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Panel 1.2: Roles, Rights, and Responsibilities for Women and Children

Gender and the Performance of Personal Cultivation

The ideals of appropriate behavior for women in premodern China were widespread throughout much of the East Asian world. By looking closely at Confucian and Daoist concepts of *wuwei* and *ren* with regards to the body, society, and nature as referenced in classical texts such as the *Zhuangzi*, *Daode jing*, and the *Analects*, and particularly the classic literature of heroic women, we can explore the relational nature of self-cultivation. Today traditional cultural resources are being drawn upon in response to current cultural and political dynamics, breaking down the *nei/wai*, inner/outer, female/male historical "geography" of constrained relational horizons to form new geographies of significant familial and social roles and relationships. This commitment to heart-mind-body personal cultivation and co-creating relationality is both the root and the height of wisdom.