

Chinese women: past, present

By Frank Shaw
Of the Emerald

The view of women in Chinese classics is "not encouraging," the general picture for women in China is improving, said a University professor Monday.

Mary Ann Burris, a University English professor who has stayed briefly in China, spoke on "Women in China: an outsiders

view of the inside" at a lecture sponsored by the Center for the Study of Women in Society.

Confucianism, one of the main Chinese religions portrays women's roles as obeying their fathers while young, their husbands while married and their sons as widows, Burris said.

Women were traditionally kept illiterate, and were not allowed much political power, she said.

One method of ensuring a women's helplessness was the practice known as "foot-binding." This practice has a woman's feet bound so the toes broke and curled under the foot, leaving a "hulk of broken flesh," Burris said.

The purpose of this was to improve physical beauty, preserve chastity (because the women had trouble leaving their chambers) and serve as an erotic stimulus.

"Fondling a hulk of dead flesh was considered a prelude to the sex act," Burris said.

After her stay in China Burris made several generalizations concerning contemporary Chinese women's roles.

"Till death do us part" is how she sees marriage in China today. Women marry for more

practical reasons, she said, and since divorce is political it is rarely seen. Students in one of her classes could only recall two divorces in the city.

Burris refers to the division of household chores as "Who does the dishes, who wears the pants," and says men work at domestic chores as much as women.

"You ask me how I know men did domestic work," she said. "There is no word for privacy in Chinese — I know."

Another observation, and one Burris says she misses the most, is "Can't you keep your kid quiet," and refers all the aunts, uncles, cousins and nieces for children in China. Raising a child is a society task, she said.

"Mirror, mirror on the wall," is how Burris sees the lack of Chinese women's interest in appearance. If she walked into a bathroom in China she says there would be people going to the bathroom, while if she walked into a bathroom in PLC there would likely be women combing their hair and making sure they look good.

"I didn't meet any women who said 'if I can't make it (in school) I'll just get married,'" she said.

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Hosticka formerly taught with the University's now-defunct community services and public affairs school.

Barrows says he doesn't know how higher education funds compare with other allocations because "that's purely a matter of judgement."

He says the people in higher education think their budget is low in proportion to basic school support, which supports kindergarten through 12th grade.

"But the people in elementary schools say 'It's not that way at all,'" Barrows says.

Although higher education proponents are concerned about their share of state money, Oregon manages to keep its colleges and universities afloat, he says.

Oregon's higher education funding is not the strongest in the nation "but it's certainly not the poorest," Barrows says.



Courtesy of the University News Bureau

Art from the covers of Life

Photographs of statesmen, poets, scientists, actors and artists by the late Philippe Halsman, an internationally known portrait and Life magazine photographer, will be displayed at the University art museum beginning Wednesday.

The exhibit contains more than 150 black and white and color photographs, including dramatic portraits of celebrities Marilyn Monroe, Humphrey Bogart, Winston Churchill, Marlon Brando, John Kennedy and Albert Einstein.

"Halsman was one of the great portrait photographers of our time," said Richard Paulin, art museum director. "He caught the inner essences of all those he photographed."

Halsman's photographs appeared on 101 Life covers between 1942 and 1970, more often than any other photographer. His work also was published in hundreds of issues of Look and Saturday Evening Post magazines. U.S. postage stamps were created from four of Halsman's photos.

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