

publique, du fait notamment de l'aggravation des conditions de travail des femmes dans le secteur de la santé et de l'accroissement de la charge physique et mentale du travail domestique. Il faut faire reconnaître l'importance du travail de soin et revenir à une logique de droits. On voit mal cependant comment atteindre à cette reconnaissance dans le contexte actuel.

Ce recueil apporte donc des analyses variées et des résultats d'enquêtes sur un sujet largement occulté malgré son importance pour tous et pour toutes.

Références

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Shanshan Du, *"Chopsticks Only Work in Pairs": Gender Unity and Gender Equality among the Lahu of Southwest China*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2002, xvii + 237 pages (paper).

Susan Mann and Yu-Yin Cheng (eds.), *Under Confucian Eyes: Writings on Gender in Chinese History*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001, xiii + 310 pages (paper).

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The tendency to gloss Han culture as Chinese culture and furthermore to essentialize Han culture as identical throughout time and space is an ongoing issue in the Western representation of cultural Others. This is further manifested in the instance of Chinese cultures by the unsubtle gender critiques applied to China that can only be characterized as monolithic. Yet, as demonstrated in these two volumes, gender roles and relations in China need to be understood in terms of interdependency and complementarity, rather than division or separation (Farrer, 2002).

There can be little doubt that the popular imagination in the West is dominated by images of Chinese women with bound feet, of forced marriages and of female infanticide. The historic imagining ignores the majority of the female population, including the peasantry, minority women and the members of the ruling elite (Manchu women were forbidden to bind their feet). Similarly, popular conceptions of contemporary China tend to neglect the conditions of educated, urban women, especially female professionals, and the prominence of rural women in local leadership and entrepreneurship. And as Charles Stafford has demonstrated, women are indispensable to the process of creating social relationships among the Han (Stafford, 2000).

Shanshan Du examines gender relations among the Lahu, a Tibeto-Burman speaking people who live in the highland border regions of China, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam. She is specifically concerned with the Lahu of Yunnan province, in China. However, before describing the Lahu way of life and of constructing gender, Du begins by asking whether there are any gender-egalitarian societies on earth. Her answer is a solid critique of the biases of Western dominated feminist thought, and feminist anthropology in particular. After pointing out that descriptions of gender-egalitarian societies are always qualified as "relative" or "possible," while patriarchy, though necessarily always limited in its implementation, is not described in such an equivocating fashion, Du writes that "according to the academic double standard, inequality and hierarchy can be of any degree, but equality must be perfect" (p. 6). She proceeds in this book to document a society in which male and female members are equally valued, regardless of the role they play—unqualified gender equality. Yet at the same time Du is careful to avoid the essentialising trap that is so common to sinology by acknowledging the complexities and regional variations in Lahu culture.

What renders Du's characterization of the Lahu so compelling is her grounding of gender equality within a dyadic worldview that emphasises the need for balance and complementarity in all things. This is clearly expressed symbolically in Lahu mythology and ritual, and throughout the life cycle. This is best expressed in terms of male-female blending:

By defining and evaluating personhood according to one's standing in the husband-wife dyad, Lahu classification and symbolism of the life cycle fully elaborate the cosmological ideal of male-female unity.... Specifically, Lahu ideals for men and women tend to blend femininity and masculinity in their religious definitions of human nature and ultimate morality, as well as in personality, social traits, and standards of beauty. (p. 71)

Part of what makes Du's analysis convincing is the attention that is paid to the nuanced reality of gender equality. While a strict sexual division of labour is not practiced by the Lahu, the desire to optimize the contribution of both spouses to the family's task schedule does not mean that differences do not exist. Work requiring intense strength is typically carried out by men, while women in turn carry out tasks that are also demanding (such as weaving), but less intensively so. As Du notes, the symbolic conception of gender unity ignores sexual division of labour, and most importantly, "none of the tasks marked by sex division was accorded differential value, and many of them were not even gender-exclusive in every day life" (for example, men typically assist with cloth weaving in various ways) (p. 104-105).

Finally, Du examines the tensions between the Lahu ideal of gender-unity and the reality of social practice. Noteworthy is the discussion of kinship relations based upon the foundation of the spousal dyad (or "dyadic ego"). Du ably demonstrates the functional aspect of unitary ideals through the

symmetrical interhousehold reciprocity made possible by an egalitarian bilateral kinship structure. However, a detailed discussion of the threats to the ideal gender dyad is also provided. Notably, much of this involves ideals about personality, specifically the consequences of marrying someone who is lazy or fails to exhibit tenderness, care and humility. Arranged marriages, divorce, elopement and suicide pacts are all a part of the Lahu's social reality, as are attempts by the Lahu to minimize these deviations from the norm.

Du succeeds in accomplishing three important tasks in this book. It is an important corrective to the tendency to essentialize the Chinese. It moves us away from the habit of interpreting gender relations in all cultures within a Western paradigm predicated on conflict. Finally, we are given an insightful and detailed ethnography of the Lahu themselves. In the end, her analysis makes a remarkable case for the existence of gender-equality in a traditional society, and focusses our attention on its quotidian manifestations in marriage, kinship, politics, ritual and economics. Du's book is important and well-written, but also contains clearly expressed ideas that make it suitable for undergraduates.

Mann and Cheng's *Under Confucian Eyes* is a very different sort of work. The stated intention of this work is to assist in rethinking "Confucianism in East Asia by using gender as a category of analysis (p. xiii). Primarily focussed on the Han (with a few exceptions), this is an edited volume consisting of translated materials from a wide variety of sources, dating from the 8th century A.D. to the mid-19th. These consist mainly of complete works, although in a few cases excerpted passages are provided. Translated works include ghost stories, poetry, biographies and autobiographies, essays and admonitory compositions, letters and descriptions of non-Han customs. In six cases the materials that have been selected were written by women, nine of the extracts have male authors, and in three instances the authorship is mixed or unknown. In all cases the selections were made based not on the sex of the authors but rather on content—on what we can learn from these passages about women's lives, their roles in Chinese society and the historical construction of the female gender. Each selection includes a brief translator's preface, followed by an introduction penned by the translators, who also indicate recommended readings in the list of references. The editor's have also included a guide for students and teachers.

The editors' introduction to the text helps the reader to place women's writings within a nuanced social context by pointing out that the distinction between the public and private spheres in China is not the same as our understanding in the West. Furthermore, Western scholarship displays a bias towards emphasizing the public sphere when examining the historical record. Mann and Cheng are quite correct in insisting that throughout Chinese history "the 'inner' realm is never reduced in importance relative to the 'outer' realm: it merely occupies less visible textual space at certain times" (p. 4).

The editors also attempt to ground the readers understanding of the selections with respect to style, ideology, gen-

der and values (p. 5-8). However, this section is somewhat brief and thus of limited use to the average reader, while more sophisticated scholars will be aware of the issues touched upon. The implications of the translated works will be most evident to readers who are very familiar with Confucian ideals and expectations. For readers who are not familiar with Confucian discourse, the full implication of the material presented will not be readily apparent. That being said, this work still provides a useful starting point for understanding the Confucian construction of gender. This is the case partly because of the introductions provided to each work by the translators. In most instances, these introductions contribute to the readers' understanding by clarifying the social and historical context, and providing important information about the personal context and life histories of the original authors. For instance, Beverly Bossler's discussion of the "Funerary Writings of Chen Liang" (chap. 4) nicely weaves together a description of the "precariousness of ... life itself in Song times" (p. 73) with the personal crises experienced by Chen Liang and his family. Thus the translated texts can be understood in terms of the affinal relations created through women and their implications for the fortunes of the family and for everyday life.

Fictional writings are also included in this volume. One example is Judith Zeitlin's translation of two ghost stories from "Liaozhai's Record of the Strange" (chap. 13). These stories are of interest for what they tell us about the construction of sexuality within and beyond Confucian boundaries. They are also well-constructed and enjoyable tales that benefit from an adroit and fluid translation. Zeitlin's introduction is however quite brief and does little to place the stories within a context beyond the strictly literary. This is something of a problem with the volume as a whole. Most of the introductions could further explore the background and the implications of the texts.

As primary sources in translation, each chapter without exception is excellent. Patricia Ebrey's "The *Book of Filial Piety for Women* Attributed to a Woman Née Zheng" is of particular interest for two reasons. First, the original work is an expansion upon traditional Confucian works for men. Therefore it has value as a window on the expectations placed upon women in traditional Han Chinese society, and contributes to our understanding of the historical construction of gender. Second, Ebrey has chosen to juxtapose the equivalent text from "the *Book of Filial Piety*" (essentially for men) on the same page parallel to the text from Zheng's work. This allows for a very instructive direct comparison, and illustrates clearly the ideological basis for gender relations in China. Ebrey's approach provides an excellent opportunity for students to engage in a textual or structural analysis of the materials.

For anthropologists Mann and Cheng's volume is of somewhat limited utility, and it would be of greater interest to scholars of East Asian history or religious studies. However, anthropologists interested in the construction of ethnic identity or gender roles will find useful materials here. For those concerned with the nature of inter-ethnic relations in China, especially in terms of the construction of the ethnic Other as

female, there are two chapters of value: Jacqueline Armijo-Hussein's translation of Li Jing's "The Customs of Various Barbarians" (chap. 5) and Emma Teng's translation of "A Brief Record of the Eastern Ocean" by Ding Shaoyi (chap. 17). The former provides descriptions of indigenous peoples in Yunnan from the 13th century, including Bai, Yi, Dai, Mosuo, Zhuang and Hani. These are brief and very general descriptions that do not deal specifically with gender to any meaningful extent. The latter chapter includes ethnographic materials related to aboriginal Taiwanese of the 19th century. It is a selection from the much larger original work. Teng's preface and introduction are both highly informative, but the translated passage is somewhat brief, though rather more pointedly dealing with gender issues.

Overall, both of these volumes make a useful contribution to the field of gender studies. Du's work is of greater interest to anthropologists, and also is more daring in its critique of the assumptions Western scholars are prone to in this field of endeavour. Du's work is recommended for teaching in anthropology, Indigenous studies or gender studies at the junior or senior level, while Mann and Cheng's book is more suited to Asian studies at the senior or possibly graduate level.

References

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2002 *Opening Up: Youth, Sex, Culture and Market Reform in Shanghai*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

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Richard G. Fox and Barbara J. King (eds.), *Anthropology beyond Culture*, Oxford and New York: Berg, 2002, 256 pages.

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This edited collection about the various ways the organizing concept of culture can be defined and applied moves beyond the question "what is culture?" to demonstrate how "culture" is characterized and used by a range of researchers. Silverman's foreword proposes that a key theme of the contributions is "culture worry," in that many contributors to the Wenner-Gren international symposium in September 2000, which launched the collection, were defensive about perceived threats to culture as a core anthropological concept. The symposium gathered 18 international scholars, who were invited from varied disciplines so that cultural anthropologists could engage with researchers of nonhuman primate culture and sociality, and were chosen "to maximize diversity" (p. 11). Sadly, to this southern hemisphere reader, while excellent scholars, the group maintained the north/south geopolitical and intellectual divide.

Despite this oversight the collection shows how there are multiple overlapping definitions of culture. Some authors adopt an ideational heritage characterization, some perceive culture to reside in the mind or to be located in the individual in contrast to group life, others analyze the integration of people into culture, and yet others pluralize culture(s) in order to encompass the diversity of human groupings through the time/space continuum. The chapters discuss culture as the "conceptual kernel" of anthropology and its ongoing usefulness (or not), particularly as a unifying thread among similar yet different sister disciplines. Overall, they remind the reader that culture is an evolving notion through which facile assumptions can be challenged and analytic uses embraced.

Fox and King introduce the 12 papers, which are divided into four parts. They detail how the traditional definition of culture presumed a homogeneity and continuity that shabbily failed to examine social inequality and active human agency. Fox and King demonstrate how culture has entered popular realms as a vapid, essentialist, but nonetheless vigorously politicized, concept. They argue for an acknowledgement of the failures and value of culture and to "just do" anthropology.

The first three chapters examine the diverse definitions and uses of culture. Fredrik Barth's chapter suggests anthropology should study the processes underlying social action in order to create generative models. He argues against a conceptualization of culture that does not theorize variation and against the trivialization of particularity by deeming it irrelevant. He proposes that research data is impoverished when verbal data that obtain ideas about notions ordered into "conceptual domains" are collected, but the ways that ideas are made manifest through daily lived experience are not portrayed. He proposes that ideas are manifest in conjunction with social action that, in an ongoing process, provide "new materials for internal reflection" (p. 35).

Trouillot, in the second chapter, creates a central distinction between concept and word, considers the site of deployment and modes of engagement that mediate between both, and suggests the kernel of "culture" be conserved while replacing it with words that more accurately describe the specificities being studied. He further distinguishes culture in academe as a "political move in theory," from broader society where it operates as a "theoretical move from politics," thereby silencing its own conditions of possibility (p. 39). He tracks the use of culture in North Atlantic philosophies and through time to show how the notion has moved from being an evocative conceptual tool to an increasingly rigid and reified explanatory concept. He analyses how anthropology's credentialization process of writing monographs inscribes and limits anthropological theories and methodologies, an assertion that links neatly with Ota's claim in the third chapter that the ways that anthropology is enmeshed in power relations and inequality should be clarified. Ota's declaration is impelled by insights from those on the discipline's margins. It is anchored in a critique of authenticity from the perspective of the anthropologist as coterminously subject and object of investigation, and is substantiated by field research in Guatemala and the Ryukyu Islands.