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following passages. Underline the important viewpoints while reading. 1. Childless - and Happy That Way In a country where most people believe that a family is not a family without children, some young couple, especially those with a higher education, have chosen to keep their families to two members-husband and wife. "I can't afford to have a child," said Wang, a promising research fellow with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. Wang has been busy traveling abroad and has received scholarship offers from a number of American universities that would enable him to complete his PhD. "He is a free bird who may leave the nest any day and I've never cared much about a child," said Xiao Wei, Wang's wife, business representative of a French company in Beijing. Unlike the Wangs, Zhang and his wife have argued over whether they should have a baby. "When we were married six years ago, we decided to adopt a wait-and-see attitude on the issue. And after a couple of years, my wife said she wanted to have a baby while I insisted we were just fine without one. We have been arguing about the matter ever since, and now that we are over 30, I think we're likely to end up in accordance with my wishes," said Zhang. "There are many marriages that should have long been broken. People just hold on because a divorce would hurt the children most and the parents hate to face that prospect. So the couple sticks together and winds up torturing

each other. "A real happy family is a family that, without children, is still a happy family." Said Zhang. Ma Jiang, who has opened a trading company and was instantly nicknamed Money Bags by his friends, said he would hate to be bothered with a child. "To me, being without a child, I am less bound by household chores and can concentrate on my business. My lovely wife is all I need, no third person," he said. Ma ' s wife, Xiao Lu, working for a government unit, could have quit her job and become dependent on the "rich" husband. But she decided against it. "I can ' t imagine what I would be like if I stayed at home, doing household chores and breast-feeding a child. I ' d rather keep my independence at all costs", she said. "Whatever people say, I believe that to have a child means a lot of sacrifice. We ' re just not ready for that, fun or misery," Ma ' s wife said. Hou Mingkun and his wife Luo Qian said they weren ' t against having a child, boy or girl, if only the baby was physically well developed. "One takes a risk when having a baby. I ' ve heard too many stories about children born with physical defects. Since there ' s no guarantee that the same won ' t happen to my baby. I think I ' d better not get myself involved. People say ' no pain, no gain, ' but for me it ' s no gain, no pain," Luo said. The couple were classmates in high school and went to the same university in Shanghai. Now, they are working for a computer company in Beijing. Those who choose not to have children have to overcome some unexpected difficulties in defending their stance. Influenced by the traditional view that one ' s worst sin is having no descendants, most people still accept that a wife is not a good wife if

she doesn't have a child. Though few Chinese believe in an after-life, they do care a lot about growing old. For centuries, one of the purposes of having children, sons especially, was to have someone take care of the parents when they were old. "Now, since both husband and wife are working, they will have a pension when they retire. What happens now is that the retired parents are supporting their adult children," Wang said. "We're normal people, just like everyone else, We've just chosen to live our own which harms no one. I hope people understand us," Wang said.

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