



Research Paper

Concubines And Their Life In The Novels Of Pearl S Buck

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ABSTRACT: In her best-selling novels and short tales about Asian and American women from the 1930s through the 1960s, Nobel Prize-winning author Pearl S. Buck defined a feminist perspective by depicting victimization and fortitude. This study examines the Concubines and their existence in selected works by Pearl S. Buck. The novel is vital since it centers around Madame Wu, a customary Chinese lady whose mentality changes affected by a Western Catholic cleric, giving the peruser a new view of the personality of a conventional Chinese lady. Following several Chinese traditions and practices, the novel depicts the actual state of Chinese people in the 1940s. According to the author, Pearl S. Buck's writings illustrate the existence of concubines and women's struggles in Chinese society.

KEYWORDS: Concubine, Struggle, Woman, Chinese Tradition, Victims, and Relationship.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Concubinage is an interpersonal and sexual partnership between a man and a woman in which they do not desire or are unable to form an entire marriage. Generally, concubinage and marriage are viewed as being comparable but mutually exclusive. Until the 20th century, concubinage was a legal and institutionalized tradition in China that supported concubines' rights and obligations. According to their owners' whims, a concubine may have been born free or an enslaved person, and their experiences varied greatly.

Both captive women and foreign royals were taken as concubines during the Mongol conquests. Concubinage was also prevalent in Meiji Japan as a status symbol, as well as in Indian society, where the intermingling of castes and religions was frowned upon, and taboo and concubinage could be practiced with women with whom marriage was deemed undesirable, such as those from a lower caste and Muslim women who wouldn't be accepted in a Hindu household and vice versa [1]. Once upon a time, a man's rank in China was determined by the number of his wives and concubines. In 1949, the Communists outlawed the practice because they viewed it as a symbol of bourgeois decadence; nevertheless, following two decades of market economy, concubines have returned to the "Ernani," which means "second wife." I wished to report on these young women's intimate, taboo stories, who were incarcerated in a gilded cage, as seen in China in the twenty-first century. The tradition of the concubine may be the topic of many men's fantasies, but for young women, it entails living in seclusion, waiting on and for the male, and being entirely dependent. The importance of family life in Chinese culture is reflected in the prevalence of prominent families. In China, the government dealt only with family heads and not with individuals; therefore, the family was accountable to its members. If the perpetrator of a crime against society or the state could not be apprehended, the head of his family could be charged with the felony.

The most significant relationship was that between a parent and son. After infancy, a mother's control over her boys was inferior to that of the son's father. However, the relationship between a mother and son was of particular significance because a wife's position depended on the birth of her son and a mother was responsible for selecting a wife for her son. There is a detachment between males and females in a family [2]; accordingly, males and females are not as close. Thusly, a mother's relationship with her girl was nearer than her relationship with her child, and a dad's relationship with his child was nearer than his relationship with his girl. Moreover, sibling brother and sister connections were nearer than sibling sister connections.

Due to the significance of boys in Chinese culture, a man might marry secondary wives or concubines in the hopes that they would produce sons to ensure the continuation of his lineage. Even imperial law in China enabled males to have secondary spouses and concubines. The purpose of concubines is not merely to produce male offspring but also sexual desire. Men possessed a more significant and longer desire than women. Therefore, some men would take a concubine to fulfill their sexual desires [3]. The wife held power over any concubines, and it was simpler to divorce a concubine who was socially subordinate to the wife. After his wife's death, a man could elevate one of his concubines to the status of a wife. The legal standing of a concubine's offspring was identical to that of the first wife's children.

Pearl S. Buck was brought into the world on June 26, 1892, in Hillsboro, West Virginia. She is a creator for the nineteenth 100 years. Buck's initial tutoring was done in 1907 at Shanghai University. In the United States, she acquired her Bachelor's certification in 1910. In the United States, Buck showed theory in the wake of finishing her examinations. She is the principal American female laureate. In 1938, Buck was the fourth lady to acquire the Nobel Prize in Literature. *The Good Earth*, her Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, has acquired her the honor (1932). "There is no prospect for the wellbeing of the world unless the position of women is changed," said the famed Swami Vivekananda.

The women who break through boundaries are those who disregard societal constraints. Empowerment is defined as "a multidimensional social process that assists individuals in gaining control over their own life." The term 'women's empowerment' refers to 'women's ability to make strategic life decisions when previously denied' This article discusses the concubines and their lives in Pearl S. Buck's two novels.

PAVILLION OF WOMEN

Pearl S. Buck's *Pavilion of Women* (1946) is an intriguing novel that tells the story of Madame Wu, a remarkable woman who is brilliant, beautiful, and full of contradictions and authority, and who made the unexpected decision to retire from marriage and choose a concubine for her husband, upsetting her extended family. As an author of numerous novels, Buck and her 1946 work, *Pavilion of Women*, continue to receive positive and negative reader feedback. The first study examines the transformation of the protagonist's personality and the significance of the novel, whereas the second study examines Madame Wu's motivations in selecting a concubine for her husband. This study examines Madame Wu's personality development as influenced by a Western Catholic Priest [4]. This study also examines Madame Wu's personality at the beginning of the novel under the effect of traditional Chinese culture and the Western Catholic Priest's teachings.

As previously said, Chinese people rarely married out of love. It shaped Madame Wu into someone indifferent to others' emotions. At age forty, she decided to select a concubine for her husband. Although most Chinese marriages were monogamous, imperial rule enabled males to have secondary wives or concubines. Madame Wu could choose a concubine for her husband because she lacked affection for him. Her parents arranged for her marriage to him. She recognized that she was unable to fulfill her spouse as effectively as she had when she was younger at that age, although her husband's sexual urge remained strong.

Consequently, she selected a concubine. She purchased a concubine as if she were purchasing pigs at the market. She did not consider the woman's emotions.

Madame Wu is quite shrewd, so she was aware of the type of woman she needed to choose for her husband. She has her criteria for selecting a partner. She selected a lovely woman but not as beautiful as herself and unintelligent and out-of-date. The legal rights of a concubine were inferior to those of the first wife. Madame Wu understood it. She treated the concubine in a manner befitting a second wife.

Madame Wu acted following Chinese traditions and norms, yet her actions do not reveal her true character. Madame Wu performed all of her household responsibilities not out of affection but because it was a requirement. She desired to be liberated from her responsibilities, so she worked diligently to ensure that everything in the household ran smoothly and chose a concubine for her husband so that she would no longer be required to fulfill his sexual needs. She hoped that by performing her responsibilities successfully, she might be released as soon as possible [5]. She had not desired to be liberated from her responsibilities and be the sole ruler of herself and her time for a surprisingly long time. She did not engage in her activities out of reverence; she believed them to be a considerable amount.

Madame Wu's thoughts reveal that she desired freedom because she did not love her husband. To ensure the continuation of their husbands' families, it was of utmost importance for Chinese women to bear sons. It secured their status in the house. Madame Wu was aware. She had given birth to four kids for her husband and performed her duties admirably for twenty-four years, and now she desired her independence. Madame Wu was formed by traditional Chinese culture to be a conservative woman who adhered to Chinese traditions and practices but overlooked the feelings of others, even her own. Madame Wu is a person who has always gotten what she desired. She never allowed anybody to disobey her commands.

"Please back to your place, my son. I just require that you obey your mother in this matter, as you have in all other matters. You are the greatest of Priests..." (p. 36)

When he met her to express his displeasure, Madame Wu did not allow her eldest son to sway her decision to choose a concubine. She required that her kid constantly submit to her authority and accept her decisions. As the oldest son, he was responsible for setting an excellent example for his younger brothers, and anything he said would affect them.

Madame Wu did not care if her younger son disapproved of her plan to take a concubine for her husband. She continued to carry out her decision. Madame Wu's two talks with her kids demonstrate that she maintained her viewpoint and conclusion regardless of what others may have said or thought about her actions or decisions [6]. She did not allow anyone to reverse her decision, which she had planned meticulously for a long time. Since the Chinese government permitted men to have concubines and reached the age of forty, she had solid reasons to maintain her decision to be released from her duties as Mr. Wu's wife and leave the house. Since the Chinese government approved having secondary spouses or concubines, it was usual for Chinese people to have more than one wife or concubine. Priest Andre disapproved of this stipulation. A concubine is also a feeling human being; she cannot be purchased like a pound of meat. It is consistent with Christian doctrine, as stated in the Bible, that once a man and woman are married, only death may separate them. Adultery is equivalent to having secondary spouses or concubines, according to Christians. It implies that we must be faithful to our husband or wife; no other wives or concubines are permitted. The study leads us to the conclusion that Madame Wu has never experienced love and that it can transform her life and restore her relationships with her family and friends. Even in Christian doctrine, Jesus states that the most important laws in the Bible are to love Him more than others and to love others as much as we love ourselves. The central theme of Christian teaching is love. Due to His immense love for us, even the Lord sent His only son to be crucified to save and expiate the sins of humanity.

THREE DAUGHTERS

The Three Daughters of Madame Liang was another masterwork by Pearl S. Buck. This book would enhance a reading list by offering a believable protagonist who survived the communist revolution and adapted to the new way of life. This book of the twentieth century began with Madame Liang's participation in the Sun Yat-revolution sen's and ended with her death at the hands of young Red Guards during Mao Tse-Great tung's Cultural Revolution. Madame Liang persevered through the transition from the era of dynastic monarchs to the establishment of the communist regime by employing common sense and pragmatism.

By owning a gourmet restaurant in Shanghai, this early reformer maintained a comfortable level of living. She was aware that regardless of the type of government in power, the leaders were Chinese, and the Chinese appreciated delicious cuisine [7]. Her restaurant was a popular gathering spot for China's gourmet leaders. Madame Liang ran the establishment in a capitalist manner, even though she legally deeded the property to the state and frequently donated to Chairman Mao's undertakings. This epicurean was able to conceal her lavish private life and pay for the American education of her three daughters. Grace, Mercy, and Joy were well-educated and talented daughters. They were devoted to China, but their reactions to the prospect of living in a communist society varied.

The eldest daughter, a physician, returned to her native country and stayed in Peking. The communist officials utilized her knowledge to establish a correlation between old Chinese herbal treatments and the newest western drugs. Subsequent to wedding a Chinese doctor, she concluded she could best serve her country by helping out the ongoing specialists. The cultivated artist little girl and her significant other, an atomic researcher instructed in the United States, got back to China. These two individuals would not work with socialist authorities. The physicist was moved to a local area as a field specialist and as needs be a coal mine for declining to check out the development of microorganism battling. The spouse reexamined and picked to chip away at atomic weapons after the introduction of their kid. The youthful researcher later died in an atomic blast. Benevolence and her little child ran away to Hong Kong out of dread for their future.

The third daughter, an artist, completed her studies in the United States and never left. She wed a Chinese artist and made her home in New York. Madame Liang contemplated leaving China but realized she could not do so [8]. She was Chinese and knew that her roots were in her ancestors' homeland since no other location could be considered home. Madame Liang's etiquette was drawn from her extensive study of the Confucian Classics. She put away opportunity every day to peruse these banned by the socialist system's old books of insight, which she furtively had. Madame Liang's serenity even with any choppiness came about because of her everyday contemplation practice. She decided that the Chinese were a superior people who, communist or not, were invincible, much as she believed China to be the geographical center of the world. China's most fabulous treasures were her people; they were immutable. According to the teachings of Lao Tzu, even if all the eggs in the world are thrown at a rock, the rock remains unchanged. Thus it was with the people;

throughout all change, they remained unchanged. Madame Liang also believed that China's greatest asset, its people, would rectify the country's shortcomings.

Mencius said, "Heaven does not have a set will, but sees and hears as the people do." Madame Liang thought that Chairman Mao was the most Chinese of all. He never traveled abroad and has no intention of doing so. The Chairman viewed communism as a tool, not as a religion. Madame Liang reasoned further that Mao Tse-tung thought and planned within the context of Chinese history. He was a scholar who was well-versed in Chinese history and retained the heroic epics of Shui Hu Chuan as a reference since he appreciated the cunning of ancient men. This Han son professed contempt for Confucius, yet he adhered to numerous Confucian norms of conduct [9]. The restaurateur added that the Chairman shared the ancient sages' fondness for spicy peppers. Madame Liang admired the resourcefulness of her compatriots, but she was troubled by the fact that religion was illegal in the People's Republic of China. Madame Liang had read that if the people are denied their gods, they will create new ones; this has always been the case. She feared that the youth would worship Mao Tse-tung during the Cultural Revolution. The former revolutionary who witnessed righteous fury during Sun Yat-sen foresaw youngsters responding to Chairmen's summons and another purge. Madame Liang was in distress.

On the one hand, she saw that the Chinese would continue to act as they have for thousands of years and would finally restore order while preserving the positive aspects of both the old and modern methods [10]. On the other hand, she witnessed the unfathomable destruction of China's amassed knowledge over the centuries and feared that future generations would never experience dynastic China's full splendor and brilliance. After reading this potent tale, the learner is left with speculative notions and a stronger appreciation for Chinese literature.

II. CONCLUSION

After analyzing Pearl S. Buck's *Pavilion of Women* and *Three Daughters of Madame Liang*, it is possible to conclude that a person's personality can grow during their lives, which may be influenced by society, family, or other individuals. From the novel's inception to its conclusion, Wu and Liang undergo significant transformations. Initially, they were conservative, disciplined, and responsible individuals who did not care about the feelings of others. Wu and Liang learned forbearance, compassion, and love through their concubines. It can be observed that educating someone does not require speeches, but rather examples and the real-life experiences of the teacher are more significant and influential. The examples can effectively influence the student since the student can immediately observe the teacher's instruction in the instructor himself.

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