

The book, *The Death of Woman Wang* is set in a corner of northeast China during the seventeenth century, in a country called T'an-ch'eng. This book focuses on average people of China community. The farmers, their wives, and other non educated people. The book was first published in America in 1978 by Jonathan D. Spence, who also wrote *Emperor of China*. This book was compiled from three sources. The first is the *Local History of T'a-nch'eng*, compiled in 1973, it told of the country's history, location and topography. The second is personal memoir's of a scholar named Huang Lia-hung. It told of his life as an official in the mid 1600's. The third was the work of a short story writer named P'u Sung-ling, who told of the hostility and misery of the country. Reading this book was new to me because I had never heard exactly how the woman was treated in Chinese civilization. It seemed fairly rough but in its own way it was almost the same in the rest of the world at that time "give or take a few small details". It was a good book but some times took a few cycles of reading through to get the part you were looking for.

The role of men and women of the sixteenth century are defined in this book, a few of these examples are. On page nineteen were a man refers to the way that married and unmarried girls should not stroll by the river or ride up the hill in a carriage, but how they should stay home and raise the children. It also refers to how men often rented out their wives for money. On page sixty three it tells of how a man let his wife take over the family business for six months, and when the tax collector came to gather the tax he told her that a smart woman was no match for a stupid man. On page eighty two it tells a story of how a man was gambling and when he ran out of money he put his wife up for the bet and lost. When a year had passed and he had still not paid his debt so the people took his wife.

On page ninety nine and one hundred it tells almost like a manual of what women are bonded to do, to be loyal and women like. It starts out by saying that a few of the characteristics that women should have, like chastity, courage, tenacity, and death if necessary when the husband dies to prevent rape. Out of fifteen women thirteen of them had committed suicide to save face.

About only right that I found in this book that women have is on page seventy two and seventy three, If the husband dies and he has a business she may inherit it only if she has a son but when the son is old enough to run it she must hand it over to him.

This book also tells of how families acted and how children were raised also of how they were treated. It also refers to how only boys go to school to get an education. On page seventy eight and seventy nine it tells of how married life was for P'u Sung-ling and how his children acted. In one instance it tells of how he was engaged when he was only ten year's old , they were married when they were twelve and had a son. The son was very wild in school and in public the only one that he would listen to was his mother. But as soon as she left he would act up again. In one instance the next door neighbor was yelling so loud that it disturbed the whole neighborhood. So he crawled over the fence and cut off here nose, ears, and toung and left the woman to die.

The people of the farming working class had hardships in ways that was painful. First of all the famine was bad when the crop wouldn't make enough to pay the taxes there wasn't food and sometimes had to move in order to escape the taxes that they could not pay. On page thirty six it tells of how the tax's were set up, the heaviest was when they harvested and it declined to winter when they didn't have to pay taxes. These taxes were a quota that every Chinese city had to pay to Peking.

The book The Classic Slum was Written by Robert Roberts and was first published in 1971. Roberts was born in a Salford slum in 1905. His parents owned a corner shop and after school he was an engineer apprentice for seven years, he focused to writing which won him many scholarships and awards, he has two other books called Imprisoned Tongues and A Ragged Schooling. This book depicts life in a slum in Britain in the year 1914 and shows us how bad the hardships were. It shows us how bad the poverty was along with the Illiteracy and crime. Reading this book made me think of how my great grandfather might have felt as he struggled to survive and put food on his families table. This book was also an inspiration to me as I learned how bad the lower class people of this time had it and how the hole family would work all day and still struggle to feed themselves and put clothes on their backs.

This book depicts the poverty of this era and here are a few passages that illustrate theses words. On page eighteen it shows just how low of a class these people were, your average industry worker would make L70 a year were as your average middle class worker would make L340 a year.

On page thirty three it tells of how Clothing clubs exist so you could go in and pay for the clothing check at a time like buying a new car. It also tells of how people would take advantage of this system by taking the cloths then selling them to a neighbor for half face value and have enough over to get drunk on. On page seventy five it tells of how some of the people were to poor to buy clothes at the poor cloths shop also it

tells of how one in four homes in Britain lacked the bare necessities for life in there home. It also tells of the common things used for heat to include an open flame or by stealing coal or by dragging the canals for droppings. On page thirty six they refer to furniture as if today like a new Jaguar it was so expensive that only the middle class and upper class had it.

Food and drink was also a very hard choice here are a few examples that the people had never enough. On page fifteen they refer to a grocery store as a gold mine. And on page one twelve it tells that in 1904 that one in six babies die in the first six months from malnutrition. And on page one eighty seven it tells of how when the war broke out that many men were denied to enter the army because of malnutrition bad teeth, bones and not big enough. The few that got in came back for leave and their parents could hardly recognize them strong, big and healthy.

The milk was either bought in the store or by dairy men vendors in the street and the last inch of milk was gray from the dirt. The vendors would put formaldehyde in the milk to keep it from spoiling so fast, even though it caused intestinal problems, so the practice of selling milk in the street was banned in 1901.

On page one twelve it tells of the table place of the poor and how they bought there eggs from vendors that were almost always bad or broke but in the eyes of the poor nothing was bad nothing could be considered bad beer, egg, milk, bread ect. The percent of inmates in prison that were illiterate grew from 1835 from 10% to 80% in 1904 on page sixty nine. On page one twenty it says that men considered pop to be a woman and child drink, that men only drink beer and that beer is a man's food one man was considered to seldom drink less than four quarts a day. The family would work all week to buy food for themselves and then on Saturday night the husband would take what was left over and spend it at the bar to bask away the reality of the pressures of famine.

Women of this time were treated as cooks, workers, mothers and wives. They had no power at the local government, but sometimes did concede in some of the decisions of the house.

In my conclusion of the two books I see socio-economic layers that continue to this day. Every social environment has the rich the poor and the barriers that separate them. In the *The Death of Woman Wang* the female is considered less valuable than in *The Classic Slum*. They both depict severe discrimination in part of the female but you can see the differences. Like in the *The Death of Woman Wang* the woman has inheritance rights but only if she has children to succeed her, but in *The Classic Slum* the woman has extensive inheritance rights. The books are both sided in the part of poverty they both have it and yet the male drinks and gambles the precious money away. Education is more stressed in the book *The Death of Woman Wang* even poor fathers that could not afford to send their children to school taught them at

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The taxes are a major role in the poverty situation in The Death of Woman Wang but the low wages are a factor in the book The Classic Slum. Malnutrition plays a factor in The Classic Slum but the food factor is not as great in The

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couldn't pay it back only her name would be ruined.

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