High Heels and Rouge:
Crafting the New Woman through Consumption in Linglong Women’s Pictorial Magazine (Linglong funü tuhua zazhi) 《玲瓏婦女圖畫雜誌》, 1931-1936

Thesis

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Abstract

During the 1920s and 1930s, the rise of China’s consumer culture in Shanghai intersected with the nation’s attempts to modernize the country economically, ideologically and culturally. The New Woman archetype 新女性, an idealized model of the modern citizen, represented not only an independent, educated woman liberated from Confucian patriarchy, but also China’s progression towards the technological and scientific advancement of a Western-defined modernity.

This thesis seeks to explore the intersection of Western consumer culture and individualism with China’s search for modernity and gender equality. It focuses on the relationship between the New Woman and the consumption of fashionable styles and commodities from 1931 to 1936. To facilitate this exploration, it examines how Linglong Women’s Pictorial Magazine 玲瓏婦女圖畫雜誌 (1931-1937) addressed the consumption of fashionable styles and commodities before and during the New Life Movement 新生活運動 (1934-1937), a government-sponsored cultural reform movement that attempted to militarize the country by creating citizens disciplined enough to sacrifice whatever was necessary to protect China from foreign domination or invasion. The purpose of this thesis is to showcase how female consumption patterns created tension between women and the state during the Nationalists’ regime (1912-1949).
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Introduction

[To Chinese women] all beauty aids had been a feminine mystery, like midwifery, but as soon as they were given publicity they became genteel and respectable. Chinese girls, for the first time, began to powder their noses in public with no sense of shame, and their horizons immediately broadened. They had been kept in seclusion for several thousand centuries, but as soon as they discovered that they could make up their faces in the presence of men [...] there was no holding them back. The Chinese woman has broken out of the inner courtyards of the Chinese home and nothing will ever put her back.¹

In 1937, Carl Crow (1884-1945), one of Shanghai’s most prolific advertising agents, recalled the affects of Western² cosmetics on the transformation of women in the early twentieth century.³ In his most popular book, *Four Hundred Million Customers*, Crow suggests that while centuries of patriarchal rule had forced Chinese women to relinquish control of their bodies to men, the availability of Western cosmetics granted Chinese women the freedom to shape their personal appearance according to their own desires. Fashion, Crow suggests, liberated them. Although not explicitly stated in the above citation, his words draw an implicit connection between the act of consuming cosmetics and the creation of bodily independence for women. In 1937, Crow recounted

² The term Western in this thesis refers to the United States, Great Britain, France, and Germany. Although Japan has often been considered an honorary Western nation by some historical scholarship, this thesis chooses to exclude Japan from the category of Western.
³ Carl Crow, Inc. was an advertising agency that flourished in Shanghai during the interwar period, 1918-1937.
that the Chinese desired anything manufactured in the West, from material goods to understandings of individualism. Indeed, the two decades that Crow dominated Shanghai’s advertising industry were the years that Western consumer culture and individualism intersected with China’s search for modernity and gender equality.

The intersection of Western consumer culture and individualism with China’s search for modernity and gender equality demonstrates that two differing understandings of modernity among the Chinese conflicted with each other from 1931 to 1936, the years on which this thesis focuses. The first of these beliefs was that modernity was marked by the ability to express one’s independence and equal standing with others through the accumulation of material wealth. The second of these beliefs was that China’s transition into modernity was dependent on the self-discipline and unconditional self-sacrifice of its educated citizens to achieve national goals.

This thesis seeks to explore the tension between these two beliefs by focusing on the relationship between the New Woman 新女性—a concept of the ideal woman used in the twentieth-century to personify an idealized modern society with educated, independent individuals—and the consumption of fashionable styles and commodities from 1931 to 1936. To facilitate this exploration, I examine how Linglong Women’s Pictorial Magazine 玲瓏婦女圖畫雑誌 (1931-1937) addressed the consumption of fashionable styles and commodities before and during the New Life Movement 新生活運動.
動 (1934-1937), a government-sponsored cultural reform movement that attempted to militarize the country by creating citizens disciplined enough to sacrifice whatever was necessary to protect China from foreign domination or invasion.

*Linglong Woman’s Pictorial Magazine*, also called *Linloon Magazine* in English, was a pocket-sized illustrated magazine published between 1931 and 1937 at 56 Nanjing Road in Shanghai. The editorial board was comprised of Mr. Zhou Shixun 周世勳 (entertainment), Ms. Chen Zhenling 陳珍玲 (women’s features), and Mr. Lin Zecang 林澤蒼 (photography). Although two out of three persons on the editorial board were male, the majority of articles featured in the magazine were written by women. *Linglong* served as an open forum for its readers to tell their personal stories, and to “give free reign to women’s pent-up sincerities.” Thus, the magazine served as an open forum for its readers to tell their personal stories, advertise their talents, discuss their gender issues, and post their pictures. *Linglong* relied heavily on articles and photographs from readers,

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6 Due to the fact that Chinese names can be gender ambiguous and many of the articles in *Linglong* anonymous, I have only counted the articles in which the author reveals information relative to their gender. For example, if the author of an article mentioned that she had given birth, wore make-up, etc., I considered the author female. The majority of the articles used for this thesis were written by women.
which were regularly sent to the magazine in daunting numbers. Its target audience was China’s New Woman, particularly those living in Shanghai. Seeking to instruct its readers on all things cosmopolitan, fashionable, and new, the goal of the magazine was to “promote the exquisite life of women, and encourage lofty entertainment in society.” In order to accomplish these goals, the magazine was split in two. Both the front and the back halves had their own covers.

The front half of the magazine was generally reserved for discussions on women’s issues, the New Woman as defined by the editors, the importance of education, and calls for patriotism. The front half of the magazine also provided advice on topics such as the newly fashionable practice of dating, child-rearing, proper behavior, sexual education, fashion and hygiene. The second half of the magazine featured short prose from readers, articles about film, the sheet music for popular American songs—such as “Tip-Toe Through the Tulips” (1929) by Joseph Burke and “Kiss Me Goodnight, Not Goodbye”

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8 The editor of women’s features, Ms. Chen Zhenling 陳珍玲 (dates unknown), announced in the first issue of 1931 that she was “hoping to serve as a representative for the voices of the nation’s female compatriots, [and to] give free reign to women’s pent up sincerities.” She asked her “sisters 姊妹們” to submit drafts of their opinions actively. According to additional letters from the editor, Linglong relied heavily on articles and photographs from readers, which were sent to the magazine in daunting numbers regularly. For example, after the editorial staff received the green light for an article titled, “Why Should I Get Married? 我為什麼要出嫁,” they requested that readers send in their opinions in regard to the purpose of marriage. Likewise, when the editorial staff agreed, at the request of readers, to expand its entertainment section, they asked in return that readers send in their own fictional stories or short prose works for publication.

(1931) by Phil Spitalny—a list of the latest Western and Chinese movies, gossip on celebrities, Hollywood fashion or strange stories in society.

Together the articles and images in both the front and back halves of the magazine sculpted Linglong’s image of the New Woman 新女性. According to Linglong, the New Woman was independent, educated, and patriotic woman. She was also a fashionable woman who frequently participated in the latest Western pastimes, such as recreational dancing, leisurely shopping, and going to the movies. The New Woman persona as presented in Linglong relied heavily on consuming not only a specific fashionable style of dress, which included clothing, certain hairstyles, and make-up, but also an embrace of the cosmopolitan, Western lifestyle that these commodities represented.

Using Linglong as a source, I argue that from 1931 to 1936, the New Woman archetype became a fashion icon because the commercial media created a stylish image of the New Woman and portrayed it as an essential part of the New Woman persona, thereby necessitating the consumption of Western styles and commodities. This material-based image of the New Woman became a point of contention during the New Life Movement’s National Goods Campaign 國貨運動 (approximately 1934 to 1936), which encouraged Chinese citizens to purchase national goods exclusively in order to bolster China’s declining economy. Consequently, I argue, fashionable consumption\(^{10}\) created

\(^{10}\) The consumption of Western styles, clothes, accessories, cosmetics and toiletries.
tension between women and the state. The magazine’s implication that self-expression through fashion was intrinsic to the New Woman’s identity clashed with the New Life Movement’s claim that the New Woman’s identity centered on self-sacrificing patriotism. Articles published in Linglong during the New Life Movement demonstrate that women attempted to negotiate the New Woman persona in an effort to ease this tension.

Although Linglong Magazine remained in publication until 1937, my examination does not extend past its last issue in 1936. In 1936 the New Life Movement came no longer to be headed predominantly by Chiang Kai-shek （1897-1975） and officials in the Nationalist Government. Instead, leadership shifted to Madame Chiang （Soong May-ling 1898-2003）. Under Madame Chiang’s leadership, Christian ideology played a significantly larger role in the rhetoric of the New Life campaign.¹¹ New Life-defined consumption became less demonstrative of militaristic patriotism in a time of political and economic crisis. Acceptable consumption in the view of the movement’s advocates became more representative of sexual modesty and puritanical simplicity. As a result, I have decided to focus on the first two years of the New Life Campaign because these two years were the most concerned with the role of female consumption patterns in China’s economic crisis and National Goods Movement.

Definition of Terms in this Work

Although *Linglong* is used as the central source for this work, each chapter also relies on an array of other secondary and primary sources. Since these sources do not define the term New Woman in the exact same fashion, I first provide a brief explanation of how the term will be used in this work. The term New Woman has been defined in different ways both historically and analytically in historical scholarship. Generally, this essay utilizes the definition provided by Sarah E. Stevens. Stevens’ definition is based on the model of the New Woman created during the New Culture Movement 新文化運動 (1915-1921). Stevens argues that the New Woman was an “educated, political, and intensely nationalistic” woman who was devoted to assisting China’s transition into modernity—understood as China’s transformation into a strong nation on equal standing with Western countries. Additional markers of the New Woman, as Stevens understands the concept, included her pursuit of free love, desire for social improvement and Western-style education. According to Stevens, physical signifiers of the New Woman included:

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12 The New Culture Movement endorsed Western science and democracy as well as nationalism, liberalism, individualism, humanism and political responsibility. New Culturalists attacked traditionalism, patriarchy, and Confucianism as backwards and inhumane. Personal autonomy and individual rights were considered necessary to the modernization of China. Therefore, New Culturalists believed China’s progression into modernity required equality between the genders. The dialogue of gender equality produced a new social category of women: the New Woman 新女性 (*Xin nüxing*).
short hair, fashionable clothing, and a healthy physique (because of her close attention to modern hygiene and nutrition).\footnote{Ibid., 86.}

While the term New Woman is most often used to describe a woman with these qualities, scholars, such as Tani E. Barlow and Hu Ying, have also used the terms Modern Girl 摩登姑娘 and Modern Woman 摩登女性 when talking about a woman with the aforementioned qualities. The differing terms used among scholars results from the fact that the in the 1920s and 1930s the Chinese frequently used all three terms interchangeably in their writings to describe the same fashionable, patriotic, political and educated woman.\footnote{Stevens, “Figuring Modernity,” 83-88. These interpretations and definitions of the New Woman were taken from various sources included in Stevens’ analysis of the New Woman in the 1920s and 1930s and others I have collected myself. These primary sources include: Cai Chusheng’s film Xin nüxing (New Woman, 1935), Ding Ling’s Shanghai Spring 1930 (1930), Mao Dun’s Rainbow (1941), and Mao Dun’s Midnight (1930). Secondary sources include: Deng Dunlan, “My Plan for Women’s Emancipation and Self-Improvement” Young China 1, no. 4 (October 1919), Women of Republican China: A Sourcebook (New York: East Gate Publishing, 1999), 121-125. Wang Jingwei, “Thoughts on Women,” Women’s Magazine 10, no. 1 (January 1924), Women of Republican China: A Sourcebook (New York: East Gate Publishing, 1999), 141-144.} However, there are still instances in which Chinese writers in the 1920s and 1930s defined these terms in very distinct ways. Stevens argues that fiction writers from China’s Republican period (1912-1949) used terms New Woman and Modern Girl very strategically.

While the New Woman archetype continued to refer to an educated, patriotic and fashionable woman, the term Modern Girl came to represent everything that had gone
wrong with the New Woman. Antonia Finnane, argues that the term Modern Girl was first used in China in 1927.\textsuperscript{16} According to Finnane, the newspapers and novelists also described the Modern Girl as a woman with a bob and make-up.\textsuperscript{17} Stevens agrees with Finnane’s argument, but adds that the Modern Girl was a “cosmopolitan figure who celebrated the superficial aspects of modernity.”\textsuperscript{18} Associated with all the things that were dangerous and morally contemptuous in the modernizing world, the Modern Girl was often linked to the image of the \textit{femme fatale}. The Modern Girl was obsessed with material wealth, was extremely sexual, and sought nothing but pleasure and self-satisfaction. The dichotomy of the New Woman and the Modern Girl was employed by Chinese feminists, reformers, and literary writers of the late 1920s and 1930s.\textsuperscript{19} However, this dichotomy did not exist in \textit{Linglong}, where the terms New Woman and Modern Girl were interchangeable. Neither term consistently invoked a positive or negative meaning. The New Woman could be just as corrupt as the Modern Girl, and the Modern Girl could be just as virtuous as the New Woman.

Due to the fact that the terms New Woman, Modern Woman, and Modern Girl are used differently in the secondary and primary sources of this work, I have decided to use these terms as they were historically rather than as they are in Western scholarship to

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{17} Finnane, “Changing Clothes in China,” 167.
\item\textsuperscript{18} Stevens, “Figuring Modernity,” 89.
\item\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 83.
\end{itemize}
prevent confusion. The default term of this essay is New Woman; however, the proper terminology will still be used when translating Chinese texts into English. The following summary of the period from 1917 to 1934 provides additional information about the rise of consumer culture in China and explains how an influx of American media into Shanghai encouraged women to consume fashionable goods. This summary also provides basic knowledge about the New Life Movement and its focus on female consumers during its National Goods Campaign.

**Modernity, Consumption, and the New Woman**

The origin of modern consumer culture in China can be dated to the establishment of Shanghai’s first department stores in 1917. Although the city had been a major trading location and center of proto-capitalism since before the nineteenth century, the power of commercial culture had never before overturned the Confucian social hierarchy, in which merchants were placed at the bottom of a four-tiered occupational hierarchy. China’s losses in the First Opium War (1839-1842) and the installation of the treaty-port system in 1842 had demonstrated to the Chinese that industrialization and

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21 The term proto-capitalism here uses the definition provided by A.G. Frank, “A Theoretical Introduction to 5000 Years of World System History,” *Review* 13, no. 2 (Spring 1990):155-248. Frank defines proto-capitalism as a stage between feudalism and full capitalism. In which the following qualities are present: “1) extensive commodity production, and an important role for traders, who seek profit; 2) considerable investments in capital; 3) an increasing important role for wage labor; 4) however, not yet accumulation of capital as the primary driving force.”
commercialization appeared to have brought political power to Western nations.\footnote{\textit{Bergère, Shanghai}, 252.} As a result, commercialization and consumerism gradually developed a good reputation among Chinese citizens and the importance of merchants to China’s national development became strikingly apparent. Materialism and consumption not only became a symbol of Western modernity, but also of Chinese technological advancement and social progress.\footnote{Ibid.} The visual representation of China’s progression into modernity was deeply connected to women’s fashions.

Fashion in China had a longstanding relationship with social and political reform movements. Shifts in fashion were highly demonstrative of social change. According to Louise Edwards, political reformers used clothing and hair styles to publicize their commitment to reforms. For example, in 1911, revolutionaries opposing the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) showed their defiance by cutting off their queues. Qiu Jin 秋瑾 (1875-1907) wore a Western men’s business suit to demonstrate her equality with men.\footnote{Stella Dong, \textit{Shanghai: The Rise and Fall of a Decadent City, 1842-1949} (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2001), 146.} Women of the 1920s and 1930s used the same tactic to show their passionate rejection of Confucian patriarchy. Christina Gilmartin argues that women adopted “the practice of bobbing their hair to symbolize their emancipation from the traditional codes for
women.”

In Guangzhou, she continues, “hair-bobbing was the most important way for a young woman to signify that she was an active participant in the grand effort to construct a new order.” Thus, fashion played an important role in the visualization and public demonstration of a woman’s liberation and China’s modernity.

The visual representation of women’s liberation was significantly influenced by the influx of foreign media into China. The availability of foreign press and foreign film allowed Chinese feminists to view the ways in which other women had freed themselves from their respective patriarchal societies. Chinese feminists often drew inspiration from Japanese and European women’s movements of the early twentieth century. The women’s rights movement in America and images of women in the American media also had a significant effect on Chinese perceptions of modern femininity. Discussing the effects of American cinema on the New Woman archetype is vital to understanding how

26 Ibid.
28 Carol C. Chin, “Translating the New Woman: Chinese Feminists View the West, 1905-1915,” Gender and History 18, no. 3 (November 2006): 491
29 In this work, I define modern femininity as the antithesis of common markers of traditional femininity found in patriarchal societies, such as minimal education for women, financial dependency, and isolation within the domestic sphere. I regard the New Woman as an example of modern femininity because of her Western and Chinese-style education, financial independence, and participation in the public sphere. I elaborate on the markers of modern femininity in chapter one.
the image of the New Woman became associated with fashionable consumption and became a fashion icon. The following section, in which I discuss the adoption of modern ideas of femininity from America, is important to my analysis of Linglong because the magazine often regarded Hollywood actresses as the ideal models of womanhood. In addition, American film played a significant role in convincing women that consuming fashionable goods was part of the New Woman ideal.

**Adopting Modern Ideas of Femininity from America**

Katrina Gulliver’s *Shanghai Modernity in the Western Eye* asserts that the New Woman was the Western feminine ideal that other women “aspired” to have. Chinese women did look to the United States for examples of modern femininity. However, Carol C. Chin argues that the purpose of drawing inspiration from Western women was “not merely to translate American feminism or imitate foreign models of modernity.” The goal was to examine selective images of the American woman and appropriate those images “as a part of the creation of […] modern Chinese women.”

In her research on Chinese feminist views of liberated American women, Chin explains that women’s education in America largely inspired the New Woman archetype.

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31 Chin, “Translating the New Woman,” 2.

32 Ibid., 2.
Chinese feminists believed that the equal education women received in America starting in the 19th century was the source not only of their own independence, but also of national progress. Pulling information about female education in America from American women’s magazines, Chinese women’s magazines at the time often published articles that contrasted the personal and political freedom American women had gained through education with the dependency and subjugation of undereducated Chinese women. For example, in *Funü shibao* 婦女時報 (*Women’s Times*, 1911-1917), one writer commented that, without equal education for women, there would never be gender equality in China, and China would never be equal to the United States.\(^{33}\) The image of American women presented by Chinese women’s magazines such as *Funü shibao* aligned with the image of the New Woman established by New Culture feminists that was based on education, independence, and patriotism. These characteristics of American women’s lives were considered appropriate for adoption by many Chinese feminists. However, the process of extracting models from American media became problematic in the 1920s when the influx of American films presented an alternative image of modern American femininity.

\(^{33}\) Chin, “Translating the New Woman,” 497-498. Enrollment percentages for women in Chinese higher education still remained negligible until after 1920. Most women’s colleges or co-ed schools that accepted women remained in Beijing. However, Shanghai had the second-largest percentage of women participating in higher education in the 1920s. For more information on this topic see Paul J. Bailey, *Gender and Education in China: Gender Discourses and Women’s Schooling in the Early Twentieth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 109-110.
Cinema became a popular pastime in Shanghai during the 1920s. In 1926, there were approximately 156 cinemas in China.\textsuperscript{34} A new set of movies appeared almost every week at several of Shanghai’s thirty-seven theaters, some of which could seat thousands.\textsuperscript{35} Ninety percent of the foreign films screened at the theaters in the foreign concessions were American.\textsuperscript{36} In the 1930s, competition to screen popular American movies was so intense that individual theaters signed contracts with companies, such as MGM and Twentieth-Century Fox, to secure their exclusive right to show their productions.\textsuperscript{37}

Chinese men and women who considered themselves modern flocked to theaters for their latest dose of cosmopolitanism. However, the images of modern women in these films did not mesh with the intellectual and patriotic image created by Chinese reformers and feminists.

In the 1920s and the 1930s, the influx of American cinema in China often presented depoliticized versions of modern women that were deeply commercialized and rooted in material acquisition. In her autobiography, Hui-Lan Koo 黃蕙蘭 (1899–1992), wife of Chinese diplomat V.K Wellington Koo, known in Chinese as Gu Weijun 顧維鈞

\textsuperscript{35} Bergère, \textit{Shanghai}, 268.
(1887-1985), recounted the impact of Western cinema on Chinese perceptions of modern femininity in the mid-1920s:

[Hollywood] motion pictures made a deep impression on Chinese women. They aped the stars’ clothes and mannerisms as best they could. Elizabeth Arden blossomed into a feminine deity; her permanent wave transformed half the sleek heads in town into a mass of riotous curls; her false eyelashes proved a sensation. For a brief delirious moment, all fashionable Chinese ladies had lashes fluttering up to their eyebrows. And many a Shanghai dinner was brightened when a treacherous strip of eyelashes fell into the bird’s nest soup.  

As Koo has demonstrated, many Chinese women imitated the fashions and purchased the imported commodities Hollywood actresses wore. Indeed Hollywood was the model of modernity among many middle-class and upper-class Chinese women. As women consumed the images of modernity and femininity presented in American cinema, they came to believe that the materialist ideologies of American consumer culture were also a basic part of modern society.

Popular Hollywood actresses in China, such as Joan Blondell (1909-1979), frequently played characters that were independent and street smart, but morally questionable and obsessed with material acquisition. Their films were regularly advertised in Shanghai. For example, *Linglong* featured a list of the newest and most popular films that were screening in cinemas of Shanghai every week. Several of the films that the

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magazine advertised were laced with materialist ideologies. For example, *Gold Diggers of 1933*, directed by Mervyn Leroy (1900-1987), was among the list of new movies *Linglong* recommended to its readers. The film became iconic for its opening musical number, “We’re in the Money,” performed by Ginger Rogers (1911-1995).

![Image 1: “We're in the Money” Dance Scene. Mervyn LeRoy, “Gold Diggers of 1933,” 1933.](image)

Rogers’ character, the “glamour-puss,” is dressed in a bikini-style costume made entirely of silver coins. She sings, “We’re in the money, come on, my honey, let’s lend it, spend it, send it rolling around.” Shortly after, an elated chorus of girls, also scantily dressed in costumes made from American money, all dance the Can-Can with silver-
dollar props on a stage decorated with colossal dollar coins.\textsuperscript{39} American deifications of materialism in film worried Chinese feminists that Chinese women would become too concerned with the superficialities of modernity.

Chinese feminist Sophia Chen Zen (1890-1976)\textsuperscript{40} openly shared her concerns about the influences of popular American media on Chinese understandings of modern femininity and the New Woman. In a lecture delivered to an audience in Canada in 1933, Zen complained that American cinema was corrupting China’s modernization by presenting materialistic images of modernity in America. Western modernity, as presented in film, promoted the idea that the perpetual use of money for self-indulgent consumption created a modern lifestyle.\textsuperscript{41} She warned China’s new women about the consequences of blindly adopting Western models of femininity. The closing statements of Zen’s essay, “Chinese Women in a Modern World,” reminded women to be vigilant in their patriotic goals because the distractions of a modern society were a very real threat to their patriotic resolve:

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\textsuperscript{40} Zen’s original Chinese name was Chen Heng-zhe 陈衡哲. She adopted the name Sophia Chen Zen after she married H.C Zen, a Chinese chemist. She published her English-language works under this name.

Make a wise selection as well as a judicious revelation of the elements both in the old Chinese virtues and the new Western ones, so that [you] may not fall victim to the chaotic state, chaotic morally, intellectually, and socially.\(^\text{42}\)

Zen reminded her readers that the modern world needed “a society whose average female members were “intelligent, capable, broad-minded, and independent.” Speaking of the New Woman, she explained, “the modern world is demanding these changes of her. It needs women whose vision extends beyond her family courtyard.” Above all else, China needed the New Woman to transition into the modern era. Thus, a woman’s duty as a New Woman was not solely to enjoy her personal freedoms; she had a public obligation to her nation that superseded her individual materialist desires.

In 1931, an economic downturn sparked a national goods movement that tested every New Woman’s ability to put her patriotic duty above her desire to wear fashionable, Western imports. The two national goods movements that began in the wake of the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931 transformed consumption and fashion into an expression of a woman’s patriotic devotion instead of her liberation.

**Economic Decline and Shopping to Save the Nation**

On September 18, 1931, the Japanese army invaded Manchuria with minimal resistance from Nationalist 國民黨 (Guomindang) troops. The Japanese forces eventually

\(^{42}\)Ibid., 15.
established a pro-Japanese puppet government in the region. The Japanese occupation led to a decline in trade between Manchuria and Shanghai. To add insult to injury, the Chinese tael bounced back, which “discouraged exports, dried up foreign investments, and made credit difficult to obtain in China.” 43 Several of Shanghai’s factories and commercial companies were forced to close or went bankrupt. For example, the Shexin Company had to close two of its factories and seventy of Shanghai’s traditional qianzhuang banks went bankrupt. 44

Under these conditions, the Nationalist Government believed that the exclusive consumption of domestically produced goods was necessary to keep the country afloat. Consequently, the government sponsored the National Goods Campaign 中國國貨運動 of 1931. This campaign coincided with a series of anti-Japanese boycotts that began after the Japanese invasion of Manchuria. 45 Supporters of the boycott proposed that in order to successfully strengthen China’s economy and retaliate against the Japanese, Chinese citizens had to boycott Japanese goods and exclusively consume national products. Civilian national goods associations were assembled and operated in an ad hoc manner to support the campaign. Although the National Goods Movement of 1931 was a direct result of anti-Japanese sentiments, it was also a response to China’s growing foreign trade

44 Ibid., 167.
45 Karl Gerth, *China Made: Consumer Culture and the Creation of the Nation* (Harvard University Asia Center, 2004), 177-179.
deficit.\textsuperscript{46} Since the popularity of Western fabrics, toiletries, perfumes, and cosmetics proved to put more stress on the trade deficit, the Nationalists regarded these items and Japanese imports as detrimental to the country’s economic stability.\textsuperscript{47} As the primary consumers of imported commodities, Chinese women became key players in the county’s various National Goods Movements from 1931 to 1936, the first of which was the National Goods Campaign that immediately followed the Japanese invasion in 1931.\textsuperscript{48} However, the effectiveness of this campaign fizzled by 1933.\textsuperscript{49}

In 1934, the Nationalist Government (1912-1949), launched another two-year National Goods Campaign as part of the New Life Movement’s economic revitalization plan. The New Life Movement was a reform program designed to revolutionize Chinese society in preparation for possible military attacks. It was an extremely comprehensive campaign, implementing military, economic, and cultural reforms. It relied on aspects of Confucian conservatism and a glorification of national values to reform hygiene and

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{46}From 1920 to 1930, the trade balance between imported and exported good was -2,624,923 Haiguan taels. From 1931 to 1932, it was -1,080,272 Haiguan taels. For more information see Gerth, \textit{China Made}, 44.
\textsuperscript{47}Gerth, \textit{China Made}, 303.
\textsuperscript{48}For more information on the various National Goods Movements in China during the 1920s and 1930s, see Karl Gerth, \textit{China Made: Consumer Culture and the Creation of the Nation} (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).
\textsuperscript{49}Chiang Kai-shek began to withdraw support for anti-Japanese boycotts in 1932. Although, at the grassroots level, pressure to consume patriotically and boycott imported goods continued, the deficit continued to grow. In 1933, the trade balance was -733,274 Chinese National Dollars with a Net number of imports equaling 1,345,567. The net number of exports only amounted to 612,293 Chinese National Dollars. For more information see Gerth, \textit{China Made}, 44 and 178.
\end{flushright}
behavior. Chiang Kai-shek, leader of the Nationalist Government, believed that social reform needed to begin with four factors: clothing, food, residence, and behavior. If the simplest parts of life could be reformed, it was argued, drastic social changes could gradually follow. In the wake of China’s enormous trade deficit, leaders of the New Life Movement believed that the National Goods Campaign could inhibit the consumption of imported clothing, and cosmetics, thereby alleviating the stress on China’s economy.

1934, the first year of the New Life Movement’s two-year National Goods Campaign, was specially directed towards women. This year was titled the Woman’s Year of National Goods. In 1935, the Woman’s Year of National Goods came to an end. Although the second year of the National Goods Campaign was not dedicated to any specific group of consumers, many Chinese believed that female consumers still had the greatest impact in the effectiveness of the Campaign. Women remained under a microscopic lens as their consumption patterns were watched by the Nationalist Party and civilian organizations supporting the National Goods Campaign. The chapters that follow are designed to examine comprehensively how the consumption of fashionable Western styles, cosmetics, and fabrics created conflict between the state and women during these two National Goods Campaigns of 1931-1933 and 1934-1936.

Chapter one analyzes how the act of consuming fashionable styles and commodities reinforced key characteristics of the New Woman archetype, particularly independence, selfhood, and self-ownership. The purpose of this analysis is to demonstrate that consumption became an important expression of the New Woman’s liberated status and her equal standing with men. In the midst of this, the commercial media used the growing popularity of fashionable commodities among women to turn the New Woman archetype into a profitable fashion icon. I examine how the media created a link between a specific fashion style—comprised of high-heels, permanent waves, bobbed hair, make-up, Western clothing and luxurious accessories—to New Woman persona.

The second chapter studies Linglong in order to expand upon two arguments made in the first chapter. The first of these arguments is that women were consuming hair products, shoes, cosmetics, and Western-style clothing to replicate a stylish image the commercial media suggested was part of the New Woman’s identity. However, this chapter focuses on how Linglong’s contributors reacted to this association. Second, this chapter explores Linglong’s stance on the use of imported cosmetics to demonstrate that from its inception Linglong endorsed the used of “unpatriotic” goods. The final section of this chapter showcases tensions between fashionable consumption and patriotism by exploring Linglong’s reaction to some of the controversy surrounding the qipao, a “Chinese” garment that used imported fabrics, during the National Goods Movement of 1931. This case study of the qipao also provides insight into some female reactions to the
government’s ban on imported goods and Western fashions during the New Life Movement’s National Goods Campaign in 1934.

The final chapter focuses heavily on the New Life Movement’s National Goods Campaign, which directly targeted female consumers. In this chapter, I examine articles and images contributed to Linglong by its readers to showcase how women debated the state’s regulation of female consumption. Special attention is given to the readers who rejected the New Life Movement’s control on fashion and consumption because, they believed, fashion was part of their right as an individual to control their bodily appearance. This chapter demonstrates how the belief that shopping represented independence was employed by some women during the New Life Movement, resulting in a disagreement between these women and the Nationalist Government.

This disagreement is the site in which we can view how social tension resulted from differing views of modernity held by the state and by some of Linglong’s readers. While the latter believed that modernity lay in a woman’s ability to control her own affairs, the former believed modernity could be attained when individuals renounced their own desires and unconditionally assisted the state in achieving its goals.
Chapter One:
Consumption Shapes Modern Femininity and the New Woman

The important question so far as we were concerned, was what the Chinese girls were going to do about these new [Western] styles. The most fashionable ones had already begun to wear skirts instead of trousers, [sic] that being one of the manifestations of modernity.¹

-Carl Crow, *Four Hundred Million Customers*

In the 1920s and 1930s, department stores created a social space in which women could not only showcase their financial equality with men, but also discover a sense of self. Department stores and the practice of shopping legitimized the New Woman as an icon of autonomy, intelligence, and equality. Thus, the department stores, together with the act of consuming, initiated women into the community of a Westernized modernity. Though it is difficult to argue that fashionable commodities² actually created personhood, it is arguable that the Chinese believed that fashionable goods could create selfhood. For example, the Chinese commercial media played a large role in reshaping the image of the New Woman into one that was linked to the acquisition of luxury items rather than attaining an education.

This chapter seeks to examine ways in which the media advertised a particularly fashionable style—including high heels, permanent waves, bobbed hair, make-up, and

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¹Crow, *Four Hundred Million Customers*, 39.
²Goods and clothing that were usually imported from the West or based on Western styles.
Western-style clothing—as part of the New Woman archetype. Some advertisements claimed that fashionable clothes were necessary to the New Woman archetype. Other advertisements in the media visually combined a specific style—made up of high-heels, permanent waves, bobbed hair, make-up, Western clothing and luxurious accessories—with fashion motifs that had originated during the Women’s Liberation Movement. In addition, the chapter serves to introduce the ways in which consuming fashionable goods was an important expression of a woman’s freedom from patriarchy. To accomplish all these goals, this chapter discusses the relationship between fashion, consumption, and New Woman ideal. Thus, the best place to begin this analysis is the place where fashion, the New Woman and consumption collided to showcase modern femininity and social progress: department stores.

**Department Stores and Consumption as an Act of Personhood**

The first department stores—baihuo gongsi—were built in British Hong Kong in the first decade of the twentieth century. These Chinese department stores were modeled on British department stores that had been established in Australia in the early 19th century. In Shanghai, the Chinese capitalized, owned and managed many of the most popular department stores on Nanjing Road, the commercial center of the city. The four major department stores in Shanghai emerged primarily out of the efforts of three men: Ma Yingbiao 马应彪 (1860-1944), Guo Le 1874-1956) and his brother Guo Chuan 郭泉
Shanghai’s four major department stores Sun Sun 新新, Dah Sun 大新, Wing On 永安, and Sincere 先施 were established in the 1920s and 1930s. The Guo brothers opened Wing On’s Shanghai branch in 1917. Ma Yingbiao founded Sincere in Hong Kong in 1900 before installing the Shanghai branch in 1917. Sun Sun and Dah Sun followed in 1926 and 1936 respectively.\(^3\)

The facilities of Shanghai’s four largest department stores revolutionized shopping. They transformed it from a mundane domestic task into a form of entertainment that exposed women to the luxuries of a cosmopolitan world. Shanghai’s four big department stores included coffee shops, restaurants, hotels, entertainment gardens, and even dancehalls.\(^4\) The introduction of fixed prices, seasonal sales, mail order delivery, eye-catching window displays, and courtesy training for employees, successfully made department stores budget friendly and welcoming for women. In a short time, these features made department stores into “veritable cultural and community centers” where women and men gathered for socializing.\(^5\) Department stores offered a space in which the humanist and individualist ideologies of the New Culture Movement

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\(^4\) The Great Eastern Cabaret was built on the premises of Wing On department store in 1928. In 1936, the Paradise Ballroom was built on the fifth floor of the Sun Company department store.

could be expressed, and the autonomy of the New Woman archetype could thrive. Hence, it was very typical for shopping trips to be advertised as the “embodiment of feminine well-being.”

The various forms of Western entertainment, and imported or luxury goods sold in the department stores, made them sites of a Westernized modernity. For the consumer, participation in the leisure activities at department stores offered initiation into the modern, international community. Based on Frederick Cooper’s understanding of modernity, Carol C. Chin suggests that the Chinese understood modernity as a representation of their equality with Western nations. Therefore, China’s attainment of equal standing with the West was understood as a kind of modernity. In this light, modernity was a universal standard that other (Western) nations had achieved and China had yet to reach. Invoking Chin’s suggestion that modernity was a representation of equivalent levels of technological and ideological advancement between nations, massive department stores, such as Wing On and Sincere, symbolized China’s equality with Western nations. The Renaissance style of Sincere’s architecture, Wing On’s ventilation

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7In his book Frederick Cooper questioned “is modernity a condition—something written into the exercise of economic and political power at a global level? Or is a representation, a way of talking about the world in which one uses a language of temporal transformation while bringing out the simultaneity of global unevenness, in which ‘tradition’ is produced by telling a story of how some people became ‘modern.’” Frederick Cooper, Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 114. Quoted in Chin, “Translating the New Woman,” 491.
8Chin, “Translating the New Woman,” 491.
and lighting, and Sun Sun’s grand ballroom and personal radio station were all representations of China’s equal standing with America and Europe. When Dah Sun opened in 1936 boasting Shanghai’s first escalators and air-conditioning on every floor, it was incontestable evidence that China had entered the exclusive community of Western modernity.9

Brian Wemp’s argument about the Parisian department store, the Grands Magasins Dufayel, sheds light on the power of department stores to function as social equalizers. In the Grands Magasins Dufayel, goods and clothing that were once reserved for the bourgeoisie were made widely available to the working class at low prices. As a result, Wemp argues, while this department store was “disseminating bourgeois elegance to a wider public, it was also undermining the bourgeoisie’s material basis of prestige.”10 In China, department stores allowed women to display publicly their financial independence from their husbands and fathers, dispelling oppressive gender distinctions founded on dichotomies of dependence and independence. The sight of these women shopping freely alongside men was a marked expression of equality between the sexes. Several of Shanghai’s female factory workers expressed a new sense of independence from their husbands or families when they were able to purchase freely whatever they

wanted with their earnings.\textsuperscript{11} When Cora Deng 邓裕志 (1900-1996), head of the YWCA’s Labor Bureau in Shanghai, conducted an interview with groups of female workers in various factories in the city, her participants revealed that “in keeping part of their earnings they had more freedom about buying the clothes they wanted and also did not have to get permission from elders in the family.”\textsuperscript{12} For these women, the act of purchasing fashionable clothes and cosmetics was an expression of their independence from parties that were traditionally in control of their lives.

The act of consuming cosmetics and toiletries (toothpaste, sanitary napkins, etc.) endowed a woman with the right to define herself, not only physically, but also mentally. In Confucianism, a woman had no ownership over her body. According to the principle of filial piety, as a child a woman’s body belonged to her parents. Any alterations she made to her body were an affront to her parents. As a wife, her body belonged to her husband largely for reproductive and domestic purposes. However, vanishing creams, eyebrow tweezers, electric curlers, rouge and lipstick allowed a woman to transform her natural appearance however she saw fit. In this way, cosmetics offered a sense of personal ownership. For this reason and with the influence of American standards of beauty, it was not uncommon for Chinese women’s magazines to promote the use of

\textsuperscript{11}Female factory workers could only shop in the department stores of downtown Shanghai on holidays because factory districts, such as Yangshupu and Hongkou, were a considerable distance from Shanghai’s commercial center. However, other working women who worked in the city center, such as dancers, salesgirls or clerks, were able to frequently visit large department stores.

cosmetics. For example, *Linglong* featured articles that explained how a woman could redden her lips, remove or hide fine hair above her lips,\(^{13}\) permanently curl her hair, and appear to lengthen her torso using cosmetics or popular fashions. Modernist writer Ouwei Ou, went so far as to suggest that Chinese women surgically alter their eyebrows so that they could meet Western standards of beauty.\(^{14}\)

The kind of femininity that these products created was one that was based on science and technology with regards to the use of chemicals in cosmetic products and the electricity used in electronic curlers. Although Tani Barlow argues that fashionable products themselves did not generate personhood, she does agree that using these commodities put a woman in charge of her body.\(^{15}\) Furthermore, when cosmetics became an essential part of modern femininity, they not only created a sense of autonomy, but also a sense of social progress.

Knowledge of how to use modern cosmetics and toiletries became a defining feature of the New Woman that distinguished her from traditional women who did not have control over their own bodies and were not educated. A scientific femininity required scientific understandings of the female body. A woman’s ability to distinguish

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\(^{13}\) “Hong chun fa,” *Linglong* 40 (1931): 1571.


the best feminine care products for the female body showcased her ability to understand the body in biological ways that were analogous to modern Western scientific studies of the human body. Scientific understandings of the human body had been adopted during the New Culture Movement as part of effort to attain “new knowledge 新知,” a term created during the New Culture Movement to denote useful and modern Western political or cultural knowledge.\textsuperscript{16} Comprehension of scientific commodities proved that a woman had knowledge that was typical of the modern (Western) world. Barlow also argues that this knowledge created “a mirror of modern recognition.”\textsuperscript{17} Similarly, the use of Western cleaning supplies, such as soap and powdered detergent, indicated a woman’s adoption of modern standards of cleanliness and hygiene. \textit{Furen huabao 婦人畫報 (Women’s Pictorial, 1933-1937)} told its readers that the New Woman had to develop her “internal qualities by attaining a certain level of taste for the modern.”\textsuperscript{18} Therefore, consumption not only gave a woman a sense of physical independence, but also exhibited her comprehension of modern ideologies. This knowledge legitimatized the New Woman’s place in the modern world, thus reaffirming the New Woman’s distinction from traditional women.

In these ways, department stores became spaces in which the individualism, egalitarianism, and technological advancement of modern society all came together for

\textsuperscript{16}Bergere, \textit{Shanghai: China’s Gateway to Modernity}, 256.
\textsuperscript{17}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{18}Dong, “Who’s Afraid of the Chinese Modern Girl,” 204.
average citizens to enjoy. Women and men who shopped in department stores believed themselves to be initiated into a sophisticated, cosmopolitan class. In the case of middle-class women, they rose to the level of upper-class women because they could acquire the same fashionable commodities and participate in similar forms of entertainment regardless of their socio-economic background. In the case of all Chinese women seeking to be modern, the availability of imported or luxury goods in department stores gave women affordable access to items that were iconic of modern femininity, thereby granting them entrance into the international community of liberated, new women. In the 1920s and 1930s, the business world quickly pounced on the opportunity to use this new scientific, commodity based femininity to make a profit.

**Marketing the Essentials of Luxury Items**

In his work on the American Flapper, Kenneth A. Yellis suggests that the feminist activist of the Progressive Era (1890s-1920s) transformed into the fashionable, pleasure-driven flapper of the Roaring Twenties in only a decade because of the American commercial media and the availability of jobs for women. He argues that the transition of women into wage-earners was the catalyst for their transition into consumers:

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19 Textiles, apparel and cosmetics made up the largest portion of imported products sold in department stores. As a result, department stores went to great lengths to keep up with the latest Western fashions and cosmetics. Each department store published a brochure that showcased the latest modern fashions from Europe and America that their tailors could recreate.
The influx of well-educated single and married women into the professions resulted in the creation of a new class of women who constituted a growing and lucrative market, especially for clothes.\(^{20}\)

Yellis’ argument remains valid when applied to China’s New Woman. Like the flapper, maintaining the lifestyle of a modern, urban woman in China—which was based on American examples—required consumption. Permanent waves, powdered faces, and all the other wrappings of the New Woman came with a price tag; even going to one of Shanghai’s nightclubs required lessons in Western dance styles. This created an opportunity for big businesses to take advantage of the New Woman’s persona and make it serve consumerism. The foreign and domestic markets continually reproduced images of the New Woman that highlighted characteristics women celebrated (i.e. independence, personhood, and glamour). Printed and electronic advertisements then linked this image to the acquisition of fashionable goods.

Radio programs and product exhibitions created a language of mass consumption that promised initiation into the modern world of liberated females. Of these electronic mediums, the radio used the most direct method of convincing women that the identity of the New Woman was actually rooted in the products she purchased. In the 1930s, there were over thirty radio stations in Shanghai, some private and some public.\(^{21}\) Due to the


fact that only the affluent Chinese could afford a radio, some stations paid public spaces, such as theaters, tea houses, and department stores, to broadcast their programs.\textsuperscript{22} Lao Jiu He Silk and Foreign Goods Emporium 老九和綢緞洋貨局 and Lao Jie Fu Silk and Foreign Emporium 老街福綢緞洋貨局, two of the finest silk and fur retailers in Shanghai, were among the most successful businesses to utilize this advertising technique to shape the image of the New Woman as a self-indulgent consumer and root modernity in consumption.

Wen-hsin Yeh explains that Lao Jiu He’s songs “promoted their silk gowns and fur coats as an indispensible part of modernity.”\textsuperscript{23} Consequently, a woman might find it difficult to see herself as fashionable without shopping at Lao Jiu He. In this way, the company wrapped the persona of the New Woman closely around the practice of consumption. Its advertisements glorified the image of a fashionable woman in silk or fur, coming and going through stores, slowed only by the height of her heels and the weight of her shopping bags.\textsuperscript{24}

Lao Jie He was not the only department store to use this method. Lao Jie Fu Silk and Foreign Goods Emporium also claimed that luxurious cosmetic goods were essential

\textsuperscript{22}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{23}Yeh, \textit{Shanghai Splendor}, 69.
\textsuperscript{24}Carlton Benson, “Consumers Are Also Soldiers: Subversive Songs from Nanjing Road during the New Life Movement,” \textit{Inventing Nanjing Road: Commercial Culture in Shanghai, 1900-1945} (New York: Cornell University, 1999), 110.
to a New Woman. In one of Lao Jie Fu’s advertisement titled, “The Modern Girl,” the ideal woman is portrayed as a woman who walks around the city freely in high heels, and “brand new” fashionable clothes as she visits “parks, theaters, and dancehalls.”\(^{25}\) After presenting this image of the ideal woman on the radio, the company supplemented it with a printed advertisement that said, “modern women wear modern clothes, and Lao Jie Fu’s silk is completely modern […] if you don’t wear Lao Jie Fu’s modern fabric, you can’t be considered a modern girl.”\(^{26}\) Both advertisements intended to create an idealized New Woman that could only be realized through consumption. Overt suggestions made by department stores tied fashionable commodities to the New Woman persona. In the printed media, calendar posters of the 1920s and 1930s subtly suggested that a woman seeking the New Woman ideal could also be fashionable.

**Calendar Posters and the New Woman Style**

Calendar posters 月份牌 (month boards) were printed advertisements that featured a calendar and an illustrated poster attached. The poster usually featured the image of a woman, although there were some calendar posters that featured children. Calendar posters originated in Hong Kong in the 1850s; they arrived in Shanghai in the

\(^{25}\) Benson, “Consumers Are Also Soldiers,” 110.

\(^{26}\) Ibid. In this article, Benson only provided an English translation of his Chinese sources. I’ve have used Benson’s transition.
1910s and gradually spread to other cities in China. The earliest color-lithographed calendar posters were given away with the purchase of a Shanghai lottery ticket. They were also distributed by companies for the new year, given to customers in stores as gifts after a purchase, and sold by street vendors.

While calendar posters were designed to advertise various goods, the actual commodity was often pictured beneath the illustrated female figure or embedded into a border surrounding the main illustration. The calendar was either at the bottom or the sides of the page and the name of the company advertising its products was usually at the top. Given the size of the actual commodities pictured in comparison to the illustration, they appeared to be subsidiary to the female form.

In the 1920s and 1930s, a new wave of graduates from the Shanghai Institute of Fine Arts, and apprentices from the commercial art industry became the leading designers for calendar posters. The most prolific artists in this group included: Xie Zhiguang 謝之

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28 Ibid.
32 Ibid., 67. Lynn Pan has dated the second generation of calendar posters from 1928 to 1937. Her dates are intended to correspond to the middle Haipai cultural period in Shanghai. I have chosen to date the second generation of calendar posters more generally because I have found that
During this time, veteran designers Zheng Mantuo 鄭曼陀 (1885-1959) and Xu Yongqing 徐詠青 (1880-1953), who had established themselves in the 1910s, collaborated in Shanghai on the production of a set of calendar posters that would become the most popular posters of the 1920s. The women pictured in their illustrations set the standard for a fashionable style that became associated with independent, liberated women.

Typically the women pictured in these calendar posters were dressed in styles that blended Western and Chinese tastes. The models were flawlessly made up with short bobbed hair, rosy cheeks, and permanent waves. They dressed in form-fitting clothes and wore high heels. “Always Thinking of You” by Ni Gengye exemplifies the fashionable style that became associated with liberated women. The model has bobbed hair with a permanent wave. She wears blush, red lipstick, and high heels.33 In “A Prosperous City

33 Liang, Selling Happiness.
that Never Sleeps 不夜城” by Yuan Xiutang 袁秀堂 (dates unknown) the illustrated female also wears this style.\textsuperscript{34}


In almost every calendar poster featuring a woman in the late 1920s and 1930s, high heels, permanent waves, Western accessories, rouge, and lipstick became commodities that, when worn together, formed a modern style for the ideal emancipated woman—the New Woman. The qipao 旗袍, a form-fitting Chinese gown, was the most common garment illustrated in calendar posters, as seen in “Always Thinking of You”

\textsuperscript{34} Lynn Pan, \textit{Shanghai Style: Art Design Between the Wars} (San Francisco: Long River Press, 2008), 164.
and “A Prosperous City that Never Sleeps.” However, Western fashions also appeared frequently on the models in these posters. For example, an advertisement for Kou Jie Su Tooth Paste and Tooth Powder 口潔素牙膏精粉刷牙 featured a woman wearing blue Western-style slacks, a tight short-sleeved sweater, and a collared shirt.\textsuperscript{35} This fashionable style of dress became associated with the New Woman archetype because it invoked fashion motifs that were linked to the Chinese women’s liberation movement 女解放運動.

The combination of Western fashions and styles that had a longstanding relationship with the visual representation of gender equality in China created a link between fashionable dress and the New Woman persona. As previously stated, women used short hair to publicly display their liberation from patriarchy and their participation in the process of strengthening China. Antonia Finnane has argued that short hair and natural breasts, rather than breasts that were bound,\textsuperscript{36} were unanimously recognized among Chinese female activists as symbols of women’s liberation.\textsuperscript{37}


\textsuperscript{36} Breast Binding was a process by which a woman used a “little vest,” a Chinese under garment, to flatten her breasts by tightening up the laces in the back of the garment. It was designed to streamline the body and create a boyish figure. However, many women and physicians believed that breast binding was detrimental to female health because it hindered the growth of breasts, was harmful to a woman’s children and caused bad circulation. Consequently, the practice became unpopular. For more information see, Finnane, \textit{Changing Clothes}, 160-162.

\textsuperscript{37} Finnane, \textit{Changing Clothes in China}, 161.
Designers for calendar posters illustrated female figures with short hair and unbound breasts with painted faces, permanent waves, high heels and western clothing. In addition, female characters in posters of the 1920s and 1930s exposed their long legs, cleavage and healthy bare bodies proudly. Their make-up and heels suggested that the illustrated figure represented a woman in control of her bodily appearance. Simultaneously, their short hair and unbound breasts associated her to the Women’s Liberation Movement as well as the Natural Breasts Campaign started by female activists in the 1920s. Images that were set outdoors further emphasized the illustrated woman’s emancipation from her boudoir and her entrance into the public sphere.

A woman’s celebratory entrance into the public sphere was the subject of a British American Tobacco ad titled, “Joy is Within.” The scene is set outside on a mountain trail in the daytime (see image 1.2). A woman sits upon a bike in a pair of white heels, shorts and a Western halter-top. While the scenery and her bicycle suggest that she is a woman who frequently embraces her freedom to explore the outdoors, her wardrobe emphasizes fashion motifs that are emblematic of the female liberation and independence. Her blouse hangs open to reveal that her breasts are unbound and left in their natural state and her hair bobbed. Her smiling face is made-up
with soft pink blush and red lipstick. The poster suggests that an emancipated woman wears make-up, and occasionally wears revealing Western clothing.³⁸

Another poster by the China Hua Dong Tobacco Company proposes the same suggestion (image 1.3). The female character stands in a room that appears to be the entrance to a hotel or a dancehall. She wears a low-cut Western-style dress. While her gown highlights the natural shape of her breasts, it also makes it evident

that she is not wearing a bra and her breasts are unbound. Her hair is short with a permanent wave. Her make-up includes pink blush and red lipstick. Similarly, in Zheng Mantuo’s “Charleston” for Nanyang Brothers Tobacco Company 南洋兄弟烟草公司 a woman dressed in a qipao dances the Charleston in a nightclub with another young lady wearing a Western-style drop-waist dress. While only one of the women has a perm, they both have short hair. Again, a woman in the public sphere is portrayed fashionably. In these two illustrations fashion styles that are deeply associated with female liberation are meshed with fashionable, Western cosmetics.


It is unclear whether or not advertisers and designers intentionally mixed nuanced Chinese fashions with Western styles, but a consequence of this blend was a subtle implication that an emancipated woman had a permanent wave, used cosmetics, and wore Western clothing and high heels. According to Shu-mei Shih, visual representations of the liberated woman in the printed media suggested that:

She was liberated from some of the restrictions of the traditional woman, but she has slipped into a new set of protocols—her dress must be in good taste, her actions liberal, she must follow trends and fashions, and must rely on the haven of consumer culture.⁴⁰

The depiction of liberated women in this fashionable style of dress prompted the consumption of cosmetics, Western-style clothing, high heels, and products necessary to perm one’s hair. Wen-hsin Yeh concludes that the images of women in these posters encouraged desire and possession “not of the women portrayed, but of everything they wore and touched.”⁴¹ From love seats to bicycles or fur-trimmed coats to high-heeled shoes and cigarettes, each product in the advertisement seemed to offer the viewer the same glamorous and self-governing lifestyle as the woman pictured.⁴² Consequently, these commodities became connected to the New Woman’s emancipated fashion and lifestyle. For example, when cigarette advertisements featured elegantly dressed women

⁴¹ Yeh, Shanghai Splendor, 67.
⁴² Ibid., 67-68.
with short hair and permanent waves, it was not long before these advertisements convinced women that smoking was a fashionable activity among affluent Chinese women.\footnote{Ibid., 68.} Without a doubt, as Ellen Laing argues, “the Chinese learned of the latest styles indirectly through newspapers and magazines,” especially from the advertisements featured in them.\footnote{Laing, \textit{Selling Happiness}, 189.}

Circulating to tens of millions per image, the posters established a model for womanhood that “fed on the contemporary mass cultural discourse.”\footnote{Del Lago, “Crossed Legs in 1930s Shanghai,”108.} Women were not simply imitating the models presented in calendar posters; they were also influencing the way women appeared in these posters. Advertisers often considered the opinions of their target audiences when they designed posters. Carl Crow admitted that his company relied heavily on surveys from his consumers in Shanghai to determine what styles and products were in vogue.\footnote{Crow, \textit{Four Hundred Million Customers}, 314.} In this way, women had a great deal of agency in shaping how the New Woman archetype was presented in the printed media. Francesca Del Lago has made a provocative point about the relationship between consumption and construction of the New Woman persona in advertisements and popular magazines:

Calendar posters contributed to create a hybrid format of gender representation where women are portrayed simultaneously as both subject and object of market

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{Ibid} Ibid., 68.
\bibitem{Laing} Laing, \textit{Selling Happiness}, 189.
\bibitem{Del Lago} Del Lago, “Crossed Legs in 1930s Shanghai,”108.
\bibitem{Crow} Crow, \textit{Four Hundred Million Customers}, 314.
\end{thebibliography}
and sexual consumption, and more precisely where the boundaries of subject and object […] are in an endless reflective interplay of consumer and consumed.⁴⁷

Thus, the image of the New Woman was simultaneously produced and consumed by the media and everyday women. Consequently, the distinction between the consumer and the consumed became exceedingly blurred. Was the media shaped by the New Woman or was the media shaping her? It proved to be neither. As part of the largest group of consumers in China, the New Woman was consumption itself. It shaped her, she guided it, and they both sustained and propelled each other. As the New Woman ideal became closely associated with the consumption of fashionable goods, critiques that the New Woman had exchanged her patriotic devotion for a trendy wardrobe also emerged in the media, particularly in the form of cartoons.

In a cartoon by Zhang Hancheng 張漢澄 entitled “Sealed Goods,” Zhang placed two drawings side by side. The image on the right is a perfume bottle draped in a sheer wrapper with the emblem of a bouquet of flowers pasted onto the middle of the bottle (see image 2.2). To the left is an image of a woman that is approximately the same length and width as the perfume bottle. The woman has bobbed hair and is dressed in a qipao.

⁴⁷Del Lago, “Crossed Legs in 1930s Shanghai,”111.
She is draped in a sheer veil that is identical to the wrapping of the perfume bottle and holding a bouquet that is an exact replicate of the emblem on the bottle.48


This image conveys the belief that the New Woman was nothing more than the fashionable cosmetic and styles that she wore—aesthetically pleasing, but a useless luxury. In the eyes of conservatives, fashion and the acquisition of fashionable goods and styles became too closely associated with the New Woman model. Many people began to believe that women who sought the New Woman ideal had forgotten their patriotic obligation to improving the nation. Conservative activist Huang Jiade criticized the New Woman for reveling in the benefits of her freedom and forgetting that the

purpose of her liberation was predominately for national goals. He argued that in their haste to be liberated from Confucian patriarchy and confinement within domesticity, these women had swung from one extreme to the next. They were too eager to prove their liberation through their clothing and cosmetics. As the 1930s continued, similar criticisms arose in magazines and newspapers in larger numbers.

**Conclusion**

The hey-day of the New Woman coincided with the most conservative period in Nationalist political history: The Nanjing Decade, 1927-1937. In an effort to reunify and control the nation, the Nationalists purged most of the leftists in the White Terror (1927) and attempted to regulate the daily lives of citizens to maintain order. At this point the vilification of the female consumer reached new heights. Attempts to distinguish forms of consumption that were beneficial to nation building from forms that were not sparked debates between women, particularly during the National Goods Campaign that followed the Japanese Invasion in 1931.

In the midst of the Nanjing Decade, *Linglong Magazine* published its first issue in 1931 and took on the task of vindicating fashionable women and leisurely consumption. The magazine endorsed fashionable clothing, cosmetics, and hairstyles as part of the New Woman’s modern, cosmopolitan lifestyle. *Linglong* often showcased the glamour of

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Hollywood actresses as a guide to beauty and fashion. In several cases, articles in the magazine set Western fashion as the standard of beauty. The following chapter demonstrates that *Linglong* also promoted a style of dress—comprised of high heels, permanent waves, cosmetics and Western accessories—as part of the New Woman persona from 1931 to 1933. However, it expands upon this point by showcasing how the magazine’s contributors responded to the New Woman’s close association with fashion. The end of the following chapter uses a case study of *Linglong*’s reaction to the *qipao* to illustrate how this fashionable style became problematic during the New Life Movement’s National Goods Campaign from 1931 to 1936.
Chapter Two:

The New Woman and the National Goods Campaign in Linglong Magazine,

1931-1933

Basically what ordinary people call modern is based solely on outward appearance. A girl wearing the latest fashion of 1933, her hair set in a “permanent wave,” blood red lips, and leather shoes 6 or 10 cm high is seen as the modern girl. Indeed it is so. From her appearance she seems to represent the meaning of contemporary. But if this kind of person does not have brains, then isn't it a joke [to call her modern]?¹

In 1933, Miss Shi Lili 施莉莉 wrote these words to her “sisters 姊妹們” who regularly read Linglong. In this passage, she makes it clear that there were women who misunderstood how to achieve the New Woman ideal. Her argument that fashion should not be the defining feature of a New Woman was repeated several times in Linglong. The superficiality of consumerism was also occasionally critiqued in the magazine. However, Shi Lili does not entirely reject fashionable consumption. She acknowledges that purchasing and wearing modern fashions are characteristics of modern femininity, but, she insists, they are not the most important characteristics. Shi Lili’s comments are highly representative of Linglong’s attempt to balance its support for individualism, fashionable consumption, and Western modernity with its calls for scholastic achievement and patriotism.

This chapter expands upon chapter one’s argument that the commercial media created a link between the New Woman and the consumption of fashionable commodities and styles. It demonstrates that *Linglong* endorsed the same fashionable style that the commercial press advertised as part of the New Woman archetype. While certain products and styles became emblematic of a woman’s liberation, articles in *Linglong* reveal that some women criticized conceptions of the New Woman that were too closely associated with material acquisition and fashion. Thus, this chapter also aims to showcase the ways in which *Linglong’s* contributors discussed the relationship between the New Woman ideal and the consumption of fashionable styles and commodities. The magazine’s discussion of this relationship introduces how the editors and *Linglong’s* readers viewed the consumption of fashionable foreign imports during the National Goods Campaign of 1931. The final section of this chapter provides a case study of reader reactions to the controversy surrounding the *qipao* 旗袍 during the National Goods Campaign of 1931.

**The New Woman is fashionable, not materialistic**

*Linglong* offered itself up as a guide to women so that they could understand the “genuine 真正” nature of the New Woman. Articles titled, “How Indeed to be a New Woman 怎样才是新女性” and “How Indeed to be a Modern Girl 怎样才是摩登女性”
appeared several times in the earliest editions.\(^2\) They illustrate how *Linglong*’s contributors understood the New Woman ideal. Several of these articles demonstrate the magazine’s readers believed the New Woman was intelligent, patriotic, independent and fashionable. However, it is clear by these articles that while readers believed the New Woman was fashionable, they also believed she should not be obsessed with fashionable styles and goods. In an effort to circumvent materialistic presentations of the New Woman, the magazine frequently published articles that described what goals and values women pursing the New Woman ideal should aspire to have.\(^3\)

“The Contemporary Woman’s Three Followings and Four Virtues 现代女子之三从四德,” published in 1932, identified the four virtues of the New Woman as public virtue 公德, private virtue 私德, thrift 節儉的美德, and studiousness 好學的美德.\(^4\)

Public virtue was defined as setting a positive example for the rest of society. Private

\(^2\) Recall that the terms New Woman and Modern Girl were used interchangeably in *Linglong*. They did not consistently carry a positive or negative connotation. In these two articles, the New Woman and the Modern Girl describe the same fashionable, educated, independent and patriotic model for an ideal woman.


\(^4\) In Confucianism the traditional Three Obediences and the Four Virtues 三從四德 were the most important set of moral guidelines for women. The original Three Obediences were in reference to the three men that dominated a woman’s life. In childhood, she was to obey her father. After marriage, she obeyed her husband. After the death of her husband, she must obey her son. The traditional four virtues consisted of moral conduct, proper speech, modest appearance and diligent work.
virtue entailed being generous and honest (unlike men who were “sneaky 鬼祟 and deceitful 奸猾”). Women were expected to be naturally better at these qualities than men. Studiousness, the author argued, was intrinsic to strengthening women’s status in society and, ultimately, women’s liberation. The new three obediences included: obeying one’s personal aspirations, following the rules of the majority, and adhering to common sense as well as humanity’s natural laws.5

Although Linglong established these virtues as qualities of the New Woman, its readers were aware that some women claiming to be a New Woman were completely devoid of these qualities. Some of Linglong’s contributors overtly tried to counter the belief that the New Woman ideal could be achieved through consumption and fashion. A reader by the name of Pei Fang 佩方 wrote that, “some people incorrectly think [that] what is called modern is the ability to wear fashionable clothing, go out to dancehalls and movie theaters, and have a lot of boyfriends 有些人以为所谓摩登者，便是会穿时髦的衣服，出入跳舞場和戲院，多結交几位男朋友.” 6 However, Pei Fang argues, this was a “ridiculous misunderstanding 可笑的误解.” In her eyes, it was not sufficient to say that a New Woman was simply a woman of the contemporary age, who only delights in fashions and leisure.

Pei Fang’s article identified three tools a woman needed in order to achieve the New Woman ideal. Contrary to the commercial media’s portrayal of the New Woman, none of these tools included fashion or Western commodities. First, in addition to modern clothing, she must also “have modern thinking [because] clothing is only a person’s outward representation. Indeed modern thinking was the true soul [of a New Woman] 有摩登的意想,服飾不過是一個外表,意思才使真正的靈魂.” Second, a New Woman needed modern morals. A woman, Pei argues, could not simply use her new freedoms for her own benefits; she was required to have a “noble personality 高尚的人格.” She must “recognize her personal responsibility toward society and the nation 認識自己對於社會國家的責任.” Finally, she must have modern knowledge 摩登的知識. The magazine stated that this knowledge did not include the old Three Obediences and Four Virtues. The New Woman, she argues, should have some knowledge of contemporary science and sociology. If she has aspirations to take more advanced courses of study, she should make great efforts to do further research. Like Pei Fang, Shi Lili also stated that a New Woman’s outward appearance should be fashionable, but her spirit and brains were most important.7

Pei Fang’s comments also make it evident that while some of Linglong’s readers accepted a fashion-centered image of the New Woman, they denounced over-indulgence

in fashionable goods. While readers like Pei Fang did not have a problem with the consumption of fashionable goods, they believed that women hoping to attain the New Woman ideal should not become obedient to clothing, beauty and money.\(^8\) In regards to Western commodities and styles, female contributors to the magazine were not entirely opposed to purchasing Western commodities, adopting Western fashions, and some Western standards or beauty. However, they mocked women who believed that the New Woman ideal could be achieved simply through extreme Westernization. Ms. Chen Zhenyan 陳珍言 criticized women who believed the New Woman ideal could be realize if one wore Western clothing, purchased garments that exposed as much skin as possible, used complicated English sentences, or wasted too much time enjoying Western leisure activities, such as dancing or playing the piano.\(^9\)

The comments made by Shi Lili, Pei Fang and Chen Zhenyan suggest that some of Linglong’s readers believed the New Woman could embrace Western fashions, but she should maintain a certain level of moderation so that her intellectual goals and patriotic obligations were not overshadowed by her personal desires for beauty and fashion. Consumption was not the way to become a New Woman. In addition, the New Woman’s Westernization, some believed, should also be done in moderation. Since moderate Westernization was welcomed, advertisements for Western products frequented the

magazines pages, and Western standards of beauty were prescribed by many contributors. As a result, it appears that Linglong’s readers endorsed Western styles and encouraged each other to purchase imported Western goods so that they could imitate Western trends in fashion. Unfortunately, there were two key fashion trends in Linglong that came into conflict with the boycott and National Goods Campaign of 1931: the use of cosmetics and the qipao. The following three sections explore how the editors and the readers of Linglong addressed these two fashion trends from 1931 to 1933.

**Consuming Cosmetics**

Linglong’s endorsement of cosmetics was partially a product of its distributor, Sanhe Distribution Company 三和公司發行 (Three Harmonies Distribution Company). Sanhe Distribution Company was an adjunct division of Huashang sanhe gongsi 華商三和公司 (Three-Harmonies Enterprise of Chinese Merchants), based on Nanjing Road. Linglong’s ties to merchant interests made it highly susceptible to commercial trends. The magazine’s numerous advertisements for medicine, cosmetics, accessories, and photography supplies are a testament to its close ties to commercialism. Consequently, Linglong endorsed an image of femininity that demanded the various products it

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10 Sanhe Distribution Company sold tennis equipment, photos of movie stars, and photographic equipment. The owner of the company, Lin Zecang 林澤蒼 (1903-1961) was the main financial backer of the magazine, and his brother, Lin Zemin, served as an editor in the photography department.

advertised and adhered to popular trends in fashion. The magazine’s perception of certain products and fashions was dictated not only by its editors and financiers, but also by the articles its readers contributed. Although three parties—the financiers, the editors, and the readers—influenced how the magazine approached the New Woman’s consumption of fashionable goods, generally all three parties, with the exception of some readers, supported the use of foreign cosmetics before 1934.

In 1931, Shen Yixiang 沈詒祥, a fan of the magazine, submitted the article “Why Do Modern Women look Better than Women of the Past 現代婦女何以比從前婦女好看.” In her article, she argued that women of the 1930s differed from their predecessors because they studied the most fashionable makeup trends. She insisted that, “researching cosmetology is one part of women’s daily job [and] it is not a shameful matter at all 研究美容術, 是他們日常工作一部分. 這並不是羞恥的事.” Shen Yixiang argued that understanding makeup was one way in which women enacted “a kind of responsibility for a social lifestyle 一種社交生活的責任.” The article does not elaborate on this responsibility, but it is clear that its author sees the use of cosmetics for some greater societal purpose. Thus, it appears that Linglong’s readers supported the idea that cosmetics were an essential part of modern society.
The editors acknowledged that their readers regarded cosmetics as an essential part of life that was also connected to the New Woman persona. They often informed women which products were the best and explained how to use them. Furthermore, the magazine included numerous advertisements for Western cosmetics; both the editors and the magazine’s contributors encouraged readers to buy imported goods. Germany’s Odol toothpaste, Great Britain’s Lux Soap and Detergent, America’s Odo-ro-no deodorant and Cutex nail polish were frequently featured in the magazine. The presence of these products suggests that Linglong endorsed a femininity based on Western scientific understandings of the body. Cosmetics, such as 4711 Tosca Eau de Cologne from France, Tangee rouge lipstick by Muller Maclean and Company Incorporated, and the Chinese-produced Sansan perfume, highlighted the more glamorous aspects of Western hygiene and fashion. Each of these cosmetics promised the user the kind of glamour that was appropriate for their modern life in the public eye. Their presence in the magazine encouraged readers to idealize aspects of Western femininity.

An ad for Tangee Rouge Lipstick exemplifies cosmetic advertisements that subliminally promoted White notions of beauty. This ad guaranteed that after using it “the color of one’s lips becomes incomparably marvelous [and] the lips are moist” ¹３ A major selling point for this product was that

Tangee’s color was so perfect that it suited every woman’s facial features, foreign or Chinese. The language used in this advertisement illustrates a significant appeal to white notions of beauty. Cosmetic advertisements in China that used language such as “rosy” and “moist,” subliminally presented “an ideal skin in a vocabulary loaded with indigenous cultural references, such as ‘fair’ and ‘pearly-white.””¹⁴ The glorification of Western beauty persuaded women to mimic foreign fashions by consuming Western imports.

Indeed, advertisements, like those by Tangee Rouge Lipstick, in *Linglong* conveyed a visual language in which the fashions of the New Woman elaborated on classifications of ethnicized whiteness.¹⁵ The important question is whether or not the editors of *Linglong* consciously selected these advertisements because they promoted Western concepts of beauty as the model for Chinese women. Since there is not enough information concerning the selection and publication of advertisements in *Linglong*, it is difficult to argue that the editors intentionally published advertisements that specifically promoted Western beauty. It is likely that they had little choice in the matter, and the decision was made by *Linglong*’s financiers. Regardless of how these advertisements were selected for the magazine, their presence both affected how Chinese women


¹⁵Ibid.
perceived Western standards of beauty and also encouraged women to meet these standards by buying Western imports.

Cosmetics represented a sphere in which “White” (Caucasian) standards of beauty promoted the consumption of Western imports, and although these commodities were considered problematic by supporters of the National Goods Campaign, *Linglong’s* contributors did not directly address their thoughts on the matter until 1934. Even in the midst of the anti-Japanese boycotts when the consumption of Japanese and Western goods was considered unpatriotic, the magazine decided to support the National Goods Campaign in a piecemeal fashion. The following section explores *Linglong’s* unique reaction to the anti-Japanese boycott and National Goods Campaign of 1931.

**National Goods Campaign of 1931**

Although this section focuses on the National Goods Campaign of 1931, that campaign was only possible because the resources and organizations necessary to carry out an extended national boycott had been in place since the fall of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). As a result, it is necessary to provide a brief summary of the National Goods Movement prior to 1931.
Since 1905 civilian organizations were largely responsible for the all of the various National Goods Campaigns that took place during twentieth century. These organizations were often created by merchant guilds that were experiencing a decline in their sales because of the popularity of foreign imports. During the twentieth century, the largest and the most influential national goods organization was created by the merchant guilds of Shanghai. The National Products Preservation Association 中華國貨維持會 (NPPA, 1911- date unknown) was founded by eight Shanghai native-place associations on December 12, 1911 and remained active into the 1940s. They were the leading force behind these campaigns when anti-Japanese and anti-foreign sentiments became increasing tense in the second decade of the twentieth century.

Since 1919 anti-Japanese and anti-Western sentiments prompted these organizations to boycott imported goods and finance national goods campaigns in 1919, 1923, 1925, 1928 and 1931. During this period, boycotts, as Karl Gerth says, “provided the passion and muscle to promote and enforce nationalistic consumption.” Although, organizations for the promotion of national goods often operated successfully in an ad

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16 Over the course of the century many campaigns were started organization for the promotion of national goods. These campaigns often lost momentum a year or two after they began. Following the failure of one campaign, another would begin. For example, one began in 1919. It lost steam two or three years later and then a new campaign began in 1923.

17 Gerth, China Made, 71. The NPPA preached that there was an inherent connection between patriotism and consumption. They “promoted an ethic of nationalistic consumption” based on the notion that China had been engaging in commercial warfare with foreign powers.

18 Ibid., 184.
hoc manner, during 1930s, they increasingly sought assistance from the Nationalist Government.

The NPPA and other national goods organizations—such as the Shanghai Citizens Association for the Promotion of National Products 上海市民提供國貨會 (1923- date unknown)—appealed several times to Nationalist Party for support, arguing that the state had an obligation to control fashion and support China’s domestic industries. During the boycott and National Goods Campaign of 1931 organizations for the promotion of national goods received a great deal of assistance from the Nationalist Government, particularly during Chiang Kai-shek’s term as chairman.

While political backing was important to sustaining the movement in 1931, it could often function without support from the government. By 1932, complaints from Japan had convinced Chiang Kaishek to retract his support for the Campaign of 1931. However, pressure from Campaign supporters inspired and intimidated people to such an extent that the Campaign was able to persist to 1933 even with some interference from the Nationalist Government. Students and store owners alike refused to sell or buy Japanese goods. In Shanghai, Wing On and Sincere department stores temporarily removed Japanese imports from their shelves when protestors threatened violence. Likewise, Chinese newspapers stopped advertising Japanese goods. The press played a

19Ibid., 107-11.
pivotal role in sustaining the National Goods Campaign of 1931. Some magazines focused exclusively on the National Goods Movement, such as *Guohuo yuebao* 國貨月報 (*National Goods Monthly*, 1915-1935). *Linglong* was among the magazines that promoted the boycott and nationalistic consumption.

*Linglong* published few extended articles about the boycott of Japanese goods, but it did support the anti-Japanese movement. Articles encouraging the boycott, such as “Promote Artisanship, Boycott Japanese Products 提倡工藝, 抵制日貨” and “Two Indirect Ways of Boycotting Japanese Goods 兩個間接的抵制日貨方法,” were published, but rare.²⁰ It was not uncommon for the magazine to include images of women participating in anti-Japanese war campaigns. These images provided examples of patriotic women to *Linglong*’s readers. One image displays a woman in a loose-fitting Chinese-style jacket.²¹ She is shown standing on a stage in front of a crowd and giving a speech against the Japanese. The caption under the image explains that she is the granddaughter of one of Beijing’s political representatives, and she is speaking on issues concerning the war. Other images featured Chinese women in the army alongside men.²² The editors even encouraged teenagers and preteens to assist the effort in any way they could. In a photograph published in 1931, three children happily point a fake cannon at

²¹Linglong 40 (1931): 1579.  
²²Ibid.
the camera.\textsuperscript{23} The caption reads, “Don’t be afraid, aim your cannon at our common enemy—barbarous Japanese 不要怕，拿你們的砲對好了我們的公敵—蠻日 (see image 2.1).” Linglong encouraged readers to inform themselves about China’s political situation and join in the effort to strengthen China and defeat the Japanese.

Figure 2.1: Don’t be Afraid, Aim Your Cannon at Our Enemy, Linglong 39 (1931): 1536. Courtesy of C.V. Starr East Asian Library, Columbia University.

The editors issued warnings and published anti-Japanese slogans to encourage readers to participate in the Anti-Japanese Movement’s National Goods Campaign. One

\textsuperscript{23}Linglong 39 (1931): 1536.
slogan ominously warned: “Readers, if you buy Japanese products, something bad will definitely happen to you within seven days. 读者若购日货七日之内必有不如意之事.”

The threat clearly alludes to the violence that had befallen some of Shanghai’s stores and shoppers in the protests. Other slogans in the magazine stated, “to boycott the enemy’s products is the first step of saving our nation. 抵制仇货为救国之第一步” or “boycott Japanese products forever, so we will gain the final victory. 永远抵制日货，便得最后胜.”

In light of the magazine’s opposition to Japanese goods and its acceptance of Western cosmetics and fashions in the early 1930s, it appears that Linglong did not have an entirely anti-foreign stance. At times, the magazine presented women in the United States and Western ideas of femininity as too self-indulgent. Nevertheless, cosmetics, permanent waves, and high heels remained popular. Linglong encouraged women to simply increase the amount of domestic goods they consumed even as they purchased their French perfumes and British vanishing creams. On one hand, the magazine featured photographs of Chinese movie star supporting the National Goods Movement, while on the other hand, it condoned purchasing imported (Western) goods. For example, the caption under the image of the Hollywood actress using a Chinese fan states that:

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24 Linglong 35 (1931): 1346.  
27 Linglong 99 (1933): 906.
Chinese are always proud of using imported goods. This movie star in Hollywood is the same. She also thinks using a Chinese fan is fashionable. 中国人總以用舶来品為榮。好萊塢的電影明星。何不獨然。她也以為用中國扇子是時髦。

The quote suggests that Linglong’s readers should not be ashamed to use foreign imports because even women abroad used imports to look fashionable. Linglong’s editors in openly showcased fashions that the National Goods Campaign found problematic. Linglong’s endorsement of the qipao is the second fashion trend in the magazine that demonstrates that its contributors and editors decided to approach the boycott and National Goods Campaign of 1931 in a piecemeal fashion.

The Qipao and the National Goods Movement of 1931

The term qipao 旗袍 translates as “banner gown.” Although the exact origins of the qipao have yet to be determined by scholars because of the garment’s many progenitors, it is largely associated with the Manchu style of dress during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911).28 Antonia Finnane has argued that this deep connection between the qipao and the Qing Dynasty does not necessarily make it an exclusively Qing garment, but it has become an iconic Chinese outfit nonetheless.

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28 Finnane, Changing Clothes in China, 141.
Chinese author Zhang Ailing 張愛玲 (1920-1995) traced the origin of the fashionable qipao, the version featured in second-generation calendar posters, to 1921.\(^{29}\) Unfortunately, she provides no source material for this dating. However, Finnane also argues that the fashionable qipao arrived in Shanghai in the mid-1920s.\(^{30}\) It first appeared in the fashion articles of newspapers, such as Shenbao and Liangyou, in 1926.\(^{31}\) This version of the qipao was considerably more form-fitting and emphasized the physique of the wearer. The iconic slit in the garment, generally ran from ankle to knee. A shorter version of the qipao became popular in the late 1920s and 1930s.\(^{32}\) In 1930s, some qipaos had slits that ran from a women’s ankle all the way up to her thigh, revealing an amount of bare skin that had not been seen in a public before. The visibility of this amount of skin received a great deal of criticism from the conservative population. Generally, the length of the garment depended on the customer’s preference. Sometimes shorter styles were more popular than longer styles and vice versa.

The qipao is a very significant and unique garment because it demonstrates Chinese attempts to blend China’s traditional past with Western modernity to achieve a uniquely Chinese sense of modernity. Changes in the qipao tended to loosely coincide with changes in European or American dress abroad. For example, the popularity of the

\(^{29}\) Pan, *Shanghai Style*, 172.
\(^{30}\) Finnane, *Changing Clothes in China*, 149.
\(^{31}\) Ibid.
\(^{32}\) Ibid., 149-156.
longer qipao developed around the same time that the long H-line dress was popular in Europe. Likewise, the dress shortened when short skirts became popular in Europe. Louise Edwards argues that the qipao represented the paradoxical nature of the New Woman and tensions between modernity and Westernization. The style made a “nationalistic statement in a period when the conflation of modernity and Westernization was increasingly unpalatable.”

At the height of the qipao’s popularity in the 1930s, Western fashion played a large role in shaping Chinese women’s clothing. The importation of Western fabrics and the appearance of Western women in cinema strongly influenced designs for the qipao and how women choose to accessorize the garment. It became extremely common for women to request that their qipao be made from woolen fabric, an imported fabric. Furthermore, women preferred to adorn their qipao with Western accessories, such as “puffed sleeves, matching scarves, long fur coats, stockings, and leather heels.” The garment’s occasional use of Western fabrics and accessories made it a target of animosity during the national goods campaigns that followed the May 30th Incident of 1925.

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34 Ibid.
36 On May 25th 1925, Japanese guards murdered Gu Zhenghong at Nei Wai Number Five Mill. This triggered a series of student and worker demonstrations that protested foreign control of Shanghai.
In the aftermath of these protests, organizations for the promotion of national goods, particularly the NPPA, realized that in order to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the boycott they needed a method of distinguishing national goods from foreign imports. The boycott of 1925 facilitated the creation of a list of criteria that a garment had to adhere to in order to be considered a domestic product. As a result, in 1928 a document titled the National Products Tentative Standards (NPTS) was published by the newly established Nationalist Government in conjunction with the NPPA. Government publications were issued regularly. Each document described what kind of products were “pure” national products. The movement identified what they
believed were the four basic components of any product: capital, management, raw materials, and labor. Each of these components had to be entirely Chinese in origin to be considered a “pure” national product. Foreign raw materials were only permitted in the absence of Chinese materials and foreign technicians and experts were only acceptable if they were absolutely necessary. The NPTS became the document remained the cornerstone of each National Goods Campaign after 1928. It was intrinsic to the Campaign in 1931 and the eventual condemnation of the qipao because the list of seven criteria implicitly condemned constructional and stylistic aspects of the garment.

The NPTS established seven grades of pure national goods. Grade one included products that were produced using Chinese capital, management, raw materials, and labor. These were considered the highest quality of pure goods. The other grades included products that had various degrees of foreign input in these four categories. In some situations, the qipao could be categorized under grade 2, which included goods that were produced using Chinese capital, management, and labor, but a small amount of non-Chinese raw materials. During its production process, the winter qipao was usually sewn by Chinese seamstresses, but produced with imported wool. This was a known fact among many women who rallied behind the NPPA and believed that China’s revival as a strong, independent nation was dependent on its domestic industries.

Madame Wellington Koo recounted her reasons for rejecting the adoption of the qipao among young women. She believed that long, form-fitting gowns, like the qipao, were extremely unpatriotic garments. The winter-style qipao relied heavily on wool, a textile that had been undercutting China’s silk and cotton industry for decades. Thus she insisted that all her clothing be made from local materials. In her eyes, the extreme popularity of the qipao was a prime example of unpatriotic consumption.

In the wake of criticism from conservatives, such as Madame Wellington Koo, Linglong glorified the qipao. Its praise of the qipao appears to be an attempt to negotiate

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38 Koo, Madame Wellington Koo, 256.
the tension between its consistent endorsements of foreign accessories for the *qipao* and the National Goods Movement. Unlike Koo, *Linglong* presented the *qipao* as a happy blend between Western modernity and Chinese tradition. The *qipao* was the physical manifestation of a Chinese modernity that was neither entirely Chinese nor entirely Western. In her research on the *qipao*’s presentation in *Linglong*, Wessie Ling argues that the entire point of the *qipao* was to look desirable, hence its tight fitting frame and tendency to reveal bare skin.\(^{39}\) Indeed, the *qipao* was a mix of Western notions of modern sexuality as well as traditional Chinese floral aesthetics. This blending of traditional and modern was one of the major reasons why Chinese women who did not want to “totally submit to Western culture saw the *qipao* as an alternative.”\(^{40}\) Fashion sketches for the latest *qipao* remained a constant sight in the magazine throughout the Campaign of 1931.

In addition to the *qipao*, the magazine often featured other garments that incorporated Western accessories or fabrics that would be condemned during the Campaign of 1931 and New Life Movement: high-heeled shoes, fur coats, and trench coats (see image 2.2).\(^{41}\) These fashion sketches suggest that *Linglong* dismissed criticisms of fashionable Western styles and continued to market them openly. This case study of the *qipao* provides insight into reader reactions to the government’s ban on

\(^{40}\) Ibid.
imported goods and Western fashions during the New Life Movement’s National Goods Campaign that started in 1934. Many of Linglong’s readers would contribute articles that articulated the belief that they could support the New Life Movement’s National Goods Campaign and still consume fashionable garments that were, at times, problematic.

Conclusion

During the National Goods Campaign of 1931, Linglong’s readers welcomed the consumption of foreign imports and Western fashions as part of a New Woman’s overall goal to look fashionable. The magazines contributors perceived fashionable dress to be part of the New Woman persona. However, they made it very clear that moderation was necessary and education as well as patriotism were the most important parts of the New Woman persona. When the National Goods Campaign of 1931 began, Linglong’s readers and its editors were faced with a question. Should they abandon the belief that the New Woman could wear Western imports and fashion without compromising her patriotic duties? They preached a doctrine of moderation, implying that it was the only way women could act out all the characteristics of a New Woman. The presence of recommendations for foreign cosmetics and problematic fashions in the magazine from 1931 to 1933, suggests that Linglong’s contributors and editors struggled to accept the entirely anti-foreign stance of the National Goods Campaign. Instead they chose to
promote an anti-Japanese stance while actively encouraging their readers to purchase Western imports to mimic Western fashion trends.

The purpose of this section was to highlight parts of *Linglong*’s controversial fashion recommendations during the boycott and National Goods Campaign of 1931. *Linglong*’s reaction to the anti-Japanese boycott and criticism towards the *qipao* demonstrates that the magazine’s contributors and editors supported the first National Goods Movement it had experienced in a piecemeal fashion. *Linglong*’s contradictory attitude towards imported goods became more complex during the New Life Movement’s National Goods Campaign as readers debated how they could retain their autonomy and ability to govern their bodies when the campaign became increasing more invasive.

The following chapter analyzes the ways in which *Linglong*’s readers reacted to government regulations of female consumption patterns and fashion. The purpose of this concluding chapter will be to illustrate the ways the New Woman’s relationship with fashionable consumption created tension between the state and women seeking to achieve the New Woman ideal. The chapter showcases articles from *Linglong*’s contributors to demonstrate how this tension unfolded and how some women tried to resolve it.
Chapter Three:

Debating Patriotic Female Consumption and Fashionable Women

In February of 1934, Chiang Kai-shek launched the New Life Movement (NLM) in hopes of revolutionizing the country with conservative and traditional morals. The movement’s goal was to inspire hygienic and behavioral reforms that could propel the nation into modernity and self-sufficiency. Chiang Kai-Shek believed that behavioral changes among the Chinese would increase public awareness of national problems and better prepare China for an attack from hostile nations. The New Life Movement was intended to reform China by first altering its most fundamental qualities and then expanding them to more complex aspects of society.¹ In a speech delivered in 1934, Chiang explained his reasons for launching the movement:

Officials tend to be dishonest and avaricious, the masses are undisciplined and calloused, youths become degraded and intemperate, adults are corrupt and ignorant, the rich become extravagant and luxurious, and the poor become mean and disorderly. Naturally, it has resulted in disorganization of the social order and national life, and we are in no position either to prevent or to remedy natural calamities, disasters caused from within, or invasions caused from without.²

Chiang concluded with the comment that the New Life Movement’s chief goal was to promote a life guided by the four Confucian virtues of *li* (ritual/decorum), *yi* (rightness or duty), *lian* (integrity or honesty), and *chi* (a sense of shame). These virtues should be applied to the four most basic categories of life: food, clothing, shelter, and action. Chiang stipulated that clothing had to remain simple and entirely comprised of nationally produced goods.3

The movement consisted of two phases that were under the control of two different people. The first phase lasted from 1934 to 1936. Arif Dirlik has argued that the first phase of the campaign was led by Chiang Kai-Shek and his close military leaders. In the second phase, from 1936 to 1937, Madame Chiang had a much greater influence over the campaign. In that phase, American as well as Christian elements of the Nationalist Government played a much larger role in controlling the New Life Movement’s activities and ideologies. Mobilization of the masses was at its highest during the first two-year period of the movement.4 Mobilization also came in two phases. The first phase was characterized by mass demonstrations, in which the goals of the movement were expressed. The second phase was characterized by “more ‘regular’ leadership and

4 Ibid., 948.
‘inspection’ by organized bodies and specially trained personnel to ensure that the public adhered to its goals.”

By March 1934, New Life Promotional Associations had been established in nine provinces and three municipal centers. These associations were tasked with the job of spreading the ideologies of the movement and implementing the simplification of fashions and the militarization of society through educational programs. Educational programs for young men and women included ten guidelines. These guidelines were aimed at “training for national defense and the acquisition of military skills,” the “dissipation of extravagance,” and the promotion of physical activity that could build bodies strong enough to fight.

Hsiao-Pei Yen has argued that, during the movement, Chiang adopted fascist techniques from Germany and Italy to militarize the Chinese people to the point where they were willing to make sacrifices like soldiers. Thus, the purpose of the movement was also to create citizens who were willing to do anything to achieve national goals. Promoting national goods became part of the New Life Movement’s plan for enhancing economic strength. To do this effectively, Chiang Kai-Shek partnered with organizations for the promotion of national goods and targeted urban women, the largest group of

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5 Ibid. Note that this thesis does not intended to discuss the second phase of the New Life Movement. It only focuses on the period from 1934 to 1936.
6 Ibid., 949-950.
7 Ibid., 972.
consumers in China. Thus, the first year of the New Life Movement’s National Goods Campaign was titled, the Woman’s Year of National Goods 婦女國貨年.

The Women’s Year of National Goods began in 1934, targeting middle-and upper-class women as its main audience. That year, several female committees and organizations were started, such as the Women’s National Products Promotion Association 婦女提倡國貨會, Women’s National Products Association 婦女國貨會, Women’s Wear National Products Society 婦女服用國貨會, and the Shanghai Women’s National Products Promotion Society 上海婦女提倡國貨會. These associations were largely responsible for organizing events directed at women including opening exhibitions for national goods in several major cities across China. The national goods movement sponsored other activities that were specifically directed to women, including fashion shows, rallies, festivals, and children’s events. In addition, throughout the movement, domestic products that mimicked Western cosmetics were advertised as good domestic alternatives. The Women’s National Products Year was an opportunity for the Nationalists to take control of the New Woman persona and reshape it for their political agendas.

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9 Gerth, China Made, 309, 321, and 302.
10 Ibid., 310.
Collectivizing the Individualist New Woman

According to the Nationalist Party’s New Life rhetoric, all citizens, including women seeking the New Woman ideal, should be unconditionally obedient to the government, doing anything necessary to achieve national goals. One of the objectives of the New Life Movement was to create citizens with a “group orientation.”  

New Lifers believed a collective consciousness among citizens would “contribute to national strength by stimulating awareness of nation and building up the spirit of responsibility and sacrifice.”  

As a result, they argued, citizens must be disciplined enough to ignore their own desires. In regards to the Nationalists’ understanding of political reform during the New Life Movement, Dirlik has stated that:

Their understanding of political mobilization was increased awareness of the group, in order to subject one’s will to that of the collectivity. The emphasis was on self-restraint, self-sacrifice, obedience, [and] loyalty. State interest was extended as infinitum, while private interest was rejected as “selfishness.”

Based on this understanding of political mobilization, the Nationalist Government and civilian supporters of the National Goods Campaign of 1934 viewed the New Woman’s romanticized autonomy with suspicious eyes. Thus, during the Women’s Year of National Goods, women hoping to achieve the New Woman ideal were given the most attention. Chiang Kai-Shek and other conservatives believed that their allegiance to

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12 Ibid., 955.
13 Ibid., 958.
China could not be trusted because the New Woman ideal was heavily ground in self-governance and self-reliance. Furthermore, the commercial media still presented Western fashions and cosmetics as a basic part of the New Woman persona. Female desires for foreign imported goods worsened the trade deficit, and the media’s influence on the New Woman archetype was only fueling these desires. Thus, the Nationalists used the Women’s Year of National Goods as an opportunity to control the behavior of all these women pursuing the New Woman ideal because they believed these women lacked concrete, dependable political loyalties.\(^\text{14}\)

In attempt to make these women more dependable citizens, the Nationalists and other supporters of the National Goods Campaign made efforts to redefine the New Woman persona. They endorsed an image of the New Woman that was extremely patriotic. This dismissed interpretations of the New Woman that were too heavily based in fashion and Western standards of beauty. They tried to dissipate the belief that the New Woman persona could be expressed through the consumption of Western fashion and cosmetics. As a result, campaign supporters tried to “break the association of the ‘modern’ with international fashion and products.”\(^\text{15}\) Modernity, they argued, was not international, it was national. Therefore, the New Woman could not be constructed from

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\(^{14}\)Gerth, *China Made*, 301.

\(^{15}\)Ibid., 307.
international standards of beauty and fashion. Her identity was based on national standards and necessities.

Offering examples from American, German, and French women, the Nationalists portrayed each Western fashion as nationalistic rather than representative of a universal cosmopolitan lifestyle. Newspapers told stories of Hollywood actresses who purchased American goods and ate at American restaurants even while they were abroad. Media that supported the New Life Movement’s National Goods Campaign portrayed the New Woman as a Chinese construct that was created solely to display national pride and assist national goals. According to them, she was an object of collectivism and interdependence, not an icon of individualism and independence.

In light of this new definition of modernity, the belief that consumption created personhood for women became a point of contention. The Nationalists collectivized the purpose of consumption at a time when many women already considered the ability to consume a mark of their autonomy and ownership over their bodies. By collectivizing consumption and fashion, the Nationalists implicitly collectivized the female body. Women could no longer freely alter their appearances. As a result, the marketplace was no longer a haven of uninhibited female expression and a symbol of initiation into liberated feminine modernity. According to Gerth, the Nationalists considered the marketplace to be the battlefield of exemplary women; it was “the proving ground for an

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idealized femininity and motherhood.”\textsuperscript{17} In this space, the Nationalists argued, a woman relinquished control of her body willingly; a selfish woman did not.

When the Nationalists began the process of banning unpatriotic commodities, they relied on the media to inform civilians which goods were the most problematic. Making up the largest percent of imported goods, perfume and cosmetics were placed at the top of the list. For example, in an illustration published in \textit{Guohuo yuebao 國貨月報} (\textit{National Goods Monthly}), a woman stands in front of a series of products. Her short, wavy “bob” and 	extit{qipao} are reminiscent of fashions associated with the New Woman. The caption calls the woman a “faithful marketing representative of foreign products.”\textsuperscript{18} Behind her is a visual summation of the most unpatriotic commodities: a watch, two boxes of powder, a bottle of perfume, and a Cutex manicure set.

Magazine articles supporting the Women’s Year of National Goods often identified women wearing foreign goods as prostitutes. The author of an article titled, “National Goods and Prostitutes 國貨與女妓” argued that women who wear fashionable clothing should be considered prostitutes because “one knows at a glance that these women are unprincipled and disreputable.”\textsuperscript{19} Comments like these did not fall on deaf ears. In many of China’s major cities women who ignored these dress codes and continued to dress fashionably were physically and verbally attacked. For example, a

\textsuperscript{17}Ibid., 297.  
\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Guohuo yuebao} 1, no. 2 (1934). Image cited in Gerth, \textit{China Made}, 304.  
\textsuperscript{19}Gerth, \textit{China Made}, 306.
group called the Smashing Modernity Gang 摩登破壞團 traveled China’s major cities persecuting fashionable women and destroying all signs of Western modernity to such an extent that in Hangzhou and Tianjin they “poured acid on people in theatres and amusement centres.” The Smashing Modernity Gang received little reproach for their crimes. Yen argues that “there was little sympathy for the victims.” Yen reports that an article in Libai 梨拜六 (The Saturday Post) even expressed appreciation for the gang’s efforts in Hangzhou.

Faced with this kind of opposition, some women were discouraged from dressing fashionably because it threatened their public reputation and could put them in danger. Fashionable clothing caused other to consider a woman both unpatriotic and sexually promiscuous. Prostitutes and fashionable women seeking the New Woman ideal were unanimously chastised in most of the media throughout the Women’s Year of National Goods and the New Life Movement as a whole. Linglong is unique form of media in this period because its contributors both vilified and defended fashionable women hoping to achieve the New Woman ideal. The magazine’s endorsement of the foreign cosmetics

20 The use of the term modernity here can be misleading. The Smashing Modernity Group largely targeted pastimes, commodities, and clothing that were considered fashionable or Western. The term modernity is invoked here because “fashionable” items and commodities were also considered “modern” because of their association with Western popular culture, their use of innovative technology, or their reliance of chemistry and science. For example, the chemicals used in make-up were considered to a scientific innovation for popular consumption, making them both fashionable among women and scientific in construction.


22 Ibid.
made it problematic for the editors to easily concede to bans on fashionable clothing. However, they fully supported the National Goods Year.

**The National Goods Campaign and Fashionable New Women in *Linglong* Magazine, 1934-1936**

In 1934, *Linglong* fully embraced the Women’s Year of National Goods 婦女國貨年 and most of its ideologies about fashionable women. As discussed in chapter two, prior to 1934, *Linglong* enthusiastically promoted the use of all foreign cosmetic products, and vigilantly instructed its readers how to apply make-up and to dress fashionably. Once the New Life Movement started, however, the magazine’s sentiments towards Western fashion and make-up became contradictory. This contradiction reflected the magazine’s struggle to continue to promote the style it had endorsed from 1931 to 1933 without grossly violating new social norms. *Linglong*’s depiction of the New Woman and the prostitute demonstrates how its contributors negotiated the tension between the image of the female consumer depicted by New Life enthusiasts and the image that it had shaped over the first three years of its publication. While the editors published articles written by both supporters and dissenters, the editors more often tended to include articles, advertisements, and photographs that contested with the New Life Movement’s opinions on fashion. While *Linglong* did encourage women to shop patriotically, it made efforts to remain true to its goal of defending women’s freedom of expression verbally and
materially. The following sections demonstrate the split opinion between its contributors and the magazine’s ultimate resolve to defend fashionable female consumption.

**Linglong Agrees with the New Life Movement**

*Linglong’s* response to the inauguration of the Women’s Year of National Products was extremely welcoming. The magazine immediately began to publish articles that advised women how to consume patriotically. The editors encouraged women to “wear domestically produced goods above all others” and ensured that women would do so by explaining how to distinguish domestic goods from foreign imports. The editors instructed women to collect articles about the National Goods Movement from newspapers and other magazines so that they had them available for future reference. They even suggested that women simply give their money directly to Chinese banks so as to guarantee that their money funneled into China’s economy. In 1934, they published a list of guidelines for women to follow so that they could effectively support China’s domestic market.

“The Patriotic Women’s Creed” originally published in *Xinwen yebao* 新聞夜報 (*Evening News*) and reprinted in *Linglong* in 1934, describes how a woman can consume patriotically without faltering. The creed begins with these words:

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25. Ibid.
“From this year on, [I] am determined to pledge sincerely to purchase native goods. 從今年起堅決信誓購用國貨.” Then it provides fourteen guidelines to correctly purchase national goods. Since, many of the methods are redundant, what follows is a brief summary of what Linglong prescribes.

1. Advise those older and younger than you, as well as your relatives and friends, to purchase national goods.
2. When shopping, examine whether or not a product is a native good. If you cannot decide whether or not it is a national product, you should ask the storekeeper. In general, however, it is best to avoid this problem by shopping at stores that only sell national goods. If you discover that you or the store owner is mistaken, and the product is not a native commodity, you must immediately return it. To prevent this kind of misunderstanding, you must pay attention to the raw materials used to produce it, the brand name, the company name, the name of the factory that produced it, and the location of that factory.
3. Understand the difference between pure national goods and pseudo-national goods. The former uses Chinese raw materials, Chinese capital, and Chinese labor. The latter consists of products that contain foreign participation in regards to the capital, resources, and labor.26

Linglong clearly expected its readers to do an enormous amount of research each time they went shopping. Just like New Life leaders, the magazine expected women to internalize patriotic consumption patterns comprehensively. In its attempt to create dedicated and patriotic consumers, Linglong repeats some of the rhetoric used by promoters of the National Goods Movement.

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Item number three borrows directly from the criteria for pure national goods and pseudo-national goods in the National Products Tentative Standards (NPTS) in its classification of the purity of a product according to the capital, raw materials, and labor used to produce it. By demanding awareness of the factory, and location of production to the list of criteria, this article expands the old criteria of the NPTS to a more comprehensive level. *Linglong* fully embraces this extension regardless of its impracticalities. “The Patriotic Woman’s Creed” is only one instance in which *Linglong*’s ideologies about consumption were similar to those expressed by leaders of the National Goods Movement. Reader contributions to the magazine reveal that several women agreed with the New Life Movement’s endorsement of national goods and its portrayal of the New Woman.

“The Patriotic Women’s Creed” also provides evidence that at times *Linglong* abandoned its commitment to promoting self-indulgence in fashion and endorsed the simplistic style of the New Life Movement. The article advises women not to purchase “convenient, new, and novel products便宜新奇的出品.” The recommendation is a response to the belief among Chinese consumers that the most “convenient and ingenious things便宜的靈巧的東西” were always imported. The author argues that women should stay away from these kinds of items because they were probably foreign in origin. Likewise, the author also recommends that women do not buy cosmetics, woolen

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clothing, and leather shoes. All of these items were commonly produced by foreign companies or used imported raw materials. By republishing this article, the editors of \textit{Linglong} showcased their support for a much simpler style. Furthermore, with regards to fashion, it appears that editors had slightly different their reaction to the \textit{qipao}.

Recall that during the National Goods Movement of 1931, in 1934 the garment was still surrounded by tension because, some believed, it encouraged women to buy foreign accessories and cosmetics. According to Hsiao-Pei Yen, the average woman used three kinds of imported products for daily cosmetic care of her legs: nail polish, moisture cream, and powder. She spent an average of three to fifteen \textit{yuan} on imported items so that her bare legs could appear silky smooth. Nail polish could be as much as 15 \textit{yuan}, and cream could be as expensive as 20 \textit{yuan}.\footnote{Yen, 172.} In the eyes of national goods promoters and New Life supporters, The New Woman regularly poured a total of 35 \textit{yuan} directly into imperialist hands. Consequently, the \textit{qipao} or any garment that exposed a woman’s legs was considered an unpatriotic style. During the National Goods Campaign of 1931, \textit{Linglong} had largely ignored the controversy surrounding the garment. After 1934, fashion sketches of the garment, specifically woolen \textit{qipaos}, in \textit{Linglong} noticeably decreased from 1934 to 1936.\footnote{As Chapter One has demonstrated, \textit{Linglong} advertised various versions of woolen \textit{qipaos} before 1934.} The few that remained did not boast their use of woolen
fabric as they had before 1934. Instead, the magazine included designs of *qipaos* that were made of Chinese silk and satin.

Because the editors never explicitly stated that they removed fashion sketches of *qipaos* after 1934 because of New Life sentiments, it is difficult to argue for a direct relation between the National Goods Movement of 1934 and the disappearance of woolen *qipaos* in the magazine.\(^{30}\) It is possible that the magazine’s decision to get rid of the majority of its fashion sketches had more to do with The New Life Movement’s condemnation of fashionable, luxurious styles and less to do with the state of China’s textile industry. Nevertheless, *Linglong*’s continued praise of silk and satin *qipaos* does suggest a correlation. The magazine’s view on cosmetics was considerably more direct.

The editors openly acknowledged that female consumption of cosmetics had aggravated China’s trade deficit. The magazine published statistical analyses of China’s import ratios to disclose the gravity of the situation to its female readers. For example, in 1936 Chen Mulan 陳慕蘭, a contributor to the magazine, explained that, from March to December of 1935, the number of foreign perfumes and cosmetics amounted to 1.4 million yuan. In an essay she contributed to *Linglong*, Chen states that the “average women’s monthly consumption of luxury goods is more than any other item” in China. This was evident, she continues, because the average middle-class woman spends more

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\(^{30}\) A fashion sketch is a hand-drawn design for a new fashion. They were featured in *Linglong* to show readers the latest fashions.
than 10 yuan on luxury goods. Chen concludes that, “the consumption of luxury goods is a huge waste; it is meaningless [and] once we prohibit the consumption of women’s luxury goods than we can affect our country’s income 禁止了婦女奢侈品的消耗而可以影響到國家收入的原故.” Statistical arguments provided the basis for the New Life Movement’s support of the Woman’s Year of National Goods as well as a justification for the criminalization of the New Woman and the ban on fashionable styles. With this tangible proof in hand, some of Linglong’s readers also began to blame the New Woman for China’s economic crisis.

Echoing the language of New Lifers, several contributors to the magazine took issue with the New Woman’s preoccupation with luxury items and Western imports. In 1935, Linglong published “During China’s Crisis, the New Woman Should Be Like This 在國一危殆中：新女性應該怎樣.” The article stipulated that “taking pleasure in beautiful clothing and luxurious goods was wrong 美麗的服飾奢華的享用都是不對的.” The author, whose name was not indicated, stated that, in this time of crisis, some new women have begun to pay attention to China’s political and economic situations. However, the author continued, women like these are rare. “Society no longer produced this kind of woman 因為我們現在所要得新女性此刻尚沒有產生.”

32 Ibid.
contributor’s comments suggest that he or she believed modern society, perhaps specifically consumer culture, encouraged the creation of materialistic women. Consequently, he or she argues, modern society was overrun by useless, but beautiful women.

As if to elaborate on this contributor’s point, a male reader wrote into the magazine and described exactly what kind of new women modernity had produced. In “A Sketch of Shanghai’s Women 上海女人速寫” he divided the women of Shanghai into three categories: the “Clara Bow type of Concubine 克萊拉寶型的姨太太,” the “Fashionable Female Student 時髦型的女學生,” and the “Prostituting Dance Hostess 賣婬型的舞女.” Each of these characters was sexually licentious. The concubine was characterized as the type of woman who wore the latest make-up, and applied her lipstick regularly. She had a perfect pair of erect breasts and her hips always swayed just right as she walked. This kind of woman, the author explains, has an illicit lover, who is attractive

34Clara Gordon Bow (1905-1965) was a famous American actress in Hollywood. She became a legend after she starred in It (1927), a silent romantic comedy directed by Clarence G. Badger (1880-1964). Bow is considered the original “It Girl,” a term that was created after her appearance in It. The term is still used today to describe a woman who is considered incredibly attractive, spunky, and aggressive. Bow became an iconic figure of the “Roaring Twenties,” embodying the Flapper persona. Director Frank Lloyd (1886-1990) described her as “the personification of the ideal aristocratic Flapper, mischievous, pretty, aggressive, quick-tempered and deeply sentimental.” Hamilton Evening Journal, March 4, 1924. Bow frequently appeared in Linglong as a fan favorite. The magazine often documented her personal life and her film career. The author’s use of Bow as a parallel in a “Sketch of Shanghai’s Woman” suggests that he believed that some of Shanghai’s women became replicas of the superficial American society that was presented to them on film.
but forces her to support him. However, she does not worry about this situation because her husband will always be there to give her more money. The fashionable school girl is strikingly similar to the concubine. She wears deep shades of rouge on her cheeks and the typical modern fashions for a student—a white collared shirt, a short black skirt, a small black purse, and black flat shoes. She is sexually alluring and maintains multiple relationships simultaneously. Love letters come and go from her residence “unceasingly 不斷.” When she isn’t replying to these love letters, she wastes her free time at the movie theater. Her “constant concern 時刻關心” is not her schooling or her country, but how her romances are progressing. The sketch of the prostituting dance hostess is the least critical. She is described as a very graceful dancer who is incredibly attractive. 35

This male reader believed that in Shanghai the majority of women seeking the New Woman ideal no longer took any interest in anything other than their trivial personal matters. He objectifies the New Woman by eroticizing her form and suggesting that her sexuality controls her life as she spends most of her time engaging in romances, thinking about romances, and dressing in a manner that attracts sexual partners. The New Woman, in his sketch, is a product of her uninhibited human desires for sex, attention, and amusement. The result of this portrayal is an image of the New Woman as a highly individualistic creature who is fueled by nothing more than personal desires for superficial pleasures, an image that is strikingly different from the New Life Movement’s

promotion of self-discipline. Furthermore, the representation of the dancehall hostess suggests that the New Woman is a sexual object that is to be possessed and consumed, so much so that her livelihood and her very existence is her sexuality. Portrayals of women like this reinforced conservative accusations that the New Woman’s shameless self-indulgence in fashion and entertainment had caused China’s economic and political crisis. The fact that this writer was a man is of little significance. Linglong’s female contributors also took issue with the New Woman’s obsession with Western commodities. This proportion of readers encouraged their peers to join the movement employing differing methods to persuade them.

Qiong琼, a penname for a frequent contributor, tried to convince her fellow readers that Chinese goods could be just as novel as Western imports. She called upon her “sisters” to dispel the belief that foreign goods were better than native goods and to encourage one another to wear native products.³⁶ Similarly, Lian连 said, “we cannot say that all European and American things are new 我們不該說歐美的一切都新的” and we cannot believe “each and every Chinese thing is old 凡是中國的一切都是舊的” and outdated.³⁷ For readers who might not agree, other contributors tried to dissuade them by justifying the Nationalists’ clothing ban and appealing to their national pride.

³⁶ Qiong, “Funü guohuo nian dui zimeimen yidian guli,” Linglong 127 (1934): 72
Hua Sheng 華生 attempted to dissuade women from purchasing foreign goods by arguing that Westernization was detrimental to Chinese culture. Hua reveals in “Discussing the Westernization of China’s Fashionable Women from the Perspective of Germany’s Hygienic Clothing Movement 從德國的衛生服裝運動: 談到中國時髦婦女的洋化” that she finds similarities between Germany’s clothing reforms and the Nationalists’ ban on fashionable clothing in parts of China. Hua uses these similarities to justify the Nationalists’ ban on foreign products. She explains that after Germany began relations with Southern Europeans 南歐人, women’s fashion in the country began to mimic fashionable foreign (non-German) clothing. Eventually, German women imitated foreign practices “materially and spiritually 在物質上精神上.” They adopted bad habits and ideologies, and the influence of Southern Europe gradually caused Germany’s native culture to disappear. The disappearance of their culture eventually caused the denigration of German families. The German government, she argues, instituted clothing regulations to prevent the situation from worsening. Now, when a German woman wears native clothing, she explains, it is a symbol of Germany’s ideology and national pride.

38 The author does not specify how many or which countries of Southern Europe. However, she does imply that Italy is one of these nations.
39 The author does not explain exactly how this occurs, she only states that it happened, which draws the question of whether or not she is speaking truthfully or making this up to support her argument.
The example of the relationship between Germany and the influence of Southern Europe is a clear allusion to the relationship between China and the influence of the popular culture in the United States. The author indirectly suggests that the rampant adoption of Western ideologies and products through consumption will bring about the end of China. She implies that the Nationalists’ ban on fashionable clothing will preserve their culture. She claims that each nation’s fashion not only represents its level of respect for women, but also its level of national pride. Therefore, she concludes, women should wear simple native clothing, so that they represent their national pride and prevent the disappearance of Chinese culture.

When these polite persuasive methods failed, other contributors used scare tactics. Qiong provided a detailed description of the Smashing Modernity Gang’s activities in Hangzhou and Tianjin with the intention of frightening other readers into compliance with the New Life Movement. In 1935, she wrote:

Allegedly, in Hangzhou and Tianjin the Smashing Modernity Gang is running wild, especially in the theaters. When it is dark they can easily do their work, so their destruction is more effective. Many modern women, who wear beautiful clothes, finish watching their movie and, upon their return home, discover that all of their foreign products and clothing have been damaged, but their native goods are not affected. I think, when the ordinary woman who uses foreign products hears this matter, [she] is certainly terrified, isn’t she? [...] The Smashing Modernity Gang seeks to cause this kind of damage because they dislike seeing our countrymen ardently promoting foreign goods. Therefore, the women that primarily use imported goods suffer the most losses. We must remember that

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This passage serves as a warning to fashionable women. The severity of this warning is intensified by Qiong’s validation of the Smashing Modernity Gang’s methods. Although Qiong regards the Gang’s methods as “crude and rash” 魯莽,” she believes that the women who suffered this punishment deserved it because they did not participate in the New Life Movement’s National Goods Campaign. She claims that women who did not willingly participate in the New Life Movement’s National Goods Campaign left the Gang with no other choice but to force them to comply with the Movement’s ban on fashionable clothing and foreign imports. In a rhetorical question, Qiong asks her fellow readers if women are so passive that such extreme methods must be used to convince them to purchase domestic commodities. Qiong considers this incident with the Smashing Modernity Gang to be a wake-up call to women who have passed over domestic goods. She confesses that these vicious methods are probably more harmful than beneficial, but at the end of the article, she still expresses her appreciation for the activities of the

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41 Qiong, “Cong modeng pohuaituan xiang dao funümen yu waihuo,” Linglong 136 (1934): 644. The article suggests it is possible that the Smashing Modernity Gang damaged the clothing of fashionable women while they were sitting in a darkened theater by cutting their clothing.
Smashing Modernity Gang. She states that their methods may scare other women to correct their mistakes and purchase national goods voluntarily.

Qiong’s justification suggested that women who have been targeted by the Smashing Modernity Gang would not receive sympathy or assistance from the rest of the general public who considered their unpatriotic behavior and lack of self discipline as reprehensible. The acquiescence of the general public allowed the Smashing Modernity Gang to run rampant in Hangzhou and Tianjin. If the residents of Shanghai resign themselves to comply with these violent methods because they find it necessary, as Qiong does, then the possibility of the Gang’s activities flooding into Shanghai becomes much more plausible to a reader. In this way, Qiong’s justification serves as implicit warning that the fashionable women of Shanghai risk being harassed if they do not comply.

Despite these warnings, voluntary compliance was not possible among women who ardently opposed the New Life Movement’s attempts to control their bodies. In 1935, Madame Chiang Kai-Shek attempted to reassure female protestors that “the movement is not to interfere with private affairs or prohibit others from realizing their legitimate wishes […] it is not to curtail freedom of the individual, but to promote the freedom of the whole nation.”42 Yet, regardless of her efforts, the Nationalists found it difficult to supplant the influence of Western individualism on women influenced by the New

42May-Ling Soong Chiang, War Messages and Other Selections (Hankow: China Information Committee, 1938), 318.
Culture Movement. Yiman Wang has noted that the emerging sense of individual subjectivity among women after the New Culture era became increasingly difficult for the Nationalists to subsume into their “communal and nationalist interests” in the wake of the Japanese invasion in the 1930s. In Linglong it is evident that the belief in individual liberties among women contended with the New Life Movement’s call for self-sacrifice and personal discipline for the sake of collective and national goals. The following sample of Linglong’s readers presents the voices of women who rebuffed the New Life Movement’s calls for patriotism on the grounds that the campaign’s legislative bans on fashionable styles and cosmetics infringed upon their individual freedoms. This section is the place in which we can view how differing understandings of modernity—one based on collectivism, the other based on individualism—caused tension between the Nationalists and Linglong’s contributors.

**With Liberty, Lipstick, and Perms for All: Linglong Contends with the New Life Movement**

According to articles published in Linglong during the New Life Movement, some contributors were hesitant to denounce the image of the New Woman as New Life supporters had; they preferred to portray the New Woman as an ignorant victim who was exploited by the avarice of opportunistic capitalists in a male-dominated society. Further,

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dissenters of the New Life Movement in the magazine argued that the chauvinistic aura of the New Life Movement stifled their freedom as women to control their bodies. Many believed that the campaign’s attempt to control their personal appearances was a misguided endeavor to strengthen the nation through trivial personal matters. In 1936, “Discussing Women and Luxury Goods 談到婦女與奢侈” by Chen Mulan illustrated the ways in which some women were reluctant to place all the blame for the trade deficit on women.

Chen Mulan excuses the consumption patterns of the women by arguing that China’s male-dominated society forced women to consume cosmetics. She claims that, in a world dominated by men, for the sake of their survival, women “have no choice but to apply powder and paint, and study fashion in order to look beautiful 在男性中心社會制度下，女子為圖生存，不得不塗脂抹粉，研飾為美.” She suggests that cosmetics became necessary to femininity because men made them essential. There is no elaboration on this point, but it is implied by her statement that the standards of beauty became so high that women had to wear makeup and “dress up” in order to meet them. According to Madeleine Dong, during the early twentieth century the purpose of the New Woman persona was to prepare a woman for marriage.44 The New Woman’s education and her use of cosmetics and fashionable clothing were to attract a suitable, reputable

husband.\textsuperscript{45} It is likely that Chen’s argument is related to the idea that women began to find fashionable dress indispensable because it improved their marriage prospects. Consequently, Chen argues, women and luxury goods “formed a bond 女子結不解緣,” and women learned to love fashionable clothing. The article paints a picture of the New Woman as a victim of a male-dominated society whose behaviors are motivated by male desires.

These “pitiful women 可憐的女子” consumed fashionable goods because the business world of men had convinced them it was a normal part of femininity. Chen explains that critics should blame factories instead of women because manufactories exploited women to make a profit. She claims that, “in a private ownership system […] smart manufacturers utilize a human’s weakness: love for beautiful things 在私有制度的社會[…] 聰明的廠家就利用人類愛美的弱點.”\textsuperscript{46} She insists that manufacturers have made it their job to rob women of their money by preying on their love of fashionable clothing. Chen was not the only contributor who believed that the decline of national goods in the face of popular imported commodities was the fault of China’s opportunistic manufacturers.

Although Qiong justified the persuasive methods of Smashing Modernity Gang in 1935, one of her earlier articles demonstrates that she was also hesitant to blame women

\textsuperscript{45}Dong, “Who’s Afraid of the Chinese Modern Girl,” 204.
for the trade deficit. In an article she contributed in 1934, she vilifies manufacturers for their negligence during the National Goods Movement. “Two Things That Should be Considered in the Women’s National Goods Year” argues that fashionable women were not intentionally rebuffing Chinese goods. The real problem was that they were unable to determine whether or not an item was domestically produced. Consequently, they often purchased goods that they wrongly believed were domestically produced or they passed over goods that were national products, but appeared foreign. She recounts a speech that was delivered by a writer named Madame Beike—a possible transliteration of Becker—who had recently returned to China from America. Beike reported that when a group of women examined silk and satin fabric produced in Nanjing, they mistakenly believed that it was a Japanese product. Based on this example and confessions from multiple women, Qiong argues that many women have been “easily fooled” into purchasing foreign goods. She claims that this confusion, not fashionably dressed women, was inhibiting the expansion of China’s industries and worsening the trade deficit. Therefore, only Chinese manufacturers could fix the trade deficit. She urges them to unite together and organize a consumer guide to

47 During the anti-foreign boycotts of the 1920s and 1930s, many Chinese companies decided it would be profitable to imitate popular American goods and sell them in the same packaging. Some companies used foreign goods to produce their own “Chinese version” of luxury goods, such as toothpaste and gauze underpants. Karl Gerth argues that in the mid-nineteen twenties and the late-nineteen twenties, “the next best thing to producing a pure Chinese product was producing one with imported raw materials. For more information see Gerth, China Made, 188-189.
differentiating native and foreign goods. In defense of woman, Qiong’s statements place the responsibility of the consumption of national goods in the hands of manufacturers because, she believed, it was ridiculous to expect women to consume domestic goods consistently without these guidelines.

Arguments like Qiong’s formed a basis on which women could also defend prostitutes.⁴⁸ The anonymous author of “Banning Fashionable Women’s Clothing 取締婦女時髦服” denounces the movement’s tendency to blame prostitutes for China’s economic problems. She explains that this method of strengthening the nation was insensitive. Hoping to alleviate the intense criminalization of prostitutes and women pursuing the New Woman ideal, the author asks “the gentlemen in authority 當局諸公” to be “sympathetic 同情” and “cautious 謹慎” in their attitudes towards women.⁴⁹ To dissuade other women from persecuting prostitutes, she appeals to their belief in a universal sisterhood between women. The author writes:

Although prostitutes are regarded as one of our (China’s) three harms, they are still without a doubt women, [so] how can [we] simply make them into the exception, and ridicule them? 娼妓雖然算得我們的‘三害’之一不過妓女當然也是婦女怎可獨把她們視為例外而來挖苦他們？⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Qudi funü shimao fuzhuang,” Linglong 221 (1936): 158.
⁵⁰ Ibid.
Calls for sympathy were a result of the magazine’s promotion of universal sisterhood in the face of male dominance and dishonesty. According to Gary Wang’s research on sisterhood in *Linglong*, in the magazine, “feelings between women are cherished as genuine and enduring.” Consequently, Wang argues, *Linglong* presented a representation of sisterhood that emphasized female solidarity. It is highly likely that *Linglong’s* defense of new women and prostitutes was a product of the magazine’s belief in the bonds of sisterhood.

*Linglong’s* defense of the New Woman also stemmed from its philosophy of female independence and individualism. These ideologies caused conflict between the New Life Movement’s clothing regulations and *Linglong’s* readers who believed that they had the right to control their bodies. Several editorials in the magazine demonstrate that some readers found the New Life Movement’s methods needlessly oppressive and ineffective. One writer responded directly to clothing laws passed in Shanxi Province that ordered Chinese prostitutes to get a perm and wear high heels. The author bitterly commented that Shanxi’s law unfairly made any woman who wore high heels or curled their hair a prostitute. Another reader discussed a recent law in Hangzhou that prohibited female students from perming their hair as well as wearing make-up, high heels, rings and bracelets. The author argues that prohibition of fashionable clothing could not

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52 Ibid.

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generate any significant social results. Another contributor mirrored these sentiments, concluding that government regulation of personal adornments, such as hair, was useless. She insists that, “Perming, cutting, or keeping one’s hair long are all women’s personal freedoms, and have nothing to do with so-called moral questions.” These sentiments strongly reflect the dissident females who were not contributors to the magazine. For example, in 1935, Taiyuan’s Women’s Progressive Association 婦女協進會 called on the city to rescind the order that prostitutes perm their hair and wear high heels. They argued that these laws denied other women the right to look fashionable and retain their dignity. The association understood that the Nationalist Government began the regulation of female clothing to morally uplift women who had become too materialistic. However, they still insisted that female problems could only be resolved by women, so the government should not interfere in the personal affairs of women. Due to the fact that some women found the New Life Movement’s method’s of igniting social change invasive and ineffective, they often dismissed or ignored the promotion of patriotic consumption and simple clothing.

Photographic fashion articles and advertisements in Linglong demonstrate that the magazine periodically chose to ignore the New Life Movement’s condemnation of

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55. Gerth, China Made, 329.
cosmetics and luxurious clothing. For example, advertisements for Cutex remained present in almost every issue of *Linglong* throughout the New Life Movement. Likewise, advertisements for the French perfume 4711: Tosca Eau de Cologne sporadically appeared in the magazine as well. Although the editors never featured advertisements for rouge, lipstick, or powder during the New Life Movement, they continued to provide instructions for the proper application of these items, especially eye shadow, and eyeliner. In 1935, the editors published a series of photographs showcasing different ways to wear eye make-up, in which the thickness, color, and shape all varied. Another image featured two Western women demonstrating how they apply eyeliner and darken their eyebrows using make-up. The identity of these women is unclear, but the caption assures the readers that they are Hollywood celebrities, and they have some authority in the best ways to apply make-up. In this way, it also appears that Hollywood glamour remained very influential to the magazine’s portrayal of modern femininity.

The magazine’s continual glorification of Hollywood actresses and Western styles from 1934 to 1936 also indicates that *Linglong* more often ignored the New Life Movement’s disapproval of perms, high heels, bare skin, and Western beauty standards. *Linglong’s* editors continued to publish hairstyles for women with permanent waves. Likewise, contributors encouraged other readers to mimic these styles. For example, The magazine featured several images of various versions of the “bob,” such as the “Baby

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Flemish bob,” the “Boyish bob,” the “Pine apple[sic] bob,” and the “Sweetheart bob.”

Images providing multiple angles of a new variation of the style were commonly available in the magazine so readers could mimic them correctly (see image 3.1).

Photographs of Hollywood actresses, such as Lillian Gish (1893-1993), were frequently featured to showcase the shape and cut of popular American bobs. A brief article about American hairstyles enthusiastically expressed the opinion that American women changed their hair in accordance with changes in society, implying that they always had the latest fashions, and Chinese women should use them as a model. The article was accompanied by three photos of the latest Hollywood hairstyle, each featuring a different angle. The author encouraged the fashionable women of China to imitate this look.

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58 Linglong 44 (1932): 1768.
60 “Meiguo funü shizhuang tanfa xin yang zhi san,” Linglong 40 (1931):1577.
61 Ibid.
The magazine unremittingly upheld the glamour and extravagance of Hollywood actresses as the global standard of beauty. In an editorial titled, “A Famous Artist’s Ideal Girl,” Jean Harlow (1911-1937), Marlene Dietrich (1901-1992), Joan Blondell (1906-1979), Janet Gaynor (1906-1984), and Joan Crawford (1904-1977) are portrayed as models for the ideal girl (see image 3.2). In the collage of these actresses that accompanies the article, Harlow and Crawford show off their figures in form-fitting clothing. Blondell, Gaynor, and Dietrich show off their bare legs and cleavage in a swimsuit, a short skirt, and a low-cut blouse, respectively. The “ideal girl” standing among them is presented as a composite of all five actresses. Like Harlow, her hair is
light and curly, her swimsuit is almost identical to the suit that Blondell wears, and her proportions are similar to Crawford’s body proportions. According to this image, the ideal woman proudly flaunts her bare legs in society, wears high heels, and takes the time to curl her hair and do her make-up flawlessly. She is a woman in control of her body. The presence of this article suggests that the editors of *Linglong* continued to promote an image of a New Woman that did not align with the New Life Movement’s condemnation of high heels, permanent waves, bare skin, and cosmetics.62

In some cases, the magazine even mocked conservative criticisms that called fashionable women, like Irene Dunne (1898-1990), Myrna Loy (1905-1993), and Janet Gaynor, detrimental to society. The editors published a series of photos that called these women and a handful of other Hollywood actresses “dangerous women 危險的婦女” (see image 3.2).63 Yet, within almost every photo, these actresses are portrayed in a positive light. Myrna Loy and Janet Gaynor smile happily, giving off a cordial rather than threatening aura. Claudette Colbert (1903-1996) is dressed in a plain white collared shirt, exposing only her hands and her neck (an outfit that New Life supports could hardly consider inappropriate). Finally, Irene Dune appears to be the manifestation of feminine vulnerability. She is hardly the picture of a woman that could overturn a nation. The editors regard Joan Blondell as an outgoing and friendly girl, and Janet Gaynor as similar

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to the girl-next-door. The purpose of this editorial is to disprove accusations that the New Woman’s self-indulgence was a danger to the nation.

In 1934, the magazine published a special edition that focused entirely on “Hollywood Actresses 電影明星特刊.” In these photographs, the actresses wore a variety of outfits, but all of them portrayed flawless pin-curls and make-up. The collage

of images indicates that a woman could be both fashionable and reputable. In one image, Loy wears a low-cut gown and looks seductively into the camera, beckoning the viewer towards her. In another, Gaynor wears plain white slacks, a simple black blouse and smiles at something outside of the mise-en-scène, an obvious difference from the seductive “come hither” look that was emblematic of the New Woman’s licentiousness. Colbert is dressed in an elaborate glittering black dress, and Sally Eilers (1908-1978) dons only a plain white turtleneck sweater and a black cardigan. These contrasting images of glamour and simplicity are strategically arranged to display the New Woman in all her extravagance and ordinariness. The purpose of these images was to defeat arguments that fashionable women were nothing but superficial, extravagant creatures.

Loy and Colbert hold particular importance to the magazine’s sardonic response to criticism of Hollywood glamour because they were frequently featured in Linglong as beauty icons both before and after The New Life Movement began. The editors chose the particularly modest photos of Colbert and Loy in “Hollywood’s Seven Most Dangerous Women” to vindicate not only the actresses’ reputations, but also the reputations of all the women who admired and emulated them. In the two aforementioned articles, Colbert’s simple portrayal in a white shirt and her glamorous presentation in a shimmering gown showcase two dimensions of the New Woman (see

image 3.3). Colbert and the other actresses provide evidence that the villainess New Woman was nothing more than an average woman who occasionally dressed up. These images indicate that even while the New Life Movement was in full swing, Linglong continued to defend and promote the image of a New Woman as a female with fashionable taste who controlled her own body. By presenting both images of the New Woman, Linglong argued that women could choose to be more or less glamorous without more denigration.


Based on this idea that women had a choice, *Linglong* continued to showcase fashionable Chinese women who ignored the New Life Movement’s regulations. Mrs. W.J. Wen, Miss Elise Soong, Mrs. Russell Sun, and Mrs. Lin Baohua were all depicted in elegant embroidered *qipaos* with matching jewelry and simple make-up (see figure 3.4). With the exception of Sun and Wen, all of these women were shown with permanent waves.\(^{68}\) Adornments, such as earrings and necklaces were considered extravagant luxuries by supporters of the New Life Movement and largely criticized or banned. Yet, as readers continued to send in personal photos in which they donned permanent waves

\(^{68}\) *Linglong* 175 (1935): 543-547.
and jewelry, *Linglong* did not hesitate to publish images of Chinese women wearing prohibited styles (see figure 3.4). \(^6^9\)

**Conclusion**

When the New Life Movement began in 1934, female consumers and the New Woman archetype receive a large amount of attention from New Lifers and supporters of the movement’s National Goods Campaign. The Nationalists planned to militarize Chinese citizens in preparation for possible military attacks by instilling them with a collective consciousness. They believed that the New Woman’s emphasis on autonomy and fashion undermined their efforts to rid Chinese citizens of self-indulgence in material culture and also make them whole-heartedly devoted to national initiatives.

The Nationalists used the Woman’s Year of National Products to reshape the archetype’s focus on Western standards of beauty, style and fashion. Hoping to regain control of women pursuing the New Woman ideal, they attempted to dispel the belief that the use of Western commodities and the adoption of Western styles represented modern femininity. They argued that modernity was a construct that could be shaped by individual countries according to their needs. Therefore, the New Woman persona was based on national standards and her main purpose was to assist national needs. In this

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way, they attempted to collectivize the New Woman persona so that she was no longer rooted in individualism.

Based on this idea, the Nationalists believed they could control female consumption and fashion when it became necessary for economic improvement. However, when the government began to ban certain Western commodities and styles, their belief in collectivism clashed with female beliefs in individualism. While some women accepted state control because they believed it was justified, others ardently opposed it. *Linglong’s* contributors showcase these two groups of women. Articles in the magazine demonstrate that some women tried to pacify the growing tension between women pursuing the New Woman ideal and the Nationalist Government. However, many women did not. Consequently it appears that women followed the New Life Movement’s reforms in a piecemeal fashion. They endorsed the National Goods Movement, but did not entirely reject Western fashions.

The photos of Hollywood actresses and Chinese women wearing banned fashions in the magazine reveal that despite the fact that the editors supported the National Goods Movement and published articles that critiqued the New Woman’s Western style, they disregarded the New Life Movement’s contempt for fashionable clothing and cosmetics as well as its endorsement for simple dress. Indeed, *Linglong* showcased both reactions to the New Life Movement because it intended to retain its status as a forum in which
women could freely express their opinions. However, the magazine still had its own agendas and its goal to present all things modern and fashionable. Therefore, the editors published editorials and illustrations that supported the New Woman’s freedom to consume and wear fashionable cosmetics and styles regardless of their origin.

This chapter has examined the New Life Movement’s National Goods Campaign (approximately 1934-1936), which directly targeted female consumers. The purpose of this chapter was to demonstrate that some women believed shopping represented independence, and to showcase how this belief created tension between these women and the Nationalist government. It demonstrates that female consumption of fashionable goods provoked tension between these two groups of people because it revealed that they defined modernity differently. While the Nationalists leadership argued that modernity was based on collectivism, some women pursuing the New Woman ideal believed that modernity was rooted in autonomy and individual rights. Thus, the New Woman’s relationship with fashionable consumption is the point at which it is possible to view the intersections between modernity, individualism, gender equality, and nationalism.
Conclusion

China’s consumer culture began in Shanghai approximately the same time that the first department stores opened in the late 1910s. Western consumerism was quickly adopted by the Chinese middle-class and upper-class. Consumer culture depended on the affluent Chinese community’s desire to show off their new-found wealth and modern lifestyles, represented by their equal participation in, and consumption of Western leisure activities and commodities. Shanghai’s consumer culture was bolstered by the influx of foreign, particularly American cinema.

American films created a template of modernity that emphasized materialism as the manifestation of the modern world. Miriam Silverberg has argued that in Japan the popularity of Japanese and American films significantly influenced Japanese audiences who consumed the images of American life and society. This consumption through film, created a “consumer culture of images\(^1\) in which the image of modernity was more effective than the objects presented in those images. The image of an object in an American film was more effective than seeing the product on display in a store because the commodity’s place within a mise-en-scène that illustrated the modern Western lifestyle of the bourgeoisie legitimized that object as an emblem of Western modernity. In this way, modernity became dependent on the corporeal objects that represented society’s

technological, intellectual and economic advancement. Modernity became a commodity that could be bought and sold. As a result, cinema and the idea that the creation of a “modern” lifestyle could be achieved through consumption were significantly linked. Images of Western modernity helped create and sustain the popularity of consumer culture during Shanghai’s Golden Age, the 1920s and 1930s. Madame Wellington Koo remarked that Shanghai of that era had fallen “under an American spell.” The infiltration of American consumerism was not only transmitted visually; it was also manually transplanted on to Chinese soil by Chinese businessmen and entrepreneurs who sought to capitalize on the popularity of American popular culture and leisure. Koo recalled that in Shanghai many of the Chinese who had spent time in the United States, “abetted by Hollywood, were largely responsible for the American vogue.” For example, they constructed nightclubs and produced imitations of Western cosmetics and fashions. The American vogue and the rise of consumer culture brought significant social changes to society in Shanghai.

The beginning of consumer culture in the late 1920s coincided with the turning point in the Women’s Liberation Movement 婦女解放運動 after the May Fourth Incident in 1919. The New Woman became representative of a modern society with liberated, autonomous individuals. The stark difference between the patriotism,

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2 Koo, Madame Wellington Koo, 254.
3 Ibid., 255.
individualism, and cosmopolitanism of the New Woman and the compliancy, dependency and narrow-mindedness of the traditional Confucian woman were indicators of the chasm that had grown between modern China and traditional China. Consequently, most of Chinese political society believed that the New Woman had an obligation to usher China into the international community of modernity. The New Woman and modern China had made an equivalent exchange. In exchange for her liberation, the New Woman had to liberate China from the shackles of imperialism. It was in this manner that the tension between feminine individualism and nationalism began to emerge. In the 1920s and 1930s, political and commercial forces simultaneously wrestled for control of the New Woman persona. During the 1920s, commercialization and Shanghai’s business world commandeered the archetype of the New Woman for profit.

The printed and electronic commercial media portrayed the New Woman archetype as dependent on the acquisition of both domestic and imported fashionable commodities and styles. Calendar posters reproduced the image of an autonomous New Woman who was in charge of her body and sexuality. Advertisements took this image of the New Woman and adorned it in fashionable clothing, make-up, and soft curls. These images suggested that all the items these models wore were essential to the modern femininity, and gradually consumption was presented as a necessary part of modern femininity. *Linglong* was among the various forums in the media that endorsed shopping as a rudimentary part of femininity. *Linglong* based its understanding of femininity
heavily on Western understandings of beauty, hygiene, and science that had been adopted during the New Culture era. The magazine enthusiastically promoted and advertised Western cosmetics and fashions as guides to femininity and cosmopolitanism. Readers of Linglong were among the women seeking modern femininity through Western examples and creating their own sense femininity through hybrid forms of Sino-Western fashions and styles.

The 1930s was also marked by the incorporation of Western cosmetics and toiletries into a woman’s daily life, creating a femininity that was based on Western science and technology. The knowledge of how to use these cosmetics was evidence of the New Woman’s distinction from her traditional predecessor and legitimized her as a member of the modernized world of scientific advancement. Consequently, women’s understanding of Western concepts of femininity and biology became a symbol of China’s emergence into the international community of Western-defined modernity. Within Shanghai, department stores became spaces in which the New Culture Movement’s endorsement of individualism and gender equality were acted out. Female shoppers in the act of consumption developed a sense of independence from their husbands and families. The search for independence among Chinese women in the Nanjing Decade, 1927-1937, collided with the Nationalists’ reorganization of the regime as well as their hope to build national strength and nationalism through economic stimulus.
In 1930, the new Nationalist regime under Chiang Kai-Shek was only three years old. During the Nanjing Decade the Nationalist Government believed that China’s rise into modernity relied on its economic independence and stability. Consequently, production and consumption became central to the Nationalists’ modernization plans. In the 1930s, China was suffering from a foreign trade deficit that was reported to be as high as 900 million dollars in 1933.\(^4\) Chinese businessmen and the Nationalist Government examined the most popular foreign goods among consumers and found that cosmetics, and toiletries as well as some fabrics made up the highest percent of imported goods. In the midst of this, women had recently emerged as China’s largest consumer base. Consequently, the Nationalists viewed women as important figures in economics. In the eyes of the Nationalists, women were key players in China’s modernization, economic stability, freedom from imperialism, and moral regeneration. The importance of women pursuing the New Woman ideal to the cultural and economic state of China made them a group that, conservatives believed, needed to be controlled and regulated for the good of the country.

During the majority of the New Life Movement from 1934 to 1936, consumption became a realm in which nationalism and autonomy came to a head. As exemplified by the articles in *Linglong*, women believed that fashion represented a sphere in which they had complete control over their own bodies and personal autonomy. This individualism,

manifested through their control over their wages, signified liberation from patriarchal confinement. It was feminine modernity. Indeed, Linglong’s readers agreed that they had a patriotic responsibility to bolster the country economically, but they also ardently believed in their own civil liberties. For New Life supporters, the road to modernity lay in the militarization of citizens to produce disciplined, self-sacrificing and reliable civil servants. As a result, the Nationalist Government believed civilian activity should be devoted to national goals. Hoping to rectify the foreign trade deficit and save China from the moral denigration of Western-defined modernity, they banned imported goods and fashionable styles of dress. The compliant reaction of some women and the protests of others in Linglong illustrate that there were differing responses to these laws. Together, they showcase the ways in which consumption, modernity, and nationalism created points of contention between the government and civilians as well as between gendered hierarchies.

The intersections between consumption, modern concepts of femininity, and nationalism are points in which it is possible to view the complications of adopting Western modernity in colonized nations. Furthermore, these connections also provide a glimpse into the tensions that can arise between individualism and nationalism in times of national crisis, a subject that has been understudied within the context of Republican China during the 1930s. A more comprehensive analysis of the ways in which the

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tensions between individualism and nationalism in colonized nations are exacerbated by consumer culture exceeds the scope of this thesis. However, these tensions provide a starting point from which to expand this research and examine how liberalist ideologies affect the relationship between the state and the individual in economically and politically unstable periods.
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