wall, Smith, & SLJ. (2008). Ethnic tourism development: chinese government perspectives.

⁷ Wen, B., Shi, H., Ren, L., Xi, H., Li, K., Zhang, W., ... & Xiao, C. (2004). The origin of Mosuo people as revealed by mtDNA and Y chromosome variation. *Science in China Series C: Life Sciences*, 47(1), 1-10. doi:10.1360/02yc0207

⁸ Cai, H. & Michael, S. (2003). A society without fathers or husbands: the Na of China. *Waterloo*. 45(1). 178-179. doi:10.2307/25606125

⁹ 陈更新.(2012). 从摩梭人的典型血亲关系解读人类社会深层结构的形成[J]. *剑南文学 (经典阅读)*, 2012(9):324-324,322.

¹⁰ 徐旌.(1998).摩梭人之民俗文化探析. *云南地理环境研究*(01).

¹¹ 郇欣言,林启洋 & 杨小军.(2018).文化混搭理论视角下摩梭人婚恋观念研究:泸沽湖地区例证. *重庆社会科学*(07),46-56. doi:10.19631/j.cnki.css.2018.07.005

¹² 陈更新.(2012). 从摩梭人的典型血亲关系解读人类社会深层结构的形成[J]. *剑南文学 (经典阅读)*, 2012(9):324-324,322.

Marriage

In anthropology, marriage is cultural that defined as the socially sanctioned customs, rules, and obligations of relationships between men and women, adults and children and between kinship groups of married partners (Nanda & Warms, 2019).¹³ However, anthropological studies have long documented the widespread existence and validity of family types, including families built on multiple husbands, multiple wives, and a plethora of other possibilities (Lathrop, 2004).¹⁴ In terms of the institution of marriage, their unique form of marriage is what we call the "walking marriage" system, where the relationship between the spouses is not governed by the law and the two are always original members of their own family. The lovers are the man who goes to the woman's boudoir for one night and returns to his own home the next morning (Yao, 2015).¹⁵

Dating and Intimate Relationship

In anthropological studies, a successful seduction leads to the establishment of a rapport, or intimate relationship, which also means that both parties can share information confidently, and this relationship also connects the two parties through intimate conversations (Moore, 1985).¹⁶ This theory also applies to the matrilineal clan, the Mosuo. One of the criteria for men to choose a partner is youth and beauty, and the other is the ability to maintain a family, and for women, the criteria for choosing a male partner are wealthy family, talent and good character. That means, both men and women can choose their partners voluntarily, and the will of the woman is relatively more respected (Diao, 2016).¹⁷ On the day of the traditional festival "Mountain Turning Festival," Mosuo people all wear colorful clothes and come to Mount Gram, then burn incense and pray, and then hold folk activities such as horse racing, swinging, dancing and singing (Li, 2016).¹⁸ And every day at the bonfire, Mosuo people will dress up and show their ideal partner at the party (Mu et al., 2020).¹⁹ According to Zhang and Zhang (2014),²⁰ the young men and women of the right age have a good feeling for each other and use the form of antiphonal songs to hint at each other, often men take the initiative to please women. Start dating after the other person gets the hang of it, without asking permission from their family (Zhang & Zhang, 2014). After that, the form of walking marriage was established between two people. There are two types of marriage: the marriage of a person who lives apart, and the marriage of a person who lives together, and the marriage of a "couple" who lives together is based on affection and sexual interaction, regardless of material factors (Sun & Zhao, 2020).²¹ The study found out three stages of marriage choice among the matrilineal

¹³ Nanda, S., & Warms, R. L. (2019). *Cultural anthropology*. Sage Publications.

¹⁴ Lathrop, S. (2004). Broadening the Marriage and Family Debate. *Anthropology News*, 45(4), 23-24.

¹⁵ 姚冠男.(2015).那山、那水、那人——泸沽湖畔摩梭人的家庭结构. *裔(06)*,138-139.

¹⁶ Moore, M. M. (1985). Nonverbal courtship patterns in women: Context and consequences. *Ethology and sociobiology*, 6(4), 237-247.doi: 10.1016/0162-3095(85)90016-0

¹⁷ 刁振飞.(2016).摩梭人走婚文化探析. *潍坊工程职业学院学报(04)*,73-76.

¹⁸ 李红营.(2016).泸沽湖摩梭人传统节日之“转山节”. *天津中德职业技术学院学报(04)*,93-96.

doi:10.16350/j.cnki.cn12-1442/g4.2016.04.027.

¹⁹ Mu, S., Zhang, A., & Tian, S. (2020) Cultural Representation of Mosuo Ethnic Twist Dance in Tourism Practice. In *4th International Conference on Culture, Education and Economic Development of Modern Society (ICCESE 2020)* (pp. 168-171). Atlantis Press. doi: 10.2991/assehr.k.200316.039

²⁰ 张妍 & 张橙.(2014).摩梭人走婚制度浅析. *新西部(理论版)(04)*,17.

²¹ 孙涛 & 赵飞.(2020).丽江永宁摩梭人走婚习惯法的存续与递嬗——基于法人类学视角的探究. *昆明学院学报(04)*,108-115+123.

community of Mosuo: Stimulation, Values and Roles. Each stage has unique practices and rituals.

The search for a life partner is an inherent instinct across cultures. For the Mosuo people, this quest takes the form of "walking marriage," a distinctive marital practice. This article examines the stages of walking marriage, including partner selection, value exploration, and role confirmation. Insights from interviews with community members shed light on the intricacies of this unique tradition.

Partner Selection:

In the first stage, known as stimulation, individuals focus on non-mental factors such as physical appearance and qualities. In the Mosuo community, potential partners are often sought during nightly bonfire gatherings.

Informant #1 explained:

For example, during our bonfire party, individuals clasp palms with their desired partners. If not interested, a gentle pinch is given; if interested, they clasp back and exchange notes indicating their flower house color. This helps avoid confusion when finding the girl's room.

Value Exploration:

The second stage involves verbal exchanges to explore values and worldviews, aiming for harmony. However, Mosuo people tend to avoid discussing the details of their interactions openly. Traditionally, Mosuo couples did not engage in daytime dating, instead relying on nighttime interactions. Additionally, the tedious sleepover ritual played a role in establishing physical requirements for partners.

Role Confirmation:

The final stage involves confirming that the abilities and qualities of both partners align with their assigned roles. Walking marriage among the Mosuo is based on long-term stable intimate relationships.

Walking Marriage

The Mosuo community practices a unique form of marriage called "walk-away marriage," which stands out for its absence of financial exchanges, pretense, and bride price. According to our interviews with local community members, this marriage tradition involves the man visiting the woman's house late at night and leaving before sunrise. He then goes back to his mother's house to fulfill his duties and obligations towards his immediate family members.

It was also revealed during interviews, that relationships problems may arise due to perception that the man is "useless" and fails to make a substantial contribution to the female partner's family. In the words of the interviewees, this lack of contribution becomes a significant factor leading to relationship difficulties.

Furthermore, our data collection revealed a noteworthy contrast between the Mosuo community and many other minority groups in China and elsewhere. Unlike these other groups, the Mosuo community does not adhere to dowry or bride price customs, further highlighting the distinctiveness of their marital practices.

Family Life and Status

The field of anthropology recognizes three primary types of family structures: the nuclear family, the composite family, and the extended family, as identified by Nanda and Warms (2019).²² One prominent example of a matrilineal society is the Mosuo, renowned worldwide for their adoption of this family system. This is in contrast to the prevailing patrilineal systems found in many other minority societies. In a matrilineal family, children born to a man and a woman within the context of an intimate relationship are considered part of the woman's lineage. They bear the mother's name and are raised by her family. Notably, the role traditionally associated with a "father" in this context is primarily fulfilled by the mother's brothers, who assume responsibility for the discipline and upbringing of their sisters' children. Meanwhile, the biological father typically returns to his own matrilineal family (Zhang, 2022).²³ As a result, a Mosuo family exclusively comprises members from the mother's bloodline, with no direct representation from the father's lineage. Each morning and evening, everyone pays their respects to her, and she remains in this room throughout the day. This room also serves as the venue for important life events and significant ceremonies, including the veneration of ancestors (Cai & Michael, 2003).²⁴

The grandmother plays a significant role in the family as she holds a position of authority and is responsible for making important decisions. As the clan mother and matriarch, she becomes the custodian of all resources, ensuring their equitable distribution among her children and grandchildren, while also assuming the role of sustaining and protecting all members of the clan (Goettner-Abendroth, 2018).²⁵

Absence of Paternal Confirmation

One fascinating outcome of this study is the distinct absence of paternal confirmation within the Mosuo community, setting it apart from other minority groups in China and other countries. In the traditional Mosuo culture, the notion of a biological father holds little significance. Instead, their cultural beliefs, rich in myths and metaphors, illuminate the role of men in the process of childbirth. According to Mosuo beliefs, the ultimate creator, known as the "Abaozhu," assumes responsibility for bringing forth a child. Around five months after birth, the Abaozhu places the fetus in the girl's womb, determines its gender, and supports the woman during her pregnancy. In this framework, the man's role is viewed as simply providing the seed that already exists within the woman's womb, enabling it to sprout and mature (Cai, 2011).²⁶

The Mosuo "father" demonstrates recognition of their children in a public setting through a child sacrifice ceremony, where a gift is presented to the birth mother (Shi et al., 2002).²⁷ In cases where the father is unwell or has passed away, it becomes the children's responsibility to

²² Nanda, S., & Warms, R. L. (2019). *Cultural anthropology*. Sage Publications.

²³ 章立明. (2022). 摩梭人母系家庭与性别分工的百年变迁——以云南省宁蒗县永宁乡大落水村为例. *山东女子学院学报* (02), 52-60.

²⁴ Cai, H. & Michael, S. (2003). A society without fathers or husbands: the Na of China. *Waterloo*. 45(1). 178-179. doi:10.2307/25606125

²⁵ Goettner-Abendroth, H. (2018). Re-thinking "matriarchy" in modern matriarchal studies using two examples: The Khasi and the Mosuo. *Asian Journal of Women's Studies*, 24(1), 3-27. doi:10.1080/12259276.2017.1421293

²⁶ 蔡华. (2011). 人类学怎样理解“父亲”——再论“无父无夫的社会”. *世界民族* (01), 40-47.

²⁷ 施传刚, 杨春宇, 胡鸿保. (2002). 摩梭是“无父无夫的社会”吗?. *世界民族* (02), 55-57.

visit him or represent their mother at the father's funeral, emphasizing the importance of honoring the paternal connection (Chou & Guo, 2006).²⁸

This momentous occasion is marked by a joyous celebration known as the "100 days celebration" to honor the birth of the child, as Qiu (2021)²⁹ stated. These customs and rituals exemplify the intricate and nuanced understanding of fatherhood within Mosuo society. A Mosuo child once shared, "I live together with my parents. I have an uncle who doesn't live here. But my mom tells me to call my father 'uncle' when we encounter tourists" (Qiu, 2021).

Rite of Passage

At the age of 13, a significant and highly revered ceremony known as the cheng ding li (成丁礼), also called the coming-of-age ceremony, takes place in the lives of Mosuo individuals. This grand event marks a key moment in their lives and is considered the most significant festival. Various rituals are performed during this ceremony, where boys put on special-made trousers, while girls wear skirts, symbolizing the transition to adulthood (Lidz, 2007).³⁰ One notable ritual involves stepping on pig's meat and the Mosuo's Ahawa, and the uncle of the boy would adorn him with jewelry and purchases him a new suit of clothes. Upon reaching this milestone, individuals are granted the privilege of having their own flower house, a symbolic representation of their adulthood. The practice of walking marriage among the Mosuo people is primarily driven by the need for reproduction. It can be understood as a unique approach to fostering the continuation of the lineage (Ullmann, 2017).³¹

Family Obligations

The traditional patriarchy refers to a social system characterized by gender-based hierarchies, where men hold dominant positions and exercise control over women, often leading to their oppression and exploitation (Waters, 1989).³² This system is prevalent in many societies worldwide. However, the Mosuo community stands as a unique example within China, being the only existing matriarchal society. In a matriarchal society, the defining characteristic is that women wield absolute power and authority. In Mosuo families, it is the female parents who hold control over the management, inheritance, and distribution of goods. Studies have shown that the level of attachment with both fathers and maternal uncles is similar among the Mosuo, while in comparison, the Han culture displays a stronger attachment with fathers than with maternal uncles (Xiao et al., 2022).³³

The absence of the concept of a "father" in the family structure results in the mother assuming a central role within the household. Mothers fulfill crucial roles in child-rearing, providing support to the elderly, managing the family's finances, and overseeing agricultural and

²⁸ Chou Wah-Shan & 郭平. (2006). 《一个没有父亲和丈夫的社会——中国纳西族》. *西北民族研究* (03), 169-171.

²⁹ Qiu, Y. (2021). Mosuo matrilineal society, their kinship system and mainstream Chinese society: Possibilities of integration and/or preservation of traditional cultural aspects in China. *Unpublished Dissertation*.

³⁰ Lidz, L. A. (2007). Evidentiality in Yongning Na (Mosuo). *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area*, 30(2). <http://sealang.net/archives/lbta/pdf/LTBA-30.2.45.pdf>

³¹ Ullmann, I. (n.d.). Impacts of migration on Mosuo Cultural Identity: A case study of the Mosuo people in Lijiang. SIT Digital Collections. https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection/2647

³² Waters, M. (1989). Patriarchy and viriarchy: An exploration and reconstruction of concepts of masculine domination. *Sociology*, 23(2). 193-211. doi:10.1177/0038038589023002003

³³ Xiao, E., Jin, J., Hong, Z., & Zhang, J. (2022). The relationship between children and their maternal uncles: A unique parenting mode in Mosuo culture. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2022.873137

domestic tasks. It is only a slight adjustment, which does not hinder the contribution of each member of the family to the family (Chen, 2012).³⁴

Family Relationships

The cultural practices of matrilineal and walking marriages among the Mosuo people align with evolutionary principles, leading to numerous adaptive outcomes such as reduced sexual conflict and improved overall well-being (Yong & Li, 2022).³⁵ Notably, the Mosuo society fosters a remarkably peaceful family environment, where conflicts or contradictions rarely arise between couples, family members, or between two families. These practices prioritize freedom in romantic relationships and emphasize mutual respect and understanding, contributing to harmonious relationships and a tranquil atmosphere within Mosuo families. It is essential to note, however, that Mosuo children display exceptional obedience and good conduct, even among older children, demonstrating a notable restraint from engaging in such actions. This adherence to respectful behavior contributes to the overall harmonious dynamics within Mosuo families.

Marital Conflict

In traditional Mosuo society, the approach to marital conflict and separation differs significantly from the formal divorce processes seen in Han culture. The emphasis is placed on maintaining harmony and avoiding conflicts, leading to a peaceful separation if the individuals involved decide to end their relationship. This contrasts with the legal procedures and potential conflicts often associated with divorce in other cultures.

Based on our research, Mosuo people prioritize open communication and mutual respect when navigating disagreements within a relationship. For instance, in the case of Amei and her partner, they never exchanged hurtful words or allowed their disagreements to escalate. Instead, if they reached a point where they no longer wished to continue their walking marriage, they simply stopped the arrangement without the need for legal intervention or conflict.

The Mosuo people's approach to marital conflict and separation reflects their cultural values of harmony, respect, and simplicity. By prioritizing peaceful resolutions and avoiding conflicts, they aim to maintain positive relationships within their community. This unique perspective on separation illustrates the Mosuo people's commitment to preserving social cohesion and reducing the negative impact of relationship endings.

The Mosuo people are influenced by Tibetan Buddhism, and living Buddhas and lamas play an important role in their lives. The Living Buddha would be responsible for naming newborn children, while the lamas would treat them for illnesses (Ran et al., 1999).³⁶ The leaders who

³⁴ 陈更新.(2012). 从摩梭人的典型血亲关系解读人类社会深层结构的形成[J]. *剑南文学 (经典阅读)*, 2012(9):324-324,322.

³⁵ Yong, J. C. & Li, N. P. (2022). Elucidating evolutionary principles with the traditional Mosuo: Adaptive benefits and origins of matriliney and “walking marriages”. *Culture and Evolution*, 19(1), 22-40. doi:10.1556/2055.2022.00017

³⁶ 冉茂盛,向孟泽,侯再金,唐牟尼,毛文君,李洁.(1999).四川省摩梭族(蒙古族)对喇嘛治病与求医行为的跨文化认识. *中国心理卫生杂志(01)*.

guided their lives were the chiefs, called "土司" (Tusi), who were the leaders of the community before the infiltration of modern officials (Zhang, 2022).³⁷

Conclusion

Marriage and family have been the subject of study by anthropologists around the world. In China, the Mosuo are not only not one of the 55 regular ethnic minorities but are also considered to be the only remaining matriarchal clan in China. The Mosuo community, a representative of maternal genetic structure, has unique marriage patterns and family structures. Mosuo community does not adhere to dowry or bride price customs, further highlighting the distinctiveness of their marital practices.

³⁷ 章立明. (2022). 摩梭人母系家庭与性别分工的百年变迁——以云南省宁蒗县永宁乡大落水村为例. 山东女子学院学报 (02), 52-60.

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