Research article / Научная статья

Image of a Woman in Chineese and Russian Paroemiae

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Abstract. Paremiological comparative studies are a relevant area of modern linguistics, since the corpus of paroemiae of a particular language reflects the peculiarities of the worldview of an ethnos, its value guidelines, established social connections, prohibitions, priorities, and traditions. In this regard, it seems interesting to compare the language signs and the meanings behind them, which coincide in two different Chinese and Russian linguistic cultures. The similarity that underlies our comparison is due to universal human values, the foundations of traditional society and the biological nature of family relationships. The result of the study was the recording of eleven coinciding meanings of paroemiae about a woman: daughter as a beloved female child; daughter as an extra mouth in the family; daughter as a potential member of another family; daughter as a family member opposed to daughter-in-law; qualitative description of a bad wife; qualitative description of a good wife; wife-partner; tradition of wife beating; mother as the basis for the life and upbringing of a child; mother as a bearer of love; opposition of mother and stepmother. The study can be continued by identifying and describing means of expressing these meanings in Chinese and Russian paroemiae about a woman. A separate aspect of the comparative analysis can be identification of divergent meanings in paroemiae about women, which we understand as a fixation of gender norms of traditional society.

Keywords: paremiological picture of the world, paroemia, Chinese language, Russian language

Образ женщины в китайских и русских паремиях

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Аннотация. Паремиологические сопоставительные исследования являются актуальным направлением современной лингвистики, поскольку корпус паремий конкретного языка отражает особенности мировосприятия этноса, его ценностные ориентиры, сложившиеся социальные связи, запреты, приоритеты, традиции. В этой связи представляется интересным сравнить знаки языка и стоящие за ними смыслы, которые совпадают в двух различающихся китайской и русской лингвокультурах. Сходство, которое лежит в основе нашего сопоставления, обусловлено общечеловеческими ценностями, основами традиционного общества и биологической природой семейных отношений. Результатом исследования стала фиксация одиннадцати совпадающих значений паремий о женщине: дочь как любимый ребенок женского пола; дочь как лишний рот в семье; дочь как потенциальный член другой семьи; дочь как противопоставленный невестке член семьи; качественное описание плохой жены; качественное описание хорошей жены; жена-партнер; традиция битья жены; мать как основа жизни и воспитания ребенка; мать как носитель любви; противопоставление матери и мачехи. Исследование может быть продолжено выявлением и описанием средств выражения данных значений в китайских и русских паремиях о женщине. Отдельным аспектом сопоставительного анализа может стать выявление несовпадающих значений в паремиях о женщине, которые мы понимаем как фиксацию гендерных норм традиционного общества.

Ключевые слова: паремиологическая картина мира, паремия, китайский язык, русский язык

Introduction

Linguistic analysis of systems of paroemiae in world languages will remain a relevant scientific problem of modern linguistics [1–3]. Aspects of consideration include thematic, structural and figurative representation of paroemiae [4], their axiological characteristics [5; 6], cognitive-pragmatic nature [7].

The image of a woman in paroemiae, which became the object of consideration of this study, continues the tradition of describing the paremiological picture of the world in a separate fragment, in particular, on the material of Spanish [8–10], Malagasy [10], Tuvan [11], German [11], Portuguese [12], Swedish [13] languages. These studies form part of the thematic field of family, the paremiological systems of which are described based on French [14; 15], English [16–18]; Turkish [17], Kalmyk [18], Swedish [19] languages.

A separate group of studies consists of the analysis of the Chinese linguistic picture of the world [20–22], because culture is "a special type of knowledge that reflects information about a person's reflexive self-knowledge in the processes of his/her life practices" [23. P. 679], culture is a semiotic system in which "signs and meanings are synthesized: a sign is the bearer of what was developed by human in the process of understanding the world" [24. P. 170]. In this regard, it seems interesting to compare those signs and the meanings they express that coincide within the Chinese and Russian linguistic cultures, determined by universal human values, the foundations of traditional society and the biological nature of family relationships.

Materials and results of the study

The study was conducted based on the material obtained by continuous sampling from dictionaries of paremiological units of the Chinese[1],[2] and Russian[3],[4] languages. The principle of selection is based on choosing paroemiae of any format in which one of the three meanings under consideration is expressed; there is a formal reference to a woman. The selected paremiological units are sorted into groups with a common meaning. Single paroemiae are not taken into account in the sample; thus, only those paroemiae that are reflected in both the Chinese and Russian languages are combined into groups. We formed groups WOMAN–MOTHER; WOMAN–DAUGHTER; WOMAN–WIFE.

The connection between the form and content of the paroemiae is due to the generalization of the meaning, i.e. stable orientation of characteristics and attributes. Lexical groups in which there is no specific content act

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[1] Wen, Duanzheng (2012). *Dictionary of 10,000 proverbs*. Shanghai: Shanghai Lexicographic Publ. (In Chinese).

[2] Wen, Duanzheng (2011). *Large dictionary of Chinese proverbs*. Shanghai: Lexicographical Publ. (In Chinese).

[3] Dal', V.I. (1957). *Proverbs of the Russian language*. Moscow: Hudozhestvennaya literatura. (In Russ.).

[4] Mokienko, V.M., Nikitina, T.G. & Nikolaeva, E.K. (2010). *Large dictionary of Russian proverbs*. Moscow: OLMA Media Group. (In Russ.).

as formal means of expressing a generalization of the proverbial structure. The proverbial form is based on an associative-imaginative motivational complex of semantic dominants that organize the complex content of the proverb. These semantic dominants predetermine the content of subsequent components of the form which verbally embody the semantics of this whole in the language. The form of paroemiae about the three hypostases of a woman in many cases is based on the associative connection of its components, which can continue to be included in chains of oppositions, forming associative-semantic subgroups. These components are linked by an associative connection with the identifier stimulus located in the centre of the field. According to Yu.N. Karaulov, for the implementation of an association there is a necessary condition — a semantic connection: if there is a semantic connection, there is also an association [25. P. 180].

WOMAN–MOTHER
in Chinese and Russian paroemiae

Mother is a key figure in the structure of the family and society as a whole, embedded in the world picture of any language. The paremiological level of the language reflects predominantly the traditional idea of it. Chinese and Russian traditional society defined motherhood as the dominant feature of a woman's life, maternal love is perceived as equal to female nature, most women preferred to be a mother and knew how to do it. In traditional society, the lack of a girl's right to go to school and later to realize herself in the professional sphere created the preconditions for redirecting her energy to the family, which became a platform for learning, and later an arena for her activities. Thus, mothers were the first teachers of children, authoritative in the family in raising children, which was assessed by society as the main function of a woman.

We noted such meanings as the *indispensability of a mother for a child*, *the infinity and tenderness of a mother's love*, *the opposition of mother and stepmother*.
1) **indispensability of a mother for a child** — this meaning is often presented in Chinese and Russian paroemiae in two ways:
  • *comparison with the flora/animal world* as proof of the intrinsic nature of the connection between a child and a mother (35 Chinese and 39 Russian paremiological units): 瓜儿离不了秧儿，小孩离不了娘 'a melon cannot be separated from its sprouts, a child cannot be separated from his/her mother'; 鱼见生水，如子见母 'when a fish sees water, it is similar to a son seeing his mother' meaning mother is all life, a child needs her as fish needs water / *Птица радуется весне, а младенец матери* 'the bird rejoices at the spring, and the baby at its mother'; *Мать любит дитя как кошка — котя* 'a mother loves her child as a cat loves her kitten';

- *contrasting the relationship of a child with father and mother* (22 Chinese and 24 Russian paremiological units), this meaning is presented as unequal participation and level of influence of the mother and father on the upbringing of the child, the role of the mother is assessed as more significant: 和尚亲不如庙亲，老子亲不如娘亲 'a monk is not as close as a temple and a father is not as close as a mother'; 爹是爹，娘是娘，爹爹再好替不了娘 'father is father, mother is mother, and father is no substitute for mother'/ *Отцов много, а мать одна* 'there are many fathers, but one mother'; *Без отца — пол сироты, а без матери и вся сирота* 'without a father one is partially an orphan, and without a mother — an entire orphan'; *Что мать в голову вобьёт, того отец не выбьет* 'what mother puts into her head, father will not knock it out';

- here we note a meaning of the *negative role of mother in the child's life*, which is represented by: *cause-and-effect link of upbringing and its result* (11 Chinese and 16 Russian paremiological units): 娇生惯养没有好儿郎 'mothers who spoil their children do not have good children'; 母慈悲儿孝顺，娘狠毒儿生分 'if the mother is merciful, then the son is obedient; if the mother is cruel, then the son is indifferent'/ *Щенок у матери лаять учится* 'puppy learns to bark from mother'; and the *similarity of the child and mother* (In appearance, character and behaviour) (7 Chinese and 12 Russian paremiological units): 看看她娘脚后跟，就知道闺女七八分 'if you look at her mother's heels, you can tell her daughter's size — whether it's 7 or 8' / *Дурной рыбак — дурные сети, дурная мать — дурные дети* 'a bad fisherman has bad nets, a bad mother has bad *children*'; *У свахи-неряхи и невесты непряхи* 'the matchmaker is a slob then her girls (wives-to-be) are slobs'.

2) The idea of **infinity and tenderness of a mother's love** is often expressed in the paremiological units under consideration with the use of:

- comparisons (19 Chinese and 26 Russian paremiological units): 鸡无三条腿，娘无两条心 'the chicken does not have three legs, and the mother does not have two hearts' in the meaning of the needlessness of the mother's second heart, because her love is infinite, the idea is conveyed through a comparison with the third leg of a chicken, similar to the Russian paroemia *Как у собаки пятая нога* 'dog's fifth leg' / *Материнская забота и в огне не горит и в воде не тонет* 'maternal care does not burn in fire and does not drown in water'.

- metaphors (11 Chinese and 16 Russian paremiological units): 舐犊情深 *literally* 'deeply in love licks the calf' in the meaning 'the cow licks her calf as a symbol of care and love'; 寸草春晖 *literally* 'the sun in spring is necessary for the growth of grass' in the meaning 'a small blade of grass cannot repay with its meager heart the deep love of the spring sun' / *Материнская ласка конца не знает* 'mother's caress knows no end*'; Для матери ребенок до ста лет дитёнок* 'for a mother a child stays a baby up to a hundred years old'.

3) *The role of the mother in traditional society is also conveyed through the* **opposition of mother and stepmother** (14 Chinese and 16 Russian paremiological units).

The frequency of paroemiae with the component stepmother in the paremiological units of two languages confirms the traditional division of functions in the family between genders: if the wife dies, the man must marry a second time, since there remains a need to run the household, and most importantly, to raise his children because the man is the economic basis of the family. The stepmother in paroemiae is presented as evil, which can be emphasized in comparison with the animal world, or directly contrasted with the mother: 黄蜂尾，马蜂针，最狠不过后母心 'a wasp's tail, a wasp's needle, the most ruthless thing is the stepmother's heart' / *Из дому гонит мачеха, а из лесу медведь* 'the stepmother is chasing out of the house, and the bear is chasing out of the forest'; 扇风不及吹风凉，后娘莫如亲生娘 'the air flow from under the hand fan is not as cold as the wind, the stepmother is worse than the real mother' / *Мать высоко замахивается, да не больно бьёт, мачеха низко замахивается, да больно бьёт* 'the mother swings high, but doesn't hurt, the stepmother swings low but hits painfully'.

WOMAN–DAUGHTER
in Chinese and Russian paroemiae

In a traditional society, the attitude towards a daughter is opposed to the attitude towards a son, which is why we understand the son as a resource. Paroemiae of the Russian and Chinese languages coincide in marking the son as a family value (12 Chinese and 13 Russian paremiological units): 家有秘宝不外传, 不传闺女只传男 'if there is a secret treasure in a family, it should not be passed on to others, it should not be passed on to daughters, only to men'; *Дочь питаю — за окно кидаю, сына кормлю — в долг даю* 'I feed my daughter — it's a waste-out, I feed my son — it's investment'.

In the selection of paroemiae about a daughter, we note the coinciding meanings of a daughter who grows up for someone else's family, the opposition of a daughter and a daughter-in-law, a daughter as an extra mouth and a beloved daughter.

1) **a daughter who grows up for someone else's family** — the understanding of a daughter as a potential member of another family (the one into which the daughter will marry) is most frequent in the sample (13 Chinese and 16 Russian proverbs): 出嫁的女儿就像泼出去的水 'a daughter given in marriage is like water that is poured out' / *Дочь — работница для чужого поля, ключница чужому отцу, ларечница чужой матери* 'a daughter is a worker for someone else's field, a housekeeper for someone else's father, a treasure keeper for someone else's mother'; *Дочь — чужое сокровище* 'daughter is someone else's treasure';

2) **the opposition of a daughter and a daughter-in-law** (In the sample 5 Chinese paroemiae and 4 Russian paremiological units): 姑娘本是堂前客，嫂嫂才是

当家主 'the daughter must be a guest at the front of the hall, the daughter-in-law is the mistress of the house'; 传子不传婿，传媳不传女 'it is passed from son to son, but not from son-in-law' is understood as the fact that the material and cultural wealth of the family is passed through the line of the son (son + daughter-in-law), but not through the line of the daughter (daughter + son-in-law) / *Зять по дочке помилеет, а сын по невестке опостылеет* 'a son-in-law will be kind to one's daughter, but a son will be disgusted with one's daughter-in-law';

3) **a daughter as an extra mouth** in a family — this meaning can be expressed explicitly (9 Chinese and 8 Russian paremiological units) and implicitly (12 Chinese and 13 Russian paremiological units): 女到娘家是个贼，十回来，九回失 'the daughter returns to her mother's house like a thief; in nine cases out of ten the family will lose something' (direct indication of material damage); 河里的沙土打不起墙，出门的闺女养不了娘 'sand from a river cannot build a wall, and a daughter who leaves home cannot feed her mother' (indication of the meaning through comparison); 家有三个女，连娘四个贼 'the family has three daughters and a mother, that is, four thieves' (direct indication of material damage); 赔不尽的女儿，过不尽的年 'there is no end to raising a daughter you need to spend money on, it's endless years' (about the need for material investments in raising a daughter who will not bring dividends); 没粪不要种黍子，没钱不要养妮子 'don't plant millet without manure, don't raise your daughters without money'; 月好晒不得谷，女好上不得屋 'although the moon is good, it cannot illuminate the grain; although the daughter is good, she does not return home' / *Дочку в колыбельку — приданое в коробейку* 'put daughter in the cradle — put dowry in a box'; *Одна с хлеба долой* 'one off the bread' (about a married daughter), *Растить дочку, что лить в дырявую бочку 'raising a daughter is like pouring a leaky barrel'*; *Дочь отцу-матери не корысть (не кормилица)* 'a daughter of a father and mother is not for self-interest' (not a feeder). This meaning is also expressed with the use of the antithesis son — daughter (10 Chinese and 13 Russian paremiological units): *Сын хлебом кормит, а дочь последний кусок унесёт* 'the son feeds family with bread, and the daughter takes away the last piece'; *Девочка выносит, а сын приносит 'the girl takes things out and the son brings them in'*;

4) **a beloved daughter** — we noted this meaning in two types of paroemiae: units in which both sons and daughters are mentioned (9 Chinese and 12 Russian paremiological units) and only daughters (6 Chinese and 7 Russian paremiological units): 生女勿悲酸，生男勿喜欢 'don't be too sad about the birth of a daughter, and don't be too loving towards a born boy'; 生了女儿纺棉花，生下儿子做庄稼 'give birth to a daughter who spins cotton, give birth to a son who grows crops'; 生男可喜，生女不忧 'giving birth to a boy is nice, but giving birth to a girl is also worth it'; 手心手背都是

肉，儿子丫头都是后 'all sons and daughters are a worthy continuation' / *Сын да дочь — ясно солнце, светел месяц* 'son and daughter — the sun is clear, the moon is bright'; *Хорошая дочь стоит двух плохих сыновей* 'a good daughter is worth two bad sons'; *Все равные детки, что пареньки и девки* 'all children are equal, both boys and girls'; *Мальчик на подмогу, девочка на потеху* 'boy for help, girl for fun'.

WOMAN–WIFE in Chinese and Russian paroemiae

The third type of paroemiae about a woman ia a large group of proverbs about a woman-wife, the units of which are classified into four large meanings: *a good wife* and *a bad wife*, *husband and wife as partners* and *beating a wife*.

1) **A good wife** meaning is represented by paroemiae expressing such connotations as:

- *a good wife is the basis of a happy family life* (22 Chinese and 24 Russian paremiological units): 家要富，炕上坐下巧媳妇 'if a family wants to be rich, sit on the stove and get a smart wife' / *Мир в семье женой держится* 'peace in the family is kept by the wife'; *Дом с хорошей женой — рай* 'home with a good wife is heaven'; *От плохой жены состареешься, от хорошей помолодеешь* 'a bad wife will make you old, a good wife will make you younger';

- *a good wife is a virtuous wife* (14 Chinese and 16 Russian paremiological units). We noted an expression of this type through direct nomination and through negative nomination: 好 女不吃两家饭 家和靠妻贤 'harmony in the family depends on a virtuous wife'; 秋好一年谷，妻贤一生福 'if you reap a good harvest, you will eat for a year; if you find a virtuous wife, you will be happy all your life' and 烈女不更二夫，忠臣不侍二君 'a virtuous woman does not serve two husbands, a faithful homager does not serve two kings' (with the help of comparison the second part of the paroemia accentuates the meaning 'faithful'); 不怕千军万马，就怕妻不贤子不孝 'do not be afraid of a thousand troops, but be afraid of an unvirtuous wife and a negligent son' / *Три друга*: *отец, да мать, да верная жена* 'three friends: father, mother and faithful wife';

- *a good wife is a skillful housewife* (6 Chinese and 7 Russian paremiological units): 秋好一半谷, 妻好终生福 'good seedlings fill half the valley, good wife fills life with happiness'; *Доброй жене домоседство не мука* 'for a good wife home-keeping is not a torment' (the main meaning is conveyed by the lexeme *добрая* 'good, veracious'); *С лица не воду пить, умела бы пироги печь* 'a pretty face may not make you happy, she (wife) should know how to bake pies'.

2) **A bad wife meaning** is marked by such characteristics as:

- *a bad housewife* (7 Chinese and 12 Russian paremiological units): 娇子勿能立业，娇妻勿能治家 'a spoiled child cannot create his own business, an incompetent wife cannot manage household chores'; *Червь дерево точит,*
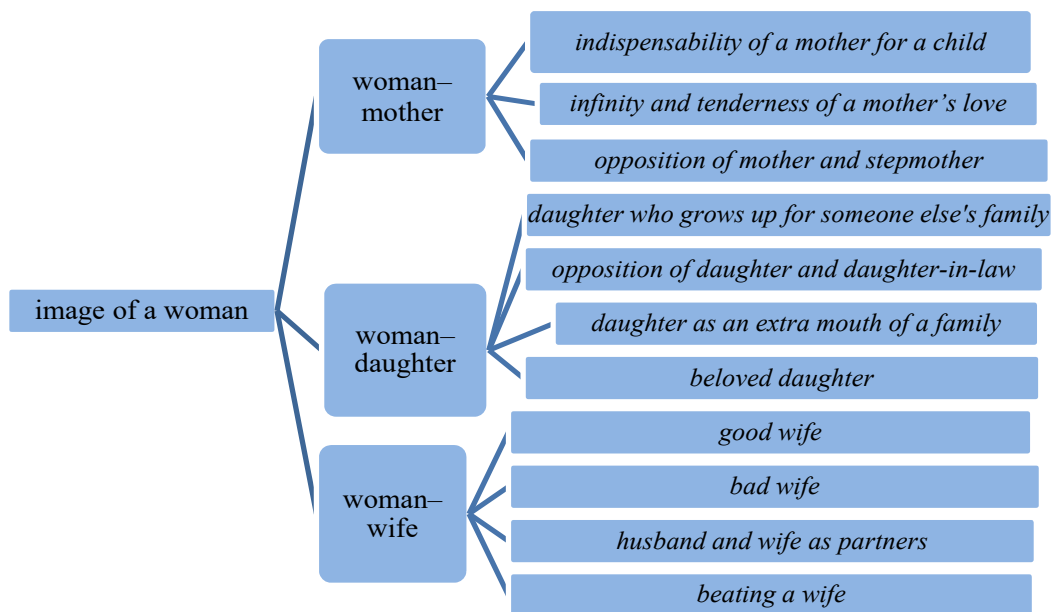
а плохая хозяйка дом изводит 'a worm wears away a tree, and a bad housewife plagues a house';

- *a wife as absolute evil* (3 Chinese and 4 Russian paremiological units): 世间最恶是妖婆，地下最恶是阎罗 'he most vicious person on earth is wife, and the most vicious person underground is Yan-lo' / *Бог создал три зла — бабу, черта, козла* 'God created three evils: a woman, a devil, a goat';

- *a wicked wife* (12 Chinese and 20 Russian paremiological units): 蹶马破车，恶妇破家 'a slow horse with a broken cart, a wicked wife with a shabby house'; 十只黄猫九只雄，十个老婆九个凶 'out of ten yellow cats, nine are males, out of ten wives, nine are wicked' 不出妖婆家不穷，不刮西风天不晴 'no house would be poor without a wicked wife, and no weather would be sunny without a west wind' / *Лучше хлеб есть с водою, чем жить со злою женою* 'it is better to eat bread with water than to live with a wicked wife'; *Злая жена — поборница греху* 'a wicked wife is an advocate for sin'; *Худая жена — кара господня* 'a wicked wife is God's punishment';

3) **Husband and wife as partners** meaning (7 Chinese and 7 Russian paremiological units): 夫有千斤担，妻挑五百 'the husband carries a thousand cats, and the wife carries five hundred' / *Муж с женой что лошадь с телегой*: *везут, когда они исправны* 'a husband and wife are like a horse and cart: they are driven when they get along'.

In meaning 4) **beating a wife** by her husband: we identified two subgroups:

- *about domestic violence as an established tradition* (14 Chinese and 18 Russian paremiological units): 官打民不羞，父打子不羞，夫打妇不羞 'there is nothing shameful in an officer beating a citizen, there is nothing shameful in a father beating his son, there is nothing shameful in a husband beating his wife'; 禾苗见了锄，媳妇见丈夫 'a seedling meets a hoe like a wife meets her husband'; 打不死的婆娘，晒不死的辣椒 'wives don't get beaten to death, and peppers don't burn in the sun' / *Бей жену к обеду, а к ужину опять* 'beat your wife at lunchtime, and again at dinnertime'; *Жену не бить — милу не быть* 'if you don't beat your wife you won't be satisfied'; *Чем больше жену бьешь, тем щи вкуснее* 'the more you beat your wife, the tastier the cabbage soup becomes'; *Жена не горшок, не расшибешь* 'a wife is not a pot, you won't break (hurt) her'; *Кто вина не пьет, пьян не живет; кто жены не бьет — мил не живет* 'he who doesn't drink wine doesn't live drunk; he who doesn't beat his wife doesn't live well'; *В стары годы бывало — мужья жен бивали, а ныне живет, что жена мужа бьет* 'in the old days husbands would beat their wives, but now it happens that a wife beats her husband';

- *a small subgroup* (1 Chinese and 2 Russian paremiological units) in which the tradition of beating your wife is condemned: 汉子打老婆，一辈子不好过 'a man who beats his wife will be unlucky for the rest of his life' / *Бил жену денечек, сам плакал годочек* 'he bet his wife for a day and cried for a year'.

Thus, the coinciding figurative and thematic representation of women in paroemiae of the Chinese and Russian languages can be illustrated by the following diagram (see Fig.).

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                                   │ daughter who grows up for someone else's family│
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│ image of a woman │    │ woman–   ││ opposition of daughter and daughter-in-law  │
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                                    │   daughter as an extra mouth of a family    │
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                        ┌──────────┐└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                        │ woman–   │┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
                        │ wife     ││                bad wife                     │
                        └──────────┘└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                                    ┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
                                    │      husband and wife as partners           │
                                    └─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                                    ┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
                                    │              beating a wife                 │
                                    └─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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Figurative and thematic representation of women in paroemiae
of the Chinese and Russian languages

Conclusion

The conducted research made it possible to identify groups of meanings of paroemiae in the Chinese and Russian languages, expressing three main ideas about a woman: woman-mother, woman-wife and woman-daughter. The presence of eleven similar meanings of paroemiae in the two unrelated languages under consideration is predetermined by certain social and cultural norms that have developed in traditional societies. In relation to a woman, the paroemiae under consideration reinforce the assessment of various aspects of family life, which allows evaluating one's own and others' behaviour, correlating it with the standard one, forming and directing one's own vector of communication, and determining the interaction of members of society. Paroemiae about a woman are a fixation of gender norms of society, which we understand as the rules and standards of a woman's activity in three states: **daughter** (a beloved female child; an extra mouth in the family, useless for her family and a potential member of another family; a family member opposed to a daughter-in-law), **wife** (qualitative description of a bad and good wife; wife-partner; tradition of wife beating), **mother** (mother as the basis

of life and upbringing of a child, bearer of love, contrast between mother and stepmother). We see the prospect of research in further analysis of the means of expression of the considered block of meanings of paroemiae about a woman in the Chinese and Russian languages.

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