



## The Good Women of China: Hidden Voices

*Xinran , Esther Tyldesley (Translator)*

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### **The Good Women of China: Hidden Voices** Xinran , Esther Tyldesley (Translator)

When Deng Xiaoping's efforts to "open up" China took root in the late 1980s, Xinran recognized an invaluable opportunity. As an employee for the state radio system, she had long wanted to help improve the lives of Chinese women. But when she was given clearance to host a radio call-in show, she barely anticipated the enthusiasm it would quickly generate. Operating within the constraints imposed by government censors, "Words on the Night Breeze" sparked a tremendous outpouring, and the hours of tape on her answering machines were soon filled every night. Whether angry or muted, posing questions or simply relating experiences, these anonymous women bore witness to decades of civil strife, and of halting attempts at self-understanding in a painfully restrictive society. In this collection, by turns heartrending and inspiring, Xinran brings us the stories that affected her most, and offers a graphically detailed, altogether unprecedented work of oral history.

### **The Good Women of China: Hidden Voices Details**

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## **From Reader Review The Good Women of China: Hidden Voices for online ebook**

### **Mira Margitta says**

Jos jedna knjiga u kojoj otkrivamo kako je tesko biti zensko u Kini. Djevojke i zene pricaju o zlostavljanju od najranije dobi, okrutnosti od strane najuzih clanova familije. Sta se sve prelomi preko njihovih ledja i sta sve pretre... samo zato sto su se rodile kao zene.

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### **Kavita says**

A collection of different true stories from different women, this book is written with the aim of bringing lost voices of Chinese women to the world. In spite of the emancipation of women due to communism, and in spite of the fact that most Chinese women work in positions equal to that of men, there still exists an enormous gender bias in Chinese society.

This book explores the stories of women during the Cultural Revolution. I had no idea it was so bad! There are many stories of women being sold to higher officers, raped, imprisoned, in many cases, merely for being a woman. There is also a strong gender bias and a preference for sons in the culture which is brought out in many of the stories, and indeed is quite visible in China because of the practices of abandonment or murder of female babies. Many stories are not specific to women, but they are here because it happened to women.

Xinran belongs to a previous generation, and herself has faced many problems, some of which she describes in this book. It is clear that mere financial emancipation is just the first step to gender equality. There is so much more to do, especially with providing choices for women, and to ensure that their needs are being met on a level equal to that of men.

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### **Ivana Books Are Magic says**

The most hearth-breaking stories in this book are those of women that were raped as children. I was somewhat prepared for the descriptions of atrocities committed during Cultural Revolution, and some of the other horrors described in this book but you can never quite prepare yourself for reading about child rape, can you? Perhaps because of that, reading this book reminded me of FDLF cult in USA and its leader Warren Jeffs who was ultimately sentenced for raping 12 year old girls, his 'brides'. I saw a film about life in that cult, and parts of some documentaries. I found it extremely hard to watch the documentaries (I think there was a documentary series). Just knowing about such things as child rape is extremely emotionally draining and upsetting, but seeing the victims with your own eyes or reading their stories makes one feel even worse. This book is more like a documentary than a film. It just throws it all in your face.

It is one thing to read fiction about such events and quite another to read the 'real' accounts. There are many such present day stories, whose horrors are unspeakable. Finding the words to say them must be incredibly hard. Think of the European girl Natasha who was kidnaped and imprisoned for years. When she finally managed to escape, she was the same weight she was when she was imprisoned at 10 years old. Extremely underweight and abused for years, Natasha managed to escape. I was always amazed by her courage and

wondered what gave her such strength. These stories are everywhere. They do not happen only in the East, in Africa or China. They happen in Western and European societies as well. Why is paedophilia so present? Why do we still have so many child marriages, even in so called developed countries? I always feel haunted by the numbers I remember. The number of child and incest marriages in the West is enough to make everyone sick to their stomach. It's a problem that is sadly not limited to a single country, or continent. Reading those parts of the book was as horrible as seeing those FDLP girls with my own eyes and knowing there are so many children still trapped in that cult. They often kick teenage boys out of that cult so they wouldn't get into the way of all these men who want to marry their baby sisters. I watched those boys coming back, trying to save their sisters. It is a very brave thing to do, being raised in a cult and devoting your life to fight against it. The human instinct would be to flee and never look back, yet past will always caught up with us. Thinking about so many little girls 'married' at age of 12 and raped is enough to give anyone nightmares. I've read this book yesterday and needless to say I found it very hard to fall asleep last night.

I just described what the most difficult part of the book was for me, now I'm going to talk a bit more about the book itself. The author of this book Xue Xinran worked as a journalist for many years, and her stories are presumably based on real events. Some people noted that there seem to be many coincidences in the stories, suspecting that some of them might be fabricated or 'polished'. I'm not going to make any accusations, because I know life is stronger than fiction. If the author changed some details, or even made up some stories, that won't really change my opinion of her.

I would say that Xue Xinran is a very brave women. As I was reading the book, I wondered how she was able to hear so many heart-breaking stories and keep her sanity. I think Xinran herself admits that at times she feels overwhelmed. As a host of a popular radio show, Xinran received a staggering amount of intimately sad and heart-breaking letters. A young woman that wrote to Xinran asking for guidance killed herself because Xinran failed to read her letter or answer her in time. It is a very heavy weight to carry.

What I found very interesting is the questions Xinran tried to answer with this book. This is after all a book about Chinese women and the author does reflect on the state of women in the Chinese society. She doesn't go into great length, there is no encompassing study but this is certainly a book that makes one thing. Xinran is an excellent interviewer but she is also very human. I liked how Xinran often let the women tell their stories in their own way, showing a great deal of patience and common sense. The author tells the stories of so many women, and for me personally the story seemed a bit too quick at times. I wanted to know more about these women. What happened to them once the chapter answered? The amount of stories shared felt a bit overwhelming. I felt like they deserved more space. At times, the writing even felt a bit cold. I know that the job Xinran took upon herself was incredibly hard. It is not a job any book can fulfilled. I know it must have been heard hearing all those stories, trying to write them down, give them justice and at the same time talk about the complex topic that is the position of women in Chinese society.

Wars are a terrible things, not just while they last, but in the years that follow. WW2 was so terrible, that I sometimes doubt our society will completely recover from it. Women, as a perhaps more vulnerable part of the society, are often the ones on whose shoulder it all breaks- the years of chaos and social instability. It is important to write about such things, to give women a change to speak. Many of them are being 'strong' for the sake of their families and their sense of duty, and talking care of everyone else women often forget to take care of themselves. That is why writers like Xiran, writers that tell these difficult stories, are so important. I spoke much of the sadness of the stories, and how devastating some of them were, but I should also say that some of them made me hopeful as well. One of the stories that will stay will me is the story of mothers who lost their children and family in a terrible earthquake but have, nevertheless, founded the

courage to open and run an orphanage. They were never free from pain, they never forget what happened to them and what they lost- but they found the strength to take care of others. Women can be so strong, this book testifies to that. Still, the book doesn't seem to be that well rounded up. At times it can feel a bit chaotic and overwhelming, filled with so many stories. Is it the fault of the writing?

As tremendously important as I think this book is, I felt that the writing perhaps lacked something. A bit more warmth perhaps. The Good Women Of China: Hidden Voice is a very humane book, but the writing felt a bit dry at times. Perhaps the author is more a journalist, than a writer. Moreover, Xinran started to open up a bit about her own life and history in the book, but then she just stops. One gets a feeling that Xinran left many things unsaid when it comes to her own personal history. It's not a major fault, though. I would still recommend this book to everyone. It's not an easy read, but it is worth it. I own a copy and I will probably reread it. To conclude, do listen to these hidden voices. We all have so many things hidden in our hearts. I really liked what Xinran at one point in the book says- we all need more understanding.

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### Sori says

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### Janet says

This is one of the most tragic books I have ever read. Story after story of shattered lives - simply by being born female. But I recommend it to all women, so that we don't forget how far the world still needs to go and that we who live more comfortable lives don't stay silent. We MUST speak up for those who are powerless to speak for themselves.

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### Samadrita says

*"At that time in China, I might have gone to prison for writing a book like this. I couldn't risk abandoning my son, or the women who received help and encouragement through my radio programme. In England, the book became possible. It was as if a pen had grown in my heart."*

A stinging indictment of patriarchal violence in China through the ages and the hypocrisy of the Cultural Revolution, a tribute to the destroyed lives of countless women who have been left brutalized by an unjust, barbaric, corrupt system insisting on treating them as mere tools, and a cathartic memoir written by a woman

who should be saluted for her fortitude and determination to give these women a voice despite the towering hurdles she had to overcome.

Few other books have left me feeling so numb and incapacitated with the degree of savagery depicted in them. I only leave readers with a polite request to read this.

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## Larry Bassett says

I am chasing my adopted daughter's heritage by reading books about China, especially as it relates to abandoned and damaged daughters. If you have been reading my reviews for a while, you know that my daughter who is ten years old was abandoned in Aksu, China at the age of 3½ months. We believe that because she had a cleft lip and palate her parents were unable to nourish her so abandoned her in a safe location so someone with more access to medical resources could save her life. She was very malnourished when she was found and, in fact, when we adopted her more than three years later, she was still diagnosed by our doctor as "failure to thrive" due to her very low weight. At the age of 3½ years she was eighteen pounds!

*The Good Women of China* is filled with amazing (and appalling) information and observations. For example:

Oh, poor Xinran. You haven't even got the various categories of women straight. How can you possibly hope to understand men? Let me tell you. When men have been drinking, they come out with a set of definitions for women. Lovers are "swordfish", tasty but with sharp bones, "Personal secretaries" are "carp", the longer you "stew" them, the more flavour they have. Other men's wives are "Japanese puffer fish", trying a mouthful could be the end of you, but risking death is a source of pride. And what about their own wives? "Salt cod."  
Salt cod? Why?  
Because salt cod keeps for a long time. When there is no other food, salt cod is cheap and convenient, and makes a meal with rice...

Blood boiling yet? There is much more to create a rolling boil. You won't believe it. The book has fifteen stories about fifteen different women in China being treated extremely badly. You might wonder if these stories are representative of the Chinese society as a whole. From what I have learned about China these were not rare experiences for women and girls during the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s and 1970s. Their horrid experiences are recalled by women in the 1980s and 1990s and told to Xinran, the author who became a trusted listener as well as recalling her own bad experience as a girl child.

At that time women obeyed the "Three Submissions and the Four Virtues": submission to your father, then your husband and, after his death, your son; the virtues of fidelity, physical charm, propriety in speech and action, diligence in housework. For thousands of years, women had been taught to respect the aged, be dutiful to their husbands, tend the stove and do the needlework, all without setting foot outside the house.

I know from the experience of my adopted daughter that many girls, including babies, have a hard beginning if they survive at all. This is a result of both the one child policy and the overwhelming desire that the first child be a boy.

Many other reviews on GR go into more detail about the stories in *The Good Women of China*. I found the individual stories horrifying but I already knew a good deal about the Cultural Revolution.

During the Cultural Revolution, anyone from a rich family, anyone who had received higher education, was an expert or scholar, had overseas connections or had once worked in the pre-1949 government was categorized as a counter-revolutionary. There were so many political criminals of this kind that the prisons could not contain them. Instead, these intellectuals were banished to remote country areas to labour in the fields.

The stories are individual and therefore more personal than statistics and general recountings of events. Xinran was able to write down and publicize some of the stories she heard once she moved from China to London. In her book she tells about what she heard and what she was able to do while she was a radio broadcaster in China.

Journalists in China had witnessed many shocking and upsetting events. However, in a society where the principles of the Party governed the news, it was very difficult for them to report the true face of what they had seen. Often they were forced to say and write things that they disagreed with.

When I interviewed women who were living in emotionless political marriages, when I saw women struggling amid poverty and hardship who could not even get a bowl of soup or an egg to eat after giving birth, or when I heard women on my telephone answering machines who did not dare speak to anyone about how their husbands beat them, I was frequently unable to help them because of broadcasting regulations. I could only weep for them in private.

The stories are not pleasant and there are not many happy endings. But they expose evils that will only be repeated if nothing is done to change things. Things have changed in China since the end of the Cultural Revolution but many women are subjugated, second class beings. Xinran speaks for them in her books.

*The Good Women of China* delivers an important message to the reader. By telling these stories Xinran exposes a wrong in the world and increases the potential for change. Published in 2002 about the injuries from events twenty-five years before that, Xinran shines a light in the darkness of a past that continues to reach forward into the present.

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## Wanda says

This is a heartbreaking book which I would never have picked up except I was looking for an X author for my *Women Authors A-Z* reading challenge this year. I never know how to rate books like these because it's important to know about the situations in countries other than our own, but I always feel helpless and angry when I know that women are having such frightful difficulties.

I have to bear in mind that this book was published in 2002 originally, the author having moving from China to England in order to be free to do such a thing. A lot can and probably has changed in 16 years, plus many of the stories related in this book are from earlier years yet.

The Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) seems to have disrupted relations between men and women and the nature of family relationships to an extreme. Survival was top of mind for everyone and each did what they had to. Xinran reveals the painful stories told to her by Chinese women—of having children horribly injured,

daughters gang raped, husbands treating them like servants (or livestock), work denied, promotions skipped over, you name it.

As China seems to be heading into another iteration of their authoritarian regime, there will undoubtedly be more issues for women. I hope there is still someone like Xinran to listen to women's voices and to articulate what they are able to (Xinran herself had to walk a fine line so as not to offend the Communist Party).

In the era of the Me Too and Time's Up campaigns here in North America, we have to hope that our sisters on other continents are able to achieve some gains as well.

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## Nicole~ says

Back in Nanjing 1989-1997, Xinran ran a radio program called "**Words of the Night Breeze**," the motive in her words: *"to open a window, a tiny hole, so that people could allow their spirits to cry out and breathe after the gunpowder-laden atmosphere"* [of the Cultural Revolution].

**The Good Women of China: Hidden Voices** is a compilation of 14 life stories taken from personal interviews of some of these 'survivors' - women whose lives were agonizingly destroyed, their families ripped to shreds, their existences pummeled into chaotic dust. For possibly the first time, these isolated women, of varying backgrounds and economic conditions, have been given a voice through Xinran. The stories are powerful, gripping, anguished accounts of inhumane treatment, sexual exploitation, torture, rape, hunger, death - direct fallout of the Cultural Revolution.

Xinran's compassion for these women inspired her to recount her mother's story and that of her own destroyed childhood when, at age seven, she witnessed the Red Guards march into her home and burn all her family possessions, including cutting off her plaits and throwing them into the fire: *"From now on, you are forbidden to tie your hair back with ribbons. That is an imperialist hairstyle!"* Her parents were imprisoned and she and her brother were made to suffer daily humiliations, labeled as 'polluters' of the revolution.

These stories, as overwhelmingly tragic as they are, are written in Xinran's exceptionally poetic prose, highlighting their deeply inspiring qualities, the unbreakable strength of maternal love and the everlasting endurance of the human spirit.

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## Nikki says

Xinran was the presenter of a radio show in China, during which she would ask women to call her and tell her about themselves. Over the years, she gathered many stories of Chinese women, and this book contains fifteen of them, including her own. It's a diverse collection of stories, including the stories of a lesbian woman, of loveless forced marriages, of hopeless love stories, of women who were raped as children...

They're eye-opening, saddening, horrifying. Xinran's matter of fact tone -- though no doubt partly due to the translation -- doesn't do anything to hide that. I wouldn't say that any story in here is actually a happy one.

Worth reading, though, yes. If you want to learn about Chinese women through the eyes of a Chinese woman, *The Good Women of China* will definitely help, while at the same time it doesn't dump information on you in big blobs -- the idea is to give these women of China a voice, really, not to educate the West.

Xinran doesn't just speak of other women, and her own story runs through it all, with her own thoughts and reactions contextualising the stories.

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## **Jamie says**

Wow, scrolling down the comments on this book I realized I'm the first guy to review this. Umm, here goes.

Continuing my year of China reading I casually picked this up at my aunt's house but pretty soon found myself absolutely glued to it. I've read a few memoirs of modern China and the Cultural Revolution, many of which contained stories of shocking cruelty and incredible endurance, but none have affected me quite as much as the stories compiled in this book. The images are just stunning: a girl repeatedly sexually abused by her father recovers in a hospital and in incredible tenderness begins to keep the flies around her bed as pets. In the aftermath of an earthquake a girl is trapped two stories in the air between two freestanding walls, rescue workers unable to free her, her mother comforting her as she dies.

Also I am just bowled over by the genius with which these stories were edited into a series of chapters that seamlessly flow from one to the next, and the way each story is both incredibly specific but also echoes larger themes. I thought of comparing it to Studs Turkel's books (which I love) but I think this is edited even more effectively and skillfully than Studs Turkel. One of the best books I've read this year.

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## **Sidharth Vardhan says**

Have you ever seen a stranger or on a bus and wondered what kind of past they have had? This is a book voicing the fates of faces that are lost in crowds.

Xinran hosted a radio call-in show on feminist issues, "Words on the Night Breeze" from 1989 to 1997 which was hugely popular in China. and which brought forth the stories of women from different sections of society, bringing the ugly face of communist China. Almost all stories contain elements of horrible violence, sexual assault, and social suppression and are greatly depressing. Moreover, many of incidences of violence are met out to them when they were children. The problems faced by the women take many forms - rape cases, kidnapping of girls for forced marriage because village lacks daughter due to female foeticide, bullying of children because their parents are Japanese or use foreign goods - sometimes to extent of turning them mentally unstable, people so poor that all sisters of a family shared a single dress which they wore in turns, since all the little clothing the family went to sons.

The stories themselves are worth reading as they draw a kind of social history of Maoist China - with its government control on media, denial of fundamental rights, poverty etc besides doing the service to victims of a ridiculous patriarchy. The patriarchy and poverty creates such ugly forms everywhere in East, but the problems arising out of communism are of unique form,

The trouble is they need a better writer to present them. Xinran keeps on using the phrase 'Chinese women' repeatedly to the point that you would believe that they were some sort of exotic animal species or that she herself wasn't one of them. I mean I know it is your buzzword, but come on, Initially when she kept talking about wanting to know Chinese women, I thought she might have done her studies outside China and so knew little about her country, but no, she had always lived in China. The repeated use of national adjective 'Chinese' instead of using something like 'our women' or 'women in our country' or simply 'women' leaves

one with the feeling that the book is written for a foreign audience. And in the last chapter, Xinran confirms it. I think if you want to write about problems of a country, you should assume your primary audience to be people of that country. I am no fan of this foreign reporting thing. And so it is four stars, instead of five stars. There are some other issues too.

Some of the stories would have left a more powerful impact on the reader if Xinran had let the victims finish their story without frequently breaking in to remind how emotional she is as listens to them - most journalists do let people speak for themselves.

It is a translation so, may be, the ridiculously simple language can be forgiven.

There are too many coincidences in these stories which take away their credibility - to take an example, Xinran is told by her father about a couple from his college who were separated by revolution, and she is then told about an unknown woman staying at a hotel who later turns out to be the woman her father talked about.

A woman falls in love for Xinran and later thinks that she is homosexual since she was raised like a man or since she had come to hate men, an observation which she generalises to all homosexual women. Maybe excusable in a country where even married women do not understand sex properly.

Also, it is part biography so she writes about her own childhood sufferings and that of her parents - okay but she must also tell you about office politics, how everyone envies her and so on.

Some of these are minor annoyances but they take the focus away from worthwhile things. Definitely worth reading if you are after knowledge rather than mere reading experience.

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## Repellent Boy says

Estoy absolutamente maravillado y horrorizado a partes iguales con este libro. Maravillado porque es de los mejores libros que he leído nunca. Horrorizado por las barbaridades que es capaz de hacer el hombre. Barbaridades que en la mayoría de los casos se cometen contra las mujeres.

La historia real es narrada por Xue Xinran, la propia escritora. Xinran era una locutora de radio, que a raíz de recibir la carta de una oyente con su propia experiencia en la vida, decide interesarse en la vida de las mujeres chinas. Y descubre la falta de capacidad para expresarse sobre sus intereses, sus deseos o incluso su sexualidad. En definitiva, sobre su imposibilidad de decisión sobre su vida. Nos cuenta mediante las vivencias de otras mujeres como llegó a convertirse en la mujer que es hoy. A través de las diferentes vidas de estas mujeres nos adentramos en los estragos que ha causado la Revolución Cultural en China. Aunque, como algún que otro capítulo muestra, esta revolución era solo la excusa de usar ese poder para facilitar ese maltrato y abuso a las mujeres. El hombre por naturaleza siente superioridad sobre la mujer y es algo que solo cura la educación y la cultura. Algo contra lo que luchaba esta revolución.

Me ha costado mucho leer este libro, porque ha sido realmente duro. No entraré en detalles de la historias, porque ha sido muy perturbador. Eso sí, este es un libro de lectura obligatoria. Se lo recomendaría a todas las mujeres, pero sobre todo a los hombres, para que fuesen concientes de lo que pueden llegar a ser y el error que implica que muchos, hoy en día, digan a boca abierta que ya no hay desigualdad, que el feminismo no es necesario y otras idioteces similares.

Para mí, desde ya, Xinran se convierte en un icono feminista imprescindible.

## Netts says

The stories are, as you would expect, fascinating and harrowing. The writing on the other hand is unforgivably juvenile. These women deserved better. But let's think for a moment about the type of person who would be allowed to become a journalist for state media in a repressive dictatorship. Logically, their selection would have little to do with any storytelling talent. Instead, it would hinge on being the type of conformist able to swallow and parrot propaganda without any intellectual analysis. The author tries hard to talk the reader into believing she's an actual journalist but her incompetence (or, if we're being kind, naive bumbling) is painfully apparent. Example: she spends several days with a woman in a hotel, only to realize AFTERWARDS that she was someone whom she was actively searching for. This in a country where you absolutely cannot check into a hotel anonymously. It never occurred to this "journalist" to get the woman's name from the front desk. This was not an exception. I had time and time again the same "how can you be such an idiot?!" reaction to her lack of research.

And then there's the writing style, which manages to be simultaneously sterile and cloying. ALL the supposed first person quotes sound exactly the same. Maybe they're not fabricated. It's possible all these women tell their stories in exactly the same way. Or maybe the nuances get lost in the translation. But something is definitely off. Having recently read a couple of good books dealing with first person accounts of misery and oppression (ex. Behind the Beautiful Forevers - Life Death and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity and Nothing to Envy - Ordinary Lives in North Korea) throws into stark contrast how bad this one is. I found this really infuriating because these are important stories and they deserve a much more impactful telling.

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## Dorothea says

My long-held belief that the roots of extreme sexual repression can be traced to Judea-Christian influences has unraveled completely in the first 10 pages of this book. In George Orwell's *1984* it was obvious that his dystopia was taken directly from Soviet Russia, but I never understood where Orwell was getting his images of sexual repression and taboos against romantic love. Wherever it came from it was also present in China.

The stories of Chinese women collected in this book will break your heart and make you grateful for *any* freedom you have, even if it's just the freedom to eat an egg (without first having to bear a son) or to use feminine hygiene products that don't shred your skin. This book has stirred in me the desire to read more about China, especially the period preceding and during the Cultural Revolution. It's hard to believe that I have walked on this earth during a time when women in China were imprisoned for being lesbian or even co-habiting with a man outside of marriage.

With the last three books I've read I have come to appreciate some of the redeeming qualities of my own country. America is wrong in a lot of ways but at least we can fly a kite here, at least we can live a life independent of a man, own property, get a divorce if we need to and take a lesbian lover without having to worry about going to prison for it....I wonder how long it will last?

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## Nanny SA says

Buku ini adalah buku kedua karya Xinran yang saya baca, buku pertamanya adalah :Sky Burial: An Epic Love Story of Tibet Sky Burial . Keduanya menceritakan tentang kekuatan, ketabahan dan ketangguhan wanita Cina dari sisi (cerita) yang berbeda.

Pada tahun 1980-an, Deng Xiaoping mulai berusaha untuk 'membuka' Cina, pada masa itulah diakhir 1980-an Xinran mendapat pekerjaan sebagai penyiar radio negara dan mendapat izin untuk memandu acara 'show telepon radio' yang beroperasi di dalam batasan sensor pemerintah, dengan tujuan untuk membantu kehidupan wanita Cina, program ini diberi nama 'Kata-kata Dalam Hembusa Angin Malam'. Xinran tidak hanya menunggu telepon yang datang tapi juga mengunjungi tempat-tempat, lorong-lorong dan daerah terpencil agar bisa mendapat berita/cerita yang autentik dari sumbernya. Acara ini disambut antusias oleh masyarakat, hal-hal yang selama ini hanya menjadi kisah-kisah rahasia yang terpendam seperti mendapat saluran yang tepat. Banyak kisah para wanita Cina yang menyayat hati, di luar nalar manusia, atau bahkan membangkitkan ilham dan kekaguman.

Ada lebih kurang 15 cerita mengenai wanita-wanita Cina yang diungkapkan di sini, beberapa diantaranya :

*- Perjalananku Menuju Kisah-kisah Wanita Cina,*

*Ada seorang pemuda yang menelpon Xinran dan mengatakan bahwa di kampungnya ada seorang pria tua yang membeli seorang gadis muda yang mungkin korban penculikan. (Hal seperti itu kerap terjadi di sana) Pria tsb memperistri sang gadis muda, tapi karena takut istrinya kabur maka dia mengikatkan rantai besi ke tubuh si wanita yang mengakibatkan pinggangnya luka-luka akibat gesekan rantai dan darah telah merembes kebajunya. Ketika Xinran berniat membantu dan melapor ke Biro keamanan Publik Lokal, polisi di sana mengatakan bahwa hal itu biasa terjadi dan ikut campur dalam persoalan ini adalah sia-sia. Menurut mereka di desa : 'langitnya tinggi dan kaisar berada jauh di sana ' artinya hukum tidak mempunyai kekuatan di sana. Penduduk/petani hanya takut kepada pihak berwenang local yang mengendalikan suplai pupuk, pestisida, dan keperluan pertanian mereka. Memang akhirnya Xinran dapat membebaskan wanita itu dengan bantuan pimpinan depot pertanian desa. Ketika akhirnya Xinran membawa wanita itu pergi kepala desa harus mengosongkan jalan agar bisa melewati penduduk yang marah dan mengutuk rombongan Xinran.*

*-Wanita Bukit Teriakan*

*Thn. 1996 Xinran ditugaskan ke daerah barat Xi'an di Cina Tengah perjalanan panjang ke dataran tinggi kering dan berdebu dengan rumah-rumah gua di sisi bukit, tidak ada tanda air yang mengalir atau tumbuhan hijau. Daerah termiskin yang pernah dilihatnya dimana air merupakan hal yang sangat sangat berharga. Bukit Teriakan terletak di lajur tanah di mana padang pasir melanggar batas dataran tinggi kekuningan. Sepanjang tahun angin berhembus, di tengah badai pasir yang menghalangi penglihatan penduduk yang bekerja keras di atas bukit harus berteriak untuk berkomunikasi mungkin inilah latar belakang nama tempat tersebut.*

*Tempat ini benar-benar tertutup dari dunia modern mereka tinggal di rumah gua yang kecil dan rendah, penduduknya sekitar 20 keluarga.*

*Para wanita dihargai hanya dari kegunaan mereka sebagai alat reproduksi, mereka adalah 'benda' perdagangan paling berharga. Para pria sering menukar 2 atau 3 anak gadis mereka dengan seorang istri dari desa lain, pada gilirannya wanita yang kemudian menjadi ibu ini harus merelakan pula kelak putrinya ditukar. Apabila satu keluarga miskin yang terdiri dari adik- kakak laki-laki tanpa memiliki saudara wanita untuk ditukar maka mereka membeli seorang istri bersama 'digunakan' untuk melanjutkan keturunan. Dengan demikian mereka mendapat dua keuntungan, karena siang hari si istri mengurus keperluan rumah tangga termasuk mengambil air dari tempat yang letaknya di bukit lain yang ditempuh selama 2 jam perjalanan dengan memikul ember, dan malam hari mereka bergiliran menikmati tubuh si wanita. Tidak ada rasa kasih sayang terhadap istri bagi mereka keberadaan wanita dibenarkan oleh kegunaan mereka. Ketika Xinran disuguhi Mo roti datar yang kasar (makanan istimewa mereka), dia diberitahu bahwa hanya para petani pria yang berhak memakannya, sedangkan para wanita dan anak-anak hanya makan bubur gandum encer sepanjang tahun sehingga mereka terbiasa merasa lapar. Makanan kehormatan dan suguhan*

terbesar bagi wanita adalah semangkuk telur dengan gula dan air panas yang diberikan ketika mereka melahirkan seorang **bayi laki-laki**. Inilah prestasi tertinggi buat wanita.

Xinran menyadari suatu fenomena aneh di tempat ini yaitu ketika para wanita mencapai masa remaja atau sebayanya, cara berjalan mereka mendadak menjadi sangat aneh. Mereka mulai berjalan dengan kedua kaki terentang lebar, berayun-ayun seperti busur setiap melangkah. Akhirnya Xinran menemukan jawabannya, ada 2 penyebab yang mengakibatkan para wanita berjalan seperti itu ( --saya ingin mengungkapkannya di sini tetapi untuk menuliskannya kembali saya merasa pedih dan ngilu). Secara garis besar penyebabnya karena penanganan ketika masa menstruasi, mengandung & melahirkan .....

Yang paling mencengangkan...Xinran mengatakan bahwa dari ratusan wanita Cina yang diajak bicara selama hampir sepuluh tahun bergelut di bidang penyiaran dan jurnalisme para wanita Bukit Teriakan inilah satu-satunya wanita yang memberitahukan bahwa.. mereka bahagia.

Ternyata banyak alasan mendiskriminasi kaum wanita, di beberapa tempat ada diskriminasi mengatasnamakan agama, di Cina diskriminasi wanita dilakukan atas nama adat kebiasaan dan juga ideologi...

Masih selalu terngiang di telinga : surga di bawah telapak kaki ibu

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## H?i Y?n says

#2018PopsugarReadingChallenge

29. A book about feminism

M?t góc nhìn khác v? l?ch s? Trung Qu?c mà tr??c gi? tôi ch?ng h? bi?t ??n. Tôi ch?ng th? hình dung ???c nh?ng ng??i ph? n? Trung Qu?c ?ã ph?i kh? s? ??n ng?n nào ?? ???c tr? nên bình ??ng nh? ngày hôm nay. T?ng câu truy?n, t?ng m?nh ??i ??u th?m ??m n??c m?t b?i nh?ng ?au th??ng tang tóc trong th?i kì Cách m?ng v?n hoá. Ai có th? ng? nh?ng con ng??i H?ng v? bình ??i di?n cho chính ??ng l?i có th? làm nh?ng hành ??ng không có tính ng??i nh? v?y. Tôi t? h?i bao nhiêu ng??i ph? n? ?ã b? c??ng b?c tàn nh?n, m?t s? ng??i b? bu?c ph?i phát ?iên vì không ch?u n?i ???c s? tàn b?o, h? b? c??ng b?c b?i chính nh?ng cha, nh?ng anh c?a mình nh? H?ng Tuy?t hay b? c??ng hi?p t?p th? ??n phát ?iên phát d?i nh? Th?ch Lâm. Dù không th? hi?u ???c h?t nh?ng n?i ?au mà h? ph?i ch?u ??ng, nh?ng m?i khi ??c xong m?i câu chuy?n, tôi ??u ph?i d?ng l?i vì tính ?au th??ng và tàn nh?n c?a nó.

Trung Qu?c th?i ?ó ??y r?y nh?ng b?t công ??i v?i thân ph?n ng??i ph? n?. Có nh?ng ng??i b? s?p ??t nh?ng cu?c hôn nhân ép bu?c n?i mà ch?ng h? có h?nh phúc, nh?ng ng??i v?, ng??i m? ch? là công c? ?? ti?n lên c?a ng??i ?àn ông. Có nh?ng cô gái b? c??ng hi?p ngay t? khi còn nh? nh? Hoa Nhi b?i nh?ng ng??i H?ng v? quân trong cái g?i là nhóm h?c t?p. Có nh?ng ng??i b? bu?c t?i ph?n cách m?ng và ph?i s?ng kh? c?c su?t bao nhiêu n?m không k? xi?t. Và c?ng có nh?ng bà m? kiên c??ng v??t qua n?i ?au m?t mát sau tr?n ??ng ??t kinh hoàng ? ???ng S?n ?? xây d?ng lên m?t tr?i tr? tình th??ng.

Tôi th?t không th? t??ng t??ng ???c nh?ng câu chuy?n ?ó là th?c, nh?ng m?nh ??i ?ó và hàng tr?m m?nh ??i b? th??ng c?a nh?ng ng??i ph? n? Trung Hoa khác.

H? th?t s? là nh?ng H?o n? Trung Hoa.

P/s: Sau bao nhiêu câu truy?n tôi ?ã ??c qua, r?t cu?c tôi v?n ch?ng hi?u tình yêu là gì và li?u có t?n t?i tình yêu ?ích th?c nh? v?n ch??ng v?n mô t?? Li?u có t?n t?i câu truy?n nh? c?a cô T?nh Di và C? ??i th?t hay không?

## Irene says

37% -- Sad stories. Well -written though.

2/3 of the way through. Beautiful. I love memoirs and this is very unique because she retells the stories of real people...real women who called her line when she hosted her radio show years ago.

The Women of Shouting Hill - wow.

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## Nhi Nguyen says

Kh?ng khi?p, bàng hoàng, ám ?nh... Hân Nhiên ?ã dùng vai trò c?a m?t nhà báo ?? vén b?c màn n?ng tính truy?n th?ng, th? c?u v?n luôn ph? lên ??u nh?ng ng??i ph? n? Trung Qu?c, thông qua nh?ng m?u chuy?n ?au lòng v? thân ph?n nh?ng ng??i "h?o n? Trung Hoa" mà bà ?ã nh?t nh?nh t? ch??ng trình radio ?êm khuya *Khinh Phong D? Tho?i*" c?a bà. Thân ph?n nh?ng ng??i ph? n? ?y, quy?n t? do l?a ch?n, quy?n m?u c?u h?nh phúc,... t?t c? ??u b? gi?m ??p bên d??i nh?ng b?c t??ng quan ni?m th?i phong ki?n v? vai trò và ??a v? c?a ph? n? trong xã h?i, bên d??i cái "tam tòng t? ??c" mà nhi?u khi tôi ch? mu?n nó cùng cái k? ?ã ?? x??ng ra nó ?i ch?t h?t ?i!!! Ai cho ?àn ông cái quy?n quy?t ??nh ph? n? chúng tôi là ai, ph?i tr? thành ng??i nh? th? nào, thành cái gì ?? ph?c v? cho cu?c s?ng c?a các ng??i????

Khi ph? n? ch? ???c xem nh? là m?t c? máy ??, m?t th? ?? v?t s? h?u mà ?àn ông *dùng* ?? th?a mãn nhu c?u sinh lý c?a h?, thì nh?ng bi k?ch ?au lòng ?ã và s? luôn x?y ra. R?i còn ?ó cu?c Cách M?ng V?n Hóa khét tí?ng do Ch? t?ch Mao Tr?ch ?ông kh?i x??ng, cái cu?c cách m?ng ?ã gián ti?p t??c ?i c?a ph? n? quy?n ???c tìm hi?u và tr?i nghi?m b?n n?ng gi?i tính và cái ??p c?a tình d?c. T?t c? nh?ng gì tôi nhìn th?y ? cu?c Cách M?ng V?n Hóa t?m l?m ?ó chính là vi?c ph? n? có con ngoài giá thú b? coi là ph?m pháp, tri th?c thì b? ?ánh ??ng v?i l? t? s?n bán n??c, và m?t m?i liên h? nh? nhoi v?i chính quy?n c? ho?c các n??c t? b?n khác c?ng có th? d? dàng ??a gia ?ình b?n vào vòng lao lý.

Ch?a h?t, cái cu?c Cách M?ng V?n Hóa ?ó còn nh? nh?p và t?m l?m ??n cái m?c, nó bi?n thành cái ??ng ch?a ch?p nh?ng tên ?u dâm, thành n?m m? chôn vùi tu?i xuân, t??ng lai và h?nh phúc c?a nh?ng cô bé 18 tu?i (?ã th?y xót l?m r?i), th?m chí còn có c? nh?ng ??a tr? ch? m?i 11, 12 tu?i, c? th? v?n ch?a phát tri?n ?? ??y. L?y danh ngh?a "c?ng hi?n cho cách m?ng, cho ??ng", cái cu?c cách m?ng l?y tên V?n Hóa ?ó ??a ng??i ph? n? tr? v? th?i Trung c?, ép bu?c h? tr? thành nh?ng trinh n? b? hi?n t? cho d?c v?ng ??i b?i c?a nh?ng tên ?àn ông mang cái mác H?ng V? Binh.

Bao nhiêu ngôn t? c?ng không th? nào giúp tôi miêu t? h?t ???c cái s? kinh hoàng kh?ng khi?p c?a nh?ng gì tôi ?ã ??c. Ch? có nh?ng gi?t n??c m?t dâng trào m?i có th? ph?n nào ph?n ánh cái ?au ??n không th? nào quên mà nh?ng "h?o n? Trung Hoa" ?ã ph?i tr?i qua. Tôi khóc vì xót xa cho nh?ng m?i tình ??p vì s? b?t ?n c?a chính tr? mà ph?i d? dang trong tí?c nu?i. Tôi khóc vì t?c ??n ngh?n h?ng cho nh?ng ng??i ph? n? l?n lên trong th?i k? ?y, nh?ng con ng??i ph?i tr? thành v? bé b?t ??c d? theo yêu c?u c?a ??ng, nh?ng cô bé b? c??ng b?c t?p th?, nh?ng ng??i v? b? ch?ng mình b?o hành. V?y mà b?t ch?p t?t c?, b?t ch?p nh?ng m?t mát, nh?ng ký ?c kinh hoàng, nh?ng v?t s?o trên c? tâm h?n l?n c? th?, r?t nhi?u trong s? h? v?n g?ng g??ng tí?p t?c s?ng, v?n g?ng g??ng v??t qua n?i ?au... Qu? là m?t ?i?u k? đi?u. Nh?ng là m?t ?i?u k? đi?u không có ánh sáng lung linh c?a h?nh phúc...

