

## **CHAPTER III**

### **ANALYSIS**

In this chapter, the writer will provide and develop an analysis toward the novel based on the statement of problems in the first chapter. The first section of the analysis will consist of the explanation of the favourable and unfavourable forces dealt by the main character in her process of making decision to follow new ways of her husband. The writer emphasizes the forces come from the influences of people surround her, for instance her parents, her husband, and his parents. The analysis of the second section provides the information of the impacts of her action upon the main character.

#### **A. The Forces**

##### **A. 1. Favourable forces**

For woman, particularly when she lives in the time of which there is no space to express herself, outside forces during her process of making decision are extremely needed. Forces or supports can be gained from many aspects, such as parents, husband, friends, etc.

##### **A.1. 1 Yang Kwei-lan's mother**

Thus with Yang Kwei-lan, who is reared in such circumstance where the family and society are surrounded with traditional custom and philosophy, she needs some forces in order to make decision. Her traditional custom and philosophy do not give women chances to learn and to express themselves because they are best in home for serving the family member. The reason of this

situation was best represented by her mother, when her mother says, "...learning has never accompanied beauty in women" (Buck 9). It is because Chinese custom put the physical beauty of Chinese woman is above everything more than woman's cleverness or skill. In addition, the beauty of Chinese woman is valued in her submission toward her husband, the in-laws, and the ways she please her husband.

When Yang Kwei-lan lives together with her husband, it means that the two different cultures meet each other, since she represents rigid Chinese traditions while he (Yang Kwei-lan's husband) represents more modern and western beliefs. In order to hold her husband's heart, hence, she has to change herself and it is not simply easy. She needs times to be able to get along and gradually to open herself to the new things taught by her husband. Therefore, when Yang Kwei-lan decides to follow her husband's ways, indeed, forces or supports are needed. And the first support essentially comes from his mother.

Her mother is described as a woman who seldom to speak, has strong personality and loyal to husband and family. She is called as the First Lady because she is the first wife of Kwei-lan's father whose character is "altogether of old China" (80). She holds on the traditional custom and philosophy firmly. She teaches her daughter in such ways with the result that her daughter will not do anything, which brings shame upon her husband particularly the in-laws. She emphasizes Kwei-lan that, as a wife, her duty is to "please her husband" (42) because it is the only way for a woman in the world. Hence, when she finds out Kwei-lan is in trouble situation of getting along herself to his life as well as of

satisfying her husband, she, furthermore, suggests Kwei-lan to follow her husband's will, begins with unbinding her feet (42). In fact, it is a quite difficult decision whereas, for years, foot binding or having small 'lily' feet is a symbol of proud for a high-class woman at that time, as explained in chapter 2, page 25.

It is because of the process of unbinding one's feet is not just considered as a process of releasing the bandages of feet, but it has deeper meaning. It can be regarded as releasing the symbols, which attaches to women at that time and therefore, by unbinding the feet, it can be regarded as an 'opposition' not just toward her husband and mother in-law but also toward society and custom. Women with bound feet are fit to the symbol of suffering and of obeying their husband as well as the in-laws because bound feet prevent them from 'wandering' for the reason that women with bound feet are scarcely to walk, since it is very painful even for going a short distance.

It is understandable for Kwei-lan when she says, "Indeed, the unbinding process was almost as painful as the binding had been" (50). Kwei-lan frightens that in the eye of her husband and her mother in-law, she is not regarded as an obedient woman because she unbind her feet. Another reason is, that the feet which has already accustomed to constriction, then by releasing the bandages, it gradually stretches a little and the blood begins to circulate (50) and for Kwei-lan, it hurts her feet.

There were times in the day when I tore at the bandages to unfasten them and bind them more tightly to ease me; and then the thought of my husband and that he would know at night,

made me replace them with trembling hands. The only slight respite I could get was to sit on my feet and rock back and forth (50).

Yet, it seems contradictory because although Kwei-lan's mother represents an old Chinese woman, nevertheless she still helps her daughter by giving Kwei-lan permission to unbind her feet. In fact, for Kwei-lan, her mother's permission instantly encourages her to unbind her feet to follow her husband's will. In addition, this unbind process, gives good result since her husband is the first person who asks Kwei-lan to unbind her feet because it is "unhealthful for the whole body" (34) but more important is "a protest against an old and wicked thing" (50). It is because, as referred to page 25, the practice of foot binding is merely to fulfil the desire of a prince toward his concubine in the past time and not to aim at any particular purposes.

Yang Kwei-lan's years of suffering of foot binding are meaningless in the eye of her husband. Yang Kwei-lan wish to please her husband in an old manner is categorized useless and therefore, Kwei-lan feels sad. She said, "He was making useless all the sacrifice, and even demanding a new sacrifice" (49). The word "a new sacrifice" (49) means that her action, later, will bring impacts toward herself particularly toward her relationship with her family and her husband's family. She has to change herself to follow his ways, which is West ways that is different to her Chinese ways. In addition, it is uneasy since Yang Kwei-lan knows nothing about the foreigners and their ways. Nevertheless, since

it is part of a woman's duty to 'please her husband', she, moreover, gradually changes herself, of course, with the helps of her husband.

### **A.1. 2 Yang Kwei-lan's husband**

Another support comes from Kwei-lan's husband. He is a Chinese gentleman and his family name is K'ung, who also comes from a wealthy family. He has been studying medicine in America for twelve years. He is six years older than she is. He teaches Yang Kwei-lan Western knowledge and science both through books and manners. For instance, he let her to precede him when entering the room (51) or, when he meets someone, he takes one's hands and shakes it up and down, which it is "peculiar" for her (47), while the Chinese people needs to bow their head, particularly before elders or anyone whom respected. Though the foreign male serves the female first, it does not mean that the male are inferior to their female. In his opinion, it is grounded in an old system of courtesy, which began in ancient times (51).

He observes that old Chinese custom put his wife into an unpleasant condition because she is considered as 'servant' for him, especially for his mother for the reason that Chinese women is "prepared to subject" (26) herself to their mother in-law in all things, as explained in page 24. As the result, he takes her to move away from his ancestral home and establish a new household, because he does not want to "have his wife a servant" (25) in his original home and do the "servant's works" (26). They live in a house of Western style but for Yang Kwei-lan it is "hideous" (29) since its form is different with her original house.

The house of Chinese rich family is very large with walls surrounded it. The walls is merely for “privacy” (102) because “it would not be fitting for any vegetable vendor or passing candy seller to peer” (102) at the family activities. Chinese male and female are not living together but they get separated in places called men’s apartment and women’s apartment. When a Chinese boy reaches at the age of nine, he should leave the women’s apartment and join to the men’s apartment where his father and the male heads live. There are courtyards with pool, the family rooms, and the “stately guest hall” (20).

The house with western style is different for “it has no courtyard” (27). In the new house, there is dining room and main room he calls “parlour” (28). The guest hall of western style house is not as big as the guest hall in her original home. She says, “There is only a tiny square hall from which the other rooms open, and from which a stair rises swiftly up” (27-28). Climbing the stairs is a new thing for her since in her original house there are no stairs and “the steepness”(28) of the stairs to which her feet are not accustomed.

The position of women according to the old custom is inferior to the men, as referred to page 24. It is because Chinese people consider males are more valuable than the females. The males with their energy, power, and strength can do something worth, such as working, so that they can earn some money for their family, while females are better when they are at home, to serve their husband and the in-laws. Women are regarded well, when they are able to please and obey their husband.

Thus, the word “equal” (23), which referred to the relation of husband and wife mentioned by him since the first day of their marriage, arises astonishment and surprise within her, since Chinese women are hardly equal to their men and what is the purpose of being equal (23). It is because Chinese parents had already taught their daughters from early age that women should not set their will against the men (72). Represented by Kwei-lan’s mother, who said, “A women before men should maintain a flower-like silence and should withdraw herself at the earliest moment that is possible without confusion” (6) and “...set his thoughts upon your value” (9). Therefore, with such thinking, Chinese women do not have courage to disobey their husband, furthermore, to think that they are equal to their husband. She says, “I did not at any time dream of being on an equality...It was not necessary” (73). It is less important, for Chinese women, to have equal position to their men because the important thing for Chinese women at that time if they can please the men by being submissive and they will be called as good women or good wives.

The old custom has restrained the freedom of Chinese women to follow their wish and for Kwei-lan’s husband, this custom is not good for women since they, as human, also have rights to express themselves as well as the men do. For example, about marriage among Chinese people. Chinese women, as well as the men, do not have any chances and right to choose which man to become their husband, since from early age they have been betrothed, as referred to page 22.

**If he did not tell me what to do, then who would? Was he not my master by law? No one had forced me to marry him—what else could I do if I did not marry? And how could I marry except as my parents arranged it? Whom could I marry if not the man to whom I had been betrothed all my life? It was all according to our custom. I did not see wherein lay any force (23).**

**Kwei-lan words give us clear description on how much she is very dependent upon him. During the marriage days, no one has the privileges to tell Chinese woman what she is going to do but their husband only, since Chinese custom put Chinese man as the master of woman and hence, Chinese woman has to follow her husband commands. Chinese woman, when she becomes maiden, her parents do not prepared her as to be ‘somebody’, but she has been prepared well merely as a wife, all according to Chinese custom.**

**Kwei-lan shortly knows that the impact of the custom also creates a great gap between men and women. Chinese men, sometimes, feel “so separate” (87) because Chinese women “are reserved and demure. They revealed nothing” (87). It is because Chinese parents teach their daughter to speak before their husband “with eyes and expression but without words” (9) and to be submissive “as a flower submits to sun and rain alike” (8). Furthermore, the revealing of emotional feeling between husband and wife is regarded privacy, as explained in page 26. Truly, it is quite difficult situation for Chinese men and ‘the silence’ of their wives, apparently, puts them into a “baffled” (90) situation and feeling. The**

same situation occurred to him at the time of their marriage. She answered him nothing when he tried to speak to her (6) but only to wait his command to her.

Through her husband, she can learn the life of foreigners and gradually “doubts the wisdom of the old ways” (84). He teaches her whether Chinese or Westerners, they also have their own history and culture and the foreigners “are therefore not wholly barbarian” (51-52). They were, as well as Chinese people, also “civilized people” (51). He also showed her the life of Westerners so that his wife would see and know how their life was, and not to “copy them slavishly, but that you may enlarge your ideas” (59).

It is because of her experience of meeting the foreigners, Kwei-lan felt shock for the first time she met them, until she called them “foreign devil” (61), as explained in page 19-20. The saying of her parents and servants that the foreigners are barbarian and they have magic that can kill Chinese people haunts her. In addition, she has no opportunity and never walks abroad upon the streets to meet the foreigners. Instead, her father even “considered them of no importance except to make him laugh with their coarse looks and abrupt, rude ways” (60). In the eye of Chinese people, the foreign people were “rapacious” (6) furthermore; their look, clothes, and behaviour were “curious” (52), “ridiculous and inhuman” (131). The attitude of Kwei-lan’s family shows us how great the proud of Chinese people upon their country and culture is and regard less important of the foreigners, as referred to page 10-11.

### **A. 1.3 Her husband's friends and her brother**

In order to help her to get along easily to “the new path” (24), Yang Kwei-lan's husband introduces her to a Chinese modern woman, Mrs. Liu, who graduates from a Western college for women called Vassar (48). Although Mrs. Liu is modern in ways and thinking, but, somehow, she still keeps some of the old China custom, for example, she still gives her children Chinese clothes, which then makes Kwei-lan surprise (64). In Kwei-lan's opinion to change means to take everything of the new ways and leave entirely the old one. Of this circumstance, then Mrs. Liu suggests her to learn the good things from the foreign people and reject the unsuitable one (64).

His American friends also give her support by showing her different way in taking care of children. The foreign woman nurses her children at her breast while the Chinese give this task before the servant since it is not customary among Chinese women of any wealth or position. Her husband also supports her to do the same since it is good to nurse her baby (63). They, too, show her the manners of West. For instance, the priority of serving woman first than to man and when they talk, they address one to his face wherein in Chinese old custom, man is the first priority and address to one's face is considered “an insult” (62). For the foreigners, to address one's face is considered as a manner of honouring other people and showing that they are paying attention to.

Another support comes through his brother who marries an American woman, named Mary. They represent the union between Chinese and West, despite the difference in birth and rearing that existed centuries ago (156). She

learns also that in this changed time, it is not considered taboo anymore for Chinese man and woman marry with the foreigners. From them also, she learns about love, especially love between husband and wife. Because, unlike Chinese, the foreigners are more clear in expressing their feeling and emotion. Kwei-lan considers the expression of love is as “a sight without dignity” (144). Showing affection is merely for privacy of husband and wife, and therefore, not to show it clearly in front of people, as explained in page 26. She thinks that love and its expression are simply proper for concubines and slave girls (144).

From the explanation above, Kwei-lan, at first feels in trouble when she has to get along with Western culture, represented by Kwei-lan’s husband. Yet, once she is willing to follow his culture, many helps come upon her such as, her mother, her husband, and her friends. In various ways, they have shown her Western culture and how to be a modern woman.

## **A.2 Unfavourable forces**

The second aspect that goes along with Kwei-lan in making decision is the unfavourable force. Though the system of China’s government is already changed as well as the new values widely spread among Chinese people, but it does not followed by some people who still maintain the old values. Their actions of not getting along with the new values, later, become barriers for some people, who have desire to accept the new values. Among of them are Kwei-lan’s parents and his parents. Thus, when she lives together with her husband whose culture is

different compared to hers, somehow, creates inner conflicts within her, to choose which culture she will follow then.

### **A.2.1 Yang Kwei-lan's parents**

It has been mentioned before that Yang Kwei-lan's mother character is "altogether of old China" (Buck 80). Her mother holds on the traditional custom and philosophy firmly. Confucian codes are visible in the teachings of Kwei-lan's mother toward her. She teaches Yang Kwei-lan position as a Chinese daughter-in-law toward the elders of her husband's family, "to submit yourself as a flower submits to sun and rain alike" (8). As a woman before a man, she "should maintain a flower-like silence and should withdraw herself at the earliest moment that is possible without confusion" (6). The way of a wife speaks before her husband is "with eyes and expression but without words..." (9).

Hence, those teachings above put Kwei-lan in a difficult situation when she associates with her husband. It is because, since early childhood, a Chinese woman is taught by her parents not to dispute her husband's will since man is in a higher position, therefore a woman should show her obedience to him. Thus, she becomes a woman who is silent and so "reserved and demure" (87). Between them, there is nothing important to talk about but only for small stuff, which "with the courtesy of strangers to each other, I with shyness towards him, he with careful politeness that overlooked me" (49).

Yang Kwei-lan's husband does not pay attention to his wife because between Kwei-lan and her husband have different point of view, since she

represents old Chinese while he represents West. Thus, Yang Kwei-lan seeks every way in order to hold his heart only to her. She says, "I can only sit and think and dream how to seize hold of his heart" (30). As the result, all her efforts to please him in old ways are useless; moreover, "He cares nothing except his books" (31). All her dream is to please her husband with what she has been taught and said to do in both manner and appearance. Beauty and appearance are regarded important for Chinese women as well as Kwei-lan's mother emphasizes her daughter to "decorate" (9) her self as part of serving her husband in order to please him. Supported by her position as a daughter from a wealthy family, she, of course, is able to attain her aim easily to be a beautiful woman in the presence of her husband. Gold, pearl, jade, beautiful, and expensive clothes even perfume, etc, all the things that can make her appearance physically beautiful and will not disappoint him. Somehow, her efforts to please her husband are useless and she says, "strange that when my beauty could not move him, my distress did!" (50).

Her mother essentially has tried her best to teach Kwei-lan how to be a true Chinese gentlewoman until her mother can assure herself that Kwei-lan's parents in-law will not find anything lacking in her work (9). Her mother also reminds her daughter of her position as a woman before man, that is not to oppose him because the custom regards Chinese men in higher position than the women, therefore, women should obey them. Chinese wife is expected to be completely obedient to her husband, as referred to page 24. It is likely uncustomary among Chinese women of having different opinion or of having same rights as well as the men have or of doing the same activities as the men do. Thus, when on the first

day of their marriage, Yang Kwei-lan's husband mentions about "equal" (20), which refers to the relation of husband and wife, that arises confuse and surprise feeling. Yang Kwei-lan is bewildered by the words of her husband because since when Chinese woman ever been equal of a man. Such an attitude, which, at that time, is hardly to be accomplished since the position of women are lower than to men. Such a contrary for the foreigners' because their women have the same rights to express their feeling as the men do and it is very unusual for Chinese people.

Another unfavourable forces come from her father. He is described as a fat man and has three concubines. He likes travelling and easy to fall in love with woman. He thinks of the foreigners "of no importance except to make him laugh with their coarse looks and abrupt, rude ways" (60) and "lacking in respect" (127) to them. When his son marries to an American woman named Mary, he even dares to ask his son to divorce Mary then gives her much money to "pay her and let her to return to her own country" (148) because it is not possible to receive his son's wife as family since "in her veins flows blood unalterably alien. In her heart are alien loyalties" (148). It is believed as "a scandal and a disgrace" (149) of Chinese people marry to the alien people.

His attitudes toward the foreigners are the example of majority Chinese's attitudes in regarding the foreigners, as explained in page 10-11. They consider the foreigners are less important because they think Chinese people and culture are much higher and "complex" (36) than the foreigners'. Chinese people think that they are civilized people while the foreigners are barbarous since they

are born outside of China. These ideas has existed in the family of Kwei-lan, hence, she feels so “safe and sure” (39) in old honoured traditions. She never thinks of other people whose life and culture is different than she has, moreover, it is no use of thinking of them. She says, “Nothing from the outside ever touched me. I desired nothing” (5). Somehow, this view troubles her in getting along to the “new ways” (23) of the foreigners.

### **A.2.2 Yang Kwei-lan’s parents in-law**

Unfavourable forces also come from her husband’s parents, especially her mother in-law. Her mother in-law is described as “a majestic old lady, very fat, with tiny feet long...” (57). She, as well as Kwei-lan’s mother, comes from a wealthy official family whom holds on the Chinese traditional culture firmly. She has six sons and Kwei-lan’s husband is the youngest. Since Kwei-lan follows him to move out from his ancestral house, her mother in-law then treats her “negligently” (56) and “a little haughty” (57). They regard her as “a person of little importance” and “had almost no share in the family life” (56).

It is natural for all parents to wish their sons and daughters to devote their heart to them. They have rights to expect their sons and daughters to please them by being respectful and obedient, since the term filial piety attached to them, as explained in page 23. When their son and his wife decide to move away, it is natural if Yang Kwei-lan’s parents in-law think their son and their daughter in-law want to separate their life as well as their heart from them. Perhaps, they think that their son and his wife no longer want to serve them and to show their obedience

before them. Their moving from his house is believed by Kwei-lan's mother in-law as disobedience or unfilial of children upon parents. Beside that, it is regarded breaking the Chinese traditional family's form of its extended family, as referred to page 22-23. For that reason, her mother in-law shows a bit of hatred before them.

Yang Kwei-lan's husband considers his Chinese life is full of superstitious things, differ from his mother—as well as other Chinese people—who thinks that Chinese life is “highly complex and cultivated” (36) and therefore, he chooses to ignore his old ways by determining to move away from his ancestral home. However, for Kwei-lan, she wants to show her great obedience upon her mother in-law and has obligation to treat and to “cherish” (26) his mother as excellent as her mother, but she, obviously does not have many chances to do such things since she follows him to move.

Kwei-lan describes this situation as “a most difficult time” (56) for she, once again, is in the middle position of two persons to whom she gives her great respect that is her husband and her mother in-law. As the daughter in-law, she employs many personal services to her mother in-law, as referred to page 24-25, but on the other side, she is also a wife of her mother in-law's son and hence, she has to obey him, as referred to page 24, although his life is extremely different from his own mother. She wants to give his mother the proper obedience that all daughters in-law should give to mothers' in-law according to the ancient custom.

Since her sisters in-law cannot give male offspring, hence, when her mother in-law knows that Kwei-lan is pregnant, she, then, treats Kwei-lan

differently because Kwei-lan is the only hope who can give son as “an heir” (56) for the family. As explained in page 23 that Chinese family values sons more than daughters do, because sons can continue the family name and give the family name good reputation. Sons can also work for the welfare of the family.

Yet, unfortunately, Yang Kwei-lan’s mother in-law still ‘interferes’ her daughter in-law with “lies and superstition” (59) advises. For instance, not to prepare any clothes before the child’s birth but to wrap a newborn child with his father’s oldest clothes, in order to keep the cruel gods unaware of the baby because if they see it, they would seek to destroy (58). Being frightened of the family’s influences before Kwei-lan as well as her son will be “ruined by foolish slave girls and overmuch feeding and harmful luxury” (66), her husband then determines to take care of the child by him and his wife without any involve from his great family. Of course, his parents, once again, get angry because they think that their son and their daughter in-law are against the custom since according to the custom her first-born son should belong to all the family (66).

His father can be included as unfavourable forces. He is “ a scholar, small and slight and stooped with learning” (27). He demands his son to stay in his house and let his wife to produce sons because, according to Chinese custom, three generations of men under one roof is a sight pleasing to Heaven. Moreover, he suggests him not to work but to spend days in “dignified leisure and in study that suits your pleasure” (27), as explained in page 27. Certainly, the idea of leisure and idleness brings rejection from him since he, as a doctor, wants to help other people with his skill and serve his motherland (27) and this incident has

resolute his heart to move from his house. Nevertheless, he stresses his father that his heart always belong to them forever even though he and his wife move out from his house.

### **A.2.3 Herself**

Yang Kwei-lan's husband says, "I wish to regard you in all things as my equal. I shall never force you anything. You are not my possession—my chattel. You may be my friend if you will" (23). The word 'equal' mentioned by him at the first night of their marriage day has undeniably astonished her. Moreover, when Yang Kwei-lan tells her mother about this notion, her mother also mystified toward the equality between a wife and a husband. Her mother says, "Equal with him?"... "What does he mean? How can you be equal to your husband?" (41). Her mother's statements even assert the impossible condition of being equal toward husband and wife.

It relates on the situation of her country. The social situation of China in the early of twentieth century and after is still influenced by the old traditions. Although the system of government in China has already changed, yet, the majority of Chinese people are still holding on firmly their traditions whereas the Western system has influenced some of Chinese people at certain level. The new system has not deeply rooted among all Chinese people yet. According to Chinese custom, women as possession and hence Chinese husband, probably, has right to treat his wife anything he likes because she belongs to him and hence, no one can forbid him.

In addition, it is shown in this novel when Chinese men, represented by Yang Kwei-lan's father and her brother in-law, who easily decide of taking another woman as their wife even though they already have wife. Her father's decision of taking another woman as his wife is mainly because this woman's beauty has attracted him and her brother in-law wants to marry again just because his first wife cannot give birth to sons to him and his family, as referred to page 23. Those examples somehow have shown how Chinese men care nothing of their woman's heart. Perhaps the best representation to put comment on this situation comes from her husband, he says, "Our old custom have held women lightly..." (142). Since the situation of the time, where Chinese women cannot do some protests to reveal their truthfully heart because they are frightened to be called disobedience woman toward husband and society, therefore, Chinese men have rights to do such things.

Chinese custom has put women as men's possession and women do not have the same rights as the men do, or in another words, being their possession means being inequality toward them. Thus, the equality between man and woman is like a huge terrifying wave of Western idea that attacks Chinese women. A new idea that against the Chinese people's point of view of a good woman or a good wife in the society.

Chinese society regard a woman as a good wife according to Chinese custom, if she can show her obedience to her husband and his parents and also to bring happiness to her parents, as referred to page 24. The parents will rightfully proud of their daughter if she can be a good daughter and a good wife in the in-

law's point of view because it is a sign that they have finished their duty as a responsible parent toward children. Hence, they will do their best to teach their daughter so that she will not disappoint them and will not do anything that bring shame toward parents because they also bear the consequences, as explained in page 23. In addition, the silence and obedience are expected from a woman before husband and his parents with the purpose of she will not do anything against them unless the society will call her as 'insubordination' woman.

The situation above creates inner conflict because of Yang Kwei-lan position as a woman in such condition. In Chinese people's view, men are everything while women are not, therefore, killing the "babies girl" (18) are allowed, particularly when the women are slaves. It would against the customs and considered unfilial obedience if she tries to perform herself to be equal to her husband. It is selfish if a wife emphasizes her rights above his. Disregarding his commands might put her into wayward wife to her husband because disobedience is shameful among Chinese women since they bear their parents' name. Yang Kwei-lan is 'trapped' in the middle of two cultures, which culture she will follow and whether her mother or her husband who is right since both of them are people whom she love and respect.

Her inner conflict continues when she faces all the new things and ways shown by him. This is because she is reared within a family with old customs whose house is very big and wide, surrounded by courtyard walls, which refers to "privacy" (102) of her family from the people outside. The walls that for a long time, during her child and youth time, is a symbol of separating her from

the 'outer world.' Yang Kwei-lan, like other Chinese people, has already felt confident and safe in an old surrounding and therefore, never dreams to change.

Not one of the august ones was modern; nor did he have desire to change himself. They all lived in quietness and dignity, confident of their rectitude. Thus did my parent rear me in all the honoured traditions. I never dreamed I could wish to be different... Nothing from the outside ever touched me (5).

Thus, she never desires to accept the new ways or to change her self. She never considers of other people whose culture is different. She becomes a woman "as I was taught, the approved ways of my ancestors" (5). This condition remains until she meets her husband. "I never dreamed I could wish to be different" (5) and "I knew nothing indeed until he came" (144). She never thinks of something that is more modern and different with the ways she has been practicing for years and she considers the life of her family is "wholly modern and independent of old restraint" (102).

For her, the new ways shown by her husband look very odd and queer and have arisen uncomfortable feeling within herself since she never been taught how to deal with it, let alone she, now, lives under the same roof with a man whose life is "an alien in every way" (39). Following her husband is, indeed, difficult because she has to leave all the familiar old ways and take the new one, which means she has to learn from the first and from the small things, and, it is uneasy. She hesitates to be able to adjust herself in those alien ways by saying

“How could I fit into his life” (39). It seems that adapting herself into his ways becomes burden upon her.

She herself knows and accustoms to the living within old environment, but none of the new one. “The love of home and of old surroundings was warm within me... Ah, I am the daughter of an old Chinese home, with old customs, old furniture, old well tried relationships, safe, sure! I know how to live there!” (39). Through her words, she emphasizes that she tremendously knows and is accustomed to everything of her old traditional life and therefore, to change is simply not easy. Inherits the dignity of her ancestors, she never cares of the foreigners moreover their life. Now, she has to discard her unconcern feeling upon the foreigners because she lives with a man whose life is foreign. Whether she likes it or not, she has to deal with those new ways.

The foreigners and their life are new to her. Kwei-lan thus reveals the shock because of her first contact with westerners, when she sees white foreigners for the first time at foreigners’ home. From young age, she has already heard about their evil action toward her country and the magic they have. Kwei-lan, then, describes the foreigners as a “frightful creature to behold—more hideous than the Good of the North in the temple entrance!” (61), and therefore, she called them ‘foreign devil’ (61) with their “curious” (52), “ridiculous and inhuman” (131) in their look, clothes, and behaviour. Moreover, she observes that the foreigners are barbarian because they were born outside of China, as referred to page 11.

For Kwei-lan, to make decision is not easy. In her process of making decision to follow her husband's culture she has to face some unfavourable forces from her own parents, his parents, and her inner conflict. They represent rigid Chinese traditions that against the Western culture, the culture that adopted by her husband. And somehow that creates inner conflict within her, because she is likely in the middle of two positions, whether she has to follow her husband's ways of life or to maintain the old one.

#### **B. The impacts toward Herself**

This analysis is about the impacts of her action of choosing to follow her husband's culture. Since it relates to the impacts toward her self yet, it does not mean to emphasize this analysis into psychological identification but more is to see herself in relation to others, such as her husband, her parents, and his parents.

The after-effect of making decision is noticeable in the life of Kwei-lan. She is more accustomed to the West ways. In fact, those new ways are not merely seizing her in the surface but they already have become part of her life. Moreover, it is explained in the description below.

The first changing within her begins from her decision to unbind her feet and buys some leather shoes (51) in order to replace her old embroidered shoes to which she covers her bound feet. It is a quite brave action whereas at that time in China, as a woman, particularly from wealthy family, she has to endure foot binding, as explained in page 25, but she decides to release it. The process of

unbinding her feet can be said as her first step to release old values and to enter the new lives; furthermore, by unbinding them she begins “to know new freedom” (50). Her feet are now able to walk in a far distance even to run and to walk up stairs (50), something that she never thinks she can do before.

The second changing happens when he accompanies her walking on the street (51) and makes her “precede” (51) him when they entering places. According to old Chinese, that is not “good custom” (51) because Chinese women are inferior to men. Hence, they are not supposed to get first attention than the men. On the contrary, the foreigners, in doing those things, not to indicate that the men are inferior to women but to show the manners of “courtesy” (51), which grounded since ancient times.

The third changing, she nurses her son at her breast (67). This is certainly “not customary” (63) among old Chinese wealthy women. They have slaves to nurse their children (63). She also raises her son together with him only. It is breaking the custom since Chinese family is included to the extended family and not to nuclear family, as referred to page 22. More important is because her sisters in-law do not have “male offspring” (56) hence, her son will be the only “heir to the family estates” (56). According to the old custom, her “first-born” (66) son should belong to “all the family” (66). Chinese people put males in higher position than females because they can continue the family name and work for the welfare of the family. In addition, Chinese husbands have right to divorce their wife or to take another woman as a wife just simply to get a son. Chinese

parents expect their sons to show obedience to parents and give good reputation to the family, as referred to page 23.

The fourth changing, she is, now, able to open her heart to him. She is no longer afraid of showing her emotion to him. She is more easily tells him her innermost feeling of something. This is significant changing within her whereas she, at first, shows her silence because Chinese woman is expected to be “reserved and demure” (87) according to the old custom. This is because Chinese woman should speak to her husband “with eyes and expression but without words” (8) and to submit herself as “a flower submits to sun and rain alike” (8). Chinese custom, indeed, has “restrain” (73) the freedom of Chinese woman.

Day by day, she grows “more used to” (51) the West culture. Nevertheless, she does not adopt entirely “the strange things” (51) taught by him. She somehow still keeps the old culture of her people. For instance, she is still wearing traditional Chinese clothes (61), which consist of “trousers and coat” (43) instead of “long cotton gown” (61) wore by the female foreigners. Of her son, too, she covers him with clothes of old Chinese style and the colour is “scarlet, yellow and royal blue” (63) to show “joy” (63) of his existence into this world for his parents instead of “linen and lace” (154). In manners, she keeps showing her respect and honour toward the elders by bowing and using both two hands when she receives and gives something. She does not follow the foreigner’s way shown by him of taking one’s hand and shaking it up and down (47).

Aside of all the impacts above, in fact, she has to experience something, in which she never thinks before that her decision to follow his new

ways moves her into certain condition where she has to put apart with her mother, her mother in-law, and her husband's great family.

It is not a matter of physically separation from her mother's place, since she belongs to her husband after she marries, but more essential is the separation of mind and heart. She has spent seventeen years of her life together with her mother, through good and bad times, and it is not quite short life. It is such a long journey, which full of dedication and hope that she will bring happiness to her mother through her obedience before her mother in-law. Hence, her mother has entered her heart and become the centre of her life, but suddenly, her position is gradually replaced by her husband.

Her husband's life, little by little, has attracted her mind and heart more than her mother do. She becomes a quite different woman for she feels some changes upon herself. And it is discernible when she deals with her mother. She, moreover, feels there is some kind of great wall that separated her from her mother. She says, "What has separated me so far from my mother? We cry aloud, but we do not hear each other. We speak, but we do not understand each other" (95). From her words, it can be assumed that she feels distant relationship between her and her mother. She becomes a different woman that her mother seems does not recognize her anymore and vice versa.

However, now, she is standing "between past and present" (95) represented by her mother and him, to whom she dedicates her love and respect. Which side she will choose, since she deeply love with of them. She says, "I clasp my mother's hand; I cannot let it go, for without me she is alone. But my

husband's hand holds mine; his hand holds mine fast I can never let love go!" (95). Through her words, it seems, she has already made decision for being on his side. She will never let love go, the love between her and him. The loves that has changed as well as has awaken her spirit to discover and to explore a new life, together with him, to face the future.

In addition, she says, "I am openly taking part against my mother, I who in all my life before never disputed her will" (104). It is sad because of her action of following his ways, on one side, she has fulfilled her wishes of having a close relation with him, but on the other side, she is separated from her mother, an old woman whom has given birth to her and taught her about many things. Finally, she may say, "I feel I am changed, and I know I am changed by love" (95).

From the explanation above, it is shown that, at last, she is willing to accept and to practice the Western culture although she is still maintaining the old Chinese culture. Some part of her is East and some part is West. She is as if standing in the middle of both cultures. Thus, she becomes a newborn person, a newborn personality, that neither totally West nor East. And the cost for her decision is not cheap because she has to sacrifice her tight relation toward people, to whom she put her love and respect. Struggling to win his love makes her in the position of taking part against her old custom that represented by her mother, his mother, and his family.

# **CHAPTER IV**

## **CONCLUSION**