

A Maidservant of the Revolution

*He Xiangning and Chinese Feminist
Nationalism in the 1920s and 1930s*

Shelly Chan

香
港
亞
太
研
究
所



HONG KONG INSTITUTE OF ASIA-PACIFIC STUDIES

THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

SHATIN, NEW TERRITORIES

HONG KONG

A Maidservant of the Revolution
He Xiangning and Chinese Feminist Nationalism
in the 1920s and 1930s

Shelly Chan

Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies
The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Shatin, New Territories
Hong Kong

About the Author

Ms Shelly Chan is a PhD candidate at the Department of History, University of California, Santa Cruz, USA.

Acknowledgements

This paper was originally an MA thesis, filed in 2005 as part of the requirements for my doctoral studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz. I would like to offer deep thanks to Professor Gail Hershatter for being an inspiring and supportive adviser throughout this research project.

Opinions expressed in the publications of the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies are the author's. They do not necessarily reflect those of the Institute.

© Shelly Chan 2007

ISBN 978-962-441-185-0

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form without written permission from the author.

A Maidservant of the Revolution

He Xiangning and Chinese Feminist Nationalism in the 1920s and 1930s

At the end of a two-month-long voyage, He Xiangning 何香凝 (1878-1972), a revolutionary veteran, returned to Shanghai from France in a spirit of national solidarity after Japanese forces had invaded northeast China on September 18, 1931. Immediately after her return, she issued calls to the Nationalist (GMD) government led by Chiang Kai-shek, urging repeatedly that it cease the fight against the Communists (CCP) and commit troops to the anti-Japanese cause. Shortly after Japan bombed Shanghai in January 1932, He travelled to the capital of Nanjing and confronted Chiang at a dinner party, insisting that he back up the Nineteenth Route Army in its resistance efforts. Infuriated by his vague reply and repeated offers of food to deflect her persistent demands, He left and later sent him a packet of women's clothing (Shang, 1994:219). Her dismay was encapsulated in an accompanying poem:

Shame on you who call yourself a man 枉自稱男兒,
Yielding to the Japanese dwarfs 甘受倭奴氣,
Giving away the rivers and mountains without fighting 不戰送河山,
Causing all to suffer this disgrace 萬世同羞恥.
We women are willing to die on the battlefield 吾儕婦女們
願赴沙場死.
Take my women's clothes 將我巾幗裳,
Turn over your fighting garb 換你征衣去! (He, 1985b:125)¹

Despite a long and remarkable political life, He has largely slipped through the cracks of the scholarship on twentieth-century China, which has been dominated by the history of the conflict between the GMD and the CCP.² Although the portrayal of the two parties as diametric

opposites has been widely critiqued, few historians have paid serious attention to the GMD left, which emerged at the end of the Northern Expedition in 1927. Still fewer have noted that the GMD left's most visible leaders were two women, He and Song Qingling 宋慶齡, who were the widows of two of China's most well-known revolutionaries, Liao Zhongkai 廖仲愷 and Sun Yat-sen.³ A revolutionary active in the inner circles of the GMD, He was the first woman and among the earliest to join Sun Yat-sen's *Tongmenghui* (Revolutionary Alliance 同盟會) in Tokyo in 1905. After the formation of the First United Front in 1924, He was appointed head of the Central Women's Department and was instrumental in the women's mobilization campaigns during the Northern Expedition. After the deaths of Liao and Sun in 1925, He charted her revolutionary career by rearticulating their legacies and formulating a vision of feminist nationalism independent of the two men. Together with Sun's widow, Song Qingling, she emerged as one of the most outspoken critics of Chiang Kai-shek's rightist policies during the Nanjing decade (1927-1937).⁴ As her poem and gift of women's clothing to Chiang suggest, their conceptualization of the national crisis was often framed in starkly gendered terms.

This paper will sketch the contours of feminist nationalism during the 1920s and 1930s through an examination of the experience and writings of He Xiangning. Historians and social scientists have generally treated women as a collective subject. How did a historical event improve or worsen the status of "Chinese women"? How did "they" respond and contribute to change? Seeking to reinsert women as agents and actors in history, this approach places women at the centre of the analysis, but often at the expense of historical specificity and social diversity, offering a somewhat flattened picture of personal traits, feelings, experiences, and memories. In western scholarship on twentieth-century China, there have so far been relatively few biographical narratives on women.⁵ Putting faces on grand historical narratives, these studies have only begun to map out the trajectories that individual women took in negotiating change and craving out new subject positions from which to speak.

Apart from serving to close gaps of information, female biographical traces can often "talk back" to national history in

unexpected ways. The individual experiences of female revolutionaries offer a promising entry point to work through historical complexities and challenge the current scholarship on twentieth-century China, which has been largely reliant upon the perspectives of male revolutionaries generalized as universally “Chinese”. The importance of gender as a particular vantage point shaping the writing of revolutionary history remains to be explored.⁶

Among scholars of gender who have studied the Nationalist Revolution of the 1920s and 1930s, the inquiry into the role of women revolutionaries has generally taken the direction of examining the compatibility between feminism and nationalism. Scholars writing in the 1970s and 1980s argued that feminist ideals quickly faded in favour of the pressing needs of nationalism. Suffering high emotional costs for their rebellion, feminist women were torn between the demands of revolution and family, where the latter often exerted more influence (Feuerwerker, 1975; Rankin, 1975). Portraying a contradictory combination of modern feminism and traditional patriarchy, Gilmartin (1995:157-62) has pointed out that female complicity with patriarchal forms of control in the CCP eventually sealed the fate of feminism during the 1920s. Although He is credited as the person who was “most responsible for giving explicit meaning to [the] women’s emancipation declaration and organization”, Gilmartin casts her as moderate and pragmatic; one who focused her attention on developing women’s programmes and preventing internal divisions from occurring, as opposed to the younger, more radical, and less established generation of Communist women, who Gilmartin regards as embodying the driving force of the movement.

Although this body of scholarship offers valuable insights into the politics of feminism operating within nationalist and patriarchal constraints, the focus on the subordination of feminism to nationalism and Communism has overshadowed the fact that feminist ideology continued to survive in multiple forms. Throughout the late 1920s and the 1930s, often interpreted as an era of defeat for feminist struggles nationwide, the question of gender never left the heart of the revolutionary project. Nationalist mobilization remained heavily dependent upon the careful and continuous management of the

domestic and emotional, widely considered as a feminine sphere and quality, in order to channel the resources of both men and women into the revolution. Among nationalists on the left and right, the re-articulation of gender relations provided one of the important ways through which the political prerogative of national modernity could acquire concrete meanings in daily Chinese reality. The New Life Movement of 1934 initiated by the GMD government was a case in which women were the primary site of articulation and reform in the ideological struggle over Communism. Supported by Song Meiling 宋美齡, Chiang's wife, the movement called for a revival of Confucian ethics. Women, in particular, were urged to cultivate the "four virtues" of "chastity, appearance, speech, and work" (Cheng et al., 1999:294-302; Spence, 1999:356-57).⁷

He's use of women's clothing to mortify Chiang Kai-shek sheds light upon the ways in which gender functioned to differentiate and normalize privileges and responsibilities during the Nationalist Revolution. Voicing the determination of Chinese women to fight for the nation if men would not, her poem alludes to the fabled figure of Hua Mulan 花木蘭 (circa 500 CE), who among feminist nationalists exemplified the ancient tradition of female warriors fearlessly donning soldier's armour during a moment of crisis and, disguised as men, fighting the enemy among men (Barlow, 2004:49-52). In the service of the nation and the patriline, Hua Mulan left behind her feminine outfit and domestic roles, if only temporarily. Masking her gender and keeping her chastity intact, she fought as a proxy for her ageing father in the absence of a male descendant. Since the late Qing period, the folklore of Hua Mulan has been reinvented to become a powerful cultural theme of female heroism in China (Barlow, 2004:49-52).⁸

By gendering Chiang Kai-shek's unwillingness to fight imperialism as passively female, He reaffirmed that fighting for the nation was a quintessentially male quality and duty, which would make a man manly and China unified and strong in a perilous world of imperialism. In other words, the maintenance of the gender boundary was rendered as essential to the survival of the nation. Transgressing it, symbolized by women cross-dressing and fighting on the battlefield as men, was meant to be a temporary move and a

very last resort during a grave crisis. Far from being repudiated, the traditional gender boundary was instead strengthened and stretched to serve the nationalist agenda.

He's use of women's clothing as a means of shaming and inciting men in power to action has deep historical and cultural resonances. One of the most well-known instances occurred during the Three Kingdoms period (220-280 CE), in a story made famous by the fourteenth-century Ming historical novel, *Sanguo yanyi* (Romance of the Three Kingdoms 三國演義). In 231 CE, during a northern campaign, Zhuge Liang 諸葛亮, the military strategist of the state of Han, sent a woman's headdress and a white silk robe to his opponent Sima Yi 司馬懿, the general of the state of Wei, after several failed attempts to provoke the entrenched Wei army to a battle. Suggesting that Sima should wear women's clothing for refusing to fight like a man, Zhuge's move was meant to evoke anger and rouse them to action through insulting their manhood (Luo, 1959:456-57).⁹ He Xiangning's gesture of sending women's clothing to Chiang Kai-shek was thus an appropriation of a historical male subject position used to deride another man's failure to fulfil his gender role.

Paradoxically, by marking inactivity as feminine, He's intervention crossed and stabilized the traditional gender boundary at the same time. Her threat that women would replace men as soldiers was culturally recognizable as a subjunctive to incite male action — if even women were willing to fight and die for the nation, then men who wanted to be considered men had better respond immediately. The voicing of women's willingness to take over male duties was a familiar rhetorical device directed at men to conjure up a sense of indignity and to urge immediate action. Although Chiang's government would not commit to fighting Japan until 1937, He never implemented plans to organize women to become soldiers. Rather, she mobilized them to raise funds, sew clothing, and perform nursing duties, while keeping up the pressure on the men in power to send troops to war (Shang, 1994:382-87). In other words, her activities built upon, rather than altered, the prevailing gendered division of labour. It is in this wider context that her challenge to Chiang should be understood: a blurred gender line, whereby men refused to fight,

was symptomatic of a grave crisis that needed to be corrected for the survival of the nation.

Binding together national survival and gender difference, He clearly did not seek to remove gendered roles or operate outside the nationalist frame. Seen by Gilmartin (1995:161-62) as less radical than Communist women because she aligned women's interests with national objectives, He nonetheless worked within the dominant discourse, deploying ideologies of femininity and masculinity to demand and inspire appropriate behaviour from men and women, as well as to admonish, ridicule, and hold accountable those occupying positions of power. By upholding a stable gender boundary as a divider of labour, He drove a wedge into the nationalist ideologies monopolized by powerful men, creating a feminist subjectivity through reinventing the tradition of female activism at moments of danger and appropriating a historical male subject position. Yet this figure of the woman warrior was intended to interrupt, not obliterate, male authority. Reinforcing traditionalized gender differences at the same time she undermined them, He's rendition of feminist nationalism illustrates that female subjectivities were negotiated between contradictory forces that simultaneously produced and limited possibilities for female voice and action.

Revolutionary Days in Tokyo, 1903-1916

He Xiangning was born in 1878 into a large merchant and landowning family in Hong Kong. The ninth child of two doting parents, He resisted foot-binding at a young age by repeatedly cutting the bindings off her feet at night, despite her mother's long series of pleas and attempts at coercion (Liao, 1979). Known as a boyish character who surpassed her brothers in tree climbing and studying, He became a trusted assistant to her father at the age of 16, performing bookkeeping duties for the household (Shang, 1994:6-13). In 1897, she married Liao Zhongkai, a returned Chinese born in San Francisco, after her parents had heard that the Liao family was looking for a daughter-in-law with "natural" feet.¹⁰ The young couple lived in a shack built on the top floor of a house in Guangzhou that belonged to Liao's

brother, naming it the *Shuangqing lou* (Double Pure House 雙清樓). In 1903, after Liao failed to obtain financial help from his brother to study in Japan, a place rapidly becoming a model of modernity and a magnet of political activism among Chinese youth, He decided to sell her dowry to support Liao's studies, ignoring the opposition of both of their families.¹¹ Joining him in Tokyo a few months later, she took Japanese classes and enrolled in a teacher's college. Shortly afterwards, her essay, "*Jinggao wo tongbao jiemei*" (A warning to my sister compatriots 敬告我同胞姊妹) was published in *Jiangsu*, a Tokyo-based journal run by Chinese students from Jiangsu province (Shang, 1994:28-31).

In this 1903 essay, one of the first by female feminist nationalists in the early twentieth century, He pointed out that two hundred million women were human beings like men but conventional wisdom held that a woman without talent was a woman of virtue. Absorbed in the sighs of sentimentalism and the pleasures of poetry, she said, Chinese women "did not know what the nation was". As Joan Judge (2001) has argued, feminist nationalists in Japan including He and Qiu Jin 秋瑾 tried to invent new female subjectivities by attacking the celebrated elite tradition of literary women leading cloistered, apolitical lives. During the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion in 1900, as foreign troops pillaged and plundered in eastern Beijing, He wrote, it took the insult of rape to shock Chinese women into the realization that the nation had fallen, a tragedy that drove many to drown themselves. Invoking the trauma of sexual assault and death, she represented the female body as the only site where women were capable of experiencing the rise and fall of the nation. To return China to its ancient glory, women should "drop old habits. Learn new knowledge. Travel abroad. Fulfil oneself and help others to do the same. Do not give up one's responsibility and passively await one's demise" (He, 1985b:1-2). Her injunction that women overcome Chinese patriarchal values and female ignorance was characteristic of early feminist nationalism in the twentieth century.

In 1905, He joined Sun Yat-sen's Revolutionary Alliance before Liao did, because, as He would explain later, Liao had left Tokyo for a brief visit to Guangzhou at that time (He, 1985b:215-16).¹² An

exiled revolutionary, Sun had been under Japanese police surveillance and found his ability to carry out anti-Qing activities increasingly constrained. To allow the group to operate more freely, He moved her home to a larger house that became a secret revolutionary base to hold meetings, handle correspondence, and lodge activists. To prevent information from leaking to outsiders, He was forced to manage domestic tasks without help. Having grown up in a wealthy household surrounded by servants, she had never stepped into a kitchen. Despite her class background, because of her gender she had to cook, make tea, and wash clothes for the revolutionary men in the house. Because it was a Japanese custom to remove and leave one's shoes outside before entering a home, she also had to hurriedly hide all of the shoes when revolutionaries came for a meeting at her house so as not to rouse the suspicion of Japanese police and Qing spies (He, 1985b:911). It was an experience that she would record in a 1937 memoir, discussed later in this essay, as marking her transformation into a "maidservant" of the revolution.

Interrupted by a heavy burden of domestic chores, continuous poor health, a miscarriage, and two pregnancies, He soon found it difficult to concentrate on her studies. Since Sun needed someone to help design flags and emblems for the revolution, she switched to a women's art school in 1909 to pursue a less demanding curriculum, studying with the famous Meiji master Tanaka Raisho 田中頼章, and helped form a circle of Cantonese painters who actively participated in anti-Qing revolutionary activities in Tokyo (Liao, 1979).¹³

As He began to study Japanese painting, Liao returned to China on a secret mission in 1909, two years after the female revolutionary Qiu Jin was executed by Qing authorities. Liao had accepted Sun Yat-sen's order to meet with a French socialist named Boucapaix and to set up an underground organization in Tianjin. An extremely dangerous assignment, it was part of a greater scheme to develop a revolutionary force in northeast China that would eventually deliver a fatal blow to the heart of Qing power (He, 1985b:194, 916). Having just given birth to a second child a year earlier, He immersed herself in poetry and painting to express her longing for Liao and her revolutionary spirit in 1909 and 1910. She wrote the following poem on the eve

of Liao's departure, urging him not to fear sacrificing his life for the revolution:

My heart cannot rest when the national insult has not been
vindicated 國仇未復心難死。
Pretending that the parting is normal, I suppress the sound of my
weeping 忍作尋常泣別聲。
I urge you not to spare yourself from harm 勸君莫惜頭顱貴。
So as to leave "Shina" a name in history 留取支那史上名。(He,
1985b:217)¹⁴

Exuding strong nationalist sentiments, this poem would be invoked again in He's 1937 memoir and cited frequently by People's Republic of China (PRC) biographers in the 1980s to illustrate her revolutionary resolve. Other pieces dealing with the emotions of solitude and separation have received much less attention. One, written in 1910, was entitled "*Zhengfu yuan*" (The misery of a warrior's wife 征婦怨):

Moving silently toward the steps 俏向階前立,
I gaze at the bright full moon with sorrow 愁看皓月圓。
A thousand drops of tears fall in vain 空垂千點淚,
They will not reach my lover's side 流不到郎邊。
Having left the dressing table for a long time 一別妝台久,
Yearning for him, I am too lazy to draw the line of my eyebrows
思君懶畫眉。
My face grows pallid as the autumn moon ascends 顏隨秋月減,
Holding empty hopes of his return 空自卜歸期。(He, 1985b:4)

Suggesting that revolution placed extraordinary demands upon women to endure emotional hardships, He's expression of intense and bitter longing for Liao threatened to subvert the nationalist call for female sacrifice. Although it can be read as an implicit statement about the virtues of loyalty and fidelity toward one's husband, this piece is far less harmonious with national narratives than the previous one.

The official compilation of He's works seems to suggest that He did not produce more writings until the mid-1920s. Personal memoirs from a later period, however, help provide information about

her activities during the 1910s and 1920s. In February 1911, after completing her art studies in Tokyo, He returned to Hong Kong with Liao. There she stayed until the 1911 revolution in October led to a series of provincial declarations of independence and put an end to Qing rule. Following the collapse of Sun Yat-sen's Second Revolution to oust Yuan Shikai 袁世凱, who ordered the assassination of the revolutionary Song Jiaoren 宋教仁 in 1913, the couple fled to Japan with other rebelling activists and joined the new GMD in 1914. After the death of Yuan in 1916, the group of revolutionary exiles, now including Sun's new wife, Song Qingling, returned to China, which had fallen deeper into the control of warlords (Shang, 1994:55-60).

The Rebellion of Chen Jiongming, 1922

The Russian Revolution of 1917 and the May Fourth Movement of 1919 spurred fresh nationalist visions and energies among the educated elite in China. Nonetheless, the First Northern Expedition led by Sun Yat-sen in 1918 was aborted almost as soon as it had begun. In 1921, under the protection of the Guangdong warlord, Chen Jiongming, Sun became president of a new national government in Guangzhou. His plans for a military expedition to eliminate warlord rule in favour of national reunification and centralization of power alienated Chen, who instigated a rebellion in June 1922. After having had Liao Zhongkai, then the government's finance minister, kidnapped, Chen ordered an armed attack on the presidential residence in Guanyinshan in the late evening of June 16. When Song Qingling pleaded with Sun to escape immediately and save the nation from destruction, Sun left guards to protect the house, and fled the city of Guangzhou on a gunboat (He, 1985b:356-59; Shang, 1994:77-89).¹⁵

It took three days for He to locate Sun, who was directing a counter-attack from the ship of firing upon Chen's troops on the coast. In their first meeting after the coup, the two old revolutionaries broke into tears. Feeling pity that Sun's only clothes had been stained by filth and sweat in the hot weather, He later wrote that she arranged to have clean clothing along with other daily supplies delivered to him, and continued to do so for some time when no one was available to

wash his clothes. In a friend's home at Lingnan University, she finally found Song Qingling, who had escaped by disguising herself as a peasant woman and had just suffered a miscarriage (Shang, 1994:87-89).

Meanwhile, He tried to rescue Liao, who had been imprisoned in an arsenal located in the suburbs of Guangzhou. Ten days after the incident, she was allowed to see him for the first time. To her distress, she found that Liao was lying in a scorching room, chained to an iron bed and wearing a soiled jacket. At their second meeting, He brought him clean clothing. Because Liao's hands were tied, she recalled that she had to cut open the clothing on his body with a pair of scissors, ask the guards to untie his hands, and help him to put on clean clothes. Believing that Chen would soon order his death, Liao wrote two poems to He and the children, encouraging them to carry on the revolution (Shang, 1994:92-96). Suffering from a serious case of dysentery and driven to desperation, He revealed later in 1941 that she had contemplated suicide (He, 1985b:378-80).

After weeks of anxious waiting, He decided to confront Chen in person on August 18. Having walked up the hill in pouring rain, as she later remembered in a 1961 memoir, her body was soaked and covered in mud when she arrived at the hall in Baiyunshan where Chen was chairing a military meeting. Surprised by her appearance, Chen offered her a rattan chair and a glass of brandy to warm up. When he then offered her a change of dry clothing, He shot back with anger that she was prepared not only to be drenched with rain but also with blood. Before a roomful of military men, she chastised him for his betrayal and demanded the immediate release of Liao. After making a scene that disgraced Chen and his men, He remembered, she succeeded in forcing Chen to free Liao on that day (He, 1985b:934-36).¹⁶

The recurrent theme of clothing in He's remembrances reveals the gendered structure of nationalist memory. As a marker of the traditional gender boundary, clothing played an important role in the maintenance and performance of a male or female identity. On the one hand, He's provision of clothing to Sun and Liao not only represented her pity and affection for the two revolutionary men, but

also showed that she treated clean clothing as an article of dignity for the male revolutionary subject even in dire circumstances. On the other hand, for her, Chen's offer of dry clothing before a room full of military men was an attempt to soften the power of her will. Rejecting the invitation for superficial comfort, she responded that she was not even afraid to bleed. Finally, the centrality of clothing in He's memories of Chen's rebellion illuminated how gender functioned to divide duty and responsibility in the revolution. Embodied in the mundane acts of making, washing, and delivering men's clothing, nationalism demanded of women continuous domestic labour, a fact that has been obscured in traditional historiography dominated by male accounts. He's memories also show that she and Song played an important role in coping with a disaster that could have ended the lives of Liao and Sun.

After Chen was ousted by a rival faction of militarists in 1923, Sun returned to Guangzhou to plan for the reorganization of the GMD and the First United Front with Soviet aid. Sun announced the three policies of "uniting with Russia, accepting the CCP, and assisting the peasants and workers". In 1924, He was appointed to head the Central Women's Department, the first modern governmental agency established to oversee the mobilization of women and gender equality (Gilmartin, 1995:157). When Sun Yat-sen was dying of illness in March 1925, He was one of the witnesses who signed his will. Two months later, during and after the May Thirtieth Movement, she travelled between Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Hong Kong to speak publicly against imperialism and to organize assistance to striking workers.

During her three years as the director of the Central Women's Department, He was instrumental in putting forth legal codes to promote the legal, societal, economic, and educational rights of women. These included the protection of equal rights for women in employment, property inheritance and political participation, free marriage and divorce, the elimination of social discrimination against remarried women, the protection of the right of working women to paid maternity leave, the favourable treatment of child labour, and the abolition of such practices as child brides known as *tongyangxi* (little

daughter-in-law 童養媳), concubinage, and the bonded servitude of female children. Stressing the importance of women's involvement in the revolutionary effort, He led programmes and initiatives such as literacy schools, a drama society, and women's Red Cross units for wounded soldiers. On March 8, 1924, she organized the first Chinese celebration of International Women's Day (He, 1985b:461-63; Gilmartin, 1995:161-62).

The Death of Liao Zhongkai, 1925

On the morning of August 20, 1925, Liao Zhongkai, He Xiangning, and Chen Qiulin 陳秋霖, the editor of *Guangzhou Republican Daily*, arrived at the GMD headquarters in Guangzhou for a Central Executive Committee meeting. Just as He stopped to speak to a colleague after leaving the car, Liao and Chen were fired upon at the doorsteps of the building. Overwhelmed by shock and disbelief, He rushed to check on Liao, who had been shot four times and had fallen to the ground. Bending and holding him in clothes dripping with blood, He narrowly escaped being killed as the assassins continued to fire shots, missing her but sending a gust of burning air by her scalp. Liao died on the way to the hospital, Chen several days later. It was widely believed that the assassination was ordered by the party's right wing, which had been denouncing Sun and Liao for going Communist (Shang, 1994:159-64).

Immediately after Liao's death, He fought to contain her grief and did not stop making public appearances. Addressing workers, students, and party members on different occasions to commemorate Liao, she stressed that Liao had died in the attempt to achieve freedom and equality for China, a cause that made his untimely death a far greater loss to the nation than to her. Treating her feelings as a trivial matter, she explained that her pain stemmed from the fact that the revolution was still incomplete because of the obstruction of imperialists and counter-revolutionaries.

He Xiangning also portrayed Liao as a frugal, loyal, and diligent man, through the telling of intimate familial anecdotes, thereby showing that the domestic was at the core of the revolution. In various

public speeches, she repeated that Liao was so absorbed in his work that he often “lost sleep and forgot to eat”. His selfless dedication to the nation, however, did not prevent him from noticing the food that his family was eating one day. After summoning his cook and learning that it cost as much as a dollar to buy a chicken, Liao said that his household should not spend so lavishly on food because a dollar could last for several meals in a worker’s or peasant’s family.¹⁷

This anecdote not only illustrated her intimate relationship to Liao as wife and companion, but also established the nationalist revolution as a universal cause that transcended concerns about personal and conjugal well-being. It was a masculine rhetoric that marginalized the individual and the family, but was paradoxically dependent upon the effective management of the emotional and domestic. He’s representations of her separations from Liao, their material deprivations and, eventually, her widowhood, demonstrated the ways in which female emotion and desire were targets of containment and regulation among feminist nationalists. In maintaining that nothing was so much to be desired as men’s success in making revolution, women embodied the gender difference that was being reworked to legitimate the division of duties and privileges as indispensable to the national struggle.

During the latter half of the 1920s, He and Song Qingling emerged as the most visible and influential figures of the GMD left. In their writings and public speeches, both women rearticulated their husbands’ legacies to mobilize women and to criticize the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek after 1927. They created a universal category of Chinese women who were united by a uniform set of experiences forced upon them by imperialism, differentiating them from Chinese men. As Song (1992a:54) pointed out, Chinese women embodied “the most oppressed class in the most oppressed nation in the world”, bearing the brunt of imperialism in the form of unequal treaties and economic exploitation by foreigners. Chinese women, she argued, must fight for their own rights by becoming a revolutionary force: “Those who are content to be wise mothers and good wives and fail to contribute to the nationalist revolution will become the slaves of the slaves of the imperialists and warlords” (Song, 1992a:39-40). Being

the “slaves” of oppressive men who were slaves of the imperialists, Chinese women ended up suffering far greater hardships than Chinese men.

Asserting that their lives were far inferior to those of *niuma* (cattle and horses 牛馬), He (1985b:54-55) explained during the celebrations for International Women’s Day in 1927 that not even cattle and horses had to carry “little cattle and horses” on their backs to work, whereas Chinese women, painfully trapped within the double binds of family and work, were often forced to do so with their young children. In attributing the miseries of Chinese women to foreign imperialists and Chinese warlords, the “running dogs of imperialism”, He (1985b:54-55) further emphasized that threatening ramifications for Chinese men made the successful outcome of the Northern Expedition, which had begun in the summer of 1926, absolutely crucial:

An imperialist power is like an old woman in her fifties. Although she is ferocious, her productive powers have already been exhausted. She cannot hope to give birth to any offspring. When she sees our unexploited young virgins, her ambition grows and she wants to make us “little daughters-in-law” to provide supplies for her production. It is enslavement to make any female a “little daughter-in-law”. If we do not work harder for the nationalist revolution, even Chinese men could become “little daughters-in-law” in the future.

The humorous edge of He’s analogy drew upon a shared sense of absurdity at a blurred gender line and confused sexual norms concretized in the imagery of Chinese women and men being forced to become “little daughters-in-law” to a foreign imperialist. Appropriating the traditional marriage practice of poor families buying, selling, and raising female children as future daughters-in-law, which had been criticized by nationalists as inhumane and barbaric since the early twentieth century, He invoked a familiar sign of China’s cultural weakness and projected a sexualized image of imperialism driven by desire and a fetish for the uncontaminated. Portraying China as a female virgin at the prime of her marriageability and procreative power, He presented the nation as full of resources and possibilities

but also inexperienced and vulnerable. By gendering the imperialist as a female, a fierce, lustful but withered mother-in-law who must exploit younger women to survive, He conveyed a concrete sense of fear and disgust toward imperialism.

Registering broader anxieties about the nation, He created the revolution as the only solution to avert a disastrous disruption to gender roles and sexual mores, revealing the fundamental position that they occupied in the national project. For her, the greatest threat of imperialism was captured in the possibility of coerced feminization, whereby Chinese men could be turned into “little daughters-in-law” under imperialism. Through this image, she articulated a sense of strangeness and immorality at the prospect of men forced to become like female children. Making explicit that men could also be harmed by the oppression of women, He aimed to broaden and deepen feminist nationalism to strike a chord with every Chinese man and woman. Feminist nationalism was rendered as a discursive practice that would stabilize, not upset, the traditional gender and sexual boundary.

The conclusion of the Northern Expedition brought the deep divisions within the GMD into the open. By the end of 1927, leftist GMD and CCP forces in Wuhan and Guangzhou had suffered a catastrophic series of military setbacks, bringing the First United Front to a crushing end. Profoundly saddened by the collapse of the Wuhan government, He went to a resort in Lushan to recover and refused to participate in the preparations for a new government in Nanjing. Later, having failed in a meeting to dissuade Chiang Kai-shek from embarking upon anti-Communist violence, she rejected Chiang’s request to be a witness at his marriage to Song Meiling. Although she finally agreed to join the GMD government as member of the Central Executive Committee in early 1928, He vented her disillusionment and frustration with current politics in painting and poetry gatherings, and relinquished her government duties in the same year. In 1929, she boarded a ship to Southeast Asia and held a painting exhibition in Manila to raise funds among the overseas Chinese for the Zhongkai Peasants’ and Workers’ School, which had been set up in Guangzhou to commemorate the work of her late husband. Spending most of her days studying and painting, He later

reached Paris and also visited Berlin to see her son Liao Chengzhi and Song Qingling (Shang, 1994:193-209).

After Japan invaded northeast China in September 1931, He headed home from France. At the send-off, she angrily scolded a group of graduates from the Whampoa Military Academy for having no plans to return immediately to help defend the nation. During the 1930s, in defiance of Chiang Kai-shek's failure to resist Japan and of his anti-Communist campaigns, He, Song Qingling, and a group of leftists spearheaded a drive to raise funds for the war effort against Japan, to revive the United Front policies, and to free political prisoners. In December 1936, as Japanese pressure in north China escalated, Chiang Kai-shek was kidnapped in Xi'an by one of his generals, Zhang Xueliang 張學良, who demanded that he unite with the Communists and fight the Japanese. Bedridden after a heart attack, He was called out to assist Song Meiling in the negotiations to release Chiang. However, because of a problem with transportation, her trip to Xi'an was cancelled. Chiang was released two weeks later (Shang, 1994:250).

Remembering the Revolution, 1937

In 1937, amid national fervour for an upcoming war with Japan, He wrote a short memoir entitled "*Dang wo xuehui shaofan de shihou*" (When I learned to cook 當我學會燒飯的時候). Written to commemorate the founding day of the Guangzhou GMD government in 1924, the piece was first published in 1938 in a collection of autographical sketches. Deeply nostalgic, the memoir was He's autobiographical account of her youthful days in Tokyo thirty-five years earlier and her remembrance of the intimacy and camaraderie among the revolutionaries. Following Sun Yat-sen's request to turn her home into an underground revolutionary headquarters in 1905, He moved into a larger house with seven rooms, sent away her Japanese maidservant, and shouldered all of the domestic work. Remembering the time when she was the only woman in the group, she framed her memory of revolution through her memory of learning how to cook. For her the two were inseparable:

Normally, I would open my mouth to eat when a meal was ready. I would not ask questions about what the maidservant had prepared. By then it was different. Carefully, I observed how she washed the rice, placed it in a pot, added water, and started a fire. I paid close attention to the right amounts of rice and water, as well as the size and timing of the cooking fire. (He, 1985b:212-18)

Calling the story “*furen xue bizi*” (a matron learning to be a maidservant 夫人學婢子), He represented her changing role in the home from one who ate to one who cooked as a repudiation of her social status as an upper-class woman. Her entry into the kitchen was her dramatic transformation into a “maidservant” of the revolution. Offering elaborate details about her daily routine, He shed light upon the ways in which a revolution led by men required the domesticity of women:

After getting up every day, the first thing was to tidy up the bedding. I even had to get my own water to wash my face. After school, I bought the groceries and started a fire by burning charcoal. At that time in Japan, gas was not yet used in cooking. After all the work of making rice and the food, I had to clean up once everyone had finished eating.... The most inconvenient thing was to wash clothes. Fetching water was difficult. Although Zhongshi [Li Zhongshi 黎仲實] brought me a few buckets every day, I had to run to the well myself sometimes when the water was used up. (He, 1985b:212-18)

He Xiangning regarded her domestication as her initiation as a national subject who served the nation, a contradictory moment that marked her as “woman” who must also serve the male nationalists through providing the comforts of home and female companionship. Holding the conviction that her suffering was for the sake of China’s revolution, He neutralized the contradictions in the making of the female revolutionary subject and redefined the tensions as essential to the success of the revolution. As He put it, her belief sustained her through the double hardship of “living as a student and a maidservant”, helping her to “swallow all the bitterness and labour joyfully without ever feeling tired”. The trial of domesticity thus belonged specifically to women.

He's recollection revealed the demarcation of gender difference and its meanings in the daily life of the revolutionaries. Twelve years younger than Sun Yat-sen, He was called affectionately by him "obasan" (a Japanese word for "grandmother" and a term of endearment for an older woman 御婆様). Her "kashiya" (rental home 貸屋), was a "family" into which she welcomed every male revolutionary as her "brother". In an environment where a new arrangement of cohabitation between unrelated men and women was made, the trope of gender and family relations had the effect of desexualizing the contact between He and the men, prescribing an appropriate manner of conduct between the sexes and a basis for solidarity. Maintaining a revolutionary subjectivity was unsettling and dangerous, and gender boundaries functioned to satisfy the desire for a durable, anchored identity through "home".

Ironically, He's memory of an intimate relationship among the revolutionaries contrasted with that of her male comrades described in the same essay. Since everyone came from different places in China and she did not speak Mandarin, she wrote, members of the alliance often spoke mutually unintelligible dialects and could not always carry on long conversations. Knowing little about each other, in fact, one of the things that the men remembered most about He was her feet. During a chat with her old comrades many years later, one man recalled that even though they saw her frequently, they could not converse very much as they did not speak a common dialect: "Because you had natural feet, we called you 'He *dajiao*' (He big feet 何大腳) when we mentioned you to other people. Even if we called you that right to your face, you did not understand what we said" (He, 1985b:212-18).

Recalling herself as the only Chinese female student in Tokyo with "natural" feet at that time, He was a conspicuous figure in the social circles dominated by men. Writing in the memoir that this friendly anecdote gave everyone a good chuckle, she proudly added that even Qiu Jin, who arrived a few years later, still had traditional bound feet. Interestingly, while the student radicals could not communicate with each other because of linguistic differences, He's "big feet" provided them with a focal point through which humorous references

to her could be made and understood despite regional differences of culture. As revolutionaries invested their political energies in China's modernity and women's emancipation, old discourses of female beauty associated with tightly-bound feet continued to circulate in the same social milieu.

Summarizing her revolutionary career, He attributed her transformation into a progressive character to physical, domestic, and political labour:

In front of my parents, I behaved like a girl from a privileged background (*xiaojie* 小姐). Entering society, I became a worker. At home, I cooked and managed all of the trivial tasks. Stepping out of the kitchen, I participated in political movements. Not that I cannot afford fine and lavish delicacies, but I am also used to coarse and simple fare. I can handle a stable and idyllic life. Even when times are rough, I will not be afraid. Nowadays, most married women and single girls from a privileged background (*taitai xiaojie* 太太小姐) indulge themselves in luxury and extravagance. I really don't know how they can live such a life. (He, 1985b:212-18)

By overcoming emotions and desires associated with elite women, whom she criticized for indulging in expensive comforts, He represented herself as a reformed modern female subject capable of saving China from the "paralysis" caused by the lack of women's participation, showing that gender was an important boundary marker in the national struggle. He Xiangning maintained that Chinese women must, as she did, battle the vices of materialism and sentimentalism, which to her were feminine qualities that would take the work of bodily sacrifices and services to correct. Just as her use of women's clothes to admonish Chiang Kai-shek reaffirmed that fighting Japanese imperialism was masculine and appeasing it was feminine, He's narrative of her transformation from a "a girl from a privileged background" into a "maidservant" established domesticity as a female duty to the nation. Suggesting that women should cast aside their class privileges, she nonetheless did not demand that men give up their gender privileges by taking up domestic work. In other words, her ideology of feminist nationalism promised gender equality by redefining, but not erasing, traditionalized gender differences.

Conclusion

Less than a week after He had penned “When I learned to cook”, Japan launched a full-scale invasion of China in the summer of 1937. As soon as war broke out, He devoted herself to organizing women in relief work and raising funds for the war effort in Shanghai. She wrote the following poem to express her vision of national unity:

The thread in women’s hands 婦女手中線,
Makes the clothes on the soldiers’ bodies 征人身上衣.
Every stitch is filled with resentment for the enemy 針針含敵愾,
And sons are urged to slay the barbaric foe 勉子殺敵夷.
(He, 1985b:230)

The imagery of intrepid men facing the enemy on the battlefield and dutiful women sewing clothing on the home front embodied He’s ideal of an unbreakable union that would help China win the struggle. Depicting a national unity where men fought and women sewed, this poem, which she wrote shortly after China entered the war, contrasts with the one she wrote to admonish Chiang Kai-shek in 1932 when she saw a national crisis caused by the failure of men to honour their gendered duty. For He, instrumental to the uplifting of the Chinese nation was a stable and distinct line of demarcation, whereby men and women each performed the roles designated for their sexes.

The poem also conveys He’s ideal of a tightly knit relationship between women and the nation. Its first two lines are reminiscent of Meng Jiao’s (孟郊) “*Youzi yin*” (The rhyme of a sojourning son 遊子吟), a well-known verse from the Tang period (618-907 CE) that depicts a loving mother sewing clothing for a departing son.¹⁸ In He’s rendition, the phrase “kind mother” is replaced by “women”, and “sojourning son” by “soldiers”. Portraying an intimate picture of interwoven motherhood, womanhood, and nationhood, He expressed the desire for unity between women and soldiers, a bond as natural and indissoluble as the one between mother and son. Linking the figures of woman, mother, and national subject, He’s model of femininity was a woman who contributed domestic, productive, and reproductive labour — bearing and raising children, serving men, and

working for the nation. A feminist nationalist committed to gender equality, He did not repudiate the traditional gender boundary that defined women's domesticity and sexuality in relation to men. Rather, she stretched the boundary to new limits to incorporate nationalist goals.

As women were mobilized to cook meals and produce clothing for the fighting men, the war of resistance (1937-1945) also demanded that women live as refugees, endure physical and economic hardships, and suffer the loss of fathers, husbands, and sons on the home front and behind enemy lines. As Japanese forces advanced into central China, He escaped south to Hong Kong where she continued to raise funds for the war effort. After the fall of the British colony in 1942, she began life as an itinerant refugee, selling her paintings for a living and moving from one free area to another in Guangdong and Guangxi provinces. Despite her poor health, she adamantly refused to accept Chiang Kai-shek's offer of monetary help and his invitation to come to the wartime capital of Chongqing. After the end of the war and the Communist victory in 1949, He remained on the mainland and pledged her support to Mao Zedong. Never a member of the CCP, she worked for the government on policies relating to women, art, and overseas Chinese until her death in 1972 (Shang, 1994:368-416).

He's autobiographical traces, from her childhood resistance to foot binding and her youthful days in Tokyo where she learned to cook without help, to her mustering of emotional strength to cope with the death of Liao Zhongkai and her itinerant existence with minimal material comfort, take the form of a nationalist memorial about her transformation into a loyal "maidservant" of the revolution. It was a path that she hoped Chinese women would follow. Her remembrances showed that gender ideology was at the core of the Nationalist Revolution, providing the metaphorical language for articulation and an entry point for national mobilization. Gender difference could also be deployed as a weapon to question and undermine male authority. Rather than being completely subordinated to nationalism, He's discourse of feminism indicated that female subjectivities were always negotiated in the midst of contradictory forces.

Finally, He's narratives of revolutionary China challenge

traditional historiography, which has been reliant upon official archives and the accounts of male revolutionaries. Not to be taken as a passive and transparent repository of facts, her memories about major historical junctures such as the formation of the Revolutionary Alliance in Tokyo, Chen Jiongming's 1922 rebellion, and the emergence of the GMD left offer a wealth of historical sources about lived and critical revolutionary experiences at specific moments and locations that would otherwise have been permanently lost. The inclusion of such female perspectives allows historians to decipher gendered experiences and provide new and nuanced ways to understand the complex relationships between nation-building and subjectivity formation. When we consider gender as a means to establish and challenge boundaries of authority, revolutionary history looks not only more complete, but different.

Notes

1. Although the most comprehensive collection of He's original writings, *Shuangqing wenji*, indicates that the last two lines of the poem are "Take my women's clothes 將我巾幘裳. Give me fighting garb 換我征衣去!", the chronology of He's life in the same collection and a photograph of the poem hand-brushed by He show a discrepancy. They both show that the lines should be "Take my women's clothes 將我巾幘裳. Turn over your fighting garb 換你征衣去!". The picture can be found in Jinan daxue lishi xi et al. (1987: illustration no. 174).
2. For a concise critique of the construction of the GMD and CCP as dialectical opposites in historiography, see Esherick (1995). For a review of earlier scholarship that focuses on the conflict and differences between the two parties, see Pepper (2004). Examples of earlier scholarship on revolutionary history include Johnson (1962) and Selden (1971).
3. Dirlik (1975) is among the few scholars writing in English who have studied the GMD left extensively. In this article, he wrote that the recognized leaders of the left were Wang Jingwei 汪精衛, Chen Gongbo 陳公博, and Gan Naiguang 甘乃光. He did not mention He Xiangning and Song Qingling.
4. After Chiang Kai-shek ordered the suppression of the workers'

movement in Shanghai on April 12, 1927, He (1985b:64) denounced him as a “counter-revolutionary” at a GMD party meeting in Wuhan. After Deng Yanda 鄧演達, a leftist GMD member who was known for his longstanding opposition to Chiang Kai-shek, was murdered in November 1931, Song Qingling (1992a:83-86) sent a press release to *Shenbao*, condemning the violence and claiming that “the GMD has ceased to be a political force”. From then on, He was known to often refer to herself as “a party member of the thirteenth year of the Republic” to emphasize her loyalty to Sun Yat-sen’s Three Policies of the United Front of the thirteenth year of the Republic (meaning the year 1924) and her disapproval of Chiang Kai-shek’s betrayal. During the 1930s, He and Song were founding members of the Chinese Alliance for the Protection of Civil Rights 中國民權保障同盟 and the National Salvation Committee 救國會 in defiance of the Nanjing government.

5. For examples of biographies in the English language of Chinese women, see Rankin (1975), Witke (1975), Croll (1995), Terrill (1999), Wang (1999), Xie (2001), and Ye (2001). For a discussion of women as a collective subject and of biographical narratives on women revolutionaries, see Hershatter (2004).
6. For the most recent biography on Chinese male revolutionaries, see Bergère (1998). Bergère offers some details of Sun’s relationship with Song Qingling and includes Song’s recount of Chen Jiongming’s 陳炯明 rebellion in 1922. Despite the close relationship between Sun and He Xiangning, He receives no mention at all.
7. Interestingly, Song Qingling (1992a:171-80), Song Meiling’s sister, criticized the New Life Movement and the upsurge of Confucianism, which she thought was conservative, feudal, and inapplicable to modern-day China.
8. The celebrated theme of female morality and agency is made familiar by the popular expression *jinguo bu rang xumei* 巾幗不讓鬚眉, i.e., one who dresses her hair in a scarf (*jinguo*, a woman) does not fall behind one who has a beard and thick eyebrows (*xumei*, a man). The term *jinguo xumei* also refers to a woman who possesses admirable traits that are believed to be masculine in nature, such as a strong will, a lack of pettiness, and open-mindedness. A reference to *jinguo xumei* can be found in the late-Qing historical novel, *Niehaihua* 孽海花, where the daughter of Fu Rong is described as “*qigai fengfu*” (although not beautiful, she has a rich heroic aura 氣慨豐富) and “*titang buquan*” (an open,

generous character that makes her stand out from the crowd 個儻不群). She has a reputation for being a *jinguo xumei* (see Luo et al., 1987:673). Other terms frequently used to describe women who possess admirable “masculine” qualities are *nüzhong zhangfu* 女中丈夫 and *nüzhong haojie* 女中豪傑.

9. A historical reference to the story can be found in *Jinshu* (History of the Jin 晉書), compiled circa 644-646 CE, covering the period of 265-429 CE.
10. According to He's son, Liao Chengzhi 廖承志, his grandfather had instructed his family before his death that they find Liao Zhongkai a wife with “natural” feet. Liao Chengzhi explains that this was because the family was of Hakka ethnicity and his grandfather, who had lived in the United States, felt that women with bound feet often faced discrimination in the West. Liao Chengzhi (1979) wrote humorously that, when the Liaos spread word around town that they were looking for a daughter-in-law with “natural” feet and He's father heard of this, a marriage resulted.
11. There is a discrepancy between He's 1961 memoir and Shang's (1994:13-23) account on the reason for why He sold her jewellery to help Liao. While Shang wrote that it was because Liao had repeatedly failed to obtain funding from the Qing government, He's 1961 memoir indicates that the reason was because Liao's brother refused to help him. Shang indicated in his footnote that his source was He's 1937 autobiographical piece, in He (1985b:192). However, in that piece she only mentions “financial difficulties”, not a lack of Qing government funding.
12. In fact, He and Li Zhongshi were Liao's two sponsors when Liao returned and decided to become a member. Liao and He had first met Sun in 1903.
13. Tanaka Raisho was best known for having three times received the honour to demonstrate his painting skills before the Meiji Emperor. See also Croizier (1988:37). He Xiangning explains later in a 1961 memoir that she first learned to paint lions and tigers from Tanaka.
14. According to He, the modern Japanese word for China, “Shina” 支那, was commonly used among anti-Qing Chinese students in Tokyo to represent their new vision of the Chinese polity as opposed to the “Great Qing” 大清. In a 1937 essay, she wrote that Chinese usage of “Shina” ended with the establishment of the republic. To retain the authenticity of her 1909 poem, she decided not to drop the word “Shina”. However, in the reprint of her collected works in the PRC

in 1985, the name “Shina” in the poem is replaced with “Zhonghua” 中華.

15. Parts of Song Qingling’s account of the escape can be found in Bergère (1998:302-03).
16. He’s account of this confrontation with Chen may well be the only primary source in the historical record. Except for the poems he wrote when he was detained, Liao did not leave any writings about his release.
17. For a list of public speeches that He made about Liao’s death, see He (1985b:10-29).
18. The original lines of *Youzi yin* are:
 The thread in the hands of a kind mother 慈母手中線
 Makes the clothing on the sojourning son’s body 遊子身上衣。
 She sews stitch after tight stitch as departure nears 臨行密密縫
 And worries about a late return 意恐遲遲歸。
 Can a child ever give enough thanks to a mother 誰言寸草心
 Whose love is like sunshine in the spring 報得三春暉?

References

- Barlow, Tani E. 2004. *The Question of Women in Chinese Feminism*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Bergère, Marie-Claire (translated by Janet Lloyd). 1998. *Sun Yat-sen*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Cheng, Pei-kai and Michael Lestz with Jonathan D. Spence (eds.) 1999. *The Search for Modern China: A Documentary Collection*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Croizier, Ralph C. 1988. *Art and Revolution in Modern China: The Lingnan (Cantonese) School of Painting, 1906-1951*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Croll, Elisabeth. 1995. *Changing Identities of Chinese Women: Rhetoric, Experience, and Self-Perception in the Twentieth-Century China*. London: Zed Books.
- Dirlík, Arif. 1975. “Mass Movements and the Left Kuomintang,” *Modern China*, 1(1):46-74.
- Esherick, Joseph. 1995. “Ten Theses on the Chinese Revolution,” *Modern China*, 21(1):45-76.
- Feuerwerker, Yi-Tsi. 1975. “Women as Writers in the 1920’s and 1930’s,”

- in Margery Wolf and Roxane Witke (eds.), *Women in Chinese Society*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 143-68.
- Gilmartin, Christina Kelley. 1995. *Engendering the Chinese Revolution: Radical Women, Communist Politics, and Mass Movements in the 1920s*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- He, Xiangning 何香凝. 1957. *Huiyi Sun Zhongshan he Liao Zhongkai* (Remembering Sun Yat-sen and Liao Zhongkai 回憶孫中山和廖仲愷). Beijing: Zhongguo qingnian chubanshe.
- (edited by Shang Mingxuan 尚明軒 and Yu Yanguang 余炎光). 1985a. *Shuangqing wenji* (The Collected Works of the “Double Pure” 雙清文集). Vol. 1. Beijing: Renmin chubanshe.
- . 1985b. *Shuangqing wenji* (The Collected Works of the “Double Pure”). Vol. 2. Beijing: Renmin chubanshe.
- Hershatter, Gail. 2004. “State of the Field: Women in China’s Long Twentieth Century,” *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 63(4):991-1065.
- Jinan daxue lishi xi, Guangdong sheng wenwu guanli weiyuanhui and Liao Zhongkai He Xiangning jinianguan 暨南大學歷史系, 廣東省文物管理委員會, 廖仲愷何香凝紀念館 (eds.). 1987. *Jinian Liao Zhongkai He Xiangning* (In Commemoration of Liao Zhongkai and He Xiangning 紀念廖仲愷何香凝). Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe.
- Johnson, Chalmers A. 1962. *Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power: The Emergence of Revolutionary China, 1937-1945*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Judge, Joan. 2001. “Talent, Virtue, and the Nation: Chinese Nationalisms and Female Subjectivities in the Early Twentieth Century,” *The American Historical Review*, 106(3):765-803.
- Liao, Chengzhi 廖承志. 1979. “*Wo de muqin he ta de hua*” (My mother and her paintings), in *He Xiangning Zhongguo huaxuanji* (Selected Chinese Paintings of He Xiangning 何香凝中國畫選集). Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe.
- Liao, Mengxing 廖夢醒. 1973. *Wo de muqin He Xiangning* (My Mother He Xiangning 我的母親何香凝). Hong Kong: Zhaoyang chubanshe.
- Luo, Guanzhong (translated by C. H. Brewitt-Taylor). 1959. *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. Rutland: C. E. Tuttle Co.
- Luo, Zhufeng 羅竹風 et al. (eds.). 1987. *Hanyu da cidian* (The Chinese Language Dictionary 漢語大詞典). Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe.

- Pepper, Suzanne. 2004. "The Political Odyssey of an Intellectual Construct: Peasant Nationalism and the Study of China's Revolutionary History: A Review Essay," *Journal of Asian Studies*, 63(1):105-25.
- Rankin, Mary Backus. 1975. "The Emergence of Women at the End of the Ch'ing: The Case of Ch'iu Chin," in Margery Wolf and Roxane Witke (eds.), *Women in Chinese Society*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 39-66.
- Selden, Mark. 1971. *The Yen'an Way in Revolutionary China*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Shang, Mingxuan 尚明軒. 1994. *He Xiangning zhuan* (A Biography of He Xiangning 何香凝傳). Beijing: Beijing chubanshe.
- Sheng, Yonghua and Bin Zi. 1995. *He Xiangning de gushi* (The Story of He Xiangning). Hebei: Hebei shaonian ertong chubanshe.
- s.n. 1973. "Ho Hsiang-ning: A Staunch Revolutionary," *China Reconstructs*, 22(1):4-6.
- Song, Qingling 宋慶齡. 1992a. *Song Qingling xuanji* (Selected Essays of Song Qingling 宋慶齡選集), Vol. 1. Beijing: Renmin chubanshe.
- . 1992b. *Song Qingling xuanji* (Selected Essays of Song Qingling 宋慶齡選集), Vol. 2. Beijing: Renmin chubanshe.
- Spence, Jonathan D. 1999. *The Search for Modern China*, 2nd ed. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Terrill, Ross. 1999. *Madame Mao: The White-Boned Demon*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Wang, Zheng. 1999. *Women in the Chinese Enlightenment: Oral and Textual Histories*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Witke, Roxane. 1975. "Chiang Ch'ing's Coming of Age," in Margery Wolf and Roxane Witke (eds.), *Women in Chinese Society*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 169-92.
- Xie, Bingying (translated by Lily Chia Brissman and Barry Brissman). 2001. *A Woman Soldier's Own Story: The Autobiography of Xie Bingying*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Ye, Weili. 2001. *Seeking Modernity in China's Name: Chinese Students in the United States, 1900-1927*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

A Maidservant of the Revolution

He Xiangning and Chinese Feminist Nationalism in the 1920s and 1930s

Abstract

In late 1931, He Xiangning (1878-1972) returned to China from France in a spirit of national solidarity after Japanese forces had invaded the northeast. After repeated failures to convince Chiang Kai-shek to end the fighting against the Communists and respond to the outpouring of anti-imperialist sentiments around the country, He angrily sent him a packet of women's clothing, shaming his refusal to fight Japanese imperialism as passively female. In an impassioned poem, He declared that Chinese women would be willing to fight in the battlefield, if the men would not. This incident revealed the deepening split within the party since the end of the Northern Expedition in 1927. A key figure of the Nationalist government left, He's choice to mortify Chiang with a gift of women's clothing also illuminated the ways in which gender had functioned to divide risks, privileges, and responsibilities in the nationalist revolution against warlordism and imperialism.

This paper sketches the contours of feminist nationalism during the 1920s and 1930s by examining the writings of He Xiangning. Seeking to mobilize and contain "the other half of the population" in the revolutionary struggle against warlordism and imperialism, He called upon women to undertake new duties and sacrifices. None of these demands, however, repudiated the traditional gender boundary. Rather, the line was stretched to incorporate new definitions of domesticity and sexuality as the meanings of women's body and labour became tied to the fate of the nation. He's autobiographical narrative covered the period from her childhood resistance against footbinding and her youthful days in Tokyo when she learned to cook without help, to her strength in enduring the loss of her husband Liao Zhongkai, and her peripatetic existence with minimal material comfort. It was a nationalist memory about her transformation from a "pampered daughter" into a "maidservant" of the revolution. It was also a path that she hoped Chinese women would follow.

「做個革命的下女」

何香凝與1920至1930年代的婦女民族主義運動

陳珮珊

(中文摘要)

1931年底，日本佔領中國東北後不久，何香凝從法國趕回上海，準備共赴國難。回國後，她多次企圖游說蔣介石停止剿共行動，一致對外，但不被接納。盛怒之下，何送了一道女服給蔣，嘲諷他拒絕抗日救國是婦人行為；在一篇激昂的詩裏，何直指中國的男人如果未能上陣殺敵，婦女們將不惜取而代之。這事件反映了自北伐統一完成以來，國民黨面臨愈來愈嚴重的內部分裂。作為國民黨左派的老黨員，何香凝贈女服的舉動，正好表現出國民革命中，性別觀念用作區分各人權利和義務的重要功能。

本文的目的是透過何香凝的思想論說，探視中國1920至1930年代的婦女民族運動。為了發動「另一半的國民」參與反軍閥反帝的鬥爭，何號召婦女挺身承擔新時代所湧現的責任。不過，她這些針對婦女的申述，並非要挑戰傳統的男女角色，而是要演繹舊有的界別，把女性在家從屬的定位，以及她們勞動和身體的意義，與國家民族的命運緊密地連在一起。何香凝自傳式的點滴，從小時候堅拒纏足的反叛，到留學東京時學會燒飯，繼而克服丈夫廖仲愷被刺殺的哀痛，過著艱辛飄泊的生活，是她由當初的「富家小姐」成功改造為「革命下女」的自我表述，也是她期望中國婦女都會選擇的一條道路。

HONG KONG INSTITUTE OF ASIA-PACIFIC STUDIES

The Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies was established in September 1990 to promote multidisciplinary social science research on social, political and economic development. Research emphasis is placed on the role of Hong Kong in the Asia-Pacific region and the reciprocal effects of the development of Hong Kong and the Asia-Pacific region.

Director: Yeung Yue-man, PhD(*Chic.*),
Research Professor

Associate Director: Sung Yun-wing, PhD(*Minn.*),
Professor, Department of Economics