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## Aesthetic and Ethic ideals of Masculinity in Contemporary China: between Traditional China, Modern East Asia and the West

### Summary

There exist in contemporary China, as anywhere else, not the one (hegemonic) but rather many hybrid masculinities, which have integrated some features of traditional and global masculinities. They seem mutually complementary and contradictory, since every of them comes from the different cultural and social contexts, and is embodied by different age groups. The article concentrates on two the most popular ideals of masculinity in XXlth century China – „effeminate man“ („little fresh meat“ *xiaoxianrou* 小鲜肉 or „sissy pants“ *niangpao* 娘炮) and „home guy“ (*zhainan* 宅男). The first of them have received much attention in the scholarly and media literature, while the latter is studied mostly in its „original“ Japanese context (as *otaku*). This article argues that those two Chinese masculinities should be investigated together, since they have many common features: their „pan- East-Asian“ and cyberspace

origin and context; they both are related to the new „internet generation“ and depend on the empowerment of women; they both combine traditional and contemporary aesthetic and ethic features of masculinity, so important for the contemporary China's inner and outer (global) politics, and its international image in particular. The first part of the article looks over their historical, political, cultural and transcultural context and origin, but restricting this survey to three „crises of masculinity“ in modern China. The second part examines *xiaoxianrou* and *zhainan* masculinities according to the still authoritative Kam Louie theory of Chinese traditional „dual masculinities“ of *wen* (soft-cultural) and *wu* (hard-military), as well as few important factors, indicated by Harriet Zurndorfer – men's kinship bonds, their relationship with the state/government, the impact of commercialization and global (Western and pan-East Asian) masculinities.

**Keywords:** soft masculinity, military masculinity, hybrid masculinities, *niangpao*, *zhainan*, sexuality, masculinity crisis.