

Nu shu – the women's writing of china

[Sociology](#), [Women](#)



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Nu Shu, also known as the women's writing of China, was a major part of Chinese women's lives throughout the 20th century. Unlike any other writing, it is the only known hidden written language. Women used Nu Shu as a way to escape from the oppressive outside world and enter into a peaceful state of mind. Life was hard enough for women; it's scary to think how hard Nu Shu was probably the most commonly valued thing for women in China during this time period. It was valued so much because it was used to share women's miseries. China was ruled by men, and women were nothing more than housewives and sometime field workers.

What made it so special was that only women knew about it. It was a written language expressed by songs and stories. Any other language besides Chinese was forbidden by Emperors. Women couldn't use any form of education, so it had to be formed in secret. Having been something only women knew, it was an easy way for them to express their hardships and sufferings. Every woman at that time was going through the same thing, so it was seen as the easiest way for women to let out their feelings. Males dominated society completely, and Nu Shu was the only true form of power that women had.

If it had been leaked to the public, not only would it have been banned, but many women would have been sent to jail and killed if found using it.

Women were beaten and abused to the point where a good day in marriage was a day you cried. Marriages were always arranged, and many women didn't even have feelings towards their husbands. They had to put up with the abuse and couldn't complain. At any point in time, a man could tell his

wife what to do and when to do it. Women had no say in the government, their marriage, and in everyday society.

The only time they could speak freely was when writing in Nu Shu. Their only audience willing to listen was other women, and Nu Shu was the only way to get in touch with other women without anyone finding out. Whether or not Nu Shu was good or bad is often debated. I happen to think it was good for many reasons. Women weren't educated in any way. Nu Shu was the closest thing they had to education. With education comes power, and that was exactly what women needed. In a time when men ruled society, power is everything. While it wasn't power that everyone recognized, it helped women have better mindsets.

In a way, it was creating a more equal society for these women. Equal was definitely something the Chinese culture wasn't centered around, but it was something all women strived for one day. It was often believed that Nu Shu taught women to accept their suffering, but I actually think it was the opposite. No women would ever accept that foot binding were okay, or that the beatings from their husbands should be allowed. Instead, they learned how to cope with these struggles. Knowing how to handle yourself in bad times is a very good quality to have.

When thrown a curveball in life, instead of sulking about it, the better thing to do is to take a step back and learn how to deal with it. I think that is something people in Western society do well and in the long run made the Chinese women stronger. Unfortunately, the last living person proficient in Nu Shu died several years ago. I think it's a shame that Nu Shu is closer to

being extinct. While the actual writing itself may have no significance to anyone in today's world, I think a great lesson can be learned from it. It's fascinating how long women were successful in keeping it a secret, and overall made the Chinese women stronger people.