

WOMEN AND EQUALITY IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA: Workplace, Culture and Social System

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Abstract

This thesis is a discussion focussed on the possibility of Chinese women achieving equality under free market conditions. The key critical and constructive ideas utilised in the thesis derive to a large extent from free market theory as proposed by Milton Friedman. The thesis explores women's inequality in the People's Republic of China as it arises from the excessively strong role of government in the political and social system and traditional cultural prejudice against women. These factors inhibit Chinese women from making their own choices in pursuit of their own interests and achieving equal competition on the basis of equal opportunity with men in society. Even before the dynastic period of Chinese history, a decline of women's social role--their administrative role in particular-- began. It was caused both by the expansion of the state bureaucracy and the unique dominance of Confucianism in Chinese society and continued by and large right up to the post-dynastic period. After the Communist Party came to power in 1949, socialism created a new form of government control over women, limiting their free geographical movement and their freedom to choose place of work. Under socialism, women's choices were extremely restrained not only by the Party/government system of personnel management but also by Party ideology. The problems faced by Chinese women after the economic reform of 1978 can be attributed both to the continuance of the socialist system and to the re-emerging influence of traditional cultural prejudice against women. On the other hand, the achievements of Chinese women after 1978 derive largely from the newly emerged market-oriented economy, in which women can to some extent achieve their interests by making their own choices.

In the light of the experience of Chinese women documented in the thesis, it is suggested that internationally agreed principles of women's equality should include women's equal opportunity with men and equal attitudes towards women and men regardless of differences in culture, religion and race as well as gender. What women do and what

values women believe in should depend entirely on women's own choice rather than on any imposed policies or values.

- from people of many different cultural backgrounds at Sydney University and also in China.

First of all, I owe a big debt of gratitude to my first "Western" supervisor, Dr. Richard Basham, currently head of the Department of Anthropology. He is the person who taught me to swim in the Western academic sea that was so unfamiliar to me on arrival six years ago. He helped me to get over the big gap between Western and Chinese academic study: his understanding of different cultures is profound and his supervision was outstanding. It is always delightful and fruitful to have a conversation with him. His strong support and encouragement motivated me to finally complete this thesis.

My Chinese supervisor in the Department of Government and Administration, Dr. Qingguo Jia, helped me greatly in understanding Chinese politics from the Chinese perspective, while my second "Western" supervisor, Professor Graeme Gill, gave me very important help in structuring the thesis to a Ph. D dissertation standard.

Professor Peter King has made a crucial and in fact indispensable contribution to the thesis. His help was priceless. First, he suggested the topic and then opened the gate to the road of contemporary women's studies for me. Second, he spent a great deal of time helping me to clarify the arguments of the thesis and fix up my "Chinglish". I have appreciated very much his sincerity and kindness and what I can say to him at this moment is (in a Chinese saying) "Lairi fangchang" (There will be ample time for you in the long run).

Associate Professor Rodney Tiffin gave me much methodological help in processing the answers to my questionnaires for students and employees using the SPSS

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This thesis could not have been completed without a great deal of “multicultural help” - from people of many different cultural backgrounds at Sydney University and also in China.

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(Statistical Package for Social Science) program. As a result, the survey data generated about contemporary Chinese thinking and beliefs became the main primary source of my thesis.

research. Mr Shen Yuan, Dr. Li Yunhe and Ma Tan Shen engaged in valuable conversation with me on several memorable occasions.

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A Movement of the All China Women’s Federation organised a meeting for me to talk to the research fellows of the institute. I thank them for giving me their honest

In addition, I have benefited from living in a “United Nations” atmosphere with the overseas Ph D students of the Department of Government at 86 Darlington Road. I

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indispensable part of “fun” making and a much missed sporting partner since he returned to Weert.

My father, Wang Qingxiang, who was teaching English at

Northeast University in 1993 (and checked each of my questions for political

Living in this “UN” atmosphere, I shared and learnt so much. All of us enjoyed sincere friendship together, and also shared our difficulties in study and life arising from the cultural and social differences between Australia and the societies we came from. Our

mutual understanding helped us to overcome our feelings of loneliness and isolation from Australian society. Our small but intense community has broadened our minds

and enhanced our flexibility and capacity for adapting to differences. I am very proud to say that, at the end of our studies, each of us had made a great leap forward in being

international. who included officials of the Shenyang municipal government and the Liaoning provincial government; scholars of the Institute of Sociology of the Liaoning

Another big debt of gratitude is owed to all the Chinese friends, relatives, colleagues and acquaintances who helped me with my field work in China during 1993.

white collar workers and workers of Dalian No. 10 Industrial Meter Plant; workers of Dayang

In Beijing, scholars of the Research Institute of Sociology of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences provided me with valuable materials, many of which were fruits of their own research. Mr Shen Yuan, Dr. Li Yunher and Ms. Tan Shen engaged in valuable conversation with me on several memorable occasions.

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In Shenyang, several people helped me greatly in administering my questionnaires to students and working people. They were, Yan Tao, a student of China Medical University in 1993; my father, Wang Qingxiang, who was teaching English at Northeast University in 1993 (and checked each of my questions for political acceptability) and, finally, Wang Xiaobo and Wu Songqi, the student political supervisors of the Department of Machine Processes and the Department of Industrial Management of Northeast University.

Lastly, I would like to thank all my student and employee respondents, who were patient and thorough in completing the questionnaires. Their answers steered my study of Chinese thinking and behaviour in new directions. I must also thank all my other interviewees, who included officials of the Shenyang municipal government and the Liaoning provincial government; scholars of the Institute of Sociology of the Liaoning Academy of Social Sciences; academics of Northeast University; employees of the women's organisation of the Dalian municipal government; managers, white collar workers and workers of Dalian No. 10 Industrial Meter Plant; workers of Dayang

Clothing Enterprise and self-employed people in both Shenyang and Dalian individual trade markets.

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This thesis is dedicated to all of the people mentioned above and to the women of China striving for a better life.

and collective workers 109

Abbreviations

- PRC People's Republic of China
- CCP Chinese Communist Party
- CCCP Constitution of the Chinese Communist Party

Period History

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Abbreviations

PRC People's Republic of China
 CCP Chinese Communist Party
 CCCP Constitution of the Chinese Communist Party

Han	206 -- 220 A D
Three Kingdoms and Northern and Southern dynasties	220 -- 581 A D
Sui	581 -- 618 A D
Tang	618 -- 907 A D
Wudain (Five Dynasty Period)	907 -- 920 A D
Song	960 -- 1127 A D
Southern Song	1127 -- 1280 A D
Yuan	1280 -- 1368 A D
Ming	1368 -- 1644 A D
Qing	1644 -- 1911 A D
Post-dynastic period	
Republic	1911 -- 1924
Guomindang	1924 -- 1949
People's Republic	1949 -- present

Periods of Chinese History

Pre-dynastic period

Sanhuang (Three Emperors) and Wudi (Five Emperors)	2852 -- 2205 (?) B C
Xia	2205 -- 1766 (?) B C
Shang	1766 -- 1122 B C
Zhou (including Western Zhou and Eastern Zhou)	1122 -- 770 B C
Warring States period	770 -- 220 B C

Dynastic period

Qin	220 B C -- 206 A D
Han	206 -- 220 A D
Three Kingdoms and Northern and Southern dynasties	220-- 581 A D
Sui	581 -- 618 A D
Tang	618 -- 907 A D
Wudain (Five Dynasty Period)	907-- 960 A D
Song	960 -- 1127 A D
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Post-dynastic period

Republic	1911-- 1924
Guomindang	1924-- 1949
People's Republic	1949 -- present

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a study about women's equality conceived on the basis of women's own interests and choice. The subject of the thesis is women in the contemporary People's Republic of China (PRC), and its purpose is to make a contribution to the current debate about common paths to women's equality across cultures and societies. The search for international women's equality has been a goal of the "second wave" of the feminist movement in the West since the 1970s. The main concern of the thesis is the social equality of women, which I refer to as the relative social position of women compared with men, both in the public and the domestic realms. In this comparison, the extent of the social role of women is indicated mainly by women's economic independence and autonomy in financial management.

The core argument of the thesis is that a market economy in China can provide significant new opportunities for women and thus gradually erodes the dominance of traditional roles for women. However, the strong role of state and the continuing strength of Chinese traditional attitudes towards women still hamper women to a great extent in seizing new opportunities.

The significance for Western feminist scholars of studying women in the PRC is that women's reality in the PRC, and the relationships between men and women that are shaped by the Chinese cultural, social and political environment, can suggest alternative solutions to the problems of women's equality. Chinese culture and society differ from concepts of Western culture and society by upholding different attitudes toward the role of women in society, and their relationships with men. Priorities for tackling their problems are also different from those favoured by Western feminist scholars. Chinese women are a crucial example for them in re-examining the adequacy of their own theories, which are supposed to guide women to achieve equality. The efforts of the state

for women's equality and the women's movement in China to achieve equality have long been influenced by Western ideas about women's social role and by Western social ideology, especially the idea of equal rights as between men and women before the law. Indeed, it is assumed by Chinese scholars that the women's movement in China began under the influence of Western ideas during the May Fourth Movement in 1919, which aimed at helping women to break away from traditional roles by studying and working outside the home (Li, 1988: 145-150). According to these scholars, the women's movement continued after 1949 and was driven by Marxist ideology.

Since the new course of the CCP, legitimised at the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee in December 1978, gave priority to economic growth over political considerations, the degree of women's equality in China has become more and more related to the economic situation of women rather than the efforts of political movements. Women again after 1978 faced problems that seemed to have disappeared after 1949, and renewed discrimination against women in many aspects emerged.

The situation of women after 1978 has drawn great attention among Western feminist scholars to the effects of the new economic policies on women in China. They have conducted numerous researches on women both in urban and rural China. The most representative studies by Western feminist scholars are Andors (1983), Johnson (1984), Wolf (1985), Honig and Hershatter (1988), Croll (1994) and Jacka (1997). These studies have concluded that economic reform has had a double impact on women. On the one hand, economic reform has increased the living standards of women in China, and women have been able to take up new work opportunities to pursue their own economic independence; on the other hand, in the view of Tamara Jacka, "in numerous ways the subordination of women has been reinforced and increased since the reform were introduced" (Jacka, 1997:1), which according to Emily Honig and Gail Hershatter, "The

reforms strengthened and in some cases reconstructed the sexual division of labour, keeping women in a transient, lower-paid, and subordinate position in the workplace" (Honig and Hershatter, 1988: 337). In rural areas, according to Jacka,

Women have not benefited from the reforms to the same extent as men, and the reforms have not led to an improvement in rural women's position, either within the family or in the wider community. Rather, certain aspects of women's subordination have intensified and others have been altered or broken down, only to form new patterns of subordination (Jacka, 1997: 190).

Has economic reform had a negative impact on women? Have these apparent negative impacts on women actually been brought on by economic reform? To answer these questions, it is necessary to define the equality of women in a Chinese context and to understand the causes of inequality for women in China.

This thesis suggests that the most important priority in achieving women's equality is women's initial equal opportunity with men, on which basis, women should be free to make their own choices to achieve their diverse interests. It is based on the assumption that men and women are innately equal as individuals; thus they should have equal chances to take advantage of opportunities. It is vital to ensure that all women have equal opportunities regardless of their cultural, religious, and national differences.

The inequality of women in China derives from discriminatory attitudes towards the role, capabilities and talents of women. These attitudes have been strengthened by the operation of a male-dominated Chinese bureaucracy imbued with Confucian morality: Traditional China was characterised by "[t]he all-pervasiveness of Confucian influence in social norms and private morals, [and] the exalted status accorded to Confucius himself" (McNeill, 1970: 1). The essential task for women's equality is to change Chinese discriminatory attitudes toward women and to break down barriers preventing women

from achieving equality with men. To do so, it is fundamentally important to reduce the moral pressure on Chinese women, which probably requires a significant decline in the role and status of the Chinese bureaucracy. A market economy and marketisation may be able to play this role by challenging the sole role of the Chinese bureaucracy in Chinese society and by enhancing other roles, thus providing new opportunities for women. In traditional Chinese society, "there was only one profession... recognised: that of governing" (Balazs, 1964: 11). For the leading Western prophet of the market, Milton Friedman, the market can provide equality of opportunity for every individual:

A market system could combine the freedom of individuals to pursue their own objectives with the extensive cooperation and collaboration needed in the economic field to produce our food, our clothing, our housing.

[In a market system] a career open to the talents. No arbitrary obstacles should prevent people from achieving those positions for which their talents fit them and which their values lead them to seek. Not birth, nationality, colour, religion, sex, nor any other irrelevant characteristic, should determined the opportunities that are open to a person--only his or her abilities (Friedman, 1980: 1 and 132).

From this perspective, market opportunities may allow Chinese women to prove their equal capabilities with men and, in the long run, reduce the dominant social and cultural prejudices against women. Such opportunities are instrumental for women in China to achieve equality with men. Women are capable of emancipating themselves as long as there are opportunities. Economic reform has provided women with new opportunities, thus has a positive impact on women. However, new opportunities by and large are distorted by the existing system and Chinese culture, many women are seen to have less advantage than men in seizing opportunities. Therefore, women have faced many difficulties and inequality since 1978 are as the result of the existing system and Chinese culture. This thesis will explain how the existing system and Chinese culture prevent women from seizing the same equal opportunities as men after 1978.

(3) Ancestor Worship and Social Control. Women could only achieve ancestral status. In studying the inequality of women in China and its causes, this thesis explains the social role of women, relations between men and women, both domestic and in the public realm, and in particular the effects of Chinese socialism after 1949, and since the economic reform of 1978, on women.

the political dominance of a few male elites and the priority of men over women in the administration and in the public realm generally.

Methodology

The theme of women's equality in this thesis will focus on equal opportunity for women in the workplace, and achieving equal respect for all women as well as men. Other problems faced by women, such as sexual abuse, domestic violence and the like, are not centrally discussed in this thesis. This thesis compares the individual equality achieved by freedom of choice with restraints placed on individual equality by bureaucracy and government intervention. A strong government role tends to strengthen one dominant idea or value and belittle others, especially in China, which results in grossly unequal treatment of worthwhile values and ideas. A strong government role also tends to strengthen Chinese patriarchy.

The salient Chinese patriarchal phenomena in traditional society are best summed up by Baker (1979). That is:

(1) Patriarchal control. Women, who were in essence outsiders in their affinal family, were subordinated to men and elders in the family. Inheritance followed the male line, while the daughter normally did not inherit.

(2) The family as a unit of governance. The authority of male patriarchs was enshrined in law. The father could freely beat his son for an offense. A wife was subject to flogging if she beat her husband. A wife who ran away could be beaten or sold if caught.

(3) Ancestor Worship and Social Control. Women could only achieve ancestral status through their husband and male children (Baker, 1979).

Following conventional critiques of Chinese patriarchy, this thesis acknowledges that this conception of patriarchy is still relevant in contemporary China. On top of that, the key element of Chinese patriarchy is the political dominance of a few male elites and the priority of men over women in the administration and in the public realm generally.

The analytical paradigms used in my thesis are adapted from those by Smith, Harre and Van Langenhove (1995).

These [paradigms] emphasise: understanding and description rather than measuring, counting or predicting; meaning rather than causation or frequencies; interpretation rather than statistical analysis; language; cultural context rather than context free perspective; and subjectivity rather than objectivity (Summarised by Pedersen, 1996:2).

To explain the situation of Chinese women and their thinking and behaviour in the Chinese social and cultural context is the main analytical task of the thesis.

Studying women in a cultural context can provide Western feminist scholars with an alternative way to examine women's situation in a particular society. The particular importance of studying women in their own social, cultural and personal context is to understand precisely why women do not adopt the ways expected of them by Western women to obtain equality with men, and why many women seemingly cope well with patriarchy.

We can understand each person's behaviour relatively and accurately only when we explain it in its own terms, which will determine how a behaviour has developed. [Because] we do not have direct access to a singular, stable and fully knowable external reality but rather depend on culturally embedded,

interpersonally connected and necessarily limited notions of reality (Pederson, 1996:16).

Research Methodology

Following conventional critiques of Chinese patriarchy, this thesis acknowledges that Chinese women were and still are living under patriarchy and that many Chinese men hold strongly discriminatory attitudes towards women. However, the individual experience of a woman in dealing with men often does not always indicate the subordination of women to men. Moreover, the subordination of men to Chinese patriarchy is also often seen, especially in the sense of the political dominance of male elites. This will be shown in chapter 2.

Five aspects of women's inequality will be examined in the thesis:

1. The change in Chinese women's social role in a historical perspective from ancient to modern times.
2. The conflict between the ideology of women's liberation and the personal reality of women under the Chinese socialist system after 1949.
3. The contradiction between the assumption of general disadvantage experienced by women in China in production and education, and their profound productive capability despite poor education.
4. The complexity of the situation of women after 1978.
5. The attitudes and exceptions of Chinese men and women towards each other in the Chinese social, cultural and personal context.

The data used in my thesis are both primary and secondary materials and the results of my field work in China from July to November 1993, which included case studies in a state-owned urban enterprise and a rural enterprise, and interviews and questionnaires conducted among university students and urban employees in Northeastern China.

Research Methodology

My field work in China was concerned with the disparity between Western studies of Chinese women and Chinese women's reality, and the disparity between academic analysis of Chinese behaviour and thinking-- Chinese academic analysis in particular-- and the "inside thinking" of Chinese women themselves

Given these concerns, to discover the real "face" of Chinese women as well as men was the essential goal of my fieldwork in China. My work concerned: (1) women's experiences under the women's liberation movement after 1949; (2) women's own view of the influence of policy change on them; and (3) women's perceptions of themselves in Chinese social and cultural circumstances. Information for these three research tasks was gathered by structured interviews, case studies and a questionnaire.

Interviews

Interviews were implemented by both formal and informal means. Both methods proved to be fruitful and useful: they reinforced one another, especially in the Chinese political, social and cultural circumstances. Politically, to openly and directly criticise the Chinese socialist system or Party policy is prohibited. Culturally, to expose individual independent opinions or interests in public is not appreciated by many Chinese, and is regarded as showing lack of moderation and self-cultivation. Given these two restraints, Chinese in general avoid opening themselves up to others, because their career and reputation may be permanently and negatively affected. They will not reveal their "inside" thinking unless they are sure that a stranger will not bring any harm to them. In addition, at a personal level, Chinese expect to be understood and appreciated even before they tell their own stories. In accordance with these social and cultural inhibitions and preferences, it is important for a stranger to show "disconnection" with the circle in which Chinese must

move, and also to show respect for and sympathy towards them, and to understand the Chinese tendency to face saving. In the Chinese traditional context, face and dignity are much entangled with each other. Face directly determines dignity. It

represents the confidence of society in the integrity of ego's moral character, the loss of which makes it impossible for the person to function properly within the community. Lian (face) is both a social sanction for enforcing moral standards and an internalised sanction (Hu, 1945:45).

Face is an issue for an individual, a family, a community, a work unit, a province, the nation; and so is dignity. Chinese anxiety about face makes them insecure and fragile. As I was told by some academics in Beijing in 1993 before conducting formal interviews, a formal interview in Chinese eyes is a way that researchers gather information about individual opinions on behalf of an authority or to expose them (the interviewee) in public, which is perceived as a potential danger to destroy or shame the individual's face. Thus many Chinese attempt to conceal the reality of their inside thinking from researchers. What we "learn" from formal interviews can be identical with the Party line and socially as well as morally accepted opinion. But informal interviews are not taken particularly seriously by Chinese, as can be observed in free chats with no particular purpose; therefore informal conversation is most likely to garner useful information about Chinese social reality and the true inside thinking of Chinese.

As a Chinese student studying abroad, I had both advantages and disadvantages in collecting information through interviews. The advantage was that I was an "outsider", and not involved in any particular circle: many Chinese therefore would not feel insecure to express their personal opinion to me. This advantage worked well in my informal interviews with the Chinese whom I interviewed at places where I visited. My disadvantage, most noticeable in formal interviews, was that some Chinese suspected that I was a "spy" sent back by a Western organisation. For instance, I was asked over the

phone by a female manager of a clothing enterprise in Dalian, who had sent me back to China. I was particularly rejected by women from the Dalian Municipal Women's Association, who hid materials about the situation of women in the workforce in Dalian from me, and also by two successful women entrepreneurs from two clothing enterprises in Dalian, who roughly refused my proposed interview. I overcame this disadvantage by interviewing extensively those people whom I was able to contact.

Interested in exploring official Chinese opinions on women's liberation after 1949 and the situation of women after 1978, I interviewed several women from the All China Women's Federation in Beijing and the Municipal Women's Association in Dalian during my 1993 field work. The first interview was conducted on August 5 1993. Interviewees were from the Institute of Women's Studies of the All China Women's Federation and from the Institute of Women's History of the Federation. The second interview was conducted on October 14. My interviewees were from the Dalian Municipal Women's Association.

The interpretation shared by all of these women was that Chinese women were broadly liberated after 1949. All my interviewees echoed the official announcement of the All China Women's Federation in the following year (1994) that after 1949 Chinese women were liberated from the oppression of several thousand years of Chinese feudalism and Western imperialism; that women share equal rights with men in property owning and the franchise, and have an equal legal and economic role; that they have participated extensively in political and administrative affairs; that they have increased their role in social development; that they have equal status with men in marriage and the family; that their rights have been significantly protected by women's organisations at different levels, and that they have actively participated in international women's activities (China Daily, 4 June 1994). At the same time, my interviewees admitted that the social obstacles to women's equality are still strong and extensive, which they attribute to China's lower level

of economic development and the contemporary inheritance of Chinese feudal ideas. Despite that, the newly emerged discrimination against women after 1978, which they admitted, was, in their view, a result of women's lower competence than men in facing the challenge of policy change and also their greater dependence on government help. They suggested that educating women to replace their old ideas with Marxist ideas should be continued and women should learn to be independent and have high self-esteem.

Some case studies about Chinese women conducted by Western scholars are valuable for After meeting with the two women from Dalian Municipal Women's Association, the head of the Department of Women's Rights admitted that her commitment to women's affairs was only because her job required it, which she undertook out of obligation to high level authority.

studies of China's women after 1949 conducted by people such as Judith Stacey (1983), Elizabeth Croll (1978, 1988 and 1994), Emily Honig and Gail It is evident that the attitude of these Chinese women towards women's liberation and the women's situation in China is ambiguous. Officially, they take for granted the line on the achievements of women's liberation after 1949. They support government policy affecting women and make judgements on Chinese women on behalf of the government. Personally, however, they are ambivalent about their own situation under the strong influence of the Party-government. Given official ideas, it is very important for a researcher to go beyond these ideas and seek actual evidence regardless of official ideas. It is not unusual in China's circumstances that official ideas are far away from Chinese reality and the ideas of ordinary people.

Stacey concludes that socialism did not emancipate Chinese women because the new In further search of individual Chinese attitudes towards women's issues, I talked informally with both Chinese men and women over several weeks in 1993. My informal interviews were conducted in Guangzhou, Beijing, Shenyang and Dalian cities, a rural enterprise near Dalian and two universities in Shenyang. My interlocutors included

academics from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing and from Northeast University in Shenyang, police, self-employed workers (*getihu*), government officials, doctors and nurses, urban and rural workers, students, housewives and retired women. Their ages ranged from 20 to 60. Such a wide range of interviews gave access to a comprehensive set of opinions prevailing among the Chinese, both men and women.

and documentary research in the reform period.

Case studies

Some case studies about Chinese women conducted by Western scholars are valuable for our understanding of Chinese people generally as well as women. The case study has been a particularly important method of Western studies of Chinese women since 1978, as Western researchers have gained more access to the grass roots of Chinese society. Significant Western studies of China's women after 1949 conducted by people such as Judith Stacey (1983), Elizabeth Croll (1978, 1988 and 1994), Emily Honig and Gail Hershatter (1988), Margery Wolf (1985), and Rubie S Watson (1992), which have questioned some Westerners' belief in Chinese women's great achievement after 1949, are based on actual fieldwork in China. These field work case studies have provided a broad picture of the situation of Chinese women both before and after 1978 from different perspectives and have made a significant contribution to understanding the situation of modern women.

women—giving priority to Chinese men in the workplace and to sons within the family (Croll, 1994: 181-214).

Stacey (1983) in particular focuses on the effect of the socialist system after 1949 on women. By comparative study of the Chinese socialist system and Chinese patriarchy, Stacey concludes that socialism did not emancipate Chinese women because the new Chinese communist institutions, like those they replaced, were in reality dominated by patriarchal Chinese men.

1978 in relation to the current Chinese political and social system, Chinese culture and the experience of individual women. In particular, the unequal opportunities of women caused by state policy is not yet well discussed in these

Wolf (1985) and Honing and Hershatter (1988) are concerned with the impact of policy changes after 1978 on women's liberation and they also attempt to cover the history of social change in China before 1978. Their studies focus on the change of women's situation following the new post-1978 dynamic of social and cultural transmutation. Their studies are a landmark for Western scholarship, being built on contemporary interviews and documentary research in the reform period.

Watson (1992), by contrast, denies that there was any substantial women's liberation in China after 1949 on the basis of anthropological research in a village in Southern China. He is convinced that the achievements of women's equality documented by the Chinese government are fallacious and that the women's inequality existing before 1949 was strongly maintained after 1949.

Croll (1978, 1988 and 1994) is concerned with the implications of policies affecting women after 1978, both in the context of the history of the Chinese women's movement (1978) and in the context of policy at the most immediate level of social organisations and of families (1988 and 1994). She draws a mixed conclusion: on the one hand, the standard of living of women has increased, while, on the other hand, there is continuity in traditional attitudes towards women--giving priority to Chinese men in the workplace and to sons within the family (Croll, 1994: 181-214).

All of these studies come to a common conclusion that Chinese traditional attitudes towards women remain influential in Chinese society today, and this is still a key element in women's inequality. However, these studies lack a comprehensive investigation of the situation of women after 1978 in relation to the current Chinese political and social system, Chinese culture and the experience of individual women. In particular, the unequal opportunities of women caused by state policy is not yet well discussed in these

studies. On the acceptance of women's inequality derived from Chinese tradition, my case studies explore how the existing political and social system has shaped the current situation of women. My analysis of the situation of women relates to change in the personal life of women both in the workplace and in the family since 1978. On this basis, I make a comprehensive assessment of the impact of policy change on women after 1978.

woman could study abroad alone. As some of them commented later: "You are so brave
Case Study in Dalian No. 10 Meter Instrument Plant change people" In the first few

In connection with the theoretical and policy debates about the impact of post-1978 policy change on Chinese women, I conducted two case studies in Dalian--one at No. 10 Meter Plant (Dalian Dishi Yibiaochang) with the help of my cousin, Yu Ruizi, the only senior engineer in the plant; and another in Dayang Clothing Enterprise in Yanshufang village, near Dalian, with the help of Wang Cairong, my ex-roommate and classmate at Liaoning Normal University in Dalian. They both offered me extensive and indeed priceless help, introducing me to managers and officials of the two enterprises and ensuring that I could work in a workshop with workers. Thus, I was able to position myself as both a participant and an observer. A fruitful outcome from my working with workers was that they perceived me to be trustworthy in listening to their gossip and also their complaints about authority generally, particularly influential figures and their colleagues.

to get close to people in power, and vice versa--powerful people are not expected or inclined to associate with employees. An equal and friendly conversation
 Given the fact that urban female workers confront a disadvantaged situation, the purpose of my working in Dalian No. 10 Meter Instrument Plant was to find out the reality behind the women's situation so as to dispel the illusion hiding the complexity of women's problems in the workplace. I wanted to identify the functional factors, both objective and subjective, affecting women.

former by the latter, and vice versa, drove me to also interview administrative people including managers to understand them from their own standpoint.

Most of my time in Dalian No. 10 Meter Instrument Plant was spent working in the valve workshop. In comparison with my own position, many workers in the plant at the beginning felt inferior to and curious about me, as most of them were lower educated, while I was highly educated and was pursuing a higher degree abroad. They were particularly curious about me because it was beyond their experience that a Chinese woman could study abroad alone. As some of them commented later: "You are so brave to live in a culturally strange country and to deal with strange people". In the first few days when I worked in the plant, many workers avoided me but observed me closely in the meantime. However, they seemed to expect me to get closer to them and immerse myself in their affairs. Therefore, I followed their way of doing things, such as chatting with them freely and casually, cooking and sharing lunch with them, using their (workers') language and showing diligence--sweeping the floor, making the workshop tidy, bringing hot water from outside to the workshop and so on. By doing all this, I gradually earned the workers' trust and appreciation. Not only were they willing to tell me their stories but they kindly invited me to visit their families.

In this plant, workers were usually expected, from both the authority's and workers' side, to keep their distance from people at a higher level. In principle, employees are not supposed to get close to people in power; and vice versa--powerful people are not expected or inclined to associate with employees. An equal and friendly conversation between an employee and a powerful person is rarely seen in public. As long as an employee is perceived as having a close relationship (not necessarily a sexual relationship) with a powerful person, both of them will be a target of workers' gossip or criticism. The distinctive distance between employees and administrative people, and the strong criticism often heard of the former by the latter, and vice versa, drove me to also interview administrative people including managers to understand them from their own standpoint.

recruited 2,400 female peasants from 1979 to 1993, most of them from Yangshufang. As for the situation of women in the plant, in their opinion several intertwined factors were important. Firstly, the enterprise had a low reputation in Dalian city and, given its inefficiency, many skilled women were reluctant to work there; even unskilled female employees would try hard to leave this plant. Secondly, in principle, women were prevented by policy from working in several workshops of the plant because of their requirement for heavy physical labour and the substantial dangers associated with the consideration of women's health. Thirdly, women's capability in administration was regarded as generally lower than that of men. One manager stated that many women in the plant did not like to do what they were capable of, but liked to do what they were incapable of, namely work in the office.

An extensive questionnaire was another important item of research methodology in my

Case Study in Dayang Clothing Enterprise

There are two distinctive categories of women in China--urban and rural women. The latter are located in a lower status, receiving lower respect and enjoying less social benefits. They constitute the majority of Chinese women. Studying the impact of policy change on them may tell us more about whether policy change has brought progress or regress for Chinese women.

(1994:25), as well as family background. The items of the questionnaire concerned

To be able to hear rural women's voices on policy change, I conducted my case study in Dayang Clothing Enterprise, located in Yangshufang village near Dalian. I chose this enterprise as my research target because the deputy manager of the enterprise was a woman, Li Guilian, who was well-known as a female peasant-oriented entrepreneur nation wide. She and 85 other peasant women founded this enterprise in 1979. It

Chinese do not often think about or are not interested in. With multiple choice questions,

³The statistics on female employees in Dayang Clothing Enterprise were given by Mr. Qu, the secretary of the general office of the enterprise administration, on 4 October 1993.

recruited 2,400 female peasants from 1979 to 1993, most of them from Yanshufang village, but including women from other rural areas.¹

From 4 to 10 October 1993, I worked in the technical workshop of this enterprise, which consisted of one male peasant, three female technicians and Wang Cairong, who was in charge. While at the enterprise I also visited No. 1 and No. 2 workshops where all workers were found to be female, both directors and employees. Apart from that, I was invited by two female technicians in the technical workshop to visit their families in Yanshufang village.

Questionnaire Surveys

An extensive questionnaire was another important item of research methodology in my field work, aimed at further exploring Chinese "inside" thinking in contrast to more formalistic academic explanations of Chinese women's situation in both the West and China. My questionnaire was intended to explore personal features of behaviour, expectations and values in the Chinese social system. The variables studied included "demographic (age, gender, place of residence, etc) and status (social, educational, economic, etc) and affiliations (formal and informal)", on the model of Pedersen (1994:25), as well as family background. The items of the questionnaire concerned personal interests, self-image, career aspirations, sexual relationships outside marriage, mutual expectations between men and women and Chinese attitudes towards women in general and career-oriented women in particular. Answers were elicited in open questions and in ways that Chinese could easily understand. As Chen (1994:69-79) has realised, the Western style of questionnaire is inadequate: many questionnaires concern topics that Chinese do not often think about or are not interested in. With multiple choice questions,

¹The statistics on female employees in Dayang Clothing Enterprise were given by Mr. Qu, the secretary of the general office of the enterprise administration, on 4 October 1993.

the spectrum of choice is often very limited and Chinese tend to choose an answer that meets the researcher's expectations as they perceive them-- in the Chinese saying, "satisfy them and make them happy". Another problem that I faced in my survey by questionnaire was that Chinese students were fed up with filling in questionnaires, because they had been commanded by university authorities to do such a thing quite often. A political supervisor of the Department of Machinery Processing of Northeast University admitted that "our students have been forced into answering questions that they don't like, so they have deceived authority and themselves as well".

To overcome these weaknesses and stir up Chinese enthusiasm for expressing themselves, I designed questions which suited the Chinese focus on personal interests and popular social topics; in other words, I tried to fit my questions into the Chinese context. My approach to designing the questionnaire was to let the Chinese decide what they would like to say. Thus, all questions were open. I read much secondary material and interviewed many Chinese in order to work out what sorts of things Chinese would prefer to talk about, before formulating the questionnaire.

Given the results from Chinese responses to the questionnaire, it seems that all questions were understood correctly and most answers were truly personal and significantly variable. Of course, in addition, there were some common perceptions shared by nearly all my respondents, which are deeply seated in Chinese tradition. Variable answers usually related to each respondent's family background, personal preference or personal comparative condition. Personal comparative condition includes educational level, family status and personal origin (urban or rural) which has a particularly strong impact on establishing a personal image in the Chinese ego. It is assumed that rural Chinese confront invisible and open discrimination from urban Chinese, which leads those ambitious Chinese from rural areas to live in a dilemma. On the one hand, they are eager

to catch up with urban Chinese life styles and behaviours; on the other hand, they are given the impression that they somehow are not adequate to meet urban Chinese standards.

Because, from the Chinese perspective, marriage is a divide of great change in career, family relations and life generally and, for a woman, the beginning of the decline in her career ambition, my questionnaire was administered in two versions (see Appendix A and Appendix B)--one for students and one for employed people. University students who completed the questionnaire were all unmarried, as they are prohibited from getting married during undergraduate study. Apart from that, female students and employed women are separate subjects in the study of women's discrimination in China after 1978. Distinguishing students from employed people is also aimed at finding out the overlap as well as differences between them in terms of their values, beliefs and life priorities.

I administered the questionnaire for students to fourth year students because the final year is when students begin to think thoroughly about their future career and life. The sample for the questionnaire consisted of 409 students, including 28 non-Han Xinjiangese students,² from seven departments and four universities in Shenyang. They were the Department of Medicine (both the English language and Japanese language streams) and the Department of Dentistry of China Medical University; the Department of Mechanical Engineering, the Department of Industrial Management and the Department of Social Science of Northeast University; the Department of International Finance and Trade of

interview went well, and each lasted more than two hours. I was informed by students

² These 28 Xinjian students were from the Department of Industrial Management of Northeast University. According to China's ethnic higher education policy, many key national universities are allocated certain quotas to receive non-Han Chinese from poor areas who achieve less than the standard entrance examination scores at key universities. These non-Han Chinese often study Mandarin for one year before they study together with Han students.

Liaoning University, and the Department of Industrial Metering of Shenyang Industrial College. These four universities are key universities at different levels and take students from different parts of China. China Medical University is a key university of the Department of National Hygiene, and receives students from places north of the Yellow River. Northeast University is a key university of the Department of the National Mineral Industry, and receives students from all over China. Liaoning University is a provincial key university which receives students from all over Liaoning province. Shenyang Industrial College is a key university of the Department of the National Military Industry which receives students from Northeast China.

While administering the questionnaire to students, I also organised formal interviews with a few groups of students. They were: male students and female students of the Department of Dentistry and female students of the Department of Medicine (Japanese language stream) of China Medical University, and students of the Department of Social Science of Northeast University. Topics of the interviews were related to those in the questionnaire. The purpose of the interviews was to check out if students had understood the questions correctly and if those questions interested students.

Overall, the questionnaire was highly appreciated by students. They acknowledged that the questionnaire was neither political nor abstract, and was close to their personal concerns. I was told that both male and female students were highly stimulated; they were eager to know each other's inside thinking through discussing the questionnaire. Each interview went well, and each lasted more than two hours. I was informed by students that they enjoyed equal and mutual conversation, in which they did not hesitate to explore themselves and their concerns: They also asked me to express myself and expected to have more conversations with me.

(1) is linked with public opinion and question (2) is linked with personal concerns. The

The questionnaire for married Chinese was aimed at comprehending the Chinese family more completely. From the Chinese perspective, marriage, especially for women, is a turning point to readjust their beliefs and priorities for their life and career. After marriage many Chinese women pay less attention to their own career and tend to cooperate with the Chinese patriarchy. The sample to which this questionnaire was administered consisted of doctors and nurses from the hospital of Northeast Electricity Bureau; workers from Dalian No. 10 Industrial Meter Plant, and students from a TOEFL (Test of English as Foreign Language) class of Northeast University. The TOEFL class provided the majority of my respondents: they were all highly educated and preparing for the TOEFL exam to be able to qualify for studying abroad. They were academics, scientists, engineers and doctors. Thus, answers to my questionnaire represented mostly the opinions of educated Chinese.

women in handling Chinese patriarchy in accordance with their priorities, beliefs and values.

It is said that Chinese people's actual behaviour is almost always at odds with written and oral declarations. As Chen has pointed out, "There are some husbands whose thinking and behaviour is 'male chauvinist,' but, when answering questions about male-female equality, they select socially acceptable answers and do not express their own true opinion"(Chen, 1994:71). Thus the questions in my questionnaire were linked with both public opinion and personal concerns. For instance, the emergence of successful women in some fields after 1978 has been identified as largely a fruit of women's liberation since 1949 and of women's greater competence since then. However, the success of women after 1978 contradicts the traditional role of Chinese women, while this role has nevertheless been seen to be enjoying a resurgence by many Chinese today. Thus, my questions about Chinese attitudes towards career-oriented women included: (1) What do you think about the emergence of successful women? ; (2) Do you expect your wife to be a career oriented woman, or do you want to find a career oriented girlfriend? Question (1) is linked with public opinion and question (2) is linked with personal concerns. The

answers often reflected traditional attitudes towards women, morality and values. Other questions brought out how married women's behaviour is driven by current patterns of family life and living conditions, in contrast to the Western ideal of women's behaviour reflecting the viewpoint of women's equality.

In order to narrow the gap between people's written declarations and their inside thinking, I pursued individual interviews with people of different occupations, ages and educational levels. Topics that I talked about with people were related to the questionnaire. The questionnaire-plus-interview combined research method was aimed at drawing a comprehensive picture of the overlap and disparity in attitudes between married men and women concerning each other, family, career and life generally; and it also explored the motivation of women in handling Chinese patriarchy in accordance with their priorities, beliefs and values.

Structure of the Thesis

Apart from the Introduction, my thesis comprises five chapters. The basic principles of these five chapters are to show how the Chinese political and social system distorts primary conditions for equal opportunity and how the dominance of one Chinese cultural value distorts the idea of equal respect.

In Chapter 1, I briefly survey the role of women in traditional society and the change in Chinese women's social role from ancient times to the fall of the imperial system in 1911, from a Chinese historical and cultural perspective. Noting the comments of both Western feminists and Chinese in China on women's liberation after 1949, I then review the history of Chinese women's liberation before 1949 and beyond.

In Chapter 2, assuming that the strong control of government results in inequality and limits individual freedom, I explore the highly centralised structure of the Chinese political-economic-social system after 1949 and again after 1978. This system limits individual free geographical movement and social mobility by the Party/government system of personnel management and employee management, particularly as retained after 1978. In addition, after noting the views of the All China Women's Federation on the success of women's liberation in China after 1949, I reveal personal experiences of Chinese women after 1949 which show a divergence from what Chinese authorities have claimed about women's liberation.

In Chapter 3, I explore the situation of Chinese women in the workplace after 1978 based on my case studies of women in an urban collective enterprise, a rural enterprise and individual markets. After 1978, the Chinese economy moved towards a market orientation. A market-oriented economy is supposed to bring more opportunities to women, and thus women should become more equal with men than they had been before. However, after 1978 women in China in fact faced renewed discrimination in the workplace and society. Some women's gains made after 1949 have been reversed. But, paradoxically, new women's achievements have also been prominent. Why have women generally not yet gained the equality presupposed by free market theory in China's market-oriented economy, on the one hand, and why have some women benefited greatly from the market-oriented economy on the other hand? Chapter 3 tries to explain the complexities causing not only resurgence of discrimination against women after 1978 but also the gains for some women.

Chapters 4 and 5 will discuss the role of women and relations between men and women as perceived by women in China. These two chapters attempt to show that Chinese women have their own interests, which they prefer to achieve in ways that are accepted

Chapter 1 Chinese Women Before 1949

by society. Some interests and values somehow are shared by both men and women. Relations between men and women are not necessarily opposed, although there are some conflicts between the two genders. These two chapters argue that marketization might be a pragmatic solution to the problem of breaking down existing social barriers for women and changing Chinese discriminatory attitudes towards women. In addition, these two chapters attempt to explore barriers for Chinese women to achieve their own interests on the basis of equal opportunity with men.

These two chapters will also show women's perceptions about themselves and their relationships with men, including husbands. Chinese women's perceptions about themselves will be discussed in comparison with Chinese scholars' assumptions about women. My aim is to show that the dominant voice of Chinese scholars does not represent the opinions of women as a whole, but is full of prejudice against many other women in general. Even Chinese female scholars tend to isolate themselves from the actual situation and actual thinking of Chinese women. In this sense, they do not perceive themselves as equal with other women, but superior.

Concerning women's inequality, some Western feminist scholars view Chinese women as weak, subordinate, subservient and victims of Chinese men and family patterns. Studies by Western scholars of Chinese women cover a wide range of women's situations, such as those of widows, concubines and prostitutes (Ann, 1981: 12-13; Jackson, 1983), as well as women's role in marriage, the kinship system, and society and the family before 1949 (Freedman, 1970; Wolf, 1972; Baker, 1979; Ebrey, 1981: 113-146; Watson, 1994). From these kinds of studies, Western feminists have generally concluded that Chinese women's lives before 1949 were miserable in contrast to those of Western women. Chinese women's personalities and lives were buried under the weights of the 'three obediences': to obey fathers when young, husbands when married and adult sons when widowed. In addition, Chinese women were forced to submit to tyrannical mothers-in-law after marriage; a widow might not be allowed to remarry after her husband's death; concubinage was legally recognised, and concubines had few legal rights to property. Thus, these feminists tend to conclude, Chinese women were frozen in a rigid hierarchy of submission and dominance which ensured their passivity and weakness (Andor, 1983: 12-28; Johnson, 1984: 3-36; Wolf, 1985: 1-27).

Chapter 1 Chinese Women Before 1949

This chapter focuses on the changing role of women in Chinese society before 1949, and the impact on them of Chinese bureaucracy and social development patterns. I argue that Chinese women's inferior social role was largely determined by Confucian culture and morality. Women were seen in the past as necessarily inferior in administration and hierarchical relationships. However, Chinese women in fact have constantly challenged this conventional view of women, and consistently displayed their talents and capabilities as long as there were opportunities. However, such displays tended to be followed by restrictions on women, reassertion of morality and further expansion of bureaucracy.

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Now, while it must be conceded that this perspective is largely correct, the “weakness” of women was in fact enforced coercively through the dominant Confucian morality, and, while Confucianism was used to confine women to certain areas of activities which separate women from men, women nevertheless have often shaken off Confucian influences and roles by their actions “behind the scenes”. As Wolf has noted: there is “[not only] a Chinese conception of women as weak, timid and sexually exploitable [but also] as dangerous, powerful and sexually insatiable” (Wolf and Witke, 1975:2). Thus, Chinese women’s social role might have been and still may be more complicated than some Western feminist scholars realise.

Women’s Role Behind the Scenes

It is well known in the West that Chinese women are associated in literature and some historical writing with *yin* (darkness), which is fearsome and threatening. As a result, women’s role was often evaluated in a negative way (Ames and Hall, 1987: 21-45; Guisso, 1981: 59-60). This was mainly because Chinese male elites and scholars did not wish to admit women’s talents, and saw women’s influence on politics as a danger to maintaining the social order upheld by male scholars-officials, who attempted to suppress women’s participation in government. Therefore, we can conclude, the negative description of women’s role often reflects women’s political skill and actual influence on government and their challenge to conventional beliefs.

In legend, by contrast with most of the historical period, Chinese women were seen as all important. Several myths preserve traces of the ‘maternal age’ characterised by (matrilineal, bilateral descent, matrilocal family and use of maternal names)-- that is, the periods of “Sanhuang” (Three Emperors) and “Wudi” (Five Emperors) (2852-2205? BC) and the Xia dynasty (2205-1766? BC). In the Sanhuang period, the main worship symbol was a female, “Nuwa”, the ancestor of human society and the mother who created human beings.

When heaven and earth were formed, there was as yet no human race. Nuwa began to fashion men out of yellow earth. But she found the task too great for her strength; so she went and gathered some mud, which she found easier to use. And that's how the nobles were men made of yellow earth, and the poor, who live base and servile lives, were drawn from the mud (Kristeva, 1977: 51)

Shanhanjing (The Book of Mountain and Sea) recorded that a female invented the Chinese calendar: "In the ancient time when there was no ruler; people only knew who were their mothers, rather than their fathers". And a female, Huangdaopo, invented weaving skills (Guo, 1991:1-5; Du, 1988: 2-7). During the Sanhuang period, females dominated social production and management. Property inheritance was retained along the mother's side. From the Wudi period, China started to transmute from a matriarchal to a patriarchal society. For instance, the worship symbol of the Wudi period was a dragon, an indication of the male.

In the Xia dynasty, the beginning of Chinese civilisation proper, in Du Qingfan's view, China started to be governed by males. It began to be assumed that the overthrow of an emperor would often come about because he had indulged his wife's or another woman's beauty. Again, a beautiful and intelligent woman was condemned as a portent of bad fortune, and was envisaged as the root of the collapse of the state (Du, 1988: 2-7).

Again, according to Du Qinfan, the Shang dynasty, based on a different tribe from the Xia, to some extent maintained the tradition of the matriarchal society, although it had been replaced with patriarchy at the top. Women were allowed to participate in politics and play an important role both in public and domestic affairs. Property inheritance along both the mother's and father's side co-existed. But in the Zhou dynasty (1122-771 BC), the attitude of people toward women's social participation was inclined to be negative. Women were not supposed to participate in politics; women were "inside" and men "outside", and women were classified into higher and

lower status: but women could still influence society. Women of high status could assist their husbands in administrative affairs and educate their children. By this means, a woman could be highly respected by society as "a good wife and a kind mother", and as a wife faithful to her husband (Du, 1988:15-27). Meanwhile, the fall of the Zhou dynasty was attributed to a woman, Pao Szu. As the poets sang:

Glorious was the Zhou House,

It was Pao Szu who ruined it (cited in Creel, 1951:128).

Since the Zhou dynasty, Chinese literature has often expressed grievances against those women who were either influential or played a significant role in government "behind the curtain". These women were especially blamed for their influence on rulers who are often depicted losing their thrones as a result. One of the Chinese classics—*the Book of Songs* (Waley, 1960)-- contains many poems that cause or imply blame on women.

A wise man builds a city wall,

A wise woman overthrows it.

Beautiful is the wise woman,

But she is an owl, a hooting owl.

A woman with a long tongue

Is a promoter of evil?

Disorder is not sent down from Heaven,

It is produced by women (cited in Creel, 1951:130).

When a country is in danger--

What plant is not wilting?

What man is not taken from his wife?

Alas for us soldiers.

Treated as though we were not fellow men (Waley, 1960:121).

Another poem about King Yu (781-771B.C) declares: "the beautiful wife splendidly side by side [with the king] has her place" (Waley, 1960:131). This poem implies that

the wife of the king had a significant influence on him. King Yu is usually blamed for bringing the Western Chou dynasty to the end which it met at his death, through his wickedness and frivolity. He was said to have become infatuated with an evil but fascinating concubine, who led him on the road to destruction (Creel, 1951:240-243).

Lienüzhuan (The Biography of Chinese Women), written by Liuxiang, an official scholar of the Han Dynasty, also recounted how, from the Xia dynasty to the collapse of the Western Zhou dynasty, emperors lost their states for the sake of beautiful women, and how women used their beauty to chase after emperors (Du, 1988:7-15; Guo, 1991:9-34; Ma, 1992:33-38).

The first female Emperor, *Wuzetian* (642-703 AD), displayed extraordinary political talent in ruling the Tang dynasty. She got rid of the ruling Empress, princes who were eligible for the throne when she established an agency and a reputation for herself. It is a common belief for Chinese that the reason why the Tang dynasty was for a short time in 755 AD temporarily defeated by the risings of An Lushan and Shi Siming, local military officials, was because the Tang emperor, Tang Ming Huang, was obsessed with one of his concubines, *Yanyuhuan*, who was later called *Yang Guifei*. A Tang poem suggested that Tang Ming Huang over-indulged in her beauty and, therefore, stopped attending the royal court in the morning (*Chongci Qunwang Buzaochao*). *Yang Guifei*, is described as not only beautiful but also imperious and despotic, and is said to have seized privileges for her family by influencing the emperor. At her instigation, her brother, Yangguo Zhong, was appointed as Minister in Paradise. This historical period is called "the period of despotic rule from outside the imperial family clan" [*Waixi Zhuanzeng*]. *Yang Guifei* was terribly resented by many people in the royal court and by the soldiers who protected the Emperor. During a strategic retreat, the soldiers successfully demanded that the Emperor have her strangled in exchange for the continued defence of the state against its enemies (Li, 1959: 176-180; Xu, Zhao and Wen, 1981: 213-215).

During her period of power, she supported the *Yangwu* movement, which started in the 1860s—a movement that aimed at learning technology from the West and that

These stories imply that the prejudice against women embedded in Chinese culture which was largely shaped by men. The strong male voice in Chinese literature and history has created an image that the fall of a dynasty is frequently caused by a beautiful and voluptuous woman. This kind of woman can destroy the state as soon as a ruler is intoxicated with her beauty. Such women have become scapegoats for incompetent rulers.

Cixi has been portrayed as the most notorious empress by Chinese literature and history. Notwithstanding the prejudice against this kind of woman, Chinese literature and history have also recorded the important ruling role played by some women.

The first female Emperor, *Wuzetian* (642-703 AD), displayed extraordinary political talent in ruling the Tang dynasty. She got rid of the ruling Empress, princes who were eligible for the throne, when she established an ascendancy and a reputation for skilful government rarely matched in Chinese history, and other favourites of the Emperor, and finally sat on the throne. She instituted the system of competitive examinations for civil servants, which became the standard Chinese system for recruiting civil servants in later dynasties. She initiated other radical political changes: opening government careers to a wider group than only ruling class families; listing families in genealogies according to the official ranks attained by their members, rather than according to their traditional inherited social standing. She even named her own ruling period Chao instead of Tang. *Wuzetian* has inspired many Chinese women, and in the revived Tang dynasty after her fall, more than one princess schemed of establishing a female line of emperors (Fitzgerald, 1955).

In the late Qing dynasty, the famous Empress Dowager *Cixi* (1862-1908), came to dominate the throne from behind the curtain, beginning as concubine of the lowest order. She successfully defeated all conspiracies by powerful ministers against her. During her period of power, she supported the *Yangwu* movement, which started in the 1860s—a movement that aimed at learning technology from the West and that

established state oriented enterprises for producing weapons. *Cixi*'s period was full of devastating events, such as the fatal failure of the Chinese navy in fighting with the Japanese in 1898, and the Boxer rebellion followed by the invasion of eight foreign armies in 1900. However she was able to dominate the court of China and remain the ruling spirit of the Chinese government for half a century.

(Creel, 1951:132)

Cixi has been portrayed as the most notorious empress by Chinese literature and history, which depict her as usurping the throne by craftiness and disposing of her opponents ruthlessly. And her conservative dominance is supposed to have resulted in China lagging further behind the West. This conclusion is based on the Han Chinese popular view that the Qing dynasty postponed the advance and strengthening of China. But the Qing dynasty was ruled by Manchurians, who, in the eyes of Han Chinese, were barbarous and cultureless, and incapable of furthering Chinese modernisation.¹

In Chinese culture, there have been other streams coexisting with Confucianism. Apart from Han Chinese prejudice against Manchurians, the standard depictions of *Cixi* reflected general ignorant or biased attitude towards women's dominance in politics in Chinese society. *Cixi* was accused of using ruthless methods, but these were common practice among Chinese rulers in traditional society. For instance, the first great Tang emperor, Li Shimin killed his other brothers to become emperor. In the Qing dynasty, Emperor Yongzheng got on to the throne by changing Emperor Kangxi's will and persecuting his competitors. Studies of dynastic changes by Chinese scholars indicate that in Chinese political history bloodiness and killing are usual (Department, 1979; Xu and Zhao, 1981; Niu and Qing, 1992). Thus, *Cixi* simply followed precedent in gaining her own power. In addition, it can not be denied that it requires more intelligence and skill for a woman to dominate government in

¹This judgement is still accepted by Chinese. In conversation with a scholar of the Chinese Academy of Social Science on 1 August 1993 in Beijing, he insisted that the dominance of the Manchurians postponed Chinese modernisation.

Chinese social and cultural circumstances, because women's participation in politics is not in theory recognised, and, of course, is not accepted by most male elites and scholars. A female ruler thus will confront more challenges than a male to be able to rule the most populous country in the world. Creel has emphasised that Chinese scholars have always made very harsh judgements on women's role in government (Creel, 1951:132).

The Changing Role of Women

Although Chinese women have played an important role in history, they were in theory excluded from administrative participation, as we have seen. Restrictions on women increased over time, owing to the constant reinforcement of Confucian morality in Chinese society, on the one hand, and women's challenges to Confucian moral beliefs on the other hand.

In Chinese culture, there have been other streams coexisting with Confucianism, including Daoism, Buddhism, Meism, and Legalism (Du, 1988; Lu, 1988). However, Confucianism developed to be much more prominent than the others; Confucian values, morals and ruling principles have penetrated strongly into the Chinese political system, society and family. In the view of Chinese historians in the People's Republic and in Taiwan, Confucianism was infused with Legalism at the administrative level, and with Daoism, Buddhism and Meism at the level of civil society (Du, 1988; Zhang, 1988; Lu, 1988; Li, 1988:135-141). Thus, Confucianism plays a far more influential role in administration than the other cultural streams.

The concrete role of women and their responsibilities was discussed first in the *Four Books*, one of the Confucian classics. The *Four Books* also discusses the role and responsibilities of men, men's virtue, the behaviour of men and women and the hierarchical relationships properly obtaining between men and women.

Confucian Explanations of Women's and Men's Role.

Confucianism sought to layer and stabilise the Chinese social system: "The Confucian persuasion was predominant in the art of governance, the form and conduct of elite education, and the moral discourse of the populace" (Tu, 1990:112-113). Thus, Confucianism has been dominant in characterising Chinese women's role in society, and thus, as mentioned before, Western feminist scholars have come to believe that Chinese women's supposedly miserable life and inferiority to their husbands in the past were largely caused by Confucianism.

This judgement is correct from the perspective of individual rights and individual dignity, which are not yet officially and socially recommended in China, where obeying authority is still paramount. However, there are complexities involved in the external situation of Chinese women. As I have said, Confucian values and morals prescribe not only women's role but also men's role, and these roles persist by means of psychological and social incentives and sanctions. How a man or a woman acts out his or her role directly affects his or her dignity and also social status, which is the most crucial social value in China. Chinese who obey social rules will be respected and appreciated by society, and have access to high social status. As Metzger points out:

Humanistic and philosophical accounts of the moral meaning of Confucian life indicate a psychological pattern of gratification and self-assertion which serves as a counterweight to those anxieties described in the behavioural literature on dependence...yet, it [The pattern of Confucian self-assertion and interdependence] simultaneously involves an anxious fear of moral failure and a desire to subsume the needs of the self under those of morally legitimated groups (Metzger, 1977: 15-16).

Fears and anxieties drive many Chinese who can often be mobilised by appeals to be morally well behaved. To subsume self-interests in moral rules is the pragmatic way for Chinese women as well as men to be respected and climb up the social ladder.

How exactly, then, should we understand the influence of Confucianism on women?

According to the Confucian canon, the inferiority of Chinese women's role in society derives from their inferior role in administration: pursuing a high administrative position is the dominant value in Chinese society, but women are largely rejected in this area. Confucianism excludes women from administration, on the one hand, and creates a largely bureaucratic society on the other hand. The decline of women's role in society followed the expansion of Chinese bureaucracy and the increase of social prejudice against women's participation in administration.

First of all Confucianism minimises women's public role and excludes women from administration by defining separate personalities, behaviours and duties for men and women. Then Confucianism has simplistically categorised Chinese personality and behaviour with reference to the image and capability of a good governor. As elucidated in the main classic of Confucian doctrine, the *Four Books*:

Wishing to order well their states, they first regulated their families.
 Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their persons.
 Wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectified their hearts.
 Wishing to rectify their hearts, they first sought to be sincere in their thoughts, and then they first extended to the utmost their knowledge.

Their knowledge being complete, their thoughts were sincere. Their thoughts being sincere, their hearts were then rectified. Their hearts being rectified, their persons were cultivated. Their persons being cultivated, their families were regulated. Their families being regulated, their states were rightly governed (translated in Legge, 1978:2-3).

Personal cultivation, family reputation and the state were three in one, a big trinity

indeed. Needless to say, so-called knowledge in Confucian terms solely refers to virtue as illustrated by the ancients. This is pointed out in the introduction to the

Great Learning, the first of the *Four Books*:

Things have their root and their branches. Affairs have their end and their beginning. To know what is first and what is last will lead near to what is taught in *The Great Learning*.

The Great Learning is a Book transmitted by the Confucian School and forms the gate by which first learners enter into virtue. That we can now perceive the order in which the ancients pursued their learning is solely owing to the preservation of this work (Legge, 1978:1-2).

Following the *Great Learning*, the other three of the *Four Books*--the *Doctrine of the Mean*, the *Confucian Analects* and the *Works of Mencius*-- illustrate in detail the character of an ideal governor, the general virtue of a man and a woman, and the different relationships between people in terms of their roles in society and in the family. These are: the relations between governor and subordinate; between man and woman; between husband and wife; between parents and children; between father and son; between elder and younger brothers; between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law; between wife and concubine, and between friends.

In what follows, I summarise--drawing heavily on Legge's edition of the Chinese text of the *Four Books* (but sometimes not his translation)--the key Confucian ideas on personal character and social relationships. Many of the often quaint-sounding phrases used below are still current in China.

In regard to personal character, a governor must be a virtuous man, rather than a mean man. "Virtue will give a ruler people, territory and wealth. Virtue is the root; wealth is the result" (Legge, 1978:231). A virtuous man's character is: to be cautious, apprehensive, determined in self-integrity, firmly calm, generous, benevolent and full of self-esteem (Legge, 1978: 19). To be cautious and apprehensive is to make precise predictions and suggestions in advance; to have self-integrity is to often examine oneself according to the rules of virtue, "self-examining three times day"; to be firmly calm ensures that a man's feeling will not be stirred by joy, pleasure, anger, sorrow or the sexual attraction of women; to be generous is not to reserve any reverence and to

love those whom men hate and hate those whom men love (Legge, 1978:64); to be benevolent and self-esteeming is to stay in obscurity with great inspiration, waiting for appointment from the top, and to sustain oneself in the position one thinks proper for oneself before the people both above and below oneself. The virtuous man regards wealth as worthless and honour as his root. Conversely, a mean man has no foresight, indulging in pride and extravagance, pleasure and women; he seeks for luck by high visibility and a high profile; craven towards authority, he is arrogant to inferiors, and keen on wealth (Legge, 1978:140-141).

In dealing with people above and below, the virtuous man should show entire devotion and sincerity to the emperor and senior persons, but not be self-abasing or a flatterer; he should treat his inferiors with contemplation, fairness and consideration, and not scorn or be partial to a particular person (Legge, 1978:73). A virtuous man should sacrifice himself and his family on behalf of the nation. A mean man will tend to betray nation and friends; show insincere respect for the emperor and senior persons; be partial to particular persons and selfish for his own family (Legge, 1978:162-163).

At home, a virtuous man should be filial to his parents. He should not leave his parents when they are alive; he should sacrifice himself for his parents and bury his parents well when they die, according to Confucian propriety (Legge, 1978: 198). An older brother should look after younger ones; while a younger son should show respect for older brothers. A virtuous husband should be sovereign and polite, and treat his wife with respect, but not wink at or shield his wife, or listen to and adopt her suggestions. For the sake of his parents and the reputation of his family or his family interests, a husband is entitled to sacrifice his wife, even abandon her (Legge, 1978:172-173). A mean man disobeys and does not support his parents; he is troublesome and spoils his wife. Therefore, the nation can only be well governed by

virtuous men who are very few in a nation. The majority of people in a nation are mean men (Legge, 1978: 163). Like men's role, women's role is also defined by Confucianism, emphasising family reputation. Confucian explanations of women's role inherit much from the *Yijing*, a doctrine of Daoism, in which women are perceived as being men's opposite. For instance, men indicate brightness, women darkness; men represent Heaven, women the Earth; men are a symbol of strength; women of weakness (Gou, 1991, Wei and Zhang, 1994:8). In the Confucian explanation, women's role derives from women's morals, women's behaviour and women's skill. Women's morality is to be filial to parents before marriage; loyal to and devoted to the husband after marriage, and to show respect to parents-in-law and brothers and sisters-in-law. A concubine should be subordinate to the first wife and other concubines above her; self-cultivated; self-sacrificing on behalf of the husband and family; live a frugal not an extravagant life; be indifferent and not frivolous towards the opposite sex. (Legge, 1978; McNaughton, 1974).

Discussion of women's behaviour is comprehensive in the Confucian classics. Women should walk without looking around and walk smoothly rather than stride forward; smile without showing their teeth or widening their mouth; be modest, tender and charitable, not argumentative and aggressive; speak only when it is necessary and in a tender voice and considerately. Women's skills include cooking and sewing; managing the family; teaching children; being considerate and caring; perceiving accurately the other's mind and need. Talented women are good at playing musical instruments, poetry, quills, painting and calligraphy. Women who are talented and moral as well as beautiful are desirable (Zhao, 1989:25, Liu, 1988; Li, 1991).

Confucianism regulates men and women with different moral rules with which both are supposed to comply. Typically, these moral rules are imbued with principles of governing which display China as a highly hierarchical social order. Under this order, social status is the most important social value that both Chinese men and women try to uphold, but in pursuit of which men and women have to conform with and preserve Confucian rules. Of course, these rules initially are highly favourable to patriarchy-- Confucian doctrine was completed by the 70 students of Confucius, who were all male (Tu, 1990:113).

Women's visible subordination to moral rules is not solely self-sacrificial, but is also a satisfactory method for society. By being subordinate, a woman may possibly move up to high social status and earn a reputation for her family, or maintain her previous high social status. Women's interests are served directly by her obedience; if she disobeys moral rules, she may be suppressed to a lower status and insulted as immoral, disgraceful or shameless, and even be thrown out by her parents or her husband and her husband's family, because her disobedience can damage the family reputation. In addition, obligation is "reciprocal-- "in return for woman's fulfilment of her tasks, she is supported by her husband and his family. A woman could not be sent home simply at her husband's whim"(Borthwick, 1985:64). The roles of men and women are separate but complementary. Men and women can only define their role and responsibilities in relation to each other.

Kathryn Bernhardt has made a thoughtful comparison between the role of women in the Confucian context and in a Western context.

Gender in imperial China was not conceptualised as 'property of bodies or something originally existent in human beings', but rather was produced within the context of 'different kin linkages'. Women were defined in kinship-specific, relational terms as daughters, mothers, and daughter-in-law. This construction had two important implications: first that there was no transcendent category of 'woman', the foundation upon which Western feminism was built, and second that the structure of

subordination of women in China was grounded in their assigned kinship roles as inferiors in hierarchical relationships (e.g., wife/husband) and not by 'natural' differences between women and men (Bernhardt, 1996: 49).

Needless to say, not only women but also men and even emperors were bound to uphold Confucian morality and hierarchical relationships. As Smith has noted:

Family obligations imposed practical limitation on the ruler's power. [In the Qing dynasty], few emperors were inclined to alter the policies of their ancestors without careful consideration, and filial piety proved to be a formidable factor in imperial politics... Emperor Qianlong took his mother on extended tours to south China and built lavish monuments to her.

In theory, imperial power was absolute—as long as the emperor ruled by virtue. The mandate of Heaven concept, which gave the people the right to rebel against oppressive rule and supported an 'ethics of remonstrance' on the part of Chinese officials, encouraged monarchs to be responsible to their constituents.

The emperors' power was not only constrained by this general sense of accountability, it was also limited by tradition and precedent...(Smith, 1994: 47-48)

Thus, Confucianism should be seen as a morally constrained hierarchy first and a patriarchy second. It rules both men and women.

As I have said, increasing restrictions on women followed from the constant reinforcement of Confucianism. Confucianism was officially recognised in the first century BC until the twentieth century AD as the official philosophy of the Chinese empire with only occasional interruptions. "The Confucian classics were the basic texts of Chinese education and the subject matter of the civil service examinations, virtually ensuring the imperial bureaucracy would be imbued with Confucian principles" (McNeill and Sedlar, 1970: 1).

Following Confucian morality, the female ideal was comprehensively set out in the book of *Nujie* written by Ban Zhao, a famous female historian (49-120 AD), who completed *The History of the Han* begun by her brother Ban Gu after his death (Su, 1987:487-481). Ban Zhao possessed the virtue of modesty, and was thus regarded as a most qualified person to advise women and the book has won immortality in Chinese literature. In *Nujie*, Ban Zhao followed the Confucian moral code for women and summed up women's moral character in four words—*de, yan, rong gong* (virtue, words, demeanour, and meritorious deeds). These words have been embraced by and become a motto for the entire scholar-official class (Knechtges, 1987: 177).

Ban Zhao singled out *de* as the most important term in morality. As between *de* (virtue) and *cai* (talent) she chose *de*. In her view, women should above all cultivate virtue, but need not be particularly talented or brilliant. In one poem, she declared:

Only good virtue cannot perish,

The body dies but reputation survives.

This is what the classics and canons have extolled;

They honour the Way and virtue, benevolence and wisdom (translated by Chang, 1997:243).

Although virtue was declared by Ban Zhao to be paramount for women, it must be noted that she also gave women advice on how to cope with existing Confucian attitudes; women could thus live in peace enjoying respect and good reputation. Ban Zhao knew very well how important reputation was for women in Chinese society; she therefore suggested that women act according to the moral code. In any case, Ban Zhao's precepts for women become an idealised model held up for women in Chinese society even today. As I have said, the model has been eagerly embraced by later Chinese scholars who aim in fact to strangle women in a rigid social structure and maintain the social order favoured by male elites and official scholars.

The biggest increase in official restrictions on women occurred in the Song and Ming dynasties. Following the fall of the Tang, the Song rulers and elites determined to avoid past errors and to profit from the lessons of past achievements. What the Song was particularly anxious to avoid was the reemergence of those causes that finally destroyed the Tang dynasty. In the Tang, Buddhism and Taoism had prevailed over Confucianism, and even Empress *Wuzetian* herself was an enthusiastic Buddhist (Fitzgerald, 1955). The Song rulers believed that the most effective way of maintaining a good social order was to ensure the dominance of one philosophy. They thus again chose Confucianism, brought government closer to the Confucian ideal and strengthened further its role in both government and society.

[In the Song dynasty] it was the great strength of the new Confucianism that it was at once a creed that gave meaning to the life of the individual, an ideology supporting state and society, and a philosophy that provided a convincing framework for understanding the world (Schirokaner, 1993:140-141).

Song scholars compiled anthologies of Confucianism for self-instruction and self-improvement. Song Confucianism is known in the West as Neo-Confucianism. Under this ideology, female foot-binding was officially recognised, and that widows should not remarry became a part of morality. As Schirokaner says, "Female foot-binding was thought to enhance a girl's attractiveness and, at the same time, to deter her from straying into mischief"(1993: 144), while the ban on a widow remarrying was thought to enhance the virtue of the woman in question and ensure that she remained faithful to her betrothed. Thus women could take their place among the Confucian paragons.

In justifying the ban on remarriage it was explained that a widow was full of *Xieqi* (unfortunate *qi*) in her body, which could bring a disaster to her second husband's family. In fact, with the social development of the Tang dynasty, many women

engaged in public activities and many widows, especially elite widows, remarried. For instance, the famous Song female poet, *Li Qingzhao* (1094—1152), remarried after her husband's death (Kristeva, 1977: 93; Schirokaner, 1993:142). Such female activities as poetry threatened men in the areas dominated by them. *Li Qingzhao* enjoyed the same high social status as many famous male poets. Her remarriage, from a Neo-Confucian point of view, could be seen as undermining her first husband's family clan and damaging their reputation.

ing, *Nai Wucun Bianshi De* ("A woman's virtue is more important than her talent"), which implied once again that talented Neo-Confucianism increased restrictions on women in order to prevent them from challenging conventional Confucian ideas and men's social superiority, and there was

not a women's primary duty, for it can hurt her morality" (Chang, 1997: 240). Under

... increasing importance attached to fidelity in which women ceased to work and became status symbols for men. The writing about women revealed idealist reactions to a changing society. Foot-binding, the cults of chastity and virginity, and stricter rules against the remarriage of widows are cited as evidence of the growing oppression of women (Wolf and Witke, 1975: 14).

Song Neo-Confucianism declared that women's natural talent could lead to vice.

Under the influence of this idea, many Song women were led to believe that talent in women could be very harmful.

Constant pressure on women was rooted in male scholars' deep fears of challenges to the dominant role of Confucian morality in a changing society. These fears reflected

In the late Ming and Qing dynasties, women's literacy and literary accomplishment were notable. According to Chang, "the works of as many as 3,500 female poets were

published during the Ming-Qing dynasties alone" (1997: 236). In the Ming-Qing dynasties, poetry clubs and publication of female verse flourished in commercial centres such as Hangzhou, Suzhou and Changzhou in the Yanzi river triangle. In

these cities, education had become widespread among well off women. today it is not uncommon in Chinese classical literature to ascribe tragedy to a disobedient female, who is cursed for being a "long tongued woman" or "a big mouth

woman", and who is therefore humiliated or expelled by her family and by society.

The prevalence of women's learning in practice brings a profound irony into clear relief: while highlighting women's awkward position in the Confucian learned expressive" -- too regardless of moral rules (Li, 1991:11-17; Ma, 1992: 54-57).

tradition, the spread of women's education also testified to deep changes within society. However, many male scholars were extremely hostile to women's increasing literary status. The eminent Ming scholar, Zhang Xuecheng, harshly criticised women poets who were, in his view, showing off or "fishing for fame"-- for women should remember that "words (are) not to pass from the women's quarters to the outside world"(cited in Chang, 1997: 239). Zhang revived the dispute between *cai* (talent) and *de* (virtue), and inspired a famous saying, *Nuzi Wucai Bianshi De* ("A woman's virtue is more important than her talent"), which implied once again that talented women lack virtue. This phrase became popular in the late Ming dynasty and continued so under the Qing. One Qing woman claimed, "Cultivating one's talent is not a women's primary duty, for it can hurt her morality" (Chang, 1997: 240). Under the Qing period, many women of the gentry burned their poems and conformed strictly to rules on moral self-cultivation. Even today, Chinese are still using this phrase to blame women who do not act conventionally in their own lives. Thus, from the Ming onwards, Chinese society became to a large extent hostile to talented women especially those lacking in self-restraint.

Constant pressure on women was rooted in male scholars' deep fears of challenges to the dominant role of Confucian morality in a changing society. These fears reflected traditional male dominance in areas like government and literature, and were directed especially at challenges from women.

The negative view of talented women as reinforced in the Ming dynasty has had a strong influence on Chinese literature and Chinese attitudes towards women up until today. It is not uncommon in Chinese classical literature to ascribe tragedy to a disobedient female, who is cursed for being a "long tongued woman" or "a big mouth woman", and who is therefore humiliated or expelled by her family and by society. Often such women are characterised as argumentative, aggressive and "too expressive"-- too regardless of moral rules (Li, 1991:11-17; Ma, 1992: 54-57).

Although, the social role of talented women was severely repressed by official ideology, women's literacy and literacy practice became widespread in the late Ming and Qing dynasties, as I have said, especially when government power began to fragment: "In a period of uncertainty and change, educated women benefited from the growth of new professions, in which roles were not yet rigidly defined as they were in the exclusive male bureaucracy" (Bankin, 1975: 39).

So what explains the constant pressures on women? As mentioned before, a woman's behaviour affects her family's, either her father's or her husband's, reputation and, without a good reputation, a capable man could not expect to be assigned an official position, because family reputation was a considerable factor in official appointment. Family reputation is determined by both men's and women's moral behaviour.

Chinese officials were expected to be men of moral vision and upright virtue. They were not construed as paper-pushing functionaries operating according to clearly articulated rules, they (especially those at high levels in provincial and central government positions) were seen as individuals who could exercise judgement on difficult issues. Moral sincerity and personal character, therefore, prepared officials for bureaucratic success (Huters, Wong, and Yu, 1997: 9).

Thus, Neo-Confucian morality acted as a coercive force on both men and women in different settings, and still does.

Morality and Chinese Bureaucracy

The coercive role of morality and the connection between the influence of morality and of institutions on individuals have both been expressed clearly by Western sociologists, psychologists and other social scientists, such as Durkheim, Freud and Weber.

A basic assumption of the Confucian school was that the quality of government depends primarily upon the ruler's moral character. "Govern

According to Durkheim, the mere fact of the existence of an institutionalised rule endows it with moral sacredness. Moral rules, attitudes, and sanctions originate at the group, rather than the individual, level.

Thus, according to Durkheim,

(1) Morality is basically a matter of respect for fixed rules (and the authority behind those rules), not of rational calculation of benefit and harm in concrete cases; (2) Morality seems universally to be associated with punitive sentiments, sentiments incompatible with the notion that the right is a matter of human-welfare consequences; (3) From group to group there is wide variation as to the nature of the rules arousing moral respect, punitiveness, and the sense of duty (summary in International Encyclopedia of Social Science, 1968: 487).

Freud agreed in viewing morality as "fundamentally a matter of respect for concrete rules which are culturally variable or arbitrary, since these rules are a manifestation of social authority" (summary in International Encyclopedia of Social Science, 1968: 487). Weber asserted that a bureaucracy establishes authority relations between social positions, which are characterised by defined rights and duties, and prescribed in written regulations (Bendix, 1966: 423). In the words of Wilson and Greenblatt, "all bureaucracies, to one degree or another, are in the business of social control--attempting to channel citizen behaviour in particular directions, and to prevent and limit 'deviance' from those directions" (1977:131).

Morality has an even more particularly important role in Chinese bureaucracy. "China occupies the unique position of a state resting on moral force, a conception almost alien to the Western mind" (Hunters, Wong and Yu, 1997: 1).

Thus, China's government in theory is governed by moral force.

A basic assumption of the Confucian school was that the quality of government depends primarily upon the ruler's moral character. 'Govern

the people by regulations, keep order among them by chastisements, and they will flee from you, and lose all self-respect; govern by moral force, keep order among them by virtue and they will keep their self-respect and come to you of their own accord' (McNeill and Sedlar, 1970: 55).

It seems that morality is inseparable from tradition. At least in China's case, morality became a part of tradition. Tradition, according to Mill and also Smith, is a system of rules, values and customs understood and utilised pervasively and constantly by people within a society. In a closed society, tradition also lays down and regulates the structure of family and society. "Morality is a system of refined and dominant rules and values based on tradition" (International Encyclopedia of Social Science, 1968: 486). Its concrete criteria are judgements of the goodness and badness of individual behaviour (Mill 1957; Smith 1948). The judgement of goodness and badness in terms of tradition and morality is used to distinguish people's behaviour. Behaviour which matches tradition is pervasively appreciated; other behaviour is indiscriminately condemned, and the contexts and doctrines of tradition and morality have been mostly interpreted and written down by males, with reference to their own interests. Thus, the roles and obligations of women in tradition and morality are determined by males. However, men are also expected to follow moral rules, as mentioned before. This indicates that Chinese as a whole, both men and women, must obey moral rules if they expect to have a respected life and social status.

It follows that to achieve the highest virtue, Chinese women would wish to marry an official-scholar, and thus obtain high social status; while men's simple preference would be to secure a high position in government. In China, personal status is the core concern of most individuals. This is because, in traditional Chinese society, the only social position that is clearly recognised is in government. "Bureaucracy [is] a permanent feature of Chinese society" (Balazs, 1964). Status is demonstrated by a man's, husband's or father's, social position.

A bureaucratic position is attractive to most Chinese because by holding a position in the bureaucracy, a man as well as his family enjoys tremendous privileges and high prestige.

[Chinese traditional society was in the form of] social pyramid--which rested on a broad peasant base, with intermediate strata consisting of a merchant class and an artisan class, both of them numerically small, lacking in autonomy, of inferior status, and regarded with scant respect.

The class of official scholars ... held all the power and owned the largest amount of land. This class possessed every privilege (Balazs, 1964: 16).

The reason why so many Chinese men adhered their entire life to bureaucracy was because a scholar-official enjoyed both privilege and prestige, and also ruled the state. But they were also its servants. As soon as they lost their position in government, their privileges and prestige would immediately disappear: "The inevitable contrary is that an official in his capacity as a representative of the state is sacrosanct, but as an individual he is nothing"(Balazs, 1964: 18).

The solid state and strong bureaucracy were breeding grounds of women's inferiority, of which Confucianism is the ideological source. Although it is difficult to accurately define the style of the Chinese bureaucracy in ancient times, both Western and Chinese scholars acknowledge that Chinese social development entailed great enhancement of bureaucracy (Metzger, 1977; Liu, 1985, Wang, 1982; Ropp, 1990; Fei, 1993).

I use Dull's analysis of the historical stages of Chinese government, as well as Chinese historians' studies of Chinese women, to explain the relation between the decline of Chinese women's social role and Chinese bureaucratic expansion. My analysis of the decline of Chinese women's role will focus on women's administrative role, because individual administrative position is the only real criterion of success in Confucianism, justifying and underpinning an individual's

social role, as I have said. Other criteria such as property and skills are not important in Confucian standards. Dull divides the evolution of Chinese government before the collapse of the imperial system into four stages-- patrimonial, meritocratic, aristocratic and gentry-based (Dull, 1990:55-85). These terms from Western scholarship may not be accurately equivalent to Chinese terms, but I borrow them as a "grammar" in search of the historical relationship between the process of bureaucratization and the decline of women's social role in China.

According to Dull, the Shang dynasty from 1766 to 1122 BC was a period of pioneering patrimonial domination, when the Shang ruler conceived of himself as utterly without peer and governed Shang China as a powerful father figure who looked on everyone else as a member of his family and therefore under his control.

However, as Creel says:

In the Shang dynasty, certain ministers did enjoy high honour. They afford an important precedent for the position that came to be accorded to the scholar-official in later China. And this Shang tradition provided an unusual climate for the later development of political ideas and institutions in China (Creel, 1958: 40).

The Shang was replaced by the Western Zhou dynasty. As Creel (1958) also says, Chinese bureaucracy expanded on the basic government form established in the Western Zhou dynasty, the one which Confucius admired most. Thus, "the pattern of imperial government in China has often been called 'the Confucian state'. China's government has been deeply influenced by Confucianism. Confucianism was given much of its form under the Chou (Zhou)" (Creel, 1958:58). The pattern of Western Zhou government was highly centralised authority employing prestigious scholar officials: "The state [had] complete control over all activities of social life, absolute domination at all levels" (Balazs, 1964:17).

After the Western Zhou dynasty, China emerged into a chaotic situation, and quite a few small states remained independent of one another until the establishment of the Qin dynasty (221--206 BC). During this period, Confucian thought emerged, and then was pervasively spread in these small states (Jin, 1967; Jian, 1983). Since Confucianism was recognised,

Confucian classics have played a dominant role. A very large part of China's huge literary production has consisted of books that comment on and discuss these works. They formed the core of the educational curriculum and the basis of the civil service examinations over a period of two thousand years (Creel, 1958: 14).

According to Dull, the Qin dynasty was the beginning of meritocratic China, which lasted to the fall of the Han dynasty (206 BC-220 AD). The Qin dynasty established the first centralised system in China--with the emperor at the apex and groups of ever more numerous agencies in central, regional, and local strata under him. Under the emperor, actual administration was entrusted to a bureaucracy. Officials were graded by rank and salary and were controlled from the capital. The central government led by three senior officials (*Chengxian*, *Taiwei*, *Yusi Daifu*), who were responsible for administration, military affairs and legislation respectively, and were appointed with the approval of the throne (Wang, 1982:58-111). "Beneath this triumvirate were local ministers who were charged with various affairs ranging from local politics, military functions and domestic affairs to central government revenues. They were dependent on recommendation and appointment from above"(Dull, 1990:256). Thereafter, all imperial government resembled the government structure initiated by the Qin (Hucker, 1975; Schirokauer, 1978).

The bureaucratic system of the Qin dynasty was built on the unification of the seven states, the Qi, Chu, Yan, Han, Zao, Wei and Qin states. Although Confucian thought had been popularised pervasively in the other six states, it had not been infused into

the Qin state before the Qin unification. The co-existence of seven independent states was accompanied by constant wars: each of the states was ambitious to defeat and uniquely dominate the others. This dynamic impulse caused each state to reform its previous policies and search for efficient methods to govern well and in the meantime to conquer other states. Concentrating on this subject, debates of various kinds emerged surrounding Confucianism, Daoism, Meism, Legalism and the like among the many scattered states of China (Li, 1948; Liu, 1988; Jin, 1967).

At the state level, Confucianism was more influential in the six other major states than in the Qin state, where the legal thought of Shangyang was dominant,² whose preference was to govern and maintain a consolidated state order by means of sovereign law, rather than by morals and ethics, the preference of Confucianism. After the unification, Qin legalism overwhelmed Confucianism in politics, and was therefore rejected by Confucian scholars in accordance with their ethnocentric preferences, since the Qin state population was considered as an ethnic group distinct from that of the other six states, barbarous and backward.³ To suppress Confucian scholars' resistance, the Qin emperor incited a movement called 'Fenshu, Kenru' (Burning Confucian books and Burning Confucian Scholars) (Li, 1948). In addition, the political role of Confucianism in the Qin Dynasty was strongly criticised by Legalist thinkers. As a consequence, Legalism became another important stream of Chinese political thought, together with Confucianism.

²Shangyang was an official scholar in the Qin state, whose ideas were accepted and practiced by the Qin emperor before unification. As a result, Chinese historians believe that Shangyang's ideas were an outstanding ideological resource of the Qin state, which led it to become more powerful and prosperous than the other six (Li, 1948; Liu, 1985).

³According to Chinese historians, the Qin state was ethnically composed of non-Han Chinese. Before unification, the other six states regarded the Qin state as barbaric and culturally backward. Confucianism was only influential in states composed of Han Chinese, including the six states eventually absorbed by the Qin.

Like Confucianism, Legalism also defined an inferior role for women, specifically emphasising women's inadequacy in administrative tasks. Legalism strongly denigrated women's capability for administration, as can be seen in Han Fei-zi's explanation of women's role. Han Fei-zi (280 BC-233 AD), the founder of Legalist theory, synthesised the legal thought of other Legalists into a systematic theory.⁴ He was born into a noble family and was a military official of the Han state, one of the seven contending states. Just before unification, Han Fei-zi accepted the invitation of the Qin emperor to enter Qin service as a military and administrative consultant. He attempted to avert the danger of the Han state being occupied by the Qin state, which was already the most powerful. His legal thought was pervasively utilised by the Qin emperor and inherited by other dynasties.

Han Fei-zi propounded the theory of women's negative role both in administration and the royal family by assuming that women were always dangerous elements for the state's stability. On the premise that human beings had a tendency to be lascivious and promiscuous, which was the evil side of human nature and was dangerous to the strength, prosperity, and solidarity of the state, Han Fei-zi insisted, like many thinkers of previous dynasties, that a governor should be indifferent to the erotic and to women's beauty and exclude women from administration. A beautiful and ambitious woman was harmful for the state. Firstly, she, whether empress or concubine, could take advantage of the emperor's favour towards her, and thus hold the emperor under her arm: "A governor's trusting and listening to his wife are not distinct from women's dominance of the state: in such a case, it is not long before the state collapses" (Lu, 1989:108). Secondly, a beautiful woman could induce the emperor to be bewildered by her beauty, by which the emperor would lose interest in

⁴According to Chinese historians, there were ideological and practical legalists before Han Fei-zi, they were Meng-zi, Xun-zi and Yi wen-zi, the ideological legalists in the West Zhou period; and Shang Yang and Li Shi, the practical legalists in the Qin state (Jing 1968; Li 1988).

governing the state. Thirdly, a beautiful woman was a potential danger to the state's stability. Neither an empress nor a concubine would make a concerted effort for an emperor on behalf of the state unless seeking his favour towards her, by means of which her son could take over the throne in future. Fourthly, between an empress and concubines, and among concubines, there could be much intrigue, and the emperor's involvement in these affairs was no help for the state. To avoid these dangers, Han Fei-zi claimed that a governor or a husband should absolutely dominate his family and maintain surveillance of his wife: a governor should not discuss administrative affairs in front of his wife; a governor should give up his wife without mercy, if she is disobedient; and, within the family, the hierarchical order between wife and concubine should be strictly preserved: only the son of the wife should be entitled to inherit the throne. By contrast, although women were dangerous for the state, they could be used as political tools--for example sending beautiful women as baits to the enemy and, thus, defeating him after he indulged in a woman's beauty (Zhou, 1980; Du, 1988:213-227; Lu, 1988; Zhang, 1988).

mentioned before, Empress Wu Zetian open the examination system to people from all levels. Thus, more bureaucratic

Hen Fei-zi's assumptions about women's role, together with Confucian assumptions, penetrated into Chinese society in its later development. Confucianism reassured in politics from the West Han period, when Dong Zhongshu, the official philosopher, announced the ideology of 'Bachu Baijia, Duzun Rushu' (Banning plural thoughts, merely appreciating Confucianism). After that, Confucianism was utilised as the ruling principle of the state and highly respected for its social values and morals. The Confucians devised the hierarchical relationships between a husband and a wife, a father and a son, and a governor and a subordinate, which were all formally and officially recognised. Women were constrained by Confucian morality and those who wanted to play a role in society were no longer appreciated, but denigrated. Thus, from the Qin dynasty, women's administrative role was limited by both Legalism and Confucianism.

as basically organized along Tang lines (Hucker, 1975:180-185). After the Song dynasty, other dynasties, which include the Yuan dynasty (1211-1260 AD),

Under the Han dynasty (206 BC-220AD), following the Qin dynasty, the pattern of imperial government "was carried over almost intact from the Qin dynasty. This system of efficient and sometimes despotic centralised bureaucracy was the product of a long process of development that has its beginnings as far back to Western Zhou"(Creel, 1951: 45).

The period of aristocratic China is dated from the collapse of the Han dynasty to the end of the Tang dynasty (618-960 AD). Apart from the inheritance of many values of the earlier system, for example in the creation of power networks in the kingdom based on lineage, the scope of bureaucratization went forward. The Tang dynasty broadened the geographical composition of the bureaucracy by including men from areas other than the emperor's native area, but government remained in the hands of emperor and government officials. Local power was more pervasive and influential than before. Under the Tang dynasty, bureaucracy was expanded, new positions were filled through the examination system. As mentioned before, Empress Wu Zetian open the examination system to people from all levels. Thus, more bureaucratic positions were built. Since the Tang dynasty, government service gradually became the most desirable and prestigious career in the empire.

From the beginning of the Song dynasty (960-1279 AD), Chinese bureaucratization went hand in hand with a gentry-dominated China until the 1911 revolution, when the imperial system was overthrown. In the Song dynasty, the bureaucracy was expanded by formulating a distinctive system of civil service. This system remained the most prestigious method of government recruitment. Theoretically, people were eligible to enter the state civil service by their success in the civil service examination and became scholar-officials. Actually, many people entered the state civil service through other means, such as personal connections with a high official. Song government was basically organised along Tang lines (Hucker, 1975:180-185). After the Song dynasty, other dynasties, which include the Yuan dynasty (1211-1260 AD),

the Ming dynasty (1368-1644 AD) and the Qing dynasty (1644-1911 AD), experienced an enormous expansion of bureaucratic institutions wielding economic and administrative power and operated by scholar-officials at different levels. The examination system of the Song dynasty built on that of the Sui (581-618 AD) and Tang dynasties. The subjects of examinations derived from and complied with Confucian doctrine. According to the rule of the Song, as long as a person succeeded in the exams, and was appointed to a certain official position, his family would enjoy all of the benefits and privileges that he was entitled to. In addition, Confucianism was nominated by the Song Neo-Confucianists as the unique official ideology (Guo, 1991:7; Hou, 1972; Wang, 1982: 100-111).

In politics, the Neo-Confucianism believed that ruler must gain understanding of true principles of government and become a sage by moral self-discipline. In practice, the Neo-Confucian orthodoxy put it primary stress up on the moral development of the classics and the examination system, for the Confucian of loyalty and social conformity (cited in Hymes, 1993: 349).

Thus, the Confucian impact on Chinese politics reached its apex in the Song dynasty. In this respect, family reputation was more important than ever before, as it was also regulated by Confucianism. Song politics fixed women to obedience of moral rules which were also popular social principles. As mentioned before, Song philosophers asserted that for a woman, losing her purity or virtue was worse than starving to death (Ebrey, 1990:200). From the Song dynasty until the Qing dynasty, the eternal widow and the suicide of women for the sake of loyalty to husbands were eulogised in Chinese classical literature up (Elvin, 1973; Tien, 1988).

In sum, Chinese women's role was defined and constrained by Confucianism, associated with which, Chinese women's administrative role was constrained particularly by Legalism. These two philosophies tended to prevent women from achieving administrative and social participation. Their increasing impact on women

coincided with the enhancement of Chinese bureaucracy which is also organised by Confucian and legalist rules. Following these rules, Chinese literature and history have misinterpreted or distorted the image of many Chinese women who occupied important positions in administration and in society. Confucian morality is the reference that Chinese use to judge women. Confucian morality is the ideological source of Chinese discrimination against women in administration and social participation. This ideological source led women to face strong social rejection when occupying an administrative position, and thus women became inferior in the administrative field. As Confucianism is hostile to and ignorant of women's administrative role, women are therefore located in a low social status.

Efforts To Change Women's Traditional Role in China before 1949

It is assumed by Chinese scholars (Li, 1988: 107-134; Peng, 1995:77-96) that political demands for improving women's situation began in the nineteenth century in China. From the beginning, these demands came under the influence of Western ideas about women's role. In the meantime, social efforts for changing women's traditional role also took place. Political efforts exposed the fact that the women's political movement in China involved a contradiction between the ideas of the movement, as discussed below, which mostly derive from Western ideas of women's emancipation, and Chinese patriotism, which is quite hostile to Western ideas generally, while, social efforts echoed the priority of a market economy for increasing women's opportunity.

The efforts for women's emancipation before 1949 included political and social activities, academic studies and educational reform. The first girls' school in China was set up by the members of the Association of Eastern Women's Education run by the British Christian missionary, Miss Aldersey, in Ningbo in 1844. From 1847 to 1860, there were eleven girls schools established by Christian churches in five trading ports in China--Guangzhou, Fujian, Xiamen, Ningbo and Shanghai (Li, 1988:143).

The first girls' school recommended by the Qing government was established in 1898. In 1906, Dowager *Cixi* urged development of women's education, which was listed in the plan of public education. The Qing government issued edicts on the Right of Women's Education in Normal University and the Rights of the Girl in Primary School. Women started entering university in 1920 (Li, 1988:143; Peng, 1988:3; Qiao, 1990:248; Liu, 1993:15). In 1905, twelve female from Huan province were sent to Japan to study; and three from Jiangshu province were sent to America in 1907 (Zhongguo, 1973: 119-121).

Politically, the Taiping movement from 1850 to 1864 proposed for the first time in Chinese history to change women's traditional role. The Taiping movement, whose ideology was influenced by Christianity,⁵ campaigned strongly against foot binding of women and women involved in the movement were no longer foot bound. The doctrine of the movement, 'Tiancho Tianmu Zhidu' (The System of Heaven and the Farm), proposed the idea of equality between men and women, that is, all men should be brothers and all women sisters. It also proposed an equal right of possessing land. This doctrine was drafted with the assistance of a Christian priest who was the consultant of Hong Xiuquan, the top leader of the Taiping movement. However, the participants of the Taiping movement intended to overthrow Manchurian domination, and, with further development of the moment, the part of the ideology influenced by Christianity constantly declined, and even the Christian priest himself eventually was not appreciated by Hong Xiuquan, and withdrew from his circle as a result. The Taiping movement was suppressed by the Qing military in 1864. Christianity was an important ideological source only in the early period of the Taiping movement, when Taiping leaders needed many supporters. By converting to Christianity, Hong Xiuquan himself became the leader of the first religious brotherhood organisation, Chinese-predominant System Associated with the Western System). The goal of the movement was to restore the power and dignity of China which had declined after the

⁵ Hong Xiuqian, who was baptised before the Taiping movement arose, claimed himself to be the son of God. The doctrine of the movement was stated as a message from God. (243-324; Xu, Zhao and Wen, 1981:366-368).

"Tiandi Hui" (Heaven and Earth Organisation), organised under the Taipings. But as soon as the Taiping movement seemed to be strong enough, the leaders began to give up Christian ideas, which were essentially alien to them. Hong Xiuquan also established his own empire in Nanjing, which imitated the traditional style of Chinese empire (Wang, 1958:133-151; Yang and Deng, 1954:121-126; Luo, 1981:74-77; Mou, 1979:191-203). The final goal of the movement, overthrowing Manchurian dominance over Chinese and thus occupying the throne, was no doubt total power of a Chinese kind.

Following the Taiping movement, Kang Youwei and Liang Qi Chao, the activists of the brief "Wuxū Reform" in 1898, advocated equality between men and women.⁶ Kang Youwei established a "No Foot-binding Committee" in 1884 (Li, 1988: 142-143). However, as in the Taiping Case, these political activities for women's equality were associated closely with other political goals which were seen as more important than women's equality. Eventually, these political efforts for changing women's role gave way to other political goals.

Again, the May Fourth Movement in 1919 was similarly contradictory. On the one hand, this movement reflected Chinese patriotism under the banner of anti-Western imperialism and anti-Japanese occupation, and on the other hand, it urged the Chinese government to adopt new ideas of democracy and freedom in search of the strength and prosperity of China. Thus, the May Fourth Movement was actually a

Chinese inheritance system and attitudes to gender on the family (Guo, 1981: 230-

⁶Wuxū is the name of the year of reform, 1898, in the Chinese lunar calendar. The Wuxū reform intended to reform orthodox Confucianism and was led by Han activists whose ideas were influenced by Western constitutional monarchists and the Meiji reform of 1868 in Japan. They proposed "Zhu Yi Zhongxue, Fu Yi Xisue" (A Chinese-predominant System Associated with the Western System). The goal of the reform was to increase the power and dignity of China which had declined after the Opium War, and to abolish the imperial dominance of Manchurians. This reform was ideologically supported and even supervised by British and American missionaries (Fan, 1955:243-324; Xu, Zhao and Wen, 1981:366-368).

patriotic movement, although it launched Western ideas of democracy and freedom: thus its demands for women's emancipation were only momentary ideas of the movement.

The May Fourth Movement claimed that women should leave home by working outside; resist arranged marriage, and replace polygamy with monogamy (Li, 1988: 150-158). The ideology of the May Fourth Movement was adopted later on by both the Chinese Nationalist Party and the Chinese Communist Party.

From the 1920s to 1949, as a ruling party, the Nationalist Party (Gumindang) also intended to improve women's situation. In the 1920s and 1930s, the Nationalists proposed free marriage, monogamy and equality between men and women. The Nationalist Party Manifesto of 1924 pronounced that men and women were socially equal. The Rules of the Nationalist Party of 1931 claimed that women and men were equal before the law (Li, 1988:157; Liu, 1993:5). However, the impact of the Manifesto and Nationalist Party law on Chinese society was very limited.

Apart from political efforts for emancipating women's role during the Guomindang period, women's studies in China spread extensively in the early twentieth century, involving such topics as the history of Chinese marriage and patrilinealism (Chen, 1925; Tao, 1934); the origin of Chinese polygamy (Cai, 1934); the history of folk customs in shaping the Chinese view of women (Zhang, 1911); the effect of the Chinese inheritance system and attitudes to gender on the family (Guo, 1981: 230-232; Se, 1981: 162-172, Chen, 1937:37-40); the history of Chinese women's life from the Han to Song dynasties (Chen, 1928); the history of Chinese prostitution (Wang, 1934:11-16; Gao 1934:3; Sou, 1932:4; Li, 1941:8; Zhou, 1942); the social role of Chinese women (Zhao, 1928; He, 1932:6; Liu, 1932:2 Wu, 1937:2), and Chinese women's literature (Xie 1926; Liang 1927; Tao, 1933; Lu, 1931; Zeng, 1935).

In addition, during the Guomindang period, it was not unusual in urban areas for married women to work outside the home and gain economic independence: many lower social status women climbed the social ladder, such as Jiang Qing, the third wife of Mao Zedong, who migrated to Shanghai from a remote area of Shandong province in the late 1920s, and became a film star in the early 1930s. Jiang's story is very well known in the PRC. Some female scholars in China admit that women had more freedom in some ways before 1949 when there was less ideological control, more privacy, more opportunity to choose a career freely and freer academic study.⁷

Thus, the role of Chinese women had received serious attention before 1949, both in theory and in legal terms. Chinese women had been an important subject for study before 1949 and there were some peaceful improvements in women's social role.

After 1949, the Chinese Communist Party inserted the ideology of the May Fourth Movement into the context of women's liberation under the Chinese socialist system. Ironically, even after several decades, the criticism of both Westerners and Chinese concerning the Chinese social outlook today is much the same as during the May Fourth Movement --such as that the Chinese give priority to a son over a daughter and uphold male dominance in family and society. In academic studies, according to Chinese female scholars, wide ranging research on Chinese women was banned after 1949 and women's studies could only be associated with the ruling political ideology.⁸

Conclusion

Historically, as I have argued, many Chinese women were powerful behind the scenes and constantly challenged Confucian beliefs about women's role. The

⁷Oral information from female scholars of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing, on 9 August 1993.

⁸ibid

negative attitudes of Chinese towards women's administrative role and social participation derive from Confucian morality, the dominance of which was enhanced by the historical expansion of Chinese bureaucracy, which itself was of course administered under Confucian rules.

As shown above, Western ideas about women's role have been exploited temporally by Chinese reformers in pursuit of patriotic goals. But it is always likely that when Chinese find themselves strong enough to achieve their political goals, they will abandon Western ideas and revive traditional ones. This is because political efforts at reform have never shaken the fundamental structure of society which is based on traditional ideas. Without changing China's social structure radically, traditional ideas will continue for a considerable period yet to rule over society at large as well as women's situation. In addition, political demands for improving women's situation were associated mainly with other political goals rather than with women's own concerns for making their own choices. Thus, successful social change can not be undertaken by exclusively political efforts in China and thus the control of Chinese values and morality over women remains. In my view, the most effective way of making real social change in China is to expand the scope of the market to improve women's opportunities to take action for their own interests and thus challenge Confucian-type moral control. This can lead progressively to women's emancipation even if it does not demolish traditional ideas consciously or completely.

The most prominent feature of the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) effort to achieve women's equality (in Chinese terms, women's liberation movement) in the PRC after 1949 is that it was initiated by the Party and driven by its ultimate political goal—reaching the socialist and communist system defined by Karl Marx. In CCP rhetoric, the socialist system is the only social system in which there is no class struggle and where the state truly represents people's interests. Socialism evolves out of capitalism and thereby is superior to other systems. China can only become a strong country through a socialist system (Zhongguo, 1979:2-3; All China Women's Federation,

Chapter 2 THE CHINESE SOCIALIST SYSTEM AND WOMEN FROM 1949 TO 1978

Introduction

This chapter undertakes a historical exploration of women's inequality under the Chinese socialist system. I suggest that this system has on balance hindered women's opportunity for freedom of choice and that women are seriously constrained by China's highly centralised Party and government bureaucratic apparatus, because the organisations specifically charged with protecting and advocating women's rights are organs of the Party and therefore of the state. In addition, the Chinese socialist system is dominated by men—decision making is monopolised by a few male elites, and administrative positions at all levels are mostly occupied by men. This chapter shows that where women's interests contradict what the Party deems to be national interests, the former are subordinated to the latter by official women's organisations; and that the attempt to impose the abolition of Chinese tradition has remained frustrated by pre-revolutionary attitudes towards women—attitudes that have been in some ways strengthened by contemporary Chinese ideology and practice. In sum, even where there are achievements to show in women's equality since 1949, these have usually been made at the expense of the rights of women to make their own choices.

The most prominent feature of the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) effort to achieve women's equality (in Chinese terms, women's liberation movement) in the PRC after 1949 is that it was initiated by the Party and driven by its ultimate political goal—reaching the socialist and communist system defined by Karl Marx. In CCP rhetoric, the socialist system is the only social system in which there is no class struggle and where the state truly represents people's interests. Socialism evolves out of capitalism and thereby is superior to other systems. China can only become a strong country through a socialist system (Zhongguo, 1979:2-3; All China Women's Federation,

1994:1-4). Unlike all other social systems, socialism provides substantial equal opportunity for women. As the All China Women's Federation says:

Chinese women suffered from Chinese feudalism for thousands of years without the right of political participation, social status or freedom of marriage. Imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic-capitalism collaborated together, exploiting and oppressing the Chinese, pushing China to the edge of national collapse, by which Chinese women were driven to the abyss of suffering.

The establishment of the People's Republic of China ended the period when Chinese women were oppressed by feudal society and foreign invaders. Chinese women became the masters of new China. They enjoyed equal rights with men in politics, economy, culture, society and the family. Their equal rights are guaranteed by laws.

The Chinese government has protected women and women's rights from discrimination by laws, policies and education. Therefore, Chinese women today are enjoying equal rights for ever (People's Daily 4 June 1994).

However, the change in the situation of women in China after 1949 was brought about by political force. In the 1950s, the CCP disrupted and distorted the previous social structure and the traditional pattern of the Chinese family through a series of intensive political movements--the three anti-revolutionary movement, the five anti-revolutionary movement, land reform and the Cultural Revolution. In the course of these movements, the CCP boasted of women's equal rights as embodied in the new Chinese constitutions (1951,1978) and new marriage laws, employment policies, labour insurance policies and laws on women's and children's rights (Wang, 1984; Wolf, 1985:45-60; Honing and Hershatter, 1988:38-49; Li, 1988:160-164; All China Women's Federation, 1994:10-12).

The women's movement after 1949 was carried out on the basis of a great change in China's political system. One point agreed upon by some Western and Chinese scholars and officials in the PRC is that there has been progress towards women's liberation in the PRC since 1949, as shown by increasing numbers of women in education, the workplace and politics, and by men and women sharing equal political

and legal rights (Zhongguo, 1991:4). The official outcomes of policies on women have been well documented by Chinese authorities, and this documentation has become a resource for Western feminists--especially socialist feminists-- in research on Chinese women. Up to 1978, many Western feminist scholars believed that Chinese women's situation had improved and that they were far more equal in the social field than before 1949. These scholars were also convinced by the PRC's policies and laws and asserted that establishing the socialist system should be placed prior to women's equality in some respects (Barrett, 1973:57-63; Croll, 1975; Rofel, 1994:240-261). According to Chao:

[In China], the value of emancipating women and their extensive participation in social production... to change their economic and social status is on the increase accordingly. On the other hand, the emancipation of women from household work may also influence their domestic happiness; nonetheless some women could react favourably to emancipation because, having been imbued with Mao's thought, they have been prepared to join social production. Again they can enjoy more freedom under communism than in the past (Chao, 1977: 141).

Some Western feminist scholars tend to idealise the achievement of women's liberation after 1949. According to Honig:

[The Chinese] family structure began to change in the years after 1949, and with it patterns of family relationships. When women married, they no longer necessarily moved in with their husband's families. ... No matter where they lived, women maintained their ties to their natal families. Furthermore, in the cities at least, they had increasing power in the family because their jobs gave them access to income and social networks that were not directly dependent on the family (Honig and Hershatter, 1988:255-256).

Phyllis Andors endorsed his view:

In the 1950s, achievements by women in such areas as legal rights, job opportunities, education, health care, and political power were significant enough to make a decisive break with the pre-1949 period.

Not only were more women working, but they were entering fields like heavy industry formerly considered open only to men, and although their

numbers were small, they were breaking down age-old barriers. Women were even entering the prestigious scientific fields. By 1957, one-seventh of the researchers in mathematics research institutes were women.

In rural areas, more women were entering farm production, especially with the advent of the agricultural producers' cooperative. By 1957, over 100 million women age 16 and over were members of these collectives (Andors, 1983:35).

In fact, in the 1950s, the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) first priority was socialist construction, the advancement of full collectivisation in rural areas and state ownership in urban areas. Chinese private property was confiscated by the Party or its handover forced by the Party. Many people were *Baitian Qiaoluo Dagu, Wansha Baotuo Tongku* (playing drums and cheering during the day, but crying at home at night), which is the phrase actually used by the CCP to criticise people's reluctance to embrace collectivisation and public ownership. Many women were driven out of their homes. The increasing number of women doing outside work was promoted by Party policy.

Some Western feminist scholars such as Kay Ann Johnson (1983: 232) and Tamara Jacka (1997: 37-39) agree that the Cultural Revolution has had some positive effects on women. Jacka, although she admits some backlash against women's achievement in the 1950s and early 1960s, believes that the policy which ran from 1968 to 1976, by which urban school graduates were sent to the countryside to learn from peasants (*Shanshan Xiaxiang*), was good for women.

Young women did sometimes benefit from the policy. Educated young urban women, for example, sometimes had greater opportunity to exercise their skills and gain positions of respect in rural industry and rural policies than they would have had in competing with their male counterparts in the cities. As the same time, they provided a new model for young peasant women to emulate, and helped to break down rural prejudices about women.

The anti-Confucian campaign ran from 1973 to 1976 and resulted in a uniquely concentrated attempt to challenge the obstacles that Confucianism continued to create for the realisation of gender equality (Jacka, 1997: 38).

During the Cultural Revolution, the *Shangshan Xiexiang* (learn from peasants) policy produced a generation of the lost, millions who never enjoyed their "spring time". According to Lao Gui (1987)¹, the policy of sending educated youth to the countryside resulted in many tragedies for both these youth and the peasants. Most educated youth were reluctant to go to the countryside, and never devoted themselves to countrywork; and mostly isolated themselves from the peasants. Some of them were able to return to the city through their parents' personal connections with authorities who had the power to send children back to the cities, while some educated females tried to avoid working on the farm by having affairs with influential officials. The skills that educated youth learned from schools were only properly used when political movements erupted, for educated youth were more capable than peasants in writing political and ideological speeches and articles. Educated youth could escape from farm work if promoted to work in county offices or if they became political activists. At the end of the *Shangshan Xiexiang* policy, many fertile lands were destroyed and the ecology was seriously damaged. Peasants blamed the educated youth for damaging their lives, while many educated youth believed that the Party had destroyed their lives. These Chinese, both men and women, who have experienced the *Shangshan Xiexiang* policy, saw no benefit from this policy (Lao:1987).

From 1973 to 1976, the real purpose of the anti-Confucian campaign was not to combat anti-Confucian attitudes toward women but rather it was a reflection of a power struggle at the top of the CCP. After seven years of Cultural Revolution, culminating in Lin Bao's accident in 1973, the Party leadership faced a serious crisis and the national economy was stagged. The people at that time were told to enhance

¹Lao Gui is the son of a famous Chinese writer, Yangmo. His published novel *Xuese Huanghun* (blood under sunset) in 1987 was banned soon after because it implied strong criticism of high ranking officials of the Chinese Communist Party. This novel revealed vividly lives of Lao Gui's and other educated youth in the countryside in Northeastern China during the Cultural Revolution.

proletarian consciousness in order to protect proletarian dictatorship from being overthrown by Confucian feudalism. Under the slogans, "What men can do, women can do too", and "Women hold up half the sky" (Jacka, 1997: 37), unemployed urban women were encouraged to work outside in order to save the devastated urban economy in the early 1970s. Thus, the achievements of women's equality campaigns applauded by Western feminist scholars were in fact often enforced by the Party in its own interests rather than women's interests.

The crucial fact that has been ignored by many Western feminist scholars about women's liberation in China after 1949 is that it was carried out by political force rather than by women's freedom of choice. Under the Chinese socialist system, women were highly organised by a CCP dominated by male elites. Women were in fact forced to subordinate their own interests to the Party's demands. Women as well as men were coerced by the Party's bureaucratic apparatus. As Xiaorong Li has argued, the Chinese Communist Party's policy on women's equality has always treated it as merely instrumental to political solidarity and serving the party's interests.

The official ideology in China has worked against the ideas of women's freedom to choose and respect for them as individuals, equal to men in dignity. Women have been treated as instruments for enhancing the national GNP. The increased role of women in the workplace is praised 'for its contribution to the building of socialist material and spiritual civilisation'

The 'equality campaigns' indoctrinated women to view their roles in society in a particular way rather than helping them to cultivate their capability to reflect on and challenge the traditional patriarch status quo (Li, 1995: 410-411).

As shown by Chinese women's experiences, individual rights to freedom of choice have been considerably suppressed since 1949. For women, the goal of "increasing numbers of women in politics and the workplace" is obtained by women's subordination to the

state and Party as a first priority. More significantly, the Marxist ideology of class struggle between exploiting and exploited classes-- between feudalism, capitalism and socialism--brought many kinds of difficulty for Chinese women, as I hope to show. Following this ideology, the CCP tried to force Chinese women to replace their traditional ideas with Marxist ideology. Of course the CCP interprets Marxist ideology by a Chinese standard, but class struggle is the theoretical foundation of the CCP's interpretation of social conflict.

The Enhanced Control of the Socialist System over Chinese Women

The Chinese political-economic system is based on Marxist and Leninist theories of socialism, even though their ideological influence on China after 1978 has not been as significant as it was before.

According to Karl Marx, socialism is characterised by public ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange with state administrative control. Capitalism, by contrast, is built on the base of private ownership. Socialism is also the first stage of communism. Under communism, the political role of the state will be destroyed, but an administrative role will continue to ensure that individuals enjoy equality and make full use of their talents. As Karl Marx proclaimed in his propaganda masterpiece, *The Communist Manifesto*:

The distinguishing feature of Communism is not the abolition of property generally, but the abolition of bourgeois property. But modern bourgeois private property is the final and most complete expression of the system of producing and appropriating products that is based on class antagonisms, on the exploitation of the many by the few (Marx, 1951:40).

In this sense, the theory of the communism may be summed up in the single phrase:

Abolition of private property.

The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie to centralise all instruments of production in

the hands of the state...[The state controls] the total of productive force as rapidly as possible(Marx, 1951:44).

Lenin agreed with Marx on the question of state control under socialism:

Marx terms socialism the "first" or lower phase of communist society-- the means of production are no longer the private property of individuals. The means of production belong to the whole of society (Lenin, 1918:70).

[In the higher phase of communist society], the state will be able to wither away completely when society can apply the rule, from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs, i.e., when people have become so accustomed to observing the fundamental rules of social life and when their labour is so productive that they will voluntarily work according to their ability (Lenin , 1918:73).

After 1949, under the dynamic of Marxist and Leninist theory, the Chinese Communist Party conducted political and mass movements for the confiscation of private property and the collectivisation and abolition of the landlord and business class in both urban and rural areas. There were: the Three- and Five-Anti Campaigns (1952); the development of collective farms (1952) and of agricultural cooperatives (1955); the two Suppression of Counterrevolutionaries campaigns (1950 and 1955), and the Great Leap Forward (1957) (Dietrich, 1986: 68-119).

From the CCP's point of view by the Eighth Party Congress in 1956 socialist construction had been completed, the state controlled the national economic lifeline; private ownership was entirely uprooted in urban and rural areas; the exploiting class had been abolished, and land and capital were in the hands of the state (Zhongguo, 1982: 274). These achievements were equivalent to features of socialism identified by Marx in *The Communist Manifesto*:

In the most advanced countries the following will be pretty generally applicable:

1. Abolition of property in land and application of all rents of land to public purposes.
2. A heavy progressive or graduated income tax.
3. Abolition of all right of inheritance.
4. Confiscation of the property of all emigrants and rebels.

5. Centralisation of credit in the hands of the State, by means of a national bank with State capital and an exclusive monopoly.
6. Centralisation of the means of communication and transport in the hands of the State.
7. Extension of factories and instruments of production owned by the State; the bringing into cultivation of waste-lands, and the improvement of the soil generally in accordance with a common plan (Marx and Engels 1951:44-51).

There is no doubt that the Chinese system established after 1949 was a socialist system built on public ownership and state control. On the basis of public ownership and state control, the CCP developed "a socialist system with Chinese characteristics". The Chinese socialist system is the combination of the Chinese traditional bureaucracy and the political and institutional structure of the former Soviet Union. As Liu describes it:

[After 1949] the traditional Chinese impulse toward bureaucracy was reinforced and legitimised by three modern conditions: prolonged civil war; the ideology of socialism with its emphasis on central planning and public ownership, and emulation of the Soviet political system (Liu, 1986: 57).

Compared to the Chinese system before 1949, the Chinese socialist system "continues and further refines historical Chinese bureaucratic development toward increased centralisation, more minute regulations, stricter surveillance, and tighter control" (Liu, 1986: 5). At the individual level, after 1949, new rules of internal citizenship have limited individual geographical movement and the personnel management system in the workplace constrains the individual employee to a specific work unit or government organisation.

Internal Citizenship

Internal citizenship after 1949 derives from the Chinese traditional family management system (Hukou Guanli Zhidu) which required every resident to be registered with a local authority after he or she was born. It can be traced back to the Xia dynasty and was formulated systematically in the Qin dynasty around 221 B C, after the unification of China. The initial purpose of establishing the family management system was to

collect tax according to the number of family members. This system continued until 1949 (Wang, 1981:90-99, Police Book, 1986: 29). After 1949, the role of the family management system shifted to emphasise internal citizenship, and aimed to control individual geographical movement. Internal citizenship was strongly institutionalised: every resident was registered at the local police office, from which any government authority can easily trace the personal details of every local resident, such as their place of birth, the size of their family, including extended family, where each family member works and family background. For each resident, citizenship determines whether she or he can live in an area permanently, where she or he can enter a school to study, find employment² and register a marriage.

Internal citizenship was firstly regulated by the "Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Huji Dengji Tiaoli" in 1959 (Articles of the Registered Resident System of the People's Republic of China, 1958) (Police Book, 1986:30-31).³ Since then, each family has been given a registration book. It contains seven items to be filled in for each family member (resident): (1) place of permanent residence; (2) place of temporary residence; (3) date of birth; (4) date of death; (5) the date from when and the place from where a resident moves out of an urban area; (6) the date from when and the place where a resident moves into an urban area; (7) justification of the status of a resident, i.e, change of name, change of professional status or educational level, giving up or renewing nationality (Police Book, 1986:34-39).

²In principle, a school student is only entitled to go to the school located in the suburb where her or his family lives, except for entry to selective schools at state level by entrance exam. In recent years, however, schools with high tuition fees are booming; they also disregard the suburb where a student's family lives. Only residents who do not have college or university degrees are necessarily eligible to work in the area where they live. University graduates are assigned jobs by the state after their graduation. Thus, many graduates are likely not to get a job in the area where their parents live.

³The document concerned was copied from a book in a police college, which was not supposed to be read by the public. Out of respect for the help from the person who offered me this document, I will not give the title or publisher of the book.

The principles for the management of citizenship are determined by the national police. Its agents operate at local level from the province to the residential district. According to the Articles, every resident should be registered at the police station of a suburb, to which station a resident who intends to emigrate to another place must apply with the necessary documents. These, for an employee, include the acceptance letter from the new work unit, the letter of permission from the work unit she or he is leaving and the approval from the personnel bureau of the local government. With these documents, the police station will issue permission for the applicant to live in the new area. In China, people are classified for residential purposes as either urban or rural residents. In general, every work unit in the public sector must take consideration of the region of registration of the residence of an employee. Without locally registered residence, she or he is less likely to get a job than local residents. More strikingly, job advertisements often stress that eligible applicants must be residents of a particular area and applicants must provide their identification cards (Dalian Daily 25 September 1993).⁴ The internal citizenship system ensures that Chinese are only able to work in the area where their citizenship is registered.

Restrictions under the Chinese Personnel Management System

In addition to lack of geographical movement under the internal citizenship system, the personnel management system is another factor that limits individual movement from one work unit to another.

Personnel management is operated within the structure of the administrative system of government organisations. The structure of government organisations is based on that of the former Soviet Union (Schurmann, 1968:1). After 1949, it was set up according

⁴In 1982, the PRC reaffirmed the system of personal identification cards, which show the residence of a person, her or his working and living place, and birth day.

to specific administrative fields: thus there was a central administration of culture; of science and technology; of education; of railways, and the like. Each administration directs subordinate administrations or bureaux at the local level (Guowuyuan, 1990).

There are many complexities in relations between central and local organisations and between local organisations and work units. Some local organisations are directly attached to "their" central organisations while some are connected through their local government authority. For instance, the Liaoning Bureau of Electronics is directly under the control of the Northeast Bureau of Electronics rather than the Liaoning provincial government. It carries out the policies made by the Northeast Bureau of Electronics which is directly attached to the Central Electronics of Administration. However, Liaoning University is under the control of the educational administration of the Liaoning provincial government, which is directed in turn by the educational administration of the central government.⁵

Personnel management under the Chinese administrative system includes highly centralised management both of an employee's movement from one work unit to another and of the promotion system. There are two organisations--both of which extend from the central government to local government and local administrative bureaux, and even to work units-- which are responsible for the movement of workers from one work unit to another and for professional promotion of employees. They are: the personnel affairs bureau (Renshi ju) and the labour affairs bureau (Laodong ju). In general, the personnel affairs bureau takes responsibility for the movement of those employees who are designated as "national cadre" which, in general, includes those who work in the non-productive and non-social service sector--that is in government organisations, institutions and universities. As is well known in the PRC, after 1978 this title came to depend on individual educational level and only those who have

⁵Personal knowledge in China, gained from contacts with people working in Shenyang University, Northeast University and the Northeast Bureau of Electronics.

received education beyond high school are classified as "national cadre". By contrast, the labour affairs bureau is responsible for the movement of workers with a lower educational level who are in the productive or social service sectors. These two types of organisations at the top level exercise their political dominance over an employee through their subordinate organisations within a work unit, which broadly carry out the policies of the central personnel administration and labour administration concerning personnel management. In addition, these two types of organisations at local level regulate the details of an employee's movement and professional promotion (Guowuyuan, 1990:93-102). Again, other specialised administrations at the top incorporate policies from the central personnel affairs and labour affairs bureaux for professional promotion and make their own detailed rules for the organisations at a lower level within their own administrative fields. This political and administrative role of the central government and local government was taken over by the Party committee at both central level and local level during the Cultural Revolution, and was only reinstated after 1978. The reinstatement of the government's administrative role was considered an important part of the 1978 reform by the CCP, which insisted on the (so-called) "separation between the Party's and government's role" (Deng, 1982:180).

The personnel management system ensures a complicated process for an employee's movement from one work unit to another. Take the example of a senior lecturer's movement from Northeast University to Shenyang University. Northeast University is directly administered by the Central Minerals Department. Shenyang University is directed by the educational committee of the Shenyang municipal government. In the process of moving out from the Northeast University, a senior lecturer needs permission letters from the department in which she or he is, from the personnel organisation of Northeast University (endorsed by the vice-president who is in charge of personnel affairs), and from the personnel organisation of the Central Minerals Department in Beijing.

This system set up a distinction between the policy-making authority and operating

To be able to move into Shenyang University, this same senior lecturer must go through the personnel bureau of the Shenyang municipal government, the personnel organisation of the educational department of the Shenyang municipal government, and, at last, the personnel organisation of Shenyang University. In negotiating these administrative steps, successful movement of an employee from one work unit to another depends almost entirely on her or his personal connections with powerful figures in those administrations.

The Strong Requirement for Individual Subordination to a Powerful Figure in a Work Unit

After 1949, every employee was attached to her or his work unit. Each work unit determines its employee's life in terms of housing, income and promotion (Walder, 1986: 14-16, 56-58, 76-80). Personal promotion is essential for all employees, as it directly affects an employee's income and living conditions. The higher the employee's position is, the more her or his income is, and, for a male employee, the better the living condition of him and his family. In principle, a work unit only allocates accommodation to its male, not its female, employees.

As noted by Schurmann, the PRC formulated its fundamental responsibility system for management in industry in the 1950s. That is, every employee in each work unit is responsible for every task, and every item of work. These are assigned by the head of a workshop. Above workshops, at unit level, the head is supposed to be a single person who "directs planning, production, technology, machine power, materials, finance and accounting, labour and wages, personnel and sales promotions, and welfare. This single person appoints specific individuals to perform appropriate tasks" (Schurmann, 1968:225). Because of the role of the single person, this system was called the one-man system. Later, it also came to dominate in non-industrial sectors.

This system set up a distinction between the policy-making authority and operating authority. The former focussed on policy making. The latter was concerned with running day-to-day affairs. The policy-making authority varied from the Party committee to the administrative bureaucracy at different levels. In the early 1950s the role of the Party committee, both at local level and in the workplace, was that of a supervisor. The Party committee did not intervene in daily administrative affairs. Initially, the CCP assumed that this system could fit into central planning. However, as a result, there was a great disparity between policy and operations. The outcome of operations diverged from the initial plan, which undermined the Party's influence in the workplace. By the result, the CCP accused some Chinese of being individualists and putting party and government policy aside. Therefore, in 1955, it proposed individual responsibility under the leadership of the Party committee of each work unit. All plans and administrative changes suggested by a single person should be put through the party committee of each work unit. However, this responsibility system was abolished in 1958 by the leadership of the Party. In a workshop, the role of a single person was replaced by that of the Party secretary (Schurmann, 1968:263-308).

Since then, the Party has increased its dominance in both the government and the work unit. During the Cultural Revolution, the Revolutionary Party Committees controlled supreme policy and intervened in details of administration; the government's role was concealed and suppressed and many administrative institutions were abolished (Schurmann, 1968:173-219; Liberthal and Lampton, 1992:60-68).

The responsibility system was rehabilitated after 1978, and is now called "the manager's responsibility system" (Changzhang Fuzhezhi) in both the industrial and non-industrial sectors, and "the president's responsibility system" (Xiaozang Fuzhezhi) in universities. In the revived promotion system in industry, the general manager nominates vice-managers and the head of each workshop, while in a university the president nominates vice-presidents and the head of each department. But the

manager's or the president's nomination must be approved by the Party committee of the industrial enterprise or university. Usually, the manager or the president is a member of the Party committee.⁶ Below a workshop or department, other official positions are assigned by the head of the workshop or the department.

Overall, internal citizenship and the personnel management system established after 1949 minimise individual opportunities for free geographical movement and changing the place of work, and confine the individual to a single institution or work unit. Under the system, women are provided with few opportunities for freedom of choice. Apart from the limitations of the Chinese socialist system on women's freedom of choice, the increasing numbers of women in politics and in the workplace mainly imply women's strong subordination to the Party. Women are required to absolutely obey any decision by the Party and they have very few rights to make their own decisions. In addition, the Chinese socialist system brings with it new forms of inequality affecting women concerning their social position, social status and social benefits.

Women's Subordination to the Party

The Submissive Role of Women in Decision-Making

According to the All China Women's Federation, the political achievements of women's liberation since 1949 include the following: (1) the percentage of women representatives in the National People's Congress increased from 12 percent in the First Plenum of the National People's Congress in 1954 to 21.3 percent in the Seventh Plenum of the Congress in 1988, and the percentage of female members in the General Committee of the Congress increased from 5 to 11.6 percent in the same period (Zhongguo Funü, 1991:571); (2) as of 1988, there were four women in the "top

⁶ After 1978, the members of a Party committee at local level come from both the Party organisation and government administration at that level. The Party secretary is of course the head of the Party committee.

[political] leadership" (undefined) and 13 women ministers at the central government level, while at local level, there were 13 women vice provincial presidents; and (3) the numbers of women cadre in China increased from 360,600 in 1951 to 8.7 million in 1988, while there were 6 million women party members in 1988 (Zhongguo, 1991: 15-16).⁷ However, do the increasing numbers of women in politics indicate women have a serious influence in policy-making?

It is known that decision-making in the PRC is done and implemented by the Party. The Party organisational system is highly centralised from top to bottom. Within the Party hierarchy there are seven levels, each of them involving a Party committee. They are: (1) the Central Party committee; (2) the Party committee in the province, autonomous region and centralised city; (3) the Party committee in the city; (4) the Party committee in the suburb, which is equivalent to the Party committee in the township in rural areas; (5) the Party committee in the work unit in urban and rural areas; (6) the Party committee in the workshop within a work unit or in the production brigade; (7) the Party group in the production team. The Central Committee of the Party is the pinnacle, making significant national policies which the Party committees at the other six levels must implement. Apart from the Central Party committee, the Party committees at a higher level exercise a leading role over the ones at lower levels in making policy (Schurmann, 1968:139-161). According to the Party Constitution,

The central committee of the Party has an absolute right to make national policies; local committees only have the right of making suggestion to the central committee of the Party, but not of making any final decision on their own.

The Party committees at lower levels must resolutely carry out decisions taken at high level. If local party committees perceive that some new policies from a high level do not tally with local reality, they are allowed to

⁷ The All China Women's Federation offers no comparative statistics on members of women and men in the Party and government at various levels, and also none between the CCP of women members in the National Party and government before 1949.

request new policies; however, if the high level party committee persists with previous policies, the party committees at lower levels must obey, and are not permitted to express openly or publicly their opinions opposite to the one of the high level party committee (CCCP, 1986:75).

After 1949, the government developed as a structure parallel to that of the Party organisation. In the relationship between the Party and government, the Party committee is superior to the government (Schurmann, 1968:172-219).

Schurmann describes the controlling character of the CCP in his book, *Ideology And Organisation In Communist China*:

[The Chinese Communist Party] is hierarchically organised, which means that the whole structure resembles a pyramid. It has a far flung base ramifying throughout the society and culminating in an apex where supreme power resides. The Party stands in alter-ego fashion alongside every organised unit of state and society. Wherever there is a factory, bureau, school, production brigade or military company, there also is a unit of the Communist party. This parallelism makes it possible for the Party to exercise direct leadership over every unit of organisation to which it is linked (Schurmann, 1968:139).

In practice, on top of the Party and government organisations, members of the Politbureau finally endorse national Party and government as well as military decisions (CCCP, 1986: 87). They are thus the substantial decision makers who dominate the whole nation by policy making. However, no woman has ever been a member of the Politbureau since 1949 (Zhonghua, 1993:26-43).

From the All China Women's Federation point of view, women's organisations are representative of women, who make good decisions for women, and the establishment of women's organisations demonstrates that women have become masters of themselves (Zhongguo, 1991: 576-577). However, from the very beginning, women's organisations have played a role as a tool and an arm of the CCP.

The All China Women's Federation, the top level women's organisation, was set up in the early 1950s. It was positioned below the Central Party organisations under the direct leadership of the CCP. In the following years, women's organisations spread throughout the whole nation (Guanyu, 1979:45). As with the All China Women's Federation, local women's organisations were also positioned under local Party committees. The first priority for women's organisations is to carry out the Party's policy. Deng Yingcao, the Vice-president of the All China Women's Federation in 1950, outlined the role and tasks for women's organisations in the 1950s as follows:

[The main task of women's organisations is] to assist local people's government. Women's organisations organise, educate and propagandise Chinese women in accordance with the policies of the people's government, on the one hand; and they report women's opinions to government and assist it to make policies on women and children on the other hand (Guanyu, 1979:52).

The Constitution of the CCP of 1982 stated clearly that "the Party should strengthen its leadership in the trade union, the youth league and women's organisations" (CCP, 1986:68). This implies that the Party conducts surveillance over the policy-making of women's organisations. The Constitution declares that the most important role of the Party is its leadership in politics.

The vertical relationships between women's organisations is similar to that in the Party. For instance, the Shenyang Municipal Women's Organisation is under the direction of the All China Women's Federation and the Liaoning Provincial Women's Organisation, and it in turn supervises women's organisations at lower levels (Shenyang, 1990:519).

Within Shenyang Municipal Women's Organisation, there are eight departments: the general office; the organisational department; the department of women's rights; the children's affairs department; the research institute; the propaganda department, and the office of urban and rural women's affairs. In general, the first priority of these

departments is to ensure that women obey the Party rules and guidance, on which basis, these departments tackle women's and children's affairs.

(1) Educating women to obey laws.

For example, the main tasks of the propaganda department are:

- (1) Educating women in the Party's ideology.
- (2) Selecting model female employees.
- (3) Organising activities for "Wuhao Jiating"(The Five Good Family).⁸
- (4) Rewarding the "March 8 Red Flag Model female employees" and the "March 8 Red Flag Collective Production Groups".⁹

These tasks were initially defined by the All China Women's Federation (Li, 1990: 12-13, Tan, 1990: 31-32) and afterwards were upheld by the Party. In 1992, a big national activity of women's organisations in China was to select model females who were supposed have made special progress in learning knowledge and skills, so called "two learning" (Shuangxue). According to Chen Muhua, the president of the Federation, the idea of two learning was suggested by the All China Women's Federation in accordance with the Party's focus on socialist economic construction and was approved by the Party (Women of China 3 March 1992).

women, but the former role is prior to the latter.

⁸Considering the emerging collapse of previous family patterns after 1978, the All China Women's Federation announced a national movement aimed at restoring the previous family pattern in the early 1980s--the "Five Good Family Movement". The criteria for a Five Good Family were:

- (1) A harmonious relationship between a husband and a wife.
- (2) A woman should be a kind wife and good mother. A kind wife means a wife loyal to her husband and looking after her husband well. A good mother refers to the active role of the mother in educating children.
- (3) A harmonious relationship between daughter-in-law and mother-in-law. A good daughter-in-law is one who looks after and shows high respect for her mother-in-law.
- (4) A harmonious relationship between sisters-in-law.
- (5) A harmonious relationship between neighbours.

⁹In China, women's organisations select some female employees and female working groups for the award of prizes on March 8, International Women's Day, namely those considered to have done an excellent job in the past year. The former are given the title "March 8 Red Flag Model", and the latter "March 8 Red Flag Group".

As a second example, the department of women's rights in the Shenyang Women's Organisation undertook the following tasks relating to women in 1990:

- (1) Educating women to obey laws.
- (2) Assisting those administrative departments responsible for social security to repress such social phenomena as prostitution and the selling of women and girls.
- (3) Ensuring that those administrative departments responsible for labour insurance do provide insurance for women.
- (4) Providing reports on women for local People's Congresses (Shenyang, 1990:520-521).

It is clear that women's organisations in the PRC formulate their policies following the direction of the Party's political line. The Party is a political supervisor of women's organisations, approving or disapproving their policies. Women's organisations are not able to make independent policies for women without toeing the Party political line. In practice, the Party subverts women's interests. That is, as long as they conflict with the Party, women's interests must be subordinated to the Party. Therefore, women's organisations play a dual role as both assistant of government and representative of women, but the former role is prior to the latter.

For a woman, participation in politics is always at the expense of her entire subordination to the Party. Firstly, the Party controls appointment of senior party and government officials; secondly, the condition of participating in politics is to join the Party, while, thirdly, a woman like any other party member, must obey the party's rules.

The task of appointing senior party and government officials is undertaken by the organisational department, one of six departments constituting the Party organisation at every level. The other five are: the general office of the Party committee; the propaganda department; the women's organisation department; the trade union

department, and the Youth League department. Of those, the organisational department is the most powerful. It is responsible for personnel management at high levels. It is called "the throat and tone of the Party and government" (a common Chinese saying). In general, the organisational department of the Central Party Committee preserves the dossiers of senior Party and government officials, who include officials of the Central government, provincial Party and government organisations and Party and government organisations of the cities directly under the control of central government. The organisation department completes the whole process required for the appointment of a senior official, making inquiries of the candidates and reporting the findings to the central committee of the CCP which gives final approval or disapproval. The Central Committee of the CCP is also empowered to appoint a senior official on behalf of the general Committee of the CCP. Thus, the appointment of senior officials is the prerogative of the Central Committee of the CCP. At the local level, the local organisational department and Party committee exercise dominance over the local Party and government officials. In addition, the CCP exercises its superior power in personnel management by keeping close watch on the political status or "personal political condition" of individuals. In general, the candidates for senior official promotion must be party members--only they are considered politically reliable people by the CCP. According to the CCP, senior officials must possess two kinds of capability: administrative capability and political integrity. "Political integrity" means loyalty to the Party, subordination to the order and principles of the CCP (CCCP, 1986: 7).

Not only senior officials but also all party members are required to obey the Party. According to the Party Constitution,

Every Party member must obey a Party organisation. The Party organisation at all low levels must obey that at a high level. All Party members must obey the Party Congress and the Central Committee of the Party (CCCP, 1986: 73)

By the process of appointing and removing Party and government officials and the demand for personal loyalty to the Party, the CCP entirely controls the passage of individuals to high positions and thus individual political life in China. Under such strong control of the CCP, those women who have moved up to high positions as party members entail stronger subordination to the Party than is required of other women who have not yet moved up to a high position and not yet joined the Party. As a result, increasing numbers of women in politics do not ensure that women play an important role in politics, but rather enhances their subordination to the Party.

The Anxiety of Employed Women in the Workplace

The increasing numbers of women in the workplace is also regarded as part of the achievement of women's liberation after 1949. In the early 1950s, 60 percent of rural women were involved in farm work, while only the women in the Southern provinces participated strongly in agricultural production before 1949. In urban areas, the big increase of women in the workplace occurred after 1978 (Zhongguo, 1991: 6-7, Zhongguo, 1993: 10-11). However, although working outside of the home brings women economic independence, pursuing economic independence and a career in the workplace, particularly in the urban public sector, traps women into a competition of personal connections rather than of personal capability. For the sake of making good connections, women are forced into satisfying those powerful people who have influence on the achievement of their goals. The importance of personal connections is even more prominent in the urban public sector, where both the personnel management system and the relationship between authority and employee in a work unit, as described above, revolve around personnel connections, as just a few individuals control all professional and official promotion.

On professional promotion, the CCP formulated a complicated promotion system after 1978 which led to an especially intense competition over personal connections. The promotion system is still based on the administrative structure established before 1978

under which there are several layers of administrative organisations involved in professional promotion through all levels of authority. At the top level, both the National Planning Committee (Guojia Jiha Weiyuanhui) and the National Personnel Department (Renshi Bu) make general policies on professional promotion and prescribe the numbers of professional positions at each level (Guowuyuan, 1990:20-24; 93-97). Associated with these policies and numbers, the personnel office of every central administration makes detailed policies for, and allocates maximum numbers to, equivalent local administrations, institutions and work units. For instance, the National Education Committee is in charge of making detailed policies for professional promotion in higher educational fields and assigns numbers of professors and associate professors to those universities under its administration every year (Guowuyuan, 1990:25-31).

For an individual, her or his professional promotion is directly influenced by the authorities responsible for professional promotion. For instance, in Northeast University, Shenyang, a candidate for professional promotion is firstly selected by the department in which she or he is working. The department selects candidates through the academic committee of the department according to the principles established by high level authorities and the numbers of professional ranks at each level assigned by the University. It then conveys the list of candidates with the committee's recommendation to the personnel office of Northeast University. On the basis of the list, this personnel office again selects candidates and makes a report them to the personnel department of the Central Minerals Department in Beijing for final approval. In this whole process, a candidate's promotion is determined subjectively by the people in charge of professional promotion at the three levels indicated above. These people are entitled in practice to manipulate assessment of an individual's capability.

For a skilled worker in an industry which is under the administration of the Shenyang municipal government, professional promotion is influenced directly by the head of the

workshop, the personnel office of the industry, or the administration watching over the industry, and indirectly by the personnel bureau and the planning committee of the Shenyang municipal government. As these latter two are empowered to make policies on professional promotion and allocate numbers of professional positions to each industrial administration at the state level (Shenyang, 1990:220-234), they are also able to influence decisions made by those directly responsible. It is common knowledge in the PRC that the industrial administration and the two official authorities tend to maintain good relationships with one another: this is "mutual understanding" and leads to "mutual help". Usually, the industrial administration can easily grasp the reason why the two authorities are trying to influence its decision, because there are specific candidates in the industry that one or other of the two authorities expect the administration to promote or not promote. In this case, the administration will usually change a previous decision if necessary.

Because these authorities have an influential impact on an individual's professional promotion, personal connections are crucial for professional success. In the Chinese saying, "Personal connections are more important than an educational certificate in pursuing one's professional career". Therefore, an individual's professional capability is marginalised by her or his lack of personal connections, and can be subjectively judged by influential people for their own interests. In other words, individual capability is interpreted in a partial way by authorities. In these circumstances, a female's professional success is entirely controlled by authorities which assess her capability and demand her subordination.

For official promotion at a low level, it is determined by the authority of a work unit. In a work unit, a woman's personal relationship with authority determines her chances for promotion. Two contrasting cases of Chinese women in Dalian No. 10 Industrial Meter Plant may illustrate the significance of women's personal relationships with authority for promotion.

assigned to a small factory in Dalian in 1968.¹¹ From 1970 to 1973 she went to the Ms. Jiang, the Party secretary of the Dalian No. 10 Industrial Meter Plant, was appointed to this position in 1992. She first entered this factory in 1990 as a technician, having graduated from Shenyang Industrial College in 1968. When the previous manager was preparing to leave, there was a vacancy for the position of Party secretary, which was previously held by the manager. After graduation from Shenyang Industrial College, Ms. Jiang had been appointed by the college as a political supervisor of students: her job was to organise students to follow the Party's political line. She returned to Dalian to join her husband in 1982 after they had been married for seven years. Having pursued a political career for many years, Ms. Jiang was no longer qualified to be a technician and therefore while she was employed as a technician Ms. Jiang was criticised her colleagues for her technical inability. She was assigned the technician's job only because of her educational background and because an administrative position was not available. Judging by Ms. Jiang's experience, the position of the Party secretary was suitable for her and, indeed, the manager nominated her later as Party secretary not only because of her experience, but also because of her personal relationship with him.¹⁰ She had been able to transfer to the factory through the manager's influence. Thus, the primary personal claims of Ms. Jiang to be Party secretary were: (1) personal educational level, which was especially emphasised by the Party after 1978; (2) personal experience; (3) personal connections with authority. Hers was a typical Chinese pattern for women as well as men in climbing up to a high administrative position. Personal capability is mingled with government policy and the power of an influential figure.

Ms. Yu's story shows the other side of the coin. Ms. Yu graduated from the mechanical engineering department of the Jinzhou College of Technology and was

Zedong on May 7, 1969. That is, highly educated people should go to the factory, the country and the army, thereby learning from workers, peasants and soldiers. In urban

¹⁰The personal relationship between a man and a woman discussed in this chapter refers to a non-sexual relationship.

assigned to a small factory in Dalian in 1968.¹¹ From 1970 to 1973 she went to the countryside with her husband as a "Five-Seven Soldier",¹² and returned to Dalian in 1973. She firstly worked for a small enterprise, a fan factory in Dalian, as a technician, and was gradually promoted to head of the inspection department, checking the quality of products. In addition to this, she was also responsible for teaching and supervising workers of the factory, most of whom were lower skilled. Ms. Yu's relationship with the manager of the factory started to break down when she criticised him for delivering poor quality products to consumers. He insisted that the factory was concerned with profit, which depended on the quantity rather than quality of products. Ms. Yu persisted that producing good quality products should be the ethic of the factory. In the end, she ignored the manager and did not allow poor quality products out of the factory. From the manager's perspective, she offended and showed disrespect for him. Besides, she never showed obedience to the manager, and was defined as "the pinhead of a thorn". In consequence, she failed to be promoted to vice-manager in 1982, although the new vice-manager was not as capable as Ms. Yu for this position.

Urban women but not rural women are allowed to buy rice, wheat and oil at a price. It is evident that women in the public sector have been constrained by the administrative structure woven by a dense male-dominated power network. This administrative structure has enlarged the authoritarian spectrum to which women have to submit. Not only has the structure of the Chinese socialist system not brought opportunities for women on the basis of freedom of choice, but also the policies which were supposed to ensure equality have created new forms of inequality.

¹¹Jinzhou is a middle-sized industrial city of Liaoning province.

¹²The name of "Five-Seven Soldier" was given in accordance with speech by Mao Zedong on May 7, 1969. That is, highly educated people should go to the factory, the country and the army, thereby learning from workers, peasants and soldiers. In urban areas, highly educated people from "exploiting family backgrounds" were firstly sent to the country, and were called "Five-Seven Soldiers". Ms. Yu and her husband were both from landlord families.

The All China Women's Federation maintains that the superiority of the Chinese socialist system is based on its guarantee that women enjoy the benefits of all policies ensuring women's equality. Policies are: equal participation in the workplace; equal pay; equal education; maternity leave, and the right to a pension. However, these policies and benefits are closely associated with the structure of the Chinese socialist system, and thus in practice create new forms of inequality, even among women.

type of social insurance	urban females %	rural females %
Inequality Between Urban and Rural Women		5.6%

Internal citizenship, as I have said, classifies the Chinese into two categories, urban and rural. As of 1987, 36 percent of the female population lived in cities and towns, and 64 percent lived in rural areas (Zhongguo, 1991:34-35). Women in rural areas are

regarded as peasants, and inequality between urban and rural women has been created by the internal citizenship regime after 1949, which prevents rural women from having equal access to work in cities and from receiving benefits that many urban women enjoy.

The benefits listed in Table A are provided for women who work in state-run enterprises, which include only 2.1 percent of rural women (Zhongguo, 1993:81). Of Urban women but not rural women are allowed to buy rice, wheat and oil at a price subsidised by the government, and are entitled to work in cities, identified as place of citizenship. Citizenship policies also prevent rural women from moving into urban areas permanently. Although since 1978 more and more rural citizens including women have flooded into urban areas, the state council and the national police decree that each city, especially big cities, should strictly control the numbers of its citizens (Police Book, 1986:32-50). Those rural females who are able to work in urban areas temporarily must pay much higher rent for accommodation than urban citizens.¹³

Inequality Between Female Employees

Between urban female employees, the degree to which they enjoy social benefits differs

¹³Oral information from an informant in Beijing in 1993, who was a so-called 'illegal emigrant' from Harerbin, located in Northeast China, because he did not have Beijing citizenship.

With regard to social benefits, except for a few who work in rural enterprises, most female peasants do not enjoy these benefits at all in their life (Zhongguo, 1993: 80-84), as the table below shows:

Table A: Percentage of women employees receiving social benefits in urban and rural areas

type of social insurance	urban females %	rural females %
pension	82.6%	5.6%
medical care	71.0%	8.0%
sick leave	79.9%	9.2%
maternity leave	85.3%	12.1%

Source: Zhongguo Funu Diwei Gaiguan (A Survey of Chinese Women's Social Status), 1993: 90).

All of the benefits listed in Table A are provided for women who work in state-run enterprises, which include only 2.1 percent of rural women (Zhongguo, 1993:81). Of course, the new forms of inequality reflected in Table A also exist between men and women. Most rural male peasants do not enjoy the benefits and advantages that urban women have. But as between rural men and women, more men than women enjoy social benefits. Among the rural male population, 10.8 percent receive pensions, 11.7 percent receive medical care and 16.6 percent are entitled to sick leave (Zhongguo, 1993:90). To discuss specifically inequality between women is to compare women's reality with the All China Women's Federation's perception of the achievement of women's equality after 1949.

Inequality Between Female Employees

Between urban female employees, the degree to which they enjoy social benefits differs from one category of employee to another. The two distinctive categories of urban

employees are "national worker" and "collective worker". The former title applies to those employees who work in big industries and the non-social service sector, and to those who have received college or university education. The latter title applies to those who work in collective enterprises and the social service sector.

Table B: Percentage of women employees receiving social benefits: national workers and collective workers

Type of social insurance	national workers %	collective workers %
Pension	95.5%	85.7%
Medical care	99.2%	83.9%
sick leave	95.7%	78.7%
Maternity leave	97.4%	88.4%

Source: Zhongguo Funu Diwei Gaiguan (A Survey of Chinese Women's Social Status) (1993: 93-94).

However, 83.3 percent of urban female employees are collective workers, compared with 76 percent of urban male employees.

Above all, after 1949, Chinese women were tied in to the highly centralised socialist system. Women's political participation has not given them influence on decision-making, even though a few women were appointed to high administrative positions. The latter group of women have been required to accept stronger subordination to the Party in order to maintain their high positions, and women's political participation in general has been largely symbolic.

Women Under the Ideology of Women's Liberation after 1949

Women's liberation in China has been closely associated with the ideological goal of the CCP since 1949--that is, replacing Chinese people's traditional ideas with Marxist ideology. In the CCP's explanation, the Chinese were influenced by Chinese feudalism for centuries, and Chinese women were oppressed by "three mountains"--Western imperialism, Chinese feudalism and bureaucratic capitalism. Thus, women's liberation could only be achieved by smashing the past political, economic and social system through political indoctrination and other methods (Zhongguo, 1991:1; Tan and Jiang, 1993:1-16). In the party's view, the ideological content of women's liberation must break with Chinese traditional ideas and life style. To achieve this goal, the CCP abolished the traditional pattern of the Chinese family by means of an imposed political movement and prohibited sexual affairs without marriage, using political sanctions. The abolition of polygamy and the achievement of "free love" in the Party's sense are regarded by All China Women's Federation and many Chinese scholars in the PRC as two main fruits of women's liberation (Li, 1988:61-64; Zhongguo, 1991:1; Zhao, 1992:35-48; The All China Women's Federation, 1994). However, for these achievements, Chinese women have paid a high price-- some women have been forced unwillingly to give up the traditional pattern of life; some continue to suffer from the strict Chinese moral rules on women, and some "liberated women" endured ignorance and prejudice from society and men. Fundamentally, the Chinese still expect women to meet the traditional standard for women.

Women's Liberation from Polygamy

After 1949, the CCP strove intensively to overcome polygamy. In the CCP's explanation, polygamy is a feudalist family pattern and therefore against the Marxist socialist pattern of monogamy. In addition, most polygamous families were those of landlords or the urban bourgeoisie, who were 'class enemies of the people'. Thus women in polygamous families were said to be exploited by their husbands or parents-in-law (All China Women's Federation, 1994). However, in reality, many of the

women forced to leave their previous polygamous families had to endure great suffering from political struggles and Party policies.

Under class struggle, they were despised both by government authorities and society at large for being from exploiting class families, which gave them great difficulty in achieving marriage or re-marriage. It was common after 1949 for them to marry men from poor families or from a revolutionary background, either a Party-government official or a soldier from the People's Army, for the sake of political safety. But their lives were often rather depressing. Their class background often brought them inferiority at home: they were required to feel grateful to the men who married them. A Chinese woman confirmed:

I dared not complain about anything no matter how my husband treated me, as a cow or a horse. Women like me from an exploiting and polygamous family belonged to those to whom few people were sympathetic. As long as a man would like to marry me, and did not detest my family background, I was satisfied.¹⁴

The abolition of polygamy was subsequently ensured by a restrictive policy on divorce. One informant, a concubine of a landlord before 1949, claimed that she was encouraged to divorce her landlord husband by the CCP and was introduced to a Communist Party member from a peasant family. But after her remarriage, she could not divorce again when she wanted to, because divorce was strictly controlled after the early 1950s. From then on, a divorce had to be agreed to by the work unit or a residents' committee responsible for housewives.

In the early 1950s, a professor of the Northeast Agricultural University was asked to divorce one of the wives who was married to him before 1949. If not, he would not be

¹⁴Personal interview with a woman who was the second wife of a landlord before 1949, and married a worker from a working class family in early 1950. I interviewed her in Dalian on 18 September 1993.

allowed to join the Party and get a professorship in the university.¹⁵ He eventually divorced his first wife who previously lived together with her landlord mother-in-law. He was ordered to offer 80 Yuan (about \$US 16 in 1993) living expenses each month for her and her children under age 18. Since then, she has lived with one of her married daughters, and has never worked outside the home. In her own experience, after living in a respectable landlord family as a housewife, she had no skill required for working outside and was also reluctant to take any job. Considering that the CCP deprived her of her property and reduced her living standard, she did not want to work outside, because of her fear of being discriminated against in the workplace, as one from a landlord family background. Thus, she never had her own place to live, because only employees were eligible to be assigned an apartment under the public housing system in urban areas.¹⁶

Women's Struggle for "Free Love"

In principle, "free love" is recommended in the Chinese constitution and marriage laws, which decree freedom to choose a partner as against traditional arranged marriage. But "free love" does not involve free sex, and any sexual affairs without marriage were and are prevented by formal and informal policies. Since 1949, the punishment for those Chinese who have conducted sexual affairs outside of marriage has been remarkable.

In 1963, three male and three female lecturers in the foreign language department of a university in Shenyang were penalised for extra-marital affairs. They were accused of having a "feudal" and "rotten" life style, and their names and stories were openly spread by posting announcements of criticism around the campus of the university. Details were also recorded in their personal files.¹⁷ The personal file is an essential

¹⁵In 1950s, the CCP received some prestigious intellectuals into the Party regardless of their family background. The aim was to encourage intellectuals generally to "enthusiastically join" the Party.

¹⁶This story came from the people whom I knew in China.

¹⁷This is a story that I have known for many years, since growing up on the campus of this University.

document for an employee in China which directly impacts on an employee seeking a job or personal promotion.

The tight bond between avoiding extra-marital affairs and having a successful individual career has continued since 1978. Dr. Xie's story is striking. She studied at the Dalian Medical University from 1981 to 1985. When she was hospitalised during her study, she was looked after by one of her male lecturers in the University. They then had a love affair, which was discovered by the authorities of the two departments to which they belonged. From the authorities, they both received a serious criticism which was recorded in their personal files, since a love affair between a lecturer and a student was forbidden. The punishment for them was that Dr. Xie was assigned a job in Liaoning People's Hospital in Shenyang, although she was eligible to get a job in Dalian, and the lecturer failed to be promoted to a high professional rank and was constantly rejected for his payrise by the University. Because of his personal file recording his affair with Dr. Xie, many other work units were reluctant to hire him. Without good personal connections, he suffered in the University from a notoriety which he could not expunge. Under these pressures, he finally suffered a mental disorder in 1989.

As for Dr. Xie, before her registration in Liaoning People's Hospital, news of her love affair with her lecturer was spread around the hospital. She was firstly confronted by criticism from the Party secretary and the head of the X-ray department in which she worked, who warned her to behave herself along the Party's line and give up her "rotten" life style. Dr. Xie's love affair also brought her difficulties in looking for a boyfriend. According to Dr. Xie, most men whom she was interested in kept away from her. As soon as they found out her story, she was regarded as being a "cheap" and "dirty" woman. Most of them knew her story from the staff of the hospital. When I interviewed her, she said:

She went to the United States in August 1995.

"Oral information from one of my interviewees."

My love affair has put me into a bind. My colleagues look down on me, and Chinese men, well educated men in particular, are not interested in me. For them, my love affair is like hearing about a terrible disease.¹⁸

Again, the restriction on abortion has been another sanction of the CCP to discourage an individual's extra-marital love affair. Abortion before the new birth planning policy announced in 1982 was only socially acceptable if approved by the authority of a work unit (Even today, it is a disgrace for an unmarried woman to have an abortion).

When a 44 year old Dalian woman had an abortion while unmarried in the 1970s, she was ill-treated by a doctor at a hospital and the boss of her work unit. At the same time, her boy friend broke up with her for the sake of his career. If he had kept up the relationship with her and been discovered by his work unit he would not have been promoted. She was constantly discriminated against by her colleagues, friends and parents, and was left alone, even when she was sick.¹⁹

Ironically, although the official political voice of women's liberation has been deepening, the traditional view of women is still strong. Men prefer to marry virgin women: "the worship of the hymen" (Li, 1991:21) still holds sway, which causes women to carry a big psychological burden.

A divorced woman in the PRC will have difficulties in getting a new partner and also suffer from public opinion. As the head of the women's rights department of Dalian Municipal Women's Organisation claims:

¹⁸Oral information from Dr. Xie. Because of her difficulty in finding a boyfriend and the discrimination against her in her workplace, she wanted to go abroad or find a Western boyfriend. Having heard that I had come back to Shenyang from Australia in 1993, she contacted me and asked me to help her either to come to Australia or to find an Australian boyfriend. Since then, we have kept contact with each other regularly. She went to the United States in August 1995.

¹⁹Oral information from one of my interviewees.

One of the main worries of a divorced woman is that her personal value will decline after divorce. She can not look for a partner by her own standards but must reduce them, because very few men like to marry divorced women. And, too often, people conceive that the divorced woman must have done immoral things and been disloyal to her husband; therefore she was kicked out.²⁰

Chinese prejudice against "liberated" and independent women

After 1949, some women struggled to "liberate" themselves by following the Party ideology were promoted to administrative positions. After 1978, some women showed strong capability in pursuing economic independence. However, what these women have received from society and men is mainly ignorance and discrimination. The women who are strongly appreciated by Chinese are those who have played women's traditional role well.

Ms. Wang, the head of the party affairs office of Dalian No. 10 Industrial Meter Plant, might be considered by some Western feminists and Chinese officials and scholars as one of the few Chinese women who were truly liberated after 1949. However, what has Ms. Wang gained from her "liberation"?

Ms. Wang, was originally from a poor peasant family in Shandong province, and entered Dalian city with her sister in 1952. She was assigned a job as a teacher of a primary school after graduation from high school in 1962 when the shortage of school teachers was great. From then on, she was a political activist, and was appointed successively Youth League secretary, Young Pioneer counsellor and political supervisor of the high school. She was promoted quickly because she was enthusiastic about the Party's policies and was from a "good" family background. Before 1978, given the ideological priority of class struggle, most people who took up influential Party and administrative positions were from poor peasant, worker or soldier families.

²⁰Oral information.

After the rise of the Revolutionary Committees in each work unit in 1968, army soldiers and, later on, workers assumed the position of Party secretary in each work unit as well as in schools. In this period, Ms. Wang was nominated as the vice-Party secretary of the school by an army soldier, who was then the Party secretary of the school. Such a promotion inspired her to devote herself to the Party's affairs, for which she even postponed a love affair. Once, she was introduced to an army official in 1969 when it was fashionable for a girl to find a soldier as a boyfriend, as army soldiers had a high political reputation. Ms. Wang missed her appointments with this soldier many times because of being busy attending political meetings of the school at night. He gave her up eventually.

Ms. Wang's enthusiasm for politics was appreciated by the Party secretary of the school and the Party committee at a higher level, and thus she was rewarded by being honoured as a model teacher of the school for several years. This honour helped her ignore criticism from her colleagues who blamed her for simply subordinating herself to the Party authority and having no compassion for teachers. On behalf of the Party, Ms. Wang often sacrificed other teachers' interests.²¹

After marriage, Ms. Wang continued to be politically disciplined, participating regularly in political meetings which sometimes lasted to 8 or 9 pm, and then carrying her baby home-- a one and a half hours walk. Once, at Chinese New Year, she left her children at home and led students to go on the streets propagandising the Party's policies. This activity was called for by the Party authority at a high level.

After the fall of the Gang of Four in 1976, Ms. Wang slid down from vice-Party secretary to being an officer in the Party affairs office of the school, and was accused

²¹This is my summary of Ms. Wang's story (Interview: 11 October 1993) and gossip from some female workers in the No. 10 Meter Instrument Plant, who knew of Ms. Wang's experience in the school.

of standing in the same political line with the Gang of Four. This kind of political purge happened to many people who were promoted to high positions from 1966 to 1976.²²

Meanwhile public resentment of Ms Wang in the school emerged, which was the crucial factor that forced Ms. Wang to leave the school. She transferred to the No. 10 Meter Instrument Plant in 1980 and worked in the personnel office. Then when there was a vacancy of the head position of the Party affairs office, she applied for it. At the beginning, her application was not approved either by the authority of the plant or at a higher level, because of her political record during the Cultural Revolution. In the end, though, she succeeded through her personal connections. Asked her feeling about not being trusted, she regretted it:

What a silly I am. I used to indulge the Party, and do everything on behalf of the Party. But because of the change of leadership, I suddenly became a part of those people who are in a special category disliked by the new Party leaders and an alien to other people. At the moment, as the focus of the Party's policy has shifted from political considerations to economic construction, the Party has given me up. In the past, I learned no practical skill except doing political work. And now, every work unit prefers an employee with a skill. The skilled women will be hired by small private enterprises or rural enterprises after they retire, but no work unit will be interested in me. I feel useless and discarded by society. The Party does not care about me.

She had been given the label of 'a Marxist woman', because she often joked with her colleagues in political or ideological terms. Many colleagues in the No. 10 Meter Instrument Plant were not interested in talking with her, and isolated her.

²²After 1978, most people who were in political and administrative positions during the Cultural Revolution were asked to leave, and were not trusted by the new leadership. They were considered as "three types of people", that is, people who followed the political line of the Gang of Four; people who did things like smashing and grabbing during the Cultural Revolution; and people who betrayed leaders--victims of the Cultural Revolution. Those who undertook influential jobs during the Cultural Revolution were designated as the first type, like Ms. Wang.

After our interview, she was going to a market to buy a Japanese language tape and a tape recorder for her daughter. She asserted that she would not let her children commit the same errors as she did before, indulging in political activities, but get them away from politics. She has two children. Her son was studying computer science in a college in Dalian, and her daughter was studying in a high school. In Dalian, going to Japan to work or study was and still is a career dynamic for young people. Ms. Wang expected her daughter to have such an opportunity in future.

Having graduated from a high school in 1962, Ms. Song stayed at home, looking after

It is evident that her "liberation" has brought a personal tragedy for Ms. Wang. As soon as the driving political force in China shifted from simply ideological struggle to economic growth, and the throne changed hands at the top, she was thrown aside by the Party, and isolated by people's apathy and hostility towards her. She is precisely a political victim of the Chinese version of women's liberation and ideological struggle. Ms. Wang's experience may arouse many feminists to realise that, if they regard those Chinese women like Ms. Wang who were mobilised to a high position before 1978, but who dropped downward after 1978, as beneficiaries of women's liberation in the PRC, then they are wrong.

Many women who have taken up administrative positions have confronted the same problem as Ms. Wang-- they are now overlooked by many Chinese and by society. In the early 1980s, women in politics who had been promoted to high positions under women's liberation were severely criticised for being masculine and unqualified for administrative work (Li, 1988:28-36; Li, 1988:182-1982). Chinese attitudes towards "liberated women" proves the unpopularity of the movement for women's liberation after 1949.

Unlike Ms. Wang, Ms. Song, the head of the trade union and women's association in the No. 10 Meter Instrument Plant, gained a good reputation in the plant. She was mobilised to her current position from a workshop where she was a manual worker. In

the workshop, she used to work hard and tried to look after her other colleagues, for which she was appreciated both by managers and workers of the plant.²³

Ms. Song was born into a family of eight children, a grandmother and a mother who became a widow at age 33 in 1955. After her father's death, her mother supported the family by washing uniforms for a factory. Her older brother and older sister (Ms. Song was the third child) dropped out of school and started to work in the late 1950s. Having graduated from a high school in 1962, Ms. Song stayed at home, looking after her mother and her younger sisters and brother. Ms. Song and her elder sister and brother shared the responsibility for the family. She managed the expenditure of the family, to which her brother and sister contributed all their income.

Because of the family's situation, Ms. Song expected to find a partner who had less family burden, and could help her to pay more attention to her own family. She was eventually introduced to a man who was the only child of his family, and she married him later on. However, she was disappointed after her marriage, for her husband was spoiled by his parents and his parents were not in good health. Not only he but also his parents needed to be looked after. In the end, she had to look after two families.

In the early 1980s, her parents-in-law were both seriously sick and hospitalised. By that time, she was a worker of the plant, and her husband was working outside Dalian. She had to visit her parents-in-law in the hospital during the day, and Ms. Song's mother cooked for them at home.²⁴ Because of that, Ms. Song was often absent from her work and, thus, was embarrassed and felt guilty. As a result, she would set out to work very early in the morning and endeavour to complete her task of production before going to the hospital. One of her colleagues appreciated Ms. Song:

The wife explained:

²³Stories about Ms. Song told by her colleagues.

²⁴In China, most families within a city prefer to cook for "their" hospital patient at home because of the bad and expensive food in hospitals.

Although looking after her sick parents-in-law, Ms. Song never held up her own task of production, and, quite often, arrived at the workshop at 6 o'clock in the morning. She is not only an excellent worker, but also a good and filial daughter-in-law.²⁵

In the hospital, Ms. Song was perceived as being a good daughter of her parents-in-law by patients, who observed how carefully Ms. Song looked after them.

After her father-in-law died, the work unit of Ms. Song's husband did not allow him to come back to Dalian to attend his father's funeral, but Ms. Song borrowed a truck from the plant and sent her father-in-law's corpse to a crematorium with the help of her colleagues. She did the same thing for her mother-in-law, who died 55 days after her husband's death. The reputation of Ms. Song, as a good worker and good daughter-in-law, spread throughout the whole plant and was accepted by both workers and managers. She was gradually raised from a blue collar worker to a white collar worker and, then, to head of the trade union and the women's association. The policy of women being laid off from the administration of the plant did not threaten her. She has not yet confronted discrimination, as she has fulfilled the Chinese standard of a good woman.

Another case concerns a married couple's conflict, and shows the resistance of men to independent women. This couple experienced a crisis of their marriage in 1993 because of the husband's extramarital affair.²⁶ The husband resented his wife:

She is not capable of being a wife because she does not have any sense of responsibility for our family, only for her work. She does nothing at home. My mother looks after our 3-year-old daughter and does all the housework. Relatively, my girlfriend is much better. She looks after me very well, cooking and washing clothes for me.

The wife explained:

²⁵Personal comment of a colleague of Ms. Song (Interview with Ms. Song: 11 October 1991).

²⁶My interview with the couple on 8 October 1993 in Yangshufang village, near Dalian.

My husband expects too much of me and cannot understand me. I leave home for work at 6 o'clock in the morning and come back home at 7:30 in the evening every day. There is no weekend, in accordance with the rules of my work unit (a township enterprise). Except on public holidays, I cannot give up my work for the sake of cooking and washing for him. He should look after himself, because I am very busy. But I have helped him and his parents a great deal. He was transferred to a high school in an economic zone from a job in a village as a fine art teacher by my personal connections, and his parents have received permanent residency in the economic zone. I treat his parents as my own. On every public holiday, I bring more presents for his parents than other daughters-in-law, even than his sisters, and also provide his parents with their living expenses. His parents have admitted that I am more filial than their daughters, for which reason his parents have strongly discouraged him from divorcing me.

Conclusion

On the whole, the experience of women under the Chinese socialist system suggests that women have faced strong political control in the name of liberation. Women have been tied to a highly centralised system, under which their opportunity for freedom of choice, free movement from one place to another and free change from one workplace to another has been extremely limited. The promotion of women has rested largely on their subordination to the Party and authority rather than their capability. The Chinese socialist system has created new forms of inequality even between women themselves, particularly between urban and rural women. Rural women rarely receive any of the government benefits available for urban women.

Politically speaking, Marxist ideology was imposed on women as well as men. Women from an "exploiting class" background were greatly discriminated against. The actual effect of Marxist ideology on women in China is that women must play both a traditional role at home and a career role in the workplace. The former has turned out to be the real social demand for women behind and despite Marxist ideology.

The experience of Chinese women demonstrates vividly that women's equality was promoted on the premise of women's subordination to the Party under the socialist system and was carried out at the expense of many women's interests, because the Party stresses persistently that individual interests must be subordinate to national or state interests. Furthermore, national policies were made by a few male elites influenced by Chinese traditional morality, and although supposedly aware of the need for eradicating traditional morality, these policy makers have hardly escaped from traditional patterns. They themselves behave in accordance with Chinese tradition to keep society in line with the order that they expect. On the whole, important posts in government organisations are still mostly occupied men, and men have much easier access to government organisations than women.

Under the Chinese socialist system, the achievement of Chinese interests is under the strong control of government through internal citizenship and the personnel management system.

Women's disadvantage in the workplace in the state sector. Again that women still retain their disadvantages in occupying administrative or management positions is not only attributed to men's patriarchal attitude towards women, but also to the continuance of the Chinese socialist system and traditional patterns of personal connections leading to continuing discrimination against women. The data in this chapter are drawn from two case studies, one of women in an urban collective enterprise and one of a rural enterprise, and also from interviews with women in the individual markets located in Dalian city.

That women's lack of educational experience in China as elsewhere is one significant factor causing women disadvantage in the workplace has been commonly asserted both by many Western feminist scholars and by almost all Chinese scholars in the PRC. They agree that, even since 1949, women's lack of educational experience leads them to hold lower skilled jobs, and, therefore, to occupy lower positions in the workplace than men (Honig, and Westhatter, 1988: 243-272; Wolf, 1985: 56-78; Jacka, 1997).

CHAPTER 3 CHINESE WOMEN IN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS FROM 1978 TO THE PRESENT

Introduction

This chapter explores the capability of lower educated women to achieve economic success both before and after 1978 and the problems and achievements of women occupying administrative and management positions in the work place. This chapter argues that the possibility of women's achievement before 1978 was greatly suppressed under the highly centralised socialist system. By comparison, after 1978 some women could flourish in the new market-oriented sectors. But, apart from Chinese prejudice against women, the strong control of the state over job creation and skill training prevents many women from taking up opportunities arising from economic reform, and thus results in women's disadvantage in the workplace in the state sector. Again that women still retain their disadvantages in occupying administrative or management positions is not only attributed to men's patriarchal attitude towards women, but also to the continuance of the Chinese socialist system and traditional patterns of personal connections leading to continuing discrimination against women. The data in this chapter are drawn from two case studies, one of women in an urban collective enterprise and one of a rural enterprise, and also from interviews with women in the individual markets located in Dalian city.

To overcome this women's disadvantage, many Western feminists advocate above all the creation of equal educational opportunities for women as an important method in the United Nations Women's Development Program together with four other equal participation in politics, equal participation in the workplace, and equal participation in the home. That women's lack of educational experience in China as elsewhere is one significant factor causing women disadvantage in the workplace has been commonly asserted both by many Western feminist scholars and by almost all Chinese scholars in the PRC. They agree that, even since 1949, women's lack of educational experience leads them to hold lower skilled jobs, and, therefore, to occupy lower positions in the workplace than men (Honig, and Hershatter, 1988: 243-272 Wolf, 1985: 56-78; Jacka, 1997).

equality between husband and wife, and equal treatment as between boys and girls

Generally speaking, women's lower productive capability in Asian countries is said by Western feminist scholars to be rooted in industrialisation and modernisation, during which women are separated from their traditional farm fields and pushed back into the home. In Boserup's view:

Economic development often results in the gradual disappearance of female-managed enterprises, even in countries where such enterprises are tolerated. The large majority of female labour market participants are working as low-paid or unpaid assistants to male managers and supervisors.

Wages for similar work are usually higher for those belonging to the dominant ethnic groups. Usually the higher status of men is underlined by paying them higher wages than women for similar jobs, both in public service and in private enterprise.

Industrialisation has opposing effects on different groups of women. Whereas young women are drawn into industrial employment and increasing numbers of educated women obtain white-collar jobs in social and other services, the other situation of older, uneducated women may deteriorate, because the family enterprises in which they work may suffer from competition with the growing modern sector (Boserup, 1990: 18 and 24).

According to Wolf:

Industrial growth has occurred at the expense of young, poorly paid female workers...[as a result of] the interplay between traditional gender hierarchies and the growth of global capitalism as they intersect in the selection and employment of docile Third World women in multinationals oriented toward the world market (Wolf: 1990: 25).

To overcome this women's disadvantage, many Western feminists advocate above all the creation of equal educational opportunities for women as an important method in pursuit of women's equality. Women's equal education with men was also legitimised by the United Nations in 1978 in the Women's Development Program together with four other criteria: equal participation in politics; equal participation in the workplace;

equality between husband and wife, and equal treatment as between boys and girls (Ostergaard, 1995; Guoji, 1992: 47).

With regard to the problems of social disadvantage faced by Chinese women after 1978, one explanation again is that women's problems are partly due to their lower average educational level than men (Li, 1988: 170-172; Ma, 1992: 34-39; Zhongguo, 1991:7).

My argument is that simply to regard the lower level of women's education as a cause of women's disadvantage in China essentially accepts the existing educational hierarchy, so that individual capability is judged merely by individual educational level. Highly educated people are automatically considered to possess superior skills. In reality no one educational system in the world is perfect to fit people for work. No system necessarily provides the full range of skills that a society requires. The skills that people learn from school or university are always limited. To identify an individual's skills only by her or his educational experiences is blindly to deny those skills that are needed in society but are excluded from the educational system. Given this concern, educational level should not be the only standard for measuring women's skills in relation to the goal of national and international women's equality. Chinese women's experiences in the PRC provide an important source of information that can remind supporters of women's education to readjust their ideas on the practical resolution of women's inequality in the workplace. This chapter will suggest, in opposition to the assumptions of many Western feminist scholars, as well as Chinese scholars in the PRC, that women's disadvantages in the workplace are not mainly due to women's lack of educational experience. Thus, in urban areas of China after 1978, of the women in the new market-oriented sector, 24.7 percent were lower educated

* By the Chinese standard, people who have only received primary education are regarded as being lower educated and those who have received university education are considered highly educated (Zhongguo, 1993:80).

compared with 1.6 percent who were highly educated.¹ (This sector includes individual trading markets where most people are self employed, and individually-run restaurants, and transportation businesses) (Zhongguo, 1993:80, 107-111). Most of these lower educated women were either unemployed before 1978 or were laid off from state-run enterprises after 1978 (Tan, 1990:33-36). Before 1978, no less than 70 percent of urban unemployed people were women (Zhongguo, 1991:6). However, in the market-oriented sector since 1978, the percentage of female employees is close to that of males (Zhongguo, 1993: 105). Most of these women did not learn their skills from universities or colleges, as they are lower educated.

The success of Chinese lower educated women in the market sector proves that women are able to gain success without high education. It also proves that Chinese are capable of independent achievement without help from government policy, as in the market-oriented sector women do not benefit from government benefits such as pensions, sick leave, medical care and maternity leave (Zhongguo, 1993: 84-93). In the individual market, what they are ensured is an opportunity to make the most of their talent. They succeed through hard work, ingenuity and diligence. Again, their success demonstrates that economic reform has brought the possibility for women to achieve economic equality by making their own decisions about what they want to do in the market-oriented sector. Economic reform has lifted up many lower educated and socially disadvantaged women--especially unemployed women; thus it has made possible a positive step towards women's equality.

The positive effect of economic reform on women has been acknowledged by many Western scholars in their studies of Chinese women (Judd, 1994; Entwisle, 1995; Riordan and Dong, 1996). Most Chinese women studied by Western scholars are

¹ By the Chinese standard, people who have only received primary education are regarded as being lower educated and those who have received university education are considered highly educated (Zhongguo: 1993:80).

lower educated. Examining women's daily activities in family businesses in rural north China, Judd asserts that economic reform has created some windows of opportunity for women in the public realm, and many women have responded actively to the opportunity. Judd believes that the activities of rural Chinese women are an effective means of subverting patriarchy in the countryside (Judd, 1994: 253-257). By investigating women in rural south and north China, Entwisle is convinced that

The more that markets become established and the more regularised relations between small businesses and other economic entities become, the more feasible it may be for women to take over the routine operations of these (small) businesses and for the work to truly be "inside work" (family business)... Women are not isolated from market activity although they may face other barriers (Entwisle, 1995: 54).

In their research on Chinese women athletes (most of them from the countryside and with lower education), Riordan and Dong concludes that the rapid social and economic transformation since 1978-- illustrated among the women athletes by their outstanding success in national and international sport competition-- is undermining Chinese traditional attitudes. This transformation has provided more economic independence for Chinese women (Riordan and Dong, 1996: 131-152).

In the meantime, some Western feminist scholars also have had reservation about the effects of Chinese economic reform on women. Many of them would argue that while women's living standards have increased dramatically and that more opportunities are available for women in both rural and urban areas, nevertheless, economic reform has also generated enormous problems: the traditional preference for sons puts intolerable pressure upon women; women are still exposed to crimes like female infanticide and wife-beating; women are still assigned the least-skilled and lowest-paid jobs and the gender wage gap has in fact increased; urban women remain lower-paid and subordinate positions in the workforce; the growing private sector offer less welfare for women than the state sector; rural women are still restrained to inside work and

thus isolated from the outside, women are still especially exploited in the workplace (Andors, 1983:160-169, Wolf, 1985: 56-111, Honig and Hershatter, 1988:335-340, Jacka, 1997:1-10).

Can we say these problems have been reinforced by economic reform? In my opinion, these problems stem mainly from Chinese traditional and current attitudes towards women and from excessive government control. In addition, to judge the effects of economic reform on women, it is important to distinguish factors that arise from the market economy from those that do not. Since the current situation is very complicated—the Chinese economy is a "socialist market economy"—we need to carefully make clear which aspects of women's problem come with the market. We need to compare women's situation in the sectors that existed before economic reform and in the sectors that emerged after reform.

Western feminist scholars as well as Chinese scholars agree that the preference for sons and female infanticide originated from the Chinese tradition that awards men the role of family head and maintaining the family tree (Baker, 1979:51-65; Wolf, 1985:1-27; Andor, 1983: 12-28; Yao, 1983, Watson and Ebrey:1992). Apart from Chinese traditional attitudes towards sons and daughters, the pressure on women for giving birth to a son and the increase of female infanticide were stimulated by the One-Child policy after 1979, as Croll (1985) and many other feminist scholars have acknowledged, because the One-Child policy increased the fear of Chinese, especially peasants, that they would not have strong labour to do household and agricultural work, and would not have children to depend on when they grew old. The solution to peasants' fears remains unclear.

As for the "socialist market economy", in the Chinese context, it is supposed

to improve those aspects and factors that are not suitable for the development of production and productive forces and superstructure on the premise of a continuing socialist system. This reform proceeds in an orderly and gradual fashion under the leadership of the Party and government and is the self-development of socialism (Zhonggong, 1984: 10).

During economic reform, two pre-1978 principles remained in force--socialism and Party leadership (Zhonggong, 1984:7-10, 38-42). To continue the socialist system means to persist with public ownership-- the state owns land, sources of raw material, railways, banks, important industries and military industries (CCCP, 1986: 222). To continue the Party's leadership is to maintain the leading role of the Party in policy making and the management of cadres and Party members (Deng, 1982:287). The Constitution of the CCP of 1982 delineates clearly this role of the Party after 1978:

The Chinese Communist Party is the advanced team of the Chinese working class, the representative of the interests of all Chinese including Chinese minorities, the core of the leadership of Chinese socialism. The final goal of the Party is to achieve a communist system (CCCP, 1986:63).

By the leadership of the Party is meant the leadership of politics, ideology and organisation. The Party must design correct political lines and policies, organise well all party activities and be responsible for propaganda and education, in order to fully use the model role of party members in all of China in both the workplace and social life (CCCP, 1986: 68).

On the basis of socialism and the Party leadership, enterprises and institutions are allowed to have some autonomy to manage their own affairs. In industrial fields, the manager of a big industry can make his own plan for production on top of the command plan. For urban enterprises, economic reform means separation of the right of ownership and the right of management, both of which have been monopolised by the Party-government in the past. After economic reform, the Party-government continue the right of ownership of enterprises; however, the manager of an enterprise possesses the right of management (Zhonggong, 1984:11-17).

⁴Oral information from a woman who came to Australia as a tourist in April 1996.

Under economic reform, urban Chinese female employment in the state sector, mostly in state run enterprises, is in rapid transition, and, at present, women over 45 years of age have left or have been told to leave their work. This is an unwritten policy.² This is because since economic reform the state sector has been challenged by a private sector deriving from market reform. The state sector has been shown up as extremely inefficient, and has become a big burden on China's economic development. Downsizing the state sector has been inevitable and right now is the main official task of the CCP in deepening and widening economic reform following the 15th Party Congress in April 1998. Facing the challenge of downsizing, many employees in the state sector are in danger of being fired, but in practice women have been laid off first. From the Chinese perspective, it is a solution which manifests a strong concern for social stability and family durability. Under Chinese cultural circumstances, men are regarded as breadwinners and pillars of their nuclear families and their natal parents' families. And, in the Chinese traditional view, it is disgraceful and shameful for a man to be financially supported by a woman. Downsizing the state sector is supposed to be beneficial for Chinese economic development, and, in the long run, for the Chinese people, as Zhu Rongji, the new Chinese prime minister, claimed at the 15th Party Congress. But in any case we can attribute downsizing at the expense of women first in the state sector to traditional Chinese cultural values.

of women, will improve along with marketisation" (Meng, 1990: 67-68). According to Meng, the wage gap between

As for work in the rural area, Jacka (1997), Honig (1988) and Wolf (1985) agree that most women are happier to do "inside" work rather than the collective "outside" work that they had to do before economic reform, because these women think they are working for their own and their family's benefit. By doing inside work, they have more autonomous time and more choices to do other things. Jacka tends to assume that women will be isolated from the outside when they are doing inside work. However, rural women can socialise for themselves in their spare time. It is true that

for both men and women. For instance, the Chinese government recently decided to

²Oral information from a woman who came to Australia as a tourist in April 1998.

in rural areas women have disadvantages in getting new jobs and acquiring the skills required by the market economy such as accounting and specialised technical skills. Women face a lack of facilities to acquire such skills as well as a lack of job openings. They also face prejudice about women-- women are seen as less capable than men in doing mathematical and technical work. Also, more women than men are confined to rural areas and prevented from moving to cities, not only because geographical movement is considered by many Chinese as a risk, but also because women are presumed to be less adventurous than men, and need to be protected. Clearly, the opportunities for women provided by the market economy are limited by Chinese prejudice towards women.

As for gender, income and wage differentials, in contrast to Western feminist scholars' assertions that the gender income gap increased after economic reform, Xin Meng suggests that, in rural areas, community authorities make their decision about an employee's wage according to occupation, they do not seriously discriminate against women, while in the private sector, "the labour market has progressively become more liberalised, firms have tended to pay their employees increasingly according to their productivity. Therefore, market forces tend to reduce the degree of discrimination in the market and the economic position of women will improve along with marketisation" (Meng, 1990: 67-68). According to Meng, the wage gap between men and women is higher in the market sector because the wage is determined according to an employee's performance. It would be fairer for both men and women if their wages were determined by performance.

If we enquire closely, it is hard to conclude that women's problems emerging after 1978 are basically the fault of economic reform. Many facts show that it is the Chinese government which has limited opportunities provided by the market economy for both men and women. For instance, the Chinese government recently decided to ban a direct sale business, Amway, which was brought into China by an American

company in 1990. From 1990 to 1995, three million Chinese men and women were involved in this business, and most of them were people without specialised skills, unemployed people and housewives (The Australian Chinese Times, 1998: 7 May). This decision will result in large numbers of Chinese losing income. The blocking of market opportunities by the Chinese government has not been well studied by Western feminist scholars.

Croll argues that China's economic reform has left rural women uncertain.

Although there was excitement at reform there was also a sense of loss or bereavement that has not so much to do with a wish to return to the past as with the onset of uncertainty, unpredictability and anxiety, as the present is increasingly suspended in time and space. As the present becomes increasingly mixed, combining gain and loss, and since 1984 the reforms too have fallen short of initial expectation, there is no sweetness of the future to compensate, no dream to sustain the disappointments of the present or certainty that tomorrow will be better than today (Croll, 1994: 222-223).

David Zweig (1997), in his research on relations between urban and rural China from 1949 to the economic reform era, gives a sensible answer to Croll's doubt. He demonstrates vividly that the income and life gap between urban and rural areas substantially widened because of Maoist policies; while from 1978 to the mid-1980s; the income gap between urban and rural residents narrowed. However, from the mid-1980s onwards, the income gap between urban and rural areas increased again, as urban enterprises were favoured by Party policies and urban residents were given more opportunities than rural residents, particularly outside the big cities.

Authority remains ensconced within the bureaucracy and distributed among the various levels within it, making bureaucratic authority, and not the market, the best predictor of the outcome of decisions and the distribution of resources. County and town officials still possess important mechanisms of command and control over resources, production, migration, and economic opportunities. (Zweig, 1997: 221)

Moreover, "In rural areas, many resources needed for farming, such as seeds, fertiliser, pesticides, and land, remain locally controlled, making farmers dependent on

local cadres. Cadres can take a farmer's land to build their own homes, and there is little villagers can do" (Zweig, 1997: 242). Thus, it is the state rather than the market which has created loss and disadvantages for rural people. Again, the state uses "the household registration system to impede rural villagers' access to the greater benefits and opportunities reserved for urban dwellers" (Zweig, 1997: 241), and thus reinforces the income gap between urban and rural residents. Inequality between urban and rural residents and between cadres and ordinary residents is generally created by the state rather than the market economy. Economic reform is reform without fundamentally changing Chinese socialism and the Party leadership. Because of that, opportunities for women as well as men after 1978 remained very limited. The problems faced by women have been due to the combination of very limited marketization and the Chinese socialist management system.

This chapter will illustrate the diversity and complexities of women's situation through individual women's stories. I chose my case studies in an urban collective enterprise and a rural enterprise because many urban collective enterprises were set up by urban unemployed women in the early 1970s,³ and, at present (as mentioned in chapter 2), 83 percent of urban female employees are located in collective enterprises (Zhongguo, 1993:81). Rural enterprises boomed after 1978: they are the main workplace that recruited rural women, and thus transformed them from peasants to rural industrial workers. Case studies show the "fate" of female founders in two different types of enterprises—collective and rural enterprises—and the effects of economic reform on lower educated women in urban and rural China and on female industrial workers.

Women in a Collective Enterprise: A Case Study of the No. 10 Meter Plant of Dalian

Electronic machine factory in Dalian. At first, the only productive facilities that they used were three big works brought from their home. They worked in the open air and

³Oral information from an official of the Shenyang municipal economic planning commission.

My case study of the No. 10 Meter Plant of Dalian shows the capabilities of housewives in establishing an enterprise. The No. 10 Meter Plant of Dalian, located in Dalian city, Liaoning province, of Northeastern China, was assembled in 1979 from three sub-district factories--a siderite factory, a valve factory and an industrial drying oven factory. These subdistrict factories were originally set up by women in 1969, when the CCP encouraged housewives to work outside the home under the political slogan of "Women douyou Liangzhishou, Juebu zaijia chi xianfan" (We all have two hands; therefore, never stay at home and be supported by others). This political slogan used to be regarded by some Western feminists as evidence of a step forward toward women's equal participation in the workplace. Beyond that, however, the real intention of this politically inspired movement was to revive urban production which had stagnated because of the political chaos from 1966 to 1968. In the meantime, given the CCP's fear of a Third World War or a war between China and the former Soviet Union, many urban inhabitants were dispersed to the countryside, including government officials, technicians, intellectuals, doctors and nurses, youths, and housewives and their children. Moreover, many urban work units such as hospitals, institutes and universities moved to remote areas. In principle, the housewives who were allowed to stay in cities were only those from worker, soldier, and peasant family background, as the political ideology of class struggle continued to apply. In spite of the economic stagnation, these housewives were urged to set up district enterprises.

bureau of the Dalian municipal government. From then on, the housewives in

Housewives: from Enterprise Founders to "Nonentities"

The siderite factory was set up by housewives of the Zhousui district of Dalian city in late 1969. Initially, Ms. Gao, the chief of the residential committee of the Zhousui district, organised five housewives together to start producing steel labels for a state-run electronic machine factory in Dalian. At first, the only productive facilities that they used were three big woks brought from their home. They worked in the open air and made components required for making steel labels. The maximum of their salary was 30 yuan per-month(\$US 5 in 1993), but it was not fixed, as it depended on the

production output. These housewives were not guaranteed any kind of social benefits, for they were not titled "national workers". Eventually, a male university graduate joined them, who had refused to go to a remote area after his graduation, and stayed at home instead. By helping these housewives, he could earn a living wage. Up to 1976, the factory expanded from five employees to 100, 80 of whom were women. They learned productive skills from a big state-run factory by providing free services to it, and also invited technicians from big industries to their factory. Eventually, one of the electronic machine industries of Dalian shifted its whole productive task of steel label-making to this factory.

In 1976, the siderite factory was attached to the administration of the Zhoushui suburb government, which posted a manager to the factory. By this time, those employees under the age of 50 had been transferred to the category of national workers, and, therefore, benefited from a fixed salary and a small amount of social welfare. Those who were over the age of 50, most of whom were previously housewives, were asked to retire. They were not offered any pension according to the pension policy which took account of the number of years that an employee had worked constantly for one enterprise. These former housewives did not come under this policy.

In 1978, the factory was again further attached to the administration of the electronic bureau of the Dalian municipal government. From then on, the housewives in management positions were replaced by people who were posted to the factory by the electronic bureau. Not surprisingly, nearly all of these new managers were men. Subsequently, with the policy of retirement plus children's inheritance of their parents' job,⁴ more women were asked to retire. By the time this factory was merged with two

⁴In face of the massive youth unemployment in the late 1970s and early 1980s, because of youth returning to cities from rural areas (Anne, 1979: 727-738; Gold, 1980: 81-84; Tang: 1990:33-36), the Chinese government issued a document in an attempt to solve this problem. That is, children of employees of each work unit were eligible to inherit either the mother's or father's job within the work unit. In addition, new retirement

other factories into one enterprise, most housewives who entered the factory in the very early period had left.

The valve factory was also set up, in 1970, by housewives who were organised by Ms Lin and Ms Xue. Both of them were members of the residential committee of the Zhongshang district.

Ms. Lin was the wife of an army official. She was married to her husband originally in a village of Shangdong province before 1949, where her husband was a peasant. Later on, he joined the People's Liberation Army and was transferred to Dalian city in 1950. Following her husband, Ms Lin also settled in Dalian. Three years later, her husband was transferred to another place, and she was left in Dalian with three children. Receiving living expenses from her husband regularly, she did not work outside the home. Being a wife of an army official, she was appointed to be the chief of the residential committee of the Zhongshan district in 1970,⁵ and was persuaded, together with one of her colleagues, Ms. Xue, to organise housewives belonging to her residential committee to set up a district factory.⁶

Ms. Xue worked with Ms Lin in the same residential committee for two years from 1968 to 1970. Before 1949, she used to work in a factory founded by the Japanese for the sake of looking after her two younger brothers and herself. She recalled:

After my parents died, the only thing that I considered was to bring up my brothers. No matter how hard my own life was and how much I suffered, I would like to do

rules came into force, that is, the retirement age for lower educated females became 50, and, for males, 55, in the industrial sector.

⁵Before 1973, personal position in the workplace related closely to family background in terms of class struggle. Social organisations preferred appointing people from poor peasant, worker and soldier family backgrounds to certain official positions. In 1973, the third generation of landlord, merchant and urban bourgeois families were officially allowed to use their parents' current position as their family background.

⁶Xue is not her family name, but her husband's. I cannot use her family name (Interview at her home, 23 September 1993).

everything for my brothers and die for them if necessary. Before 1949, apart from working in a factory, I also begged for food and money for my brothers.⁷

Ms. Xue was married to a worker in 1951 at the age of 19, and worked for her husband's factory.⁸ Having had two children, she gave up her job and looked after her children and mother-in-law at home, for there was no child care centre in the factory, and her family could not hire private child care. Also, her mother-in-law was reluctant to help her. By 1964, when Ms Xue was already a mother with five children, the family landed in financial difficulty so that the whole family, including her mother-in-law, totally relied on her husband's income, 38 yuan per month (\$US 5 in 1993). Such a family situation forced her to seek a job, and she finally found one by working in a small factory. Meanwhile, to get more income, Ms. Xue undertook the task of making *jianbing* (a kind of fine bread made of corn flour or red sorghum flour) for a food processing factory. Too often, she got up at 3:30 am in the morning to cook four and half kilogram *jianbing*, and then prepared breakfast for her family before leaving for work by train at 7 am. After work, she made dinner for the family and did other chores, often until 12 pm. When the Cultural Revolution began, the factory collapsed, and Ms Xue stayed at home again for two years. She started to work for the residential committee of the Zhongshan suburb in early 1969.

To motivate housewives to work for the factory despite the poor conditions, Ms. Xue and Ms Lin visited many housewives and successfully urged them to work outside the home. Eventually 20 of them plunged into the factory. For the factory, Ms Lin spent her whole savings, 300 yuan in total, on renting a room from an elementary school as a workshop. No authority at any level, however, would provide any financial assistance or other support for the factory. The development of this factory depended entirely on these housewives themselves. It grew gradually with the help of a few

⁷Oral comment from Ms. Xue.

⁸After 1949, wives of workers were allowed to work within the same factory as their husbands.

retired skilled male workers. Ms. Lin and Ms Xue were heads of the workshop. But after the factory was dragged into the administration of the Zhongshan suburb government, Ms. Xue and Ms. Lin were propelled out of their management positions, and replaced by "capable" officials from the suburb government. Although Ms. Lin technically maintained her management position, she no longer had any influence on decision-making and was often ignored by the "leading figures". For these reasons, she became enraged and fell into a serious sickness. She died of cancer in 1991.

All housewives who shared the early experiences in the factory with Ms. Lin attended her funeral and showed their respect for her. Some of them even knelt down in front of her portrait. As Ms. Xue said:

Ms. Lin sacrificed herself and her family a lot for the factory. During the most difficult period of the factory, in order to subsidise the poor factory, Ms. Lin and even her children ate corn flour porridge with steamed buns also made of corn flower every day, for the sake of saving money. She rarely ate fresh vegetables, but only salty pickles. However, she was pushed aside by the officials from the Zhongshan suburb government. They look down on her and conceived of her as a nobody. It was they who suppressed Ms. Lin to death. They exploited our housewives and were inhuman. We founded the factory, but were ousted by those officials.⁹

The drying oven factory was also founded by housewives. One of those founders was Ms. Zhang, who came originally from a peasant family in Henan province. She was married to a worker of a big industry of Dalian at the age of 21 in the early 1950s, and then stayed with her mother-in-law where she still is. After her first child's birth, her mother-in-law pressed her not to work outside the home, but to look after the child. Up to the late 1960s, her family home was crowded by eight children, of which four were her own and four her sister's children adopted by Ms. Zhang after the death of her sister and sister-in-law one after another in one year.

⁹Oral comment of Ms. Xue.

In the early 1970s, she, like other housewives, was advised to work for the industrial drying oven factory which was newly organised by the residential committee of Zhongshan suburb. At the very beginning, the factory did not have any specific productive task. All the employees of the factory were told to seek a productive task by themselves. With this concern, these housewives visited several big state-run factories, and finally took up the task of processing small machine parts for one big industry. Ms. Zhang was responsible for conveying the products to the industry. As running a truck was impossible for the small factory, Ms. Zhang pulled a three-wheel cart to deliver these products, and then brought materials required for producing the products back to the factory. Each journey, forth and back, took her at least three hours. In addition, she had to rush home to cook lunch for her family at noon every day.

it was her fate to be a woman. From her perspective, satisfying other members of her family and accepting hardship for herself have become her lot: as she said, "as long

As for Ms. Zhang's family responsibilities in the early 1970s, she fulfilled the roles of mother, step-mother, daughter-in-law and wife. Her family then was eight children from age 3 to 16, and a mother-in-law. They depended entirely on 30 yuan financial support each month from her husband. Before the Cultural Revolution, Ms Zhang worked for a public dining room of a textile factory as a casual worker, but was fired during the Cultural Revolution. The family slipped into poverty. Very often, the family's living expense each month was less than 20 yuan, hence meat, fresh vegetables and fruits were rarely seen. Their daily food and dishes consisted of corn flour, red sorghum and rotten vegetables picked up by her children in a public shop. In winter, the children picked up coal and pieces of wood near a factory or a power station to warm up their house, because there was not enough fuel provided by the government for domestic purposes. Ms. Zhang made clothes, including cotton winter coats and trousers, and shoes for the whole family. The family custom was that younger children inherited clothes and shoes from the older ones. As between her own children and her sister's, she paid more attention to the latter. As she explained, "the children of her sister needed more caring, because they were more fragile and, without their own

parents, felt inferior to others, and were likely to be despised by other children". It was taken for granted in her family that she always made new clothes and shoes for the elder daughter of her sister. The children of her sister were also allocated more nice food than Ms. Zhang's own children.

While working for the factory, many difficulties occurred for Ms. Zhang. Apart from working, she had to do all household chores after work. As had become customary for many years, her husband and mother-in-law did not attempt to give her a hand. Her working outside the home did not inspire her husband and mother-in-law to assist her with domestic duties. Her full role was working woman, daughter-in-law, wife and mother. Informing me of these difficulties, Ms. Zhang smiled in sadness and admitted that it was her fate to be a woman. From her perspective, satisfying other members of her family and accepting hardship for herself have become her lot: as she said, "as long as other members of the family are happy, I do not have any expectation from them in return".¹⁰

A sidelight on Ms. Zhang's experiences in the workplace is that, in the early 1970s, the Chinese government often took away employees to dig air raid shelters as "volunteers". The aim was to prepare for war between the former Soviet Union and the PRC. As the place of air raid shelters was far from the city and work conditions were very poor and the work was not even paid, most urban employees were reluctant to fulfil the government's political purpose. In urban work units, the absence of many employees could postpone the completion of productive tasks. Therefore, many work units contended with government, and tried to resist the government demands. As a result, the government often confronted difficulty in recruiting enough "volunteers" from big industries and other public work units. By contrast, small factories were less likely to resist the government demand, because both the social status and the extent of

¹⁰Ms Zhang's oral comment (Interview with Ms. Zhang: 23 September 1993).

social benefits that employees enjoyed in small factories were lower than those in big industries and other public work units. In pursuit of as many volunteers as possible from small factories, the government often offered special promises to small factories, such as raising the social status of the factory from subdistrict factory to collective factory or improving the title of some employees' professional rank from district worker to collective or national worker. These privileges were given on the premise that these employees must comply with the government's demand. In this case, housewives of the industrial drying oven factory were no doubt stimulated by the government's "generosity". As a result, the government recruited more volunteers from small factories than from big industries. According to Ms. Zhang:

Women like us who are uneducated and with no power are easily cheated by the government and other clever people. In their mind, we are worth nothing, and should be prepared to do the hardest job and gain little.

The cost for women who experienced digging air raid shelters was inconceivable. These women were not only "volunteers"; but also did not receive any salary from their factory during their absence for at least three months. In such a situation, many of their families confronted a shortage of money and were also in chaos.

In the meantime, the factory experienced a labour shortage. Thus, those women who continued working in the factory were bound to work extra hours--also as "volunteers. They often got up at 4 am in the morning and finished their work late at night.

According to Ms. Zhang, although these housewives were treated as very cheap labour and dealt with many difficulties caused by the government, they never complained or asked for help. These housewives regarded each other as sisters and were happy to give mutual help. One point shared by these housewives was that they conceived of the factory as their common family. On behalf of the factory, these housewives were prepared to sacrifice their own interests.

as a demonstration, they stopped working for two weeks until Ms. Zhang was

In the winter of 1979, the three sub-district factories—the siderite factory, the valve factory and the industrial drying oven factory-- were assembled together. They moved into a new place where there was an empty square with a big hole in it more than ten meters deep. The housewives filled this hole by carrying soil and sand in baskets. With no inside workshop, they worked outside in weather which was 10 degrees below zero. As their main productive task was to spray paint on steel chests, and the paint was not available in the market, these housewives had to blend the paint themselves. They set up a fire outside under a big pot to blend the paint. To do so, they brought cold water in basins and poured it into the pot, because a water tap was not available. From carrying cold water in winter, their fingers were numb and the sleeves of their cotton coats were frozen. Without enough money to buy coal and wood to set up a fire, many housewives brought fuel from their own homes. The material for painting the chests was composed of double toluene, a poisonous chemical, --however, the housewives used it with no gear for physical protection and their health was injured seriously. Some of them could not stretch their fingers, and some suffered from lung disease. As I saw for myself, Ms. Zhang had bent figures and moved her neck uncomfortably. "None of us was in good health", ¹¹ she said.

her salary, yet, she had refused to take up any one of them. In addition, all female workers in the painting

During the early period, the most difficult time of the factory, "No one leader joined in and cared for us housewives".¹² However, after the factory was well constructed, and transferred to a collective enterprise, a few people from the suburb government took over all management positions in the factory. Ms. Zhang herself fully experienced being dismissed from her leading position. She was told that she was illiterate, did not possess any knowledge of management and therefore was not qualified to be a manager. This outrageous discriminatory behaviour against Ms. Zhang evoked the indignation of the other housewives. They refused to deal with the newcomers. Once,

¹¹ibid

¹²ibid

as a demonstration, they stopped working for two weeks until Ms. Zhang was recruited back to be the chief of the workshop. It was said that Ms. Zhang was dismissed from her leading position nine times from early 1970 to 1993, and each time, she was recruited back under the fervid protest of her female colleagues. They highly respected and admired Ms. Zhang.

Several stories about Ms. Zhang were told by a colleague of hers. One is that Ms. Zhang saved the lives of two young female workers who were neglected by their parents because of a mental disorder. Ms. Zhang offered them jobs in her workshop, and looked after them with patience. In the work place, she often washed their clothes, brought lunch for them, helped them with their work, and protected them whenever they were badly treated by other colleagues.

By 1993, Ms. Zhang, was the head of the most profitable workshop in the factory. She had been persuaded to stay in her job longer than she intended; she even had gone beyond the age of retirement, because she was the only one who could mix the painting fuel in accurate proportions, which could not be found in the market. She had been offered jobs by several private car part factories with a higher salary, yet, she had refused to take up any one of them. In addition, all female workers in the painting workshop insisted on Ms. Zhang's staying. In reciprocation, Ms. Zhang refused to leave them. According to her:

Sometimes, these female workers were treated unfairly by the authority of the factory, because they are all lower educated. I have to protect them, and also help them to solve their family problems. It is not easy to be a woman. To be a woman, you have to eat hardship, and, to be an uneducated woman, you have to bear being looked down on by others. I am very grateful for my colleagues. It is they who recruited me back to the chief position each time after I was dismissed. They have a strong sense of justice.

As for her life, she comments:

Information from the accountant of No 10 Meter Plant of Dalain, and other informants.

In the present, my life is much better than it was before. It does not matter if I make more or less money, as long as I am satisfied with my life.¹³

At home, Ms. Zhang is still maintaining her traditional role of daughter-in-law and mother. It is her family habit that the mother-in-law should enjoy a nice meal first, then her sons, daughters, sons-in-law and daughters-in-law, and, last, Ms. Zhang and her husband. One of her sister's daughters asked Ms. Zhang to look after her daughter, picking her up from a kindergarten every day, for which she pays Ms. Zhang 300 yuan per-month, which also covers the dinner that she and her husband have with Ms. Zhang's family every day. In addition, a daughter of one of her sons is living with Ms. Zhang, for which, however, her son and daughter-in-law pay nothing. If the daughter-in-law finishes her work late, Ms. Zhang likes to cook for her. By contrast, Ms. Zhang commented, after marriage, a son and his wife have the same interests in saving money; and she complained that nowadays many young couples are very selfish: they try to save money as much as they can with very little consideration of their parents. They need parents for help rather than for love.¹⁴

Except for Ms. Zhang, most housewives who entered the factory in the early period were persuaded to go back home in the early 1980s, when many young people were unemployed. The government forced each work unit to solve this problem on its own. Along with the policy on children's inheritance of their parent's job, as noted above, many housewives were expected to leave their workplace. According to government regulations on pensions, the maximum amount of pension that these housewives were entitled to receive in 1993 was 150 yuan per month, yet, on average, the income of employees in Dalian was 300 Yuan (US \$60) per month.¹⁵

¹³ibid

¹⁴ibid

¹⁵Information from the accountant of No 10 Meter Plant of Dalain, and other informants.

The stories of these housewives show how Chinese lower educated women were pushed back from management positions once their enterprises achieved enhanced status, following which, the enterprise was assimilated under the direct control of a big enterprise, and thus fell into the web of the highly centralised management system. As discussed in chapter 2, within this system, a leading person is appointed by a high level authority. The appointment system eased housewives into a disadvantaged position, as most housewives were far away from authority. The housewives' long distance from authority resulted in them being laid off from administrative positions.

for New Year. Li Guilian undertook this task and assembled her 85 women. Three

Women Peasants in a Rural Enterprise: The Dayang Clothing Enterprise

The Dayang Clothing Enterprise, located in the Yangshufang village near Dalian, was founded in 1979 by 85 housewives. The leading woman, Li Guilian, was born into a peasant family in the village in 1945. She went to school near the village for six years. From 1962 to 1979, she held the position of head of the women's office, Party secretary of Yanshufang village and vice-president of the township hospital. As of 1993, she had become the deputy manager of the Dayang Clothing Enterprise.

China (A Brief Introduction to Dayang Enterprise, 1991: 3). Li Guilian has been greatly
 In late 1979, given the right by the Yangshufang township government to establish Dayang Dress Enterprise, Li Guilian selected 85 housewives from the Yanshufang village. At the beginning, these women brought their own sewing machines from home to the workshop and undertook to process clothing parts for the Dalian No. 1 Clothing Enterprise, a state-run enterprise.

to 5,722 in 1993, and most of them were women.¹⁴

The new enterprise had only a few rooms in an old building where was no heating system in winter. It was not unusual that the inside temperature was degrees -5 C. In the first three months, these women received no money, although working from early morning to late at night. However, they were motivated by the inspiration of becoming like urban blue collar workers, who enjoy a regular salary. This inspiration was also shared by their families as well as most dwellers of the Yanshufan village. Therefore,

they were supported both by their family members, including their parents-in-law, and by public opinion. With this supportive environment, these women endured poor working conditions and made a steady achievement.

At Chinese New Year, 1981, a good opportunity arose for this enterprise. The deputy manager of the Dalian No. 1 Clothing Enterprise came to the village to visit Li Guilian and seek help because his enterprise found it impossible to fulfil the task of delivering suits to the American company within three days and with public holidays coming up for New Year. Li Guilian undertook this task and assembled her 85 women. Three days later, the full number of suits for delivery to an American company came out of the hands of these women (Liaoning Peasant News 6 September 1984; Yu Zesheng 1985:270-276). This outcome increased the reputation of the enterprise. From then on, it undertook more and more tasks of producing clothes.

In the last 15 years, the enterprise has enlarged into a multiple company with eight branches, and has exported products to more than 20 other places outside China (A Brief Introduction to Dayang Enterprise: 1991: 3). Li Guilian has been greatly glorified as a model worker of the nation. She is one of ten national peasant entrepreneurs and has been declared the most outstanding female entrepreneur of the nation. She was selected as a representative to the seventh and the eighth National People's Congress (A Brief Introduction to Dayang Enterprises: 1991:1). The number of her employee increased from 85 in 1979 to 5,722 in 1993, and most of them were women.¹⁶

The residents of the village are proud of working in the enterprise. Compared with other small enterprises of the village, it has a national reputation and provides a relatively high regular salary and good working conditions, equipped with facilities

¹⁶This statistic was given by Mr. Qu, a secretary of the Dayang Clothing Enterprise. (Interview: October 4, 1993).

imported from Japan. Employees wear different types of uniform in terms of their position in the workplace. They have lunch in the public dining room, which is a new life style for Chinese peasants to enjoy. However, it is true that they work long hours, from 7 o'clock in the morning to 6 o'clock in the evening, out of which one hour is lunch time, and this enterprise does not observe weekends or holidays except public holidays.

Why is the authority of the enterprise able to apply this hard working pattern to the enterprise? Why do so many rural employees seem to accept it? It is because of the social status of this kind of enterprise in the PRC. According to Chinese standards, most rural enterprises and employees are situated in a lower status: thus, catching up with the pattern of urban state-run enterprise where employees are guaranteed regular salary and social benefits, including pension, is a dramatic motivation for the enterprise and employees. From 1993, every employee was asked to participate in private insurance, which was a newly released initiative of the government. The enterprise has also announced that those employees who have constantly worked for the enterprise for a certain numbers of years are entitled to pension benefit after they retire. As for the 85 women founders, some of them remain in their leading roles in the workforce as senior workers or heads of workshops; the other were retired in 1993. The women's retirement age at the enterprise is 50. Unless given a 10,000 yuan bonus, the retired women were receiving their pensions in 1993, 100 yuan (US \$19) per month. A woman stated that it has been her a dream to get a pension in her old age. She was the first person of her family, including her ancestors, who had ever enjoyed a pension.¹⁷

Footnote 17: Commerce of the Yansinufang township government; Zhao Libin, the director of the management board and the director of the general office of the management department, had been head of the Department of Buying and Selling of the township government; Jian Chunling, a member of the management board and the

¹⁷It happened that there was a big celebration for retired founders on the day I went to the enterprise. Two of them gave speeches. The leaders of the enterprise and the township government attended this celebration.

We must also ask, has the success of female peasants been rewarded by their playing a leading role in the new enterprises?

This question will be discussed by analysis of the structure of the leadership and the background of leaders of the Dayang Clothing Enterprise, and also by noting the obstacles that capable women still encounter.

The Leadership of Dayang Clothing Enterprise

Up to 1993, the leadership of the enterprise comprised 13 people in administration and seven in the Party committee (There was some overlap in positions held). Thus, the general manager was also the Party secretary. Under this top level, there were 13 people responsible for six administrative departments--the functions department, the general office, the development department, the financial department, the management department and the security office. At the top level, Li Guilian, the general manager and the Party secretary, was the only female; all others were male. There are eight branches within the enterprise. The manager of each branch was also a member of the enterprise leadership.

How did these males take over the leading positions? As mentioned above, they all had been previously officials of the Yanshufang township government before 1979. Following the new emphasis of the CCP's policy on economic growth, they flooded into the enterprise and occupied the leading positions. For instance, the vice-manager, Shi Xiangling, husband of Li Guilian, had been a director of the Department of Industry and Commerce of the Yanshufang township government; Zhao Libin, the director of the management board and the director of the general office of the management department, had been head of the Department of Buying and Selling of the township government; Jian Chunling, a member of the management board and the vice-manager of the Dayang Enterprise, had been the Party secretary of the production

Oral information from the sister-in-law of Li Guilian, who was manager of a workshop.

brigade of Yanshufang village,¹⁸ They were able to overwhelm the leadership of the enterprise because the enterprise was subject to the hand of the township government and the state in its administration. In principle, the enterprise is under the direct administration of the Yanshufang township government, which provided a legal pretext for those former officials to take leading positions in the enterprise.

In the countryside (I was told by Ms. Yin), the neighbours in the same village as the
 At the middle administrative level, a few heads of workshops were appointed from among those of the original 85 women who had kept their good relationships with one or more of the leading figures; other female heads were either relatives of or very close to these leaders.¹⁹ The head of the No 2 workshop was a sister-in-law of Li Quilian. Obviously, the leadership constitutes a network of intertwined personal relationships.

Another important factor affecting women is that the leadership of Dayang Clothing
 The woman in charge of the women's association of the enterprise, Ms. Yin, was the wife of one of the leading male figures. Her real role was rather limited. According to her, her daily responsibility was to ensure that none of the female employees of the enterprise breached the discipline of the enterprise on birth planning policy. According to this policy, a rural family is allowed to have a second child if the first one is a girl. Following the birth planning policy, this enterprise tried to encourage each female employee to have only one child, even if her first child was a girl. Ms. Yin had to keep records of the offending females, which would impact on their bonuses and other types of rewards. To uphold the birth planning policy was the most significant part of her responsibility. It closely affected the interests of both the enterprise and the village dwellers. According to the birth planning policy:

¹⁸My interviewees were reluctant to tell me the personal background of each member of the leadership, but suggested that all of them came from previous influential positions. Someone even suggested that if the husband of Li Guilian had not had a position in the township government, she would not have been given the right to set up the enterprise.

¹⁹Oral information from the sister-in-law of Li Guilian, who was manager of a workshop.

If an employee of a work unit breaks the birth planning policy, the work units of both the husband and wife should be fined 0.5 percent of the profit of one year's production. The leaders of such work units should be given a poster of criticism and have bonus for the whole year deducted; they should further be dismissed from their leading position (Liaoning, 1988:11).

In the countryside (I was told by Ms. Yin), the neighbours in the same village as the offending woman might not be permitted to have a child for three years, even if eligible, and they might be refused permission to build a house for five years.

Thus, the women's organisation of the enterprise only nominally represents women's interests: it is an arm of both the enterprise and the government.

Another important factor affecting women is that the leadership of Dayang Clothing Enterprise is characterised by the strong traditional Chinese line of paternalism or patriarchy. All the leaders were born and grew up in the same township with no exception. They built up networks that outsiders can hardly break into, not least women.

Wang Cairong, a technician of the design workshop and the sole university graduate of the enterprise, expounded on her hesitation to join the leadership:

For an outsider, it is a big risk to participate in the leadership, because she or he does not have any established previous network. As the decision making at the top is highly secret and is full of internal struggle, an outsider can be easily excluded from the top. And also the priority of those leaders is not to recruit outsiders to join the leadership, but to maintain their paternalism line.²⁰

²⁰Oral information from Wang Cairong. Wang Cairong was one of my classmates and roommates from 1982 to 1986 at Liaoning Normal University. During my field work in this enterprise, I stayed at her place.

In the eyes of some employees, Wang Cairong is an ideal person to be a manager because of her skill, educational level and personal relations with Li Guilian. She was offered her current job by Li Guilian, who has also given her other help, such as changing her mother's official residence from a remote and impoverished rural area to the Yangshufang village. However, she confirmed:

I feel more comfortable and secure by learning practical skills, not wasting my time and intelligence in power struggle. My plan for the future is to set up my own business, such as a research centre for dress design. Doing things that I am interested in is the way to find my personal value.²¹

Her personal experience of entering and working in this enterprise is rather amazing from the Chinese perspective. It is very rare that young university graduates serve voluntarily in the rural areas.

Wang Cairong graduated from the Department of Political Science of the Liaoning Normal University in Dalian in 1986. She entered the university from a backward part of the countryside in 1982, Jianchang county, a place often perceived as the "Tibet" of Liaoning province.²² Her family was one of the poorest in her village. Her mother had become a widow in 1964 and suffered from a kind of mental disorder, as did her three older sisters. They were psychologically frightened by the case of her father who committed suicide. He was suspected of corruption as an accountant of the village. After his death, the whole family lived on small subsidies from their relatives.

After entering the university, Wang Cairong obtained one of the first class of scholarships, a subsidy for students from lower income families, 4 yuan per month. Apart from that, she enjoyed an 18 yuan living allowance which is provided for every student at any normal university in the PRC.

²¹Oral confirmation from Wang Cairong.

²²In the PRC, the term "Tibet" is used in Han Chinese areas refers to the poverty and backwardness of a place.

In her second year at university, she became bored with studying politics, but became interested in dress design. Because the Liaoning Normal University did not offer a course on dress design, she taught herself and went to an individual market to observe from some tailors how to make clothes by sewing machine. This market was miles away from the university. Yet, Wang Cairong walked there every afternoon, instead of catching a bus. In her mind, it was necessary to save the 6 fen (100 fen = 1 yuan) for a bus ticket. In the meantime, she started to contact Li Guilian.

Her behaviour was not appreciated by the university, and was discovered by the authorities of the Department of Political Science. She was urged to stop learning dress design by the Youth League secretary and the head of the department. Ignoring their suggestions, she insisted on following her own interest until September 1986 when she graduated from the university.

By this time, two difficulties had appeared for Wang Cairong. One was about her original dwelling place. The priority of the university is to assign a student a job in the place where their parents live. By 1986, her mother was living in a part of the countryside, as mentioned above, which was not under the administration of the Dalian municipal government. In principle, Wang Cairong should work in a place near her home village. Second, the main responsibility of the Liaoning Normal University was to train students to qualify as high school teachers. Most graduating students are assigned to high schools, or at least to the secondary educational field. In this sense, it was impossible for Wang Cairong to work in the Dayang enterprise without a special personal connection.

To overcome these two disadvantages, she became a Dalian resident with the help of Li Guilian. As a result, she was assigned to the educational bureau of the Dalian municipal government, which was responsible for sending her to a high school in

Dalian. But instead of registering in the educational bureau, she entered the Dayang enterprise.

Soon after, she became popular in the enterprise, as she was not only the only university graduate in the enterprise but also did an excellent job. A journalist for the Liaoning Enterprise Newspaper was eager to report her story. Unfortunately, his report became the clue for the educational bureau to find out where she was. The authority of the bureau offered her two options: one was to re-register in the educational bureau to be assigned a job in a school; the other one was to resign. Wang Cairong took up the second option at the price of losing her high social status as a member of the category of national cadre, which applies to all university graduates. She also lost permanent security benefits, such as public medical care, and other privileges available for highly educated people. As she admitted, she paid a price for her interest and success in the Dayang enterprise. By 1993, she was responsible for designing dresses, and negotiating with foreign companies. However, the type of leadership of the enterprise could not absorb such a competent woman, as she was not a part of the paternalism line and she remained a technician, denied promotion to management. The criticism of a female worker about the leadership was not subtle:

We contribute to the enterprise, and are led by leaders. Hence, leaders make more money than we do. They are masters, and we are servants.²³

The pattern of leadership in Dayang enterprise shows strong evidence of traditional pattern of personal connection and paternalism. This is an obstacle for a capable outsider to break into an administrative position. Apart from these obstacles, it is even more difficult for a woman to occupy an administrative position, because a woman has to face Chinese prejudice against her.

²³Oral comment from my informants.

The slightly different "fate" of lower educated female founders in the two enterprises illustrates that women in the state sector confront a major obstacle from the Chinese socialist system. Women in the state sector are pushed away from administrative positions simply by the appointment system, which women in a market-oriented rural enterprise do not have to combat. The different fate also proves that economic reform can be positive for women occupying management positions. Of course, they all face the same obstacles from the traditional pattern of personal connection and paternalism and Chinese discriminatory attitude towards women. In addition, economic reform has also benefited lower educated women in other areas.

Ms. Chen was an accountant of the Fan Enterprise of Dalian before working in the

Urban Women in the Individual Market: from Burden to Pillar

The individual market (Getihu Shican) was re-opened after 1978, where secondary commodities were sold. During the Cultural Revolution, the individual market was abolished, as it was considered a capitalist phenomenon. After 1978, under the pressure of massive unemployment, the CCP legitimised the individual market to some extent and perceived of it as a way out for young urban unemployed people. The legally emerged individual market also reflected the CCP's strategic change from a totally planned economy to a market-oriented economy. The CCP announced that, according to China's current situation, the market economy was not thoroughly antagonistic to socialism, because China was still a socialist country with poor productive forces; it was in the first stage of socialism. The existence of a market economy was necessary in the transition from socialism to communism. China's economy included a market economy under the direction of a command economy (Zhonggong, 1984: 10).

Manager and her previous colleagues did not like me, and I was not interested in putting up with them. It was good luck that they compelled me to leave the factory. Now, I am happier and richer than

After 1978, the pattern of the individual market was shaped by various types of unemployed people who were seeking the self-solution of their difficulties. These people consisted of three groups--(1)unemployed youth, including the ones returning to cities from the country, or released from jails; (2)rural people wishing to sell their

sideline products; (3) urban people who had left their previous work units for some reason, including women laid off by their work units.²⁴ My discussion will focus on women who were suspended from their previous positions by their work unit, and therefore joined the individual market.

My discussion seeks to explain why these women left their previous work units and how they felt after serving in the individual market. The stories of four women will be told. They are: Ms. Chen; Ms. Wang; Ms. Yang and Ms. Jiang

Ms. Chen was an accountant of the Fan Enterprise of Dalian before working in the individual market. She was promoted to this position from a workshop by a manager who was replaced in 1984. When the new manager came to power, Ms. Chen was asked to leave the accountant's office and return to her previous workshop, because of her broken-down relationship with the new manager. In the meanwhile, she was not appreciated by some of her colleagues, who resented her aggressiveness and personal connections with the previous manager. She was pressured to return to the workshop. Instead of being a blue collar worker again, Ms. Chen joined the individual market through her husband's connections with the authority of the Xinyi individual market in the Zhoushui suburb of Dalian. Her husband was then an officer of the Dalian municipal procuracy. When I visited her in the market, she was playing "Puke (Poker)" with three male assistants employed by her. Asked if she would like to go back to her previous enterprise, she gave a categorical denial by firmly shaking her head, and she made this comment with pride:

They [the new manager and her previous colleagues] did not like me, and I was not interested in putting up with them. It was good luck that they compelled me to leave the factory. Now, I am happier and richer than

²⁴Oral information from a scholar of the Institute of Sociology of Chinese Academy of Social Science ; from an official of the Trade and Economics Commission of the Shenyang municipal government, and from a tax collector of an individual market in a suburb of Dalian city.

them, enjoying a comfortable and free life. They are still struggling for survival. I am a boss; no one else can dominate me.

My husband works for the government; I make money and work for myself. Money is real power. For instance, those school teachers of my daughter's used to despise her, as she was from a working class family and did not manage her study well. But now, they, including the principal, treat her very well and often do her favours: it is because I have been bringing a lot of presents for them on every public holiday.

At home, Ms. Chen has hired two students from the Liaoning Normal University for her daughter as family tutors to teach her the English language, mathematics, physics and chemistry. She aims at improving her daughter's ability to pass the university entrance exam in future. Sending her daughter to a university is her plan, for which she is intensively saving money, as there is a new trend emerging in the PRC that those students who have failed in the entrance exam are allowed to study in a university after paying a certain amount of money. Ms. Chen assumes that her daughter is not capable enough to pass the entrance exam, and, therefore, she has to prepare for paying out money. She is convinced that an individual's social reputation and respect in the PRC derives from an individual's educational level. Somehow, her success in business does not bring her intellectual satisfaction: "Compared with the highly educated people, we are materially rich, but spiritually empty,"²⁵ she says.

Ms. Wang was from the same enterprise as Ms. Chen, and used to be responsible for collecting the production statistics of the enterprise. She was assigned this position by the previous manager, because she had obtained a popular reputation in her workshop by being friendly and modest with her colleagues. She was asked to leave this position in 1984 by the new manager, who attempted to give it to another woman whom he knew well. Ms. Wang was reluctant to be a manual worker again, and so she stayed at home from 1984 to 1988.²⁶

²⁵Oral comment of Ms. Chen (Interview with Ms. Chen in the individual market where she was doing her business: 27 September 1993).

²⁶I was introduced to Ms. Wang by Ms. Yu and interviewed her in a department store in the Zhoushui suburb in Dalian on 22 September 1993.

In 1988, introduced by a friend of hers to a Cantonese boss who runs a business in Dalian, she helped this boss to sell cosmetics. She showed herself to be quite competent at this; good at convincing consumers and explaining how to use cosmetics. Her application to leave this job was rejected by her new boss, and, as a result, her salary was increased.

As an alternative, she started to sell clothes in the individual market in 1985 without confirming this with the authority of the plant and Ms. Wang takes the whole responsibility for her household, for her husband is working in a new economic zone, 150 kilometres away from Dalian city. He leaves home at 6 o'clock in the morning and comes back at 7 o'clock in the evening. By contrast, Ms. Wang only works four hours a day. Ms. Wang is happy to do all house chores both for keeping up the family and out of personal belief. Most Dalian dwellers expect that one member at least in a family will work in the new economic zone, where much higher income is provided by foreign and joint venture companies and work is facilitated by good conditions. Ms. Wang's family has achieved this, and it gives her pride in public. She also believes that it is her responsibility to look after and support her husband, and, because of his long working hours, she does not expect him to share household jobs with her. She is satisfied with her current family and personal situation, and proudly makes a comparison of her career and life, past and present:

I feel more flexible than I was before. While working in the enterprise, I had to rush in a crowded bus every morning, and obey the fixed working hours. Not only had I less free time, but I also earned a very small amount of salary which was almost nothing compared with what I am earning now.

As the moment, I only work half the day, and the rest of it belongs to myself. Therefore, I have a choice to do other things that I am interested in. In addition, it was a big relief to leave the enterprise, where I had to worry about my personal reputation and try to impress those influential figures. My current boss appreciates me, because I am capable for this job. It is my boss who has asked me to stay in the job. I never flatter him.

At home, I have become a "super mother", doing my job successfully and all household work. Every one of my family including my husband respects me and usually follows my suggestions.

Ms Jiang was an accountant of the No 10 Measure Plant of Dalian before 1989. Her husband died of an accident at his workplace in the middle of the 1980s. Ms Jian took on the whole role of caring and providing for her family, including her son and her mother-in-law. However, to work in the plant did not provide her with a reasonable income to support her family. As an alternative, she started to sell clothes in the individual market in 1985 without confirming this with the authority of the plant and continuing to work in the plant as the same time. Staying in this balanced situation, she could enjoy the social benefits from the plant, and receive a pension after her retirement. Her doing business in the individual market was finally discovered by the plant in 1990, which, therefore, urged her to quit her job. The manager of the enterprise criticised her willingness to take advantage of it.

She in turn accused the enterprise of having cheated her as a widow without good personal connections with any influential figures of the plant. She declared that some workers who had done the same thing as her had been accepted by the plant, because they had pleased the powerful people. She accused her superiors:

Government and those managers are busters. They scorn the disadvantaged people. In my case, after my husband's death, I was entitled to receive compensation from his work unit, which, however, never gives me enough according to the government regulation on compensation for people who die at the workplace. My work unit also never shows sympathy to me. I am a small radish, no one has paid any attention to me.

According to Ms. Jiang, she has overcome the difficulties that she encountered herself, rather than relying on help from others.

Ms. Jiang's mother-in-law admires Ms. Jiang's strength, and expresses deep grateful feeling for Ms. Jiang. She said:

"In Dalian, many industrial workers who entered the individual market without resigning from their previous job were requested to pay a certain amount of money back to their enterprise. In principle, enterprises are responsible for their medical care and pension.

My daughter-in-law is aggressive, tough and does not know how to please leaders and other people. Her public reputation is not good, but she is very filial, and able to handle everything, both outside and inside the home.²⁷

Following up her mother-in-law's comment, Ms. Jiang asserted that it was shameful to ask for help, and it was weak to receive sympathy. She confirmed that, having worked hard in the individual market for a few years, the living standard of her family had increased dramatically. In the last a few years, she had bought a colour TV set, a stereo set, a refrigerator and other electronic goods. To afford these goods, a worker in an industrial enterprise would have to live extremely frugally and save money for many years.

While I was visiting her, a few people, men and women, came in. She explained cynically that many people in the individual market like and respect her, and do not regard her as a shrewish woman, as she is both successful and helpful. Apparently, a few men in the individual market are running after her. Pointing this out, she smiled with pride and self-satisfaction, and asserted that she must make a better choice. Ms. Jiang admitted that her success in the individual market has increased her individual value both at home and in society.

Ms. Yang joined the individual market because her previous work unit, Dalian No 2 Shipping Enterprise, was inefficient. The manager of the enterprise persuaded many workers to seek a better job for themselves; thus Ms. Yang chose to work in the individual market.

In the market, Ms. Yang sells fashion clothes delivered from Guangzhou. Quite often, she takes the train to Guanzhou, loading clothes herself, making sure the goods loaded

²⁷In Dalian, many industrial workers who entered the individual market without resigning from their previous job were requested to pay a certain amount of money back to their enterprise. In principle, enterprises are responsible for their medical care and pension.

are real clothes. During her journeys, her sister keeps an eye on the business. Ms. Yang's husband is a sailor, and absent from home for most of the year. Hence, she has hired a girl from a rural suburb near Dalian to look after her two-year-old daughter and do chores.

Ms. Yang looks energetic and vigorous. She is 156 centimetres in height and about 30 years old. However, her sister makes a joke about Ms. Yang that she often asked for sick leave while working in Dalian No 2 Ship Enterprise, but that now, working for herself, she seldom gets a headache, even though she has no weekend or holiday.

For Ms. Yang, selling clothes seems even to have solved her conflict with her husband's family, because her marriage was not approved by this family, who were very much concerned with the contrast of family background between Ms. Yang and her husband. Both the social reputation and the social status of Ms. Yang's family were lower than that of her husband. All members of her husband's family were national workers or officers in the Dalian No. 1 Ship Enterprise, one of the biggest state-run ship enterprises in the PRC. By contrast, the members of Ms. Yang's family were only collective workers. Moreover, her husband's job was desirable in the eyes of the workers of the Dalian Ship Enterprise, as he often sailed overseas and earned a high income.

After their marriage, members of her husband's family were cool to her. In the position of daughter-in-law, she was treated as a "little chicken". Each time she visited the family, she was nervous and was expected to cook for the family. However, none of the family seemed to show a bit of respect or attention to her, but scorned her.

However since she went into business, all members of the family have been very friendly and caring towards Ms. Yang. Her mother-in-law has offered to look after her daughter, in reciprocation for Ms. Yang's generosity and filialness, because she always

brings expensive goods for the family, and gives them money on public holidays. Ms. Yang remembers clearly that, the first time she bought an expensive gift for her mother-in-law, "her eyes immediately turned bright, from cloudy to sunlight". In consequence, she was treated as a special guest and prevented from doing any chores or cooking. Ms. Yang recalled that they, as flattery, attempted to say that she was too busy doing business; thus, it was not necessary to cook for them. And also, as her husband often sailed overseas, she had to look after herself and her daughter: "All of a sudden, they [members of the husband's family] grew up and become mature", she commented.²⁸

These anecdotes of women entering the individual market show that their new respectable social role derives from their economic success; that their capability is fully proved by the outcome of their business. There is a remarkable contrast with women's role in state-run enterprises. In the state-run enterprises, women are regarded as a burden, but, in the individual market, they are pillars.

Given an opportunity, not only urban female workers but also female peasants can utilise their talent and fortitude to play a significant role in society, as we shall now see.

The rural female's economic independence first of all led to an increased status for them at home. The general family pattern of the Yanshufang village is the extended family. A young couple and their children live together with the parents-in-law, usually from the husband's side. Parents-in-law from the "other" side usually live nearby. The young couple and parents-in-law interact as a single family unit. The parents or parents-in-law of the wives who were working in the enterprise help their daughters-in-law with their chores. In return, they are financially supported by the young couple, as elder peasants are not guaranteed either pension or social benefits.

²⁸ A Joke by Ms. Yang.

For husbands, it is not unusual that they cook at home and do heavy physical jobs on the land allocated by the government. After 1978, each family of this village was allocated a piece of land, the size of which was based on the numbers in each family. In farming the piece of land, peasants enjoy some autonomy. Apart from accomplishing the compulsory tasks of growing a certain amount of rice, corn and vegetables, each family is free to grow other agricultural goods, and is allowed to sell them in the market by themselves. In general, housewives who have not yet joined in the workforce do most of the work on their family land. But the female workers of the enterprise have almost abandoned their work on the land, and had their place taken by their husbands, most of whom do not have fixed and regular work outside the home. If a couple are both working outside, they can rent their land to relatives. These female employees are experiencing a "transitional role" between being a working and a traditional wife. After work, many female workers will do some chores. There is a perspective of mutual understanding and expectations in the minds of wives, husbands and parents-in-law. Judging from the traditional perspective of a wife's role, taking relaxation and being looked after by one's husband or parents-in-law might not be considered appropriate for a filial wife, which is a feeling also shared by husbands and parents-in-law. Thus, many working wives try to return to their traditional roles after work. This transitional role of the rural female is appreciated by most village dwellers, husbands, parents and parents-in-law, and even the authority of the enterprise.

Of course, it must be mentioned that this transitional role of rural wives is not unique for rural wives as a whole. Elsewhere there is resurgence of the disparity between parents-in-law and daughter-in-law's perceptions. Parents-in-law expect their daughters-in-law to be filial and show high respect for them, whereas some daughters-in-law endeavour to escape from this expectation. They are perceived as being aggressive, argumentative and "lazy", not devoting themselves to domestic affairs. As one mother-in-law complained:

¹³ Comment from the mother-in-law of a female employee.

Nowadays, many young daughters-in-law are lacking traditional virtue. They pay no attention to their parents-in-law, and less attention to looking after their husbands. I envisage that their husbands are being their servants and are very subordinate to them. They follow the life style of urban youth to enjoy leisure time.²⁹

It is evident that many women are starting to move away from their traditional role in the rural family. In China's cultural environment, this trend is seen as a "negative" social phenomenon against the dominant social idea of a wife's role.

Women at the workshop in a Collective Enterprise: A Case Study of the No. 10 Meter Instrument Plant of Dalian after 1978

Once again, after 1978, women in the industrial workshops were perceived as targets for being laid off; thus they were seen as the most disadvantaged group of women—victims of economic reform. The workshop is the place where women workers suffer most discrimination. This is the argument of Honig and Hershatter on the negative effect of economic reform on women (Honig and Hershatter:1988:337-354). However, the situation of women at the workshop in the No. 10 Industrial Meter Instrument Plant shows that lower educated women's disadvantage in the workplace in the state sector stems mainly from the importance of personal connections, as discussed in chapter 1, and the state control over job creation. These factors have limited the new opportunities from economic reform for women and are the main causes of women's inequality since economic reform in 1978. The women at the workshop in the No. 10 Industrial Meter Instrument Plant did not talk about being discriminated against by the plant or by society, but other issues interested them. None of them spontaneously mentioned women's problems as such.

There are three kinds of blue collar workers in the No. 10 Meter Instrument Plant: (1) workers who worked previously in district factories and were made collective workers

²⁹ Comment from the mother-in-law of a female employee.

after 1979; (2) workers who returned to Dalian from the country or inherited their parents' jobs; (3) workers who were allocated a job by the plant after graduation from school, because either their father or mother worked in one of the enterprises under the administration of the Dalian Meter Corporation.

In 1993, most female workers were quite satisfied with the new rules of the plant. That is, all the blue collar workers worked six hours a day from 8 am to 2 pm, while the white collar workers worked 9 hours a day. The working week was only five and half days, because the plant did not have enough productive tasks and was inefficient. The "triangular debt" among enterprises hampered this plant producing more products, even though there was a big demand for industrial meter instruments in the industrial market. Some female workers even worked less than six hours: as long as they finished the task of production per day, they could leave the plant. All female workers were happy with this rule. After work, they were able to manage things on their own. It is not uncommon for some female workers to have a second job outside the plant.

In this plant, female workers seemed to be the main productive force. The profit of the plant derives from two kinds of production--assembling industrial valves and painting industrial airing chests. There were 25 women out of 26 workers in the workshop for painting the chests. Women in this workshop gained more income than average; their income took into account the numbers of chests that they painted. With big demand for industrial chests, their job was profitable. They all began in this workshop as unskilled workers. A few years later, they became skilled workers, and were well disciplined, hardly ever postponing their productive tasks. The head of the workshop was Ms. Zhang, as mentioned before. This workshop has been often assessed by the Dalian Electronic Bureau as "the most excellent"³⁰ within the meter

³⁰It is common in the PRC that the government finds and acclaims a workshop or a worker in each work unit every year for the sake of setting up good examples and encouraging others to catch up with them. The workshop or worker will be honoured by high level authority, which can bring a good reputation for the work unit.

instrument corporation. The manager of the plant acknowledged that he would let none of these female workers leave; otherwise, the plant would collapse.

Needless to say, although painting is a skilled job, not many people expect to do it, because the paint is poisonous and the working conditions are poor. As mentioned above, workers do not have effective protection. There was no air conditioning or proper ventilation system in the workshop, which was very hot in summer and cold in winter. In summer, workers had to have gauze masks over their faces. It is not easy to recruit workers to this workshop. It is a place that "an educated person does not even take a glance at".³¹ In 1993, no workers in the workshop had any personal connection with any one in authority.³²

By contrast, the female workers in the valve workshop were receiving better treatment than those in the painting workshop.³³ None of them was doing productive work. Among five female employees, three were assigned the job after returning to Dalian from the countryside. They were, Ms. Liu, accountant of the workshop; Ms. Wu, a mechanical worker, who is actually responsible for cleaning the machinery; Ms. Jiang, secretary in recording daily production of the workshop; Ms. He, a cleaner in the workshop who inherited her mother's job in 1982, and Ms. Yu, as mentioned in chapter 2.

Interestingly, Ms. Liu, Ms. Wu and Ms. Jiang usually brought lunch and showed their care for the chief of the workshop, for instance bringing him a cup of hot water or washing his uniform. They sometimes did the same things for other male colleagues. Seemingly, there were harmonious relationships between female and male employees.

³¹Oral comment from a female worker.

³²Comment of a vice-manager of the plant.

³³During my case study in the No. 10 Meter Instrument Plant from September 20 to October 15, I worked in the valve workshop and spent most of the time with Ms. Liu, Ms. Jang, Ms. Wu, Ms. He and Ms. Yu.

Between them, the Chinese stereotypes of men and women were not strongly presented. They joked and played with each other. Females were not reluctant to ask males for help, and were not easily offended by their male colleagues. Their verbal expressions were not as literate as those of privileged or refined Chinese, but, by Chinese standards, were rather wild. They were frank and direct with each other. If necessary, males were quick to give a hand to females too.³⁴ Helping each other was routine in this workshop.

Ms. Liu exultantly told stories of her love. Before her marriage, she was introduced to In 1993, Ms. Liu was newly appointed to be an accountant, replacing the previous one who transferred to another meter instrument plant with a better reputation than the No. 10 Meter Instrument Plant. She dressed herself with more refinement than her female colleagues, and explained that was why she was promoted to accountant. However, according to Ms. Yu, Ms. Liu had set out to make a good relationship with the chief of the workshop: in fact, she is not quite clear minded, and often makes mistakes in accounting, according to Ms. Yu.

purchase his salary to Ms. Liu but made decisions on purchasing expensive goods, Ms. Liu was convinced that her husband should pay more. In her personal life, Ms. Liu was proud of her husband, who was sent by a suburb government of Dalian to Shenyang to study public administration. By this study, he would get a college degree and be eligible to be promoted to a higher official position in future. It is a government rule of personnel promotion that all who want to qualify for a certain level of official position should possess a college certificate at least. Ms. Liu perceived her husband as having a good future in his career. She adored her husband for being uncorrupted, honest and ambitious, and for treating her well.

Ms. Liu was introduced to her husband twelve years before, after she returned to Dalian from the countryside. Her standards in looking for a partner then were: (1) he

³⁴On the eve of the People's Republic of China's Day, October 1, 1993 every employee of this workshop was allocated 5 kilogram of grapes. After grapes were distributed to each employee in the evening, many male workers first of all gave their female colleagues lifts on their bicycles or motorbikes and took them home.

must be a member of the CCP; (2) he must be from a family in Dalian city with a reasonable living standard; (3) he must be a white-collar employee in the non-industrial and non-social service sector. Her husband then was an official of a suburban government of Dalian. He was assigned this job after demobilising from the army. His parents, who were retired, used to be officials of the same suburb government that their son was serving.

Ms. Liu exultantly told stories of her love. Before her marriage, she was introduced to men one after another. A few men were obsessed with her and even brought gifts for her family, asking for her love. But she was apathetic towards them, and finally fell in love with her husband. In her mind, he is accomplished, sensible and more intelligent than her. He often wrote her sentimental letters from Shenyang, which were full of emotion and caring, and told her how to teach her son. The division of household duty between them was that Ms. Liu was in charge of all household affairs but her husband taught her son at home. He gave his salary to Ms. Liu but made decisions on purchasing expensive goods. Ms. Liu was convinced that her husband should pay more attention to his career rather than domestic affairs, and her happiness and satisfaction related closely to her husband's career success.³⁵

Ms. Jiang is from a family with three children, and the only daughter of her family; therefore she has been favoured by her parents. Her husband was approved by her parents before she married him. Even today, her parents often show a lot of care for her, giving financial support and looking after her daughter. She would go to her parents whenever she was having a quarrel with her husband. He was working at the train station of Dalian, and earning a good income, two-thirds higher than Ms. Jiang's. Therefore, she was willing to take the whole responsibility of the household. She asserted that equality between a husband and a wife is not sharing household work, but

³⁵Oral comment of Ms. Liu.

fully exercising individual priorities and at the same time sharing joint interests. To her, the career success of her husband was more important than her own, which was not in prospect, because her job was undesirable, low paid and with low social status. It is difficult for her to quit her current job and get a better one because of her personal condition and the Chinese situation. She is unskilled and it is not yet common in the PRC that industrial workers, especially workers in collective enterprises, receive retraining after serving in a factory for a few years, or learn a new skill. Personal achievement for Ms. Jiang was meaningless and hopeless; she would rather enjoy doing household work and other things that interest her, such as knitting. From observation, she knitted all the time in the workplace for her daughter, mother, father and her husband, and did shopping every afternoon after work, with which lifestyle she was satisfied. Her motto was that, "There is a great woman behind a successful man".

disturbing to her.

Ms. Wu also did not work with enthusiasm. She was receiving regular and reasonable income from her husband, who went to Hongkong as a labourer around 1990. Money was not necessarily the only purpose that she worked for. She seemed to have a great time in the workplace, where she wiped the machines, and played jokes on and gossiped about her colleagues. Obviously, there were no more duties available for her. As an attractive, active and talkative person, she drew attention from a few of her male colleagues who often invited her to go out at night. Her social life was rather plentiful. Ms. Wu's close relationships with her male colleagues attracted conspicuous curiosity from her parents-in-law, who condemned her as being cheap, shameless and not observant of women's virtue. They suspected her of having an affair with one of her male colleagues. As recounted in this chapter, whether about lower educated women or highly educated women, whether in urban or rural areas, demonstrate that, as long as Ms Wu's parents-in-law have kept their eyes closely on her since her husband left for Hong Kong. In the early period, they tried to prevent her from having dealings with any male. In their opinion, Ms. Wu should be loyal to her husband. Their interference was effective only when Ms. Wu's daughter was small and she had to live in a frugal

style. A few years later, being able to hire a housekeeper to look after her daughter and household, she started to be outgoing. In addition, on her husband's side, apart from sending money regularly to Ms Wu, he did not attempt to stay in Dalian, even during his holidays, but remained in Hong Kong. According to her, he described Dalian as a boring city with strong social control, compared with Hong Kong. Also, he no longer showed affection for Ms. Wu, which was a big anxiety for her. She feared that her husband would eventually give her up, and, in consequence, she would lose her current comfortable and rather extravagant life. She was an unskilled worker and unlikely to have any alternatives to improve her condition. To have a reasonable standard of living by herself, her only option was to join the individual market, working from dawn to dusk, which she was not yet willing to do. The contradiction between her low value in the workplace and her high life style expectation was disturbing to her.

The reasons why blue collar female workers stay in inefficient workshops are various -- for instance, having a degree of satisfaction with the enterprise; not having good personal connections with other better organisations; lack of any chance of skill learning, and fear of exploring new ways of working. In addition, although these workers are located at the bottom of the enterprise, they seem not to attribute their low position to being discriminated against by men; rather they accept it unquestioningly.

Conclusion

The women's stories recounted in this chapter, whether about lower educated women or highly educated women, whether in urban or rural areas, demonstrate that, as long as an opportunity is provided to them, many women can make full use of their talent. Educational level is not the sole criterion to judge Chinese women's capability, for, as we have seen, uneducated women often fulfil their talent and succeed capably in areas where they are able to give full play to their native skills. The success of lower

educated Chinese women can remind feminists that it may not be effective merely to insist on education as the primary factor in achieving women's equality: we should equally recognise women's various skills, regardless of educational level, as the higher educational system in China as elsewhere is not providing the full skills required by the human market. Under the present imperfect educational system, women's capability can often best be judged by the outcome of their performance on the premise of equal opportunity and competition. Gaining the objective that they set out to achieve is an appropriate test of women's capability. The fact that many lower educated women have achieved success in the market sector proves that the market can provide opportunity for the supposedly disadvantaged women to improve their lot by making their own choices. Thus, the market can benefit disadvantaged women-- "bottom up. In the market, women are able to achieve their independent success without any significant help from government.

The experiences of Chinese women also show that the disadvantage of Chinese women in high social positions is not caused by women's inability, but by the closed relationships following from both the highly centralised socialist management system and traditional patriarchal attitude towards women. They both build up barriers for women, even highly educated women, to participate equally in high positions. The disadvantage of women in the industrial workshops is derived from limited choices for women in China and lack of personal connection that is stemmed from the Chinese political and economic system and the Chinese cultural value. Hence, as long as the existing system remains, substantial women's equality--making their own decisions and succeeding in high administrative and management positions will be difficult to achieve.

that Chinese women's subordination is dictated by Chinese tradition. Given the cultural restriction on women pursuing their goals in the same way as men, women's behaviour may be partly explained as women's pragmatic strategy to achieve final goals. These goals are not entirely different to men's, but partly shared with men.

CHAPTER 4 THE SELF-IMAGE AND INTERESTS OF CHINESE STUDENTS: FEMALE AND MALE

Introduction

Chapter 4 –and chapter 5 to follow-- attempt an analysis of Chinese “inside thinking” on the position and role of women using a Chinese cultural perspective. The argument in these chapters is that Chinese traditional culture remains significantly dominant in contemporary Chinese society, but that a market economy is gradually eroding the dominant role of Chinese tradition, especially of Chinese attitudes towards women. Thus Chinese women are still greatly limited by Confucian values and morality in achieving their own interests on the basis of equal opportunity with men. But, having experienced a market-oriented economy for two decades, from 1978 to 1998, some Chinese have begun or are beginning to modify their traditional attitudes towards women, and some women are ready to seize opportunities from a market economy. Current Chinese attitudes towards women, and women’s thinking on the position and role of women, are exposed and explored, based on my questionnaire survey conducted in 1993.

In studies by Western feminist scholars, Chinese women are generally considered to be subordinate to men in society, as mentioned in chapter 1, and Western feminist scholars attribute much of Chinese women's behaviour to the supposed fact of discrimination. They have concluded that Chinese women have been exploited by men (Wolf, 1975; Baker, 1979; Watson and Ebrey, 1992). However, this chapter will show that Chinese women's subordination is dictated by Chinese tradition. Given the cultural restriction on women pursuing their goals in the same way as men, women’s behaviour may be partly explained as women's pragmatic strategy to achieve final goals. These goals are not entirely different to men's, but partly shared with men.

Chinese scholars, by contrast, analyse women's problems on the premise that there must be acceptance of women's alleged inferiority (Li, 1988; Zhao; 1990; Liu, 1992).

They cite the following supposed phenomena:

1. Women's personality. In comparison with men, women are less confident, more dependent, less determined, jealous and gossipy, passive, vainglorious and neurotic and they tend to abandon themselves in empathy for others,

2. Women's biology. Women are physically weaker than men, and carrying on reproduction is part of explanation of this.

3. Women's domestic role. Women are naturally good at, and thus "neutered" by, household work.

4. Women's skill and capability. On average, women's educational level is lower than men's and, therefore, their skill and capability in productive fields are not comparable with men's. In addition, while women's intelligence is good in language, observation, intuition, imagination and memorising, it is less creative and logical than men's.

5. Women's career expectations. For the above four reasons, women are less devoted to their careers and have lower expectations for career success than men (Li, 1988: 135-141, 177-212, 281-301, 1989: 75-109; Zhao;1989: 19-36).

From the point of view of many Chinese scholars, then, Chinese men and women are innately unequal: women are inferior to men in many aspects. I shall argue that the acceptance of women's supposed inferiority not only denies women's actual capability but also the assumption of individual equality in terms of skills and talents.

Noting the disparity between images prevailing in conventional studies of Chinese women and their own self-image, chapters 4 and 5 will define and discuss the factors shaping the Chinese image of women. In these two chapters I survey:

(1) Chinese attitudes and opinions with regard to the status and appreciation of women.

(2) Women's expectations concerning their independence and self-esteem.

- (3) Women's frustration and revolt under the restrictions of tradition and the existing social system.
- (4) Married women's influence on the position and reputation of their family.
- (5) The income-budget of married women with reference to saving.
- (6) The duty distribution in households between wife and husband.
- (7) The mutual expectations between wife and husband.
- (8) Parents' expectations of children with particular reference to children's future responsibility for parents and the children's own future.

The present chapter explores similarities and discrepancies between the stereotypes of China's official and scholarly researchers about Chinese female students and the self-images and interests of these students themselves. I argue that the "women's problems" recognised by China's scholars do not affect only Chinese women; rather they are shared by some men as well. I also argue that, because Chinese culture holds a strong prejudice against women who adopt the same independent and assertive ways as men to achieve their interests, Chinese women must find other ways to succeed in pursuing their interests. Striking a compromise between upholding the traditional role of women and pursuing an independent career is a main problem that many Chinese women face. In the light of the idea that Chinese women have, or should have, equal capability and talent with men in pursuing their own interests, the present chapter explores female students' own thinking about their career, personal life and role in society. Chinese scholars' negative assumptions about female students are documented (Li, 1989, 1990; Li, Liang and Wang 1986; Liu, 1988; Tao, 1990: 103-106) and contrasted with female students' own thinking.

Female students are an important subject in Chinese women's studies particularly because female graduates have faced many difficulties in employment since 1978. These difficulties derive mainly from overt discrimination against women in the public sector. After 1978, many work units preferred male to female students, and some

female students were even returned to universities by work units after they were assigned jobs by universities (Ding, 1986: 23-28). Under the Chinese employment system after 1949, all graduates, whether from professional colleges (*Zhongzhuan*), colleges (*Dazhuan*) or universities were supposed to be guaranteed jobs by the government after their graduation, and this system continued after 1978 (Li, 1988: 177-181; Li, 1989: 383-384; Li and Tan 1990: 34).

The difficulties of female graduates in employment have been acknowledged by many Western feminists, such as Honing and Hershatter (1988: 243-272) who show great sympathy to female students and criticise the negative impact of economic reform on women. However, few detailed studies about female students' thinking and their attitudes towards being discriminated against in the Chinese cultural and social context have yet been undertaken by Western scholars. China's researchers by contrast have paid special attention to explanation of female students' thinking, but their conclusions are very controversial. Many Chinese researchers tend to criticise female students' thinking and behaviour as sources of their own problems, while yet acknowledging that Chinese patriarchy has prevented women from gaining equal opportunity in the workplace. They assert that female students themselves are not prepared to meet the new challenges from economic reform, thereby situating themselves in a passive position-- "waiting for death" (Li 1989:28). These researchers say that female students, as a privileged group of women, are highly respected and thus spoiled by society.¹ They are seen to be too proud and obsessed with themselves. Moreover, their academic success leads them to be idealistic and unduly isolated from society. As a result, facing the new economic competition and the challenge of social change, they are said to be unwilling to readjust themselves to meet social needs, and thus to have withdrawn from society. China's scholars believe that in general women including

original place where an individual was born is also an important factor in social status.

¹The percentage of highly educated women--women with a university degree-- is only 0.5 percent of the urban female population in China (Zhongguo, 1993:43).

female students are more traditional and dependent and less competent than men (Li, 1988:178-181; Tao, 1990:103-106).

However China's researchers unjustly stereotype female students as suffering from the traditional thinking of women and underestimate the limitations from the existing system imposes on female students. Instead, they assert that the system provides most educated women with a shelter under which they can enjoy privileges and superiority over other women (Li, 1988:180-181).

This chapter will explore the female students' own perspective in terms of the topics broached in the questionnaire and in interviews with students in China during 1993. The questionnaire was designed partly to test Chinese scholars' perceptions of female students' thinking and behaviour and partly to explore these students' views themselves and the impact of Chinese tradition on women. Apart from studying female students' "inside thinking", this chapter pays attention to the interests of Chinese males and their attitudes towards women, because the attitude of male students towards females is a crucial factor for female students in establishing their own image in public, and inevitably affects their behaviour.

In the discussion below, students' opinions will be related where possible to class background, which is actually social status background in Chinese terms. From the Chinese perspective, the term social status is more pertinent than the term class. Class is a politically specific term, linked with class struggle. For convenience only, the term class will be used in this chapter. The identification of personal class/status position in the Chinese context depends on the individual's occupational and educational level and/or her or his parents' occupational and educational level. On top of that, the original place where an individual was born is also an important factor in social status. Too often, an individual born in a rural area is considered as having a lower class position than one born in an urban area.

I adopt Chinese conventional criteria of status classification and divide the students in my samples and interviews into three categories--urban middle class, urban lower class and rural class. The students from both small towns and big cities are allocated to the urban category. Because the number of students from an upper class background (those whose parents occupy high official rank) is very small in my sample (1.4 percent of female students and 2.9 percent of male students, see Appendix A, Question 1), analysis of upper class students is omitted from the whole thesis. Thus my focus is on students from middle, lower class and rural class backgrounds.

According to statistics generated by the Statistical Package for Social Sciences program, among the 409 students of my sample, 153 female and 166 male students were from urban areas, and 40 female and 50 male students from rural areas. 72.5 percent (of 153) of urban female students, and 63.4 percent (of 166) of urban male students were from urban middle class families (see Question 1).

Individual Interests²

In China reality, one difficulty of female graduates in employment is believed by China's scholars to be caused by the fact that many of them do not study the subjects that they are interested in, as their decisions on what they want to study in university are greatly influenced by their parents or other senior people, such as school teachers, while most male students make their decisions on their own. Because of that, many female graduates appear to be less capable for their job than males in the workplace (Li, 1988:177-181; Li, 1988:24-27).

However, according to my questionnaire responses, both female (62.1 percent) and male students (64.9 percent) (see Question 3) were able to specialise in the fields that

²Questions 3 to 9 in Appendix A relate to individual interests.

they preferred.³ Their choice of speciality was affected variably by individual interests (what students themselves enjoy regardless of other factors), social trend (specialties that are popular and demanding), parents' decisions and others' suggestions. Among these four factors, social trend was the most important factor affecting students making their decision on field of study. Thus, middle class females (47.7 percent), middle class males (48.1 percent), lower class females (43.2 percent), lower class males (44.6 percent), rural class females (67.6 percent) and rural class males (43.5 percent) made their first choice of major in accordance with social trend. Individual interests and parents' decision came out to be equally important as the second factor for urban students-- middle class female (15.6 percent), lower class female (16.2 percent), middle class male (13 percent) and lower class male (30 percent) students made decisions in terms of their own interests while middle class females (15.6 percent), lower class females (24.3 percent), middle class males (20.4 percent) and lower class male (14.3 percent) students decided under the influence of their parents. Among rural students, individual interests was the second priority of male students (30 percent) and the third priority of female students (16.3 percent) (see Question 4). More middle class female students than middle class male students, more lower class male than female students and more rural class male than rural class female students selected the major that they would most like to study in terms of their own interests. Choices made by most male students did not show more independence-orientation than those of females. Interestingly, more middle class female than middle class male students were inclined to follow their own interests. A higher percentage of lower class and rural class than middle class male students made decisions based on their own interests, which is,

Questions 5 and 6: most students were firstly driven by current social trend and other

³ In the PRC, college and university students are selected in accordance with their entrance exam score and the content of their application. Before the national entrance exam, all applicants for university study are required to fill in an application form and specify a major and a university they are willing to study at. They are able to apply for universities and colleges ranging from national and provincial key ones to general ones and for three departments within a university specified in order of preference. Commonly, it is desirable that a student is selected by a national key university and is able to study the major which is in the first place among his or her three choices.

according to some students' answers to Question 4, because they perceive their parents as knowing little about education, so that the meaningful help they can receive from families and society is very limited and much less than that available to middle class students. Such a situation requires them to make decisions on their own. Relatively, they are more aware of their own interests than urban students before studying in universities.

After a few years of study, the awareness of individual interests among students has increased--50 percent of middle class female, middle class male (40.7 percent), lower class female (48.6 percent), lower class male (50.8 percent), rural female (50 percent) and rural male (54.3 percent) students declared that they wanted to study the major that they were most interested in (see Question 5). Choices were also strongly influenced by social trend at the time-- middle class female (46.9 percent), middle class male (57.5 percent), lower class female (51.4 percent) and lower class male (49.2 percent) students, and rural female (56.8 percent) and rural male (42.2 percent) students identified their interests with social trend (see Question 6). By comparison, more female than male students from the middle class were inclined to pursue their interests, which were not necessarily related directly to the social trend. Although they enjoyed many privileges, some of them were not satisfied with only sustaining their previous advantages; rather they were willing to break or give up the existing framework provided by their families, and explore their own positions in society.

As for factors underlying individual choice of study, according to the responses to Questions 5 and 6, most students were firstly driven by current social trend and other external influences such as parents' preferences and decisions. Following their further accumulation of knowledge, more female students than male students from a middle class background realise their own interests and are inclined to commit themselves to these interests; whereas most male students from middle class and female students

from lower class background continue to accept the strong dominant social trend and traditional criteria for making choice of study.

The alignment of factors affecting students' decision making on their study carried over to students' expectations about their future work places and jobs (see Question 9). Many female (38.6 percent) and male students (36.2 percent) eagerly looked forward to working in places which would provide a better life style and opportunities for challenge. One student claimed, "Big cities are the places which have a fast speed of change and provide more new information. I can fulfil my role more positively by working in big cities" (female respondent, Question 9). To work in the hometown was the second choice of many students, both male (23.9 percent) and female (25.3 percent). In pursuing individual interests regardless of living standard and environmental convenience, male students did not differ significantly from female students (see Question 9). This result is opposed to the assumption that female students are overwhelmingly inclined to work in their home town in order to depend on the convenience and social connections established by their parents.

However, the fact that female students only look forward to working in big cities or economically prosperous coastal cities is criticised by many of China's scholars as a weakness, and, because of that, female students are said to find it more difficult than male students to get a job. Zhao and Yang for instance conclude that female students are not prepared to work in small towns or remote areas where there is high demand for university graduates. They suggest that many female students only aspire to get jobs in prosperous urban areas and to indulge themselves in a luxurious life style. They are not prepared for hardship in small towns or in remote areas. By comparison, they say, male students do not show as strong interest as female students in urban prosperity; they think more of their jobs than life style (Zhao and Yang, 1993: 5-6).

But, as has been shown, there is no big disparity between female and male students in terms of their priorities for choosing place of work (see Question 9). The desire for

working in big or coastal cities was widely shared by both females and males, regardless of class background. Female students want to work in a city not only because they can enjoy a high urban living standard, but also because they seek change, as we have seen. Students from lower class family background also express strongly a desire to work in big cities. As mentioned in chapter 3, universities prefer to assign students to jobs in a place close to their hometown. Thus, students from big cities are almost guaranteed to get a job in big cities; however, students from small towns and countryside are not likely to receive such jobs. We have seen above that the second choice of students for a place of work is their hometown. In terms of Chinese cultural orientation, students find it convenient and comfortable to work in the place where their parents live, where they can enjoy caring relationships and established connections. This factor, in particular, has been proved to be very important for individual careers and life.

To work in a place where they can pursue their own interests is the third choice of students-- but pursuing individual interests regardless of living conditions and a familiar environment is not yet common. A reasonable style of social life and an accustomed social and cultural environment are important for students in making their choices. For most students, it is ideal to work in a place where they can achieve their interests, and at the same time enjoy a reasonable life style and convenient circumstances. Among these three factors, a reasonable life style predominates over the other two in students' choice; this shows both female and male students' eagerness for a good social life in determining their work place.

Chinese scholars also assume that female students are longing for occupations with a high social status and that, with such a preference, they have limited choices. Female students are thus said to depend on others' and the state's help (Zhao and Yang, 1993:7; Li, 1988: 28). According to student responses to my questionnaire, the

occupations that many students most desire are (in order) manager, doctor, academic and engineer (see Question 7). My statistics (see Questions 7-8) show that more male than female students were interested in being managers. Among female students, more lower class than middle class ones were interested in being managers. It might be that female students from lower class background were more anxious about upgrading their status than those from middle class families, as their families do not provide them with a high social reputation. Looking at the possibilities for upgrading in China's social circumstances, they tend to adopt the traditional method--enhancing personal social status by occupying a position linked to administration. At the present time, it is possible for many people to achieve a good personal reputation by combining an administrative position with a good income. The position of manager can bring both of these. A good social reputation is a basic motivation of female students from lower class background in seeking an occupation. As for female students from a middle class background, especially from the urban middle class, their family background ensures them a certain social reputation; thus their zeal for administration-oriented occupations is not as strong as among female students from lower class background. As for male students, most of them, both from middle and lower class backgrounds, were contemplating managerial occupations. Students from a middle class background were stimulated by current social trend; as some of them answered, "it (manager) is the most popular occupation in China, so I want to be a manager", while those from lower class background preferred such an occupation because of their own interests. The former were influenced by social demand more than the latter, although they shared the same interests. The latter were more aware of their ultimate goals, which again were associated with the traditional value of personal reputation. As they expressed it, "A man who does not want to hold power is not a capable one. In modern times, a good man is the one who has both power and money".

It is clear that both female and male students long for occupations with a high social status, and that most male students and female students from lower class and rural family background are most attracted to managerial occupations; hence are strongly influenced by social trend and tradition. Ironically, given the results of the questionnaire, official and scholarly criticism of the attitudes of female students towards jobs was amazingly similar to that of most male students and some female students from lower and rural class background. Thus, the real picture of female and male students' job priorities has been distorted by official and scholarly criticism in China.

Students' Expectations for Love and Marriage⁴

Is there any difference between female and male students in their attitudes toward love and marriage? Are female students more tradition-oriented than male students in tackling their love affairs and marriage, as perceived by Chinese scholars? (Zhao and Yang, 1993:10-11)

In my survey (see Question 10) female students did not seem to be more traditional oriented than male students. However, some female students did seem to have developed a dependent disposition and thus were reluctant to break down traditional barriers so as to confront new social challenges.

When asked--Do you have a boy or a girl friend at the moment?-- most students (66.1 percent of female and 70.3 percent of male students) said they did not have a regular girl or boy friend during their study. Finding a regular boy or girl friend in the early years of university is not a serious concern for most students, a fact which suits university authorities, who tend to discourage it. It is explained that there is a conflict between having a regular girl or boy friend and making progress in study. Students

⁴Comments from students of the Department of Medicine (Japanese Stream) and the Department of Chinese Medicine, Peking Medical University, whom I interviewed on 12 and 14

⁴ See Questions 10 to 17.

who find a boy or a girl friend are regarded as not paying much attention to study; thus as likely to finish their study with low grades.⁵ Thus, the expectations for love and marriage discussed below are those of students who have little or no experience in love affairs.

The relationship between men and women expected by students is similar to that which they accept between a married couple, since for most students, their goal in having a boy or a girl friend is to find a potential wife or husband. Among the female (33.9 percent) and male (29.7 percent) students who had a boy or girl friend, most expected to marry their current boy or girl friend eventually (see Question 12). Therefore, from the students' perspective, mutual expectations between dating men and women are closely related to those between a husband and wife.

By traditional standards, as set out in chapter 1, a good man is seen as being virtuous, modest, benevolent, determined, solemn, honest, polite to old generation and senior people and filial to parents; while a good unmarried female is seen as being talented in music, poetry, calligraphy and painting, shy and refined, tender and firmly peaceful, pretty, considerate and obedient to her parents and old people.

In my survey, the most popular positive requirements of female students about males was that they should be intelligent, broad minded, masculine, loyal to a relationship, loving, sociable or show initiative. For instance, a female student praised her boyfriend in these terms: "My boyfriend is ambitious, responsible, caring, sharp and sensible" (female respondent, Question 11). Most female students (68.2 percent) shared this kind of orientation. Most male students (55.5 percent) were ready to appreciate girls who were to be loving, refined, cultivated, caring or pretty. They expected girls to

⁵Comments from students of the Department of Medicine (Japanese Stream) and the Department of Dentistry, China Medical University, whom I interviewed on 12 and 14 September 1993.

uphold both traditional behaviour, such as being sweet and soft toward men, and also less traditional behaviour, such as being lively in public and being clever (but not showing off) (see Question 11). A male student commented that, "My girlfriend is confident, clever and has fine characteristics of an Oriental woman" (male respondent, Question 11).

On principles to be applied in choosing a partner, there was a big disparity between male and female responses. Most female students (50 percent) were concerned with the capabilities of the male in terms of social skills and intelligence and family background; by contrast, most males (49.1 percent) were concerned with a female's personality, associated with traditional standards for judging women. Female physical condition--the girlfriend partner should be good looking and slim-- was important to 28.1 percent male students; which only 16 percent of females referred to male physical condition--the partner should be tall and physically strong. More female (21.7 percent) than male (7.9 percent) students, and urban middle class female students in particular (25.3 percent vs. 5.2 percent of lower class female students), were concerned with choosing partners suitable to their type--they sought shared interests and mutual appreciation of personality (see Question 15).

As can be seen, traditional standards for judging men and women are still deeply rooted in students' minds. The first priority of female students in choosing their partner is a male's capability; whereas the foremost concern of male students in choosing their partner is a woman's personality as required by traditional standards. Personal condition, as mentioned above, was the second consideration for both male and female students. Individualistic orientation in choosing a partner, such as compatibility between a male and a female and common interests, was particularly important among female students from a middle class background. This orientation is not yet a mainstream for Chinese in choosing a partner, even among educated students.

It is known in China that family background is a big concern of Chinese people in choosing a partner. Traditionally, both men and women hope to find a partner from a compatible family background and in general women have a tendency to seek boyfriends from a better family background than their own. These traditional principles are still being inherited by most female and male students, and female students are more cautious than male students about the family background of their potential partners (see Question 14).

As for self-image, most female students (73.5 percent) wish to cultivate a personality which meets both traditional and new standards for women--"a combination of traditional and modern beauty"-- such as being intelligent, energetic and lively, but also feminine and refined. To be simply a career-oriented, single-minded woman with less femininity than the traditional woman is not the goal of female students. Only 2.6 percent of them express appreciation for career-oriented women, while a considerable number of female students (22.5 percent) wish to mould themselves into tradition-oriented women (see Question 16). Clearly, the idea of "absolute" women's equality is opposed by Chinese tradition and is not yet held by most female students. They would rather choose a balance between the traditional idea of women and the new image of women. Most female students in my survey valued highly the traditional image of women, and expected to be tradition-oriented themselves, and many male students (47.4 percent) (see Question 17) prefer the tradition-oriented female.

Male students also aspire to possess a tradition-oriented personality. They value career ambition, masculinity and Confucian virtue. The image of "a real man" that most male students uphold is one who is successful, assertive and determined, and, at the same time, benevolent and tolerant. More male students from lower and rural class backgrounds than from middle class backgrounds asserted that males should possess a traditional personality and uphold traditional morality. This male self-image is, however, in some conflict with female's expectations of males. As mentioned above,

most female students prefer males to be caring, loving, considerate and protective in addition to their ambition and masculinity (see Question 17).

in fact can be seen to engage in a domestic style of work even during their study, such

The main overlap in female and male students' attitudes towards men's and women's roles is that many of them agree that men should be ambitious and protective while women should follow their traditional role. The difference is that male students value a female's traditional role over her intelligence, while female students tend to balance the two aspects: female students expect males to be both caring and loving and to be ambitious and masculine, while male students seem to only pay attention to the traditional virtues of women.

men are family oriented, and that men pursue a career on

the basis of their own interests while women do it only for the sake of making a living.

Both female and male students absorb tradition into their own criteria for getting partners. Some traditions about men and women are taken for granted by both male and female students. Apart from that, the disparity between female and male students is that many female students value non-traditional, competitive capability and intelligence, which however is ignored as a value by many male students in judging women. "Marrying up" is still a principle upheld by most female students, as I have said. Therefore, many female students face a dilemma. On the one hand, they are willing to be competitive with males in both intelligence and capability; on the other hand, they may need to follow the traditional role of women in order to meet males' expectation of females, as this is assumed to be crucial for marrying "a suitable man".

Many female students echoed what one of my female respondents said: "No man wants a career oriented woman as a wife; she is not interesting to a man". In terms of most male students' expectations, those females who choose to be independent and self-determining will no doubt confront a cultural prejudice against assertive women.

Males' traditional attitudes towards women build up barriers for many female students against being as obviously independent as males, barriers which have been neglected by

China's researchers when they criticise female students for being less independent than males. See Questions 18 to 22. China Medical University on 3 September 1993, one female student was knitting a

for her boy friend.

Expectations on Life⁶

Female students are often assumed to be more family oriented than male students, and in fact can be seen to engage in a domestic style of work even during their study, such as knitting (Zhao and Yang, 1993: 12).⁷ In the view of many Chinese researchers, this domestic orientation means that female students seek wealth by finding wealthy husbands rather than by making a big effort on their own. They are criticised as having inherited remnants of tradition and having allowed themselves to become less independent than men (Zhao and Yang, 1992:13). The difference between men and women in their personal life expectations is explained by the supposed fact that men are career oriented and women are family oriented, and that men pursue a career on the basis of their own interests while women do it only for the sake of making a living. Given a choice, they would rather be housewives. Because of that, women often achieve less career success than men, according to this stereotype (Zhao and Yang, 1993: 14).

According to my questionnaire survey, the most important thing in life for most male students is indeed career success (57.3 percent of males vs. 35.9 percent of females) and the most worrying thing in life is career failure (45.9 percent of males vs. 26.5 percent of females) (see Questions 18-19). As can be seen above, many fewer female students share this attitude. More female than male students regard the combination of career success and a happy family as the priority of life, and far more female than male students choose family life as the most important thing in life (see Question 19-20).

However, in general, career success is a value shared by both female and male students, and male students merely show a stronger preference for it. Female students' bias towards family life is more obvious than males; however, many female students

⁶ See Questions 18 to 22.

⁷ While I was interviewing 15 female students from the Department of Dentistry of China Medical University on 3 September 1993, one female student was knitting a jumper for her boy friend.

want to keep a balance between career success and family life. They expect themselves to be both a career and a domestic woman. Female students may have been influenced by the All China Women's Federation, which encourages women to be both a career woman and good wife (Tan, 1990:10). Interestingly, some female students from middle class family background regard their own happiness as the most important thing in their life, something to which very few male students pay much attention. Certainly, the pursuit of individual happiness thoroughly deviates from Chinese traditional values, but more female than male students believe in this value. In my opinion, the fact that male students show a stronger career orientation than female students does not necessarily mean that female students are more traditional than males, because tradition requires males to be career oriented, as described in chapter 1. To a great extent, both female and male students formulate their life values on the basis of tradition. Comparatively, male students attach themselves to tradition much more strongly than female students. As mentioned above, most of those who have explored new values are female students, especially those from a middle class family, rather than male students of any background.

What are students' preferences in choosing an occupation? Do female students expect to be housewives? Do male rather than female students make choices driven by their own interests?

According to students' responses to Question 20, there were three main options for students in making their choices. Thus a small percentage of female students (7.8 percent) and an even smaller percentage of male students (3.1 percent) would choose to stay at home; many students (but more female than male students) would prefer to work, and again, while most students (but more male than female) would choose to pursue individual interests if financial considerations could be set aside.

women's different approach to life and career from men's, which originated in the traditional role of women. This traditional role has again become a strong social and

Responses on the first option show that most female students do not choose domestic affairs as their goal in life. Domestic life is regarded by few females as overwhelmingly important in individual life, and in any case it is chosen not only by females but by some male students as well. Responses on the second option tell us that the significance of joining the workforce for many female students is not determined by their material need but rather by their own choice. Responses on the third option show surprisingly that, setting aside financial considerations, most students are keen on achieving individual interests. This inside thinking of Chinese students exposes a substantial reality about Chinese students and China's circumstances. It is that at present, the working purpose of Chinese students is, by and large, to achieve survival and, given this purpose, there is not much difference between male and female students. But Chinese students long to achieve their own interests; while the possibility of doing so is very limited. In China, pursuing individual interests conflicts with the individual's basic need for survival, as an individual's interests can rarely be realised through a job alone. It is because, as mentioned in chapter 3, opportunities for creating jobs are largely controlled by the Chinese government and job priorities are subjectively determined by government rather than by the actual needs of society. The government's control over job creation (and creativity) results in neglect of individual interests and individual material needs, because, without government permission, some individual interests cannot generate jobs and jobs catering for individual interests are lower paid by government regulations. As a result, Chinese are not rewarded for pursuing their diverse interests. This separation of the pursuit of individual interests from individual material needs is caused by the government's excessive control over opportunities for creating jobs. *students are assumed to be close to marriage age when they graduate from universities (Li and Lian, 1986: 41-46).*

It is evident that Chinese researchers' perceptions differ greatly from female students' own thinking. Perhaps these researchers believe in the conventional assumptions about women's different approach to life and career from men's, which originated in the traditional role of women. This traditional role has again become a strong social and

cultural element in China's society and a force acting on female students. Facing this force, many female students may choose to neglect their role in the workplace. This superficial phenomenon, however, strengthens researchers' stereotypes of female students. Consequently, the public image of female students is excessively affected both by tradition and by China's researchers' subjectivity and arbitrariness. Chinese tradition prevents women from pursuing their goals in the same way as men; while it ignores those men who share the same domestic interests with women. Female students' attitudes towards life, career and their own interests differ considerably from one to another, as do males'. The generalisations of China's researchers about female students give a misleading view of the differs from the inside thinking of these students.

Preferences for the Gender of Children⁸

Conventional ideas about the need for a close relationship between a child and mother are another factor affecting women's employment situation in the PRC. That is, a mother should be "a carer and teacher of children" (Li and Lian, 1986: 112). Women are seen and expected to spend less time than men in the workplace. Thus, many work units including universities are reluctant to hire females. The problem of women in employment has resulted in overt priority among Chinese for a son over a daughter since the early 1980s (Deng, 1991: 84-86, Cao, 1991:86-88). In addition, the one-child policy after 1982 reinforced the Chinese priority for a son, which is, of course, a traditional priority (Su, 1992:33-36). Finally, the perception that a child has a negative impact on a women's career is a crucial reason why many female graduates are rejected by work units, as many female students are assumed to be close to marriage age when they graduate from universities (Li and Lian, 1986: 41-46).

⁸ Questions 23 to 26.

As explained by my interviewees, after graduation most female students will soon get married and then have children, as most students graduate at age 22 --close to the marriage age for educated women in China, which, according to sociologist Zhang Ping, is about 25 (Zhang, 1992:133). Females who are over 25 will have difficulty in finding a partner and they can suffer social pressures from their family, relatives, friends and those around them. In addition, Chinese assume that women's effective reproductive age ends at 30 (Zhang, 1992:19-21). Marriage is necessary for legal permission to have a child in China (Zhang, 1992:133-163). After marriage, according to Wu, Chinese women are expected and need to have children soon: otherwise, they are likely to be suspected of being infertile and to be blamed by their husband's family, and to face prejudice by society (Wu, 1989:3-4). Under these assumptions and pressures most female students can be expected to get married quickly.

However, after having children, women are perceived as "burdens" by their work units (Tao, 1991:103-106), because of Chinese tradition and state policy affecting women, as mentioned in previous chapters. Traditionally women are expected to play the full role of looking after children. Thus, whenever children need special care, most mothers will take sick leave from the workplace, which they must do quite often, especially when their children are small. In addition, Women in the public sector are entitled to enjoy full salary payment and medical care during their maternity leave, the period of which was expanded to one year following the one-child policy of 1982. Such a situation has resulted in a conflict for women between having children and having a career, and is an important excuse for a work unit not to hire women. Women, therefore, have to combat both social and family expectations and discrimination by work units against them.

Questions 23 and 24 aimed at testing whether female students expect to have children after marriage and whether university students, both male and female, desire sons as a traditional priority.

It is clear that the majority of both female and male students do not expect to have a child soon after their marriage, the main reason for which varies from one student to another. Most students preferred having more leisure time, committing themselves to a career and preparing a reasonable living and financial situation for the potential children (see Question 23). Most students are also convinced that they will have to spend much time with children, which could slow down their career achievement. Family finances are another consideration (see Question 24). The finance of each family in China almost entirely relies on the income of a working couple. Though each couple expect to provide reasonably good financial conditions for their children, their income is often not enough to do so if they do not have previous savings.

Among female students, more from middle class background than from lower class background prefer achieving career success to having children soon after marriage. For most female students from middle class background, the ideal pattern of their life is to have both career success and a happy family. Given an alternative, they choose to delay having children.

Female students from a middle class background maintain without question the tradition of having children soon after marriage. This fact deviates from the general assumption of China's researchers and many work units about women's approach to having children after marriage. Most importantly, this assumption has concealed the real approach of males to having children, which greatly affects women in making a judgement about the desirable gender of children after marriage. This male influence on women's making decision is not yet recognised by China's researchers, who also underestimate the cultural and social pressure on women to have children, as mentioned before. Women who choose not to or not are able to have children are mostly likely to be discriminated against by society and those who delay having children face possible stigmatisation. In any case, female graduates who decide to delay

having children after marriage are more progressive than males, because they need to confront a social prejudice which does not much affect men.

While individual achievement is widely appreciated in Western societies, Chinese As for students' preferences about the gender of children, most students are flexible rather than insisting on male gender. Comparatively, though, more male than female students long for a son and admit that their preference is influenced by tradition (see Questions 25-26).

Some Chinese scholars also assume that Chinese women are more dependent on In China today, among educated people at least, the traditional priority for a son is losing its significance. The students' explanation for this non-traditional attitude was that, having an urban style of life, students did not find it much different to have a daughter rather than a son. From their perspective, having a son did not appear much of an advantage in terms of helping parents and bringing reputation to the family. Besides, a son might increase financial burdens for parents, because a son and his parents are expected to spend more on marriage affairs than a daughter and her parents. Also, the son or his parents are expected to provide accommodation for a young couple, while many urban people are confronting difficulty in getting any accommodation. As mentioned in chapter 1, most urban employees are allocated accommodation by their work units. In most parts of the public sector, the size of accommodation depends greatly on the status or position of the male head of family. Although a private housing system is emerging in China, many urban employees, especially young employees, are not yet able to buy accommodation. Urban employees' dependence on their work units for housing still dominates the urban housing situation. In addition, in urban areas, few women depend financially on men and they receive equal pay with men in the same work unit. In terms of children's contribution to the family, it is not unusual for daughters much more than sons strongly to intend to help their parents even after marriage. This practical urban situation has resulted in the decline in traditional gender preferences. Discriminatory attitudes about the gender of children is disappearing, at least among educated urban Chinese.

The Influence of Parents⁹

While individual achievement is widely appreciated in Western societies, Chinese society and other Asian societies are commonly perceived as devaluing and denying individualism with their emphasis on individual obedience to authority (Berry, 1992; Petersen, 1994:10). This view is shared by Chinese scholars who assume that Chinese men and women naturally incline to defer to and accept authority (Li, 1988:136-141). Some Chinese scholars also assume that Chinese women are more dependent on other's help than men, which is supposed to be a part of their inferiority to men in the workplace, as women are expected to be helped by men there (Zhang, 1989:1-2; Zhang, 1992:196-208). As described in chapter 1, Chinese ideas of individual subordination to authority originated from Confucianism. In Confucianism, children's subordination is a part of overall Chinese subordination to authority: children should obey parents at home, and girls are expected to be even more subordinated to their parents than boys. In any case, women in the workplace in contemporary China find it difficult to obtain positions that they are qualified for, and many female students are rejected by work units after being assigned jobs by university authorities. This has given university authorities an impression that most female students prefer to work in a place close to their parents. Female students therefore are believed to make more inconvenience for university authorities and work units than male (Shen, 1989:15-19; Li, 1988:24-27).

It is therefore important to find out if parents have a strong influence on children and what students' obedience to parents means from the students' perspective. Parents' influence on children includes especially their impact on children's thinking about life problems and marriage (see Questions 28-29).

⁹ Questions 27 to 29.

Asked whom students think of consulting first, when they have a problem, more female than male students prefer to consult parents first. Within the same gender, females from a lower and rural class background are more independent from their parents than other students (see Question, 29). Some students from lower and rural class background explained that their parents had little of the knowledge required and few common interests with them (respondents, Question 29), whereas middle class females perceive their parents as being compatible with them. Many female students from middle class background, as well as some middle class male students, admitted that their parents were more knowledgeable and more experienced than themselves. Thus, many middle class female students have a tendency to listen to their parents' advice. Male students tend to prefer to resolve problems by themselves or with the help of their friends.

Interference on children is linked to the class background of parents. Middle class parents are expected to advise their children more than lower and rural class parents.

In Chinese tradition, parents attempt to interfere strongly in children's marriage decisions. Often, a young couple is forced to separate because of disapproval from their parents. As Liu says, "Zhongguo fumu buyao bangda yuanyang" (Chinese parents should not force their children to break up with a beloved boy or girl friend) (Liu, 1993:230-233). Of course, many young couples ignore their parents' disapproval of their love affair and get married, even though they can be blamed by their parents for being unfilial or disobedient, and some parents will even break off relations with such disobedient children (Zhao, 1992: 105-108; Zhou, 1993:238-242).

Children in many cases, however, are not obliged to obey parents' suggestions and can resist them.

Concerning student's attitudes towards their parents' interference in their love affairs (see Question 29), neither female nor male students are negative about it; they tend to understand their parents' interfering on their own behalf. However, students' acceptance of parents' interference does not necessarily mean that students will follow the parents' suggestions. Students would rather mitigate the conflict between their parents' and their own preferences in love affairs and marriage. Their priority is to reach a point where both their parents and themselves are satisfied eventually, rather

than directly reject their parents. But both female and male students from lower class background are more likely to obey their parents than those from middle class background. Given the fact that the majority of Chinese are located in the lower class, this is the dominant attitude of children towards parents' influence on their marriage. Within the same class, more female than male students prefer to obey parents' suggestions. Students who would insist on making their own decision and ignoring their parents' opinion are a very small percentage (10.5 percent of females and 8.5 percent of males).

sex, whereby, a sexual relationship without marriage was virtually forbidden and the virginity of women was particularly emphasized.

However, most students do not rely strongly on their parents' opinion in making up their minds and formulating personal values and beliefs. Apart from that, the extent of parent's influence on children is linked to the class background of parents. Middle class parents are expected to advise their children more than lower and rural class parents do. Male students show more independence than female students in solving their own problems. As for marriage and love affairs, most students, both male and female, intend to find a balance between their parents' opinion and their own. On the assumption that parents insist on their own opinion, more students from the lower class than from the middle class, and more female than male students from the same class background, are likely to give up their own choice so as to satisfy their parents. It seems that parents retain a strong influence over children's marriage decisions above all else. This kind of influence can be characterised as parent's dominance over children in many cases. However, children are not obliged to obey parents' suggestions and can resist them effectively.

Since 1978, however, sexual affairs without marriage have emerged and have become

The attitude of most female as well as many male students towards parents' influence may reflect that of Chinese generally towards authority. This attitude may be characterised as "balance" rather than challenge. On the one hand, many Chinese are quite sure of what they own interests are, but, on the other hand, understanding the
 In 1990 when I was a lecturer in the Department of Social Science at Northeast
 in the student dormitory for a few days during the winter vacation and was discovered
 by the university authority.

interests of authority, they prefer to sacrifice their own interests to a certain extent and compromise with authority in order to achieve "mutual satisfaction".

Chinese Attitudes Towards Sex Today¹⁰

Sexual equality is a part of women's equality from a Western feminist perspective, and sexual freedom is a special concern of Western radical feminists (Greer, 1970; Figs, 1978; Brown, 1986). However, these external ideas are in conflict with Confucian attitudes towards sex, whereby, a sexual relationship without marriage was virtually forbidden and the virginity of women was particularly emphasised.

As discussed in chapter 1, sexual equality presents a different picture in the context of the Chinese women's movement after 1949. The movement did not call for free sex in the Western sense at all, but set up more restrictive rules. All brothels were destroyed and polygamy was banned. If pre- or extra-marital sexual affairs were discovered by authority, both man and woman would be punished. The punishment is recorded in the personal file and continuously affects individual reputation and career achievement. A woman having had a pre-marital affair would experience inconceivable difficulty in looking for a new partner. Having experienced an extra-marital affair, she could be insulted as a "rotten shoe" (*Poxie*). Still, in China today, sexual affairs outside marriage are considered as reflecting a decadent Western style of life. In a university, a girl and a boy friend are not allowed to live together. If they do, they can be expelled by the university.¹¹

Since 1978, however, sexual affairs without marriage have emerged and have become more often, and the rate of divorce has also increased. In addition, prostitution has

¹⁰ Questions 30 to 33.

¹¹ In 1990 when I was a lecturer in the Department of Social Science at Northeast University, one of my male students was expelled because he lived with his girl friend in the student dormitory for a few days during the winter vacation and was discovered by the university authority.

been booming, although the Party-government has tried to wipe it out by political force; the so called Anti-Yellow movement. The whole society is still hostile to women associated with extra-marital sexual affairs. All the "official" women that I interviewed in China in 1993, from the All China Women's Federation to the Dalian Municipal Women's Association, asserted prostitution are shameless and the dregs of society and that women who get involved in extra-marital affairs are immoral.

In China, in an ideal love affair, both the girl and boy have only fallen in love once before marriage. Otherwise one partner will assume that the other will never devote his or her entire emotion to the marriage. In addition, as the virginity of a girl is emphasised by Chinese tradition, a boy will tend to assume that his girl friend is not a virgin if she has had a boy friend before him. The expectation of entire emotional devotion and for a girl's virginity builds up a psychological block for a boy or a girl in telling his or her current partner about a previous love affair.

The current attitude of students towards previous love affairs is that more female than male students tend to break the "taboo" by telling about their previous love affairs to their current boy or girl friends, and assuming that this is a way to show loyalty to their current partner (see Question, 29). They think, "If you really love the person, you should not keep any secret from him". Female students who attempt to conceal their previous love affairs from their current partners are afraid that their partners will not devote their entire emotion to them if they know of the previous love affair and thus might leave them or keep another girl friend. In contrast, many male students are convinced that they have a wider range of choice than female students in finding partners; they believe they can always find females who are lower educated than them, therefore it is not necessary to conceal previous love affairs from their current girl friend. The male students who intend to keep their previous love affairs secret from their girlfriends believe that in general females are jealous and narrow minded; thus it is not necessary to tell them the truth about their love affairs, unless they decide not to go

along with their current girl friends. It is clear that both females and males expect wholehearted emotion from their partners. That females are more tolerant towards their boyfriends' previous love affairs than males are towards their girlfriends' previous boyfriends, may be precisely because educated males are provided with wider choices than educated females. In common sense terms, the more highly educated women are, the more difficult for them to find suitable boyfriends.

As for a sexual affair outside of marriage, in general, both female and male students are negative towards it (see Question 30). Females are more strongly against pre-marital affairs; they believed that virginity is a part of their pride before marriage and to have a sexual affair means to reduce their personal value: "Virginity is a treasure saved for a profound love" (female respondent, Question 30). Concerning the social restrictions on sexual affairs without marriage, a female student said, "In a society that only emphasises a woman's virginity rather than a man's, a woman always suffers most. To have love affairs without marriage indicates that both the girl and the boy are too passionate and not responsible for themselves" (Female respondent, Question 30). This orientation was strongest among female students who have not yet got boyfriends; while those who have already had boyfriends are more ambivalent. Many male students also disapprove of pre-marital love affairs. They may say, "Having a love affair shows both the boy and girl are insane", or that, "When a boy and girl are falling in love they should pay attention to their spiritual love, not physical love" (Male respondent, Question 30). By contrast, those students who hold a positive view of pre-sexual affairs believe that having sex shows their love and emotion to their boy friend or girl friend. Sex and love are believed to be identical by most students. Thus, "A sincere love requires both physical and spiritual devotion", and "Having sex shows both the boy and the girl have reached a certain depth in their love"(female and male respondents, Question 29).

This kind of belief, plus the ideal of a girl's virginity, enhances a female's fear and anxiety, especially because male students from middle class backgrounds hold very strong views against pre-marital affairs and in favour of marrying a virgin woman. Male students from middle class backgrounds appear to be more conservative than those from lower class backgrounds concerning a female's pre-marital affair. It is a common story in China that women are given up by their boyfriends or husbands after being discovered to be not virgin. Because of that, for the sake of marriage, they have to reduce their expectations about the qualifications of their boyfriends (Li, 1991:1-24; Zhao, 1990:169-180).

The strong social demand for women's virginity signals a significant obstacle for Chinese women in achieving sexual equality with middle class men. From the Chinese perspective, if they have an affair with a man, they are disgraced in the eyes of men, middle class men in particular. The story of Ms. Zhang is an example.

Ms. Zhang, a nurse in a hospital in Shengyang, was given up by her first boyfriend after she got pregnant and had an abortion (it is illegal to keep a child without marriage in China). On the night after she was married to another man, she was found out not to be virgin. Afraid of being deserted again, she had not told this man about her previous love affair before their marriage, but her husband, a lecturer at a university, immediately divorced her.

After having these experiences, her parents and she realised that she could no longer find a suitable Chinese husband, and she decided to get a Western man. Later on, she met a Canadian academic at Northeast University and married him. Her parents joked one day that Ms. Zhang should feel grateful for the open door policy, because, without

⁸ Ms Zhang's cross-cultural marriage to the Canadian academic, together with her previous love affair, became a hot topic in Northeast University in 1990. In 1991, I spoke with her parents in Liaoning University, Shenyang.

this policy, no foreigner would be able to live and work in China, and thus she would never have been able to get married.¹²

Interestingly, more female than male students accept the extra-marital affairs that emerged after 1978 (see Question 31). They acknowledge that this emerging social phenomenon has resulted from social change which enhanced opportunities for social communication and social movement. In such circumstances, in their opinion, people expect individual happiness and to widen their interests. More importantly, many marriages before 1978 were found to be unsuccessful, as they were not based on mutual emotional attraction, but on a compromise with common social sense and other pragmatic considerations (Zhao, 1992: 62-103; Huang, 1986). The conventional frame of marriage has been broken since 1978 and the context of Chinese expectations of marriage has also changed; common hobbies and interests, or "Gongtong Aihao He Xingqū" are now emphasised (Zhao, 1992:144-162; Li, 1991:155-175). Needless to say, the number of students who accept extra-marriage affairs is still quite small, and almost half of male and female students are still negative about them.

Apart from pre- and extra-marital affairs, since 1978 another phenomenon has also emerged in that some university students now work in luxury hotels in their spare time and have accompanied guests in dancing, drinking and talking, and even having sexual affairs with them. This phenomenon was a hot social topic in Shenyang in the summer vacation of 1993. The city government and its education committee issued a document which prohibited all female students from working in hotels. Meanwhile, the media in Shenyang attacked the female students for their poor moral standards, saying that they showed lack of self-esteem, were materialist oriented and had damaged the reputation of students. They were described as no different to prostitutes (Liaoning Television

¹² Ms Zhang's cross-cultural marriage to the Canadian academic, together with her previous love affair, became a hot topic in Northeast University in 1990. In 1991, I spoke with her parents in Liaoning University, Shenyang.

News, 25 August 1993). The judgements of the media and the public perception shaped the attitude of students toward these female students.

The majority of both female and male students--84 percent of female and 81.2 percent of male students (see Question 33) did hold a negative attitude towards the female students who had done the escorting jobs, but female students were more alert to moral standards than male students in making judgements about these female students. However, they seemed to be more tolerant than male students in accepting general friendship with them (see Questions 32-33). Some male students declared that they could feel polluted when shaking hands with these female students and would reduce their own dignity by talking to them. Thus, at a personal level, male students are more strict on female sexuality.

The emerging social trend of female students being engaged in escorting jobs, was due to several reasons. Firstly, working in a luxury hotel was one of the limited options possible for students to get independent finance, as there are few jobs available for them during their study in China. Except for working in hotels or restaurants, or being family tutors, students can hardly find part time or casual work. Secondly, Chinese students rely totally on financial support from their parents. With the fast increasing consumption standards in urban areas, family support had become rather marginal for students, especially for those from rural areas or small towns. Many of them lived in an extremely frugal condition.¹³ In such circumstances, working in hotels or restaurants was a way for students to seek financial independence and a better life. My interview with a female student who had worked in a hotel was rather impressive. One of five siblings from a family in the countryside near Shenyang, she was the only one who had entered university. Having been asked what she planned to do with the money that she made from the hotel, she said that she was willing to help one of her married brothers

¹³ Oral Information from a student supervisor of the Department of Machine Processes of Northeast University.

to pay a debt from his marriage and also to help her younger brother to buy a motorcycle. She said:

I am not as lucky as those female students from urban areas, they can depend on their parents. Not only can I not rely on my parents who are essentially peasants, but also I have to help my family members who have supported me a lot to study in university. I am the only one in my family who is living in the city (17 September 1993).

Overall, the orientation towards moral purity and virginity of women is still playing a dominant role in Chinese society, the extent of which is still very strong among educated Chinese. Sexual equality is not yet accepted by many students, whether male or female. Traditional Chinese stereotypes about sexual behaviour will continue. The women's movement after 1949 has certainly not shaken the moral dominance of tradition over women's sexuality. Changing unequal attitudes towards sex as held by men and women has still a long way to go, despite the social changes since 1978.

Chinese Attitudes Towards Career-oriented Women¹⁴

Career success is one of the most important signs of individual achievement, which is especially significant for Chinese, because individual respect depends greatly on individual achievement. Traditionally, as mentioned in chapter 1, career success was supposed to apply only to men, for women were not supposed to work outside the home. After 1949, women were encouraged to participate in the workplace and in principle women's social respect now partly depends on women's achievement in the workplace, which of course is in conflict with the traditional role of women. After 1978, the All China Women's Federation continued to advocate women's dual role--as a career woman and a family-oriented woman (Tan, 1990:32). But women must still face the fact that they achieve less than men in the workplace. Since 1978, women including female students have been criticised for being less career oriented than men:

¹⁴ Questions 34 to 38.

"Some women are not well prepared for the challenge deriving from economic reform" (Li, 1988:11).

Asked what is the most important thing in life, most students, both male and female, share the common ground that it is career success, but, more female than male students emphasise individual happiness as their priority (see Question 18). This may be because of the different impact of social values on male and female students. According to traditional values, men's social respect is determined strictly by their career success, whereas women's is related to either father's or husband's social status. Social motivation for a woman's career success is not as strong as for a man, which provides women with a more flexible social environment in which they suffer less pressure than men in pursuing career success, and can engage in other things instead. Of course, these other things may not be highly valued in Chinese society.

Can women receive equal respect with men if they are career-oriented? "Career women" or "strong women" (Nuqiangren) was a term much used by the Chinese media after 1978. It indicated women who were successful in their career, especially in doing business. From the Chinese media's point of view, this term was coined to stimulate women to learn from successful women and thus try to succeed themselves. Chinese media publicise vigorously how these successful women sacrifice their life and family for the sake of career, which opposes the traditional expectation of women. Ironically, media reports of these women created an image that provoked a strong social prejudice against career-oriented women, and many of them experienced anxiety and being misunderstood by their families and society. They were described as being masculine, less feminine and lacking in traditional women's virtue.

The increasing social prejudice against career-oriented women aroused a debate in the 1980s over what role Chinese women should play in the era of economic reform. On the conflict between career and domestic responsibilities required for women, the All

China Women's Federation proposed a formula for Chinese women, as mentioned before: that women should play a dual role as "both career and domestic women". The Federation asserted that Chinese women should be and are able to compromise the conflicting demands well. The Federation took it for granted that women should take more responsibility than men for domestic affairs, but they also accepted the inferiority of female students to male students in making a career. That is, as discussed before, female students are said to be less competitive and ambitious than male students in the workplace after their graduation, because they can not adequately confront the challenges coming from society and new patterns of personal life.

According to my survey, more female than male students adopt a positive attitude towards career oriented women (see Questions 34-37). Needless to say, female students' image of career oriented women accords with that advocated by the All China Women's Federation--there must be a dual role for women. This issue was specifically addressed by female students in their answers to this question. Female students believe that the truly career oriented woman is capable of both making a successful career and looking after her family well.

Many male students, however, do not expect to find a career oriented woman as girl friend. They tend to dislike career oriented women, because they tend to accept the assumptions about the personality and general behaviour of career oriented women created by the Chinese media. Male students blame career women for possessing the characteristics of aggressiveness and masculinity and for lack of a strong sense of family life in comparison with traditional standards. Apart from which, career oriented male students declare that they do not want women to be competitive ("I do not need a competitor at home"), which might damage their own image as men. They also assert that career success is more important for men than for women, because men are

respected by society only through their career success, which is not necessary for women. Many male students are convinced that women should be supportive and understanding of men, and should sacrifice their own career for the sake of their husband's career (see Question 36).

Yet Chinese women are willing to give up some of their previous ideas and beliefs. In

Confronting this dominant view and the attitude of male students toward career oriented women, many female students also seem to have accepted the negative image of career oriented women. They believe that most career oriented women do not have a happy life, because these women lack femininity, and do not play a good role as a woman. Some female students are really quite hostile to career oriented women (see Question 36), and hostility from Chinese society is a main barrier for Chinese women who are interested in career success. Many female students also mentioned their fear that career oriented women were not yet accepted by society; that their lives were miserable, and, even worse, that some successful women could end up being single women. A single woman's life in China is full of stigma, because a single woman is perceived as a stranger or as having an undesirable character, and thus suffers social prejudice from parents, relatives, friends and work unit.

Overall, the attitude of male and female students as well as the whole society towards career oriented women gives substance to career women's own fears for their marriage and family life in general. In the rhetoric of female students, to be a career woman is to be not loved by men, and, therefore, to fail to get married.

Conclusion

The above analysis of Chinese female students' thinking indicates that, at first sight, Chinese traditional values and beliefs are still solidly rooted in China's society and directly affect Chinese thinking and behaviour. Thus, it might be concluded, Chinese tradition will continue to play a significant role affecting Chinese behaviour, and social

phenomena such as individual subordination to authority, men's superiority to women, and the hostility of many Chinese to independent, assertive, career-oriented women will be maintained.

Yet Chinese women are willing to give up some of their previous ideas and beliefs. In some respects, women from lower class backgrounds are eager to adopt middle class values and beliefs; and some women from a middle class background are attempting to break through traditional barriers for women. However, most men prefer to sustain their existing privileged circumstances, men from the middle class in particular. There is no doubt that China will continue to be dominated by a few male elites, from both middle class and lower class background. Men's favourable orientation to tradition and existing social circumstances, and the ruling patterns of China, will drive Chinese society along the traditional way for some time. Thus the fact that a few middle class women's ideas and behaviour deviate from tradition to a greater or lesser extent will not become a driving force any time soon. The choice available to these women is either to ignore or cope with social prejudice. The ideal of sexual equality will take a long time to take root in China than in the West.

The subordination of women to men perceived by Western feminist scholars is the result of the dominance of Chinese tradition. The inner self of women reflects the independence and strength of women in pursuing their own goals and rejecting cultural prejudice against them. Although men and women have different interests and attitudes towards life, career and career women, they to some extent share some common goals, even though some men are prejudiced against women under the influence of Chinese traditional culture. Thus, the relationship between men and women need not to be hostile.

Criticism of female students in China is based mainly on traditional thinking about women, which is essentially patriarchal and prejudiced. The effect of this criticism is to

strengthen Chinese patriarchy and marginalise greatly women's own voices. Clearly, public views that circulate among people inside China derive from the media, government documentation and Chinese academic studies and these views are not steering China away from traditional and patriarchal ideas. Thus, the idea that studies carried out in China actually help Chinese women is doubtful. On the contrary, these studies empower traditional beliefs about women and pressure women to be both traditional and independent. Silent resistance and seeking a way out without depending on support from government authority, the media or public voices may be the best pragmatic strategy for Chinese women to pursue an independent role. Striking a balance among demands arising from different sources--official authorities, colleagues, family, friends, etc--will continue to be a priority of most Chinese. As seen in this chapter, many Chinese choose not to disobey authority directly and obviously, but to find and reach the point where authority feels satisfied and individuals are able to achieve some long term goals. (14, 20-23; Wang, 1990:5-9; Hu, 1992:67)

However, it is important to point out that emerging social phenomena such as extra-marital affairs, female students' escorting work and new kinds of career success for women after 1978 prove that women themselves have found new ways of achieving their own interests following the Chinese government's move towards market economy. These phenomena are challenging Chinese traditional thinking on women's role and women's behaviour, even though they are being met by strong restrictions from the Party-government. These phenomena show that a market economy can enable those phenomena, which are rejected by Confucian morality, to co-exist with Confucian standards for moral women and moral behaviour. The possibility for coexistence between traditional and moral and non-traditional and amoral behaviour increases the tolerance of Chinese society and decreases prejudice. In the long term, it will benefit women.

women choose to achieve their own interests in those ways that are accepted by society. Women's cooperation with men and support for men are

CHAPTER 5 SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS OF MARRIED CHINESE WOMEN

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the attitudes of married women toward family, career and themselves in comparison with the expectations of married men. Choosing married women as a subject separate from single women to study is justified because, in the Chinese social perspective, they are perceived as men's wives and as daughters-in-law within the husband's family, as discussed in chapter 1. Married women no longer play such an independent role as before their marriage, and, according to Chinese academic research, Chinese married women tend to slip down in the workplace, especially after marriage. Thus, it is important to know about the views of married women on these social realities (Tang, 1992:10-14; 20-23; Wang, 1990:5-9; Hu, 1992:67).

This chapter examines married women's own "inside" thinking in comparison with comments about them by Chinese researchers in the PRC, so as to find out the disparities and similarities between Chinese women's inner self and public opinion about them. In addition, in contrast to the common idea of woman's independent or equal role in marriage, this chapter explores the married woman's own self identification in her role at home and her interests and life goals in Chinese social and cultural circumstances. Finally, this chapter also investigates Chinese attitudes toward girls in the 1990s.

After comparative study of Chinese researchers' assumptions about women and women's own thinking, this chapter argues that, in Chinese social and cultural circumstances, many women choose to achieve their own interests in those ways that are accepted by society. Women's cooperation with men and support for men are

Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing and in the Liaoning Academy of Social Sciences and Northeast University, Shenyang, in 1993.

based on the shared interests existing between men and women. Reducing Chinese discrimination against women will be significantly influenced by the increasing importance under marketization of those skills which are perceived by many Chinese as "women's skills".

The analysis of women's expectations is based on a questionnaire administered to employees on their attitudes towards and expectations on career, family and life. This questionnaire was filled in by 65 women and 45 men, all married. They were industrial workers, nurses, doctors, technicians, intellectuals and government servants in Shenyang and Dalian. Their ages ranged from 20 to 60, of which there were two big age groups-- one of people aged from 20 to 30 (38 women out of 65 and 35 men out of 51); the other of people aged from 30 to 40 (18 women out of 65 and 9 men out of 51) (see Appendix B, Question 1). The analysis of this chapter will focus on these two groups.

According to Chinese researchers in the PRC, women after marriage confront a conflict between family life and career. Faced with the choice between the two, most women are likely to choose family life and pay less attention to their careers. As a result, women's career achievement, and they are considered less ambitious as well. This women's orientation is said by Chinese researchers in the PRC to result in women's disadvantage in the workplace. It has also been considered as an important reason why most public institutions are reluctant to hire women.¹

This chapter will show that Chinese researchers in the PRC judge Chinese women's behaviour merely from surface phenomena --that women in the public sector achieve less than men (Li, 1988:90-91). They tend to ignore the influence of Chinese

¹These were among common views among Chinese scholars and academics in the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing and in the Liaoning Academy of Social Sciences and Northeast University, Shenyang, in 1993.

traditional values and contemporary society on women, and simply accept predominant ideas about women's domestic responsibilities. Their opinion is arbitrary, because they do not attempt to look at the "inside" thinking of women and find out if women are really happy to choose only the domestic role and give up, or lower, their role in the workplace.

Western feminist scholars' analyses of Chinese women's position in the workplace, by contrast, attribute women's disadvantage to Chinese patriarchal attitudes toward women and China's male-dominant social system (Bauer, 1992:333-370). While noting the comments of both Chinese researchers in the PRC and Western feminists on Chinese women's role, this chapter attempts to explain Chinese women's expectations from their own perspective.

Individual Interests²

According to Galston (1986:89-107), every individual should identify her or his interests, and an individual is most productive when she or he is pursuing and achieving those interests. Individual interest is also supposed to be an impetus behind an individual's choice in making a decision about what she or he wants to do. In this rhetoric, an individual is naturally guaranteed to have freedom of choice. However, the way that an individual chooses to gain her or his interests differs from one person to another, because it is influenced by the intricate interaction between the individual's belief about what is the best way to proceed and those social values which guide individuals to behave in ways that are generally appreciated and accepted by a society in general. For these reasons, some ideas shared by all or most individuals may be expressed in different behaviours.

²Survey Questions 6 to 10 in Appendix B concern individual interests.

On the difference between Chinese men and women, Chinese scholars in the PRC presume that men are stronger in their support of public interests in the workplace than women. Women, by contrast, are somewhat of a "burden" there. According to Hu:

1 Women are less interested than men in national and social affairs; they are not willing to participate in political activities.

2 Many women are less confident than men in the workplace; they often fail to complete their tasks of production.

3 Women's technical skills are lower than men.

4 Women are not as disciplined as men. Overall, women are a burden in social development (Hu, 1992: 68).

Are women really indifferent to public interests? And if so, why? And what are men's attitudes on this issue? Asked if and why they want to move out or stay with their current work units, my respondents all tended to express concern with achieving self-satisfaction. Women (45.3 percent) and men (54.7 percent) would like to move from their current work units (see Question 2), the main reason given being that they are convinced that those work units stifle their individual fulfilment. Job promotion in China is strongly affected by China's age hierarchy and the complicated employment system, as discussed in chapter 2. In the public sector, although educational level is important, promotion and mobility are strongly linked to the age of employees. Because of traditional respect for old people.³

As most of my respondents were educated and junior, they were very aware of discrimination against them by the age hierarchy. As one respondent declared, "My work unit hampers personal development of young people, no matter how capable a young person is" (respondent, Question 8). This feeling is shared by those men and women who greatly value individual fulfilment.

When asked to nominate the kind of job that an individual is most interested in, women's responses were quite diverse, including work in government services; jobs

³Personal experience in China.

with higher social status; easy-going jobs; household jobs, and jobs of special interest to the particular individual. In contrast, men's interest focused on either jobs with a good income (58.7 percent of men vs 31.7 percent of women) or with a high social status (30.4 percent of men and 21.7 percent of women) (see Question 9). Men's interests seem to be influenced mainly by dominant social trends in the present and by traditional values. As accumulating wealth was legitimised in 1978 and has been encouraged by the CCP, getting rich is a strong social dynamic in the PRC. Material wealth has become a significant symbol of individual success. At the same time, the expectation of a high social status, as a traditional value, still impacts very much on most Chinese. Among my respondents, the preference for a well paid job was stronger than that for high social status. It might be that because these respondents were well educated, they already occupy a high social status, on which basis looking for a well paid job is more plausible than seeking a higher social status. Another possibility is that to climb up to a high administrative position requires both personal connections and individual subordination to authority, which many people with a university degree or a higher degree find it difficult to confront. A respondent commented:

That I do not want to seek an administrative career is not because I would not like an administrative job, but because such a job involves 'dirty competition'-- making personal connections and flattering a powerful figure. I have not yet learnt how to flatter a powerful person, thus cannot make any good connections.

Many respondents agreed that they would receive few opportunities to be promoted to a high administrative position unless they could make a good personal connection.⁴ The need for personal connections and for individual subordination to authority are seen as the main obstacles for many educated Chinese to pursue an administrative career. Of course, many Chinese, especially Chinese men, still long for an administrative job. However, the lack of equal competition in terms of individual

⁴A conclusion drawn from my respondents' response to the question: what kind of job are you most interested in and why?

capability in the administrative field limits many Chinese in pursuing such a career and, while, the traditional priority for a high administrative position remains important in China, the new social fact is that many Chinese are interested mainly in accumulating individual wealth, and may be happy to forego a career in administration.

In addition, many Chinese seem not to be strongly committed to pursuing individual interests, as discussed in chapter 4: pursuing such interests does not necessarily bring a reasonable income to an individual Chinese. But in my survey, there was a strong coincidence between men's and women's responses here: if financial considerations are disregarded, women (80.6 percent) and men (89.1 percent) would prefer to do jobs where their interests are met, and only a small number of women (9.7 percent) would choose to do household jobs (see Question 10).⁵ These figures illustrate that both men and women are not only aware of their own interests, but also wish to achieve these interests.

On an assumption of a market economy, the amount of individual income should reflect individual talent and enterprise. However, in the PRC, the correlation between income and the achievement of individual interests is distorted by strong government intervention and the highly centralised system. As pointed out in chapter 2, achieving individual interests on the basis of freedom of choice is distorted by government and the political system. As Tan Shen says, "From 1949 to 1957, China developed a highly centralised wage system, which is based on individual educational level, official and professional level"(Tan, 1990:33). By and large, government dominates job creation and determines what jobs individuals are or are not eligible to pursue. This highly centralised system requires individuals to comply with prevailing rules before they are able to achieve their own interests. Hence, the orientation of Chinese to their own interests is seriously concealed by the strong role of government and the operation of

⁵ The interests named by my respondents included gardening, travelling, fashion design, painting and writing.

the Chinese political system. However, regardless of financial considerations, most Chinese are keen to pursue their own interests to some extent.

According to the questionnaire survey (see Questions 6 to 10), there is not a big disparity between Chinese men and women in their attitudes towards individual interests. The main difference between men's and women's interests is that men and women choose different subjects as the focus of their interests. As shown (see Questions 6 to 10), men's interests link closely to the dominant social trend, and thus may be more prominent and visible. Women's interests appear to be more individual oriented and to be less influenced by the current social trend. Chinese researchers therefore tend to regard men's interests as commonly accepted individual interests and to devalue the things that women are interested in, which may not yet be so popular or as marketised as the things that interest men. In addition, Chinese researchers overestimate Chinese women's interest in the household, since even those who sympathise with women accept women's domestic responsibility: "It is understandable that women find it hard to compete with men in the workplace, because they need to spend more time and energy in looking after the family".⁶ As a result, Chinese women's image is stereotyped among Chinese researchers by their own assumptions about women. Therefore, again, it is important to listen to women's own voices.

Women's and Men's Attitude Towards Family and Life⁷

On the relationship between husband and wife, women, from a Confucian point of view, are expected to be subordinate to their husbands without a strong sense of self, as discussed in chapter 1. Women thus are seen to depend on their husbands.

That Chinese women depend on their husbands has been regarded as women's weakness and also an obstacle to pursuit of their own independence (Li, 1989:75-109; Tao, 1991:106-113; Dong, 1992: 38-39). According to Chinese researchers, a

⁶Comment of a male academic of Northeast University in Shenyang.

⁷ See Questions 11, 29, 33 and 45 -- 48.

woman's dependence on her husband is a result of "mutual exchange" between the husband's and wife's interests. Fan's analysis suggests that a strong feature of Chinese traditional marriage is "mutual exchange" of men's and women's interests. Man's purpose in marriage is to sustain his family clan through his children, in practice a son; whereas woman's is to find a family that she can belong to. A woman's responsibility in the family is to sustain the family tree by giving birth to a son so that the family clan can be maintained and, in the meantime, to look after the family. Because of a woman's responsibility for the family, she needs to be financially supported and to be provided with necessary conditions by the husband (Fan, 1987:30-49). Chinese researchers perceive that this traditional approach to marriage leads a woman to develop a tendency to depend on her husband's financial support and to expect only the husband's career success. This tendency prevents women from achieving independent success (Deng, 1991:84-86; Li and Liang, 1986:1-110).

It is important therefore to question women as to whether and why they tend to depend on their husbands.

According to my respondents, Chinese women's behaviour is shaped by the social limitations on women, the values they share with their husbands and their emotions towards those husbands. There are three points shared by men and women about the family, that is, the purpose of saving money, the appreciation of a harmonious family and the expectation of a husband's career success (see Questions 11, 29 and 30). The purpose of saving money reflects hope for a good life in future and for the children's prosperous future and the need to prepare to pay for unexpected incidents. A harmonious family is considered as the most desirable family pattern. Both men and women agree that the husband's success is very important, which in the Chinese context, it establishes the family reputation and the wife's status. This social and family expectation of the husband's success affects women's choice. Many women whom I interviewed in 1993 admitted that their husband's career success was more important

than their own. To reach this common goal, most women choose to cooperate with and support their husband by carrying out far more household work than him.

However, does this women's orientation indicate that women's capability and desire for achievement in their careers are lower than men's? Not necessarily. This assumption goes against the newly emerged social phenomenon that the number of successful women has increased dramatically since 1978. The All China Women's Federation called on Chinese women in 1984 to learn from this phenomenon and thus to become career-oriented women (Tan, 1990:32). This phenomenon is understood as a positive aspect of women's response to new policies by Chinese scholars (Zan and Liu, 1993; Xu, 1993:61). Thus, they say, some women have confronted new challenges successfully and have made their own achievement, while some women have failed to deal with changes in economic policy, and thus are left behind. Some women's great success vividly proves that women can be as capable as men in the workplace.

However, what do the Chinese really think of successful women? Speaking impersonally, most men and women adopt a positive view of successful women. Among my respondents, women (77.4 percent) and men (50 percent) appreciate and honour these women (see Question 46). However, more men (60 percent) than women (32.5 percent) devalue the personality of successful women (see Question 47). In Chinese tradition, as discussed in chapters 1 and 4, the qualities of personality and behaviour favoured for women are femininity, kindness and softness, self-control in public and the like. These qualities are still strongly appreciated by most Chinese. They are the criteria to distinguish women with a good personality from those with a bad personality (Zhang, 1992:86-125; Li, 1-24), and successful women are frequently said to possess a bad personality. This negative view of successful women's personality entails a difficult social climate for women and may force some Chinese women to conceal their potential for career achievement. This social stigma concerning the successful women's personality also builds up some women's fear of being rejected for

marriage. According to Zhang Ping's survey on men's preferences for their partners' personality, among male postgraduates, 58.9 percent preferred their partners to be soft, kind, refined and graceful; only 5.9 percent did not particularly mind partners who were determined, tough and bold (Zhang, 1992:111). One man said:

A woman's softness and kindness can give me sweetness, melt the frozen part of my heart and support me to seek for a new life and new hope. ... The importance of being accompanied by a soft girl is that, when I fail, she helps me to throw out my sorrow and grants me a sweet kiss; when I succeed, she congratulates me with a sweet smile... I do not like a talkative and argumentative girl, because I do not want to turn my family into a place of debate (Zhang, 1992:112).

In addition, the Chinese rejection of successful women is driven by the media, which suggest that a woman's success comes by and large through her sexual relationships with men (Liu, 1992: 50-58; Zan and Liu, 1993: 112-128). Successful women are more or less pictured as prostitutes. One of my respondents said: "Those successful women use their sex to make powerful or useful men do favours for them so that they are able to achieve their goals". It is the media that overestimate sexual affairs as the main tactic of women to achieve their goals, but underestimate women's talent and intelligence in the quest for success. As is well known, for women to have sexual affairs outside marriage is morally intolerable in China. The media divert successful women from their careers by overstressing the moral role of women, and thus stereotyping them. The media create a social bias against successful women. Encountering this social bias, some women conceal their desire for success, and submerge themselves into an acceptable realm. As Liu Xiaoqing, a famous actress in the PRC, once said: "It is difficult to be a woman, but much more difficult to be a successful woman" (Beijing Wanbao [Beijing Evening News], 25 July, 1993).

Another problem for successful women is that, while women's career achievements will often postpone their age of marriage, women are nevertheless expected to get married

at a certain age in the PRC-- otherwise, they are likely to be stigmatised against by society. The social bias against unmarried women beyond a certain age is another obstacle for women to pursue their careers equally with men. Many Chinese agree that women's career success leads them into a stream completely opposite to marriage: "Women must pay a high price for their career success"(Sha, 1992:10). This means that successful women may have to be prepared to be single for all their lives, or become and remain divorced. From the Chinese perspective, a woman's being single or divorced is a big penalty in her life. She is likely to be perceived as being in a special category of Chinese women who are freed from the traditional confines of women's destiny, and are, by and large, socially rejected. For these reasons, many well educated Chinese women choose not to risk discrimination and therefore fit themselves into the dominant social pattern by getting married at a certain age. Most of my respondents, both men and women, confirm that they were introduced to their spouses by informal match makers (usually friends) before marriage, and most of them were married by 27 (see Question 33). The general age of marriage in the PRC today is about 25. This marriage age for a woman is a "turning point" in her social image. If women under 25 are perceived as active, vigorous and attractive, those who remain single at 25 ("single women" refers to women without regular boyfriends) are often pitied and disparaged as lao guniang (old maids) or Goguai de nüren (eccentric women), which means that they possess a kind of abnormal personality by Chinese standards. They are closely watched by society in every aspect of their behaviour. As one woman recounted:

In public, when you are silent, they think that you are self-obsessed; when you are meditating in thought, they think you are aloof and arrogant; when you are excited, they think you are crazy; if you appear to be sociable, they think you are lascivious and shameless, assuming that you are not virtuous or a virgin (Zhang, 1992:216).

By contrast, unmarried men at 25 do not face nearly as strong social prejudice as women. Still, they might be presumed to be unattractive on the one hand, or too attractive to be prepared to readily marry a woman on the other hand. Hence, for both

men and women, marriage is a must, and to some extent, a matter of individual survival under social pressure. The level of qualities and qualifications they desire in a husband, especially common interests, a compatible educational level and emotional

Apart from marriage, the public housing system turns out to be another social obstacle for women wishing to persist in their single status. It leads women to depend on their husbands for housing after their marriage. Under the public housing system, discussed in chapter 2, employees are allocated living places by their work units. Employees are only able to get their own living places after they get married. A work unit's priority in allocating flats is to house married male employees. In principle, as long as a husband is able to get a flat from his work unit, a wife will find it almost impossible to be allocated one by her work unit, while unmarried employees can only stay in a dormitory of their work unit, sharing a room with others, or stay with their parents. And they are only eligible to stay in a dormitory when their parents live in a different place.⁸

This inequality between men and women under the public housing system has been substantially overlooked by Chinese researchers on women's problem in the PRC. Indeed, they actually criticise Chinese women who look for boyfriends able to provide flats as showing too much dependence on men. This is described as properly women's own problem (Li, 1988:171). Chinese researchers attribute this women's problem which is actually caused by the public housing system, to women themselves; they are fully ignorant about the system's effect on women.

Despite these social pressures on women, it is notable that some women have striven hard for success nevertheless. They have learnt to ignore public opinion and persist in their own choices. The number of women who choose to stay single after 25 and without a regular partner is expected to grow greatly in future (Zhang, 1992: 164-165;

⁸ Personal observation in China.

Li, 1991:69-87). This tendency is strongest among highly educated women. Some of them do not want to lower the level of qualities and qualifications they desire in a husband, especially common interests, a compatible educational level and emotional commitment. There is also a popular stereotype about educated women, in China, that "highly educated women are not attractive" (Sun, 1992:22). As discussed in chapter 4, women's good looks are still a very important "plus" for Chinese men in looking for a partner. In the Chinese explanation, many intelligent women only devote themselves to a career because they are not attractive to men, and therefore divert their interests towards academic and other achievements.

The bias against the personality of the successful women, the poor image of successful women and the prejudice against unmarried women mingle with one another and make a predicament for women. In some circumstances, some women choose to retreat from social pressures, and adjust themselves to behave in an acceptable way.

Mutual Expectations Between Wife and Husband⁹

Despite social limitations on women, women's adaptation to the dominant role of their husbands does not necessarily signify women's one-sided subordination to the husband. As mentioned, the harmonious family is an important value for both husband and wife. Ideally, this harmony is achieved on the basis of mutual understanding and tolerance. However, in the conventional perspective, a wife should be more considerate, and thus be more altruistic than her husband at home. For instance, among my sample 11 percent of women vs 2.7 percent of men worry most about their spouse's and children's health. Apart from that, the husband's social role and career is also an important consideration for a wife, as discussed above. In a harmonious family, husband and wife

⁹ See Questions 33- 39 and 44- 45.

reach a point of mutual understanding and mutual exchange of their interests driven by their emotional commitment to each other.

Mutual expectations between wife and husband include having a job, domestic responsibilities, emotional support and fair treatment of each other. As statistics show (see Question 34), most wives expect their husbands to occupy jobs with high social status and good income, and 20.6 percent of women fully respect their husband's own choice of job. In contrast, most husbands expect their wives to be teachers or to do flexible and easy-going jobs. Chinese generally believe that a mother should take responsibility for the children's education at home: hence, the phrase, "mother, a home teacher of children" (Li and Liang, 1986: 112). If a mother is a teacher, of course, she is more capable and has a greater potential for educating children well. Husbands expect a wife to have a flexible job because most of them (76.6 percent) expect that their wives will spend more time on household jobs than they do (see Question 35): They also presume that flexible jobs are suitable for women.¹⁰ Most women only expect their husbands to "help" them in the household. Of my survey sample, only 34.9 percent of women and 21.3 percent of men expressed a preference for sharing household work (see Question 35). This might be because women and men have been imbued with the idea of women's domestic responsibility.

Interestingly, quite a large number of women as well as men (39.5 percent of women and 58.9 percent of men) hold a negative view of domestically oriented husbands (see Question 44). They describe this type of husband as feminine, less masculine, hopeless and incompetent in pursuing a career, and, at the same time, they tend to assume that the wives of such husbands must be sluggish, cunning or fierce at home and not feminine. This kind of assumption about the wife's character is shared by men (78.9 percent) and women (59.3 percent) (see Question 45). The patriarchal attitude to

¹⁰ Interviews with men in the PRC in 1993.

domestically oriented husbands and their wives no doubt impacts on many men and women. Men have to cover themselves up to appear to conform to the Chinese patriarchal standard, even if they are in fact willing to indulge themselves in domestic work. The women who are less domestically oriented have to adapt to women's domestic role. The patriarchal approach inevitably limits Chinese women in freeing themselves from domestic jobs.

As for emotional expectations, men (86.7 percent) and women (61.5 percent) expect caring and love from their spouse. In addition, women (36.9 percent) expect their husbands to be grateful for (the wife's) assuming domestic responsibilities (see Question 37). In this sense, love is highly appreciated by both men and women; thus, love as a value is lodged deep inside men and women. Interestingly, the husband's emotional expectation is stronger than the wife's: "I hope my wife will love and take care of me" (male respondent, Question 37). This idea may stem from the traditional belief in women's loyalty to husbands and their responsibility for looking after husbands. Inheriting these ideas, men are taught to depend on women's caring for them in their daily life, and also to demand women's moral purity. As a result, some men merely expect to be looked after by their wives: for them, marriage is a matter of finding a woman to look after them. Women's desire for being understood by their husband is another manifestation of women's desire for love. Women view the husband's appreciation and gratitude for their doing household chores as a part of love from the husband, just as women perceive that doing these household chores demonstrates their emotional devotion to the family and support of their husband.

That some women choose to take up the whole responsibility for domestic jobs derives from traditional assumptions about women's domestic role, which some women have taken for granted and chosen to cope with. However, this women's choice may not be that Chinese women reject an equal role or independence, as Chinese researchers have concluded (Li, 1988:136-141; 1989:72).

The Duty Distribution of Household Tasks Between Wife and Husband¹¹

Very strikingly, as suggested in a common public opinion in 1993, many Chinese women now take the initiative to divorce, after going abroad. Thus, the wife's going abroad is widely regarded as the end of marriage in the PRC, but such women who divorce their husbands are considered as immoral and unconscionable.¹¹ Those women who maintain their marriage and take their families with them while abroad feel consciously that their role in the home has moved up: their husbands become "much softer" than they were in the PRC.¹² In the Chinese saying, "Women's role has increased from a slave to a commander". Abroad, the breeding bed of the Chinese patriarchy has disappeared; therefore, the "warm shed" that Chinese men live in has also collapsed. Clearly, the different behaviour as between women in the PRC and women outside it illustrates that women's subordinate behaviour in the PRC is coercively shaped by the Chinese patriarchal society in which women's independent consciousness is so easily submerged.

In addition, Chinese in the PRC hold a not-so-subtle view of women who are married to Westerners. These women are often regarded as traitors. From the nationalistic point of view, Chinese tend to assume that every Chinese is a part of national property. That Chinese women marry Westerners is a loss of national property: "Any woman is the potential property of a man; thus women of one country should be properties of the men of that country. Chinese women should belong to Chinese men"(Sun, 1992: 22). The fact that Chinese women divorce their husbands after going abroad and marry Westerners tell us clearly that many women preserve their independent interests in the depths of them and put them into practice as soon as an opportunity is provided.

¹¹ From the point of view of many Chinese, a married woman is only able to go abroad alone is because of her husband's strong support and his broad minded orientation. To divorce such a supportive husband would be unconscionable of the woman in this perspective.

¹² Comment of my female friends in Sydney.

The Duty Distribution of Household Tasks Between Wife and Husband¹³

From the Chinese researchers' perspective, despite the traditional value put on women's domestic role, women's larger responsibilities for domestic affairs are also analysed as a reflection of the imbalance of educational and skill level between a couple, which is also seen as another cause of women's lower success in career terms. According to Zhang Ping, in China, the husband's education or skill is generally higher than the wife's (Zhang, 1992:105). As mentioned in chapter 4, the pattern of choosing a partner in the PRC is that a man tends to look for a woman with lower educational level; whereas a woman tends to look for a man with higher education and a well paid job (Li, 1991:20-21). As a result, the wife's educational level is likely to be lower than the husband's. On the assumption that people with a high educational level are more intelligent than the ones with a lower educational level, and thus are entitled to pay more attention to the things required for knowledge, wives are expected to do more housework than their husband. The data from my questionnaire show that this conclusion is not justified among educated men and women. Most respondents, both men and women, have chosen a partner with a compatible educational level and social status (see Questions 49 and 50). This pattern might illustrate that the compatibility of education and occupation between men and women is an ideal priority for both men and women in choosing their partners. The actual imbalance of educational levels among married couples in China can be explained from both the men's and the women's side as well as from a social point of view: it is determined by men's traditional patriarchal attitude towards women; by women's strict rules in choosing partners; by the comparatively lower percentage of well educated women in the PRC, and by public opinion on the issue of educational levels as between a woman and her husband. It is not unusual in the PRC that people show a negative attitude to a couple where the wife is more highly educated than her husband.

¹³ Most Chinese families do shopping every day after work.

¹⁴ Summary of answers to questions not included in Appendix B (Data are available on request): "What time do you get up in the morning?", "What do you do in the morning?", "What time do you go to work?", "What time do you finish your work?", "What time do you go to bed?"

¹³ See Questions 49 to 54.

However, if there is an equal educational level between a couple, do the wife and the husband play an equal domestic role? The domestic role includes various aspects--the daily time spent on household work and care of children, and decisions to purchase expensive goods and manage living expenses.

Among educated couples, both men and women typically work outside the home. For a nuclear family, according to my respondents, the daily time schedule is: (1) morning chores from 5 or 6 am to 7 am, including making breakfast and looking after children; (2) working hours from 7:30 am to 5 pm; (3) daily shopping from 5 to 6 pm;¹⁴ (4) spare time from 7 pm to 10 pm.¹⁵

Referring to this schedule, most women get up earlier than their husbands, cooking breakfast and looking after children. And, by and large, women do more house chores than their husbands after work. The current Chinese life style, the demand for long hours on domestic work, are the crucial retarding factors in a woman's quest for a career. Even educated husbands do not yet incline to share household jobs with their wives. The idea of sharing household work has not yet pervasively penetrated into the Chinese family. In the result, many women have meshed into the "double burden" of full-time paid job and major responsibility for housework.

But does the fact that Chinese women spend more time on domestic work mean women play a submissive role at home? The short answer is no.

Most couples share decision making on purchasing expensive goods, but wives usually take major responsibility for managing living expenses. The general financial situation

¹⁴Most Chinese families do shopping every day after work.

¹⁵Summary of answers to questions not included in Appendix B (Data are available on request): "What time do you get up in the morning?"; "What do you do in the morning?"; "What time do you go to work?"; "What time do you finish your work?"; "What time do you do shopping?"; "What time do you go to bed?".

in a Chinese family is that the husband often hands his full salary to his wife. A wife is the manager of the family--running household affairs and looking after children and husband. In contrast, a husband is a "family loser", tending to drift away from the family. The traditional notion of men outside and women inside maintains a strong hold in the Chinese family. It characterises the general duty division of the Chinese family.

The salient character of the traditional Chinese extended family is that a young couple Women's role in decision making and managing living expenses at home tells us that Chinese women at least in urban areas are not passively subordinate to their husbands, but play an essential role in supporting the family and their husbands. A successful couple will reach a good mutual understanding and agreement on this. A wife does not perceive her husband as a separate and autonomous individual, but as a part of her integral woman's self. As Metzger has pointed out:

From To feel dependent is also to perceive oneself as turning into one on whom others depend. And in Confucian terms this process of growth was one in terms of which one depended not only on one's models but also on one's own efforts (Metzger, 1978: 24).

[In a Chinese family] "serving" was not necessarily a state of humiliating subservience. "Serving" not only expressed feelings of gratitude but also was perceived as displaying that humility salient in the character of a sage (Metzger, 1978:25).

In addition, some women who are aware of the inequality in the duty distribution of housework find it difficult to change this situation, because "most men have been spoiled by their parents; they have been taught not to touch housework"¹⁶ Because of their emotion towards their husband, these women mostly hold back their grievance about their husband's "laziness" in housework. Along with this, the need for men's attention to outside activities is usually understood and even supported by women--that is, he must make a good future for the family, as mentioned above. In China's social circumstances, women's cooperation with their husbands to a great extent

¹⁶ A common comment of my interviewees.

represents a transfer of their desire for life and career to their husband. A wife and a husband should go hand in hand together to reach their common goal. So it is not appropriate to perceive Chinese women as playing a purely passive role at home.

embodied in the assignment policy of the university. The public housing system, as

The Current Relationship Between Parents and a Couple¹⁷

The salient character of the traditional Chinese extended family is that a young couple stay together with parents-in-law from the husband's side. Within this community, a daughter-in-law is expected to be subordinate and show respect to her parents-in-law and other members of the extended family, as discussed in chapter 1. To a great extent, a mother-in-law dominates a daughter-in-law who is thus prescribed a role as a pitiful and inferior member of the family (Bao, 1992:66-70; Metzger, 1977:21-27).

parents, or live in accommodation provided by those parents (see Question 12). The

From a Western feminist scholars' perspective, a daughter-in-law endured her inferiority in the family in the past because she was not economically independent. This perception of the past is also shared by the CCP. Therefore, women's working outside the home has been an important part of the context of women's liberation in the PRC, as elsewhere. If a woman's economic dependence on the husband's family is the cause of the woman's inferiority in the family of her parents-in-law, then educated working women, it is assumed, must have re-shaped the relationship with parents-in-law since 1949, which should now be similar with the Western type of family relationship between parents and a young couple. However, the pattern and context of the current relationship between generations in the PRC may show more meanings and complexities than Western feminist scholars understand.

At present, according to my questionnaire survey, most young couples live in an area where their parents live, at least on one side (see Questions 13 and 14). For educated people, this pattern is shaped both by the assignment policy of the university and by the

¹⁷ Questions 12 to 19. from almost all my interviewees both men and women.

public housing system. As discussed in chapter 4, most students are assigned a job in a place close to their parents after they graduate. Obviously, the traditional idea that, "Children should not live far away from their parents when their parents are still alive" is embodied in the assignment policy of the university. The public housing system, as mentioned above, upholds the traditional notion of the husband's responsibility for accommodation. A work unit tends to allocate accommodation first for its male married employees. But, given the shortage of housing in the PRC, many couples are not able to receive accommodation from the husband's work unit when they get married. The alternative resolution of this problem is that parents, usually the parents from the husband's side, take up the role of patrons by providing accommodation for a young couple. As a result, many young couples live together with the husband's parents, or live in accommodation provided by those parents (see Question 12). The public housing system strengthens the dependence of the young generation on parents. Needless to say, the factual dependence of young couples on the parents from the husband's side also derives from men's reluctance to live with their parents-in-law, even those who are willing to provide accommodation for the young couple, because men often feel under the control or surveillance of parents-in-law, as long as they live with them.¹⁸

Within the family community, the relationship between a couple and parents can serve five functions: (1) the emotional need for intimacy; (2) caring and rearing of the third generation; (3) caring for parents; (4) economic cooperation; (5) demonstration of social status.

Emotionally, Chinese parents do not conceive of their married children as independent and separate individuals, but continue to give them care and consideration. This emotional tie is also strong among married children and their parents. In the life style of

¹⁸A common comment from almost all my interviewees both men and women.

a young couple, the most important social activity is often to visit their parents on weekends (see Question 15). Women also stay in touch with their natal parents continuously after marriage. Apart from women's gratitude towards parents and caring for them, a woman's close relationship with her parents is a release from stress stemming from conflicts with her husband or parents-in-law. "Each time when I have a quarrel with my husband, I would go to my parents' place, which is my shelter. I will then not come home unless my husband picks me up. Picking me up is his apology to me".¹⁹ It is known that women often seek commiseration from their parents as soon as they quarrel with their husband or parents-in-law. Their parents often stand on the daughter's side, showing sympathy, offering help and sharing daughter's resentments about husband and in-laws.²⁰

Thus, for a considerate daughter-in-law, her humble behaviour towards her parents-in-law is a must. What is the basis of such quarrel and conflict? The relationship between a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law is still virtually hierarchical, that is, a mother-in-law is dominant over a daughter-in-law. However, the sustaining of this relationship on the basis of harmony rests on the "self-control" of both sides and also on "mutual benefit" and a daughter-in-law's respect for her husband. According to the Chinese tradition, parents-in-law from the husband's side take the main responsibility for accommodation, for child care when it is required and for financial support of a young couple. These traditional ideas are still being utilised by Chinese and strengthened by some social problems such as the public housing system. After 1978, many public child care centres collapsed, and some refused to receive children under a certain age. The alternatives for a young working couple seeking someone to look after their child are either to hire private child care or to ask for help from their parents. In this case, the

¹⁹ A comment from an informant.

²⁰ Almost all the married women whom I knew well and interviewed in Dalian and Shenyang gossiped and complained about their husband and mother-in-law. When they quarrel with either their husband or their mother-in-law, they will often leave for their natal parent's place. It is understood that a daughter-in-law and mother-in-law are often natural enemies.

mother-in-law is usually expected to pay for or subsidise private child care or to carry out the task of looking after the grandchild herself (see Question 16).

In return, a daughter-in-law is expected to respect the mother-in-law, plus other members of the family of her parents-in-law, as well as her husband. Parents-in-law often keep close watch on how a daughter-in-law treats her husband, and whether she does house chores. As one woman said to me:

Every son's mother hopes that her son is well looked after by his wife and a daughter-in-law has to be diligent. So I have to appear to be diligent, doing house chores and cooking when visiting my parents-in-law, even though I do not do that much at home.

Thus, for a considerate daughter-in-law, her humble behaviour towards her parents-in-law is an expression of her respect for and emotion towards her husband-- "please the mother-in-law for the face of the husband". The notion of the daughter-in-law's subordination to the mother-in-law has become a deliberately promoted social formula that most married women are supposed to follow, and a social standard to test women's self cultivation, self esteem and personal manner. This notion is taken for granted by husbands as well, for whom a refined and loving wife should be humble and respectful towards her parents-in-law.

In addition, a married woman's social status is associated with that of her husband's family: the social status of a man's family is an important factor that a girl looks for in a boyfriend. As Chinese researchers point out: seeking a man with a good family background, including good social status and living condition, is a priority of a woman looking for a partner (Zhang, 1992: 105-108).

Thus, the unity of social status as between a married woman and her parents-in-law often forces a woman to yield to traditional values. By doing so, a woman may maintain or move up to a high social status. Thus, the traditional definition of the role

of mother-in-law and daughter-in-law decrees separate duties for them, which shape their relationship. The continuance of this relationship is on the basis of giving and receiving and cooperation of both sides. However, the polar analysis of this relationship-- a mother-in-law is at the top, while a daughter-in-law is at the bottom, is culturally not quite accurate.

Children's Education in the Family²¹

According to Pederson:

Cultural patterns of thinking and acting were being prepared for us even before we were born, to guide our lives, shape our decisions and to put our lives in order. We inherited these culturally learned assumptions from our parents and teachers who taught us the "rules" of life (Pederson, 1994: 5).

The people that children grow up with outside the family are first of all teachers and other initial behaviour models from whom children learn by observation. Taking a larger view, constructive cultural patterns of thinking and acting are predestinated by the cultural values of each society, within which individual patterns of thinking and acting will vary from one person to another and from time to time, because "in any population of self-reproducing organisms, there will be variations in the genetic material and upbringing that different individuals have"(Hawking, 1988:13). Apart from that, after growing up, individuals see the social environment around them through their own eyes, and choose the ways to behave that they believe are appropriate and best for themselves (Pederson, 1994). Family education is thus significant for every human being. It is a part of the endogenous resources of the individual. As it is common that boys and girls receive different messages in family education, the different "family models" of boys and girls have been conceived as causing gender behaviour and capability differences, and thus women's disadvantaged role in society (Naomi, 1985:109-113; Jacobs, 1990; Eccles, 1990: 183-201). In the case of Chinese women, the different family models of boys and girls is an effect rather

²¹ Questions 20 to 23, 30 to 31 and 40 to 43.

than a cause of women's disadvantaged social role, because the family education for both boys and girls in fact expresses the same values. As some Western scholars have realised (Metzger, 1977:29-166), the fundamental role of Chinese family education is to guide children towards common social values, morality and notions of well being, and to teach or provide children with skills required for self-fulfilment and self-responsibility. In traditional China, women's skills learned at home in principle were not turned to public use: a purpose of their learning skills was only for domestic needs as discussed in chapter 1.

In education, according to my respondents, Chinese parents presume that children are Except for traditional skills, such as reciting and writing poems, skill changes follow from a changing environment, in China as elsewhere, and children are expected to be able to deal with the social situation over time. Chinese parents do worry that their children will not turn out to be responsible and capable in matching the demands of society (see Questions 30 and 41). Hence, Chinese family education is both traditional and pragmatic. For instance, the pursuit of social status is one of the most significant Chinese traditional values: traditionally, high social status could only The educational model of the Chinese family is authoritarian, echoing the hierarchical relationships within the family. In the ideal educational model of the West, "every Western family may perceive of a pattern that each member has a right to be her or his unique self an equal or fair division of labour and an egalitarian role relationship" (Pederson, 1994:14). By contrast, the Chinese family upholds a pattern whereby each member is supposed to pursue a role that has already been prepared by Chinese tradition. Role relationships, including those between parents and children, and those between children, are hierarchical, partial (favouring some children over others) and duty-oriented. If their children's jobs in the future often alter in accordance with the changing popularity of jobs, as Chinese perceive that people who occupy popular jobs Parents expect their children to obey their orders and respect them regardless of the children's self concern. Even today, educated parents still expect their children to do what they (the parents) require. Many of my respondents said that they were worried

that their children may not obey them when they grow up (see Question 41). As between children, as discussed in chapter 1, the younger should obey and respect the older. But elder children must take responsibility for looking after younger ones. In a Chinese family, generally, the youngest one receives more care, affection and attention from parents than older brothers and sisters, regardless of gender. The youngest one is most protected. On top of that, parents favour children who are obedient, tolerant and considerate (Question 21).

In education, according to my respondents, Chinese parents presume that children are less experienced than adults and are not mature, so that they are not able to make the right decisions for themselves and act accordingly. Thus, children need to be well guided towards the right direction. The so-called right direction is that perceived by parents who think they see the way that is best for children. They are motivated in this by traditional values and the dominant social trend of a particular period, as well as by their own career experiences. For instance, the pursuit of social status is one of the most significant Chinese traditional values: traditionally, high social status could only be reached by passing an entrance exam to become an official. In modern times, studying at the university is a crucial step to moving up to a higher social status. As mentioned in previous chapters, in the PRC today a university certificate goes closely with personnel promotion in all the public sectors, including government organisations, institutes, universities, hospitals, state enterprises and the like. Without a university certificate, it is difficult and perhaps impossible to advance past a certain level along a career ladder. Thus, many parents make big efforts to prepare children to enter university (Question 32). Besides that, in the quest for social status, parents' expectations of their children's jobs in the future often alter in accordance with the changing popularity of jobs, as Chinese perceive that people who occupy popular jobs have a high social status.²² In the late 1970s, and early 1980s, parents expected their

²²Personal experience in China.

children to study science and engineering in accord with the popular idea, “Xuehao sulihus; zoubian quantianxia”(Study well at mathematics, physics and chemistry, and then go all around the world). But now, in the 1990s, they urge their children to study trade, economics, medicine, applied sciences, and so forth, because the current social trend links those fields with accumulating wealth and with economic efficiency. The changing popularity and status of jobs directs parents to readjust their aspirations for the children's future. And so, to value or respect children's interests is not the Chinese parents' approach towards their children. Many parents are not aware of and don't even think of their children's personal interests. They believe that it is their responsibility to bring up their children to be responsible and useful in society, which criterion is solely designed by parents. In addition, Chinese parents try to persuade children to inherit those skills that parents themselves possess which are useful in society. For instance, if one parent is a doctor such a family will usually expect one child to be a doctor. A computer specialist expects her or his child to be a computer will often specialist (respondents, Question 40).

No matter how variable the popularity of jobs is over time, the connection between social status and the exercise of power remains essentially unchanged. To be a government official is still a strong motivation and a popular Chinese career desire, even though, at the social surface, this orientation is not absolute or overwhelmingly prominent any more. This is because accumulating wealth now seems to be an urgent task for Chinese, and the administrative structure is in transition, so that many administrative institutions appear inefficient or meaningless. In the meantime, they are a big cost for the government budget. Thus, the CCP has tried to reduce these institutions (Guowuyuan, 1990:5); however, Chinese still admire and appreciate deeply those who are government or Party officials, especially in the high ranks. They say, “That I don't want to be a government official is not because I don't like it, but because it is too difficult and competitive. It is especially competitive in personal

connections".²³ Thus, seeking a high position in administration as a sign of high social status is still a strong ego-motivation of many Chinese. It has not yet been replaced by the seemingly dominant social dynamic of accumulating wealth.

Although family education differentiates girls' skills from boys' skills, which is a part of Parents expect both boys and girls to pursue social status, but of course the paths that boys and girls take diverge: they are taught to follow different ways, because of the role division between men and women in Chinese tradition. From the Chinese viewpoint, men should only pursue high social status along the career ladder, whereas women can climb up by means of marrying a husband with a good job or coming from a family with a high social status. This traditional determination of men's and women's roles results in parents controlling or influencing children's marriage affairs a great deal. As has been well studied, in rural areas parents often meddle in children's marriage, which is a problem for girls who are often persuaded or even forced to marry those that they don't want to. For boys, parents' approval or disapproval of their marriages is also influential. To some extent, it is crucial for the relationship between a young couple and parents/parents-in-law after marriage.

Thus traditional notions remain a strong influence even on an educated couple. They mould boys and girls in different ways at home. Boys are not particularly encouraged to do household work, to learn classical literature or to listen to tales, but are supported to play aggressive games and to behave in a masculine fashion; whereas girls are asked to assist parents in doing household jobs, to recite classical poems and to learn literature and music.²⁴

Parents will often specify the types of jobs that they think are suitable for girls, such as teacher, artist, writer or easy-going jobs. They expect boys to do technical and

²³ Summary of interviews in Shenyang and Dalian.

²⁴ A summary from respondents' answers to the question, "What do your children do at home?".

managerial jobs.²⁵ Clearly, the gender bias in skills begins with upbringing and family education. In consequence, it is important in the workplace.

Although family education differentiates girls' skills from boys' skills, which is a part of the reason for distinctive gender divisions in the workplace, it does not necessarily cause women's disadvantaged position in the workplace, as many Western feminists (Andor, 1983; Eccles and Jacobs, 1990:183-201; Jacobs and Eccles, 1990). The gender bias in skills is most obvious in the public sector. Many Western feminists and Chinese scholars also narrow their attention on the women's employment issue to the public sector dominated by technical and administrative jobs, and devalue the role of other jobs requiring skills that many women actually possess. They conclude that women's skills are in general lower than men, and propose that the development of women's skills is an important part of women's equality. It was and still is true that in the public sector women are located in inferior positions; however the inequality in jobs between men and women is largely caused by policy on salary that prices skills dominated by males. Under the policy, women's skills have been under-valued. But now, with the Chinese economy becoming market-oriented, some skills common among women are being fully utilised. For instance, since 1978, many rural women have left their homes and flooded into the social service sector (as private child carers, housekeepers, restaurant workers and street vendors), getting casual work in urban areas. Women are also the main productive force in the textile industry and craft industries. There are also some emerging fields where women are very active, such as "public communications" (liaison in hotels, companies, etc) and the tourist industry. (Liu, 1993; Zan and Liu, 1993; Zhongguo, 1991:242-309). These fields allow women to commercialise the skills learnt at home, such as child care, cooking, knitting and making clothes, and women's linguistic talents are perceived as giving an advantage over men by Chinese. In the urban individual market discussed in chapter 3, more than

²⁵ A summary from respondents' answers to the question, "What kind of job do you expect your children to do in future?".

half of the working people are women.²⁶ Chinese women, both rural and urban, have developed a significant role and situated themselves for a strong role in the new market-oriented society. It is the market that allows women to display their capability equally with men. If Chinese parents have followed the gender bias in terms of skill teaching, the market ameliorates this bias. More significantly, Chinese women's fulfilment in the market also illustrates that the skills that women learn at home are equally useful and helpful in society with men's skills. Gender bias against women is initiated by family education, and is embraced in the public sector where government control is strong and highly centralised; but it is largely dismissed by the market. Strong government control is the cause of the distinctive gender division in the workplace, but the market is largely blind to this division.

The Gender Expectations of Parents Before Child Birth²⁷

As for emotional expectations of parents for their children, parents expect both sons and daughters to be filial after they grow up. However, sons' and daughters' perspective differ from those of parents. For sons, filial piety includes respecting the parents' desire for their own career achievement and being prepared to stay with and look after parents when they are getting old. For daughters, filial piety does not necessarily require taking daily responsibility for looking after parents as long as there is a son in the family; they are expected to be considerate and obedient instead. Of course, in the Chinese cultural context, parents do not view their daughters as an essential part of the family after they get married. Sons are the ones who are required to sustain a family tree. This son's role in a family may motivate parents to prefer a son to a daughter, as we have seen. That parents are partial to sons, is somehow taken for granted by daughters. Even though they perceive that their parents are traditional and conservative in dealing with sons and daughters, they do accept the son's special role in the family (see Questions 20 and 21).

couple's own attitude. Within a family where there is more than one son, parents do not eagerly long for another grandson, so long as they

²⁶Comments from women in the Dalian Municipal Women's Association and an official from the economy and trade commission of the Shenyang Municipal Government

In the public sphere, Chinese tradition overestimated administrative skill as exclusively a male attribute and prohibited women from a role in administration. In particular, administrative skill was entangled with social status, which determined the extent of respect that an individual could receive from society. Chinese tradition also decrees that the social status of a man stands for that of his family. The connection between a son's social position and the social status of his family, as well as a son's social role in the family, means that parents depend on their son for both social status and support in their old age. Therefore, parents prefer and favour the son to the daughter in general. The only exception where the family may prefer a daughter is the family where there is only one daughter and more than one son (see Questions 20 and 21).

The Gender Expectations of Parents Before Child Birth²⁷

As has been broadly realised both in and outside the PRC, the attitude of Chinese favouring a son has been reinforced by the one child policy beginning in 1982. This policy has generated prominent social problems such as female infanticide, the female's being neglected by parents and sex selection before child birth (Li, 1989:5-6). The contradiction between the one child policy and the traditional value put on having at least one son may be the key issue driving these social problems. However, in urban areas, the attitudes of young couples toward girls do differ from the traditional norm. In addition, a young couple's expectation for the gender of their children is influenced by their parents.

As mentioned above, at present many young couples still keep a close relationship with their parents. They associate with one another as a regular community, within which they help and care for each other, and thus influence one another. The attitude of parents toward girls shapes a young couple's own attitude. Within a family where there is more than one son, parents do not eagerly long for another grandson, so long as they

²⁷ Questions 23 to 28.

already have a grandson from one of their married sons, because this grandson already ensures escape from the predicament of discontinuity in the family tree.²⁸ In this situation, grandparents would probably rather have a grand daughter and reach an ideal pattern of "gender balance"²⁹. In this case, the daughter-in-law will not feel worthless if she has a daughter, and may receive equal help from her parents-in-law compared with another daughter-in-law who has had a son.

The attitude of parents from the wife's side towards a girl child also influences the young couple. If the parents do not have a son of their own, they will expect their daughter to have a grandson. Assuming a daughter fulfils the needs of her parents by having a grandson, she and her son will be paid more attention and cared for more by her natal parents. Thus, the condition that parents, from both the husband's and wife's side, are willing to offer help, and a young couple's dependence on such help, result in grandparents' expectations for the gender of their grandchildren to be an important consideration for a young couple in their own expectations. Grandparent's satisfaction with the gender of their grandchild can become a buffer to mitigate the internal conflict between a couple, and help their marriage stability. On the other hand, parents' dissatisfaction with the gender of their grandchild also can have the same effect paradoxically. However, grandparents' dissatisfaction with the gender of their grandchild can create conflict between a couple, and shake their emotional integrity (see Questions 26 and 28).³⁰ In the Chinese family community, characterised by every one's business being a part of others' business, the gender of the third generation shapes the relationship between parents and a young couple; between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, and even between a couple. Chinese admit that their attitude

²⁸ Respondents were asked, "What gender for your children do your parents expect, and why?"

²⁹ According to my interviews, many urban Chinese perceive as an ideal family pattern a couple with one son and one daughter; this is so-called "gender balance".

³⁰ This summary derives from interviews with married Chinese women whom I know well.

towards girls is influenced by traditional values and the social environment--including public opinion about girls, women's situation in society and parent's ideas about girls. It will be a big task to change deep rooted Chinese ideas upholding male preference, because it would affect various kinds of family relationships which are central for Chinese. Chinese admit that their attitude toward girl is deeply affected by traditional values and the current social environment, including public opinion on girls. Thus, it is crucial to find a way which devalues the Chinese tradition of male preference and enables Chinese to overcome the constraints and barriers it erects. The transitional attitudes of some young educated couples towards girls might be a cause for help.

Many educated couples do not care very much about the gender of their child. They state that there is not much difference between the family with a son and the one with a daughter in a modern society where women can find a proper social position. They specifically stress that in contemporary China women do not have to entirely depend on their husband in the economy. In urban areas, with modernisation, the demand for heavy labour is declining; therefore, women's lack of physical strength is no longer a serious disadvantage in the workplace. As some respondents admit, in urban areas women do not have to be involved in heavy physical jobs as they did before, and they are able to make the same amount of money as men by doing other things suitable for women. Many respondents expect their daughters to be musicians, fashion designers, secretaries, translators and the like.³¹ People may not be conscious of women's equality, but rapid marketization in the urban PRC drives them to shift away from traditional ideas. Given women's achievements in society, people, through their own eyes, have seen that women's capability and intelligence are comparable with men's in the workplace. This transitional attitude-- objective judgement of women's capability without firmly accepting the idea of women's equality-- stems from social change and the move towards marketization.

³¹ Respondents' answers to the question, "What kinds of jobs do you expect your children to do and why?"

Conclusion

The criticism of Chinese researchers about Chinese women's lower career ambition is not justified, because they neglect to relate women's visible behaviour and performance in the workplace to the social stress derived from Chinese tradition. Chinese society today views career-oriented women as controversial. In the media, career-oriented women are pictured as a kind of model to demonstrate women's capability and talent on the one hand, and, on the other hand, it is said that they sacrifice their family life and pay little attention to husband and children, which is against the traditional notion of women's role. The media create an image of career-oriented women that many Chinese, both men and women, apparently appreciate; but, nevertheless, they also inwardly reject it, as the traditional role of women is deeply rooted in their minds. Under such traditional and invisible pressures, many women choose to restrain themselves so that they are accepted by most people. In such circumstances, women tend to support their husband's career as a means of assuaging their own desire for career success or high social status.

From a cultural perspective, that Chinese women undertake more domestic responsibilities than their husbands should not be described simply as women being exploited by or made subordinate to men. To a great extent, men and women share the same expectations for life and social status. More important, despite other reasons, Chinese women conceive of looking after their husbands as a proof of their love, intimacy and consideration.³²

Chinese family education may have resulted in a distinctive gender division in the labour force; however, it is not necessarily the cause of women's disadvantage there. Chinese family education stresses the skills that Chinese women and men should learn from the family, but in terms of actual useful skills, there is no real distinction between

³² Based on female responses to the question, "What do you expect your husband to do at home and why?".

men and women. The strong distinction between women's and men's skill is subjectively designed by people who accept hierarchical criteria for skills: it is shaped by the existing hierarchical social structure dominated by a few males.

The transitional attitude of urban educated Chinese towards women illustrate vividly that opportunity, especially new market opportunities since 1978, is a very significant factor enabling Chinese to change their discriminatory attitudes toward women. Opportunity permits women to utilise their intelligence, talent and skills. Once they are able to do so, people will see and thus believe in women's comparability and equality with men. With the move towards a market-oriented economy, many women have turned their skills to productive fields and joined in market competition, where their skills are recognised for their market value.

Marketisation may be a practical method to diminish Chinese discrimination against women. Although the urban educated Chinese who have realised the potential ability of women make up a small percentage of the Chinese population, their transitional attitude is catalysed or reinforced by an invisible but effective hand--the market. Thus, the market is a "good teacher" for the Chinese to begin to give up Chinese patriarchy. As Chinese now say, "Learn from the market". It is true that Chinese who have joined the market sector are quite small in number. Up to 1993, there were only 0.1 percent of women working in foreign owned companies; 0.3 percent of women and 0.2 percent of men in joint-venture companies and 3.0 percent of women and 5.7 percent of men in individual markets (Zhongguo, 1993: 81). However, women's achievements in the market sector, discussed in chapter 3, demonstrate that women are able to achieve equality with men in the market by equal competition. What some women have already gained from the market is an equal opportunity, which in the long run can transform the possibilities for women generally to pursue their own interests and achieve fulfilment.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has pursued four key areas of inquiry: first, the sources of the definition and maintenance of Chinese women's traditional social role; second, the suppressed situation of Chinese women from 1949 to 1978 under the socialist system; third, the complexities of Chinese women's situation after the economic reform of 1978, and, fourth, the analytical description of Chinese thinking and behaviour on the "woman question" and gender relations in the contemporary Chinese social and cultural context.

Chapter 1 describes Chinese women's and men's role as defined by Confucian culture, which differentiated gender roles in both public life and the family. Under the sway of Confucianism women's social role was confined to the family--it depended on her father before marriage and her husband after marriage; thus women were perceived as having no independent social role. In traditional Chinese society, the social role of all Chinese was determined by the administrative or class position of "their" head of household. Chinese society operated on the basis of an exclusively male and a strongly hierarchical administrative structure, and thus women's independent social status was largely excluded. Thus, in traditional China, women's dependent role was a product of Confucian culture which defined both social values and the governing principles for the nation. Confucian culture became a theoretical corner stone for building up the Chinese social and family structure. Its unique role for China still is that it binds families together with society so that between them there is no clear distinction as in other societies, and very little separation of the public from the private sphere. A family is an integral part of the social system and a woman's role in the family affects the social image of the family. A good social image for the family is the biggest concern of Chinese family members. Because of the administrative character of Chinese society, the pursuit of high social status is a dominant value for Chinese and in most cases social status is determined by a family's reputation or its social image, which follows from a man's high social position. However a woman's role in the family also is a

significant factor affecting its reputation and also a man's pursuit of a higher social position. Confucian culture precisely designed two separate paths for men and women in obtaining high social status. In principle, these two paths interacted or intersected with one another. To reach a higher social status, men were encouraged to achieve a high administrative position; ambitious women were thus constrained to marry men with or likely to achieve high social status. To be able to marry men with high social status, women were expected to fulfil the moral principles designed especially for them. How well women lived up to Confucian moral principles directly affected their pursuit of high social status.

Although both men and women were expected to obey moral rules, the punishment for women who failed to do so was more severe than for men. Such women were likely to lose their high social status, or to receive no chance to climb up to high social status, but men were much less likely to suffer in this way. The essence of discrimination against women in China was that women were prevented from pursuing administrative position and were situated so as to suffer moral restrictions more severely than men. Historically, this kind of discrimination against women was entrenched following the constant strengthening and increase of bureaucratic institutions, which came to overwhelmingly dominate Chinese society. In consequence, women's role in the public sphere tended to vanish.

Chapter 2 examines the structure of the Chinese socialist system in relation to its control over individuals. This system has now reached a peak of bureaucratic control, under which Chinese individuals and families have been strongly institutionalised. Women as well as men have become almost entirely subordinate to the political system and the family has been recruited to act under the direct control and in the interests of the system. That Chinese are subordinate to the socialist system is a premise for them before they can pursue their own interests. On top of that, the Chinese have been forced to replace their traditional ideas with Marxist ideology which is to a great extent

in conflict with Chinese tradition. In reality, the imposed ideology never took deep root in the Chinese mind, on the contrary, Chinese women in particular were caught in a conflict between the "external" ideology of women's liberation and the "internal" tradition of male superiority. The Chinese socialist system in reality does not give women a proper chance to break down traditional and moral barriers affecting them, and does little to undermine those elements supporting men's domination. Under this system, women are expected to obey the Party's political ideology and also to conform to Chinese morality. What women have experienced from women's liberation since 1949 is an extended subordination to both the Party and traditional morality. Indubitably, the Chinese socialist system has hindered women from achieving equality. Chinese women's ostensible achievement of the equality asserted after 1949 has been achieved at a high cost for the majority of Chinese women.

Chapter 3 shows that after 1978, the ideological summons to equality became quite muted and was overridden by political and social zeal for economic growth. Along with this, the social priority of women's traditional role resurged, at the same time that women's life opportunities enlarged dramatically. The complexity of women's situation in this period resulted from the attempt to maintain the socialist system while initiating a market economy. The maintenance of the Chinese socialist system continued to limit Chinese women as well as men in pursuing their own interests by freedom of choice. In this situation, the emergence of discrimination against women in the workplace was due to problematic policies affecting women, as discussed in several chapters. In the public sector, women came to be seen as a burden and a cost and thus, covertly, many Chinese women have been forced to find opportunities outside of the public sector to achieve their own interests. The emerging market economy has made it possible for women to realise and develop their talents and skills, thereby finding their own role in society through their own choices. Given the possibility of pursuing their own interests, many Chinese women withdrew from the labour force not only because of prejudice against them and new demands for them to resume traditional roles, but also because

new opportunities encouraged them to sidestep traditional barriers and social and cultural discrimination in the newly opened up market place. In pursuing their own interests in the market oriented sector, they receive no special assistance from government. More remarkably, in the market sector, there is no lack of successful but lower educated women. Educational limitation does not substantially hamper their success. What Chinese women have encountered since 1978 is a new opportunity, however limited, for achievement, and what has continued to constrain them is the socialist system.

Chinese women's experiences after 1978 demonstrate vividly that women are at least as productive as men, and women's skills are generally prized by the market. What the market recognises in women is only those skills and talents that meet the demands of the market. They can succeed no matter how different their skills are from men's and how they obtain them-- by education, natural talents or in other ways. In the market in China, many Chinese people, both men and women, can exercise equal rights and freedom of choice.

Chapters 4 and 5 survey the "inside thinking" of women as well as men, which includes women's self-image, their aspirations, beliefs, values, determination to obtain their interests under Chinese patriarchy and their attitudes towards this patriarchy. The results from my questionnaire survey illustrate that despite and beyond political ideology Confucian values and morality still play an essential role in Chinese society. They remain fundamental factors shaping overall Chinese behaviour and beliefs. Chinese still build up their social reputation in the light of Confucian standards for a good man and woman. Many women share the same beliefs as men concerning women's and men's roles and the importance of Confucian moral values. Very few women are prepared to break away entirely from traditional values. Thus, many women wishing to achieve career success are in a dilemma. On the one hand, they are eager to succeed; on the other hand, they are aware of contrary moral and cultural

pressures from society. Because of these pressures, some women choose to give up the commitment to their own career success.

On the relationship between men and women, Chinese women perceive men as competitors, counterparts, or cooperators rather than as enemies and women are often inclined to support, help, understand and even look after men in Chinese social and cultural circumstances. Although, gender relationships are biased against women to some extent, they are also interactive in depth, which is a high priority of both men and women. Of course, the strong support of women for men may imply that women's own career interests are transferred to men, since women encounter such strong social prejudice against themselves in pursuing equal career success with men. But in their encounter with Chinese patriarchy, women do not view themselves as passive subjects, rather they strategically manipulate the patriarchy for their own ultimate goals, and their preference is to seek a harmonious social solution rather than to directly confront men.

The reality of Chinese women's lives illustrates a connection between women's role and social morality; between women's role and institutional bureaucracy; between fulfilment of women's capability and the market, and it also illustrates the substantially productive relationships between men and women under patriarchy.

Nevertheless women's skills are still not fully recognised in Chinese society because of cultural prejudice and government control over salary levels, which highly prizes skills dominated by men. In the market, women's skills are equally prized with men's as long as their skills meet the market needs. The market admits the value of different skills.

Every human being is born with a wide range of potential talents. ... There is no reason why differences of talent should generate or legitimate vast differences in material reward. It is an objection to the way society assigns rewards to tasks, not to the way it assigns individual to tasks. Certain kinds of abilities [should be] generally prized. Being

excluded from an equal chance to develop them means that one is unlikely to have much of value to exchange with others (Galston, 1986:104-5).

By contrast, Chinese women's experience under the socialist system after 1949 and women's situation in the public sector after 1978 show that the socialist system in fact creates new forms of inequality even between women. The socialist system enhances male dominance in society, as it is the most highly centralised system in recorded history and is dominated by a few male elites. Apart from increasing individual subordination to authority, the Chinese socialist system also creates inequality by providing some people with excessive privileges. The privileges are given not in terms of people's skills, but of people's administrative positions, and the types of their work units and their places of living, urban or rural. Under this system, some women are specially protected by the state and become superior to other women. After 1978, state intervention together with cultural prejudice against women resulted in disadvantages for women in employment and the workplace in the public sector. Chinese women's reality proves that the socialist system and state intervention do not lead to women's equality, however defined.

Under Chinese patriarchy, individual women neither were nor are necessarily oppressed by individual men, but were and are separated off into a different realm. As mentioned above, Chinese women do not perceive their relationships with male counterparts as antagonistic, although they do believe in a clear distinction between men and women. That women are disadvantaged in the workforce is not caused by individual men, but by people's cultural inheritance and the existing social and political system. By cultural inheritance, men and women learn from older people and also from their own observation about what roles they should play in the family and society. Chinese traditional ideas explained that men's public role was prior to women's; thus men are guaranteed superiority to women. In relation to that, many ruling social principles were established according to men's preferences; hence were or are partial to men. Facing these, women are seen as less advantaged than men and are discriminated

against by some men. But most men are also obliged to subordinate themselves to these principles.

"Zhi Zhi Zhi" (Knowledge is infinite and there is no limit to it), and, thus,

"Sanren Zixin Beyou Woshi" (There must be one who can be my teacher among three)

In relation to the social system, Chinese patriarchy is built on top of a greater hierarchy which is constituted by class, status, social position and the like, as discussed in chapter 1. Of course each class or status includes both women and men. A single-gender "class" is not observed in Chinese society as it is not in other societies. Thus, it might be said that the difficulty that women confront is to change predominant, male-oriented rules and the existing social hierarchy. Hierarchy, in both a cultural and social form, is the core phenomenon that limits women's equality.

This thesis has sought to reveal Chinese women's problems from social, political and cultural perspectives. These three perspectives expose the existing oppressive hierarchy and the complex causes of women's situation. The thesis suggests that the general tasks of feminism should be to disempower social, political and cultural hierarchies in both national and international spheres. A society that is able to reduce or dissipate hierarchy will be one that allows all healthy values to co-exist and play equal roles. A premise of studying women from different cultures, classes and occupational backgrounds should be to respect their differences and their different beliefs and behaviours.

Women's equality is not only for "ours", for those who agree with us and follow our advocacy, but also for "others", those who deviate from and disagree with us. The search for women's equality should aim to ensure that women can live together with men in equality and respect, but not aim to put men under the dominance of women. The aim of women's equality is not to achieve any specific goal, but to enable women to pursue their own different goals. As between individuals, whether men or women, or between women, some may climb up to gain wider views and to breathe fresh air, but they should never ever try to monopolise the peak of the mountain. Every

individual is the owner of her or his talent and knowledge, but these are always limited, because "Xuewu Zijing" (Knowledge is infinite and there is no limit to it), and, thus, "Sanren Zixin Beyou Woshi" (There must be one who can be my teacher among three people), which means that every one should learn from others. These Chinese mottoes I wish to share with every human being. All human beings are entitled to obtain equal opportunities and receive equal respect.

Interviews in Guangzhou

Ms. Meng, Xiaowen and Mr. Wen, Jianming, 19 July 1993

Ms. Zeng, 20 July

Ms. Wang, business woman from Sheuyang, 21 July

Interviews in Beijing

Scholars from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

Mr. Tan, Shen, 27 July

Ms. Li, Yunhe, 27 July and 10 August

Ms. Zhang, Ping, 2 August

Mr. Shen, Yuan, 3, 6 and 10 August

Mr. Liu, Xiaojin, 3 August

Mr. Huang, Feng, 3 August

Mr. Fang, Gang, 3 August

Group Discussion with Women from the All China Women's Federation

5 August

Ms. Tao, Cunfang

Ms. Jiang, Yongping (nrn)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Mr. Peng, Mandong (*nrn*)

Interviews

Substantial personal interviews conducted in China are listed here. (More fleeting encounters are occasionally referred to in the footnotes). These interviews were conducted in four places--Guangzhou, Beijing, Shenyang and Dalian--from 19 July to 5 November 1993. For the sake of protection, some interviewees names are invented (indicated as "*nrn*"--not real name-- in the list below) and some are listed by surname only. Some of these made-up names and surnames without first names also appear in the main text of the thesis. The names below represent all those people formally interviewed by me who are cited or quoted in the thesis.

Interviews in Shenyang

Mr. Zhang, Guang, professor of political science from South Korea

Interviews in Guangzhou

Ms. Chen, Xiaohong, professor of political science from Taiwan

Ms. Meng, Xiaowen and Mr. Wen, Jianming, 19 July 1993

Mr. Su, Guopun, Director of the Research Institute of Sociology, Chinese Academy

Ms. Zeng, 20 July Social Sciences, Beijing

Ms. Wang, business woman from Shenyang, 21 July International Conference on a Northeast Asia Economic Zone, held from 23 to 27 August, 1993, in Liaoning Hotel

Interviews in Beijing

Scholars from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

Ms. Tan, Shen, 27 July official from Liaoning Provincial Government, 1 September

Ms. Li, Yunhe, 27 July and 10 August Department of Social Science of Northeast University, 2 September

Ms. Zhang, Ping, 2 August the Department of Social Science of Northeast University, 2 September

Mr. Shen, Yuan, 3, 6 and 10 August

Ms. Zao, Miug (*nrn*), 12 September

Mr. Liu, Xiaojin, 3 August

Dr. Xie, Yansong (*nrn*), 14 September

Mr. Huang, Feng, 3 August

Mr. Yang, Zhongjie (*nrn*), official of the Commission of Economics and Planning of

Mr. Fang, Gang, 3 August Municipal Government, 17 September

Mr. Li, Yang (*nrn*), official of the tax bureau, Shenyang Municipal Government, 18 September

Group Discussion with Women from the All China Women's Federation

5 August

Ms. Tao, Cunfang with Students

Ms. Jiang, Yongping (*nrn*)

Female students from the Department of Medicine (Japanese Stream), China Medical University, 12 September

Ms. Xiao, Yang (*nrn*) Department of Dentistry, China Medical University, 14 September

Ms. Yang, Manman (*nrn*)
Female students from the Department of Dentistry, China Medical University, 15 October

Individual Interview

Mr. Wang, black market train ticket seller in Beijing, 10 August

Interviews in Shenyang

Ms. Zhang, Gongzi, professor of political science from South Korea

Ms. Chen, Xiaohong, professor of political science from Taiwan

Mr. Su, Guoxun, Director of the Research Institute of Sociology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing

The three people above were interviewed during the International Conference on a Northeast Asia Economic Zone, held from 23 to 27 August, 1993, in Liaoning Hotel.

Ms. Zhao, Zixiang, Vice-President of the Liaoning Academy of Social Sciences, 14 August

Ms. Wang, Jing (*nrn*), official from Liaoning Provincial Government, 1 September

Ms. Su, Huanyu, librarian of the Department of Social Science of Northeast University, 2 September

Ms. Ding, Xiaocun, head of the Department of Social Science of Northeast University, 2 September

Ms. Zao, Ming (*nrn*), 12 September

Dr. Xie, Yansong (*nrn*), 14 September

Mr. Yang, Zhongjie (*nrn*), official of the Commission of Economics and Planning of the Shenyang Municipal Government, 17 September

Mr. Li, Yang (*nrn*), official of the tax bureau, Shenyang Municipal Government, 18 September

Ms. Sun, Jie (*nrn*), graduate of China Medical University, 27 October

Group Interviews with Students

Female students from the Department of Medicine (Japanese Stream), China Medical University, 12 September

Male students from the Department of Dentistry, China Medical University, 14 September

Female students from the Department of Dentistry, China Medical University, 15 October

Students from the Department of Social Science, Northeast University, 7 November
October, I worked in the technical workshop with Wang, Cairong, and four other female and one male technician. Other interviewees were

Interviews in Dalian

Interviews in Dalian No. 10 Industrial Meter Plant

During my case study in Dalian No. 10 Industrial Meter Plant from 20 September to 15 October, I worked in the valve workshop and spent most of the time with Ms. Liu, Ms. Jiang, Ms. Wu, Ms. Yu and Ms. He. Others interviewed from the plant were:

Ms. Jiang, Party Secretary of the plant, 22 September

Mr. Qi, General Manager of the plant, 24 September

Mr. Bai, Vice Manager of the plant, 25 September

Ms. Zhang, 23 September

Ms. Wang, 11 October

Ms. Song, 11 October

Interviews in individual markets (Getihu)

Ms. Chen, 27 September

Ms. Jiang, 27 September

Ms. Wang, 22 September

Ms. Yang, 12 October

Mother-in-law of Ms. Zhao, Ming, 28 September

Ash, Robert (1976) "Economic Aspects of Land Reform in Kiangsu, 1949-1952" *The China Quarterly*, No. 65-68

The Australian Chinese Times (1998) 7 May

Group Interview with Women from the Women's Association of Dalian Municipal Government, 14 October

Ms. Zhao, Giqin, head of the Department of Women's Rights

Yu, Zi, Vice President of the Association

Interviews in Dayang Clothing Enterprise

During research for my case study in Dayang Clothing Enterprise from 4 to 10 October, I worked in the technical workshop with Wang, Cairong, and four other female and one male technician. Other interviewees were:

Mr. Qu, official of the general office of the enterprise, 4 October

Head of the Women's Association of the enterprise, 4 October

Sister-in-law of Li, Quilian, General Manager of the enterprise, 7 October

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Appendix A Questionnaire for Students— Zweig, David (1997) *Freeing China's Farmers: Rural Restructuring in the Reform Era* London: M.E.Sharpe Career and Life

This questionnaire was administered in 1993 to students of four universities in Shenyang, Liaoning province—Liaoning University, Shenyang College of Industry, China Medical University and Northeast University. The questionnaire was administered to students of the Department of Trade and the Department of Computer Science of Liaoning University on 30 and 31 August 1993; to students of the Department of Industrial Meters of Shenyang College of Industry on 14 September; to students of the Department of Medicine (Japanese stream) and the Department of Dentistry of China Medical University on 9 and 10 September and to students of the Departments of Social Science, Industrial Management and Machine Processes of Northeast University from 22 to 27 October, 1993. Where the percentages in the tables ("Questions") below do not sum to 100, this indicates that some respondents failed to answer the given question. All questions were open-ended and students were not given alternatives. The categories used for processing the answers, as presented in the tables below, emerged from my analysis of responses. All questions were well received by students. They regarded these questions as interesting, non-political and easy to understand.

Classification of students surveyed

	female	male
total number of urban students	153	166
total number of rural students	40	30
total number of students	193	216

Appendix A Questionnaire for Students-- Social Attitudes and Expectations: Career and Life

This questionnaire was administered in 1993 to students of four universities in Shenyang, Liaoning province--Liaoning University, Shenyang College of Industry, China Medical University and Northeast University. The questionnaire was administered to students of the Department of Trade and the Department of Computer Science of Liaoning University on 30 and 31 August 1993; to students of the Department of Industrial Meters of Shenyang College of Industry on 14 September; to students of the Department of Medicine (Japanese stream) and the Department of Dentistry of China Medical University on 9 and 10 September and to students of the Departments of Social Science, Industrial Management and Machine Processes of Northeast University from 22 to 27 October, 1993. Where the percentages in the tables ("Questions") below do not sum to 100, this indicates that some respondents failed to answer the given question. All questions were open-ended and students were not given alternatives. The categories used for processing the answers, as presented in the tables below, emerged from my analysis of responses. All questions were well received by students. They regarded these questions as interesting, non-political and easy to understand.

3. Was the major that you are studying now your first preference?

response	total sample	rural class	middle class	lower class
yes	32.1%	31.4%	30.5%	33.6%
		female		male
total number of urban students		153		166
total number of rural students		40		50
no	67.9%	68.6%	69.5%	66.4%
total number of students		193		216
	32.1%	31.4%	30.5%	33.6%
		female		male

Questions

1 What is your class background --taking account of your parents' social position and your place of origin?

class	female	male
urban upper class	2	0
urban middle class	110	105
urban lower class	41	51
rural class	40	50
total number of students	193	216

2. What type of school are you from?

type of school	total sample	rural class	middle class	lower class
selective school	89.6% (female)	92.3% (female)	91.1% (female)	89.5% (female)
	91.3% (male)	85.4% (male)	90.2% (male)	95.1% (male)
non-selective school	10.4% (female)	7.7% (female)	8.9% (female)	10.5% (female)
	8.7% (male)	14.6% (male)	9.8% (male)	4.9% (male)

3. Was the major that you are studying now your first preference?

response	total sample	rural class	middle class	lower class
yes	62.1% (female)	51.4% (female)	60.5% (female)	68.6% (female)
	64.9% (male)	59.6% (male)	62.2% (male)	75.4% (male)
no	37.9% (female)	48.6% (female)	39.5% (female)	31.4% (female)
	35.1% (male)	40.4% (male)	37.8% (male)	24.6% (male)

4. What were the reasons for your choice of major?

reasons	total sample	rural class	middle class	lower class
individual interests *	17.1% (female)	5.4% (female)	15.6% (female)	16.3% (female)
	20.4% (male)	21.7% (male)	13% (male)	30% (male)
social trend #	45.9% (female)	67.6% (female)	47.7% (female)	43.2% (female)
	45% (male)	43.5% (male)	48.1% (male)	44.6% (male)
parents' decision	16.0% (female)	5.4% (female)	15.6% (female)	24.3% (female)
	17.0% (male)	6.5% (male)	20.4% (male)	14.3% (male)
others	21% (female)	21.6% (female)	21.1% (female)	16.2% (female)
	17.3% (male)	28.3% (male)	18.5% (male)	18.6% (male)

* "Individual interests" identifies the students who made their own choice of major (e.g. , "I like the major" or " I am capable of studying the major").

"Social trend" refers to those majors that are seen as popular and in demand--for instance economics, accounting, computer science, medicine and law. After studying these majors students are likely to be assigned a job that is well paid and with a high social status.

5 Do you want to change to a new major if possible?

response	total sample	rural class	middle class	lower class
no	45.2% (female)	50% (female)	45% (female)	45.9% (female)
	50.2% (male)	45.7% (male)	53.5% (male)	50.8% (male)
yes	54.8% (female)	50% (female)	55 % (female)	54.1% (female)
	49.8% (male)	54.3% (male)	46.5% (male)	49.2% (male)

6 Why do you wish to change your major?

reasons	total sample	rural class	middle class	lower class
social trend	48.9% (female)	56.8% (female)	46.9% (female)	51.4% (female)
	54.9% (male)	42.2% (male)	57.5% (male)	49.6% (male)
individual interests	51.1% (female)	40.5% (female)	53.1% (female)	48.6% (female)
	45.1% (male)	57.8% (male)	42.7% (male)	50.4% (male)

7 What are three desirable jobs that you would like to do?

jobs	total sample	rural class	middle class	lower class
manager	18% (female)	27.8% (female)	14.6% (female)	27.8% (female)
	30.3% (male)	26.1% (male)	33.3% (male)	29.8% (male)
academic	20.2% (female)	30.6% (female)	18.5% (female)	27.8% (female)
	9% (male)	13% (male)	6.5% (male)	12.3% (male)
engineer	15 % (female)	16% (female)	10.4% (female)	17.7% (female)
	22.8% (male)	13.5% (male)	20.5% (male)	25.8% (male)
doctor	26.8% (female)	25% (female)	28.5% (female)	16.7% (female)
	27.9% (male)	17.4% (male)	29.7% (male)	28.1% (male)
other	20% (female)	0.6% (female)	28% (female)	10% (female)
	10% (male)	30% (male)	10% (male)	4% (male)
house town	25.2% (female)	22.6% (female)	22.4% (female)	30.2% (female)
	23.9% (male)	22.5% (male)	22.4% (male)	30.2% (male)
place to pursue individual interests	17.1% (female)	9.7% (female)	14.9% (female)	25.8% (female)
	13.7% (male)	17.5% (male)	10.3% (male)	15.1% (male)

8 What influences you in choosing a job?

response	total sample	rural class	middle class	lower class
individual interests	54.2% (female)	44.4% (female)	52.8% (female)	70.6% (female)
	46.9% (male)	50% (male)	43.1% (male)	57.4% (male)
social trend	40.7% (female)	55.6% (female)	40.2% (female)	29.4% (female)
	46.4% (male)	38.1% (male)	49.5% (male)	35.2% (male)
other	5.1% (female)	0% (female)	7% (female)	0% (female)
	6.7% (male)	11.9% (male)	7.4% (male)	7.4% (male)

11 What is your opinion of your partner?

9 In what kind of place do you wish to work ?

place	total sample	rural class	middle class	lower class
big city	38.6% (female)	38.7% (female)	37.7% (female)	38.7% (female)
	36.2% (males)	15% (male)	36.4% (male)	45.3% (male)
home town	25.3% (female)	22.6% (female)	22.4% (female)	30.2% (female)
	23.9% (male)	22.5% (male)	22.4% (male)	30.2% (male)
place to pursue individual interests	17.1% (female)	9.7% (female)	14.9% (female)	25.8% (female)
	13.3% (male)	17.5% (male)	10.3% (male)	15.1% (male)

10 Do you have a boy or a girl friend at the moment?

response	total sample	rural class	middle class	lower class
yes	33.9% (female)	48.6% (female)	38.5% (female)	13.5% (female)
	29.7% (male)	29.2% (male)	27.3% (male)	31.0% (male)
no	66.1% (female)	51.4% (female)	61.5% (female)	86.5% (female)
	70.3% (male)	70.8% (male)	72.7% (male)	68.9% (male)

11 What is your opinion of your partner?

judgement	total sample	rural class	middle class	lower class
(a) traditional orientation	25.0% (female)	25 % (female)	25% (female)	25% (female)
	28.8% (male)	33.3% (male)	28% (male)	12.5% (male)
(b) modern orientation	68.2% (female)	66.7% (female)	69.4% (female)	50 % (female)
	55.5% (male)	60.7% (male)	56% (male)	75% (male)
between (a) and (b)	5.6% (female)	8.3% (female)	2.8% (female)	25% (female)
	16.7% (male)	6% (male)	16% (male)	12.5% (male)

12 Do you want to marry your current partner?

response	total sample	rural class	middle class	lower class
yes	71% (female)	58.8% (female)	81.8% (female)	90.1% (female)
no	29% (female)	41.2% (female)	28.2% (female)	9.9% (female)
don't mind	19.7% (male)	28.6% (male)	17.1% (male)	21.1% (male)

13 Did you have a boy or girl friend before your current one?

response	total sample	rural class	middle class	lower class
yes	42.6% (female)	66.7% (female)	45.5% (female)	40% (female)
no	57.4% (female)	33.3% (female)	55.5% (female)	60% (female)
physical condition	23.1% (male)	11.1% (male)	20.5% (male)	16.7% (male)
traditional type of personality	76.9% (male)	88.9% (male)	79.5% (male)	84.3% (male)

16 What makes a girl desirable in your view?

14 What family background do you expect your partner to come from?

response	total sample	rural class	middle class	lower class
urban middle class	75.7% (female)	73.7% (female)	80.2% (female)	69% (female)
	52.5% (male)	24.2% (male)	60.8% (male)	51.2% (male)
don't mind	24.3% (female)	26.3% (female)	19.8% (female)	31% (female)
	47.5% (male)	75.8% (male)	39.1% (male)	48.8% (male)

15 What is your most important criterion for choosing a partner?

criterion	total sample	rural class	middle class	lower class
capability	50 % (female)	68.4% (female)	52.1% (female)	44.4% (female)
	6.1% (male)	0% (male)	6.3% (male)	5.6% (male)
suitable type	21.7% (female)	5.3% (female)	23.3% (female)	18.5% (female)
	7.9% (male)	0% (male)	9.4% (male)	3.1% (male)
physical condition	16 % (female)	21.1% (female)	16.4% (female)	14.8% (female)
	28.1% (male)	29.1% (male)	25% (male)	34.4% (male)
traditional type of personality	12.3% (female)	5.2% (female)	8.2% (female)	22.3% (female)
	57.9% (male)	70.9% (male)	59.3% (male)	56.9% (male)

16 What makes a girl desirable in your view?

response	total sample	rural class	middle class	lower class
(a) traditional type	22.5% (female)	36.4% (female)	20.4% (female)	26.9% (female)
	47.4% (male)	51.2% (male)	47.5% (male)	44 % (male)
(b) intelligence	1.4% (female)	0% (female)	1.7% (female)	0% (female)
	5.6% (male)	0% (male)	7.5% (male)	0% (male)
between (a) and (b)	73.5% (female)	63.6% (female)	74.3% (female)	73.1% (female)
	47.8% (male)	48.8% (male)	44.4% (male)	56 % (male)
career-minded type	2.6% (female)	0% (female)	3.6% (female)	0% (female)
	0% (male)	0% (male)	0% (male)	0% (male)
other	11.8% (female)	14.6% (female)	10.7% (female)	11.7% (female)
	3.3% (male)	0% (male)	3.6% (male)	1.8% (male)

17 What makes a man desirable in your view?

response	total sample	rural class	middle class	lower class
traditional type	24.3% (female)	29.4% (female)	24% (female)	26.5% (female)
	38.3% (male)	42.9% (male)	34.6% (male)	51.1% (male)
caring and loving	52.1% (female)	44.1% (female)	53.7% (female)	47.1% (female)
	14.1% (male)	11.4% (male)	13.6% (male)	13.3% (male)
career ambition	7.1% (female)	5.9% (female)	6.6% (female)	11.8% (female)
	23.5% (male)	20% (male)	23.5% (male)	20.5% (male)
masculine	4.7% (female)	5.9% (female)	5% (female)	2.9% (female)
	20.8% (male)	25.7% (male)	24.7% (male)	13.3% (male)
other	11.8% (female)	14.6% (female)	10.7% (female)	11.7% (female)
	3.3% (male)	0% (male)	3.6% (male)	1.8% (male)

18 What is the most important thing in your life?

response	total sample	lower class	middle class	lower class
career and family	23.4% (female)	27.3% (female)	26.3% (female)	12.1% (female)
	15.5% (male)	10.9% (male)	17.8% (male)	15.8% (male)
career success	35.9% (female)	27.3% (female)	36.4% (female)	42.4% (female)
	57.3% (male)	41.3% (male)	58.9% (male)	63.2% (male)
happy family	19.8% (female)	27.3% (female)	19.5% (female)	18.2% (female)
	12.1% (male)	23.9% (male)	8.4% (male)	12.3% (male)
individual happiness	12.6% (female)	9.1% (female)	18.2% (female)	9.3% (female)
	5.6% (male)	10.9% (male)	2.8% (male)	3.5% (male)
don't know	8.3% (female)	9% (female)	0% (female)	17% (female)
	9.5% (male)	13% (male)	12.1% (male)	5.2% (male)
	30.6% (male)	38.6% (male)	33.4% (male)	23.7% (male)

20-If you had enough money, would you want to work or to stay at home?

Response	total sample	rural class	middle class	lower class
19 What is the most worrying thing in your life?				
Response	total sample	rural class	middle class	lower class
Family unhappiness	20.4% (female)	34.4% (female)	20% (female)	14.3% (female)
stay home	12.6% (male)	12.2% (male)	7.3% (male)	20% (male)
Career failure	26.5% (female)	17.1% (female)	30.4% (female)	17.6% (female)
achieve individual interests *	45.9% (male)	46.3% (male)	44.8% (male)	50.9% (male)
Loss of personal reputation	12.3% (female)	11.4% (female)	13% (female)	11.8% (female)
instance: unemployment	9.8% (male)	7.3% (male)	13.5% (male)	3.6% (male)
Individual unhappiness	6.8% (female)	2.9% (female)	11.8% (female)	5.2% (female)
21 What is your reason for the choice you made?	1.1% (male)	0% (male)	1.0% (male)	1.8% (male)
to be poor	34% (female)	34.2% (female)	24.8% (female)	51.1% (female)
individual preference	30.6% (male)	38.6% (male)	33.4% (male)	23.7% (male)
individual status in society or family	12.4% (female)	11.1% (female)	12.6% (female)	6.3% (female)
	1.3% (male)	0% (male)	1.4% (male)	0% (male)
career consideration	2.8% (female)	14.8% (female)	2.9% (female)	3.1% (female)
	19.3% (male)	0% (male)	18.5% (male)	25% (male)

20 If you had enough money, would you want to work or to stay at home?

response	total sample	rural class	middle class	lower class
work	34% (female)	28.6% (female)	33.9% (female)	36.4% (female)
	24.1% (male)	8.3% (male)	26.1% (male)	28.6% (male)
stay home	7.8% (female)	21.4% (female)	8.3% (female)	6.1% (female)
	3.1% (male)	8.3% (male)	2.3% (male)	0% (male)
achieve individual interests *	47.1% (female)	21.4% (female)	43.1% (female)	57.6% (female)
	52.5% (male)	44.4% (male)	53.4% (male)	46.9% (male)

* A typical response: "stay at home" or "work", but saying "I would do what I like to do"-- for instance, travelling, gardening, being a writer, etc.

21 What is your reason for the choice you made above?

reason	total sample	rural class	middle class	lower class
individual preference	75.5% (female)	51.8% (female)	72.8% (female)	87.5% (female)
	65.3% (male)	57.6% (male)	65.9% (male)	63.6% (male)
individual status in society or family	12.4% (female)	11.1% (female)	12.6% (female)	6.3% (female)
	1.3% (male)	0% (male)	2.4% (male)	0% (male)
career consideration	2.8% (female)	14.8% (female)	2.9% (female)	3.1% (female)
	19.3% (male)	0% (male)	18.8% (male)	25% (male)

22 Do you want to have children soon after marriage? a boy, or are you indifferent to the gender of

response	total sample	rural class	middle class	lower class
yes	13.3% (female)	23.3% (female)	9.5% (female)	20.6% (female)
	18.5% (male)	13.9% (male)	15.3% (male)	23.5% (male)
no	84.8% (female)	76.7% (female)	88.8% (female)	76.5% (female)
	80.8% (male)	87.1% (male)	84.7% (male)	76.5% (male)

23 Why do you want or not want to have children soon after marriage?

reasons	gender	rural class	middle class	lower class
individual preference	73.7% (female)	61.5% (female)	70.5% (female)	80.6% (female)
	53.8% (male)	69.7% (male)	54% (male)	50% (male)
career consideration	24.1% (female)	26.9% (female)	28.4% (female)	37% (female)
	34.8% (male)	24.2% (male)	37.9% (male)	37% (male)
tradition	2.2% (female)	11.5% (female)	0% (female)	1.1% (female)
	9.5% (male)	6.1% (male)	6.9% (male)	10.9% (male)

*This group returned that they were indifferent to the gender of the child

24 If you had a child, would you want to have a girl or a boy, or are you indifferent to the gender of the child?

choice	total sample	rural class	middle class	lower class
boy	11.7% (female)	8.8% (female)	12.7% (female)	9.7% (female)
	21.9% (male)	19.6% (male)	22.9% (male)	18.5% (male)
girl	22.2% (female)	23.5% (female)	19.3% (female)	19.4% (female)
	5.7% (male)	13% (male)	3.8% (male)	5.6% (male)
indifferent	66% (female)	67.6% (female)	68.4% (female)	71% (female)
	70.8% (male)	67.4% (male)	71.4% (male)	74.1% (male)

25 What is your reason for the choice you made above?

reason	total sample	rural class	middle class	lower class
individual preference	30.3% (female)	27.3% (female)	65.2% (female)	15.2% (female)
	9.8% (male)	19% (male)	8.7% (male)	6.4% (male)
indifferent*	65.8% (female)	72.7% (female)	68.2% (female)	69% (female)
	69.9% (male)	69% (male)	69.6% (male)	74.5% (male)
traditional preference	3.3% (female)	0% (female)	2.8% (female)	6.9% (female)
	17.3% (male)	11.9% (male)	18.5% (male)	17% (male)

*This group reiterated that they were indifferent to the gender of the child.

26 With whom do you most often discuss your feelings?

response	total sample	rural class	middle class	lower class
same gender friends	45.1% (female)	38.9% (female)	43.1% (female)	63.9% (female)
	39.9% (male)	44.7% (male)	40.2% (male)	38.6% (male)
people I am close to	38% (female)	41.7% (female)	41.5% (female)	22.2% (female)
	36% (male)	42.6% (male)	23% (male)	36.8% (male)
different gender friends	4.3% (female)	8.3% (female)	41.5% (female)	2.8% (female)
	11.3% (male)	4.3% (male)	23% (male)	12.3% (male)
parents	6.5% (female)	2.8% (female)	12.5% (female)	8.3% (female)
	5.9% (male)	2.1% (male)	4.6% (male)	7% (male)

27 Who do you think of consulting first, when you have a problem?

response	total sample	rural class	middle class	lower class
parents	54.9% (female)	52.8% (female)	55.1% (female)	54.1% (female)
	36.5% (male)	40.9% (male)	35.6% (male)	38.3% (male)
friends	14.3% (female)	13.9% (female)	14.2% (female)	16.2% (female)
	20.5% (male)	15.9% (male)	25% (male)	21.7% (male)
self solution	22% (female)	25% (female)	19.7% (female)	29.7% (female)
	38% (male)	36.4% (male)	35.6% (male)	35% (male)

28 How would you solve problems with your parents if they disapproved of your love affair?

response	total sample	rural class	middle class	lower class
individual decision	10.5% (female)	12.5% (female)	8.6% (female)	6.9% (female)
	8.5% (male)	9.7% (male)	8.2% (male)	9.1% (male)
strive for understanding with parents	57.9% (female)	62.5% (female)	58.1% (female)	62.1% (female)
	59.5% (male)	48.4% (male)	69.4% (male)	50% (male)
obey parents	27.9% (female)	20.6% (female)	28.1% (female)	31% (female)
	22.2% (male)	30% (male)	11.6% (male)	29.5% (male)

29 What do you think about pre-marital love affairs?

response	total sample	rural class	middle class	lower class
positive	4.9% (female)	6.1% (female)	3.5% (female)	3.2% (female)
	8.7% (male)	11.6% (male)	11.2% (male)	7.3% (male)
negative	76.8% (female)	87.9% (female)	75.7% (female)	80.6% (female)
	58.9% (male)	53.5% (male)	59.2% (male)	56.4% (male)
neutral	18.3% (female)	6.1% (female)	20.9% (female)	16.1% (female)
	33.2% (male)	34.9% (male)	29.5% (male)	36.4% (male)

30 What do you think about extra-marital love affairs?

response	total sample	rural class	middle class	lower class
negative	45.7% (female)	52.9% (female)	49.1% (female)	38.7% (female)
	57.5% (male)	61% (male)	53.3% (male)	67.9% (male)
positive	8% (female)	8.9% (female)	7.9% (female)	6.5% (female)
	16.2% (male)	14.6% (male)	18.7% (male)	7.5% (male)
neutral	41.4% (female)	38.2% (female)	39.5% (female)	41.9% (female)
	26.3% (male)	24.4% (male)	28.3% (male)	24.5% (male)

31 What do you think about those female students who have engaged in "escorting"?

response	total sample	rural class	middle class	lower class
negative	84% (female)	84.4% (female)	88.7% (female)	71.9% (female)
	81.2% (male)	83.4% (male)	80.4% (male)	77.8% (male)
positive	4.9% (female)	3.1% (female)	4.3% (female)	3.1% (female)
	13.2% (male)	16.7% (male)	13.4% (male)	18.5% (female)
neutral	11.1% (female)	12.5% (female)	7% (female)	25% (male)
	4.9% (male)	0% (male)	5.2% (male)	3.7% (male)

32 Would you want to keep up friendship with a female student who has engaged in "escorting"?

response	total sample	rural class	middle class	lower class
no	44.1% (female)	51% (female)	46.4% (female)	50% (female)
	69.5% (male)	71.8% (male)	66.3% (male)	74.5% (male)
yes	29.4% (female)	20% (female)	25% (female)	25% (female)
	4% (male)	0% (male)	28.4% (male)	2% (male)
not sure	26.5% (female)	29% (female)	28.6% (female)	25% (female)
	26.6% (male)	28.3% (male)	5.3% (male)	23.5% (male)

33 What is your view of career oriented women?

response	total sample	rural class	middle class	lower class
positive	74.7% (female)	65.6% (female)	76.5% (female)	81.3% (female)
	36.8% (male)	20% (male)	55.9% (male)	36.8% (male)
negative	16% (female)	21.9% (female)	15.7% (female)	12.5% (female)
	42.7% (male)	55% (male)	43.7% (male)	25.5% (male)
neutral	8% (female)	12.5% (female)	7% (female)	6.3% (female)
	20.5% (male)	25% (male)	0.4 % (male)	25.5% (male)

34 As a male, do you want to find a girl friend who is career oriented?

response	rural class	middle class	lower class
yes	9.3%	11.5%	20.4%
no	90.7%	88.5%	79.5%
individual preference	46.9%	62.4%	58.0%

35 Why do you want or not want to find a girl friend who is career oriented?

response	rural class	middle class	lower class
traditional thinking	48.8%	50%	38.6%
patriarchal thinking*	41.5%	33%	34.1%
individual preference	7.3%	13.8%	20.5%

*These respondents feared loss of their own reputation from the career success of their girl friend or wife.

36 As a female, do you want to be a career oriented woman?

response	rural class	middle class	lower class
yes	24.2%	44.3%	37.5%
no	57.6%	43.4%	53.1%
in dilemma	18.2%	12.3%	9.4%

Appendix B Questionnaire for Employees-- Social Attitudes and Expectations: Career, Family and Life

37 Why don't you want to be a career oriented woman?

response*	rural class	middle class	lower class
tradition	6.7%	6.4%	0%
restrictive social influence	46.7%	31.2%	41.4%
individual decision	46.6%	62.4%	58.6%

*Most, but not all, of the "nos" in Question 37 responded to this question.

Questions

1 How old are you?

age	women	men
20 to 30	38	35
30 to 40	18	7
40 to 50	7	2
50 to 60	2	1

Appendix B Questionnaire for Employees-- Social Attitudes and Expectations: Career, Family and Life

This questionnaire was administered to employees, both women (65) and men (45), in Dalian and Shenyang during September and October 1993. The questionnaire was administered to employees in Dalian No. 10 Industrial Meter Plant from 24 to 28 September; to nurses and doctors of the hospital of the Northeast Electronic Bureau in Shenyang on 27 October, and to academics, technicians and doctors who were then studying TOEFL on 31 October, at Northeast University, Shenyang. As in the questionnaire for students, whose results were presented in Appendix A, all questions were open-ended and respondents were not given alternatives. As before, where percentages in the tables ("Questions") do not sum to 100, this indicates that some respondents failed to answer the question.

Questions

1 How old are you?

age	women	men
20 to 30	38	35
30 to 40	18	7
40 to 50	7	2
50 to 60	2	1

occupation	women	men
intellectual or technical occupation	76.1%	81.3%
white collar *	13.9%	9.5%
blue collar	6%	5.9%

*Occupation not requiring higher education

2 What is highest qualification you have received?

qualification	women	men
university qualification	51.8%	48.2%
high school qualification	26.5%	3.9%
under high school qualification	8.8%	15.7%

3 What professional rank do you have?

professional rank	women	men
assigned by university	56.2%	58%
senior level	1.8%	0%
middle level	58.9%	62.2%
lower level	33.9%	37.8%
no rank	5.4%	0%

4 What official rank do you have?

official rank	women	men
high level	0%	0%
middle level	50%	60%
lower level	25%	20%
no rank	25%	20%

5 What is your occupation ?

occupation	women	men
intellectual or technical occupation	76.1%	84.3%
white collar *	17.9%	9.8%
blue collar	6%	5.9%

*Occupation not requiring higher education

6 Do you want to move from your current work unit?

response	women	men
yes	45.3%	47.8%
no	52.1%	52.1%

7 How did you get your current job?

response	women	men
assigned by university	66.2%	68%
posted by work unit	20.6%	12.%
personal connection	7.4%	10%
inherited from parents	5.9%	10%

8 Why do you want to move from or stay in your current workplace?

response	women	men
income	30%	23.4%
individual consideration	60%	72.3 %
consideration of the distance between workplace and home	6.7%	2.1%

9 What kind of job are you most interested in?

response	women	men
government	1.7%	6.5%
middle social status	21.7%	30.4%
flexible and easy job	20%	0%
good income	31.7%	58.7%
household	1.7%	0%
individual preference	23.3%	4.3%

10 Leaving aside financial considerations, what kind of job are you most interested in?

response	women	men
government bureaucracy	0%	4.3%
middle social status	8.1%	6.5%
household	9.7%	0%
pursuing individual interests	80.6%	89.2%
other	1.6%	0%

11 What is necessary for a happy family?

response	women	men
wealth	10.9%	8.7%
caring	37.5%	42.5%
harmony	51.6%	38.8%

12 How did you get your current flat?

response	women	men
assigned by husband's work unit	56.9%	48.9%
assigned by wife's work unit	12.3%	4.4%
given by parents-in-law on husband's side	20%	11.1%
given by parents-in-law on wife's side	3.1%	4.4%
living with parents-in-law on husband's side	6.2%	13.3%
living with parents-in-law on wife's side	0%	11.1%
self owned	1.5%	6.7%

13 Where are your parents living?

response	women	men
in the same place (town or city) as a married child	67.2%	61.7%
not in the same place as married child	32.8%	38.3%

14 Where are your parents-in-law living?

response	women	men
in the same place (town or city) as married child	60.3%	76.6%
not in the same place as married child	39.7%	23.4%

15 How often do you visit your parents?

response	women	men
at least once a week	54.3%	44.7%
between once a week and once a month	23.7%	34%
between once a month and once a year	18.6%	21.3%
less than once a year	3.4%	0%

16 Who looks after your pre-school children during the day?

response	women	men
parents-in-law from husband's side	33.4%	38.2%
parents-in-law from wife's side	21.6%	23.8%
kindergarten nurse	17.5%	19%
home nurse	27.5%	19%

17 Do your parents give you financial support?

response	women	men
yes	33.3%	48.9%
no	66.7%	51.1%

18 Do your parents-in-law give you financial support?

response	women	men
yes	23.1%	45.5%
no	76.9%	54.5%

19 When you visit your parents or parents-in-law, what do you usually take to them?

response	women	men
gift	72.6%	65.2%
money	12.9%	6.5%
nothing	14.5%	28.3%

20 How many brothers and sisters do you have?

response	women %	men %
one brother	14.1%	22.4%
one sister	9.4%	6.1%
one brother and one sister	17.2%	12.2%
no brother and more than one sister	18.8%	10.2%
no sister and more than one brother	10.9%	2%
more than one brother and more than one sister	29.7%	46.9%

21 As between siblings, who do your parents favour ?

response	women	men
older one	4.8%	0%
younger one	15.9%	26.7%
me	42.9%	37.8%
no one	34.9%	35.5%
a son	1.6%	0%

22 For what reasons do your parents favour particular siblings?

response	women	men
intelligence	15.1%	15.9%
filialness	34.5%	11.4%
ideal personality	5.5%	0%
the youngest one	20%	34.1%
traditional preference (son)	30.9%	38.6%

23 Did you wish to have a boy or a girl as first child?

response	women	men
daughter	27.8%	6.3%
son	36.4%	39.6%
indifferent	37.8%	54.1%

24 For what reason did you make the choice above?

response	women	men
traditional preference	20%	33.3%
individual preference	80%	63.7%

29 What is the most important thing in your life?

25 Did your parents wish you to have a boy or a girl as first child?

response	women	men
granddaughter	10 %	2.2%
grandson	25%	41.3%
indifferent	65%	56.5%
health of family members	13.5%	9.1%

26 For what reason did your parents make the choice above?

response	women	men
indifferent	52.6%	31.1%
have a grandson already	17.5%	26.7%
traditional preference	29.9%	44.2%
family disputes	12.3%	13.3%
children's future	17.5%	11.1%

27 Did your parents-in-law wish you to have a boy or a girl as first child?

response	women	men
granddaughter	17.2%	31.5%
grandson	41.4%	20%
indifferent	41.4%	48.5%
business	6.3%	0%
children's and spouse's health	11.1%	2.2%
parents' health	36.5%	40.0%
job	0%	13.0%
personal connections	0%	4.4%

28 For what reason did your parents-in-law make the choice above?

response	women	men
indifferent	20 %	25.8%
have a grandson already	40%	21%
traditional preference (grandson)	40%	53.2%
all of these	23.9%	64.0%

32 How did you meet your spouse in the first place?

29 What is the most important thing in your life?

response	women	men
harmony	62.7%	40.9%
wealth	1.5%	2.3%
child and spouse	22.4%	4.5%
career success	0%	43.2%
health of family members	13.5%	9.1%

from 30 to 35

51.7%

27.1%

from 35 to 50

43.3%

72.9%

30 What is the most worrying thing in your life?

response	women	men
financial security	12.7%	4.4%
social stability	3.2%	8.9%
family disputes	12.7%	13.3%
children's future	17.5%	11.1%
loneliness	6.3%	0%
children's and spouse's health	11.1%	2.2%
parents' health	36.5%	40.0%
job	0%	15.6%
personal connections	0%	4.4%

flexible job

0%

19.7%

household

0%

6.3%

31 What is your purpose in saving money?

response	women	men
a good life in future	46.3%	35.4%
children's future	23.9%	4.4%
financial security	6.0%	0%
all of these	23.9%	64.6%

share household chores

34.9%

21.3%

32 How did you meet your spouse in the first place?

response	women	men
met by themselves	29.9%	40.4%
introduced	70.1%	59.6%
making money	12.5%	0%
combining career and household	3.6%	14.0%

33 What was your age of marriage?

response	women	men
from 20 to 25	53.7%	27.1%
from 25 to 30	43.3%	72.9%
from 30 to 35	3%	0%

37 How should spouses treat each other?

34 What kind of job do you expect your spouse to have?

response	wife	husband
government	10.3%	0%
social status	55.9%	0%
good income	13.2%	4.2%
respect for her/his choice	20.6%	16.7%
teacher	0%	25%
flexible job	0%	39.7%
household	0%	6.3%

35 What do you expect your spouse to do at home?

response	wife	husband
household chores	0%	76.6%
assist in household	65.1%	2.1%
share household chores	34.9%	21.3%

39 What should be the priority of your spouse?

response	wife	husband
career success	80.4%	0%
making money	12.5%	0%
combining career and household	3.6%	14.0%
loving and caring	4.5%	25.6%
household responsibility	0%	55.8%
teaching children	0%	4.7%
the children's own choice		
should follow parents' preference	68.1%	68%

37 How should spouses treat each other?

response	wife	husband
be caring and loving	61.5%	86.7%
be looked after by spouse	0%	13.3%
be understanding	36.9%	0%
share household chores	1.6%	0%

42 What should be children's responsibilities for parents in the future?

38 What defines the ideal family in your view?

response	women	men
mutual trust	37.5%	56.5%
good income	10.9%	8.7%
harmony	51.6%	34.8%
educating and guiding children	96.8%	100%
looking after children	3.2%	0%

39 What should be the priority of your spouse?

response	wife	husband
job	52.4%	75.0%
household	22.2%	13.6%
both job and household	25.4%	11.4%

40 What is your attitude toward the future occupation of your children?

response	women	men
respect for children's own choice	31.9%	32%
should follow parents' preference	68.1%	68%

41 What is your biggest worry about your children?

response	women	men
conflict between parents' and children's preferences	77.4%	75%
not to meet social demands	9.7%	12.5%
no worries	12.9%	12.5%

42 What should be children's responsibilities for parents in the future?

response	women	men
filial to parents	98.3%	97.6%
can't say	1.7%	2.4%

43 What should be parents' responsibilities for children?

response	women	men
educating and guiding children	96.8%	100%
looking after children	3.2%	0%

44 What is your attitude towards a domestic-oriented husband?

response	women	men
positive	49%	48.4%
negative	58.9%	39.5%
neutral	3.1%	12.1%

45 What is your attitude towards the wife of a domestic-oriented husband?

response	women	men
positive	32.2%	14.3%
negative	59.3%	78.9%
neutral	8.5%	7.1%

46 What is your attitude towards career oriented women?

response	women	men
positive	77.4%	50.0%
negative	21.0%	40.5%
neutral	1.6%	9.5%

47 How do you evaluate career oriented women's personalities?

response	women	men
positive	72.1%	32.5%
negative	32.5%	60.0%
neutral	3.3%	7.5%

48 What is your attitude toward the success of career women?

response	women	men
positive	79.0%	75.6%
negative	16.2%	24.4%
neutral	4.8%	0%

49 What is your educational level compared with that of your spouse?

response	women	men
even	83.6%	87.0%
uneven	16.4%	13.0%

50 What is your occupational status compared with that of your spouse?

response	women	men
even	80.3%	89.1%
uneven	13.5%	10.9%