

Consultative Workshop on

**“The Role of Women and their Contributions to
Social, Economic, and Environmental
Development”**

**The Central University for Nationalities, Beijing, China
May 17 - 18, 1999**

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Preface

Liu Shusong
Vice-Director of SULCP

Slowly the curtain lowers on the twentieth century, and gradually we see the dawning of a new era. At this junction of centuries, one of the most important research topics that has been given to us is that of the function of women in the development of society. We are now putting our efforts into the completion of this task.

Human society soars with two wings: one male, and one female. If the two wings are unevenly developed, the bird will be unable to fly. In May 1999, the Central University for Nationalities (CUN) and Simon Fraser University (SFU) organised a workshop on "The Role of Women and their Contributions to Social, Economic, and Environmental Development". This marks a new stage in the development of Sino-Canadian university co-operative projects, and it is also a concrete embodiment of the results of co-operation.

First, we must express our thanks to the Canadian International Development Agency and to the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada for their support that has allowed this workshop to take place. Thanks as well go to the Chinese Ministry of Education, the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, and the Environmental Protection Agency for their energetic support.

In the workshop, Chinese and Canadian government officials, experts, scholars, and colleagues from the three project sites consulted closely with each other, shared their scholarship and exchanged experiences in an atmosphere of warm collegiality. People from different countries, different regions and different perspectives discussed the contributions of women to social, economic, and environmental development and analysed the role of women in making these three aspects of development sustainable in view of their interdependence and mutually supportive nature.

This workshop is of great significance in raising people's awareness of women's issues, in understanding the role of women in socio-economic development, in advancing the co-ordinated development of society, economy, and environmental protection in China's minority nationality regions, in promoting the consolidation and development of Sino-

Canadian university co-operation, and in strengthening international exchanges between CUN and SFU.

Following the workshop, we have edited this volume of papers, which are rich in content and enlightening for the interested reader. Focusing on core issues, each expounding a different viewpoint, the authors reflect strategic visions and bold creative spirits that are firmly grounded in reality, all in a spirit of mutual responsibility.

If any shortcomings are found in these papers, they are sure to be seen as minor blemishes in works of overall integrity. This volume is published bilingually in Chinese and English for the convenience of all readers. All translations have been reviewed and edited by Professors Shen Youling and Guo Zhaolin, who will welcome criticisms and suggestions concerning errors and omissions.

SECTION I

OPENING ADDRESSES

Welcoming Remarks by the Chinese Project Director

Ha Jingxiong
President of CUN

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Today, women scholars from Canada, USA, and different parts of China are meeting here at CUN to attend the workshop on "The Role of Women and their Contributions to Social, Economic, and Environmental Development". Please allow me on behalf of CUN to extend our warmest welcome to our Canadian and American friends who have come from afar. I would also like to express my sincere thanks to all of the participants for your concern for and support of this workshop.

Both CIDA and AUCC have provided substantial support, making this workshop possible. We also want to show our heartfelt gratitude to the Ministry of Education, the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, and the Environmental Protection Administration under the State Council of China for their concern and support.

May in Beijing is a wonderful time. Holding this workshop on such beautiful days is an inspiring event.

We all know that the earth on which we live together is suffering from severe air, water, and soil pollution. Protecting the earth and its environment to ensure mankind's survival is our common duty.

The theme of the workshop is "The Role of Women and their Contributions to Social, Economic, and Environmental Development". The economy should be developed continuously; culture should be maintained; and the environment should be further developed. These are important issues which everyone must face and must not shirk as we enter the 21st century.

CUN, as the institution of higher learning for minorities in China, has an unavoidable duty to do its best to co-ordinate and advance economic development, cultural preservation, and environmental protection. Since 1990, CUN and SFU have conducted the CCULP and SULCP projects in order to conduct research into the "three sustainable developments" and

train minority professionals in these areas, especially women professionals.

Remarkable achievements have been made through our joint efforts. In the past decade, 44 scholars have been to SFU, including both senior and young scholars. CUN has also received numerous pieces of advanced equipment. We have published three textbooks, and the fourth will come out in the autumn.

The workshop being held now is an obvious example. The friendly co-operation between CUN and SFU has not only enhanced scientific research and international academic exchanges, but also promoted the internationalisation and globalisation of CUN and SFU. The China-Canada university co-operation has brought great economic and social benefits to our university and to minority areas.

Here, I would like to express my sincere thanks again to CIDA, AUCC, and our partner, SFU. I hope that our friendly co-operation will continue to develop.

There is a well-known saying in China, that "Women are capable of holding up half the sky." Women now are playing greater and greater roles in social, political, economic, and cultural arenas. The broad spectrum of Chinese women is a vital new force in the economy, traditional culture, and environmental protection, and women are making their own special contributions to the "three sustainables".

I believe this workshop will further develop the strength and competent of women, especially minority women, and allow them to contribute to their motherland and to all of mankind.

I wish great success for this workshop, followed by fruitful results!

Welcoming Remarks by the Canadian Project Director

*Dr. Jan Walls
Director of the David Lam Centre
for International Communications*

First, I would like to express thanks to our leadership and thanks to all of our colleagues for giving me the opportunity to take part in what I think is a very meaningful and very substantive international consultative workshop. I would like to express my thanks to President Ha, President Liu, Director Guo, Professor Shen and Madam Song Jie and other CUN colleagues whose enthusiastic support and co-operation over the past nine years, as President Ha commented, has allowed our project to further the cause of minority nationality economic, environmental, and social development to the extent that they have so far.

Thanks also to CIDA, to AUCC, and to the Canadian Embassy for their support and co-operation, without which we could not have carried out all of the training, the research projects, the publications, and the distribution of research that have resulted through the co-operative projects. It is a source of satisfaction and pride for both sides.

Thanks also to the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, to the Ministry of Education, the All-China Women's Confederation, and to the leadership in each of our three project sites for their understanding and for the support they have consistently offered for this international co-operation project; and thanks to each of the participants in our project from Hainan, from Guangxi, and from Ningxia for taking the time that they have all taken away from their regular duties to participate in our training and research projects. They are the cadres, the core cadres, of our project, and it is their work and their achievements that have made our project successful so far.

When I want to understand any kind of a complex system or a complex issue, I always start by referring to a scheme for understanding. This is a scheme for understanding complex issues or a complex system.

THE TAO OF DYNAMISM: How Systems Work

Dynamic
Assertive
Explicit
Direct
Positive
Hot

Growing
Active



Growing
Passive

Stable
Regressive
Implicit
Indirect
Negative
Cold

North Americans tend to see systems as ideally dynamic, with just enough stabilising mechanisms to keep them from flying apart into little pieces. People from Asia tend to see systems as ideally stable, with enough dynamism to make them adapt and prosper. Both visions, if implemented properly, can lead to dynamic stability.

I think everyone, our foreign friends included, will recognise this as being a schematic design of two principles: the *Qian* and *Kun*, or the *Yang* and *Yin* principles, and most westerners will understand that this is the source of digital thinking—zero and one. We have had this for a few thousand years now.

Based upon the interaction of zero and one, or *Yin* and *Yang*, if you will, we also know that the world is not so simple as black and white, yes and no, right and wrong, or male and female. It is not that simple, and that's why we have these tadpole-type shapes. It is not half-black, half-white. Complexity is not an either-or situation; it is a both-and situation and also a more-and-less situation. This is not something that is only a Chinese phenomenon. It is not something that is only from the Han nationality, which is the source of Confucianism. It is a notion that is enjoyed amongst all nationalities, and it is not even limited to China. It is one of the cornerstones of great Greek philosophies, the "golden mean", as it is known around the world.

If we want any society to succeed, then that society must provide for all its participating elements: female and male, young and old, minority and majority. If a society fails to empower all of its diverse elements, then they will be less able to contribute to that society, and it will function below its endowed capacity. It is therefore in everyone's interest to see that the female half of all minority nationalities achieve optimal participation at all levels of development activity.

Thanks once again for giving me this opportunity to share my thoughts with you, and to welcome everyone here.

Opening Address

Ms. Susan Winch
Senior Representative of AUCC

On behalf of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC), I would like to congratulate the Central University for Nationalities and Simon Fraser University for organising this timely and important consultative workshop, as part of their joint project entitled "Society, Economy, and the Environment." AUCC is very pleased to be involved in this project, as it is one of eleven university linkage projects that make up the "Special University Linkage Consolidation Program" (SULCP) which is funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and managed by AUCC in conjunction with the Ministry of Education.

This consultative workshop on "The Role of Women and their Contributions to Social, Economic, and Environmental Development" brings together participants from many universities in mainland China and Canada with participants from a wide range of government organisations in China, from the local to the national level.

Exchange of information and ideas among universities, as well as between the university sector and leaders from government organisations, is essential to ensuring that the benefits of a project are long-lasting, and will reach as many people as possible.

Too often, the contributions of women to social and economic development go unrecognised in what remains, to a large extent, a man's world. Failure to fully understand and apply knowledge of the contributions of women, and of the implications of their actions for the daily lives of women and girls, their families and communities, inhibits our efforts to improve the quality of life for people everywhere.

AUCC recognises that universities like CUN and SFU are uniquely positioned to gather data and generate new knowledge about the vast array of social, economic, and environmental factors that combine to determine the living conditions of people representing special groups such as women and minority nationalities. We have witnessed the ability of these universities to use their research findings in their work with government leaders in the development of socially, environmentally, and culturally

appropriate actions to increase the prosperity of these groups. Of course, the results of joint efforts between these universities are continually being passed along to their students who are themselves teachers of very large numbers of individuals in minority areas.

This consultative workshop is an important part of the process of generating, disseminating, and applying knowledge that will lead to long-term benefits for women and men, boys and girls.

Once again, congratulations and thanks to the Central University for Nationalities and Simon Fraser University for organising and leading this event.

On behalf of AUCC, I wish all of you a successful workshop. *Xie xie*. Thank you.