As one of the largest and most densely populated nations in the world, China has been one of the most aggressive nations in dealing with a growing population. Under the current Chinese government, among several social problems that exist to this day, overpopulation is the largest. As a result, the current government has imposed a “one-child policy.” This policy states and strictly enforces that each family is lawfully allowed only one child. To have more than one child is illegal and goes against their constitution; the People’s Republic of China state in their constitution that “Both husband and wife have the duty to put into practice family planning” (555).

Abortion, according to the Chinese, is not considered killing as it is in many Western cultures. Just like the Jews and Platonists, Confucians and Taoists believe that life begins at birth. This is not to say that modern day Chinese agree with abortion. Many one-child households wish they could bring more children into this world. As late as 1988, the state family planning commission found that in heavily populated Beijing “79.7 percent wanted two or more” (556). This reflects the ancient Confucian ideal, “more children, more happiness” (556), which many, especially in the rural communities, still believe to this day.

As a result, the Chinese government has enforced the family planning program in order to maintain a strict hold on the ever increasing population. Since the early 1970s, the preferred method for keeping the one child per family quota has been the coercive abortion policy. The government has many tactics and methods to persuade adamant couples to adhere to the family planning demands. This includes but is not limited to repeated official visits to the homes of unplanned pregnant women, “study classes,” strict penalties revolving around the forced loss of work and home. It is also not uncommon for the entire female population of a factory or institution to aid in the persuasion of forced abortion. The women in this situation are a collective group punished and rewarded as one. It is important to note that abortion is the Chinese government’s last step in controlling the population. Marriage postponement, use of IUD’s (intrauterine devices), and surgical sterilization are also commonly used.
There is much debate over whether or not the practice of coerced abortion is a moral act. Many have raised the issue of coerced abortion vs. persuaded abortion. While the author argues that coerced abortion is not morally wrong, he does recognize that it goes against the individual’s privacy and personal rights. In his opinion the government’s actions are morally justified as an appropriate means of population control since they are beneficial towards the social good.

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