Abstract

The oppression of women in traditional China has long been thought to be closely related to *Ban Zhao* (班昭) (50 A.D.-120 A.D.) because *Nü Jie* (女诫) is the first publication in China that laid out specific rules that women should observe in order to be considered proper and respectable. This academic exercise is an effort to find out if Ban Zhao is the first culprit of the oppression of women in traditional China.

In this exercise, a deeper study into *Nü Jie* is made in order to understand *Ban Zhao*’s point of view on the proper behaviour of women. Next, it looks into the ladies way of living of women in the Han dynasty to determine the influence of *Nü Jie* during that period of time. It also gives an insight into the oppression of women in traditional China, particularly on chastity and education, as it is in these two aspects that the oppression of women is especially obvious.

*Ban Zhao* may have enhanced the inequality between the two sexes in *Nü Jie*, putting men on a status higher than women. However, the oppression of women in traditional China is a result of many reasons. All such reasons should be taken into consideration to conclude whether *Ban Zhao* is the first culprit of the oppression of women in traditional China.