

## THE WOMEN'S ISSUES IN PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHTS IN CHINA AND RUSSIA AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 20TH CENTURY

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**Abstract.** The paper is to examine the evolution of the Chinese and Russian approach to Women's issues at the turn of the 19-20th centuries. The beginning of the 20th century was a century of transformation in socio-political thought, and reform in both China and Russia. Changes have also affected ideas of women's role in society. Based on a comparative analysis of the women's issues in Russia and China, several general trends can be identified. Firstly, the prevalence of the philosophical ideas about women in works of male philosophers was characteristic of China and Russia. Secondly, philosophers have considered the problem of women in the framework of the issue of the nation. Among the differences, the following can be singled out: in contrast to the Russian philosophers, who are often considered women's issues within metaphysics, the Chinese thinkers saw in it the solution of practical problems, lucid during the Sino-Japanese wars.

**Keywords:** Russia, China, education, comparative study, women's issue, reforms, late Qing dynasty.

### Introduction

Russia and China shared historical development due to their many interactions. They both emerged historically as land empires in Eurasia. This inspired a legacy of a strong centralized state with distinct identities and legitimacy. Both had been subject to military defeats in the 19th - and 20th centuries and subsequent losses of territory. It was a period before the greatest changes for countries. In a period spanning only several years, the Romanov czarist regime collapsed in Russia, and the Xinhai Revolution overthrew the Qing Dynasty, both ending the autocratic monarchies that had ruled China and Russia. Both states saw industrialization as fundamental to their modernization. Rather than simply changing political system, 20th century revolutions tried to transform the structure of society itself. The revolution movements mobilized new groups into the political system. In both states society's, women and efforts to change their position have been central to the process of revolutionary transformation. In summation, China and Russia have a strong base for historical comparison.

Nowadays, socio-political and scientific-technical transformation have contributed to improving the educational and professional level of women and led to the vital need to increase their role in society. The changing importance of women in society has attracted more research interest in various fields including social, political, scientific, industrial, and artistic. Increased attention to these issues requires a deeper study of the philosophical heritage on the subject. Studying of emergence and statement of a women's issue in scientific research acquires special relevance in connection with the appeal of modern women's movement to historical roots. The fiction as a historical source is interesting for modern science because it includes information about social moods and thoughts of country in different periods.

The gender issue is very urgent today. It is defined by the fact that studying the history of gender relations offers a scientific explanation to modern political processes and their consequences. The matter is that in the conditions of the current globalization, there is a transformation of family as a social institute. Nowadays, women's issue represents sexual difference as a politically salient topic by classifying women as a special class of citizen. Don't forget that the women's issues – which is equated with emancipation – is a concept which is complex and broad. It includes three main problems: ethical-psychological, economic equality issue, and political-civil. All these parties are closely interconnected; therefore, it is possible to tell that women's issues are connected with all spheres of public life. Studying historical experience of two great nation's social and political problems from philosophical positions in, we can scoop the important ideas for the embodiment them in the modern world.

### **Literature overview**

The formulation of educational policy – what is important to know and what should or should not be reflected in the study and practice of education – has historically been a consequence of social and political as well as academic developments.

Currently, the topic of women's issues in Russia continues to be studied and gradually attracted a growing number of researchers. They Are: L. Polyakov [5], N. Pushkaryova [6], I. Yukina [9]. Various aspects of women's issues in the beginning of 20th century in Russia are still insufficiently studied. Such issues should include the history and theory of women, there are few studies considering humanistic and intellectual direction of Russian feminism.

The question of women in Chinese feminism is a superbly argued in feminist historiography that analyses the Chinese feminist project of establishing and defining the subject of women in 20th century Chinese intellectual history. Most part of the research papers introduce the changing intellectual preoccupations with international social theory and literature in the establishment of Chinese progressive feminism specifically, and Chinese Enlightenment thought and modernity more generally. In this literature, the history of women's studies in academia is dominated by a literature professor named Li Xiaojiang [15], who was arguably the first to bring Women's Studies to importance in Post-Mao China. She is currently building curriculum and strengthening institutions for teaching, research, and writing public policy. Another figure is a Tani E Barlow [11]. She argues that progressive feminism's concern with gender inequality and women's emancipation constitutes a key element and influence in the development of Chinese intellectual thought overall. Nevertheless, there is still few works detailed how women's education discourse reflect the intellectual struggles of establishing modern Enlightenment thought in China. As well as and a relatively shorter history of theoretically oriented scholarship.

All of the above leads to the conclusion that this topic needs to be further developed with the involvement of new sources.

### **Methods**

Comparison is a fundamental tool for analysis. It sharpens our powers of description, and plays a central role in concept-formation by bringing into focus and emphasizing suggestive similarities and differences among cases [13]. The goal of the comparative method is to identify the factors and/or categories of analysis to effectively compare and contrast different historical phenomena.

Comparison is inherent in all social sciences, where comparative research has historically played a significant role in their development as scientific disciplines. In an influential article on comparative politics, Arend Lijphart situated the comparative method as a basic method in its own right [10], alongside the experimental, statistical and case study methods. The focus of the method is on the individual country in historical specificity and full context. The comparative historical method makes it possible to reveal and compare a given historical object's levels of development and the changes the object has undergone. This is to determine the trends of the object's development.

In 19th century interest in the comparative historical method is associated with A. Comte and H. Spencer, both of whom considered it the fundamental method of sociological research, treating it within the framework of the evolutionist, linear-progressive conception of development. Next step of developing the method was made by Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx. They used the comparative historical approach in their study of socioeconomic formations and the various political and economic structures within a single such formation; they also used it in analyzing social movements and ideologies. In so doing, they employed it in conjunction with study of the structure and functions of historical phenomena. Marxist methodology has given rise to comparative historical research in history, ethnography, and literature, which, in turn, has led to the emergence of several specific disciplines, such as comparative linguistics and comparative literary theory and criticism.

Throughout the article we build a case in favour of a comparative-historical approach. In comparative-historical approach the use of the basic thesis of a single essence of evolutionary historical processes as a basis allows specialists to analyze them, drawing conclusions about general and specific, regional and local cases. The main significance of the comparative method is "in the knowledge of historical reality through the study of similarities and differences between facts belonging to more than one historical system". Educational systems have been defined as a consequence of events in which they play a role in determining, and of which they are themselves a result. In addition, there is a clear connection between comparative research and socio-political processes of historical change.

Trying to understand the historical specificity of educational phenomena and simultaneously acknowledging the radical presence of the others defines a new agenda for comparative research. As argued by Fritz Ringer, "there is simply no other means of arriving at explanations, and not just descriptions, of change in education than the comparative approach" [22]. The focus of Comparative Education should not be on the "facts" or the "realities", but on problems. By definition, the facts (events, countries, systems, etc.) are incomparable. It is possible to highlight differences and similarities, but it is hard to go further. Only problems can constitute the basis for complex comparisons: problems that are anchored in the present, but that possess a history and anticipate different possible futures; problems that are located and relocated in places and times, through processes of transfer, circulation and appropriation; problems that can only be elucidated through the adoption of new zones of looking that are inscribed in a space delimited by frontiers of meaning, and not only by physical boundaries.

### **Russia**

At the turn of the 19th and -20th centuries, new benchmarks appeared in Russian life. Though, women's issues were not viewed as a priority considering other challenges of the state. The beginning of the 20th century brought fourth profound changes in Russian public life: women began to look for new ways to happiness. The problem in of emancipation of women in Russia at that time was expressed in the requirement of obtaining rights to women's education and participation in public life. This was unlike Europe, where providing electoral rights to women was a priority on the agenda.

Russian philosophers N. Berdyaev, V. Rozanov, V. Ivanov believed that the root of the Russian nation was female in the beginning. In a peasant country the role of women was not a civilian for a very long time. The main occupation of the women was housekeeping. However, from the middle of the 19th century the Russian women became active participants of women's movement. Thus, women began to play a prominent role in society and in educational activities.

Berdyaev discussed the problem of women's emancipation throughout his work, including the essay "The Meaning of the Creative Act" [12]. However the concept of the feminist movement was established in 1907 in "the Metaphysics of sex and love" and further wasn't exposed to special changes. Berdyaev allocated two main problems in the women's issue: socio-economic and metaphysical. Describing the socio-economic aspect of the problem, he wrote: "Emancipatory women's movement, of course, embodies a great truth, like any movement, exempt from slavery." The philosopher emphasized the justice of the demands of economic independence of woman from man and her free access to all the benefits of culture, education, political rights. "The woman rightly wished to become a person, not tool generic elements, not a slave to impersonal family." However, women's emancipation has also a "reverse side": "...this global movement has another trend of destroying the most beautiful women's features. Poor emancipation leads to the distortion and perversion of the eternal feminine, bad assimilation and impersonation of man. Such emancipation degrades women, makes her man second-class citizens and deprives of her originality" [1].

According to Berdyaev, the fundamental error of women's emancipatory movements - the assumption "that man is a normal person... that he is not half, not half of individuality that... you need to become a man to become a man". Hence there is an aspiration "to assimilate the woman to the man and to lead the woman in the men's way"[12].

In this sense, the emancipation of women is belittling the dignity of women, the denial of higher and special vocational role of women in the world, the recognition of femininity only weakness, immaturity, impersonal, and enslavement. This "liberation is too expensive, if it kills a woman and femininity as a special force in the world".

The problem of emancipation was also considered by the philosopher Rozanov nicknamed "Alexander of Macedon of a women's issue". His interpretation of the reasons of the Russian feminism is rather peculiar. Rozanov believed that the feminized man, losing the masculine traits in themselves, create or themselves "new ideal woman, the ideal wife-"other" mother-mentor. Thus the woman seeking to meet this ideal is included in the emancipatory movement. Philosopher thought that women didn't look like children: "She grew up and she is serious. She has already proved her for the career in theoretical science, but her main talent is practice because woman is natural practices. It is a kind of transformation of the instincts of motherhood and home economics in the instincts of care and ownership structure. That is why she needs to move... It is not for her but for society, for the state, which requires talent should take, where it lies [7].

Ivanov has devoted to the analysis of philosophical aspects of a problem of women's emancipation the article "About Feminine Values" [3]. He as well as Berdyaev, pointed out it's a huge metaphysical significance. "Women's issue", Ivanov wrote: "puts us face to face not only with the queries of social justice, but also with the pursuit of the world, the universal truth". Ivanov recognized justice and urgency of the solution of social and economic aspect of a problem as the equality of the man and women as two equivalent representatives of a type of "people".

At the same time the difficulties arising result from "tactical reasons of public construction": how to reconcile the equality of women with all other tasks of social and political order. However, he regretted that the second aspect "is secondary in our minds". When social equality of women and the possibility of free competition of her with a man in the material and spiritual life will be secured, mankind will face two possible alternatives. The result of selecting the first alternative - a mixture of women with the male sex, the development in the humanity "of a certain average type". The result of selecting the second option in finding a woman "the way her pure female self-assertion," which would mean "final revelation to mankind the idea of the sexes" [3]. According to the philosopher Ivanov in the early 20th century a woman could reach the same peaks of intellectual development as men. The solution of a women's issue was supposed to be in the organization of the upcoming national national freedom in the form of the two-uniform people of men and women.

It should be noted that education played an important role in the solution of women's issues. As the Russian famous teacher V. Ostrogorsky wrote: "Let the 20th century will raise value female teacher in the broadest sense, - and, having brought more light in this field, will render a great service to mankind" [4]. The development of school matter in Russia of the study period is largely due to women's efforts. For women of that era the main activity was the education of the children. Creation of the worthy and merciful person was an ultimate goal of children's education. In the Patriarchal public way to say that woman was born to be a teacher. "A character of the person, wrote Ushinskiy (Russian teacher) is more likely formed in the first years of his life, and what lays down in this character these first years, - lays down strongly, there is the second human nature but as the child these first years under exceptions - telyny influence of mother, and in the majority his character can make only that already before in character of mother. Everything that is got by the person subsequently nevermore has that depth in which everything differs, acquired in the childhood. Thus, the woman is a necessary member between science, art and poetry, on the one hand, customs, habits and character of the people, on another one" [4]. A well educated woman with her principles and ideas was indispensable in educational institutes. Thus the appearance of female hands in education contributed to the development of students ' morals and unity of family and school.

The question of female professional education in Russia was put forward in the second half of the 19th century. It was promoted by decomposition of subsistence economy where each coin in family was on the account. In such situation the woman needed to work. Besides, in the country the number

of lonely women has increased: they were widows who needed to provide the children and also old maids whom all family couldn't provide all life. Moreover, the Russian public of the middle of the 19th century has been filled with democratic views where the woman ceased to play a role as the keeper of a home. Supporters of reforms in the state in every possible way sought for emancipation of women, asserting their right for education and work. Anyway, in Russia there was high level of teaching in women's educational institutions.

According to the thinker V. Khvostov, the family and education of children are natural recognition of the woman, but it is worth to remember that not all women have a family. Many of them are deprived of an opportunity to marry; others in marriage have no children. In special economic conditions there are such women. A majority of professions for women are still closed, fight for sexual equality in society continues. Besides, the celibacy affected mental health of women. However, education and a profession could help them to escape physical and spiritual problems [8].

The beginning of the 20th century saw a rise in the number of professional courses for women throughout Russian cities. There usually trained accountants, cashiers, typists, translators, and even teachers. Besides, the number of women's Sunday schools and Houses of diligence for education of lonely maidens and also female gymnasiums has considerably increased. Extremely revealing rapid growth of the private women's schools before and after the 1905 revolution. From 1894 to 1904, the number of private girls' schools increased by 280% and the number of girl students by 370%. In the following decade, the number of each increased 550% and 500% respectively. From 1904 to 1914 the number of private girls' school and appeared at that time private women's progymnasium improved 16.5% and 38.5% of the total number of female secondary schools. Thanks to the new ideas and efforts of women's movement in 1914, the average women's educational institutions made 59,7% of all high schools of Russia, and number of pupils in them – 63,5% of the general contingent of students in an average school [2].

Female education in the context of a woman's issues was of particular importance as understanding of an important vital role of the woman and her serious influence on public customs and also education of future generation was incentive motive for the government. Philosophers of the beginning of the 20th century and their opinions on women affected policy and the general public's thinking. The government listened to public moods and tried to create new conditions for life of the Russian women. The Russian progressive public had obvious interest in women's issues that allowed to draw conclusions that women's emancipation was of great importance for the development of the Russian social thought and spiritual searches during the studied temporal period. These ideas, first of all, were in correlation with economic and cultural development of Russia. The majority of Russian philosophers believed that at the beginning of the 20th century, women had to develop and to get a profession, yet to keep the femininity and do not pertain to physical appearance of men.

### **China**

The processes of transforming the women's role, in the conditions of the developing world, are among the most complex and still an insufficiently studied issue. The period of the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th centuries became a turning point for many countries. This is the era to which the women's movement also belongs. In China, its formation and development were of a historical framework and were inseparably linked with the process of profound transformations in the state system including social, economic, and cultural spheres of society. It evolved under the influence of Confucian and Western ideas about humanity, freedom and the public initiative stems from the individual, equality of men and women, and new family relations.

It should be noted that the historical period in which there was a reconsideration of the position of women was full of crucial events for China. Among them, there are the two Opium wars of 1840-1842 and 1856-1860 - the military collision of the Qing Dynasty with the western powers (England, Germany, France, Russia, and Japan). Given changes in these aspects of Chinese society inspired further cultural shifts.

The defeat of China in Opium war in 1840 was the beginning of an identity crisis among intellectuals which induced the Chinese elite to look for answers from the western countries. Chinese integration into the global community and the influences of globalization on China were the causes of the changes in a sociopolitical thought. One of the strands of mainstream thinking put women issue on agenda of national salvation, leading to the development of equality in the perception of woman. It was only towards the end of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) that new girls' schools were established by the imperial reforms in China. This development caused a profound social change.

In traditional China, political, economic, social and cultural values have been connected with the Confucian structure existing for millennia, including the rigid family system. Medieval China gradually developed and norms and stereotypes of the behavior of each person depending on the place taken by him in society have been canonized. According to the Confucian structure of society, women at every level were to occupy a position lower than men. So Chinese believed that owing to the natural reality, women are little adapted for the correct perception of precepts of antiquity, and the habit to reflect too much can suggest her only the wrong idea which isn't fitting in established in society. They could not participate in public life or applied to civil service exams, which restricted to men only and serve to recruit new people for bureaucracy. This approach could be well illustrated by a widespread idiom: "a woman's virtue is to have no talent" ("女子無才便是德"). The aim of traditional women's education was limited to the teaching of social ethics and family traditions with an emphasis on how to become a virtuous wife and good mother. These skills were acquired through their parents, or nannies if the girls had come from a wealthy background, and not as a result of formal schooling. Women would be unable to take up painting or writing and, most of all, they would be barred from politics [24]. Therefore, women did not get classical education very often.

During the late Qing dynasty and early republican period, there were widespread discussions about the roles of modern women versus traditional women. Originally the discourse of "women's issue" took place in literary coterie and had publicists character. In numerous articles on magazines authors expressed the opinion on a status of women, their education and on the nature of women, etc. supported her economic independence and a possibility of participation in public work. The intellectual elites claimed women did not acquire wisdom due to their weakness, but because they were never guided to that path.

For instance, Chen Duxiu, an active participant in this movement, wrote an article entitled "The Way of Confucius and Modern Life" [14] ("孔子之道与现代生活") in New Youth Magazine ("新青年"), in which he criticizes Confucianism and explains how Confucian ideals do not fit in with the modern world. There was no personal independence and if any deviation was made from the teachings, shame would be brought to not only the individual but to the family as well. Chen brings to light the fact that in the West, women can choose to remain single if they are widowed because "they have nothing to do with what is called the chastity of widowhood" [14]. Under this doctrine, a woman in China is looked down upon because it is seen as "shameful and unchaste for a woman to serve two husbands" [14]. This is significant because to avoid bringing the rest of the family shame, in-laws have forced their daughters-in-law to remain a widow [14]. So Confucianism sacrificed individuals rights for sake of families and society at large. The universal education for man and woman has recognized as essential to creating independent personality and self-assertion. The author conducted a detailed comparison provisions on the social order in traditional Chinese culture and Western society while showing the applicability of many Western approaches in the struggle for the liberation of women in China. He posited links between gender and national progress. Such approach correlated a lot with Herbert Spencer's tract "Women's right" related the social progress to the status of women [23].

At the same time, traditional Chinese women were compared not to Chinese men, but to Western women. The most advanced Western powers still practiced a gender-based division of labor, in which Chinese intellectuals found the most convenient empirical evidence for their argument for women's roles as wife and mother. It seemed that reforming and empowering the weakened female population was the same as building a powerful China.

Another one good example is Liang Qichao. "In ancient times", he wrote in his article, "Chinese were people of villages instead of citizens" [15]. Since Liang penned these words in 1902, the shift from using patrilineality to residential criteria that are nominally gender neutral has been integral to elite activists' efforts to transform China's villagers into national citizens [16].

At Liang's article "On women education", the author pointed out several arguments for it. First of all, the formation of future generation begins with the mother's teaching, which rooted on women education [16]. Referring to evolution theory of H. Spencer and Social Darwinism he explained a priority of prenatal education as a way of improving species. Protection of the nation (species) begins with women education [16].

Secondly, according to Liang women need economic independence. Before that time women were not involved in labor, they cannot support themselves and they brought into men's subjection. If women will be well educated and easily find employment, it could solve the problem of poverty in China. In addition, he referred to the principle of profit-making by considering the well-developed nation's labor force is a base for national profit. To reach a stable government impossible if a half of people in the country does not participate in the material production [16].

In such a manner Liang connected success of the nation with the creation of social conditions for the development of the woman as an independent person. He showed personal enhancement of the woman and the man as interrelated.

Central in Liang's thinking was that the Chinese qun (群, group) had to "struggle to survive". So he suggests to improve women status, not for individual's welfare, but to achieve the progress of qun. Such approach in the theoretical plan can be compared with the theory of "the general will" Jean-Jacques Rousseau, truly the national will of people as citizens expressing the interests of society. Rousseau puts it over the interests of the certain individual [20].

For both Liang Qichao and Chen Duxiu several ideas rooted in John Stuart Mill's work, especially – "The Subjection of Women". British philosopher discussed married women's lack of property rights, describes a wife's role in marriage as 'the personal body-servant of a despot, argued it is impossible to say anything about the nature of women because no-one has seen them in a state approaching freedom [19]. He believes there is no reason to exclude women from leading positions and only after women gain their freedom can they truly realize their potential. The necessary condition for a protection of the dignity of the woman if she has no state is an opportunity to earn money. Therefore, it is necessary to allow her to be engaged in any professions and to hold any positions. Also the main point: if women were to receive the same education as men they would benefit the economy. That's why women individual rights did, in fact, serve the good of society. The modifying in social-political thoughts of Chinese scholars in many aspects is a by-product of the introduction of liberalism. Numerous accounts on women issues trace the beginnings of its outlooks to the translation of J. St. Mill, H. Spencer, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. However, in the case of China, certainly, it should be considered in the Chinese historical context as caused by the aspiration of supporters of political reforms to borrow the western political mechanisms not for the purpose of social development, but as the instrument of a revival of the powerful, influential and effective Chinese state.

The subjugates women's education to the male-centered discourse of the nation, that is, the purpose of women's education is to make them good "mothers" so they can play their role in "safeguarding the race" and "strengthening the country" [16].

The new woman should have a new-style education, which emphasized natural science as an antidote to "superstition." The completion of the new woman was her emergence into the public sphere of society through economic independence, individual integrity, and political participation as a full citizen. The numerous illustrations of the new woman that appeared in the press at this time typically depict a figure striding boldly forth into society [17]. On pages of printing editions concerning similar women expressions "new femininity" (新女性) or "the new woman" even more often began to appear (新妇女) in women's magazines from the Republican period at the Institute of Chinese studies [24]. "The new woman" has to occupy a fitting place in social life and understand the higher purpose: to

sympathize with people, to raise children, to be the man's companion in life and fight. To find an independent will, thinking she can by emancipation, competent education in which education of all mankind is concluded.

Interesting feature highlighted in the discussion of women's issues in China: in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, during the initial period of widespread of discussions about the status of women in Chinese society, the initiative was based primarily on men who referring to the debate on the modernization of society the need for the urgent release of women, for the emancipation of women was one of the aspects included in the emancipation of the nation.

In fact, Chinese scholars never used the term women's rights in any of their writings. Arguments for improving women's lot and providing women education attracted attention during late 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and exerted great influence on later scholars. According to Dorothy Ko, women's education and increasing her social role became one of the key factors of liberalization for all Chinese society [18].

Speaking about the impact of the intellectuals' work of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, for most women achievements were inconspicuous. With the exception of obtaining the right to primary education and the abolition of foot binding, the issue of gaining political, economic, legal rights of women differed little from previous decades.

The first educational establishment for girls founded by Westerners was set up shortly after 1842 under the reign of Dao Guang. According to a report published by a Christian organization, and mentioned in Chu Jineng's *The Voice of Women's Learning*, there were British missionaries in China working for the advancement of women's education and, in particular, a Miss Aldersay who had founded a girls' school in Ningbo in 1844. Within the next fifteen years, schools opened in Shanghai, Foochow, Canton and Arnoy all under the direction of various mission organizations. The post Sino-Japanese War (1894) period saw a further increase in the number of girls' schools but this time the initiative came from the local Chinese. On 31 May 1898, Jing Zheng Girls' School was opened by Jing Yuanshan. Located in the south of Shanghai City, the school enrolled its first 20 or so students from girls aged between 8 and 15. Oriented around anti-Qing guidelines, the school had endeavored to infuse nationalist ideas into its pupils, including in its curriculum a philosophy course of Nihilism, a history course on the French Revolution and chemistry courses about bomb-making. Girls who received nationalist education were inclined to join anti-Qing parties such as the Revolutionary Alliance, and committed themselves to anti-Qing activities.

This establishment is now regarded as the forerunner of girls' schools organized by local people. In 1907, the women's private educational sector was given the official seal of approval when the Qing government announced regulations covering the administration of private colleges and primary schools. At the late 1920s that girls were officially enrolled in Beijing University [25].

The Chinese revolution of 1911 had overthrown the last Chinese emperor—the symbol of the Chinese feudal system and indicated that China had entered the era of the republic. However, the revolution actually only changed a top leader of China, but it did not touch the grassroots of Chinese society. After the revolution, the foundations of Chinese society remained the same. The status of Chinese women had not been changed at all.

Consequently, Chinese scholars' advocacy for women's education was based not so much on encouraging women's direct involvement in political life as on emphasizing their potential economic contribution to nation-building. Liang claimed that education would qualify women to work in modern professions, give women economic independence and ultimately benefit the economic power of the entire nation. In their view, career women – those who could make a living on their own – were a badge of women's liberation, symbolizing the development of Chinese modernity.

## Conclusion

Russia and China have long history of relations and a lot in common. Both grew from great people, from their interference, and common features in historical development. Despite belonging to different types of civilization, there are similar features in the national mentality. The beginning of the 20th century - a century of transformation of socio-political thought, as well as the reform period in China and Russia. Changes have concerned also ideas of women in society. At the turn of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, lives of women new reference points appeared. Among the arisen problems and challenges in the states not the last place was taken by the women's issue with which philosophers dealt. In conclusion, it is necessary to make the following consequences:

Firstly, the prevalence of the philosophical ideas about women in works of male philosophers was characteristic of China and Russia. For instance, in China, the idea of gender equality emerged in a society that had not stepped in the civilization of industrialization. For that reason, due to the lack of general education for women and their traditional inferior social status, those male intellectuals were the main force in women's movements. However, in China, philosophers were mainly published his works in magazines, but Russian in the eponymous books.

Secondly, philosophers have considered the problem of women in the framework of the issue of the state and the nation. Therefore, women's movements were not ended in women themselves, but were used as means to against feudalism and as a sign of social progress, the emancipation of women was one of the aspects of the emancipation of the nation. The Russian and Chinese ideologues saw the value in the self-realization of women, especially in education. According to them, women had open access to education, because a woman is a natural teacher. Besides, it could raise education level in the states in general. If the theory of thought Russian and Chinese philosophers coincide, but in practice the implementation of ideas were different. On the given statistics above, the development of education during the studied period in Russia was very active. In China, women's education remained only in the hands of Western missionaries for a long time.

Thirdly, in contrast to the Russian philosophers, who are often considered women's issues within metaphysics, the Chinese thinkers saw in it the solution of practical problems, lucid during the opium and Sino-Japanese wars.

Fourthly, at the beginning of the 20th century in China promoting of the Western ideas including philosophy is observed. Young people have been keen on the western ideas, were eager for transformations and joined in active political struggle. All philosophical thoughts concerning a women's issue relied in China only on experience of the western states. For Russia, that period of thought still reflected the traditional patriarchal ideas based on Orthodoxy. However, Russian philosophers gradually evolved understanding of women in society in connection with world historical progress. Gradually in Russia new ideas and trends began to appear, especially during the revolution of 1905, when the women's movements were more active.

In conclusion, Russia and China are the close countries not only on a geographical arrangement, but also on ideological currents and also historical development. Today relations between Russia and China are at an excellent level and show an example of interaction of two large states in the political, mental, and cultural spheres. Considering the vast experiences shared by each other, the countries can overcome various problems together, including in gender issues.

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## ЖЕНСКИЙ ВОПРОС В ФИЛОСОФСКОЙ МЫСЛИ РОССИИ И КИТАЯ В НАЧАЛЕ XX ВЕКА

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**Аннотация.** В статье рассматривается эволюция китайского и российского подходов к женскому вопросу на рубеже XIX-XX вв. Начало XX века было периодом трансформации общественно-политической мысли, реформ как в Китае, так и в России. Изменения затронули также представления о роли женщин в обществе. На основе сравнительного анализа женского вопроса в России и Китае можно выделить несколько общих тенденций. Во-первых, преобладание философских представлений о женщинах в работах философов-мужчин было характерно для Китая и России. Во-вторых, философы рассматривали проблему женщин в рамках проблем народа в целом. Среди различий можно выделить следующее: в отличие от русских философов, которые часто рассматривали женский вопрос в рамках метафизики, китайские мыслители видели в нем решение практических проблем, осознанных во время китайско-японских войн.

**Ключевые слова:** Россия, Китай, образование, сравнительный анализ, женский вопрос, реформы, поздняя династия Цинь.

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