

Tribhuvan University

Revisiting Chinese History in Amy Tan's *The Kitchen God's Wife*

**A Thesis Submitted to Central Department of
English in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts in English**

By

Ishwor Dahal

Central Department of English

Kirtipur

July 2010

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Ishwor Dahal has completed his thesis on "Revisiting Chinese History in Amy Tan's *The Kitchen God's Wife*" under my supervision. He carried out this research paper from June 2009 to July 2010. I hereby recommend his thesis to be submitted for viva voce.

Mr. Chitra Kumar Karki

Supervisor

Date: -----

Tribhuvan University
Central Department of English
Kirtipur, Kathmandu

Letter of Approval

This thesis, entitled "Revisiting Chinese History in Amy Tan's *The Kitchen God's Wife*", submitted to Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Mr. Ishwor Dahal, has been approved by the undersigned members of research committee.
Members of the research committee:

Internal Examiner

External Examiner

Head of
Central Department of English

Date: _____

Acknowledgements

I am particularly grateful to my thesis supervisor Mr. Chitra Kumar Karki, an assistant lecturer of Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur for his priceless supervision on my research.

I am equally appreciative to Mr. Amma Raj Joshi, the head of Central Department of English, TU, Kirtipur, for his patronage to complete this study. Likewise, my respectable teachers Prof. Dr. Krishna Chandra Sharma, Dr. Beerendra Pandey, Dr. Sanjeev Upreti, Saroj Ghimire, Pushpa Acharya, Ghanashyam Bhandari, Badri Acharya and Harihar Gyawali are praiseworthy for their kind suggestions and help to conduct this research.

How can I be silent without honoring my parents who are encouraging me at every step of life? Therefore, I express the inexpressible respect to my father Bishnu Prasad Dahal and mother Ambika Dahal. My brother Gokarna is also eligible to share the credit of my study.

Finally, all my friends including Hari Bhattarai, Mitra Dev, Om, Ananta, Surya, Prithvi, Sudan, Arjun, deserve thanks for their company whether to collect materials or to discuss ideas.

Ishwor Dahal

July 2010

Abstract

This research is concerned with the contextual and historical influences along with autobiography, culture and religion on the fictional work *The Kitchen God's Wife* by Amy Tan. These elements, in fact, help to blur the boundary between history and fiction. Fiction is an imaginary construct, however, the presence of these facts in a fictional work convert a text into a factual document. Moreover, context of the writer affects the text. Author's ideology has been explicitly dominant in the text. Jiang Weili, a character in the novel, resembles Tan's mother; and Pearl, the daughter of Weili, resembles Tan herself. Sino-Japanese war also gets imitated in the text. Chinese people's suffering, Japan's attack on China and America's participation in the war confuse the common readers. So, this research contends to prove that history, culture, religion, autobiography etc. are the backbones of a literary text. The presence of Chinese history in the fictional work, influence of Confucian and Chinese culture, resemblance of author's autobiography and religion, finally, converts the novel *The Kitchen God's Wife* into a historical document.

Contents	Page	
Acknowledgements		iii
Abstract		iv
Chapter I.	Historical Glimpses in Amy Tan's Writings	1-6
Chapter II.	New Historicism: Literature and History	7-22
Chapter III.	Revisiting Chinese History in Amy Tan's	
	<i>The Kitchen God's Wife</i>	23-39
Chapter IV.	Conclusion	40-41
	Works Cited	42-44