Women In Modern China
From Iron Maiden to Super Model
University of Chicago International House
China and the Future of the World
A Spring Colloquium April 28-29, 2006

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PowerPoint Design by Jesse Katzman, SFOproductions.com
kind, selfless, hardworking, virtuous, family oriented, obedient, sexy, exotic, virgin, definitely not a bitch
Tradition

bound feet, family, class, luxury, virtue, hard working
Tradition

bound feet, family, class, luxury, virtue, hard working
Revolutionaries: 1920's-1949

educated, courageous, selfless, hard working, martyrs
Mao’s Era: 1949-1970’s

women can do what men can do
Mao’s Era: 1949-1970’s

• 1950--Marriage Law (women won freedom to marry and divorce for first time)
• 1950--Land Reform (women won right to own property and land)
• 1953--Women won right to vote
• 1958--7 million women employed, ten times than 1949, with equal pay
• 1966--Rapid growth of women leaders in government and model workers
Mao’s Era: 1949-1970’s

Zhao Chune 1935-82
Model Worker

Zhao Mentao 1936-63
Model Worker

women hold up half the sky
Cultural Revolution: 1966-1976

iron maiden, red guards, little red guards
Tradition vs. Revolution

little lotus vs. Mao’s little red guard
Mao’s Era: Rural Urban Equality

Women of China magazine 1966

educated youth in countryside – which is city girl?
Economic Reform: 1980’s-present

Women of China 1980

Women of China 1990

family, science, and fashion
Pond’s Cream Ads

1925

1991
Fashion and Advertising Explosion
Combo of Beauty, Brains and Business

hard as steel inside, they look as gentle as "Hello Kitty"
Economic Reform: 1980’s-present

women entrepreneurs
Emphasis on Appearance and Youth

• Higher unemployment rate: men—8.4%, women—12.5% bet. 1990-2000

• 70% laid off are women

• Lower pay than men: 50% of men’s average salary in 91, 40% in 94
250 Million Rural Migrant Workers

child labor, long hours, low pay, no benefits, hazardous
40 Million Peasants Lost Land

dissolving of traditional family
Broken Family Empty Village

where’s my mother?
Economic Reform: Rift Between Rich and Poor, Urban and Rural

• 27 million children unable to attend school – 10% of China’s school-age children

• Girls attend at much lower rate than boys

• More girl dropouts in junior high

• Abandoned girls

• Child traffic into maid and sex service
Corruption and Bankrupt Peasants
Elderly Women in Economic Reform
Rural Elderly Fared Worst

• pension—much lower than men’s, 16% to 36% of women’s monthly income is below $12 (Jia Yunzu, 2005)

• countryside—61% of women’s monthly income is less than $12 or no income

• health insurance: no coverage for countryside

• money spent on per peasant woman’s health care annually: 80.70 yuan ($10.00 USD) (Jia, 2005)

• higher divorce rate

• higher suicide rate: many elders take their own lives because of poverty, illness, loneliness, abandonment
Growing Old
Economic Reform: Social Morals

• 6 million sex workers, according to the world health org

• Prostitution at all social levels, from high-class bars serving senior government officials to women in vans targeting migrant workers

• High rate of venereal disease and HIV/AIDS among sex workers

• High divorce rate due to extramarital affairs and prostitution

• Child traffic into sex service

• China has the highest female suicide rate in the world: at least 250,000 suicides in 2003, 2 million additional attempts, biggest cause of death for women age 15-35, most suicides are rural women
a man is not a man if he doesn’t have a limo, keep a string of mistresses or go to brothels in Southeast Asia
Women Hold Up Half The Sky

• fire phoenix--all-female detective agency

• women in villages organized demonstrations against the government land grabbing

• women divorce unfaithful husbands

• women stay in the village and cause shortage of cheap labor in factories