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ГЕНДЕРНЫЕ ОСОБЕННОСТИ В ОБРАЗОВАНИИ ЗНАКОВ КИТАЙСКОЙ ПИСЬМЕННОСТИ

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Уникальность китайской письменности, этапы её развития и способы образования иероглифических знаков позволяют исследователям глубже проникнуть в историю и проследить влияние множественных факторов на формирование «особой» восточной (китайской) картины мира. Отсутствие необходимости дешифрования древних письменных знаков открывает прямой и максимально объективный путь к пониманию глубинных процессов, на которых базируется китайское общество.

Ключевые слова: китайский язык, иероглифика, семантика, письменность.

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GENDER FEATURES IN THE FORMATION OF CHINESE CHARACTERS

The uniqueness of Chinese writing, the stages of its development and the ways of forming character allow researchers to penetrate through the history and find the influence of multiple factors on the formation of a “special” Eastern (Chinese) picture of the world. There is no any need to decipher ancient written signs; it opens a direct and maximal objective path to understanding the underlying processes on which Chinese society is based.

Key words: Chinese, characters, semantics, writing.

The study of a foreign language itself has lost its relevance and practical purpose, and must be considered as part of the process of knowing the existence of other nations, to look at this as a cognitive process. «Understanding the text implies not only knowledge of the language, but also knowledge of the world» [Dake, 1989, S. 161]. Because of not «knowledge of the world», mutual ignorance, lack of information about the history and traditions of each other, any inter-ethnic and intercultural interaction is doomed to misunderstanding, disagreement and even to conflicts.

Language as a mirror of processes occurring in society at a certain stage is much more objective than historical essays, depending on a huge number of sociopolitical and subjective factors. The reference to the literature and to the language, which appears in literary works in all its magnificence, plays an invaluable role for a deeper understanding of events in the historical and cultural aspect.

The «special» view to the world is reflected in writing, which is currently used by almost a quarter of the world's population, the study of the structure of the characters and the mutual influence expressed by the parts of the character allows to open «Chinese specifics». Like any system, the Chinese writing system has its development and changes throughout its history, but repeated attempts to reform character writing were mostly limited to revising writing styles, but not changing the principle of reflecting the surrounding reality.

We try to consider how real life was reflected in writing. We will not speak about the images of various household items and natural phenomena such as «sun, moon, person, dishes, etc.», but about more complex phenomena and concepts, for example, the social position of women in ancient Chinese society.

The problem of interaction and coexistence of both genders in society at different historical stages and different nations presented in its own way. There has never been an absolute equality of the genders: human communities were or are matriarchy or patriarchy. Only last few decades in the Western (non-eastern) world we can see an obvious equalization of social relations between man and woman.

V. V. Malyavin in his book «Chinese civilization» writes about the attitude towards a woman «In the traditional attitude of the Chinese towards a woman there is something deeply awkward, even cruel, because this attitude with a rare persistence and consistency denies the female principle experiences, interests and dreams in the woman. The woman was recognized and valued in China only insofar as she was necessary for the functioning of the family and the household. ... Confucian moralists for centuries have attributed to women a whole host of vices: slander, cunning, vanity, levity and ordinary stupidity (openly attributing lustfulness to women did not allow by Confucian chastity)» [Malyavin, 2000, S. 542].

Ethnic or it is more correct to call social stereotypes in Chinese society still have a strong influence on the attitude towards women. Women still (with some exceptions) do not occupy leadership positions and do not work in any responsible positions, do not lead an active social and political life, etc. Their destiny is household chores, raising children, preparing food, caring for livestock, etc., and the most important is subordinating to a man. Attitudes toward women who are active are more alert, restrained, they have less confidence than men, and each time a Chinese man will remind a woman who she is and how she should behave in society towards a man.

To change this stereotype is also difficult and maybe impossible as well as to change the very philosophy of the ancient Chinese, based on the opposition of «light» and «dark», «masculine» and «feminine» principles. All Chinese philosophy based on the principle of bipolarity, according to which the categorization of the surrounding world takes place. In accordance with the ancient canons woman was equated with the category of insignificant small people. Chinese said: «It is most difficult to communicate with a woman and a small (insignificant) man. If you bring them closer to yourself, they will become audacious, and if you distance them, they will become embittered.»

The unequal position of a man and a woman in ancient China can be fully confirmed by the form of characters. The Jiaguwen era is indicative of a period of slave-owning society, after the Shang dynasty (the end of the second - the beginning of the first millennium BC). Human society passed through patriarchy, and the concepts of the primacy of men came to the leading position, the attitude towards «respect for a man and disregard for a woman» was formed in society. It should be noted that the concepts of matriarchal society were not completely eliminated, and they still influenced to the creation of characters, but under «male concepts» pressure this influence was too small. Since Jiaguwen the number of characters expressing the power and superiority of men greatly exceeds the number of characters with the concepts of matriarchal society.

The character 女 «woman» is a pictographic image of a woman who sits on her lap, with her arms folded in front of herself. In ancient times, women disparagingly called themselves 奴 «slave», 妾 «concubine, maid». In the character 奴 «slave», the right part 又 is an image of the right hand with the meaning «to have, to possess, to own». A woman could not be free and independent, she was considered only as an object of possession of a man. The upper part of the character 妾 «concubine» is an image of a sword or knife, which is brought over a woman (on her knees), showing superiority over her, subordination to a man. Let us pay attention to the fact that not an ordinary fighting sword or knife is depicted as a weapon, but one that was specially used as an instrument of torture and punishment for slaves and criminals 辛.

Such a reflection of social life in language in general and hieroglyphics in particular could be only in a society where «they respect a man and neglect a woman.» In a number of characters containing the key "woman", we also see traces of social inequality between men and women that reigned in those times.

Using component analysis, we will try to select from the characters containing the key «woman» those that contain concepts related to social position. Of the two hundred and sixty-five characters with the key «woman», twenty-four indicate the social (functional) role of the woman. To refer to the concept «servant», seven words are used, «prostitute» - three, «gentlewoman» - three, «concubine» - two, «educator» - two, one each for «courtesan», «madam», «young lady», «matchmaker», «married woman», «girl», «slave». From the list we can see, just one word “madam” indicates a rather high position in society, four – «educator» (2 words), «young lady» and «matchmaker» with neutral relativeness and nineteen (!) indicate subordinate or low position. It should be noted that the notion of «madam», with all the significance of the social status of a woman, does not imply her freedom and independence in actions, she still belongs to her master. Instead of the character 娘 «madam», consisting of 女

«woman» and 良 «good», the character consisting of the key 女 «woman» and the right part of the character «servant» was also used. The original meaning of the character (仆) «slave, servant» is an image of a load-carrying person, over whom a punishment knife hangs, the servant was depicted in clothes decorated with the tail of an animal, which once again emphasized his lack of rights. Even in rich Chinese families, after the death of her husband, the wife could not claim to inherit property or part of it, everything was distributed among the older men in the family.

Is there any difference between the seven characters meaning the concept of «servant, maid»?

The character 妮 is used to indicate young maidservants or girls, consists of 女 «woman» and 尼 «nun», draws a parallel between the modest and ascetic life of nuns who have devoted themselves to serving God and the existence of young maidservants, whose fate has already been predetermined in serving the lord.

Another character consists of two elements: the left - 女 «woman» and the right - 身 «body», in addition to the meaning «maid», has the meaning of «getting pregnant». A man could afford to have as many wives as he wanted, and the main purpose of his wife is the continuation of the clan and give birth to boy. If the first (older) wife could not give birth to a boy, it was believed that she did not live up to expectations, and the husband can take more wives. Sometimes the girl was taken to the house only for the birth of son; they used the body (身) of the maids. The body was used because all the children born from the lord were considered to be common with the older wife, and the real mother (younger wife or maid) did not have any rights to her own child.

The same feature – the ability to give birth to a boy – the basis for creating another character with a synonymous meaning: the left element is 女 «woman», the right element is 果 «fruit, fetus».

The second element of the character 婢 «maid» means «low, despise» - 卑 indicates the position of a woman at the lowest level of the social ladder in Chinese society of that period.

Such a multitude and diversity confirms that these concepts occupied a significant place in the real life. If a woman occupied an equal or higher position in comparison with a man, the concepts reflecting this phenomenon in the language would be much more.

Comparing the number of words indicating the dependent, subordinate position of women in the Russian and Chinese languages, we conclude that in Chinese there are more such words, since we need to more accurately name the social status of a woman in China. In Russia, where attitudes toward women based on their maternal beginnings and beauty, only fewer concepts indicating dependence and a low social status of a woman. The occurrence and frequency of certain words expressing the same or similar concepts directly depend on the real situation in a society at a certain stage.

In family life, the wife was completely dependent on her husband, the main virtue of a woman was humility: in girlhood she completely obeyed her father, after marriage she became the servant of her husband and his parents. A Chinese proverb says: «A husband is the head of a wife». The character «wife» 妻 is an image of a kneeling woman, whose hair is held by a hand. The subordinate position of a woman goes back to the cult of ancestors – the purpose of a man on the earth is to continue the race and keep the graves of the ancestors. A woman (who had lost all contact with her family after marriage) was given a secondary role. The position of the wife was so powerless that her using of household items without the permission of her husband could be a reason for divorce.

But it would be wrong not to say that the characters with the key «woman» expressed such concepts as motherhood and beauty, which are inextricably associated with a woman. Female breast as a symbol of maternity is taken as the basis for the character «mother» - 母. In the Jiaguwen era, depicting of a kneeling woman with an

open breast, later with the change of writing styles, the main feature (chest) was used to denote this concept («mother»).

Studying characters, we get not only linguistic knowledge (about writing), but through analyzing the origin and structure of characters, we can more deeply understand the cultural characteristics of the ancient Chinese, their attitude to the surrounding reality. Similarly, we can find a reflection of almost any aspect of the world around us in any language, and the form of existence of a particular language, types of writing, etc. is absolutely not important. Relevant is the fact that any language is used to create, store and transmit information about the world.

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