

Zhang Yimou's children spark one-child policy debate

([Shanghai Daily](#))

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A claim that Zhang Yimou, one of China's best known film directors, had two sons and a daughter with actress Chen Ting before they got married in 2011 was confirmed by people close to the couple yesterday.

The news sparked a heated online debate about the rich flouting the country's one-child policy.

It was Zhang's second marriage after his divorce from Xiao Hua, with whom he had a daughter.

People in close contact with Zhang, 63, and Chen, 32, confirmed that the couple, who registered their marriage in the eastern city of Wuxi, had children born in 2000, 2004 and 2006, yesterday's Chongqing Evening News reported.

Zhang's romance with Chen was the subject of media speculation last March when actress He Jun, who the paper said had failed to get a role in the director's "The Flowers of War," claimed Chen and Zhang had three children.

There were subsequent online claims that Zhang had bought a villa worth more than 10 million yuan (US\$1.6 million) to accommodate Chen, their children and Chen's parents, the paper reported.

Chen was said to have been a student at the Beijing Film Academy but quit when she met Zhang during auditions for his "The Road Home."

An "acquaintance" told the paper that Chen "once told me that Zhang had two daughters with a woman and a son with another woman. She felt so proud because she won (the competition with the women)."

The comments led to speculation that Zhang might have a total of seven children - three with Chen, three with two other women and the daughter from his first marriage.

Under family planning rules, couples may have a second child under certain conditions, such as both spouses being from one-child families, or if the first child has a non-inherited disease. In some provinces, rural couples are allowed a second if their first is a girl.

Zhang and Chen should be liable for a fine of 160 million yuan, based on income, a legal expert told [www.ifeng.com](#).

Online there was anger that rich and influential people could spend money to have more children while the poor were forced to have abortions.

"Do money and power top the law? Can the rich just use money to solve everything and get what they want?" was one of many online comments.