

The Representation of Gender Definition through Ancient Chinese Folktales: Symbols of Femininity Ideology, Negotiation and Similarity of Female Status as Currently Era

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Abstract

In the view of ethnologist, there is the relation between folktales and the gender dimension. In this matter, Folktale is a kind of culture that represents ways of life of each ethnic group. Due to researcher interested about Chinese culture then to investigate and present explicitly about the issue involves the knowledge of Chinese culture, folklore, and gender, there are three purposes to explore. The first, to study the pattern of gender inequality aspects that appears in Chinese folktales, all of stories the protagonists are female. The second, to study symbols that appear in Chinese folktales those present gender definition of female. The third, to study the model of negotiation and definition of female status in Chinese folktales.

In this matter, samples are four Chinese folktales composed before the Cultural Revolution of China such as The Butterfly Lovers, The Legend of White Snake, Tears that Bring Down the Great Wall and The Cowherd and the Weaver Girl. Researcher found out, in the situation of patriarchy; female was socialized to serve family according to expectation that adhere to social value about many good skills such as housework, embroidery, weaving, nurture a child and cooking etc. Moreover especially good woman has to obey parent and husband.

In this matter, all four folktales explicitly present femininity ideology and negotiation in the situation of inequality between the different gender. Furthermore, these four folktales are discourse that present attemption to achieve new definition of female in the dimension equality. In addition, protagonists are female, and the main characters are expressive behavior that implicate the concept femininity in modern society hidden in ancient folktales.

KEYWORDS: Ancient Chinese folktale, gender inequality, femininity, Gender and Negotiation

1 BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCES OF PROBLEM

Considering in terms of globalization, economy, politics, society, and culture, all are connected to every countries around the world. At the present, China is a country with rapid

economic growth and expansion. Thus, many scholars emphasize to create knowledge of China in various dimensions, also to comprehend Chinese in dimensions of cultural, society and gender. As anthropologist aims to study all aspects of human beings especially patterns of behavior base on unique culture of each ethnic group. Ideologies of female, in the past and at the present, are rooted into culture or ways of life of each ethnic group. In this matter, the collections of folklore data, including ancient folktales, are analyzed to elucidate social and cultural characteristics of each ethnic groups. For instance, folktales of Indian Tribes were Collected by Henry Schoolcraft, Henry's book, Historical and Statistical Information the History, Condition and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States, disseminates life of indigenous people to make known to the public. As another instance, Bronislaw Malinowski studied Trobriand Tribe, Malinowski analyzed folktales of this ethnic group to elucidated how folktales played importance role in Trobrianders culture and society. In the other hand, folktales are hidden some meanings and ideologies about woldviews. The contents of folktale consist of various symbols that can be interpreted for understanding the origin of the rituals, traditions, celebrations, social arrangements, values and norms etc. Moreover, meanings of various symbols that appear in folktales such as sacred animals, demons and gods, etc., these symbols present significances of ideology and perspective relate to human life. Furthermore, many folktales are embedded with symbols of good that always overcomes evil also some folktales elucidate the origin of the world and human. Apart from entertainment, folktales are strategy of indirectly socialization mechanism for members of society to learn the principles of practice that consist of norms values and belief systems of each culture and society. Thus folktalescontents are based on culture in many dimensions.

Folktales also show the relationship between male and female that exists in many cultures and societies, some of these folktales are impressive and highly talked about, such as The Butterfly Lovers, The Legend of White Snake, Tears that Bring Down the Great Wall, and The Cowherd and the Weaver Girl. All these folktales have been conveyed into various forms such as book, movie, cartoon and Chinese opera. There are also compositions of song related to all these folktales. The concept of "gender" was developed based on social construction theory in the period of the feminist movement of the 1970s. The concept of "gender" in the field of anthropology in the early 1970s was the result of concept development by anthropologists to study gender issues, furthermore feminist anthropology occurred in the later period (Suchada Taweessit, 2007, pp. 315). Issue of folktale manifests cultural foundation that influences to the social relationship between male and female in each society. Gender inequality in kinship system and patriarchal society, male has higher status than female then folktales can be clarified as discourse in the dimension of male images such as being dominant, fighter, ruler, and hero, while female images relate to being passive, helpless, and having a duty to nurture children, etc. Therefore, these all images reflect the significant of gender discourse in patriarchal society (Thomson, 2008).

Researcher aim to study how Chinese folklores in the type of folktale, represents gender status in specific dimensions of female. There are also interesting issue to study about different symbols that explicit in Chinese folktales and implicate meanings of the status and roles of female in aspect of relationship pattern within the family and the society that causes tension for female, therefore, folktales can be awared of feelings and thoughts of people both in the past and present.

2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

- 1 To study the pattern of gender inequality aspect that appears in Chinese folktales ,all of stories the protagonists are female
- 2 To study symbols in Chinese folktales those present gender definition of female
- 3 To study the model of negotiation for female gender definition in Chinese folktales

2.1 Benefits

- 1 To know gender inequality in the context of Chinese culture through folktales
- 2 To know patterns of gender negotiation that explicit in Chinese folktales
- 3 To present an analysis of symbolic interpretation in folktales relates to the gender dimension in the context of patriarchal society and Chinese culture
- 4 To use the research results as illustrations for the teaching and learning of subjects that related to Chinese studies at both Bachelor and Master Program degree levels

2.2 Research Scope

This research is qualitative method by collecting secondary data of Chinese folktales and using purposive sampling. These four folktales are famous ancient Chinese folktales.

- 1 Tears that Bring Down the Great Wall or Lady Meng Jiang, was composed in Qin Dynasty
- 2 The Legend of White Snake, was composed in Tang Dynasty
- 3 The Cowherd and the Weaver Girl, was composed in Tang Dynasty
- 4 The Butterfly Lovers, was composed in Jin Dynasty

Thus, these four folktales were composed during period when Chinese society was agricultural society, feudal system, including Taoist and Confucian influenced to many aspects of life such as gender system. In this regard, researcher view current social and cultural conditions have origin and root from the past.

Dynasty and Empire

1. Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC)
2. Western Han Dynasty (206 BC - AD 220)
3. Xin Dynasty (AD 9-23)
4. Eastern Han Dynasty (AD 23-220)
5. Three Kingdoms period (AD 220-280)
6. Western Jin Dynasty (AD 265-317)
7. Eastern Jin Dynasty (AD 317-420)
8. Northern and Southern Dynasties (AD 420-581)
9. Sui Dynasty (AD 581-618)
10. Tang Dynasty (AD 618-907)
11. Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms Era (AD 907-960)
12. Song Dynasty (AD 960-1279)
13. Yuan Dynasty (AD 1279-1368)
14. Ming Dynasty (AD 1368-1644)

15. Qing Dynasty (AD 1644-1912)
Modern China
 1. Republic of China Era (AD 1912-1949)
 2. People's Republic of China Era (AD 1949-present)

3 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

This research is qualitative method by means of documentary research. For data analysis, there are two techniques, Typological Analysis and Constant Comparison. In this matter process of data analysis is divided into three steps as below;

The first step: Data Interpretation according to conceptual and theoretical frameworks for a brief overview as a guide for further analyzing and finding more information

The second step: Examining and collecting data for additional information.

The third step: Conducting detail of analysis and make conclusion

3.1 Synopsis of 4 folktales



Figure 1: *The First : The Butterfly Lovers* (Source: <http://www.duckload.ws/forum/showthread.php?t=1021908&page=1>)

The story of Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai happened in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province. Zhu Yingtais nickname is Jiu Mei, she wanted to travel to Hangzhou to study, Jiu Mei asked for permission and begged her father to fulfill her will. Jiu Mei's father allowed Jiu Mei to go to school however Jiu Mei and her servant had to disguise themselves as men. On their way to Hangzhou, Jiu Mei met Liang Shanbo, who came from Kuaiji, he also traveled to study in Hangzhou, they had a pleasant conversation. Eventually, they decided to take the oath to be sworn brothers, after that Jiu Mei and Liang Shanbo studied together for three years. During their studies together, Liang Shanbo did not know Jiu Mei was a woman. One day, Jiu Mei received a letter from her family, father ordered Jiu Mei to return home as soon as possible because her mother was sick. Jiu Mei loved Liang Shanbo, so before Jiu Mei left, she asked teacher's wife to give her love poem to Liang Shanbo. However he didn't understand Jiu Meis love at all, Jiu Mei told Liang Shanbo, she had a sister named Jiu Mei and she was willing to be a matchmaker and hoped he could visit her house as soon as possicle. However,

when Liang Shanbo realized his sworn brothers was a woman, unfortunately, Jiu Mei had already engaged to Ma Wencai, a son of wealthy man. Jiu Mei tried to reject this arranged marriage. Finally, they realized their love would be impossible. After that Liang Shanbo worked hard day and night, however he could not forget about painful reality, even when sleeping or awake, Jiu Mei still remained in his mind. On Jiu Mei's wedding day approached, Liang Shanbo had more and more painful, eventually he was ill and died. The news about Liang Shanbo's death reached Jiu Mei just a day before the wedding day. Jiu Mei was shocked as lightning in her heart.

When the groom took the palanquin to pick up the bride in the morning, on the way that had to pass Liang Shanbo's grave, Jiu Mei took off bridal dress then revealed the mourning cloth which was weared inside. She walked straight to a grave and bit her finger, Jiu Mei used her blood to write her name on the tombstone beside Liang Shanbo's name. The bright sky suddenly turned dark, there was a thunderstorm blew sand, suddenly the land in front of Jiu Mei splited apart, immediately she jumped into the crevasse. After that, the land moved closer together and buried the bodies of Jiu Mei and Liang Shanbo together forever. Suddenly, two butterflies flew up from the grave. Everyone believed that two butterflies were love spirits of Liang Shanbo and Jiu Mei, who were going to be a couple in heaven.



Figure 2: *The Second: The Legend of White Snake* (Source: <http://zenposters.blogspot.com/2012/12/love-of-white-snake-zhen-bai-she-zhuan.html>)

At Ngo Bai Mountain, a white snake Queen lived there. This white snake had practiced asceticism for 1000 years. One day White Snake Queen and her sister Green Snake transformed into two beautiful women. White Snake Queen's name was Bai Su Zhen and Green Snake's name was Xiaoqing, they went down to travel in the human world. At the Lake Xihu in Hangzhou city, they met handsome man, his name was Xi Xian, he picked up Bai Su Zhen by boat while it was raining. They fell in love with each other, therefore Xi Xian asked Bai Su Zhen to marry and moved to live in Zhejiang. They opened a small pharmacy, after that Bai Su Zhen became pregnant. On the day of the Tuangzhou Festival (The Dragon Boat Festival), Bai Su Zhen was a snake, alcohol had effect on her body, Bai Su Zhen inevitably drank at invitation of drinking alcohol, she fell asleep and unconsciously returned to her original body. Xi Xian saw a large white snake curled up on the bed then he was in a shock. When Bai Su Zhen waked up she found that her husband had left. Bai Su Zhen managed to resolve

the situation, causing her husband to stop being afraid and believe that she was not a demon and came back to love her again. However, Luang Fa Hai, Chinese Buddhist Priest knew that Bai Su Zhen was a white snake demon, so he came to capture Bai Su Zhen. Bai Su Zhen lost the battle against Lang Jean Fahai, so she was imprisoned in the Liang Tower. Until when Bai Su Zhen's son grew up, Xiao Xin asked God to help his mother thus Bai Su Zhen was released from Leifeng Tower. This is a love story, however it is also a general family story, which convey belief and mindset of Chinese people. Moreover this legendary scenic spot, Leifeng Tower and Xihu Lake became tourist attractions.

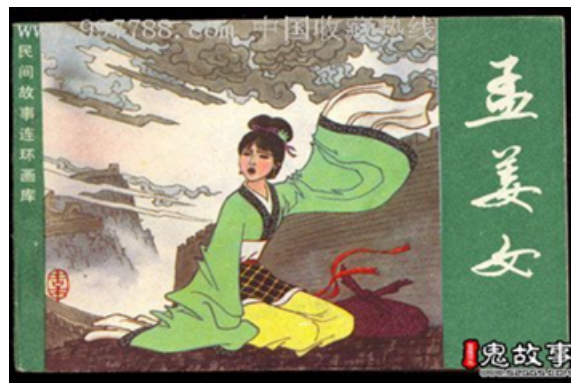


Figure 3: *The Third: Tears that Bring Down the Great Wall (Lady Meng Jiang)* (Source: <https://ongchina.wordpress.com/2012/08/23/chvalentin/>)

This story was composed in the period of the Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC). Meng Jiang was a beautiful and kind girl; she found a man who was hiding under a shelf of grape. She was scared and wanted to shout however a man waved his hand and asked for help. Fhansileang was his name, he was there to hide from soldiers, because at that time, Emperor Qin Shi Huang was building the Great Wall, thus the army captured young men to be laborers for the construction. Many workers died by exhausted and starved. Meng Jiang agreed to save him. He was handsome and knowledgeable gentleman. They fell in love with each other. Meng Jiang asked her fathers allowance to marry. On the wedding day, there were many wedding guests. After all the guests returned home, when Fhansileang and Meng Jiang entered the bride and groom's room, suddenly soldiers entered their house. They took Fhansileang, after that he was sent to the wall construction site to do hard work. Because of Meng Jiansg excruciating sorrow, she thought that instead of staying home and waiting for his news, she wanted to look for him at the construction site. She packed her belongings and traveled to the construction site. During the journey, she encountered many difficulty of dangerous way of geography and terrible weather. The power of love supported her both physically and mentally. She arrived construction site however she couldnt find him. Finally she asked a worker, then she found out he was dead and his body was buried under the wall. Thunder roared in the sky , there was darkness, Meng Jiang couldnt see anything. Suddenly she cried out and wept miserably for three days and nights then the sky turned dark and the wind brew stronger. Part of the wall collapsed and Meng Jiansg tears fell on her beloved husbands face.

Niulang born in farmer family. After his parents passed away, he lived with his older



Figure 4: *The Fourth: The Cowherd and the Weaver Girl* (Source: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/331436853812643561/>)

brother and sister in law however they treated Niulang badly. They gave Niulang a cow and a broken wheelbarrow. Since then, Niulang has been working hard at farm and built a house for them. Niulangs life was lonely. In fact, he didn't know his cow was heaven god. One day, a cow told Niulang to go to Bilian Lake, some angles would taking bath there and angle who wearied red cloth would be his wife. Niulang was shocked then he spoke to a cow, "You can talk! and Will your words come true?, a cow nodded. When Niulang arrived Bilian Lake and hid behind a tree. Suddenly, angles flew down and took off their clothes to bathe in the lake, Niulang quickly came out, angles saw him and hurriedly put on their clothes and flew away. Except angle without clothes, she was Zhinv, her clothe was stolen. At this time, Niulang appeared, Zhinv was a beautiful angle and Niulang was a handsome man. They fell deeply in love with each other. Therefore, Zhinv became Niulang's wife. After marriage, they had a son and a daughter. She was regarded as someone who had excellent skill in weaving silk. Zhinv and Niulang brought silk to sell. Their silk sold well then unexpectedly they became rich.

Zhinv was the empresss daughter, therefore the Empress was furious when she found out about this and sent heaven army to take Zhinv, a storm broke out, heaven army appeared and took Zhinv away. Niulang was very sad, Zhinv said Waits for me!, Zhinv was in the sky, she turned around and saw Niulang was carrying two baskets where their children were sitting and crying. Suddenly, the Empress appeared in the clouds. She pulled the pin out of her hair and threw then big celestial river (Milky Way) appeared between Zhinv and Niulang. The family was separated, Zhinv cried hard, also Niulang and their children cried at another side, they could not meet again. All the angles and the Empress saw their love, thus the Empress allowed Niulang and their children to meet Zhinv once a year, every July 7th.

4 REVIEW LITERATURE

Researcher searched for preliminary documents which relate to Chinese culture and society for fundamental to comprehend characteristics of Chinese families, also looked for documents which written by many scholars about folktales to be as references of implications representation of gender, women status, and roles relate to cultural and social determination.

The article written by Edwin (2010), "Shaping interpretations of reality: cultural value",

elucidates that Chinese society is characterized by the generalization of members. Collectivism means having thoughts and actions that individual concerns rather than their own feelings, thoughts and actions. In the other words, individual concerns about group's generalization rather than Individualism. Chinese culture is rooted base on the philosophy of Confucianism and Taoism, which emphasize and influence to family and kinship (Samovar, Poter, & Mc Daniel, 2010). For the article "Long-term prediction of academic achievement of American, Chinese, and Japanese adolescents" mentions that Chinese's claim to 5,000 years of history and many folktales have been transmitted from generation to generation. However, there are many Chinese folktales have not been recorded by writing thus it is difficult for systematically study about this kind of folktale. However, several studies show that folktales and cultural values have strong impact on children (Lee & Stevenson, 1996). Socialization implements the patterns of cultural behavior that members of society internalize such as ideologies, values and norms that become the frame of behavior. Chinese folktales are strategy instrument of socialization by transmitting them to children from generation to generation. Moreover, folktales present gender issues of femininity, although many folktales are not in the Chinese cultural and social context, however all of them can be models of a preliminary analysis for the researcher. Thomson (2008) studied the representation of gender issue through Japanese folktales, "Representations of Women in Six Japanese Folk Tales". Thomson found female characters are portrayed such as loyal house servant while marriage is portrayed self-sacrifice for the family. In additionally, there are representations of women resist men especially about abuse, female characters are often emotionally abused by men and parents. Therefore, portrayal of women in folklores show their powerlessness within families and they are in custody of men. Thomson argues that folklores play important role in shaping or socialization for girls about their roles in families and societies. Researcher would like to refer to the movie Oshin modern folklore, this story has the same plot as Thomson mentions about the female characters. Oshin born in a poor peasant family, her mother has shown roles of women as motherhood and wife according to role expectations and role models of Japanese culture about women in the context of patriarchal society. Therefore, Oshin has been socialized indirectly then internalized and took role model or role taking base on Japanese ideology about women. Oshin was sent by her father to work as a servant when she was ten years old in exchange for wage labour as rice to support the family as same as her sister while brothers were not sent to work. Furthermore, the article Mae Ploy and Feminist written by Pornsawan Suwanthad (2011) discusses about role and status of women as explicitly appear in the novel Four Reigns in patriarchal context. The protagonist of story, Mae Ploy, is a woman who has characters that attract men, she is beauty in appearance, manner, and a mind that are perfect for being motherhood and wife. In this matter, she has authority in managing home, it presents compromise in the dimension of woman's role as cultural feminism concept, such as Khun Prem loves Mae Ploy unwaveringly then refuses to has other women after marriage, even norm of society allows man to has many wives, as well as the love that children have for their Mae Ploy is steady and unceasing, Mae Ploy satisfies man's need in patriarchal society. Another research project by Akakwit Ruangrong (1996), analytical literary study on Kaew Na Ma this story emphasizes to the role of woman who has character over man. Conflict and social norm relate to gender inequality therefore the ideological struggles to strike back and cultivates virtue are presented. By distinctive role in the plot of story supports Kaew Na Ma

to be interesting and conducive retelling until the present day. From all documents, researcher have reviewed above are as illustrations of image, role and status of female through folktales.

5 CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theories used by researcher in analyzing folktales related to the view of women status in Chinese society include Feminist Theory, Levi-Strauss Structural Analysis Theory, and Bronislaw Malinowski's Functionalism theory and the concept of Poaching and Relevance

5.1 Feminist Theory

Feminist theory has been used in many study fields, such as literature, psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science, folklore, and history. Contemporary folktales has been started question what can be learned from womens experiences. Feminists consider to female experiences that manifest in various forms. In order to explore realities of womens lives in different cultures and contexts, these feminist scholars focus on experiences of women that had previously been overlooked and underestimated. In addition, feminists developed new theoretical perspectives and expanded their application to folklore studies. Feminist theory concern gender issues as important aspects of social relevance, such as race and social class shape interpersonal relationship within group and society as a whole (Rosser, 1992). For feminist theory, gender is categorized many different womens experiences and associated with the study of folktale. In the 1970s, a new perspective was developed by feminists as result of the movement for gender equality in the late 1970s. Feminist folklore movement in the 1960s has been incorporated into folklore theory and educational methodology (Paredes and Bauman 1972; Farrer 1975). About the dimension of folklore that Feminist approach is used in folklore studies involves to establishing basic form or category of gender to analyze cultural experiences and creates artistic expressions. Folklore Feminist uses feminist theory to express womens experience of being ignored and valuelessness, this knowledge created by women. From this point, feminist theory evolution evolved and became more complex. Feminist theory is applied to folklore studies and methodology to study folklore.

At a fundamental level, the basic goal of feminist theory can be divided into two aspects, the first to provide perspective on womens experience of struggle in the production of knowledge and the second to respond to women's political struggle and objective (Grosz, 1994a). Both aspects involve to political activism and focus on personal experience, moreover these aspects cause feminism to be criticized. Faminist theory also shows movement and expression of the basic theory of gender equality. (Kousaleos, 1999).

Thus, the analysis of Chinese folktales elucidate femininity in Chinese society in the past thus feminist theory is the guideline for analysis.

5.2 Levi-Strauss' Structural Theory

Structural theory is a fundamental theory that was created by study of the thinking process. This theoretical concept is created by Claude Levi-Strauss, a French structural anthropologist who has a hypothesis on how to study the structure of human thought as universal such as Levi-Strauss analysis of myth Oedipus. The structure of the Levi-Strauss theory has

four main points, the first appearances of human control and story are not reality, the second reality is creation, the third creation is like code and the fourth the relationship between empirical occurrences in the sequence and the facts referred to in the structure are dialectic. By structural methodology is the application of structural theory to data structure. Dialectic is included in the core of transformation method of thought. Moreover, dialectic is the formation of two opposite poles which are considered in ideas that appear in legends as a set. Thus, dialectical technique analysis is the process of reading legend and dividing them into unit to apply a structural approach to finding answer. The study of Levi-Strauss about myth resolved two problems in the study of myths, these two problems are the first interpretation of word or phrase reflection and the second some myths contain their own meaning from the text that we can discover by deconstructing the fable into parts, there is no segment of myth that cannot be explained, every segment can be explained based on references to other segments in story or other related myths.

Levi-Strauss structural theory resolves to correct interpretations of assumption about the structure of myths. It is based on the fact that the human mind is structural mechanism and each myth has its own structure. Sometimes part of the mythological structure is connected to several myths. Therefore the structure of myth is interpretation on the assumption that every element in myth is determined by the processes of the human mind.

For the view of structural theory can be used to support to analyze folktale by using the method of Levi-Strauss to separate the structure of folktale and arrange components of story plot into unit or group to interpret. Thus this technique will lead to understanding ideology of the gender system. In particular, femininity is the result of ideology that influence gender stereotype in Chinese culture and society.

5.3 Bronislaw Malinowskis Theory of Functionalism

Functionalism views the fact that culture presents that culture ables to satisfy human needs. Durkheims idea of organicism influenced to anthropological ideas of Malinowski of functionalism. There are different needs of each society because of different conditions. Therefore, funtional analysis is that each part in cultural system has different function.

Malinowski is the first anthropologist who apply function of culture to view that all elements of culture serve human needs. Each part of culture has function and represents need of human.

In this matter, according to Malinowskis ideas, human created culture to satisfy needs as follows:

1. Fundamental need derived from biology
2. Psychological need
3. Social organization need

These are needs related to the struggle to survive, such as needs of food and housing, social organization needs are about social collaboration such as the division of labor, food distribution, protection, food production, and social control. In the part of psychological needs are about peace of mind and mental stability, thus cultures those satisfy these needs such as knowledge, law, religion, myth, art, and sorcery. Malinowskis fieldwork at Trobrian Islan, he found function of Trobrians myth relates to social organization by giving authority

to ruling class.

In this matter, functionalism theory supports to analyze Chinese folktales about function in the dimension of gender system management in Chinese society that relates to rule, norm and value of gender. Especially, social organization of stereotypes of femininity under the Chinese cultural society impact on female explicit in Chinese folktales.

5.4 Poaching and Relevance Theory

Poaching and relevance are two concepts closely linked to the theory of popular culture. The relationship between these two concepts of poaching and relevance is the causality of each other which is result of the development of a cultural style known as fashion. Popular cultural theorist takes issue of poaching and discover that it manifests in variety of forms. Fiske (1989b) defined poaching as the activity of popular culture of marginal man to create relevance for themselves as marginal man who does not has relevance or participate in mainstream culture. So they use the cultural text as their representation to make this claim. For example, Charlies Angels is seen as liberating women from the patriarchal system. Women have found a way to reject patriarchal system by creating strong female characters that express poaching without fear, this is relevance by experience of women or by selecting meaningful part and relevance to the group experience (Fiske, 1989b, pp. 145). Relevance requires connection between message being conveyed and the reader's social experience. Without this relevance, reader would not be prompted by the text to empathize (Fiske, 1989a, pp. 186-187). Text communication shows relevance to the audience and represents manifestation of the poaching. Fiske claims that person involved in poaching represents member of popular culture that is active in our daily lives (Fiske, 1989a, pp. 186). Minor group or subordinate groups popular culture is developed as result of the opposition. This subordinate group is dissatisfied with being under control (Fiske, 1989a, pp. 7). This poaching becomes way of resisting their own social experiences of marginal man and subordinate group in society such as women and the third gender, subordinate groups who feel alienated from society then similar feeling, thought and anxiety will be shared. There is process of manipulation and poaching, such as through fan fiction, as seen in Star Trek. Women characters in this science fiction defy stereotypes of femininity, in this matter the author has created the protagonist as a woman who has the ability to overcome obstacles that man can't win and point out issue of anti-gender discrimination. It reflects how professional woman can cope everyday life work environment (Jenkins, 2006, pp. 48). Thus, adapting text to communicate in Star Trek makes female audiences have feeling of liberated from their own social experience. It also touches on the difficulty of being professional woman in patriarchal society and resisting traditional femininity. By creating powerful role through Star Treks female characters, both Fiske and Jenkins call popular culture a subculture. Examination of poaching and relevance in a historical context needs more clarity on thought of people in that time of each culture. Historical phenomena support to explain the relevance and show that the members of group were in fact involved. Folktale elements and story plots are written for the purpose of conveying ideology to people or revealing social realities those are sources of mass culture produced in terms of folktale. In addition, on the other hand, the process of organizing folktales in accordance with needs of social classes that present adaptation that author creates relevance for each

group of people while poaching social stereotypes that author of folktales intends to create relevance with the people in that situation. So these are roles of contemporary folktales being produced by people who want to poaching social stereotypes. It is not only entertainment but also produces something that shows the desire to overthrow traditional social stereotypes that will reveal and challenge socio-cultural issue (Zipes, 2002).

Thus Poaching and Relevance Theory supports to explain Chinese folktales on gender issue. Particularly, social stereotype that influences to womens life. Social stereotype in feminine dimension is poaching through Chinese folktales and shows relevance of the realities that women encounter the stereotype of the gender system in Chinese society.

In conclusion, all four theories mentioned above are contributed to interpret and analyze the experiences of women and roles of folktales within gender system in Chinese culture and society to organizing gender of defining Chinese femininity. The definition of womanhood that is expected and determined to be is explicitly shown in folktales that women are protagonists. For feminist theory assists to explaine factors those influence to the definition of womanhood in Chinese culture and societies. While The Poaching and Relevance Theory supports to explain in the part of ideology about femininity in Chinese culture and society. Some parts of folktales present struggling and claiming rights for women that linked to life of Chinese women with experience of social organization in the dimension of gender system characterized by a patriarchal society. Furthermore, theory of functionalism could explain roles of folktales in the dimension of fulfilling human needs. Therefore, all theories provide frame for analyzing femininity and portray inequality in the gender system that affects definition of role expectation and status that women should be under. In addition, theories above support to understand gender negotiations through symbols in folktales.

6 RESULT

6.1 The discourse of femininity in Chinese Culture and Society

All four folktales in this study are discourse that conveys what ideal woman characters should be, those are expected according to the norms and values of Chinese culture and society. Female characters in stories have abilities of doing household chores, handicrafts like Zhinv, the angle with ability of weaving. In the story of Butterfly Lovers, Zhu Yingtai or Jiu Mei, a girl who wants to go to school, however her father doesn't agree, causing Zhu Yingtai to beg her father several times. This situation shows disagreement ideas in the family about the role of woman. The fathers idea, a daughter didnt need to study, should stay at home, and practice many skills of being a good wife.

Arranged marriage is tradition that young woman couldnt avoid, even if she is unwilling to marry a man who her parent manage engagement for her such as in the story Butterfly Lovers. However, Zhu Yingtai had to marry, exactly her marriage is symbols of obedience and filial to her parent. On the other hand, this story attempts to present conventional desire of family and social class constraint. The story The Legend of White Snake is illustration or symbol of claim for the right of both man and woman to choose spouse by themselves. Moreover, in this story, white snake and green snake are demons, these are symbols of lower status of demons than human. Therefore, it is cursing that the white snake is obstructed to separate from the human who is her husband. As being qualify character requirements

of married woman, she has to take care her husband and children. Another qualify character requirement reflects in folktale is love and honesty to her husband, this character is explicitly presents in especially the story Tears that Bring Down the Great Wall.

These four folktales represent discourse about viewpoints of femininity that are expected and governed by norms and values of Chinese culture and society, at the same time, all stories show negotiations to against the limitations imposed upon women in the situation of gender inequality.

6.2 Social inequality of Gender Issue

1. Inequality and Implication of Gender Hierarchy Woman and man have been divided into different social roles; all these four folktales are as evidence of gender hierarchy system and it is more consistency in rural area, families struggle to survive especially wealthy family, the family is considered as the main unit of society, therefore arranged marriage is one part of gratitude and ideal principle for family life. In this matter, in patriarchal society, father has the most power and controls property, father has authority to manage spouse selection especially about arranged marriage for his son or daughter. Thus, social mobilization in social context of relationship between different gender is depended on man. In generally refers to society that dominated by man while woman is as mans property.

2. The Social Context of Gender Relationship and Femininity Ideology Confucianism appeared in the Zhou dynasty at that time Kongzi known as Confucius, he considered that country was in trouble about leader. His idea became as ruling country. Confucianism emphasizes to different social roles and responsibilities. Confucianism may be promoted gender inequality in a patriarchal society, where gender inequality is recognized however had implications for women liberate after. Confucian principles aimed to stabilize sovereignty and promote governance. Many Chinese emperors consolidated royal authority through Confucian ethics. Confucius principles also influenced to interpersonal relationship, therefore, interaction with others is means of selflessness and satisfying needs of others. Gender system in the principle of Confucianism implicates to social inequality between woman and man. In history appeared Chinese womens suffering, such as the binding of feet, an arranged marriage, being second wife, widows obedience to eldest son and widows suicide. Confucianism shows limitation on the role of women, controlling women by men, thus for gender inequality men were considered as the head of the family. Thus, Confucius contributed to the position of women as inferior.

Confucius principle relates to womens life that can be divided into three periods of a womans life, the first is premarital, the second is married and the third is after her husbands death.

1. Unmarried woman must follow her fathers words
2. Married woman must obey your husbands words
3. Widow must obey her son

Thus, qualify characters of women are determined as follows;

1. Must have good morals and behave within the frame that should be good manners
2. Speak softly, sweetly, and honestly
3. Clean appearance

4. Do homework

3. Negotiation for Gender Equality and Womens Rights The Legend of White Snake represents the expression as similar to a modern womans roles. According to the story, Bai Su Zhen is a woman who helps her husband to work for a living, in fact she has ability better than her husband, she helps husband in treatment of patients, then they are well known and economic status of family become better. In this point shows the link between female identity and talent. Therefore, discourse of intellectual, social practice and womens right are as revolution by the story of Bai Su Zhen. She is imprisoned under Leifeng tower by Chinese Monarch Fa Hai who is as the guardian of relationship between human and demon, based on natural law. The Legend of White Snake has complex implications about gender and class. If this story reference to personal characters, Bai Su Zhen represents as a strong woman who can fight against obstacles by herself and has the character of leadership, the rights of woman, victory, and enduring love. Exactly, Bai Su Zhen represents as a model of modern women. Moreover, For the Cowherd and the Weaver Girl depicts the higher social class of woman, a child of gods. Therefore, it is a symbol that a woman who is in higher social class and a man who is in lower social class are eventually separated. In the family, it also shows that weaver girl plays a role in earning money for the family by weaving for sale, because of this excellent skill supports economic status of family to become rich, before married her husband was a poor farmer.

The significances of all four folktales expresses about gender and social class, gender relations and romance, that express mixing of history and contemporary, thus plots show the connection between reality and presenting women with modern femininity, such as being women with leadership able to help men make a living. Gender hierarchy are presented through all these four folktales, according to Chinese tradition, women must obey their husbands however in the plots there are instances of reformation of the idea of gender hierarchy, in which women can be superior to men. Thus, according to the stories, there are attemptions to claim for gender equality through folktales in the era that women were inferior. In the other words, these are negotiations that trying to redefine femininity through folklore. Moreover, it can be seen as attemption to claim and release social and cultural pressures on status and role of women.

For The Butterfly Lovers at the beginning of this story depicts dressing of a woman as a man or to disguised as a man, the story deals with the concept of gender relationship between man and woman. Woman has to hide her sexuality by dressing as the opposite sex. This storys plot represents the struggle for woman's rights and the idea of marriage based on love or rejection of arranged marriage. Proper ideal movement through folktales will surely affect the mind of those who hear them. Here, heterosexual dressing is associated with gender issues. Woman in masculine attire presents challenge in the pre-modern era where woman live under a male-dominated society. On the other hand, the story also shows woman wants to defend herself in critical situations. Dressing as man allows woman to go on adventures in life outside home. This point emphasizes to womans desire to participate in mans activities related to authority and gender hierarchy that is the core of the motivation of the woman who is the protagonist of the story. Therefore, Gender hierarchy can be seen in womans clothing as man and mans attitudes toward woman. It also shows womens strategies for elevating social

status and attempts to has more authority and independence. In patriarchal society, there is dividing dimension of gender authority, women are passive while men are superiority, this organizing expresses the different judgment. Women tend to insult by men, this is a trait of threatened by masculine roles. The Butterfly Lovers illustrates success of woman, portrays masculinity to reserve extent only for man and woman are excluded. On the other hand, this story shows the negotiation between a biological trait, social factors and physical appearance, it is technique to create femininity and masculinity to made relevant to gender, such as the protagonist manages social definitions of gender by the social expression that she is male, then she can travel to study outside home however woman remains in the eyes of man in patriarchal social environment. The protagonist uses the imagination of man to overcome femininity. Finally, gender role is inevitable, manipulation of family life, especially the father causing her to die together with her lover express femininity tensions.

Tears that Bring Down the Great Wall, this story references the history of Qin dynasty when the emperor wanted to build the Great Wall. The plot shows the emperors will to establish a great empire by building the Great Wall to defend against enemy invasions. Therefore, many men were distributed as labours in the construction site. At the same time, there were many men death and got killed because of escaped from being labors to build a Great Wall. The plot shows the separation of husband and wife, at its core, it reveals pressure and suffering of the people under Qin dynasty. The family implications can be seen that woman marries with man who is in lower social class, in this case the plot attempts to reflect the ideology of man and woman able to choose a spouse on their own without family interference.

6.3 Gender inequality implications from folklores to Chinese family Reform

Four folktales reflect family and gender problems. Later, the Communist Party Government reformed characteristics of the Chinese family then new ideas on family have been accepted, such as follows.

1. In divorce, the mother accepts that the father must continue to be the guardian of all children after the divorce
2. Each member of the family has the right to own their own personal possessions, this idea goes against the tradition that all possessions belong to the family
3. Support intention of preference to marry or divorce that must come from the spouse directly, should not be intention of both parents.
4. Conflicts or quarrels between husband-and-wife relatives should not be considered a cause for divorce.
5. The Supreme Court has the right to be involved in family issues
6. Families have to encourage women to have equal education as men.

Under the new policies, women have the same rights as men, for the original tradition of giving praise and honoring women with purity, each family tried to preserve the purity of their daughters by prohibiting women from working outside house, no need to study, forbidden to meet and talk with men, especially going to stay overnight outside the house, etc. For womens rights, the government allowed women to participate in political positions and was found that many women worked in labor market for economic reasons.

The Communist Party believes that everyone should take full advantage of the opportu-

nity to step into a new society. First, it is essential that every woman should open her mind beyond her mere sense of duty in the family. The second, women should always remind themselves that they are intelligent and courageous enough to change themselves.

6.4 Overviews of all four folktales

1. Plots present male-dominated society or patriarchal social environment that men can determine women's life
2. Present the inequality between women and men in the dimensions of education, economic status, participation, and authority to have the right to make decisions about their own life
3. Demonstrates arranged marriage that is characteristic of Chinese families in the past, marriage must be approved by parent
4. Social class represents different lifestyles of people with unequal socio-economic status, Families often want children to have spouses of equal status.
5. Demonstrate a gender hierarchy that is determined by culture.
6. Plots show negotiation strategies of feminine state under the patriarchal society to obtain opportunities for decision making of their own lives
7. Plots present that women can be equal to men as well, both in terms of education and making a living to support family
8. Plots also illustrate the concept of Confucius principles, that women must obey their fathers and husbands, no need to study, must stay at home, does housework, take care children and husband and must be faithful to their husbands and filial piety to parent
9. The principles of Buddhism and Taoism are presented in these folktales in terms of karma is causing actions, life is suffering and beliefs about gods and miracles
The approach of Buddhism in these four Folktales is associated with the four truths as follows,
 - 9.1 Human beings have different passions, when we get what we want, we will be happy only temporarily
 - 9.2 The source of suffering is desire
 - 9.3 The way to released from suffering is accepting Buddhist principles

6.5 Functions of all four folktales

1. It is a transmission of belief system such as Taoism that believes in the supernatural and Mahayana Buddhism that has principles of karma and good deeds.
2. Claim for and release grievances of socio-cultural pressures on women
3. Claim for and release grievances on the issue of social inequality
4. Claim for and release grievances about the rights of women and the lower classes

7 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

From results of the study, the conclusions are as follows,

1. Reflecting on the nature of gender inequality in a patriarchal society

2. Reflecting on strategies used by women to negotiate and attempt to redefine womanhood through folklores
3. Reflecting on problems encountered by women in a patriarchal society
4. Reflecting on the contradiction between Confucian definition of femininity and attempts to redefine femininity through folklores
5. The content presented through four folktales is attempt to stimulate consciousness recognizing about gender inequality faced by women

When Chinese society was changed, the communist government promulgated law that contained contents about the family that look like attempt to raise equality between women and men as well as attempting to destroy traditional Chinese family characteristics. In addition to trying to claim and reflect on the issue of gender inequality, in various ways. It also shows the influence of Confucian doctrine that influenced to the right of women. If compare these four ancient Chinese folktales with Thai folktales, Kaew Na Ma is a story that attempts to redefine womanhood therefore Kaew Na Sham portrayed the ingenuity of a woman who can handle various problems and able to be leader.

Gender hierarchical relationships are social and cultural constructions that are established and maintained. Gender inequality also affects socio-economic inequalities between groups that are dominated or controlled. Thus, it can be seen that feminism is presented through folktales, in other words it is represented movement of awareness of gender inequality and attempt to claim for legitimacy.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In conducting research on the definition of femininity, it is interesting to study Modern folktales that reflects the definition of womanhood in the modern family, whether the influence of the traditional Chinese family still exists or not
2. The definition of femininity reflected in Chinese folktales can also study the definition of femininity through folktales of other societies and cultures to be compared with the Chinese cultural society

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