

СЕКЦИЯ «МЕЖКУЛЬТУРНЫЕ КОММУНИКАЦИИ»

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A STUDY OF WOMEN'S STATUS IN CHINESE TRADITION

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Abstract. *As a part of phraseology, proverbs load a lot of cultural content. Proverbs are all-inclusive, they come from life and reflect life. They are part of people's culture. By analyzing Chinese proverbs relating to women, we can see the status of women in feudal China and see the improvements nowadays.*

China is, and always has been, a patrilineal and patriarchal society. It is well known that Chinese society emphasis the importance of the family and the hierarchy within the family. Men's superiority and women's inferiority are deeply rooted in the 2,000-year-old Chinese culture. China's past is critical to understanding the role of women in China today. In Imperial China, women assumed a relatively subordinate position to men. Men dominated the Chinese society while women were deprived of all rights and were present mainly to serve men, they had to subordinate to their fathers, husbands, brothers and sons. Arranged marriages left women with virtually no voice in the society. Chinese women did not have rights and privileges. Women in Chinese society occupied a low and degraded status.

As a part of phraseology, proverbs load a lot of cultural content. Proverbs are all-inclusive, they come from life and reflect life. They are part of people's culture. Many of proverbs refer to family relations, and are highly culture specific.

In the feudal Chinese society women are imposed on spiritual fetters of wifely submission and virtues. Typically, it is the principle claimed by Confucianism in 三从四德 'the three obediences and the four virtues'. The three obediences are to obey 1) her father before marriage, 2) her husband when married, and 3) her sons in widowhood; and the four virtues are what a well-bred woman should equip herself with: morality, proper speech, modest manners and diligent work.

In the proverb 嫁鸡随鸡, 嫁狗随狗 'Follow the man you marry, be he a cock or a dog', the 'cock' and 'dog' refer here to different kinds of men and means that whoever your husband is, whether he is good or bad, a woman has no alternative but to live with the man obediently for the rest of her life even if she is badly treated by her husbands.

So, the proverbs related to the life of the married women usually have the connotation of helplessness and obedience.

Even if a woman is quite submissive, she still may suffer from the risk of being divorced. Since the Western Zhou dynasty (1046 B.C.–771 B.C. before Christ), there exists a stipulation which is supported by the imperial court named 七出三不去 'the 7 outs and 3 ins'. A husband could legally expel his wife or terminate his marriage to wife on several grounds. The 7 outs for divorce: 1) not obedient to the in-laws, 2) childless 3) adultery, 4) jealousy, 5) disease, 6) talking too much, 7) theft. By contrast, the wife's legal protection against these so-called seven reasons for expelling a wife from the family consists merely in the three limitations for the divorce. The 3 conditions on which a man can't divorce his wife: 1) She has no family to return to because her parents have passed away, 2) She had observed a full, three-year mourning for a parent-in-law, 3) Her husband was poor when they married, and now is now rich.

Not obedient to the in-laws, in-laws refer to the husband's mother and father. In traditional cultures, once a woman married, she becomes a member of her husband's family. Her

parents-in-law become more important than her own parents. The wife has to look after them, respect them, obey them, and most importantly, please them. If a wife could not achieve all of the said above or even if her in-laws simply dislike her, the husband could lawfully divorce her. The famous poet Lu You in Song Dynasty deeply loved his wife Tang Wan, another talented poet and his cousin. But Lu's mother didn't like Tang, and said Tang wasn't obedient. So they were forced to get divorced, with only their sad poems left in memory of their love.

Men could have multiple wives whereas women could only have one husband. If a woman is caught having an affair, she will be imprisoned and a divorce will follow. Even without evidence, if a husband is suspicious of his wife having an affair, he can also divorce her. Proverb 饿死事小，失节事大 'death by starvation is preferable to loss of chastity', reflects the fact that in traditional China chastity is more valuable than life. This also can be verified in proverb 男女授受不亲 'the men and women should keep distance and physical contact is forbidden'.

The reason for this phenomenon maybe because in agriculture society, the division of labor determines that men are the main provider of family incomes, and women have to wholly subordinate to men. The majority of women in ancient China lived being oppressed, while men enjoy higher status. Even women of the nobility and the imperial family did not escape the oppression, for they had little means to earn incomes. Women were considered inferior to men and from the moment of birth most women were treated as inferiors. The practice of foot binding, in which girls with bound feet are considered very attractive, further reinforces this belief, as women with bound feet are debilitated and weakened and less likely to be disobedient or rebellious.

Nowadays, the status of women has greatly improved. Chinese women have been treated more equally and fairly. Modern Chinese people regard their women with respect. Chinese women are entitled to occupational and educational opportunities. Health, education, employment and extent of political participation are widely recognized as the four main indicators of women's development in China. The founding of the New China has liberated women from the unprivileged level to the master of their country, of the society, and of themselves. The 30 years' implementation of the Reform and Opening up policy has remarkably pushed forward the process of gender equality. Today, Chinese women in China are not considered subordinate to men. Women's status has been improved and they have been able to better reach their full potential.

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**LANGUAGE AS A BRIDGE, TELL A CHINESE STORY –
A BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF THE INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION
BARRIERS AND SUGGESTIONS OF CHINESE TEACHERS
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BELARUS**

以语言为桥梁，讲好“中国故事”——浅说汉语教师在白俄罗斯大学课堂的跨文化交际障碍及几点建议

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Abstract. *This paper, starting from the point of cross-cultural communication, lists some problems during the process of Chinese teaching between Chinese teachers and Belarusian university students. These problems can be addressing, greeting, conversations and compliments etc. The author analyzes the problems and offers some solutions to conquer the barriers.*