Women’s Lives in Contemporary Chinese Societies

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Historical Background

Women’s lives in Chinese societies are intertwined with diversities based on historical and political legacies, socioeconomic development, and urban-rural divides. There are also sub-cultural differences among the ethnic and religious minorities in various regions of China. In our examination of women’s lives in Chinese societies, we cover the major geographical locations in Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan and focus on their common concerns. Women’s studies and gender research were formally established independently in these three locations in 1985 (Cheung & Kwok, 1995). Research and publications on women’s issues became more accessible. Despite the political divides, the shared cultural heritage and influence of Confucian ethics prevail in these societies, which allow us to discuss the common aspects of Chinese women’s lives.