

Banana garden

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Banana Garden Poetry Club Presented By Presented To Lecturer Banana Garden Poetry Club Gu Zhiqiong was the founder of the Banana Garden Poetry Club, although she is not listed formally as a member of the club. The freedom of expression and movement for women was once again constrained in the last quarter of the seventeenth century (Berge, 2008). Even with the restrictions, the Banana Garden Poetry Club members wrote poems to console their husbands, brothers and male relatives who had repeatedly failed exams. Husbands in elite families spent a big part of their lifetime on the road travelling, and that was the reason poems written by most Banana Garden Poetry Club members addressed absent relatives. In most cases, while men were travelling around to attend to their official duties, women were left behind to cater for their in-laws, children and farm activities.

Gu Zhiqiong a member of the banana club used poetry to express her feelings to her absent husband. Despite them being apart for a long time, she missed him and wondered why her travelling husband should not come home. Her beauty was neglected by a husband who had gone to search for fame, but she feared that the search might not be successful. The neglect caused a lot of pain to Gu Zhiqiong, which resulted in weight loss and increase in illness. The stressful moments she was undergoing made her turn to drinking to alleviate the pain. Gu Zhiqiong's belief that the quest for fame for her husband will not be successful showed an aspect weakness in males who at that time were regarded as superiors over females.

Another member of the Banana Garden Poetry Club members was Chai Jingyi. In most of her poetry works, she avoided sections of more stereotypical feminine moods and topics. In her poem titled Huangtiandang:
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On Lady Liang, she showered praises to a lady beating the drum and argued that no one would believe that the person playing the drum was a beautiful woman (Berge, 2008). Despite women's freedom of expression and movement being restricted it is clear that women have the capability of doing best what men could do.

In 1129 during the Huangtiandang battle, Han Shizhong the Song dynasty general inflicted a decisive win over Jurchen Jin dynasty troops. The general's win was mainly attributed to Liang Hongyu, who was his wife. Liang was a former courtesan and tirelessly played the drum, inspiring the Song army to superior efforts. The name of Liang often appeared in poetry in the seventeenth century as an example of devoted loyalty.

Though men's freedom of expression and movement was not restricted like the case in women, some of them did not turn out successful in their endeavors. Quian Fenglun another member of Banana Garden Poetry Club was married to Gu Roupu's grandson Huang Shixu. Gu Roupu was a formidable female poet (Berge, 2008). Her second grandson on several occasions failed his provincial examinations. In addition to that, Feng Xian, who was a member of the Banana Garden Poetry Club, wrote a consolatory poem to her husband after he once again failed his higher examinations. Even with the harsh treatment that women were subjected to, they still loved their husbands and understood the difficult situations they underwent and went ahead to console them through poetry.

Despite Mao Ti's father rejecting her quest to learn poetry from him by claiming that it is not something for her, she secretly studied and wrote poems while her husband was travelling in the whole empire. Though her ambition was to look out and climb high the restrictions could not allow. That

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resulted in sad songs that were full of intense grief. Her poems were later on printed after her death as she wished. People should be treated with equality and given chance to practice any activity that they feel suits them without discriminating in terms of their sex.

Reference

Berge, D. (2008). *The Quest for Gentility in China, Negotiations beyond Gender and Class*,
Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group. London and New York. ISBN 13: 978-0-415-43586-4 (hbk).