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Chinese Cultural Studies:

Fu Xuan

Woman (c. 3rd Cent. CE)

from Arthur Waley, *Chinese Poems*, (New York: 1946), pp 84-85, repr in Albert M. Craig, et al, *The Heritage of World Civilizations*, 2d ed., (New York: Macmillan, 1990), p. 217

How sad it is to be a woman!!  
Nothing on earth is held so cheap.  
Boy stand leaning at the door  
Like Gods fallen out of Heaven.  
Their hearts brave the Four Oceans,  
The wind and dust of a thousand miles.  
No one is glad when a girl is born:  
By her the family sets no store.  
When she grows up, she hides in her room  
Afraid to look at a man in the face.  
No one cries when she leaves her home --  
Sudden as clouds when the rain stops.  
She bows her head and composes her face,  
Her teeth are pressed on her red lips:  
She bows and kneels countless times.  
She must humble herself even to the servants.  
His love is distant as the stars in Heaven,  
Yet the sunflower bends towards the sun.  
Their hearts are more sundered than water and fire--  
A hundred evils are heaped upon her.  
Her face will follow the years changes:  
Her lord will find new pleasures.  
They that were once like the substance and shadow  
Are now as far from Hu as from Ch'in [two distant places]  
Yet Hu and Ch'in shall sooner meet  
That they whose parting is like Ts'an and Ch'en [two stars]