THE PECULIAR POSITION OF HAN WOMEN:
CONFUCIAN RULE AND FEMININE MORALITY

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Prospectus

The governance of China's Han 汉 Dynasty, which spanned four centuries from 206 BCE to 220 CE, starkly contrasted that of the preceding Qin 秦 Dynasty. Qin Shi Huang 秦始皇, the only Qin emperor, ruled through a system of legalism, comprised of strict laws and harsh punishments, and he suppressed the possibility of uprising through fear and the restriction of knowledge.

Liu Bang 刘邦, the first Han Emperor Gaozu 汉高祖, made his dynasty into the first Confucian state. This state functioned by the direct application of Confucian principle to law. Rather than relying as heavily on law and punishment, Han government functioned on an individual level, through the expected morality of the people. This new government began a tradition of ruling through Confucian philosophy, which would continue with varying strength throughout the entirety of China's dynastic history.

Confucianism is based on the ideas of self-regulation and betterment, as well as those of natural hierarchy and interpersonal relationships. When applied to a political system, Confucianism created a rigid system of social roles and responsibilities. The increased importance of acting according to one's ascribed role impacted women in particular, as they already occupied a subservient role in a patriarchal society. During the Former Han, multiple books were published with the aim of defining feminine morality. Books such as Lienüzhuan 列女傳 (Biographies of Exemplary Women) and Nüjie 女戒 (Precepts for Women) used stories of women, both real and fictional, from previous eras as examples of how women should behave in various situations and extolled the character possessed by these women.

My purpose in researching this topic is to assess the idea of feminine morality in the
Preliminary

In the preparation of this manuscript, which does not contain any references from 2003, the authors have taken the liberty of including a diagram that illustrates the concept of quantum entanglement. This diagram, which is not directly related to the text, serves to enhance the reader's understanding of the complex relationships between quantum states.

In summary, the work presented here aims to explore the potential applications of quantum entanglement in various fields, including cryptography, computing, and communication. The diagrams accompanying the text are intended to provide a visual representation of these concepts, thereby facilitating a deeper understanding of the material presented.
Confucian hierarchical structure of the Han Dynasty. In particular, I aim to examine the moral guidebooks, such as the *Lienüzhuan*, and the values they promote. These books provide examples of centuries of feminine subjugation, and that subjugation was the intended lesson for women of the Han. Though these examples of the expected morality attributed to the lesser role of women, the act of their publication also sheds light on the value placed on women at the time.

Concerning historiography, until recently, works concerning women of ancient China were largely biographical works about the lives of famed empresses, wives, and concubines. In the last few decades, however, scholarship has emerged which analyzes the relationship between Confucianism and the life of Chinese women. The works all act as feminist critiques of Confucian philosophy and its implications for women.

Two contrasting opinions have been formed on the matter: the first school sees Confucianism as the social shackles that bound Chinese women to centuries of inferiority, while the other sees it as a liberating force. The entirety of Chinese history is based upon a strongly patriarchal system and has produced many customs and rituals seen by modern society as sexist and harmful. Such practices include widow chastity, the celebration of widow suicide, foot binding, and female infanticide. It is the knowledge of these practices that motivates historians and feminist scholars to research Confucianism, so that they may find their causes.

It makes sense to many historians that it was a sexist institution that caused the subjugation of Chinese women because Confucianism was such an integral part of the Chinese society that gave way to such practices. Xiongya Gao, in her article “Women Existing for Men: Confucianism and Social Injustice Against Women in China,” presents the idea that, though women had occupied the lower strati of society long before the advent of Confucianism and the institutional application of its teachings, the integration of politics and Confucian morality at the
start of the Han Dynasty created a systematic bondage of women. Her assessment of
Confucianism, is that it made women's lives into three stages of being obedient property: first to
her father, then to her husband, and lastly, after the passing of her husband, to her eldest son.

Xinyan Jiang, in her article “Confucianism, Women, and Social Contexts,” maintains a
similar argument. She argues that in the Analects of Confucius, women are mentioned
specifically on only two occasions, and both mentions show a negative perception of women:
that they are difficult to handle and disrespectful.

While these authors believe that Confucianism provided the foundation for a sexist
society, others maintain that women's lesser social status and lack of upward mobility was an
extant part of Chinese society, but Confucianism provided women ways to improve their
situation.

Lin-lee Lee, in an article titled “Inventing Familial Agency from Powerlessness: Ban
Zhao's Lessons for Women,” criticizes the application of Western and modern feminist ideas to a
religious philosophy created in China thousands of years ago. According to her, Confucian
practice and the Nüjie provided for women a unique sense of agency that worked within the
confines of social expectations. Even though women had no individual identity apart from their
family, Lee believed that Confucian teachings emphasized gendered hierarchy as a way of
providing for social harmony. This, and the concept of filial piety, could be used in their favor,

In “Virtue 德 (de), Talent 才 (cai), and Beauty 色 (se): Authoring a Full-fledged
Womanhood in Lienüzhuan 列女傳 (Biographies of Women)” Robin R Wang arrives at a similar
conclusion by analyzing a different text: Lienüzhuan. According to her, the stories in Lienüzhuan
showed the influence women could have as role models, and the value of women's intelligence
and skill at argumentation.
The discussion of women and Confucianism in these previous works is heavily philosophical in nature: the arguments debate the system of belief itself rather than apply it to historical actuality. Therefore, it is my aim in researching this topic to provide insight into the greater historical background of the time in which *Lienûzhuan* and *Nûjie* were published, and to provide concrete examples of how the ideology expressed in the books affected Han Dynasty women.

Because the historical period I am researching occurred over two-thousand years ago, my primary research consists mostly of canonized classical texts, as they are the best preserved and most readily accessible. My focus will be on the books for the moral education of women, *Lienûzhuan* and *Nûjie*, but I will also draw upon the Confucian Analects, the *Hanshu* (Imperial History of the Han) and The Records of the Grand Historian Sima Qian. The bulk of research will be from *Lienûzhuan* and *Nûjie*, as those books offer a unique perspective into the lives of Chinese women.

As I currently lack the proficiency to read these text in the original Literary Chinese, I will be using the accepted English translations, supplementing whenever possible with alternate translations and the Literary Chinese archive on The Chinese Text Project. For things inaccessible to me, and for a greater historical background, I will defer to other historians in secondary sources.

By these means, I will contribute to scholarship on Han women by examining not only the treatment and role of women in Han China, but also the value of such roles in society at large. I will also analyze both the content of *Lienûzhuan* and *Nûjie*, as well as the circumstances of their publication to clarify the intricacies of gender relations in the Han, in respect to the culture of Confucian authority.
The issuance of warrants has been the subject of considerable discussion and debate. The arguments for and against warrant issuance are complex and multifaceted. Proponents of warrant issuance argue that it provides companies with a flexible tool for raising capital under conditions that may be more favorable than those available in the public markets. Warrants can be issued at a discount to the prevailing market price of the company's stock, which can provide a competitive advantage in the capital markets. Furthermore, warrants can be structured to provide additional incentives for investors, such as warrants that are exercisable at a price below the market price of the stock, providing a cushion for the investor in the event of a decline in the stock price.

Opponents of warrant issuance argue that it can dilute the ownership of existing shareholders disproportionately, especially if the warrants are exercised at a price below the current market price of the stock. Additionally, warrants can be seen as a means of avoiding rigorous scrutiny by regulators and the market, as they can be issued without the same level of disclosure and oversight as public offerings. The issuance of warrants may also be seen as a way for companies to avoid the costs and restrictions associated with traditional forms of capital raising.

The debate over warrant issuance reflects broader concerns about the role of warrant-like instruments in the capital markets and their potential impact on market efficiency and investor protection. The regulatory framework governing warrant issuance is evolving, with a focus on ensuring that such instruments are used responsibly and transparently.
Bibliography

Primary Sources


Secondary Sources


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