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Advice from a Chinese Revolutionary

The Feminist Press

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Hispania, the journal of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese, annually publishes listings of completed dissertations and of dissertations in progress in the fields of Hispanic languages and literatures. The most recent listing reports the titles of doctoral theses from 135 departments of Spanish and Portuguese and 45 departments of linguistics. A brief survey of these listings indicates a continuing interest in women's studies topics.

Of the 198 dissertations reported as completed in 1975, 12 are on subjects related to women's studies, either analyses of works by women authors or analyses of women characters in fiction. The authors studied include Dolores Medio, María Zayas de Sotomayer, Marta Lynch, Elena Quiroga, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Carmen Gandara, Santa Teresa, and one curious study on "six representative women novelists." The other four topics are "La mujer del pueblo en algunas novelas de Benito Pérez Galdós," "Juan Luis Vives and women's liberation," "The presence of women in medieval Spanish poetry" and "The mother image in selected works of Miguel de Unamuno." Only one of the 12 completed dissertations was written by a man.

Among the dissertations reported in preparation, 21 of 258 are obvious women's studies topics, 11 of them about women writers and the remainder on the image of women. Almost half (five) of the studies of women authors are being prepared by men. Rosalía de Castro is the subject of two theses, while other authors represented are Teresa de Cartagena, Ana María Matute, Lucila Palacios and Marta Lynch, Juana de Ibarbourou, Santa Teresa, Carmen Martín Gaité, Ana María de Lera, Rosario Castellanos, Alfonsina Storni. The other ten topics include studies of the image of women in the contemporary Puerto Rican novel, in medieval Spanish lyric poetry, in four of Blasco-Ibáñez' Valencian novels, in the plays of Juan Bautista Diamante, in the medieval and golden age Spanish Byzantine novel, in modernist lyric poetry, in the works of Narcís Oller and in the works of Alfonso Sastre, as well as of "the beautiful women" in the dramatic school of Lope de Vega and of the *Celestina* and other golden age *Celestinesque* protagonists.

The women's studies topics, which represent 6.1% of the completed dissertations for 1975 and 8.1% of those in progress, include subjects in both Spain and Latin America, ranging in period from medieval to contemporary.

Phyllis Zatlin Boring
Rutgers College-Rutgers University

The following comes from a speech made by Ting Ling on the occasion of International Women's Day in 1942 to the women of Yen-an, then the center of Communist insurgency in mainland China. It is available in a pamphlet from Femintern Press, c/o Takagi Sawako, 7-22-18 Nishishinjuko, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo, Japan.

First, don't allow yourself to become ill. Sometimes you may feel that an unregulated life style is romantic, poetic, and attractive. But it isn't appropriate for the present situation. No one cares about you more than you care about yourself. And nothing can be worse than to lose your health at this time. Good health is the most essential thing. Look after it and take tender care of yourself.

Secondly, keep yourself cheerful. Only by remaining cheerful can you have youthfulness, vitality and the ability to lead a full life, the reserve strength to endure the hardships of our situation, to have good future prospects and to have pleasure. I'm not talking about a mere contentment with life, but about the joy of struggling ahead and progressing. That's why, every day, we must do meaningful work, study, contribute something of ourselves to others. Loafing only makes our lives empty, weary and withered.

Thirdly, get into the habit of using your brain. Get rid of your aversion to deep thinking and your strong inclination to always follow the crowd. Think well about what you are about to say or do. Consider whether your action will actually be effective, whether or not it goes against your deepest convictions and whether or not you are willing to accept responsibility for it. If you act in this way, you will have no regrets; this is what is called a rational person. You will not be gypped or trapped by sweet words nor tempted by small gains. You will not fritter away your passion nor waste your life, and you will avoid worries.

Fourthly, have the determination to drive ahead to the end. Women who are fully aware of the present moment have to know how to shed every rose-colored fantasy. Our joy is a battle within a storm and not playing the harp under the moon or reciting poetry in front of a flower. Without strong determination, you will certainly quit half-way. You will either be in a continual state of distress or will become corrupted. The strength of your endurance is cultivated through "constancy." Without a great aspiration it is impossible to resist greed and to avoid becoming a victim of comfort. Only those who work for all humankind, not just for themselves, have this kind of aspiration.

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