

ACTA ASIATICA VARSOVIENSIA
NO. 28

ACTA ASIATICA VARSOVIENSIA

Editor-in-Chief

JERZY ZDANOWSKI

Subject Editors

NICOLAS LEVI

JERZY ZDANOWSKI

Statistical Editor

MAHNAZ ZAHIRINEJAD

Board of Advisory Editors

NGUYEN QUANG THUAN

KENNETH OLENIK

ABDULRAHMAN AL-SALIMI

JOLANTA SIERAKOWSKA-DYNDO

BOGDAN SKŁADANEK

LEE MING-HUEI

ZHANG HAIPENG



Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Cultures
Polish Academy of Sciences

ACTA ASIATICA VARSOVIENSIA
NO. 28

ASKON Publishers
Warsaw 2015

Secretary
Nicolas Levi

English Text Consultant
Stephen Wallis

© Copyright by Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Cultures,
Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw 2015

Printed in Poland

This edition prepared, set and published by

Wydawnictwo Naukowe ASKON Sp. z o.o.
Stawki 3/1, 00-193 Warszawa
tel./fax: (+48) 22 635 99 37
www.askon.waw.pl
askon@askon.waw.pl

PL ISSN 0860-6102
ISBN 978-83-7452-091-1

ACTA ASIATICA VARSOVIENSIA is abstracted in
The Central European Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities,
Index Copernicus



Professor Roman Sławiński
(1932–2014)

Contents

INTRODUCTION	9
ARTICLES	
MARIANNE BASTID-BRUGUIÈRE, In Memory of Roman Sławiński	11
STANISŁAW TOKARSKI, Westernization and Easternization. At the Crossroads of Multicultural Dialogue	15
ADAM W. JELONEK, On the So-Called Asian Values Once Again	25
ADAM RASZEWSKI, Human Rights in China and the Philosophical Perspective ...	39
ARTUR KOŚCIAŃSKI, Becoming Citizens: The Taiwanese Civil Society	51
LARISA ZABROVSKAIA, Women in Confucian Society: Traditions and Developing New Trends	61
NICOLAS LEVI, La minorité chinoise à Paris	69
IRENA KAŁUŻYŃSKA, Chinese Naming – Substitution by Homophones	79
IZABELLA ŁABĘDZKA, Taiwanese Contemporary Dance: From the Chinese Body to Intercultural Corporality	93
LIDIA KASAREŁŁO, The Pop-Cultural Phenomenon of Taiwanese TV Drama: Remodelled Fairy Tales and Playing with Virtues	113
EWA CHMIEŁOWSKA, FU-SHENG SHIH, Reshaping the Tradition: Postpartum Care in Modern Taiwan	123
DIANA WOLAŃSKA, Musical Inspirations in Japanese Culture	137
WALDEMAR DZIAK, China and the October '56 Events in Poland	147
IWONA GRABOWSKA-LIPIŃSKA, The Culture and Policy of the People's Republic of China towards Southeast Asian Countries 1949–1976	157
ANNA MROZEK-DUMANOWSKA, NGOs versus FBOs: Cooperation or Rivalry? The Case of the Chosen Asian and African Developing Countries	167
DOROTA RUDNICKA-KASSEM, Searching for the Truth: The Life and Work of Abū Ḥāmid Al-Ghazālī	181
MARCIN STYSZYŃSKI, Jihadist Activities in the Internet and Social Medias .	193

FIELD STUDY REPORT

ROMAN SŁAWIŃSKI, JERZY ZDANOWSKI, The Ethnic Groups and Religious Beliefs of Southern China in the Transformation Period
Shown as in the Example of the Hunan Province 203

Notes on Contributors 212

Introduction

Dear Readers!

We are presenting you yet another, already the 28th, issue of *Acta Asiatica Varsoviensia* devoted to the countries and culture of Asia. Over the years of its activity the journal started to be issued in English and it has hosted on its pages many eminent experts on Asia, yet still it remained faithful to its formula which was proposed thirty years ago by Professor Roman Sławiński, the founder of the journal and its permanent editor in chief. This formula stipulated that the Asian cultures should present themselves in the journal and talk directly with their own voice. The idea was both: to include in the group of authors and editors of the magazine scientists who grew up in Asian cultures, as well as to publish materials based on or referring to the texts – philosophical, linguistic, historical, sociological, religious studies or political studies – which were created by the Asian culture. These could be proper names as an object of linguistic research, religious texts, political documents, ideological declarations, but also biographical materials, historiographical elaborations, experience of meeting other cultures and mutual acculturation phenomenon resulting from the relations.

Professor Roman Sławiński left us in November 2014. The more time passes from his death, the more I feel his absence and the more I realize how unique a character he was in the world of research on China. Professor Marianne Bastid-Bruguière, a prominent French scholar from Institut de France in Paris, who met Roman Sławiński in the times of his studies in Beijing, writes about that fact. Most striking is the variety of interests and multidimensionality of research on China which he ran. He was trained as a linguist, and he knew perfectly well not only the classical language, but also many dialects. There was even a time it was appreciated by Mao Zedong himself. Roman Sławiński was interpreting a conversation of the Chinese leader with the Polish state authorities. During the conversation Mao Zedong changed as usual from the classical language to the dialect of Hunan province, which was his place of origin. When he realized he was using the dialect, he noticed that it was not a slightest problem for the interpreter to understand his statements. Then he asked: „Who is that young man who understands the Hunan dialect?” It was known that many Chinese from the surroundings of the Chairman did not understand him when he spoke in the native dialect. It so happened, that Roman Sławiński knew the dialect.

He was interested not only in the language. History, politics, culture as well as China's economy were the subject of his interest and research. His views, opinions and insights on these matters were the inspiration for many researchers of China, some of which are the authors of the materials contained in this issue. Of the many research interests of Professor Sławiński in recent years at least two may be mentioned. First one became Confucianism, especially its latest colours and shades. Professor persistently sought and discovered them in the texts of Chinese scientists, government documents, archives and everyday citizens of China. In this regard he was a dedicated explorer and a keen observer. Even the slightest detail was important to him. Minor personnel changes on the bureaucratic ladder were important for the formation

of general conclusions. From my conversations with him, I got the impression that he was rather skeptical about the possibility of a revival of Confucianism under the supervision of the communist authorities. So he concluded after examining many texts of the so-called new wave of Confucianism in China. His works on the latest Chinese historiography constitute an invaluable contribution to global research on contemporary China. His second passion was the research on the minorities of China Southern. The field research among the peoples of Miao and Tujia that he ran and in which I had the opportunity to participate assumed getting to know the nature of change in the cultural identity of these minorities in the era of globalization and accelerated socio-economic transformation in China. These studies had not been completed, and we can only hope that one of the students of Professor will continue them in the near future.

The arrangement of contents offered to you in the 28th issue of *Acta Asiatica Varsoviensia* refers to the research passions of Professor Sławiński. The first article, written by Stanisław Tokarski – Indologist and long-time associate of Professor Sławiński, concerns dialogue between the East and the West and the possibility of mutual understanding and agreement. Understanding another culture is also the ability to read the symbols contained in the letters and that aspect of the intercultural dialogue interested Professor Sławiński in particular. The question of so-called Asian values – presented in the articles written by Adam Jelonek, Adam Raszewski, Artur Kościański and Larisa Zabrowskaia – was very close to Professor Sławiński and he dealt with it for many years as part of his research on the so-called new Confucianism. The issue of Chinese migration in the world was also in the interests of Professor – mainly in the context of global economic and social phenomena. This part of the research on China is presented in the article on the Chinese migration to France by Nicolas Levi. The issue of Chinese language was obviously important for Professor Sławiński as a linguist and he always welcomed in the columns of *Acta* the authors writing about language and linguistic issues. This area of research is presented in the current issue in the article on Chinese names written by Irena Kałużyńska. On the other hand, the artistic part of the culture is referred to in the articles by Izabella Łabędzka, Lidia Kasarełło, Ewa Chmielowska, Fu-sheng Shih and Diana Wolańska. The first three of these articles relate to Taiwan, where Professor conducted research for many years which resulted among others in a monograph *History of Taiwan*. The further three articles penned by Waldemar Dziak, Iwona Grabowska-Lipińska and Anna Mrozek-Dumanowska refer to the political sphere. Political sphere is inextricably linked with the ideology which was also the case of China. Confucianism and the new Confucianism emerged and developed in the shadow of the emperors, presidents and chairmen of the Chinese Communist Party. Researching them without the analysis of the political scene was not possible. The part of articles is closed by two texts unrelated with China, but with the Middle East. Their authors – Dorota Rudnicka-Kassem and Marcin Styszyński present materials based on the Middle Eastern sources and thus relate to the traditions of *Acta Asiatica Varsoviensia*. The issue is closed by the report from field research in southern China by Professor Sławiński and me. For me it was a unique opportunity to get to know at least a little piece of China – a unique one, because my guide was Professor Sławiński – such a great scholar and such a seasoned expert on Asia.

I would like to thank the authors – students, colleagues and friends – for participation in the preparation of the issue, and the Directorate of the Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Cultures of the Polish Academy of Sciences for the possibility to dedicate the anniversary issue of *Acta Asiatica Varsoviensia* to Professor Sławiński.

Jerzy Zdanowski

LARISA ZABROVSKAIA

Women in Confucian Society: Traditions and Developing New Trends

Abstract

The article is devoted to the urgent problem of women's status and their level of social position in countries with Confucian traditions. The article analyzes how gender identity is constructed out of social and political forces. It was supplemented by comparative studies of the gender policies provided by the contemporary authorities of Korea, China and Japan and discovers a new tendency in their internal policies. The author reveals the historical roots of women's low positions in Confucian societies and shows the present changes of women's social status. It was underlined that the real gender situation leaves much to be desired in Japan. China's authorities try to overcome negative traditions in family life and build the modern nation-state with high global competitive abilities. The authorities of the two parts of Korea are going to raise women's social status. The Korean states have made outstanding progress in their gender policies. The authorities of all states with Confucian traditions have an aim to involve more women in economic activity, to increase the effectiveness of their economies. Doing this they may avoid the invitation of a big number of foreign workers.

Key words: women, Korea, China, Japan, gender policy, Confucian traditions

Introduction

Confucian traditions and ideologies continue to dominate in many East Asian countries. This kind of ideology persists in keeping women in low social positions, not allowing them to take the leading positions in policies and the economy, and not letting them make considerable influences in all spheres of social life. According to a Confucian rule, "women must obey fathers before, and husbands after marriage, and sons in old times". This rule worked for centuries. However, at present this rule has some changes.

On the one side, the contemporary authorities of states with strong Confucian traditions (China, Korea, Taiwan, Japan and Vietnam) proclaimed the equal rights between men and women, but, on the other side, there are few women at the top holding political positions. Very few women became the head of states, ministers, districts or mayors of cities. As usual, societies with strong Confucian traditions have especially powerful militaries, which do not permit women to become really equal.

Besides, every country with Confucian traditions has its own specifics that negatively reflect on the social positions of women. Therefore, the main aim of the article is to study

the general situation and specific moments in gender policies of states with Confucian traditions, to analyze the evolution of historical traditions and to understand how the new social trends will permit the consolidation of nations and make them more competitive in the contemporary global economy. The author understands ‘gender’ inclusively as ‘women’, incorporates relationships between men and women, and gender ideology.

Japan: how to overcome traditional barriers

Japan is a country with an advanced economy and a high level of life. Japanese authorities proclaimed equal rights for men and women, but the real gender situation leaves much to be desired, as married women are deprived of many opportunities. As a result, young Japanese girls don’t want to be married, women postpone their marriages and after marriage they prefer not to change their family names into those of their husbands. It is a kind of protest against old traditions, which preserve the low social position of Japanese women.

Japan was the first of the East Asian states in to involve more women in economic activity. In the mid-1980s the Japanese government passed a series of initiatives to expand female employment and career opportunities. Foremost among these was the 1985 passage of Japan’s Equal Employment Opportunity Law (*Danjo koyo kikai kintoho*, herein referred to as EEOL), which came into effect in April 1986. When the EEOL was passed, the government also established a special committee, entitled “Planning and Promotion of Policies for Women” and created the Institute for Advancement of Women in Employment as a co-operative endeavor between industry and the Ministry of Labor. The American researcher Millie R. Creighton suggests that these changes reflect a desire to participate in international life, rather than an internal shift in Japanese social values regarding women’s social roles. She concluded that “had Japan not made such changes by the end of the United Nation’s Decade for Women (1975–1985), Japan would not have been allowed to ratify the U.N. Resolution on Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women”.¹

The EEOL has had little effect on changing the traditions in Japanese society. Year by year the Japanese government’s White Papers on Gender Equality show a low level of advancement by Japanese women in politics, government and business compared with other countries. The situation will not change unless political, business and labor leaders get serious about the issue because the success or barriers of success for Japanese women depend, in part, on male attitudes. On the other hand, women should be more active in raising their social status.

Japan ranks 42nd among the 75 countries on the gender empowerment index. Women’s participation and decision-making authority in political and economic activities continues to be low. It ranks 80th among 115 countries on the gender equality gap index. In Japan, women occupy 10 percent of managerial positions in business, somewhat higher than South Korea’s 7.8 percent but much lower than the USA’s 42.5 percent which is the highest level.²

Nevertheless, some Japanese women have very quietly but steadily made their careers and have become top managers. While many of them have made their way up the corporate ladder, they, as usual, faced any difficulties and have successfully overcome them. As a result,

¹ Millie R. Creighton, ‘Marriage, Motherhood, and Career Management in a Japanese “Counter Culture”’, in Anne E. Imamura (ed.), *Re-Imaging Japanese Women*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996, p. 192.

² Murayama Mayumi (ed.), *Gender and Development: The Japanese Experience in Comparative Perspective*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, pp. 117–131.

it makes a correction in the former trend of business research that has traditionally ignored women's roles, let alone the existence of women managers in Japanese corporations.

Japanese women workers average wage, as a percentage of men's, is 67 percent, a little higher than South Korea's 62.6 percent and Malaysia's 63 percent but lower than America's 81 percent and Britain's 82.6 percent.

In Japan, men contribute to only 12.5 percent of the total housework and child rearing hours (South Korea, 12.2 percent), compared with a range of 37 to 40 percent in the U.S.A., Sweden, Finland and Australia. At the very least, Japan should consider setting concrete numerical targets for gender equality. There is female discrimination in the Japanese Imperial family, as according to Confucian traditions, only the male heir has the rights to be a successor to the Emperor. Only the birth of a male heir to the Emperor's younger son helped to settle the dynastic crisis during the 2000s. This shows us, that old traditions preserve the social structure and do not permit the provision of changes in Japan's society.

Women have been active in the Japanese labor force in fairly high numbers throughout most of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century. Whereas women's employment was once concentrated in agricultural and later in manufacturing work, it has overwhelmingly shifted to the service sector. Within this sector, female employees have tended to concentrate in banks, securities firms, department stores and other companies involved in rental and distribution. Although the percentage of women in the Japanese labor force has been comparable to that of their counterparts in other industrialized countries, Japanese women have faced greater obstacles because of preserving societal traditions.

At present, the Japanese authorities permitted women to be in the military, but they continue to stay in low positions in Japanese armed forces. There are consequences of the former military history, which tries to preserve Japanese women's place at home.

As Japanese society becomes more elderly, Japanese authorities must therefore invite more foreign workers. The Japanese government may solve the problem by changing gender policies and give Japanese women a chance to make careers in the economy and to be able to realize themselves in their professions. Japan needs to involve more women in high positions in politics and the economy. It would make Japanese foreign policy really peace loving.

The famous Japanese public figure Fukuzawa Yukichi said, "a strong nation could only be formed when independent individuals came together through human relations".³ He consistently criticized a confirmation that only married women were expected to be faithful, and insisted on the idea of male-female equality. His ideas continue to be very urgent for contemporary Japanese society.

China: the struggle against gender violence

In East Asian socialist states, which officially replaced Confucian traditions with communist ideology, "right laws" hide gender policies. In contemporary China the official propaganda proclaims a great role for women and gives respect to "labor heroines", "iron girls", "March 8th red flag women", and "a mode of resisting arranged marriage". Chinese

³ Naoko Nishizawa, 'The Formation of Women's Network and the Development of Class Divisions at a Time of Rapid Change in Modern Japanese History', *Women and History*, December 2013, Vol. 19, p. 194.

authorities' main concern is to create a new image for working women and their contribution in "a Chinese dream" and developing a new Chinese society.⁴

Nevertheless, Confucian traditions continue to be alive and, as a result, the social practice continues to be uncomfortable for women. The cause of women's self-expression and emancipation is still constrained by the historical burden of lower-status women's work. This means that women continue to be concentrated in areas such as culture, education and health care rather than in the masculine areas of finance, economics, industry and the military. At the same time, although teaching in China as elsewhere is a "feminised profession" with minimal career prospects and low pay, the emergence of new technological media in education has strengthened the professional status of the IT-competent woman teacher, who increasingly has taken on the role of "a technologically skilled communicator". This fact may show that there is some evolution in Chinese women becoming more modern and active in the spheres where men previously dominated.

Although it is 'under-recognized' and 'under-reported', it is one of the most significant epidemics in China today. It is gender violence. This kind of violence occurs in all regions in China. It affects families of all ethnic backgrounds and social spheres, and impacts not only families but also society, as a whole.

According to a national survey (the China Law Institute), one-third of the country's 270 million households cope with domestic violence, both physical and psychological. A survey carried out in the Gansu, Hunan and Zhejiang, provinces which are the most economically developed, said that one-third of the surveyed families had witnessed family violence, and that 85 percent of the victims were women. Because not only men but also many women consider violence as a normal part of family life, only 5 percent among those surveyed said that their marriage was unhappy.⁵

A survey conducted by the All-China Women's Federation found that domestic violence in China takes place predominantly in rural areas, in young families and in households with lower educational levels. This tendency is correlated with other developing countries and China isn't an exception in this question.

Although Chinese women have experienced significant progress in recent times, the Confucian ideas that women should be in subordinate positions to men in the household and in society still persists. Also, because men consider themselves the main breadwinners, they think that they have the right to maintain order in home by using violence. Various cultural, economic and social factors, including shame and fear of retaliation from their partners, contribute to Chinese women's reluctance to denounce these facts.

In China, as in other countries, domestic violence is not only widespread, but also considered a private matter, which makes it very difficult for women to obtain appropriate, judicial and police responses. In recent years, there has been some progress regarding this issue in China. Among those efforts to call attention to the situation are some roadside and subway advertisements stressing the scourge that domestic violence represents to Chinese society. At the same time, special refuges and community support groups for victims of domestic violence are becoming more numerous.

⁴ J. Judge, *The Precious Raft of History: the Past, the West, and the Women Question in China*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008, pp. 10–38.

⁵ J. Kaufman, 'The Global Women's Movement and Chinese Women's Rights', *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 21, No. 76 (July), 2012, p. 598.

The All-China Women's Federation has been playing a significant role in bringing domestic violence into legislation and policymaking processes. In addition, an alliance of civil society organizations has been established under a project called "Domestic Violence in China: Research, Intervention and Prevention", which has carried out some innovative actions towards the elimination of domestic violence. Chinese domestic violence is a threat to equality and justice that no civilized society should be allowed to exist.

In 2008, the Chinese government developed pilot courts defining what domestic violence is and established protection for women. However, Chinese authorities did not permit the establishment of shelters for women as they were afraid that they would be overcrowded.⁶

The other Chinese problem is the huge amount of illegal prostitution that in many cases is unofficially supported by the police and local authorities. This fact shows that the authorities are guilty of a dereliction of duty and have a poor gender policy. In addition, some of the local authorities, for example, Mu Suixin, the mayor of Shenyang, an industrial city in China's North-East, openly said, that prostitution provides a means to stave off chronic unemployment and to permit the levy of a 30 percent of tax. According to Chinese unofficial sources, "at least" 14 Chinese cities were taxing prostitution despite the fact that the sex trade remained illegal.

All these facts are troubling for the central authorities. In 2001, Mu Suixin was convicted and given a death sentence. Cases like that of Mu Suixin have piqued Xi Jinping's interest, which tries to root out all criminal activities and corruption in the country. However, the illegal practice is too deeply ingrained in the Chinese economy, as well as a culture of doing business that the crackdown on which will drive the sex trade underground. Some Chinese lawyers insist on its legalization. But it would be a step back after Mao Zedong successfully weeded out the sex trade in the 1950s. Legalization would be a blow to the reputation of the fifth generation of Chinese communist leaders. Therefore, the Chinese authorities must look carefully at the gender policy and avoid doing mistakes.

By the way, the complicated economic situation in Chinese rural areas has forced women to migrate to big cities and to work outside the home. This raises women's status in the family and may begin to change traditional negative attitudes towards newborn girls.

At the same time, Chinese women continue to be discriminated against in working places. They receive low payment. The economic restructuring of state industries has laid off more women than men. Female college graduates have a harder time finding employment than men as employers don't want to pay maternity benefits.⁷ Nevertheless, Chinese women benefit from laws' protection and social investments in health and education. Rural women have also been freed by birth control policy from a life of child bearing. This fact permits us to conclude that China's gender policy is going forward by short steps.

Korea: new trends in gender policy

North (the DPRK) and South (the ROK) Korea are the two parts of the former feudal Korea, where Confucian traditions took a main part of social life. As a rule, the women's social position continues to be unequal with men. Old traditions continue to be very hardy, and South Korean husbands prefer to see their wives at home and not call her a wife or by her name, but a "home person".

⁶ Ibid., p. 600.

⁷ Kaufman, 'The Global Women's Movement...', p. 588.

At present, North Korean society and the government's gender policy are more different than in South Korea. The North Korean economic situation continues to be very complicated, and the number of working women is increasing. The North Korean government even proclaimed an order that all young and middle aged women must work at state enterprises. Therefore, North Korean working women became more economically independent than those in South Korea, but this fact does not improve the situation on the whole.

The spouse and the sister of the young head of state Kim Jong Un, who although do not hold high leading posts, became the women's face of the new North Korean management, and set the tone in carrying out a certain gender policy.

North Korean authorities have endowed women with the same equal rights which men have, giving them some social privileges – to have a rest-time period before and after the birth of a child, to be allowed to have a pension, amongst others there are many kinder gardens in North Korea. Many North Korean women were rewarded by medals and received honorary titles. All these measures helped to raise women's social prestige to a certain level, but not to permit them to be in leading positions in policy making and the economy or becoming members of the ruling party. The last is the men's privilege. Many North Korean women are in the military, but there is no female General in the North Korean Armed Forces. All these measures promote an increase of the social status of women, but do not allow them to take the leading positions in policy making or the economy, become party members, or to serve in the army in high positions. All of this indicates that a considerable level of control still remains against women reaching high positions.

On the contrary, South Korean society continues to be a Confucian one and women's social positions remain low. As a rule, married women do not work and stay at home. Only in the middle of the 1990s did the South Korean authorities begin to take the first steps in formulating a gender policy. It was proclaimed that a male and a female's payment for the same work must be equal. There was also a declaration about the construction of the pension system and the medical insurance system, as well.⁸ Moreover, South Korean authorities revised the electoral system and established a quota for female candidates. All these measures may have become a model for other countries with Confucian traditions and to show how women can find a greater voice in society.

Nevertheless, the new social policy of the South Korean government did not make a wide impression on the social situation. Equal payments and pensions were only for people who work at the state's factories. There was a preservation of women's kind of work and men's kind of work in private enterprises. Women can work in restaurants, hotels, hospitals and schools, and men – in industry, science, political spheres and the military.

The South Korean woman, who all her life was merely a "home person", as usual would say that she did not have a pension, but instead she "has a husband". In other words, the women agree to depend on their husbands' hospitality.

In an ideal situation, South Korean women must leave their job after marriage and give birth to a male heir, as according to Confucian traditions, only male successors can make tributes to their ancestors. As a result, South Korean society continues to be a real masculine society and mainly takes into account the interests of males.

⁸ Kye Woo Lee, 'Evolution of Women's Employment and Gender Discrimination in Korea', *Korea Focus*, September–October 2005, Vol. 13, No. 5, 2005, pp. 136–148.

Many young Korean young women are well educated and their activity in the job market may result in a big profit for the country's economy. According to Confucian traditions after reaching their 30s and getting married women quit their jobs and continue to stay at home while the children grow up. As a result, the departure of the female workforce after marriage led to a loss of 128 trillion won, which accounted for about 14.2 percent of the country's gross domestic product in 2008.⁹

Therefore, President Park Geun-hye's administration decided to improve the situation and start a program for working women. It established the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family. The state-run Korean Women's Development Institute conducts research on gender issues and gives recommendations to authorities. The government's aim is to return married women to work. For this aim the government plans to inject 4.6 trillion won and makes efforts to help working mothers continue their careers. The authorities expected the employment of young mothers to rise to 70 percent. Both parents receive a right to leave their job for the purpose of child rearing. The government also plans to build 150 state-run day care centers and make a parental system more attractive for both parents, as it will allow them to work part-time and spend more time with their children. Besides, the government provides a state-sponsored nannies' policy.¹⁰

Korean TV-programs make shows about fathers and their children, explaining how fathers may spend time and have a rest with their children. All these measures may permit Korea to avoid quickly becoming an aging society with a shrinking working-age population.

At present, we can see some positive results from this comfortable for women policy. South Korea has experienced a rise in the proportion of women among teachers, lawyers, medical doctors and senior officials at central government agencies. Women make up 15.7 percent of the lawmakers at the current 300-member National Assembly.¹¹

However, the female presence in politics and corporate boardrooms has remained low, suggesting that there are still 'glass ceilings' that have yet to be 'smashed'. This phenomenon shows that a male dominated culture remains stronger in provincial politics and governance. There is a need to step up efforts to field more female contenders in local polls, making it obligatory to fill a certain proportion of their candidate lists with women.

At the same time, the young generation of rich women changed their life targets and decided to become involved in economic activity. Many daughters and especially granddaughters of owners of Korean *chaebol* continue their work after marriage. As usual, they are in the top positions in the luxury business.¹² Maybe other Korean women would follow them and establish their own business.

The next index of the level of a gender policy concerns equal rights in military service. Later South Korean governments had not increased the number of females in military service. In the last ten years women may serve as soldiers and non-commissioned officers especially in the medical divisions. In 2014, the authorities permitted female soldiers and non-commissioned officers to apply for the artillery, armored units and air defense

⁹ Cho Chun-un, 'Work and Life Balance Tall Order for Korean working Moms', *Korea Herald*, February 3, 2014, p. 4, www.koreaherald.co.kr (accessed 14 June 2014).

¹⁰ Kim Da-ye, 'Bonus for Husbands taking Parental leave', *Korea Times*, February 5, 2014, p. 2, www.koreatimes.co.kr (accessed 18 April 2014).

¹¹ *Korea Herald*, March 12, 2014, p. 14.

¹² Lee, Ji-yoon, 'Chaebol Daughters Build Luxury Empires of Their Own', *Korea Herald*, January 8, 2014, p. 10.

forces in a bid to lower the gender barrier. At the same time female soldiers received more opportunities for child care.¹³

The Army Military Academy began inviting female cadets. The government plans to increase the number of female officers to 7 percent of the total forces by 2015. All these measures testify that President Park Geun-hye's administration occupies a strong position in changing the role of women in Korean society, making it more active in the realization their own careers. President Park Geun-hye's administration has made great progress in the gender policies that permit Korean society to be more balanced and stable.

In international forums, Korean women's issues are represented and activated as specific political issues, unlike other current problems such as constructing a peace regime and the economic and political situation in North East Asia. In the 1990s meetings began between South and North Korean academic-based subject groups of women, which met in Yanbian, China and Tokyo.¹⁴ Looking forward to the process of future Korean re-unification it is very important to continue the international exchange of opinions between South and North Korean women.

Conclusion

Contrary to the submissive status of females, women leaders have dominated in South and South-East Asian states for much of the past four decades. These states have other political and religious traditions. It creates an illusion that the gender situation in these states is more comfortable for women. However, we may take into consideration the dynastic links that brought these women to power. Each of them belongs to the elite of society, their fathers or husbands being descendants of their countries recognized founding persons. The cases of these women leaders are not typical for other South Asian women.

Thus the modern process of increasing the social status of women in the nations with Confucian traditions has many common features and goes actually according to one scenario: the tone is set by the women belonging to the local elites. Under pressure from economic factors these nations take similar measures for the involvement of married women in economic activity, by creating new opportunities for their work in previously prohibited zones, for example, to serve in the army in high ranking officer positions.

The great changes in the economic situation of the nations with Confucian traditions would force women to continue to work after marriage. This would permit them to be financially independent, and conversely, this would give a lot of profits for the countries' economy, which would slow down the demographic trend towards an aging society and negate the need to invite foreign workers. At the same time, this would involve more men in housekeeping tasks and childcare and make social life more equal for men and women.

The countries of Confucian civilizations may give fresh ideas to the Confucian way of life and not only continue to maintain traditions, but also to think about contemporary economic interests and also the consolidation of their nations.

¹³ *Korea Herald*, March 12, 2014, p. 3.

¹⁴ Kim Young-Sun, 'The Historical Trajectory of Academic Exchange between North and South Korean Women and its Tasks', *Women and History*, December 2013, Vol. 19, p. 329.

Notes on Contributors

MARIANNE BASTID-BRUGUIÈRE, an outstanding sinologist graduated from the Ecole Nationale des Langues et Civilisations Orientales and Peking University who worked for the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in Paris and was named Grand Officer of the Légion d'honneur in 2010

STANISŁAW TOKARSKI, Professor Emeritus at the Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Studies at the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw, e-mail: s-tokarski@o2.pl

ADAM W. JELONEK, Professor at the Institute of Middle and Far Eastern Studies of the Jagiellonian University in Cracow, e-mail: ajelonek@hotmail.com

ADAM RASZEWSKI, PhD student at the Institute of Political Science of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, e-mail: voland7@onet.eu

ARTUR KOŚCIAŃSKI, Assistant Professor at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw, e-mail: akoscian@ifispan.waw.pl

LARISA ZABROVSKAIA, Professor at the Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography of Far Eastern People of the Far Eastern Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Vladivostok, e-mail: larisa51@hotmail.com

NICOLAS LEVI, Assistant Professor at the Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Studies at the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw, e-mail: nicolas_levi@yahoo.fr

IRENA KALUŻYŃSKA, Professor at the Department of Sinology of the Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Warsaw, e-mail: i.s.kaluzynska@uw.edu.pl

IZABELLA ŁABĘDZKA, Professor at the Chair of Asian Studies of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, e-mail: izarab@amu.edu.pl

LIDIA KASAREŁŁO, Professor at the Department of Sinology of the Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Warsaw, and at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Jagiellonian University, e-mail: lidia.kasarello@uw.edu.pl

EWA CHMIELOWSKA, PhD candidate of Department of Anthropology, Institute of Zoology, Jagiellonian University, e-mail: ewa.chmielowska@uj.edu.pl

FU-SHENG SHIH, PhD, Assistant Professor of Department of Sociology, Soochow University, Taipei, Taiwan, e-mail: fusheng@scu.edu.tw

ANNA MROZEK-DUMANOWSKA, Professor at the Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Studies at the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw, e-mail: abdumanowscy@wp.pl

DIANA WOLAŃSKA, Doctoral Candidate at the Faculty of Humanities, John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, e-mail: alanis7@wp.pl

WALDEMAR J. DZIAK, Professor at the Institute of Political Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw

IWONA GRABOWSKA-LIPIŃSKA, PhD, politologist-sinologist graduated from the Warsaw University, former co-worker of Professor Roman Sławiński in Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw, e-mail: iwona.grabowska.lipinska@gmail.com

MARCIN STYSZYŃSKI, Associate Professor in the Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, e-mail: martin@amu.edu.pl

DOROTA RUDNICKA-KASSEM, Associate Professor at the Institute of Middle and Far Eastern Studies of the Jagiellonian University in Cracow, e-mail: d.rudkass@interia.pl

ROMAN SŁAWIŃSKI (1932–2014) was a Professor of Sinology at the Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Studies at the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw and the Editor-in-Chief of *Acta Asiatica Varsoviensia*

JERZY ZDANOWSKI, Professor at the Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Studies at the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw, e-mail: jerzyzda@gmail.com