However, the influx of Chinese women has caused many social problems in the 1930s and 1940s, such as the proliferation of brothels and dancing halls, and estrangement of Chinese "coolie" women. Women also witnessed a growing consciousness among the Chinese women about their social status and the need for their participation in the economic and cultural life of the community. This trend is connected to the May Fourth movement in China, and domestic situations such as the Boxer Rebellion in Manchuria.

But "liberation" of women was quite a recent phenomenon. Only half a century ago, the position of women in society was vastly different from that of today.

This Academic Exercise attempts to analyse the changing status of the Chinese woman in Singapore in the past century focussing on the two decades during the inter-war period.

Before the turn of the century, Chinese women were a neglected group in Singapore partly because of their relatively small number and partly because of their inactive role in the Singapore Chinese society. But the great influx of Chinese female immigrants after World War I gradually changed the nature of the Singapore Chinese society from a male-dominated society to a more balanced one in terms of sex ratio.
However, the influx of Chinese women also caused many social problems in the 1920s and 1930s such as proliferation of brothels and dancing halls, and maltreatment of Chinese "mui tsai" (quasi-slave girls). Chapter III examines the nature of these social problems and the reaction of the government as well as the Chinese community towards them.

The 1920s and 1930s also witnessed a growing consciousness among the Chinese women about their social images and public images in the Singapore society. Influenced by external forces such as the May Fourth Movement in China, and domestic situations such as widespread prostitution, many of the early 1930s men and women writers alike, made suggestions for reform through the news media and literature. Their ideas and proposals form the focus for investigation of Chapter IV.

After World War II, Chinese women gained more and more rights in the Singapore society. The Conclusion briefly sums up the major developments in the modern era.

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