



**FOOT BINDING AND ITS IMPACT IN CHINA, IN THE NOVEL EAST WIND
WEST WIND BY PEARL S BUCK**

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ABSTRACT

Foot binding in China is an area that has interested, repelled, and puzzled peoples throughout its history. The ritual of binding feet in order to attain a certain measurement has all, but departed from modern-day China, but it was just the once the normal and promoted run through of lots of Chinese women. How and why the custom began is rather of a mystery, but here are numerous theories as to why women began to bind their feet. The reasons why women began binding their feet is not only topic of interest, why it became subsequently prevalent for women to binding their feet, how and why it became therefore engrained in Chinese culture and the outcome of such a practice are studied as well. It was also vital to the history of foot binding that at what time the West got word of such a practice, they set out to put a finish to the tradition they originate debasing and degrading. That is one dispute why foot binding gradually dulls out of China but not the only one. There was a impel against it from inside as well. When studying the practice of Chinese foot binding, it is also eminent to see that a few scholars disagree that near is greatly added to the story of binding feet than the damaged bones themselves. They say that people over and over again urge trapped up in the image of binding feet of barely four inches and achieve not investigate the history of the practice. This article, “*East Wind – West Wind*” novel turns out to be subdue of China’s traditional parental authority over the young Kwei-lan, to sweep away such signs of backwardness as superstition, arranged marriage, foot binding, to awaken Chinese people

to a new era of science and technology. This article will glimpse in detail about development, consequences, and after effects of the culture of foot binding in China.

Keywords: Foot binding, culture, traditional practice, technology.

INTRODUCTION

This article interprets foot-binding in Neo-Confucian China as a voluntary test undertaken by mothers to enlighten their daughters of how to be a success in earth authored by men. The test entailed a swap between mothers and daughters on lots of levels. Outwardly, it clued-up a daughter of the need of sacrificing the product of her body to the Neo-Confucian family system. Inwardly, the trial in material form for a woman-at the deepest level of her being-the lived recall of her mother. In foot-binding women in cooperation supported and subverted the Neo-Confucian method of life form civilized.

“I have always been proud of my tiny feet! All during my childhood my mother superintended the soaking in hot water and the wrapping of bandages – tight and tighter each day” (East Wind: West Wind pg. 33)

Most of the marks on foot-binding in China highlights its erotic aspect. The only comprehensive work in English, Chinese Foot binding: The History of a Curious Erotic Custom by Howard Levy (1966), follows and reaffirms the accepted notion that foot-binding was a feminine charm

intended to gratify men. This notion provided grist for theories of human being behaviour, notably individuals of Thorstein Veblen and Sigmund Freud. Veblen ([1899] 1934) cited foot-binding as a case of conspicuous litter in which women surrendered their usefulness as a gesture to imply class in a gentleman world. Freud ([1927] 1961) in custody that by mutilating their feet, women allayed the castration anxieties of men. Among other contemporary interpreters, Mary Daly (1978) cites foot-binding as a paradigm of female victimhood in the grip of patriarchy, although Patricia Ebrey (1990) seeks a clarification in the Song line recon women's feet during the past millennium and the recruitment of their bodies into a particular system of economic production and reproductive activity.

In looking for answers to these questions, I implement the three-dimensional perfect of the "mindful body" optional by remedial anthropologists Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Margaret tuft (1987). This representation urges us to commence with the "mindful" natural world of our lived bodies-in the set of circumstances at hand,

to comprehend foot-binding as the initiation of a "feminine" self-consciousness. From this preliminary angle, we perceive foot-binding as an extended obedience that mothers brought to produce upon their daughters in the brand of a mother's worship and a daughter's virtue. Both mother and daughter turned the instinctual resistance of an insufficiently girl's mass into a better part chary of its doom in a humankind of sacrifice and function and heedful as benevolently of its capacity to put into effect be in charge of over itself and others. The epithet of a self-consciousness besides presupposes a chat kinship in which the federation is objectified, in these circumstances as a mania of female mystery. As an oratory of gender, foot-binding became the dangerous flash in the chronological domination of women's bodies by "man finished language" (to scrounge from Spender [1980]). Foot-binding entailed intense, lengthened raw pain, and, according to Elaine Scarry (1985, 4), "whatever agony achieves, it achieves in element through its unsharability, and it ensures this unsharability through its resistance to language." If this terrible regulation between mothers and daughters became a "tradition," it was represented and recorded practically unequivocally in the gentleman voice. I will argue that foot-binding was the muted

voice of women in contention with the overriding treatise.

For little girls whose feet were bound, the ground of perceptual experience was radically restructured beginning between the ages of five and seven. The period of trauma and enforced discipline generally lasted, until she was between thirteen and fifteen. In Western terminology this is the age of latency at what time the child, having knowledgeable a common sense of determination in its libidinal attachment to mother, begins the transition into the subject of the social world (Erikson 1963, 258). Chinese make sure of not, however, conceptualize restrained stages of advancement allied to any one particular organic or cognitive agency. Also, the domestic obedience of small girls could start the ball rolling beforehand than five or six depending on the textile disposition of the family or the whim of exacting parents. Chinese, nevertheless, recognize that around the get older of five or six, the child's faculty "to un derstand things" (dongshi) is adequate for the outcome to start on earnest discipline of the mindful body. The Confucian tradition refers to this restraint as xiushen, accurately "to develop the body," or, in the expressions of Tu Wei-Ming (1990), "to be converted into one's body."

The Confucian main part is not a discrete somatic object. It does not pose a planet in provisos of a radical or epistemological otherness. The Confucian organization is considerably a central crux of relationships centered around the leading relationship between parents and child. The child's capability "to comprehend things" presupposes a "body" that is inherently "mindful" of others beginning with its parents. In recognizing the good consequence of its a large amount intimate other, however, the infant begins to cultivate its "mindful body" as the centre of its correlation to a smaller amount intimate others and the world at large. (In Chinese this inherent amount to be heedful of others is referred to as ren.) Both not little girls and little boys practiced the development consciousness to the right importance of others as an obvious transition into the obedience of appropriate their mindful bodies. The obedience of the mindful body facilitated a critical series of directive in the Neo-Confucian fundamentals of activity and virtue.

For a little boy between the ages of five and seven, the regulation required that he hand over the excess of his mother's world in method to personify the world of his father. where the important way of the family permitted pull out living wage

quarters, this repeatedly entailed the natural removal of a teenager from the interior place of his mother to the external quarters of his member of the father (Levy 1968, 75; fell 1992). His father's world was anchored in the potency of Neo-Confucian texts and forebears that, with state sanction, shaped the foundation of the family, the ancestral hall, and the hall. doorway into the social world necessary small girls and boys to utilize a sense of productiveness expected at nearly degree of morally knowledgeable self-realization. But this is everywhere the similarity between their experiences ended. Boys' and girls' modes of self-realization, of seemly their respective bodies in link to others, differed completely. The boy's self-realization listening carefully on the locutionary and literary dominance of the word. The girl's self-realization necessary her not only to become, but to "overcome her body" by restricting the outer space it packed.

“As little children we were ever together, when he was nine, he was taken out of the women’s apartments into those where my father lived.” (East Wind: West Wind pg. 11)

Howard levy (1966, 249-51) asked all of his elderly informants, how she contemplation her look after felt once she earliest began cover her daughter's feet.

generally recalled that their mothers showed no pity, but a quantity of recited the getting on refrain that a look after may possibly not be partial to in cooperation her daughter and her daughter's feet at the same~ time. By separating the mother's supervision for her daughter from the vessel of her daughter's experienced existence, the mother and daughter shifted their cares to altered tranquillity of consciousness. In the struggle with her mother after over the painful, bloody, and terrifying toil of assembly the swine features of her feet appear into an object of beauty, mystery, and discipline, the daughter shaped a new self-consciousness based externally on a discern of need and attachment to a male-dominated world and silently on a power to carrying out some rule over her own destiny and that of the people to whom she was attached.

“I thought of all those restless nights and the days when I could not eat and had no desire to play – when I sat on the edge of my bed and let my poor feet swing to ease them of their weight of blood”. (East Wind: West Wind pg. 34)

Feng Jicai (1986, 9) uses the word Teng to explain the corporeal "pain" minor Xiang Lian felt when her grandmother began binding her feet. shortly in the same paragraph, he uses Teng to pass on to the conflation of "care" with "pain" that Xiang

Lian began to perceive behind her grandmother's grim countenance. Foot-binding was a preface to, even a preparation for, the sexual maturation of her body. In this sense, foot-binding helped her to "overcome her body" in two important ways.

“For when my feet had been soaked and bound again more loosely intolerable suffering set in. Indeed, the unbinding process was almost as painful as the binding had been”. (East Wind: West Wind pg.51)

First, in mastering her byword of deep space the young woman with bound feet became intensely accustomed to the consequence of exercising control over reproductive functions, which were equally a menace to and favourably valued by the male-dominated family system. Emily Ahern (1975) points out that as of their reproductive activities, Chinese women are constituted as a danger to shared and cosmic instruct and for that reason "powerful" and "dangerous." In realizing her fundamental occupation of reproduction, the young woman transgressed precarious social boundaries by the taint of uterine discharge and the induction of her and her babies' unfamiliar, unsocialized bodies into the family to which she was married. The products of her body-especially male infants-were

favourably valued. Even her menstrual blood was positively valued as a poster of promptness and productiveness (Furth 1986). But as these bodily products have a tendency to "disrupt" and thus to "defile" the recognized impression of domestic order, they were also "dangerous" and subject to rigorous self-control

Second, foot-binding all set the young woman for the aggravation, pain, and dread allied with menstruation, sexual consummation, pregnancy, and birthing. The act of sexual consummation, which by custom took point on the nuptial's night, may well be attended with considerable anxiety, specially by the bride. even though we live through awfully not much about sexuality in Neo-Confucian China, I deliberate it is good to take on that the nervousness surrounding the early experience, given the necessity of proving female virginity, was not altogether distinct from what we able to glean from new studies of "traditional" village women and wedding rites. Some of this news are uniquely graphic. In Margery Wolf's report from a Taiwan village of the behind 1950s, "every female our assistants might meddle in sequence out of insisted, and a lot with bitterness, that their mothers had told them zero to set up them for their first sexual experience. [Mothers] wish to spare [their daughters] any knowledge of what is at

slightest by custom a distasteful act" (Wolf 1972, 139). But if mothers futile to verbally instruct their daughters in how to deal with the "unpleasant customs" of married life, which include the necessity of submitting her body to a man's will, foot-binding obviated the need to express these matters with any specificity. Foot-binding provided mothers with an operational course for instructing their daughters in how to handle all kinds of corporal insult. Foot-binding at slightest educated the mindful of its fatality in patriarchal society and armed it with an effective discipline, not only-as the conventional wisdom taught-to maintain the strict law of chastity, but besides to split with the travails of becoming a wife, daughter-in-law, and mother.

Foot binding process:

Foot binding began as a young woman was between the ages of four and seven. primary the foot was drenched in hot water and the toenails clipped. afterward came the distressing part: the four minor toes were broken, and the foot was bandaged tightly with the toes bowed under toward the underneath of the foot. (It was held that offspring bones were soft, which is why binding in progress early.) In demand for the girl to maintain her balance, the big toe was left unturned. Every small number of days, the bottom was unwrapped and so

therefore wrapped for a second time stable tighter, until the bottom shrunk to about four inches long. The arches were moreover broken, which caused the foot to contract even more. The total progression might last three months or longer, and it was therefore weakening that early girls from wealthy families would over and over again receive a servant to concern for her individual needs, carry her once her feet hurt, and gaze after her on wakeful nights while the ache was unbearable.

Foot binding wasn't just painful. It can additionally be dangerous. Complications included ulcerations and gangrene, and infections caused by ingrown toenails or be short of flow from tight bindings. Sometimes toes even chop down off-though this was painstaking a fine fixation as it inescapable the feet might be wrapped drawn tighter. Bound feet too had a foul stink and left many young women almost not competent to walk. Sadly, it's estimated that up to 10 percent of girls died in the practice of foot binding.

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