**Confucian and Neo-Confucian Ideals on Women**

**The Mother of Mencius (Mengzi) in Liu Hsiang’s, "Biographies of Admirable Women." (ca. 33 B.C.E.):**

* "A woman's duties are to cook the five grains, heat the wine, look after her parents-in-law, make clothes, and that is all!."
* "It will be [a woman’s purpose] neither to do wrong nor to do good. Only about the spirits and the food will they have to think."
* "A woman's duty is not to control or take charge."

**The Book of Odes, no. 264. (ca. 781-771 B.C.E.):**

* "Disorder is not sent down by Heaven, It is produced by women."
* "Those who cannot be taught, cannot be instructed. These are women and eunuchs."

**Mencius (Mengzi), a disciple of Confucianism:**

* "There are three unfilial acts: the greatest of these is the failure to produce sons."

**Admonitions for Women, Madam Ban Zhao, Female Confucian philosopher and historian, (ca. 45-116 CE):**

* "Let a woman modestly yield to others; let her respect others; let her put others first, herself, last."
* "A husband can marry twice, but his wife must never remarry. Just as Heaven cannot be disobeyed, so the wife cannot keep away from her husband."
* "As Yin and Yang are not the same nature, so man and woman have different characteristics....Man is honored for strength; a woman is beautiful on account of her gentleness."

**Quotation attributed to Confucius, quoted in Alasdair Clayre, "The Heart of the Dragon," Houghton Mifflin, 1985:**

* "We should not be too familiar with the lower orders or with women."

**Popular Saying quoted in, among others, Sharon Sievers, "Women in China, Japan, and Korea," Restoring to Women to History, OAH, 1988; Keith Taylor, "The Birth of Vietnam," University of California Press, 1983:**

* "A woman ruler is like a hen crowing."

**Record of Ritual and Book of Rites (Han dynasty):**

* "No daughter-in-law, without being told to go to her own apartment, should venture to withdraw from that of her parent-in-law. What ever she is about to do, she should first ask leave from them."
* "Women are to be led and to follow others."

**Greater Learning for Women, Neo-Confucian writer Kaibara Ekken (Togukawa period):**

* "Women's nature is passive."
* "The foolishness of woman fails to understand the duties that lie before her very eyes."

**Sayings based on Confucian ideals quoted in William Forbis, Japan Today: A People, Places, Powers, Harper & Row, 1975:**

* "If you love your wife, you spoil your mother's servant."
* "Woman has no particular lord. She must look to her husband as her lord, and must serve him with all worship and reverence."
* "A woman should look on her husband as if her were Heaven itself, and never weary of thinking how she may yield to him."