Abstract

The present master's thesis deals with an introduction of Sophia H. Chen Zen (Chen Hengzhe), the first female professor at Beijing University, who in her life and work represents the generation of May Fourth intellectuals, who were educated in traditional scholarship, but who also received modern western education. Western scholarship filled these intellectuals with enthusiasm and they were eagerly introducing it into China. Chen Hengzhe grew up in a traditional scholar family, and since her childhood she longed for education. This desire was fulfilled by winning one of the first Boxer Indemnity Scholarship opened for women. She spent six years on her studies in the United States, where she met some of the leaders of the New Culture Movement (merging with the May Fourth Movement) like Hu Shi, or her future husband Ren Hongjun. Chen Hengzhe is also remembered as a writer of the first baihua-written story, in the early beginning of chinese literary movement. But the main field of Chen Hengzhe was history. Using her knowledge and teaching experience, she wrote one of the first histories of the west in China. Exactly in the analysis of her historical writing lies the center of our thesis. The biggest part concerns with Chen Hengzhe’s history textbook and its historical and cultural context of early decades of the twentieth century, including all the influences (American as well as Chinese) that affected her work. Chen Hengzhe was also interested in rapidly changing position of women in Chinese society. Her personality perfectly illustrates this change. The present thesis is also focused on Chen Hengzhe’s „women question“ and the question of modern education for women in general.