Acknowledgements

The completion of this thesis would have been impossible without the guidance of my MA supervisor Professor Huang Jianli, and Dr. Thomas D. Dubois: my great gratitude to both of you for guiding me through the whole process of selecting the topic, collecting research materials and the final stage of writing.

The Department of History and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences have also given me enormous support in my research in the National University of Singapore, without which my field trip to China would have been much more difficult.

Special thanks go to Ms. Teo Hwee Ping, Harminder Kaur, Ong Zhen Mini, Manjit Kaur and Beatriz P. Lorente, who kindly read through my draft and gave valuable advice on my writing.

I feel lucky to be a member of a cheerful postgraduate student community in the History department, and I will always remember the great time I spent with my wonderful classmates.

I also owe Prof. Ian L. Gordon, Prof. Brian Farrell, Ms. Kelly Lau, Ms. Normah Osman, and Mrs. Letha Umar from the Department of History, for their kind help and guidance through my postgraduate study in Singapore.

Finally I thank my parents, to whom this thesis is dedicated to, for their most great love and support especially towards my pursuing of higher degree.
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Summary

This thesis is a case study of discourses on the New Woman in the newspaper *Women’s Weekly* in 1930s China. Chapter 1 summarizes scholarship on the discourses of new women from the late Qing to the 1930s. It argues that discourses of male intellectuals’ on building a new woman regarded Chinese women as objects of reformation who needed to be transformed in order to strengthen the Chinese nation. The motive behind the discourses was rather the male intellectuals’ own desires for strengthening the nation, for individual liberty and for binding a nation under its own authority.

Women intellectuals competed with their male counterparts to dominate feminist discourses as soon as they emerged on the stage. They advocated women’s autonomy towards women-concerned issues, which legitimized themselves to be the leader of women’s movement. The 1930s inherited their legacy and the contributors in the *Women’s Weekly* discussion carried forward the topics on gender equality and continued to regard women intellectuals as the leading force for the Chinese women’s movement, and ultimately, the new Chinese women.

Chapter 2 examined how educated women were qualified in the *Women’s Weekly* to be the new women in contrast to the Shanghai style “modern girls” and the “less advantaged” women, due to the women intellectuals’ ability to define a perceived appropriate new Chinese woman’s model and to direct the women’s movement.

Chapter 3 revealed how the contributors of the *Women’s Weekly* exercised their roles as social critics. They commented on social conventions that discriminate against
women; more importantly, they acted as spokespeople of the Chinese women in petitioning for the state’s support of women’s welfare; inspired by the Soviet Union’s government model, they expected the future Chinese women’s movement to be under the GMD’s umbrella, even though such advocates could not go beyond pure lip service given the Nanjing government’s reluctance to support the women’s movement.

Chapter 4 argues that the depiction on foreign women’s lives in the *Women's Weekly* reiterated the contributors’ domestic concerns. They demonstrated their cosmopolitan outlook and nationalist concerns in evaluating Chinese women’s conditions within the international background. Both qualities are desirable according to the new Chinese women’s model they advocated. More directly, the contributors categorized foreign women as advanced and less advanced according to the “new virtuous wife and good mother” criteria and assimilated themselves to their foreign counterparts, which again assured the validity of the “new virtuous wife and good mother” model and women intellectuals’ identity as the new Chinese women.
Negotiating the Image of a New Woman: Women Intellectuals’ Group Identity and the Funü Zhoukan (Women’s Weekly) in 1930s China

Introduction

The image of the New Woman dominated gender discourses in early twentieth century China. As renewed women were the metaphors of a strengthened nation, elite social groups of Chinese society always competed in the construction of images of model women, through which they claimed themselves to be the leaders of an emergent and progressive Chinese society.¹

This thesis is a case study of journalistic discourses on the image of the “new woman” in Funü Zhoukan (from hence Women’s Weekly), the supplement of the Nationalist Party (or Guomindang, GMD)’s official newspaper Zhongyang Ribao (Central Daily News) from 1935 to 1937. I argue that the construction of the New Woman image in the 1930s reflected the group identity of women intellectuals in the post May Fourth era. These intellectuals saw themselves as models for the new Chinese women and saviors of unenlightened women, as social reformers who represented women’s interests that were an integral part of a modern country.

Women’s Weekly defined itself as post-May Fourth, i.e., to put the May Fourth principles into practice. It aimed at promoting an alternative modernity from Shanghai commercialism. The discussion involved the wide participation of the urban-middle to lower middle-class people, which included school teachers, civil servants and clerks. This study will present the vibrant discussions of women’s issues carried out in the 1930s, and

¹ Liu Renpeng’s work on late Qing reformers’ promotion of women’s rights, and Wang Zheng’s analysis on May Fourth male intellectuals’ advocacy of feminism all argued the presence of each group’s own political agenda in which defining new Chinese women became necessary. Please refer to my detailed discussions on the development of feminist discourses from late Qing to the 1930s China in chapter one. detailed discussions.
argue for the presence of an intellectual identity: that of the new Chinese woman among educated middle-class Chinese women in the Chinese press.

**Previous scholarship on new woman’s image in China**

Previous scholarship has already spent much effort deconstructing the Chinese discourse of a “New Woman” in the late Qing, May Fourth and Communist China eras.² Such discourses include the late Qing reformers’ opinions on women’s education and on anti-foot-binding, the May Fourth male intellectuals’ discussions of Nora (the heroine of Henrik Ibsen’s play *A Doll’s House*) and of the 1930s Nationalist and Communist parties’ advocacy of revolutionary women. Each group advocated a certain image of new Chinese women for their own interest. This will be elaborated upon Chapter One.

The GMD is out of the picture in scholarship based on the writings and activities of prominent leaders of women’s movements.³ Compared with their Communist

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² In her book, *Jindai zhongguo nüquan lunshu: guozu, fanyi yu xingbie zhengzhi (Feminist discourses in Modern China: nation, translation and gender politics)*, (Taipei: Xuesheng publishing house, 2000), Liu Renpeng argued that the late Qing scholars expressed their desire of a strengthened Chinese nation competing with the western powers through their desire for new Chinese women as “western beauties”. An equivalent English work was done by Hu Ying, *Tales of Translation: Composing the New Woman in China, 1899-1918* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2000). Vera Schwarcz in *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and the Legacy of the May Fourth Movement of 1919*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986) argued that the May Fourth new youth identified themselves with Nora in pursuing individuality out of the family patriarchy. Christina Gilmartin focused on the gender relations within the Communist party in the 1920s. She argued that the powerful males’ sensibility towards gender equality helped mobilizing mass women’s movements; however, radical women leaders such as Wang Huiwu and Xiang Jingyu felt much pressured in setting up local organizations for women such as schools and associations. Also the unconscious superiority of masculinity still existed in feminist advocates. The peasant movement leader Peng Pai took a second wife during his fame of being a feminist. Thus although the mid-1920s made significant attempt to build new gender relations, this work showed the limitations in its achievement. See *Engendering the Chinese Revolution: Radical Women, Communist Politics, and Mass Movements in the 1920s*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

³ The leading feminists include the revolutionary martyr Qiu Jin of the late Qing dynasty in Joan Judge, “Talent, Virtue, and the Nation: Chinese nationalisms and female subjectivities in the early twentieth century”, *American Historical Review*, June, 2001, pp. 765-803; GMD and CCP women’s movement leaders He Xiangning, Xiang Jingyu and Cai Chang in Elizabeth Croll,
counterparts (the CCP), who were aggressive in reaching out to the masses, the GMD’s leadership over women’s movements appeared to be superficial. The eventual victory of the CCP over the GMD largely shaped subsequent historiography. Also, women’s voices in GMD controlled areas were considered to be silenced by strong autocratic party rule. In such a context, the new woman’s image, i.e., women with traditional virtues and western education\(^4\) could be easily regarded as a pure GMD propaganda. The rationale behind the popularity of such an image was not thoroughly examined. Few efforts have been made to bring together a full understanding of the dynamic intellectual discussions on defining women’s roles in the Chinese society.

Some recent scholarship has focused on the independent 1930s social elites from the government\(^5\). After all, those who turned to the Communists were few compared to the majority of common people who did not choose an anti-governmental stand.\(^6\) Moreover, the unification of the Nanjing regime aroused a popular desire for social transformation. After 1935, the impending war crisis imposed by Japan further intensified popular

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\(^4\) Norma Diamond, “Women under Kuomintang Rule: Variations on the Feminine Mystique”, *Modern China*, vol. 1, No. 1, January 1975, pp. 3-45; Elizabeth Croll’s book, *Feminism and Socialism in China* also described the feminine mystique advocated by the GMD government in the 1930s that women should restore the traditional virtue, pp. 153-184.

\(^5\) Zhou Yongming, *Anti-drug Crusades in Twentieth-century China: Nationalism, History, and State Building* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, inc., 1999), argued a strong presence of Chinese urban elites, especially in Shanghai, against the government in the anti-drug discourses. By mobilizing the public opinion, their organization NAOA (National Anti-Opium Association) was pushing the government in every further step against the drug trade although the government was reluctant to get rid of this major tax income, pp. 70-76.

\(^6\) Even Croll realized in her book that “small numbers of women had opted to follow in the revolutionary tradition of the Nationalist Movement of the 1920s and joined the Communists in their Soviet Bases”, Croll, 1978, p. 184.
concerns to strengthen the nation. To people of that time, the Nanjing decade was a transitional period (guodu shiqi), a time when everything needed to be initiated and done quickly. Newspapers flourished as a result of heated discussions on social issues. In 1934, there were 43 daily newspapers and over 50 news agencies in Nanjing with the readership largely consisting of civil service officers. Shanghai, the centre of publications, also saw a dramatic increase in the total number of newspapers. The number of publications from the then three largest publishing houses in China, which covered the majority of the publications before 1949, had been increasing since 1927 and they doubled their total publications from 3,786 in 1934 to 6,717 in 1936.\(^7\) The role of women in society was among the most important social issues. It was during the Nanjing decade that the total number of existing women’s newspapers in Beijing doubled from that of the previous 23 years, and it became common for general newspapers to have supplements on women’s issues.\(^8\)

**Women’s Weekly: selection of this supplement and inherent difficulties**

*Women’s Weekly* was first published on April 24, 1935. From the 64\(^{th}\) issue on, the title was changed to *Women* (*fù nǚ*). Duanmu Luxi was the editor in chief. From February 3, 1937, Zhang Yunhe took over *Women* and changed it into *Women and Family* (*fù nǚ yu jiātiān*). Duanmu Luxi graduated from Guanghua University in Shanghai, and was married to her classmate Chu Anping, who was then editing the *Wényì* (*Literature*) supplement for the *Central Daily News*. On February 3\(^{rd}\) 1937, Chu Anping had a chance

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to go to London for a year to do research, and Duanmu went with him.\(^9\) She asked Zhang Yunhe, also her Guanghua classmate to take over the supplement. Zhang renamed it *Women and Family (Funü yu jiating)*\(^{10}\), claiming to turn the emphasis unto family reform. Zhang Yunhe is one of the four famous heroines in Annping Chin’s *Four Sisters of Hofei*. Being one of the most rebellious girls among the four sisters, Zhang Yunhe considered herself to be “a woman of the May Fourth generation”\(^{11}\): she was taught by her father, who was from Hofei gentry and who sponsored the Le-I women’s secondary school\(^{12}\) (where girls first cut their hair short). Influenced by her father, Yunhe was convinced that “a woman should have economic independence, which only a proper education and a proper profession could allow”\(^{13}\). She entered Guanghua University as one of the few students who did not graduate from a missionary school or a high school in Shanghai. During her years of study, she scoffed at the female students who “wore loud-color dresses and spiky heels” and who partied all day long, “how could they be interested in their schoolwork?”\(^{14}\) She found herself unfit for the Shanghai modern girls’ fashion, which was also expressed later when she wrote the opening article “Women are not flowers” for the *Women and Family*. By the time she took over the *Women’s Weekly*, however, she was married with two children and was determined to stay home “nurturing

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\(^{10}\) For the sake of convenience, this thesis will refer to these three titles collectively as *Women’s Weekly*.


\(^{12}\) Yunhe proudly recalled that the girls in Le-I were among the first who cut their hair short.

\(^{13}\) Annping Chin, p. 165.

\(^{14}\) Annping Chin, p. 164.
the husband and cultivating the children” (xiangfu jiaozi).\textsuperscript{15} She herself admitted that she “hearted others to take the difficult path in life when she herself was just as much a slacker as they were”\textsuperscript{16}. Both women became the editors-in-chief after their marriages. Duanmu quit editing to follow her husband to London, while Yunhe put an emphasis on her own family in 1936. Both women were from an elite background, i.e., college educated. In Yunhe’s case, she was from a family where the May Fourth ideology was embraced. Yet both of them were deeply tied to their marriage and family lives. These experiences enabled them to discuss women’s roles in society as they themselves enjoyed much freedom within family and society; such experiences may have also caused anxiety in defining their roles in a changing Chinese society. For Yunhe, although she was happily married to her husband after free love, she had to bear living with her mother-in-law and four sisters-in-law.\textsuperscript{17} The change in the focus of Women’s Weekly to that of exploring family issues may have reflected her anxiety about her private life.

The feminist discourse in the Women’s Weekly is representative of pro-government side of opinion. Women’s Field (Funü Yuandi), the supplement for Shen Bao (Shen Po), argued against Women’s Weekly’s promotion of a new virtuous wife and good mother. This was part of a larger debate over women’s roles in the society in the 1930s. The communists insisted that women should step out to help in the cause of national salvation through which they could find their own liberation. Women’s Weekly however suggested that women should have the quality of being “new virtuous wife and good mother”, either at home or in society. Together with Women’s Weekly, journals such as Guowen Zhoukan

\textsuperscript{15} Ye Zhiyun ed., Zhang Yunhe, Zhang Jia Jiu Shi (Old Stories of the Zhang Family), (Jinan: Shandong Huabao Chubanshe, 1999), p. 69. All the translations from the Chinese text are done by the author of this thesis, except for those from English publications.

\textsuperscript{16} Annping Chin, p. 164.

\textsuperscript{17} Annping Chin, p. 168.
(National News Weekly) and Zheng Lun (Impartial Discussions) all had articles promoting the “new virtuous wife and good mother”.\(^\text{18}\)

The Women’s Weekly was significant because it was also published in Nanjing, the political heart of GMD authority. Compared with its vibrant neighbor Shanghai, this quiet capital has been ignored by scholars of social history. However, Nanjing was the centre of the GMD regime’s control, as was observed by an American foreign-service officer in Nanjing in 1934, “The shadow of Chiang Kai-shek extends over this whole scene. [Before coming to Nanking (Nanjing)] I would have been unwilling to believe that he dominated the Government set-up here to the extent that is now so apparent.”\(^\text{19}\)

Furthermore, Nanjing is a particularly significant spot to observe the ideological control of this regime especially as the New Life Movement moved its center to Nanjing on January 1, 1936\(^\text{20}\). As mentioned in Chapter 1, the New Life Movement was the Nanjing regime’s major attempt to mould the people of Republican China into desired national subjects in the 1930s. Song Meiling (Madame Chiang Kai-shek) was in actual control of the whole movement and she advocated a restoration of Chinese virtues for women and a differentiated education for boys and girls. In 1936 when Japan’s threat drew near, women’s training were instructed to “focus on physical, military and nursing training”.\(^\text{21}\)Women’s Weekly was part of the revival of journalism

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\(^{18}\) Ouyang Hexia, “Huigu zhongguo xiandai lishi shang ‘funü huijia’de sici zhenglun” (Reviewing the four debates on “women going home” in modern history of China), Zhonghua Nüzi Xueyuan Xuebao, no. 3, 2003, pp. 6-9.


in the city that resulted from its political position during the 1930s. The Women’s Weekly, the central feature of GMD’s publicity machine, certainly expressed such an attempt to establish a model of new woman to compete with the Shanghai style modern girls (modeng nü).

Tight censorship also guaranteed Women’s Weekly’s sympathetic stance towards the government. During the Nanjing decade, a whole mass media system was established all over the country with Central Daily News, Central News Agency and Central Radio Station as the center. A “wei jiao” (surrounding and annihilating) policy was conducted towards the Communist newspapers. Newspapers not within the Nationalist Party’s system were restricted by a news blackout. Measures to take control of public opinion were adopted to ensure unification. In 1929, GMD’s official newspaper Central Daily News was decided to be under the direct instruction of Central Executive Committee, Guomindang’s headquarters. As for the guideline, besides “elucidating the party’s and nation’s policies”, it brought forward the responsibility to “support the centrality, eliminate rebellion and consolidate bases of the party and the nation”. The authority of the Nationalist Party was to be emphasized. Central Daily News did not have much influence until Cheng Cangbo was nominated as the proprietor. According to Cheng’s own account, the influence of Central Daily News increased and it eventually became the leading newspaper in the 1930s. Cheng’s account is possible given GMD’s sponsorship and the favorable policy environment. Furthermore, Central Daily News also represented the whole press to draft several announcements towards the Japanese government.

23 Mu Yiqun, “Zhongyang Ribao de ershi nian” (Twenty years of the Central Daily News), Xinwen Yanjiu Ziliao (Resources of Journalism), No. 15, pp. 119-124
protesting the war threat (Cheng Cangbo’s drafts)\textsuperscript{24}. It showed that \textit{Central Daily News} had a certain influence on the Chinese press.

However, it is not fair to see \textit{Women’s Weekly} as being solely a propaganda machine of the GMD government. Its 510 articles were written by 280 authors (33 articles are authorless), among whom only 59 authors wrote more than one article. 23 out of these 59 authors wrote only twice, and they may not qualify as frequent contributors. In all the issues, there were calls for contributions from the editorial board. The \textit{Women’s Weekly} drew a large amount of freelance writers was due to the staff expansion of \textit{Central Daily News}. After moving to Nanjing, the editorial department of Central Daily News recruited more staff due to the expansion of the business. They were so short of people that even the requirement of Guomindang membership for the staff was loosened\textsuperscript{25}. As a supplement of the Guomindang’s official newspaper \textit{Central Daily News}, \textit{Women’s Weekly} enjoyed all the privileges \textit{Central Daily News} could bring and by having a group of freelance contributors it continued to represent a distinctive feminist discourse.

A case study on a woman’s newspaper in 1930s China has its difficulties, mainly in searching for its readership. There are no exact numbers on the circulation of \textit{Women’s Weekly}, and the readers’ letters seldom indicate where they were sent from, except for one from Ji Nan, Shandong province. The invited contributors from all over the world reported on local women’s lives.

Also very little is known of the contributors directly. We can only tell from their first-person narratives that they were mostly civil servants, female students and school

\textsuperscript{24} Cheng Cangbo, “Ban shiji de huigu” (memories of half a century), Hu Nanrui ed., \textit{Liushi nian lai de Zhongyang Ribao (Sixty years Central Daily News)}, (Taipei: Zhongyang Ribao she, 1988) pp. 30-34.

\textsuperscript{25} Mu Yiqun, p. 120.
teachers, and some were middle-class housewives. Of the 510 articles, only 270 have their authors’ genders identified. This will certainly limit the validity of this case study. However, 172 out of the 270 articles were written by female writers and 78 by male writers. Those written by male writers were either quoted from other sources and not particularly concerned with women, family and children’s issues, or were invited contributions on certain columns. The former were not included in the discussions of this thesis unless specified. The latter include articles for a column introducing women’s hygiene knowledge, contributed by Dai Tianyou who is in charge of women’s hygiene in GMD’s Hygiene department. He and his wife both wrote for this column. It also include another column, “the mailbox on children’s issues”, conducted by the consulting group on children’s issues in Zhong Yang University. Their staff members were made of both male and female. I regard these articles, together with the anonymously written articles as reflecting certain concerns of the editor-in-chief Duanmu Luxi. This study has to bear these inaccuracies in mind.

**Chapter arrangement**

Chapter One of this thesis introduces the development of discourses on the New Woman among Chinese intellectuals since the late nineteenth century. This discourse was initiated by male intellectuals starting from the late Qing reformers and followed by the May Fourth new youth and the Guomindang authority. The lack of women’s voices ceased to be a problem when elite educated women started to publish their own newspapers and magazines concerning women’s issues in the early Republican period. In the 1930s when women’s magazines and newspapers reached their peak, women’s voices were already strong and visible in public discourses. This chapter divides feminist
discourse into male feminist discourses and female feminist discourses for the convenience of narration and examines their perceptions on new women in the Chinese society.²⁶

Chapter two to four are divided according to the three major themes running through the *Women's Weekly* articles: issues concerning the construction of a new Chinese woman; issues concerning the responsibilities of Chinese society and the Nanjing government towards the women’s movement; and finally issues concerning building a competitive modern Chinese nation on par with the western nations. The discussions around the three themes in the *Women’s Weekly* formed a strong argument that women intellectuals were to be the new Chinese women with their knowledge and virtue.

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²⁶ These two terms appeared in Ma Yuxin’s article, “Male Feminism and Women’s Subjectivities: Zhang Xichen, Chen Xuezhao, and The New Woman”, *Twentieth-Century China*, vol. 29, No. 1 (2003), pp.1-37. I adopted the two terms here because they are explicit expressions of Chinese feminist discourses in the early twentieth century.
Chapter 1 The Development of Discourses on the New Woman from the May Fourth Era to 1930s China

This chapter summarizes the scholarship on the New Woman image discourses from the late Qing China to the 1930s. A distinctive character of the development of such discourse was that each social group, male or female, all aimed at having a stake at shaping new Chinese women, and thus competing to be the elite group in the modern Chinese modern society.

From the late Qing reformers to the Guomindang Nanjing regime, a pattern of feminism dominated by male writers was developed and it influenced the “new woman” image in early twentieth century China. The similarity of these discourses is that they regarded women as the objects of reformation who needed to be transformed in order to build a modern China. The driving force behind the discourses were always other than a genuine concern for their fellow countrywomen, but their own cultural political agenda for strengthening the nation (the Qing reformers), for individual liberty (the May Fourth new youth) or for binding a nation under its own authority (the Guomindang Nanjing regime).

However, the growing numbers of women intellectuals and their influence could not be neglected. They emerged eventually as an unintended consequence of male intellectuals’ promotion of women’s education. As soon as they emerged, they contested with male intellectuals in the field of feminist discourses, in order to build their own elite status in the society.

1. Male feminism in China from the late Qing period to the 1930s

*Gender equality within hierarchy*
“New woman” is a term that appeared during the May Fourth movement\textsuperscript{27}. However, the strengthening of Chinese women was advocated as early as in the late Qing period. The construction of the New Woman image came along with the recognition of western competition. As in other parts of Asia, women’s emancipation in late 19\textsuperscript{th} century China was regarded as an integral part of the nation’s modernization. In China women’s oppression was thought to be linked to the country’s weakness in confronting the western powers. The late Qing scholars recognized the strength from the west and desired to make China stand ahead of the competition. Chinese women, being bound-feet and illiterate, were to be reproached.\textsuperscript{28} Since the promotion of women’s active role in the society was directly from the Chinese advocates of western culture, the concept of new women was that of a “western beauty”, which could be used to strengthen the Chinese nation.\textsuperscript{29} The western beauty’s physical strength (racial superiority) and knowledge were of much appeal to those reformers. A reformation on their fellow countrywomen with the standard of “western beauty” was advocated, in which anti-foot-binding and promoting women’s education were the two major concerns. The New Chinese woman would remain the “virtuous wife and good mother”, but also be physically strong and knowledgeable.

The anti-foot-binding movement initiated at the end of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century started the process of renewing Chinese women. Foot binding was regarded as a guardian of female

\textsuperscript{27} Hu Shi translated “new woman” into “xin funü” in his article “Meiguo de funü” (American women). For the development of the term “xin funü”, please refer to Hu Ying, Tales of Translation, p. 208: note 11 to the Introduction.

\textsuperscript{28} Liu Renpeng, Jindai zhongguo nüquan lunshu: guozu, fanyi yu xingbie zhengzhi (The Feminist Discourses of Modern China: Nation, Translation and Gender Politics), (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 2000), p.117.

\textsuperscript{29} Liang Qichao even fancied of interracial marriages to strengthen the race. Liu Renpeng, pp. 140-143.
virtue and a criterion of female beauty in late Qing dynasty. Literature such as *the Appreciation of the Fragrant Lotus (xiang lian pin zao)* taught men how to appreciate the beauty of women’s bound feet, the so-called “fragrant lotus” (xiang lian), which are symbols of eroticism. Another purpose for foot binding was to keep women at home. “Why binding the feet? It is not because of its being good looking like bows, but to prevent her from walking out of the door.” This criterion of female beauty turned into a symbol of barbarity after the arrival of westerners after the Opium war. Bound-feet women were mocked in women’s schools opened by the missionaries. Soon the Chinese male intellectuals echoed this attitude. In the “Argument of foot-binding” which appeared on the newspaper *Wanguo Gongbao* in 1896, foot-binding was the result of cruel mothers: “The power of our nation nowadays is truly weak! Scholars, peasants, workers and merchants should all rise and work energetically to achieve self strengthening, in which women should also help. If they are still to bear the pain and complaints, distort themselves for artificial beauty, it is cruel and against the affection between mother and daughter; also [they] take each step with great pain and lose the decency of domestic assistance”; the hope, not surprisingly, was brought by the western women, “Luckily now the western ladies (gui xiu) founded the Natural Feet Association in the hope of saving our weak Chinese women out of bondage. It is indeed grand activity”. The “cruel” mothers were blamed as bearers of the backward foot-binding tradition and subjected their daughters to a miserable life. The salvation was brought by western missionaries as they imposed an alternative of “natural feet” and were able to

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31 Girls’ Canon, from Chen Dongyuan, p. 240.  
32 Chen Dongyuan, p. 316.  
33 Liu Renpeng, p. 167.
influence the “weak Chinese women”. Moreover, the “western ladies” were still regarded as “gui xiu”, which literally in Chinese refer to upper-class women who stayed in their own rooms (gui); thus they were not totally foreign, but were virtuous according to the Chinese codes for women. So it was not the Chinese codes of behavior that caused Chinese women’s weakness, but rather the Chinese women’s own fault. The men stood innocent out of this process through acting as cool-headed commentators.

Chinese intellectuals such as Liang Qichao started to symbolize bound-feet women as reminders of China’s weakness because these women had lost their productivity and had turned into pure consumers\(^{34}\), thus the necessity of an anti-foot-binding movement. In 1882, Kang Guangren, the brother of Kang Youwei, founded the first anti-foot-binding association. Later more such associations were established by Liang Qichao and their purpose was to promote women’s education by not binding their feet. Members of the associations promised not to bind their daughters’ feet or not to let their sons marry bound-feet women.\(^{35}\) The anti-foot-binding effort aimed at the promotion of women’s education to help turning women into useful human beings. Chen Ji and Zheng Guanying, the reform theorists in late Qing advocated the abolition of foot binding to prepare women for school, and finally to enable China to compete with the western countries (zhengxiong yu taixi)\(^ {36}\).

Even though the anti-foot-binding associations were dismissed after the failure of the Hundred Day Reformation, their goal to promote women’s education was realized

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\(^{34}\) Liang Qichao made such a comment and it was a shared opinion among the anti-foot-binding as well as promoting women’s education discussions. Liu Renpeng, p. 164.

\(^{35}\) Chen Dongyuan, p. 317-318.

eventually. After 1895 when women’s schools run by westerners spread, the Chinese realized the importance of promoting women’s education. In 1897 the first Chinese-run women’s school was established again by Kang Guangren in Shanghai. The promotion of women’s education unexpectedly produced women intellectuals who later stood up in competition with their male patrons for leading the women’s movement, as will be discussed later.

The new Chinese women were thought to be knowledgeable and with natural feet. Their roles in the society better remained to be “virtuous wife and good mother”. Such role was shared by the feminist trends in other countries at that time, where “mothers of citizens” were also advocated. It was also embedded within the restoration of the long-existing social hierarchies. Chinese wives were equal to their husbands, according to these scholars, and the way to equality was to restore their sages’ ideals of benevolence. Equality was defined not through individual political and social rights, but certain hierarchies to which they belonged to guarantee the harmony. The restoration of gender equality was to restore the benevolence of “sages” which were the ideals of the Chinese male scholars. Women’s virtues and value of existence were defined within the two roles of mother and wife according to these male intellectuals’ desire. Women’s living space was still confined to the home. In his message to Emperor Guangxu about the reformation, Liang Qichao, leading reformer in modern China, the leader of the Hundred

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37 Chen Dongyuan, p. 326.
38 Liang Qichao and Tan Sitong both explained “equality” as “benevolence” in their own works. Liu Renpeng, p. 1.
39 Liu Renpeng pointed out in her research that the anti-foot-binding movement marginalized the bound feet Chinese women and was a “process full of violence”. The bound feet women were excluded from women’s schools and were humiliated to be forced to unwrap their feet in the street. Liu Renpeng, pp. 168-169. In the empowering women process the women who could not catch up with the western beauty standard became voiceless.
Days’ reform in 1898, said in his “suggestions on establishing women’s schools” that the education of women could help them to “serve their husbands and teach their children”, to “benefit the family and produce better offspring.”\(^{40}\) Lin Zhu also suggested in his poem “Xìng nüxué” (promotion of women’s education) that women should

Interfere not the outside affairs after [women’s education was] accomplished,
Enough is the work to help husbands and educate children.

As Tani Barlow pointed out in her work, discourses on women in the early Qing society before it was influenced by the west always referred to women according to their specific roles within families\(^ {41}\). It was natural for early reformers to promote a more active role of women without breaking the conventional categories they were fond of. After all, the motive of late Qing reformers to promote anti-foot-binding movement and women’s education was their own pursuit of sage-hood in a Chinese society exposed to the western competition. Chinese women were the objects of salvation by these new sages. Their role of being virtuous wives and good mothers was rather one assigned to them by their male patrons.

**The May Fourth movement and the Nora image**

When the New Culture Movement and the May Fourth era came, the Chinese intellectuals were frustrated by the stubbornness of backward trends in the Chinese

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\(^{40}\) Zhou Xuqi, p. 11.

\(^{41}\) Tani E. Barlow quoted a paragraph in the “Inherited guide for educating women” by a Qing called Chen Hongmou that, “When fu1[persons, sages, women of rank] are in the jia [lineage unit] they are nu [female, woman, daugther]; when they marry they are fu4 [wives] and when they bear children they are mu [mothers]. [If you start with] a xian nu [virtuous unmarried daughter/female] then you will end up with xian fu [virtuous wife]; if you have virtuous wives, you will end up with xian mu [virtuous mothers]. With virtuous mothers there will be virtuous descendants. Civilizing begins in the women’s quarters. Everyone in the jia benefits from female chastity. That is why education for women is so important.” Tani Barlow, “Theorizing woman: funu, guojia, jiating[Chinese Women, Chinese State, Chinese Family]”, *Genders*, no. 10, Spring 1991, pp. 173-196.
society after the 1911 revolution: the first president of the Republican China, Yuan Shikai attempted to ascend the emperor’s throne; China continued to be bullied by Japan and other western countries over the Treaties of Versailles; the warlords’ military tyrannies stood as a huge obstacle to China’s democratization. All these inspired the New Culture movement which promoted the idea of democracy, science, literature revolution and vernacular writing.

The May Fourth movement started when Chen Duoxiu created *Youth* magazine in 1915 in Shanghai (renamed *New Youth* in 1916 and moved to Beijing). The contributors Chen Duxiu, Li Dazhao, Lu Xun, Hu Shi, became representatives of this movement. The dissatisfaction of the Chinese people intensified when their country was mistreated by the imperialists. It finally caused the May Fourth movement, a nation-wide protest against unequal treaties.

May Fourth is an era characterized as iconoclastic since the “new youth” intellectuals embraced the western culture and regarded Confucianism as the obstacle that needed total abandonment for the sake of China’s modernization. Confucianism was portrayed as strangling individual freedoms, as inhumane, and finally, as against the modern spirit which was symbolized by western societies. Western individualism was identified with the modernity that Hu Shi wished China to have. And Confucianism stood as the biggest obstacle in China’s way to modernization. “If Confucianism is not destroyed, there is no remedy for politics, moralities, ethics, social customs and academics in China.”  

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42 Hu Shi, “Kongzi zhi dao yu xiandai shenghuo” (Confucianism and modern lives), *New Youth*, vol.2 no.4, (December 1, 1916), from Chen Dongyuan, pp. 369-371.
Chinese women were regarded as the direct victims of the patriarchal family system, which was the major target among Confucian traditions that was attacked by the New Culture movement. In the task of breaking Confucianism control in China and seeking individual liberation, Chinese male intellectuals in the May Fourth era played a crucial role in establishing the notion of women’s emancipation, unlike their foreign counterparts who posed strong objection towards early women’s movements in their own countries.\(^{43}\)

Hu Shi first mentioned women’s oppression under Confucianism and an “emancipation” to deliver them from family hierarchies.\(^{44}\) In 1916, after seeing many attempts of restoring Confucianism, such as the ambition of Yuan Shikai to revive the monarchy and the national congress’s promotion of Confucianism as the national religion, Hu Shi denounced the suitability of Confucianism to modern lives in a thorough way in which women’s roles were concerned. The western political system, family pattern and the social phenomena that women had free will in their married lives and professional lives were symbols of a “civilized society” in which Confucianism found no place of survival: Confucianism “turned women’s participation in politics into a funny idea”; it deprived women of their rights to remarry and thus drove women into becoming

\(^{43}\) According to Joan Judge, the nature of the relationship between women and the state remained largely unexamined in the main texts of the Enlightenment in France, England and their colonies, while “In the anti-colonial context, feminist programs were generally deferred, often permanently, by the cause of national liberation”, but the nature of the relationship between women and the state was examined in China “largely because the Chinese imported the entire trajectory of Western thinking on rights at once and at a time of profound national crisis”. See Joan Judge, “Talent, Virtue, and the Nation”, p. 766 footnote 2.

“abnormal both mentally and physically”. Confucianism also prevented socializing between men and women except for marriage, which was considered to “violate the western social condition” and thus could not be applied to “contemporary China”. Confucianism caused the subjugation of women to men and “wives do not necessarily live independent lives” while the current western women already entered all kinds of professions as lawyers, doctors, waitresses and workers. Western women were not obliged to obey their parents-in-law and there is only affection involved in their relations. The parents did not live with their married children either. Yet Confucianism forced the parents’ wills upon their children’s marriages and daughter-in-laws to obey not only their parents-in-laws absolutely, but also their sisters-in-law and brothers-in-law, “This is why the abuse of wives by their evil sister-in-laws never ends in Chinese society”. 45 Through condemning the three bonds (the reason to be kept between sovereign and subject, between father and son and between husband and wife), Hu Shi denied the Confucius-defined women’s roles and suggested a greater emphasis on women’s individuality: he expressed his admiration of American women as “independent” (zi lì) human beings, who were able to “live by themselves, and serve the society by themselves” instead of being attached to anyone.46

Until the 1920s, many intellectuals wrote articles exploring issues of women’s emancipation. A new woman was perceived as one who has the courage to walk out of her traditional role. The idea of gender equality was acquainted by the public; women’s

45 Hu Shi, “Kongzi zhi dao yu xiandai shenghuo”.
dignity as human beings was recognized. Many feminist issues were raised for the first time during the May Fourth: open socializing between men and women, co-education, women’s economic independence, abandonment of arranged marriage and one-sided chastity. They remained the main tasks for the women’s movement to tackle later on.

However, the May Fourth male feminists’ focus was again the male intellectuals themselves. They expressed their aspiration for individual freedom through advocating women’s emancipation. The image of Nora was widely embraced by young Chinese students during the May Fourth. Vera Schwarcz analyzed this mentality among young students filled with new thoughts: “her (Nora’s) final gesture—a door defiantly slammed shut against her assigned roles—echoed their struggle for emancipation from the family system…To identify with the nineteenth-century Norwegian playwright’s heroine also meant that they could not help but identify with twentieth-century Chinese women closer to home. Members of the New Tide generation, thus, took up the cause of feminism in China, animated by the ardor of their identification with Nora. Young men who wanted to carve some space in the all-embracing family system for their own individuality became natural allies of daughters-in-law crushed by even heavier burdens of duty and loyalty.”

In the discourses of women’s emancipation, the young students’ desire for individual freedom from arranged roles within the family hierarchy was the final concern. The oppressed Chinese woman was a metaphor of individual oppression under Confucian authority.

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47 Li Heming (Li Da), “Argument of women’s education”, Liberation and Reform, vol. 1, no. 3, October 1919, from Zhou Xuqi, p. 24
48 Yusano Akiko’s article on chastity was translated by Zhou Zuoren to condemn the one-side chastity forced upon women and the idea that chastity is morality, many other writers including Lu Xun and Hu Shi supported such an idea. Tse-tsung Chow, p. 56
The male intellectuals defined what new women should be and left those who could not catch up with their standards to be victims. One obvious phenomenon at that time is that the intellectuals under the influence of new culture tended to divorce their wives of arranged marriages and married women who provided better companionship. Lu Xun married his student Xu Guangping and left his wife in the countryside. Xu Zhimo, advocate of new poetry in China, left his bound feet wife Zhang Youyi and married a France-educated painter Lu Xiaoman, while Zhang Youyi took over the responsibility to take care of the two children and her parents-in-law. With such a trend, when Hu Shi would not divorce his wife, it was thought to be the seven wonders of Republican history. His student Tang Degang commented that other wives of the Tsinghua students who were sent to US on the government’s scholarship “end their lives by being living widows”, “the lucky ones would become Ah Qs (a literary character in Lu Xun’s novel The True Story of Ah Q who handled the changing situation by self-consoling) at most, and claimed themselves to be ‘country wives’ who lost their husbands! Those who could not bear the social discrimination and loneliness of an empty bed would hardly resist the resolution of swallowing metals and hanging themselves!”50 From the 1920s to the end of the Republican China, the increased number of divorces largely occurred among educated students. In 1931, when a high school teacher chatted with his male students about their marriages, most of the students showed dissatisfaction. The teacher also described the students answer to solve such dissatisfaction, “in such a place like North Guangdong, it is not surprising to see men with some wealth married two wives or three concubines; or

50 Yu Fangzhen, “Wusi nüquans lunshu xia de yinying yu chongsheng: cong Zhang Youyi yu Xu Zhimo zhi lihun shijian tanqi” (Shadow and reborn under the discourse of May Fourth feminism: discussion from the divorce of Zhang Youyi and Xu Zhimo), Jindai zhongguo (Modern China), No. 150, 2002, pp. 88-116.
they could look for lovers when they go to colleges later.” However, educated women were still rare; the “old fashioned” women abandoned by their student husbands usually had no means of living if their parents-in-law refused to keep them.\footnote{Shan Lunli, “Guanyu beiyue zaohun fengsu de xiao diaocha” (A small survey on social customs of early marriage in north Guangdong), \textit{Nü qingnian yuekan (Women Youths’ Monthly)}, 10(1), 1931, from Wang Yinhuan, “Jindai xueshen qunti zhong wenhua jiaoyu yu chuantong hunyin de chongtu” (On the conflict of cultural education and traditional marriage among the modern student groups), \textit{Shixue yuekan (Journal of Historical Science)}, No. 4, 2004, pp. 18-25.}

The New Woman image was not meant to save women from their current conditions, but was an ideal for male Chinese intellectuals to look up to. The freedom of marriage caused pain to the divorced women who had no social protection. It is no wonder that individual liberalism was criticized in the 1930s. An editor criticized the free marriage tendency when she received a letter from a divorced woman, “In recently years, freedom of divorce spread throughout the whole nation. Men use their economic privilege and distorted the name (of freedom of divorce) to abandon the old love for new ones. Bigamies and remarriages are everywhere. The so called freedom, unfortunately, became the sharp sword to kill our women. In all the male friends of mine, eighty to ninety percent of them have bigamies and remarriages. What else can be more shocking and distressful than this?”\footnote{Wang Yinhuan, pp. 22-23.}

The indifference of male feminist discourses made later women intellectuals reflect on the gender relations from their own perspective.

\textit{Guomindang’s feminist discourses from Sun Yat-sen to Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek)}

During the Nanjing decade, the two political parties, the Nationalist Party and the Communist Party had become powerful entities in producing feminist discourses.

Women’s movements were systematically organized by both Nationalist and Communist Parties\(^5^4\). Both of the two parties recognized that women’s movements should be under the parties’ guidance and submitted to the courses of revolution.

In the 1930s the Guomindang Nanjing regime built its voice as orthodox to national matters. It claimed itself to be Sun Yat-sen’s inheritor to combat the competition from other cliques of Guomindang and the Communist Party. *The Three Principles of the People (San min zhu yi)* entered schools as one individual course. To the public, Jiang Jieshi specially emphasized the importance of China being ruled under one single authority and admired Fascism for being able to do so: “Foreign countries having a prominent party are ruled by this party, [and] the prominent party in China is the Guomindang… Fascist parties in other countries are successful, and it seems that in the near future they will be able to expand their power with even more success. Therefore I declare that China also needs a Fascist Party.”\(^5^5\) Jiang Jieshi’s sincerity in Fascist ideology has always been doubted by scholars despite his admiration of Adolph Hitler. His speech was rather recognized as expressing his eagerness to become the central spirit of the nation’s revival.\(^5^6\)


\(^{56}\) Lloyd Eastman in his work, *The Abortive Revolution: China under Nationalist Rule, 1927-1937*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), argued that the existence of Blue Shirt within the Guomindang was a sign of Fascism influence. Maria Hsia Chang revised his conclusion after a critic on the original sources of *The Abortive Revolution*. She argued that one could only find an advocacy that the “spirit” and “organization” of Fascism were adopted to further the implementation of the traditional political and social goals of the party. Maria Hsia Chang, “‘Fascism’ and Modern China”, *The China Quarterly*, No. 79 (Sep., 1979), pp 553-567. Chung Dooeum denied the German involvement of the founding of Blueshirt and argued that Jiang adopted Fascism as the vehicle for mass mobilization; and his ultimate goal was to transform and modernize the whole of Chinese society.
Tight newspaper censorship was also practiced to guarantee the authority of the party discourses, which was discussed in the Introduction. According to Eastman, these measures arose out of a fear of challenge to political authority from the communists and the communist-sympathetic intellectuals. Huang Jianli, however, attributes these measures to the political norm of a party in power. Regardless, these measures put the Nationalist party to the dominant power in modern in the 1930s Chinese society. Modernization agenda was thus revised by Guomindang to adjust the interest of the party.

For Guomindang, the principle of gender equality was adopted into party policies during the first National Congress in 1924 with much reluctance. Right from the very beginning when the Guomindnang was organized by Tongmenghui (the Revolutionaries’ Association) and other political organizations, it cancelled the advocacy of gender equality of Tongmenghui, which caused the violent conflict between Tongmenghui’s female members and Guomindang leaders. Song Jiaoren, founder of GMD was even hit on the face by Tang Qunying, a female GMD member, for not keeping his words. Sun Yat-sen suggested that gender equality was a certainty in the future, but now the “national business” (guo shi) is more important. Sun Yat-sen’s attitude was typical among male revolutionaries: they recognized gender equality in principle, but would compromise with the nationalist revolution courses. Women’s business was apparently not the “national business”. In the 1930s, gender equality was recognized in the party

membership\textsuperscript{59} and the \textit{Provisional Constitution} of the Republican China in 1931\textsuperscript{60}, one of Guomindang’s fifteen domestic policies was to “establish the guidelines of gender equality in legislation, economy, education and society; help the development of women’s rights”\.\textsuperscript{61} But from the founding of GMD till its legal recognition of gender equality, women’s issues were never the prior consideration in shaping women’s roles in the Republic. The following women’s movements organized by the united front of GMD and CCP in the nationalist revolution of the 1920s had already been regarded as a strategy of mass mobilization.\textsuperscript{62} After the party purge of 1927, the women’s movement was once forbidden together with other mass movements.

What the GMD concerned more was to forge female citizens that would contribute to the Republic. When Japan’s invasion threatened China in 1935, Guomindang declared a women’s education to “train benevolent, loving, mentally and physically strong motherhood, in order to respond to the national crisis and to build a solid foundation for the country and the society”\textsuperscript{63}; it also encouraged women’s training to “focus on physical, military and nursing training”.\textsuperscript{64} Women as the Republic’s citizens were called to fulfill their duties to the nation.

The forging of a female citizen was part of the larger attempt of a social reformation -the New Life Movement. This movement which was launched in 1934 in Jiangxi was the Nanjing regime’s major attempt in the 1930s to mould the people of the

\textsuperscript{59} The Constitution of Guomindang passed in 1924 opened the membership to “all Chinese citizens, no difference between sexes”, \textit{Geming Wenxian}, vol. 70, p. 44.
\textsuperscript{60} \textit{Geming Wenxian}, vol. 76, p. 163.
\textsuperscript{61} The fifteen domestic policies were formed in the first national congress of Guomindang in 1924. \textit{Geming Wenxian}, p. 385.
\textsuperscript{62} Christina Gilmartin, 1995.
\textsuperscript{63} \textit{Geming Wenxian}, vol. 70, p. 389.
\textsuperscript{64} \textit{Geming Wenxian}, vol. 79, p. 384.
Republican China into desired citizens. It aimed at revitalizing people with a new spirit, which was through the practice of the four virtues *li, yi, lian, chi* from the *Record of Ritual* (*li ji*) and *Book of Etiquette and Ritual* (*yi li*). These four virtuous were to be applied to a person’s everyday life and thus cause three transformations of the society: militarization (*junshi hua*), productivization (*shengchan hua*) and aestheticization (*yishu hua*).\(^{65}\) In Jiang Jieshi and his followers’ eyes, Chinese people were “uncivilized and repulsive”.\(^{66}\) They need to be put under the tutelage of the party to be transformed step by step into qualified citizens of a modern Republic. Women wearing “strange” clothes (western style clothes) were admonished and were told to remain modest and discreet, and not to indulge in money-wasting frippery such as perming their hair. In Beiping, regulations were passed to tell women what parts of their body must be covered. Both tailors and wearers of clothing that did not meet New Life Movement standards were subject to fines or even arrest. A woman wearing short trousers while sleeping outside was arrested and maltreated to death in jail. Women were also banned from being waitresses in order to “maintain good morals”.\(^{67}\) Women’s behaviors were regulated in such detail by the regime. The regime’s own authority was practiced during shaping women’s roles in the society.

2. Female feminism from the late Qing period to the 1930s

*The emergence of women intellectuals in the late Qing period and their definition of the new woman*

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\(^{65}\) *Geming Wenxian*, vol.13-23, vol. 68.  
\(^{66}\) “Xin shenghuo yundong de mudi he yiyi” (The purpose and meaning of the New Life Movement), *Geming Wenxian*, vol. 30.  
\(^{67}\) Jeniffer Lee Oldstone-Moore, pp. 86-87.
The promotion of women’s education by the late Qing reformers produced the first group of women intellectuals. As a trend, many women went to Japan for study. Japan at that time was where Chinese radical nationalists gathered. Being the relatives of these nationalists, these women soon were not satisfied with their subjects of study as only domestic knowledge and their education in Japan as virtuous wife and good mother, but became radical nationalists. On their return to the homeland, they actively participated in the revolutionary activities.\(^{68}\) The prominent feminist figures Qiu Jin and Chen Xiefen advocated gender equality through journalistic writings. The promotion of women’s education in early twentieth century China had prepared the road for the emergence of women intellectuals who burdened themselves the task of leading the Chinese women’s movement.

Early women intellectuals were mostly revolutionary activists, which influenced their perceptions on women. As early as they were studying in Japan, they developed the idea that female talent and virtue were not mutually exclusive. It was possible for the female citizen to be both woman and public woman.\(^{69}\) The weakness of Chinese women, according to Yi Qin, is that “they are isolated in the inner chambers”, while the contemporary world was different from that of the past, which could only be comprehended by “exposure to the world and education”. Without the exposure, women had no ways to know the “outside world” and to know “how strong the foreign nations are and how weak China is”.\(^{70}\) Compared with the male discourses, the Chinese women’s

\(^{68}\) Joan Judge, “Talent, Virtue, and the Nation”.

\(^{69}\) Joan Judge, “Talent, virtue and the nation”, p. 787.

\(^{70}\) Chen Yan’an, “Quan nuzi” (The allround women), from Joan Judge, “Talent, virtue and the nation”, p.788.
indifference became excusable here due to their lack of exposure and therefore curable. Their images were portrayed with a more active tone.

These female students themselves openly played active roles in the nation’s salvation cause. When they received the teaching training program in Japan to be wise mothers, they used it to assume the responsibilities of school teachers, founders, or principals upon their return to China. And of course there were women with extraordinary backgrounds. Qiu Jin, the martyr of women’s emancipation, left her family and arranged marriage to study in Japan. She joined Tongmenghui there and was finally executed because of her revolutionary activities. She liked to dress in men’s clothes. When Qiu Jin became the leader of Practical Action association in Japan in the 1904, she and Chen Xiefen, Lin Zongsu all received training at a weapon factory in Yokohama. Months before the 1911 revolution, women students took part in militant activities. Tang Qunying, another member of Tongmenghui, was skilled in martial arts and fought with her male comrades during the 1911 revolution. She was also one of the Tongmenghui women members who insisted that Sun Yat-sen should keep his promise to incorporate gender equality into the constitution of Republican China. Together with her were also Japan-educated Lin Zongsu and Zhang Hanying. He Xiangning became the first woman to join Sun Yat-sen’s Tongmenghui in 1905. She later became the head of Guomindang’s Women’s Department from 1924-1926. Her words were still quoted as authorities by women’s newspapers in the 1930s. These women intellectuals in the early

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72 Joan Judge, pp. 792-793.
73 Zhang Yufa, “Ershi shiji qian banqi zhongguo funü canzhengquan de yanbian” (The development of Chinese women’s suffrage in the first half of the twentieth century), Lu Fangshang ed., Wusheng zhi sheng(1), pp. 50-54.
Republic were legendary figures with extraordinary activities. Their thoughts were radical and tend to advocate gender equality in order to realize the cause of revolution.

In promoting gender equality, writing was considered an essential talent for the new Chinese women. It was a direct reflection on their previous generations’ voiceless experience by being illiterate (in their perception). They formed study and writing groups among the overseas nationalists. Publishing political journals became the tools of building their female subjectivity.\textsuperscript{74} Such legacy was passed down to future generations. Chen Xiefen founded China’s first women’s newspaper, \textit{nü bao} (\textit{Women’s Newspaper}, later \textit{nü xue bao, Newspaper for Women’s Education}) and advocated the promotion of women’s education, which assimilated the tone of the male reformers as discussed before. But the promotion of women’s education must depend on women themselves because “men probably would not have time to focus on this matter (women’s education); even if they have time, they may engage in the kind of women’s education that are advantageous to men”. The abolition of foot binding was also advocated, but to achieve the goal where “men and women became the same”\textsuperscript{75}. Qiu Jin also edited three issues of \textit{Chinese Women’s newspaper} (\textit{Zhongguo Nü Bao}) before she was executed. She reproached her fellow Chinese women as “sinking in the eighteenth hell and do not want to climb even a single level up”. In her eyes, women should have “will”, with which they would seek means of independent lives. Furthermore, women’s independence should be achieved by forming organizations and by participating in the anti-Qing revolution. \textsuperscript{76} In these

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{74} Joan Judge, pp. 794-95.
\item \textsuperscript{75} Chen Xiefen, “The chapter of independence” and “Arguing that women should pay attention to physical education”, Tian Jingkun, Zheng Xiaoyan ed., \textit{Zhongguo jinxiandai funü baokan tonglan} (\textit{A Thorough View of Women’s Journals in Modern and Contemporary China}), (Beijing: Haiyang Press, 1990), pp. 3-4.
\item \textsuperscript{76} Qiu Jin, “To inform sisters”, Tian Jingkun ed., p. 8.
\end{itemize}
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women’s eyes, women should devote themselves to the national causes, that is, the anti-Qing revolution. To be a revolutionary was the foremost important role women should play, and in this role, men and women were equal.

Although heroic, these women were the elites at that time and their activities were sporadic. Their influence on the fellow countrymen was very limited. One example is that their request to legalize gender equality was not even granted by the male nationalists they had fought shoulder to shoulder with. Another noticeable point is that although they paid attention to journalistic writings during their study in Japan, these women intellectuals soon plunged into the revolutionary struggles and felt little motivation in promoting feminist ideas. Their attention was more on revolutionary agenda such as propaganda, education, fund-raising, logistics, transport, espionage and assassination. It was not until the May Fourth era that women intellectuals embarked to contribute to define women’s roles with their pens. The case of Chen Xuezha, a contributor to *The New Woman* (1926-29), a liberal feminist magazine led by Zhang Xichen, was a clear exhibition of male and female feministic discourse differences and their relations.

*Female feminist discourses on a new woman: Chen Xuezha and the New Woman*

It is important to bear in mind that the May Fourth feminist discourses were still dominated by men. The main journal that promote feminist ideas, the *Lady’s Journal* (12915-1925) published in Shanghai, had a contributor group mainly of men, including the editors in chief Wang Yunzhang and Zhang Xichen. Under such discourse, Chinese women were to be criticized for their bad habits such as dependency, jealousy, partiality and superstition, and were to be reformed into the the New Woman’s model set up by the

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77 Zhang Yufa, p. 47.
male writers, i.e., the virtuous wife and good mother like American women of the time. The Chinese male writers regarded Chinese women as “the most convenient medium…to reclaim or maintain their sense of superiority at a time when their nation’s status in the world was declining rapidly”.\textsuperscript{78}

The few female contributors however spoke differently with their male counterparts. They rebuked that Chinese men did not understand them, and focused more on giving concrete suggestions to women on how to improve themselves and to catch new possibilities opening up to women. They advised women to eradicate bad habits to avoid gossips, being independent by working; participating public affairs; beginning a mass movement by women to promote social evolution and pursue autonomy in decisions about marriage.\textsuperscript{79}

Chen Xuezhao was by all means a new woman by the May Fourth concept, who studied abroad and had a profession of her own. Her relationship with the male intellectuals around her was as a representative of the gender relations behind the new woman discourse at that time. One point I need to clarify here is that, although \textit{The New Woman} journal was published during the post-May Fourth period, when the two major parties, GMD and CCP cooperated to promote a national revolution against the warlord government and when nationalism overshadowed liberalism, Zhang Xichen insisted on advocating of feminism even though it meant he had to leave the \textit{Lady's Journal}. But soon he built up a new fortress, i.e., \textit{The New Woman} to rival against the nationalist


\textsuperscript{79} Wang Zheng, pp. 83-84.
Marxist discourse of women’s emancipation.\textsuperscript{80} Being a contributor to \textit{The New Woman}, Chen Xuezhao’s journalistic discussions still stuck to a liberal feminism and thus could still be categorized as May Fourth discourses despite seeming like an anachronism.

Chen Xuezhao was well sponsored by her male patrons. She was a “little sister” to many Zhejiang writers because of her lively personality. When studying in France (helped by Ji Zhiren, another contributor of the \textit{New Woman}, later proposed to Chen), Ge Gongzhen, an influential editor of Times and a long time friend of Chen, offered her an editorial job to help her out of financial difficulty. She befriended many prominent male scholars such as Mao Dun, Lu Xun and Zhou Jianren.

Despite the sponsorship of her hometown fellow male intellectuals, Chen, however, did not agree on their stance of a new woman. When she was asked to write for \textit{The New Woman}, the first several works described a woman’s fear for marriage and unhappy marriages of some middle-class housewives. In contrast with the male contributors of \textit{New Women}, who viewed the new woman to be independent while at the same time full of feminine beauty and be virtuous wives and good mother, Chen’s writing expressed the dullness of educated women’s lives in middle-class households. Women’s public roles to her were more life-enhancing. A new woman to her should be educated, have careers and be economically independent.\textsuperscript{81} In later issues she became sharper and claimed that “The New Woman had not said what women truly wanted to say”. She felt that Chinese men “could not get rid of their slavish nature cultivated by the old ethics” and could not understand educated new women. They married educated women hoping them to bear children and entertain them. Her article caused uneasiness to the male contributors who

\textsuperscript{80} Wang Zheng, pp. 110-112.
\textsuperscript{81} Ma Yuxin, p. 17.
said her comments were “too radical”.\textsuperscript{82} Chen wrote with her personal experience of the new woman’s dilemma in facing male desire. She found it difficult to agree with the male feminists’ advocacy of a virtuous wife and good mother, given her own fear of marriage to a dull family. She was aware that it should “be up to women themselves to handle their own problems, improve themselves, and exercise their talents”.\textsuperscript{83} Chen pointed out the bias on new woman’s image promoted by the \textit{New Woman}. The consciousness of educated women was aroused in building their own models and did not cease to exist later even under the Guomindang’s ideological inculcation.

Chen Xuezhao’s voice was weak among the dominant male feminist discourses. And previous scholarship done in the field of literature demonstrated that the feminist writings were silenced by the 1924 revolution. However, the journalistic discourses flourished again during the Nanjing decades. \textit{Women’s Weekly} was a participant of the discussion on the New Woman’s image in the 1930s.

\textsuperscript{82} Ma Yuxin, pp. 17-19.  
\textsuperscript{83} Ma Yuxin, p. 18.
Chapter 2 Women Intellectuals as “New Virtuous Wives and Good Mothers”:

A New Woman’s Image in the Women's Weekly

Since it is still necessary to discuss women’s roles in the Chinese society, the intellectuals from the Women’s Weekly utilized the “new woman” discourse to contest for dominance and to serve their own purposes. This chapter examines the discussions among the middle-class educated women on building an alternative “new woman” model against the Shanghai fashion in the Women’s Weekly. Through denying the modernity of Shanghai modern girls and subjectifying less-advantaged women, I argue that the women contributors presented their own perception of new women, i.e., a “new virtuous wife and good mother”, whose criteria embraced its promoters as the new Chinese women.

The “new virtuous wife and good mother” model advocated in the Women’s Weekly was largely defined by the New Life Movement. Since the New Life movement moved its center from Nanchang, Jiangxi province to Nanjing in the winter of 1935, Soong Meiling was invited as the director, and the Women’s Labor Service Group (Funü laodong fuwutuan) was organized to promote movements of cleanliness and orderliness, of family hygiene, of children’s health care, of sports, of proper entertainment, of thrift, of abolishing superstitions and of saving, of buying Chinese products, of helping the elderly, the weak and the disabled, of supporting the poor and the starving, of sponsoring charities and of helping the disadvantaged women. All these goals were underlined in the discussions of Women’s Weekly, which gave voice of authority to the discussions.

Due to its freelance editorial board, opinions on a new woman’s image in China in the Women’s Weekly certainly diversified; but it was the shared concerns over certain

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84 Tan Sheying, Zhongguo funü yundong tongshi (The Comprehensive History of Women’s Movement in China), Nanjing: Funü gongming she (Women’s Sympathetic Response Society), 1936. p. 281
issues that created these contributors’ group identity as women intellectuals and ultimately, the new Chinese women. Chapter one shall examine how educated women were exalted to be the new women in contrast to the Shanghai-style “modern girls” and the “less advantaged” women.

1. Defining the new task for women’s movement of the 1930s

*Women’s Weekly* defined its manifesto as exploring new roles of women in the post May Fourth era, as the editor-in-chief Duanmu Luxi wrote:

A Chinese woman was always parasite of man before the May Fourth era. She could not be independent. She had no freedom. Just as Nora behaved in Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House*, ‘When I am at my parents, I am a parasite of my father. If my father says it is good, then I think it is good; now after I married you, I became your parasite. If you say it is good, I say it is good.’ Then she became aware. She stepped out of her family. She wanted no longer to be her husband’s canary. Nora’s self-awareness is the self-awareness we had in the May Fourth movement. We broke thousand years of confinement. We want liberation and equality with men. But what happened after Nora left? We are still confused. Thus, today’s women’s movement will never be the same as that of the May Fourth era. Today’s women’s movement is a new women’s movement about ‘what should Nora do after leaving home’. We hesitate no more, nor do we shout slogans. We will walk steadily and surely on the broad road of new women’s movement and finish the unfinished task of the May Fourth.86

This is a clear description of the initial purpose of *Women’s Weekly*, i.e., to explore ways of putting the May Fourth ideas into practice. And the purpose of this exploration is to build “sound female citizens”. “Citizenship” became the underlying criterion in defining a new Chinese woman, i.e., a woman should express her concerns regarding the national affairs. This is what we should bear in mind.

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85 “Canary” here refers to a well-fed but caged bird. It is used as a metaphor of a woman’s puppet role at home.
86 Duanmu Luxi, “Fakan xianci” (The lead article), *Women’s Weekly*, April 24, 1935
In the discussions of the *Women’s Weekly*, several writers firstly combated the current “modern girls” born out of the Shanghai culture and establish a new virtuous wife and good mother model as the alternative for a new Chinese woman. The quality of new woman was defined as one who, in the words of a regular contributor Zhi Min,

is in good health, knows the importance of hygiene, receives minimum subject education, knows all general knowledge; her love to her husband is loyal and pure while she treasures her own dignity; she has a spirit of independence, not totally dependent on her husband, manages housework in perfect order, conformed with the spirit of new science; she can be of help to her husband’s career, giving him spiritual encouragement; if there are chances, she can also go out to serve to share the economic burden of the family; to her own children, she breeds them with a new education, letting them know the importance of hygiene, patriotic, brave and noble-minded…all these virtues, I think, are the details of “new virtuous wife and good mother”. In a word, I suggest that we still advocate a kind of “virtuous wife and good mother”. But such a “virtuous wife and good mother” will never be the “virtuous wife and good mother” of decades ago, but a “virtuous wife and good mother” with a new definition.  

The terms “xian qi” (virtuous wife) and “liang mu” (wise mother) are not new to the Chinese. As early as in the pre-Qin period the history book *Zhan Guo Ce* (*Strategies of the Warring States Period*) already talked about “xian mu” (virtuous mother). “xian qi” (virtuous wife) appeared in works in the Wei Jin and the Northern and Southern Dynasties. But it was not until the early twentieth century that people started to use the term “xian qi liang mu” (virtuous wife and good mother) in their speeches and articles. Compared with former roles of women as wives and mothers, this virtuous wife and good mother

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88 Liu Liwei, “Qianyi zhongguo jindai guanyu xianqiliangmu zhuyi de lunzheng” (A brief discussion of the debates over virtuous-wife-and-good-motherism in modern China), *Funü yanjiu luncong (Collection of Women’s Studies)*, vol. 40, 2001, pp. 39-40; In 1906 the Newspaper *Shuntian Shibao* translated the head of Japan’s Ministry of Education Maniko’s speech that the purpose of women’s education should be cultivating virtuous wife and good mother.
model recognized women’s dignity as human beings but confined their roles as simply wives and mothers. They contribute to the society by managing households well and by encouraging men.

“Virtuous wife and good mother” always represented a passive role of women in Chinese eyes of the early twentieth century. As early as in the May Fourth movement, “virtuous wife and good mother” was criticized by Hu Shi in his article “American women”:

A woman is a human being. She has many responsibilities that human beings have to fulfill and many careers that human beings could take, why only by being virtuous wife and good mother could she fulfill her natural duty?

He encouraged women to build their view of life as “chao xian qi liang mu zhuyi” (beyond-virtuous-wife-and-good-mother-ism) and be “free and independent human beings”. However, it returned to the public discussions in the 1930s. This was partly due to a down-to-earth approach after the May Fourth propaganda and partly because of intensified feeling of national crisis since the Japanese invasion of northeast China in 1931. In 1935, the Japanese furthered its invasion by plotting the autonomy of the five provinces of northern China. People started reflecting on the nation’s own problems and discussing ways to cope with the crisis. “Virtuous wife and good mother” was mentioned again as a way to strengthen the family and then the nation. Lin Yutang, the conservative intellectual, asserted that “the best future for women in our country is still marriage…women who were under the limelight in politics are the worst people, but they do not represent the new women”.

90 Xu Mingqiu, “Lin Yutang xiansheng de nüxing lun” (Mr. Lin Yutang’s theory about women), *Women’s Weekly*, vol. 48, March 11, 1936.
The appearance of the controversial term “virtuous wife and good mother” in the Women’s Weekly can only be understood as a direct reaction to the emergence of Shanghai “modern girls”.

2. The “New Virtuous Wife and Good Mother” as against the “modern girl”

According to Zhi Min, current “modern” Chinese women, i.e., the Shanghai girls could neither serve society nor manage housework. Although these women were usually from wealthy families and received good education, they did not take their work seriously and most of them chose to stay at home after marriage. They enjoyed going to the cinema, dance halls and other places of entertainment. Housework and child-rearing were left to maids and nannies. These women were described as “spending most of their time on trivial matters such as putting on unknown powders, lipsticks, perfumes, as well as dressing up, playing mah-jong, chatting, reading love stories (Zhang Ziping style), watching romantic movies (Hollywood style) and going for meaningless parties”. Their minds “are no more than their dresses” 91, “No wonder some one would argue that it was a waste for the country to send women students abroad for study since they stopped serving the country as soon as they got married” 92. They were pure consumers of society. 93 They were the group of women who “misunderstood the meaning of “women’s emancipation” (fu nü jie fang) and “followed the European and American trends superficially without adopting their real good virtues”. 94

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92 Qin Jinyin, “Nüzi yu liuxue” (Women and studying abroad), Women’s Weekly, Vol. 51, April 1, 1936.
Zhi Min went on to argue that the “modern girl”’s disfunction was inexcusable since she had more access to society than before as a result of women’s emancipation. Therefore they were supposed to be pioneers who set examples on what new women should be like. However, in reality, the current modern women failed to fulfill their responsibilities. Another article, “The lives of Beiping professors’ wives” expressed the similar view: it argued that most of the professors’ wives received higher education or studied overseas. They were supposed to “stand out to lead common women to do something, or help to improve women’s welfare” instead of “spending their days playing around”. “Modern girls” were immoral because they lacked the social responsibility as educated women who were supposed to lead women’s movement and help their less fortunate sisters.

Following Zhi Min, the criticism of “modern girls” was throughout the newspaper. Several small articles mocked their luxurious and idle lifestyles. In an ironic small article, “Fat women always wish to be slim”, Dai Liao Suqin gave the enthusiasm of the “modern girls” for exercise an ironic twist, “Exercise…is especially encouraged among new women influenced by new culture, who do nothing all day long and are more likely to get fat”. The fashion of the “modern girl” was equally subjected to ridicule. The time-consuming hairstyle S-cross was revived among the “modern girls” as they had too much free time according to the Women’s Weekly. In response to the GMD’s abolition of hair-perm, one article also criticized rich women who followed the perm fashion

95 Zhi Min, “A second discussion on new virtuous wife and good mother: my reply”.
96 Sun Lin, “Beiping jiaoshou furen de shenghuo” (Lives of Beiping professors’ wives), Women, January 27, 1937.
blindly and suffered from burns on their heads. Another article compared high-heel with foot-binding, both of which were harmful to women’s health and yet were treated as fashions of their respective times. The very name “modeng”, a direct translation from the English word “modern” mocked the “modern girls” who followed a superficial westernization.

Condemnations of “modern girls” helped construct the moral authority of the new virtuous wife and good mother model, by which social responsibility was considered essential to being a new Chinese woman. Educated women were given the evangelical task of saving the irresponsible “modern girls”. By distinguishing themselves from “modern girls”, the contributors of Women’s Weekly established a superior position for themselves as enlighteners. Through announcing their vision of the image of new woman, they justified their position as leaders of the women’s movement. Later elaborations of a new woman’s image were likewise self-assertions of authority.

3. Knowledge and virtues for new Chinese women

The emergence of modern girls led to the conclusion that women of the current time still had no clear idea of what a new woman should be like. They only had a rough idea of what not being a “traditional woman” was any more and expected more both materially and spiritually. Since the current society was still a male-dominated society, those women who had too much “hope” would be mentally tortured. The resolution for this pain was to “exert all our strength to our own careers and restrict our hopes”: here the hopes referred to “desires for material enjoyment”, which indicated specifically the

99 Zhi, “Cong jinzhi diantang toufa shuoqi” (Some talk from the abolition of perm), Women’s Weekly, vol. 21, September 11, 1935.
100 Tian You, “Chanzu yu gaogengxie” (Foot-binding and high-heel), Women’s Weekly, vol. 24, September 25, 1935.
modern girls phenomenon. To avoid disappointment, women should define their hope, mainly to reduce their materialist desires.\textsuperscript{101} The “new virtuous wife and good mother” is thus a resolution to the current situation.

The virtuous wife and good mother model had a dual requirement, that new Chinese women both receive modern education and be socially responsible.

\textit{Scientific domestic management}

The new virtuous wife and good mother were firstly educated with new science. Education was considered a symbol of modernity in the twentieth century China and thus essential. However, the new virtuous wife and good mother model also encouraged women to apply their education through domestic management. Housework was presented as a type of production. Women were not to be forced out to society. Those who chose to stay home were not to be discriminated against.\textsuperscript{102} College educated women who stayed at home were persuaded that they were not wasting their education; instead they possessed the opportunity to influence their children and husbands with their “thoughts, sights, moralities and personalities”.\textsuperscript{103} Tricks to make the household more efficient during a period of national crisis brought on by Imperialistic intrusions were introduced regularly as a display of household management by “virtuous wives”. In this light, one article recommended flower frames to decorate gardens as they are convenient and economic.\textsuperscript{104}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[101] Rui Ying, “Current time and women in current time”, \textit{Women’s Weekly}, Vol. 8, June 12, 1935.
\item[102] Pei Wei, “Shengchan di yi lun (The first discussion on product)”, \textit{Women’s Weekly}, 30, November 6, 1935.
\item[103] Ji Mei, “Nüzi jin daxue shi langfei de ma?” (Is it a waste for women to go to college?), \textit{Women’s Weekly}, Vol. 11, July 3, 1935.
\item[104] Pei He, “Huajia yu yuanmei” (Flower frame and the garden’s decoration), \textit{Women’s Weekly}, Vol. 14, July 24, 1935.
\end{footnotes}
Hygiene knowledge was introduced regularly in a column called “The consultant of women’s hygiene” (funü weisheng guwen). “The hygiene of marriage” suggested couples’ taking health examinations before marriage. According to the article, a marriage built on love was the ideal pattern; yet marriage hygiene should also be considered for the sake of creating a better race. Also such examination was necessary to prevent family misunderstandings, “the older generations of the family always hope that their daughter-in-laws could bear their grandchildren for them to carry. If [women] remain childless years after marriage, it is them who would be accused of being sterile. Some would find this as an excuse to have concubines” but “according to the scientific statistics, although there are many reasons for sterility, most of the responsibilities are on men; and among the many main reasons of men [being sterile], venereal disease is the major one”.\(^{105}\) Knowledge of hygiene became the weapon for women’s self-protection. The power of knowledge should be embodied in new women: they were supposed be familiar with the gender specific hygiene knowledge covering teenage girls’ sex education\(^{106}\), the knowledge of menstruation\(^{107}\), tumors of middle-aged women\(^{108}\). These practical suggestions indicated a concern of feminine needs as well as the expectation on the improvement of women’s living conditions through science. The new virtuous wives and good mothers are supposed to pioneer in equipping themselves with the knowledge.


\(^{107}\) Tian You, “Yuejing de laiyuan” (The origin of menstruation) and “Yuejing de shengli weisheng” (The physiological hygiene of menstruation), *Women’s Weekly*, vol. 7 and vol. 8, June 5 and June 12, 1935.

The introduction of such knowledge did not imply that domestic roles for women were favored by contributors to *Women’s Weekly*: the thirst for economic independence and professions were equally strong as will be discussed later. Such knowledge was rather a challenge to Shanghai’s “modern girl” who did not bother to do any housework and left their children to nannies. These women were compared unfavorably with Japanese housewives, who were described as busy as bees and who possessed well-managed households.\(^{109}\) Such households were in accordance with the criteria of the Nanjing government’s much advocated New Life Movement that aimed at achieving modernity through correcting Chinese people’s everyday habits. “Modern girls” were instructed by the *Women’s Weekly* to “restrict their material desires” and be realistic to the still male-dominated society. Staying at home was a compromise, but the blame would be put on women if they did not even make an effort at living in dignity within their household. The educated woman who understood the spirit of serving the country through serving their household was considered a woman of the time.

**Sanctification of maternity**

In the pages of *Women’s Weekly*, maternity was considered a primary female virtue and became a major weapon in the critique of the “modern girls”. The importance of children to the family and the society was addressed time and time again through articles advocating children’s rights and maternal duty.

Maternity was not to be ignored as it was the glorious duty of women towards the nation as well as pleasure in itself. Even before babies were born, pregnant women were already instructed on proper diets in an article with a provoking title “Since the day you

\(^{109}\) Zui Fu, “Xianqi liangmu de dianxing: riben jia ting de zhufu (Model of the virtuous wife and good mother: Japanese housewives)”, *Women*, 92, Jan 20, 1937
are pregnant, you are already a mother”.\(^{110}\) The sacred maternity called for women’s attention to handle their pregnancies properly. While in “The early signs of pregnancy”, this feminine experience was glorified by claiming that “the greatest contribution of women to the society is their ‘duty of maternity’ (\textit{mu zhi}); to raise the position of the duty of maternity and to protect infants equal to protecting the national properties.”\(^{111}\)

A mother, Yang Yunhui, used her own experience to illustrate that women of higher class should be fond of raising children as it adds to their own happiness, and thus children-rearing should not be treated as a burden. Of course she did not forget to add that “healthy children are also the future strong citizens!”, “every mother bears part of the duty of educating the future masters and how significant this duty is!”\(^{112}\) One illustration portrayed a mother with tennis racket within the background of battles and it reads, “In the sound of national revival, the healthy mother is really our commanding general (\textit{zhu jiang})!”\(^{113}\)

When the war threat from Japan intensified in 1936, mothers were taught to educate their children on patriotism and receive basic military training to protect the family while the husbands were in the front.\(^{114}\)

As good mothers were still needed to produce qualified offspring, women should not leave their children to nannies if unnecessary. Otherwise nannies had to be carefully

\(^{110}\) Dai Liao Suqin, “Since the day you are pregnant, you are already a mother”, \textit{Women’s Weekly}, vol. 5, May 22, 1935.  
\(^{112}\) Yang Yunhui, “Children and the family”, \textit{Women’s Weekly}, vol. 1, April 24, 1935  
\(^{113}\) \textit{Women’s Weekly}, vol. 9, June 19, 1935.  
\(^{114}\) Xu Ruoping, “Feichang shiqi zhong muqin de zeren” (The responsibilities of mothers in the special time), \textit{Women}, vol. 86, December 9, 1936.
chosen and make sure they were in good health.\textsuperscript{115} Besides, breastfeeding was good for both mothers’ and children’s health.\textsuperscript{116} To provide more practical advice on child-rearing, a mailbox was set up in each edition of \textit{Women’s Weekly} by the Consultant of Children’s Issue of Executive Committee of National Children’s Year in Nanjing Central University to answer questions from parents. Mothers were given “Six outlines of mother’s education”: mothers’ words should be concise; their attitude should be calm and solemn; they should set examples to children by their own virtues; they should teach children that wealth was not the highest purpose for life, that the children should be brave, independent and strenuous. The six outlines were rather out of an ideological need than a psychological analysis; such purpose was even clearer by saying “every mother should completely understand and forever practice”.\textsuperscript{117}

Their lack of maternal duty was a further reason why “modern girls” did not represent the correct image of the ideal new women of China. An article entitled “New children and new mothers” complained that parents now did not pay enough attention to children’s education. It concluded that it was the “new educated women” who could set the example by being responsible mothers and provide children with good family education.\textsuperscript{118}

\textit{The beauty of simplicity: female virtue in fashion}

In the 1930s, Shanghai urban fashion became the model for women in other areas of China, including Nanjing. Women’s ways of dressing became a sensitive issue. In the

\textsuperscript{115} Qian, “Ruhe xuanze ni yao yong de ‘naima’” (How to choose the ideal ‘wet nurse’), \textit{Women’s Weekly}, Vol. 27, October 16, 1935.
\textsuperscript{116} Fu Tingfang, “Gei nianqing de muqinmen de yi feng xin” (A letter to young mothers), \textit{Women’s Weekly}, vol. 4, May 15, 1935.
\textsuperscript{117} Qi Sun, “Mujiao liu yao” (Six outlines of mother’s education), \textit{Women’s Weekly}, Vol. 35, December 11, 1935.
\textsuperscript{118} Jing Yuan, “New Children and new mothers”, \textit{Women’s Weekly}, vol. 13, July 17, 1935.
Shanghai context, cheongsam (qi pao) and high heels signaled modernity, while in the GMD-run *Women’s Weekly*, they became the symbol of women’s corruption.

The *Women’s Weekly* shared the same sentiment towards the Shanghai culture. A Yenching University graduate could not wait to compare the female students there to that in Shanghai, “many people say that Yenching is an aristocratic school, they specially say that we female students like dressing up…strictly saying, the expense per student per semester is much less than the students in Shanghai.”\(^{119}\) The Zhongyang University graduate described how shabby the female students’ lodgings were like and continued, “People would expect that the current so-called modern girls, hating to leave the material enjoyment, will have disgust towards such shabby lodgings? But, look! When each one of us runs into this lodge carrying a big bag of books, or when we enter this small gate with tired paces, you could tell a satisfying smile on each one of our faces. This smile is as if saying, ‘we all can seek satisfaction from our study, and the discomforting environment is not worth our concern.’”\(^{120}\) One graduate from Da Xia University in Shanghai also stood out saying that “although the university is near the city center, they (the female students) are not contaminated with the bad habits from the city. They have the style of country girls, unlike what people outside imaged.” The female students could not wait to establish their images as diligent students; the social convention which equated female college students to the “modern women” was attacked here.

In fashion specifically, the beauty of a simple and healthy natural appearance was advocated by several articles exclusively. Instead of seeking artificial beauty by the use

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of make-up, these articles encouraged women to focus more on their physical wellness, “get enough sleep, enough exercise, be aware of food nutrition, keep clean, and fully use the sun and fresh air, you will have strong body. Only with strong body can you have healthy skin”. 121 One article argued that dressing up should not be the foremost important thing in women’s lives. “Nowadays there are many women in society who care about nothing and make effort for nothing except for matters of dressing up. No wonder general public opinion attacks us women. Even for us women who are at least reasonable do not agree with them (women who cared only for dressing up).” 122

Moreover, dressing up should not violate the “social mood”, “Everyone in society should make their words, actions and thoughts conform to proper social development…those weird and flashy clothes (qi zhuang yan fu) are a type of sickness and abnormality. They stimulate people and the society with abnormal force. We support banning weird and flashy clothes…because today China’s economic condition has deteriorated to such a degree that everyone should live a simple and thrifty life. We should not be luxurious and squander what we have.” 123 The Shanghai fashion represented a luxurious lifestyle that was a crime to the deteriorating economic condition of the country, which should not be practiced by the virtuous new woman.

It seems that the beauty criteria of new women were never a pure aesthetic matter. Beauty was to send out social information, and hence the GMD government ordered that all female civil servants should wear uniforms from May of 1935. Instead of qi pao, the female civil servants were made to wear blue short tops, black skirts, black leather shoes

123 Jing Yuan, “nüzi zhuangshi pingyi”. 
and black stockings. Shu Zhen wrote to support such a decision, “uniformity is the most precious beauty”; “other than uniformity, I think the best advantage of a uniform is convenience…you can run and jump as you like. How free it is!” To go one step further, wearing uniform could “show one’s dignity”. If every working woman wore a uniform, “it could embarrass those who do nothing and let them feel the need for work”. 124

These beauty criteria were set by the puritan tone of the New Life movement. They were intended to challenge the taste of modern women and were direct responses to contemporary women’s fashion. Whether the criteria are influential or not, at the least women contributors to the Women’s Weekly again tried to distinguish themselves from other women as possessing the foresight and the social responsibility to lead the Chinese women’s movement.

**Virtuous women outside family**

From the very beginning, the definition of the new virtuous wife and good mother was very vague at the borders between family and profession. In elaborating the domestic roles of new virtuous wife and good mother, the duty of maternity certainly surpassed the wifehood. These discussants were careful enough not to let themselves be charged of advocating an assisting position of wives in families. In the year of 1936, more gender relation discussions appeared and such discussions were usually to support the importance of women participating in professions. The roles of mother and wife were separated. This practical difficulty was expected to be completed through the aid of the society and the government, which I will discuss later.

124 Shu Zhen, “Nü gongwuyuan yilü chuanzhuo zhifu” (Female civil servants are all to wear uniforms), Women’s Weekly, vol. 55, April 29, 1936.
Also the promotion of a new virtuous wife and good mother model, according to Zhi Min, was not meant to be confinement to women’s roles, but rather because public opinions about women’s roles in China were divided into two extremes: some said that women should go back home while some insisted that women were valuable only when they stepped out of the family. “There are many women in China who are still staying at home, why bother shouting ‘women go back home’? There are many women in China who have already stepped out of family into the society, why bother shouting ‘coming into the society’? … In my opinion, whether a woman stays at home or steps into the society, depends on her education, interest, philosophy and her environment.” And “I do not think that stepping into the society is more valuable than staying at home… A woman must do something, instead of knowing only enjoyment.”

The war with Japan was another factor in bringing forward Chinese women’s quest for professions. By the end of 1935, Japan already controlled North China’s Hebei, Rehe, Chahaer, Suiyuan region. The occupation of the five provinces intensified the Chinese people’s sense of national crisis. Discussions on women’s domestic management in the Women’s Weekly gave way to propaganda aimed at war mobilization. A buy-Chinese product campaign was organized by the Women’s New Life movement. The “Chinese product” sign emerged in commercial advertisements. Combined with this campaign, women were called upon to receive military training, nursing training, and to donate their valuables for the war effort.

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126 Yan milk powder advertisement, Women, vol. 73, September 2, 1936; “Chinese product Feihu” advertisement, Women and Family, vol. 6, March 10, 1937.
127 Lin Shuang, “Feichang shiqi funü de zeren (Women’s responsibilities in the special time)”, Women, vol. 81, November 11, 1936; Xu Ruoping, “Yi ri suo de yundong yu funü (A day’s...
patriotism and receive basic military training to protect the family while the husbands were in the front.\textsuperscript{128}

Under such circumstance, the connection between war and the promotion of women’s professions in Europe during World War Two was drawn on by the \textit{Women’s Weekly} to legitimate the claims of contemporary Chinese women. The article “A new start of women’s lives after the European war” quoted Olive Schreiner’s \textit{Woman and Labor} to explain how women needed to work during war time as the need for maternity in the family shrank due to economic recession; work diverted women’s energy and prevented them from being miserable. Although rich women and conservative women thought that working women lost their femininity and health, the author said that she did not observe any such loss so far.\textsuperscript{129} Despite society’s unfavorable opinion towards working women,\textsuperscript{130} \textit{Women’s Weekly} hoped that women could take the chance to serve the nation in war through various professions. An article entitled “The urgent needs of women’s professions” first combated Hitler’s slogan “women go back home”. It was said that such a slogan was widely accepted by Chinese people; however according to the \textit{Women’s Weekly} such a slogan did not suit China because the Chinese unemployment in China was not caused by over supply of workforce like in Europe: “To promote the saving movement and women)”, \textit{Women}, vol. 84, December 2, 1936; Guo Pinzhen, “Muqian xiwang funü yu jiating de jiuwang yundong shi shenmo? (What is the current expectation on women and family’s movement of saving the country from extinction?)”, \textit{Women and Family}, vol. 25, July 28, 1937.

\textsuperscript{128} Xu Ruoping, “Feichang shiqi zhong muqin de zeren (The responsibilities of mothers in the special time)”, \textit{Women}, 86, December 9, 1936.
\textsuperscript{129} Ming Zhi, “Ou zhan hou nüxing shenghuo de xin kaizhan (A new start of women’s lives after the European war)”, \textit{Women’s Weekly}, vol. 36, December 18, 1935.
\textsuperscript{130} It was described in Lei Sheng’s article, “zai e shili xia funü ying you de renshi he nuli (Necessary comprehension and effort of women under evil force)” that there was a “evil force” in the society that demanded women going back home. \textit{Women and Family}, vol. 20, June 16, 1937. Hitler’s slogan “women go back home” was constantly attacked in the \textit{Women’s Weekly} as it was considered to be accepted by the public in China.
national economic construction, we need to make full use of our land and our human resources, which need plenty of employees to work. Why passively prevent women from taking the only available jobs?” “We China need to cope with unprecedented national crisis, and rightly need to train women to join in practical work and to prepare for the unusual time (feichang shiqi)”. The article desired that the government open all professions to women.  

Women’s participation in professions was also considered virtuous as working women also practiced their citizen-like responsibility towards the nation which needed their devotions to work. “Modern girls” were criticized as either not working or lacking the sincerity to work. Many of them still took marriage as a livelihood even after they received college education. Another article highlighted the fact that even in work, some female civil servants were depicted to make use of the psychology of not treating employed women seriously and acted like “vases”: they dressed up for work “as if to banquets” while pushing hard work to male colleagues; when in trouble they cried so that nobody dared blame them. These women lacked strong will and were easily influenced by the environment. However, “an insightful and brave woman will respect herself more” and the right attitude should be that “you should devote yourself to your own career instead of giving up with the thought that the society will destroy you sooner or later.”

In this author’s opinion, it was those women who had no strong will and sincerity that caused a social bias against women. Women were capable of taking up professions, as long as they were determined. The authors automatically put themselves into the position

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131 Miao Yuzheng, “Funü zhiye de poqie xuyao (The urgent need of women’s professions)”, Women’s Weekly, 57, May 12, 1936.
132 Ji Mei, “Nüzi jin daxue shi langfei de ma?”.  
of women with strong will, when they placed themselves in the position of social commentators.

Since “modern girls” were not realistic in their materialistic desires; they were not virtuous as they ignored the duty of maternity and were not serious in their work. *Women’s Weekly* denied that “modern girls” were the representatives of new women. Instead, by commenting on the immorality of “modern girls”, these women raised the criteria of education-knowledge of hygiene and domestic management, and social responsibility-duty of maternity and devotion to profession. These criteria put themselves in the position of being models for the rest of Chinese women.

**Willful women in gender relations: Hu Die and Chen Bo’er**

The *Women’s Weekly* contributors also made an effort in revealing the social injustice towards women, as will be discussed in the Chapter 3. Under the injustice and social biases based on gender, they expected women to keep their will and show female power correctly. Female power and will were integrated into the new woman’s image, as were expressed through their presentations on the two film stars: Hu Die and Chen Bo’er.

Hu Die played a tearful role as Bai Huiyu in her famous movie, *xiong di xing* (Brothers’ Journey) and she was criticized by the *Women’s Weekly* as “crying too much”:

A woman in the big city cried because her lover treated their marriage lightly; she cried because she has to watch her lover marrying his fiancée and she screamed hysterically because her father saw her giving birth to a baby…But, the wheel of time keeps moving forward, and one third of the twentieth century has passed. Women are not willing to be slaves of their fates any more, but to be the fates’ masters. They in groups stepped into the machine noised factories, into the department stores, into government offices, into academic societies, into banks, into hospitals, into the streets and into the battlefields. The means they adopted to fight for equal positions are not weeping, crying and certainly not hysterical screaming, but meetings, petitions, parades, demonstrations, sticks, stones, guns, blood, iron will,
female wrath, female power!...Do modern Chinese women want to move forward? [If so,] First don’t cry!\footnote{Hu Qiwen, “Xinshidai de funü buzai ai ku le” (Women of new time cry no more), \textit{Women’s Weekly}, vol. 54, April 22, 1936.}

Hu Die was certainly not the model of a modern woman although she acted in this movie after she had traveled back from Europe\footnote{Hu Qinwen, “Xinshidai de funü buzai ai ku le”.}. Another actress, Chen Bo’er, was introduced favorably by A Yi, because she “was the first short hair girl in our hometown” as a little girl. She was the “person with foresight” and soon other girls followed her by cutting their hair. She founded a women’s primary school and later pursued her study in Shanghai and Hong Kong. “The Chen Bo’er I know is a woman in the intellectual group and is always ahead of time…Bo’er has the enthusiasm towards education and interests towards arts. A person like her joined the movie industry. This China’s eighth art has no doubt injected new blood and its life style would certainly be redirected.”\footnote{A Yi, “Wo suo renshi de Chen Bo’er nüshi” (The Miss Chen Bo’er I know), \textit{Women}, vol. 88, December 23, 1936.} As such, Chen Bo’er’s background made her easily identifiable with the educated women.

Hu Die was famous, while these women disliked her because of her crying role; while they find their star in the revolutionary Chen Bo’er. This challenge towards Hu Die’s fame was a challenge towards the general social opinion. Hu Die indirectly turned to the symbol of the lustful culture in which men were fond of women’s submissiveness. Chen Bo’er, however, stood as the assertion of female autonomy, or, the female power. She was made to be the model these educated women expected for.

\section*{4. Salvation of less-advantaged women}
If “modern girls” were immoral, the less-advantaged women, that is, working class women, rural women, prostitutes and little-daughter-in-laws, were unenlightened. Many articles introduced readers to the lives of lower-class women with sympathy. Physically they suffered from poverty and mentally they were thought to be still confined by feudalism and uninformed of the development of women’s movement. Many of them were superstitious. Women intellectuals identified themselves as the pioneers of women’s movement and felt it their duty to help these women: “we know that among our 230,000,000 fellow women in China, those who have the concept of nation probably count for less than one per mille; moreover, illiterate women are said to count for more than 85 percent…we lucky educated people should take the responsibility to guide them. In another word, we should do some substantial enlightening work.”¹³⁷ Almost at the end of all these articles, a call for educated women’s offer to help these less-advantaged women was made. They were encouraged to establish women’s tuition schools, offer classes to illiterate women and teach them practical skills. They were also promised that the help they gave would be appreciated by the less-advantaged.¹³⁸ One interesting point was that hardworking lower-class women were also praised for their productivity, which, according to the contributors of the Women’s Weekly, could put city “modern girls” to shame.¹³⁹

But the images of less-advantaged women presented in the Women’s Weekly reflected more women intellectuals’ own self-perceptions about their place in society. The existence of less-advantaged women reminded them of the country’s worsening

¹³⁷ Mei Lin, “Shenmo shi dangqian funü de renwu? (What is the task for current women?)”, Women and Family, vol. 12, April 21, 1937.
condition. Through introducing less advantaged women’s lives, the contributors expressed their anxiety to the imperialist economic intrusion which was believed to cause the bankruptcy of rural economy.\(^{140}\) Such anxiety was quite common among Chinese intellectuals in the 1930s: books on history, economics, sociology were produced reflecting the questions such as “Whether Chinese rural area left the track of self-sustaining”, “How much was China involved in the world circulation of commodities” and “how can Chinese rural areas step out of their predicament”.\(^{141}\) One embodiment of such predicament was the large numbers of bankrupted rural women who fled to cities to work in factories. Li Jinghan’s investigation on Ding county (in Hebei province) 1929-1930 and Fei Xiaotong’s book on Jiang village (in Anhui province) 1937 showed that women were the basic labors for agricultural economy in the family in the north while in the south many of them flew to the Yangtze delta into the textile industry. For major cities, the amount of women workers in the textile industry was twice that of men.\(^{142}\) Some of the articles in the Women’s Weekly approached the Lower-class women’s participation in agricultural production and industrial work through a Marxist lens. Instead of education and politics, women’s economic independence and participation in professions was thought to be the up-to-date content of women’s liberation.\(^{143}\) However the large amount of unemployment in China did not provide enough opportunities for

\(^{140}\) Liu Jingzi, “Zhongguo zhishi funü de chul u (Chinese women intellectuals’ way out)”, Women, vol. 70, September 9, 1936.
\(^{141}\) Luo Suwen, Nuxing yu jindai zhongguo shehui (Women and Modern Chinese society), (Shanghai: Shanghai remin Press, 1997), p. 205.
\(^{142}\) The Directorate of Statistics, Statistical Abstract of the Republic of China, 1940, table 36 “Factories conforming to the standard of factory law in leading cities”.
women to work\textsuperscript{144}, also “the rural area lost its labor because women fled to cities, yet not all of them were able to work in industry” because “in such a society of commodities, the tool of production is the machine and handicrafts will certainly fail.”\textsuperscript{145}

For educated women writing in \textit{Women’s Weekly}, to save the less-advantageous women meant saving the deteriorating country. Other than helping their less-advantaged sisters by educated women themselves as mentioned before, the contributors also suggested the government helping the less-advantaged improve their tools of production.\textsuperscript{146} Despite the government’s anti-Communist stand, many authors in the \textit{Women’s Weekly} even looked up to the Soviet Union’s government for inspiration.\textsuperscript{147} The government’s support was called to help build free kindergartens for working women.\textsuperscript{148}

To act better as spokespersons for less-advantaged women, some articles argued that educated women should participate in politics. The National Assembly during which the Constitution for Republican China would be made provided an immediate opportunity. Many women hoped to win female representatives on the National Assembly through lobbying and petition campaigns and they asked for a set quota of guaranteed women

\textsuperscript{144} Lu Ying, “Laodong zhiye zai woguo funü jie de diwei (The position of Labor work in women of our country)”, \textit{Women’s Weekly}, vol. 25, October 2, 1935.
\textsuperscript{145} Bai Hua, “Nongcun funü de laodong wenti (The labor force of rural women)”, \textit{Women’s Weekly}, vol. 60, June 3, 1936.
\textsuperscript{146} Bai Hua, “The Labor force of rural women”.
\textsuperscript{147} Jing Yuan wrote in her article, “Xin su’e de xin funü(New women in the New Soviet Russia)” that Women in the Soviet Union had a wide range of working positions and were active in politics largely because “the encouragement and support the government gave to them”; the government “provide facilities for giving birth and children-rearing, which made it convenient for women to work”. \textit{Women’s Weekly}, vol. 50, March 25, 1936.
\textsuperscript{148} Xi, “Tuo’ersuo: canjia Nanjing di yi tuo’ersuo chengli zhounian jinian hou zuo(Kindergarten: after visiting the First Kindergarten of Nanjing)”, \textit{Women’s Weekly}, vol. 56, May 6, 1936; Jing Yuan, “Duiyu gongchang shezhi tuo’ersuo de liangge zuidi de yaoqiu(Two minimum requirements for factories to set kindergartens)”, \textit{Women’s Weekly}, vol. 53, April 15, 1936.
To justify their participation in politics, facing suspicions like what Lin Yutang claimed that “women who are under the limelight in politics are the worst, but they do not represent the new women”, the contributors of the Women’s Weekly argued that participation in politics enabled educated women to fulfill their duty to defend rights of poor women who “know nothing about politics and political participation but only bear the oppression and pains.” Women’s participation in politics was justified to be virtuous as it was a direct step to empower the educated women in leading the women’s movement. One article proudly linked current women’s effort in getting female delegates into the National Assembly to the previous women revolutionary activities: “Women’s movement in participating in politics, ever since women’s participation in the revolution from the late Qing, went through Qiu Jin’s assassinating Manchurian Qing official, women organizing Northern expedition troop, attacking the senate and joining in the May Fourth Movement…until now”, however “the women who are in actual political power are still countable”, thus she called, “Enlightened sisters! How much should we make effort for politics, for women’s participation in politics!”

5. Conclusion

Compared with Shanghai modern girls and less advantaged women, the women intellectuals were both educated and socially responsible, which identified themselves as the new women according to the “new virtuous wife and good mother” criteria.

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150 Rui Xian, “Nüzi yu zhengzhi:guomin dahui ying zengjia funü daibiao” (Women and politics: the National Assembly should increase women delegates), Women’s Weekly, vol. 61, June 10, 1936.
151 Xu Ruoping, “Jinhou funü canzheng ying you de nuli (Necessary effort for future women’s suffrage)”, Women’s Weekly, 62, June 17, 1936.
Chapter 3 Women Intellectuals as Social Critics:

Petitioning to the Society and the State

The “new virtuous wife and good mother” imposed double requirements on the Chinese women, which urged them to seek social and governmental support in performing their domestic and social roles. This chapter will examine how, through writing, the contributors of the *Women's Weekly* carried out their duties as critics against social conventions that discriminates against women; more importantly, they acted as spokespersons on behalf of all Chinese women to petition the state’s support for women’s welfare. Inspired by the Soviet Union’s government, the contributors worked towards the goal of a future Chinese women’s movement that would be under the shelter of GMD’s tutelage. Such an aim, however, was unpractical given the Nanjing government’s reluctance to support the women’s movement. But the contributors performed well their responsibilities as social critics, and thus reconfirmed their role of becoming the new Chinese women.

1. Social critics on gender relations

*Women's Weekly* contributors appealed to the society, more often to men in order to seek for help in creating a more tolerant environment for women’s movements. The discussions revealed the depth of social biases towards women present in those days, and the need for a cooperative attitude from men.

It was considered that the discrimination towards women still existed in people’s mentality. One incident of the “Crown of Xu Lai” caused a dispute from *Women’s Weekly*. This is a beauty contest held to raise relief funds for the casualties of a natural disaster. An article commented on this behavior:
We object to any kind of beauty contest, crown, or queen...people organizing such contests nowadays almost only have one measure: lust. ... All kinds of queens of schools or queens of movies are dull and disgraceful. (However, it was not Xu Lai’s own fault because) Xu Lai is only an uneducated woman, a puppet of this lustful society.

The “uneducated” women were victims of the “lustful” society where the gender relation was considered unhealthy. The contributors, unlike the ignorant contest organizers and the “dull and disgraceful” beauty queens, thought themselves to be above such unhealthy gender relations and thus were able to criticize it.

In expressing their genuine concerns towards women’s movement, the contributors did not hesitate to criticize even the GMD officials if necessary. When Jiao Yitang gave a talk on the memorial week of Sun Yat-sen, he blamed women who were fond of fashion as responsible for the country’s weakening. Soon after this talk, Jiao was criticized on the Women’s Weekly for being indifferent to men who ignored their own responsibilities towards the nation. The article further pointed out that the viewpoint held by modern youth was also biased: “They thought that the object of social reform and national revival pertained only to women. They tolerated men’s behaviors such as corrupting, breaking the law, over-eating, drinking, going to prostitutes and gambling which violated the criteria of the New Life Movement.”

Social bias against women also resulted in the harassment or sexual discrimination towards professional women. Ma Zhixiang, a female civil servant observed her male colleagues’ attitudes towards women as such: “[they] put aside their business when their bosses are away; they chat and smoke...the most popular topic is certainly women, not considering the female colleagues’ feelings and not saving some dignity for themselves.

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Vulgarities come out of their mouths and they would become more excited if the topic is about their female colleagues.” One of them even bought a tabloid with news on their female colleagues. This tabloid “was very popular among the male colleagues and was shared from one department to another…it was really funny and annoying!” Because of their biases, Ma Zhixiang argued, some women colleagues without “strong will” were easily led to become “vase women”, who made use of this habit of not being treated seriously in work, as discussed in chapter 2. Such bias in work was an obstacle to the development of women’s professions. As for those who shouted “women go back home”, the author replied angrily that “it is not yet time for China to discuss this since most Chinese women are still at home, and it [the “women go back home” slogan] will put the useful women who stepped out [of family] into futility if they are pushed back home. At least for me, I would turn to a waste if [I am] asked to go back home.”

Women and Family revealed that current family system is problematic, and imposed unnecessary burdens on women. In response to the opinion of “women going back home”, one article revealed why Chinese women could not go back home: for middle class women, they had no economic independence and were disrespected under the feudal convention which discriminated against women. “The unfaithfulness of their husbands, the oppression from old rituals, economical dependence plus their desire for an easy life forced them to compromise to the painful life….As for women below the middle class, they were forced to leave their families either by the abuse of their husbands or by the economic needs…they are homeless.” A housewife revealed other problems in Chinese families: they were too big to handle and Chinese cooking was too time-

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153 Ma Zhixiang, “Yi ge nü gongwuyuan de zishu”.
154 Hong Ying, “Funü huijia qu” (women go back home), Women and Family, vol. 12, April 21, 1937.
consuming. Housewives had to rely on cheap labors to help them out. The blame on lazy housewives who use servants was a misunderstanding. 155

The current marriage relations also needed to be reworked in order to reflect gender equality. Young people were reprimanded in the article “Freedom and equality between husband and wife” for not paying attention to developing harmonious relationship between partners. They were said to either compromise with parents-arranged marriages, or the couple would have a prenuptial agreement that the man would dominate the family. Such notions were harmful because “the un-wakened women would be more fooled and oppressed while men would center around families since they treat families as their properties. Thus compromise, hesitation, decadence, corruption, lack of progress, quailing and selfishness all came to them. Social reform and nation’s revival are all encumbered.” 156 The harm for not changing their notions on marriage and gender relations was linked to the fate of the country.

Despite the many reprimands given out by the publication, the contributors continued to work with their fellow countrymen. While reprimanding Jiao Yitang for being blind to men’s bad deeds, Tao Jitian still called on the sympathy of “important people of the party and the country” towards women. 157 Being neither the un-willful women, nor the backward male counterparts, the contributors of Women’s Weekly perceived themselves to be eligible to direct current women’s environment. Their perceived status as being above the social problems allowed them to deliver comments that aimed at reforming gender relations.

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156 Fang, “Fufu jian de ziyou yu pingdeng” (Freedom and equality between husband and wife), Women’s Weekly, Vol. 7, June 5, 1935.
157 Tao Jitian, “Tingle Jiao Yitang xiansheng de yanshuo yihou”.
2. Expectation on a government initiated women’s movement

The general published critiques on social biases took place on a sporadic basis; what was considered crucial to the development of women’s movement was the government’s initiative.

By looking at the 1930s social background, the rationalization for such an attempt of a government sponsored women’s movement becomes obvious. Firstly, there was an optimistic outlook towards the future of a unified China in the 1930s. Although the unification by Jiang Jieshi was rather limited—concerning Japan’s influence in northeast China and residual warlords in marginal provinces as well as the factional conflicts within Guomindang\(^{158}\) - the Nanjing regime did bring some hope for national reconstructions to the people in the 1930s and “made reconstruction a vogue in China until the outbreak of war with Japan in 1937”\(^{159}\). In Guangdong province, a number of provincial and municipal “reconstruction plans” were drafted in 1929-1932. The Three-year Administrative Plan of Guangdong Province, inaugurated on 1 January 1933, incorporated these earlier plans\(^{160}\) We could also sense optimism in the Women’s Weekly of a government-led promotion of social welfare that could benefit women.

The expectation of a government-sponsored women’s movement was also due to the influence of Communism and Soviet Union in particular. The 1930s saw the rising appeal of Communism among people in Europe and China, especially during the desperation of


\(^{160}\) Lin, p. 193, Note 6.
The establishment of Soviet Union drew many Chinese intellectuals’ attention to Socialism as an alternative pathway to the western model since early 1920s and continued to be influential throughout the 1930s. Despite GMD’s white terror, around 76 books on Marxism were translated during 1928-1937. The ambiguous relations between among the Soviet Union’s government, CCP and GMD also allowed room for promoting a Soviet Union model, disregarding the possible penetration of communism. As early as 1935, the Soviet Union urged CCP to ally with GMD for fear of expansion by Fascism. Moreover the Soviet Union provided the GMD government several million US dollars worth aid, together with a substantial number of airplanes. It was probably due to this connection that the Soviet model was tolerated and survived the censorship. On June 9, 1937, an exhibition on the Soviet Union’s achievement on protecting motherhood and children was organized in Shanghai by the Sino-Soviet Cultural association. Reports show that it was well visited.

In the Women’s Weekly, the Soviet Union also formed a source of inspiration for the government’s greater concern towards women’s economic situation. In particular, the government-sponsored model of the women’s movement was taken as the practical method to promote women’s movement. The Soviet Union’s government became a

162 Song Yuanfang, Zhongguo chuban shiliao, p. 99.
164 Funü zhuankan (Women’s Special Journal), supplement of Shen Bao, vol. 70, June 12th, 1937.
165 The pragmatic attitude meant adopting Soviet Union model while ignoring the ideological difference. Ming Ding put the Soviet Union’s government together with German government as two models in eliminating illiterate women regardless of their ideology. Both of the governments’ policies were substantial achievements of women’s movements which China lacked. Ming Ding, “Zhongguo fuyun zhi liang da zhengjie” (Two symptoms of women’s movement in China), Women’s Weekly, vol. 23, September 18th, 1935.
model to follow, which will be discussed further in Chapter 4. Generally speaking, in the
eyes of the Women’s Weekly contributors, women in Soviet Union took on all kinds of
professions in the society as men do. Women were also active in political participation
with the female party members taking up to 30 percent in total. Furthermore, the
government subsidized the fees of giving birth and children-rearing, and also built up vast
institutions for children’s benefit to make the above come true; “We can know that
women in nowadays Soviet Union are truly liberated. Every one of them owns the free
and independent status”, reports one article in the Women’s Weekly\textsuperscript{166}, Another writes
“children in the Soviet Union can be called the luckiest children of the world”.\textsuperscript{167} A third
article, “New women in new Soviet Union” also contributed the Soviet woman’s
professional success to “the encouragement and assistance of the government”.\textsuperscript{168}
“Women and children in Soviet Union” analyzed the government policies that liberated
women: the liberation assured in constitution, the equal educational opportunities as men
and the social and economic support to alleviate their burden as mothers\textsuperscript{169}.

The Chinese government needed to take actions according to many contributors in
the Women’s Weekly; and many articles were dedicated to give concrete plans for the
government’s reference.

With the great aspiration of entering the working society, Chinese women had to
deal with reducing the burden of family work. Abortion, birth control and child breeding

\textsuperscript{166} Miao Yuzheng, “Sulian funü jinri de diwei” (Women’s status in nowadays Soviet Union)
Women’s Weekly, Vol. 61, June 10, 1936.
\textsuperscript{167} Zha Jiemei, “Xingyun de sulian ertong” (Lucky Soviet Union children), Women and Family, vol. 17, May 26, 1937.
\textsuperscript{168} Jing Yuan, “Xun su’e de xin funü” (New Women in the new Soviet Russia), Women’s
\textsuperscript{169} Bi Ru, “Sulian de funü he ertong” (Women and children in Soviet Union), Women, Vol. 70, August 12, 1936.
were among the most discussed issues in *Women’s Weekly* and the government was assigned the task of helping out in this area.

**Abortion and birth-control**

Birth control was introduced to China after Margaret Sanger (1879-1966) delivered a speech in 1921. This took place immediately after the May Fourth movement and the new youth showed great interest in this issue.\(^{170}\) Opinions regarding practicing birth control were varied, according to the stance taken by the person\(^{171}\). In February 1936, Margaret Sanger visited China again and the topic of birth control returned to the forefront of discussions in women’s journals.

Birth control was embraced by some of the *Women’s Weekly* contributors as the precondition for the improvement of living standards, social and family lives, politics, the spreading of education, agricultural reformation and industrial development. The birth control issue, as a result, was taken into the whole modernization scheme. An awareness of competition from western countries led to an aspiration to follow suit the developed countries, where mortality rate was lower: “the crying of abandoned babies” was considered to be “more a disaster” than the “gun fires of imperialists’ galleys in our territorial water”.\(^{172}\)

One outside opinion by the then famous male eugenicist Pan Guangdan was quoted for discussion on the *Women’s Weekly*, which contrasted its usual feminist stance. He had

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\(^{171}\) Some totally agree with Margaret Sanger because birth control could reduce the pressure of China’s growing population; some disagreed as China has many unexplored lands and does not need birth control; yet some agrees partially and think that eugenics is better than birth control-poor and unhealthy people should be forbidden to have children yet intellectuals and rich should contribute more. Ji Ping, “Huanying shanhe furen de yiyi”, *Funü zhuankan* (Women’s Special Journal), supplement of *Shen Bao*, vol. 7, February 29th, 1936.

certain concerns about birth control that targeted its perceived benefits towards the society on a whole. He disagreed that poor people were among the group on whom birth control should be conducted. The reason was that China did not have many rich people except for those “malfeasants, local powers who aggrieve people (tu hao lie shen), compradors and winners of lotteries and horse-racings”. The latter part of the article was full of discontentment regarding the social conditions the intellectuals had, since Pan’s political stance is rather leftist. He believed that economic conditions could not be treated as a way of categorizing people. In conclusion, he suggested that “social reform has more than one ways, not just reform of population. And the reform of population also had more ways than birth control. We should conduct birth-control while on the other hand reform eventually social economic production and distribution”. 

Pan’s article focused more on the offspring, especially those who had great hopes of becoming high-quality people but were eliminated because of their low-born status. His mind shows a reformer’s concern to use eugenics to achieve social justice. As early as 1931, his opinion was criticized as disregarding the value of individual happiness in one’s lifetime, especially for women who sacrificed themselves to become reproduction machines.

Zhi Min, who promoted the “new virtuous wife and good mother” model, would agree with such critics. She was overwhelmed by the concern of maternity as well as women’s living conditions. She first pointed out in general that the high infant mortality rate in China was caused by lack of hygiene knowledge, high birth rate, the wide-spread notion in favor of male offspring, pressure of poverty, superstition and lack of public

\[173\] He was rumored to be on the blacklist of GMD to be murdered.
\[175\] Yuehtsen Juliette Chung, p. 82.
institutions for homeless children. Under such circumstance, birth control became necessary as a way to balance the quantity and raise the quality of life. It was also a protection of women’s health and a way of improving living standard. The government was responsible for the advocacy of birth control by sponsoring facilities, spreading hygiene knowledge, birth control knowledge and demographic knowledge.

Furthermore, against the government’s policy, Zhi Min suggested that abortion be legalized as a way to practice birth control, particularly considering women’s physical suffering in giving birth. She strongly recommended contraceptive methods to be distributed among the common people since abortion was illegal in law: those women who were too weak for giving birth and those who cannot afford breeding too many children should practice contraception. Although she routinely related over-population to the weakening of the nation (that given the family’s economic condition, the more children they bear, the less resource and effort could be spared to each child), she made an interesting analysis about abortion being illegal. The reason for abortion being illegal in law, Zhi Min said, was due to the humanitarian and nationalist concerns. It was inhumane to kill a baby who had already started its life by abortion; as equal subjects of the nation, parents did not have the right to kill babies. However, “there are many latent dire vices lying under the law”, one of which is the ignorance of women’s pain of giving birth, “the pain of giving birth could be one of the most painful suffers for human beings.”

Other than reducing the pain of giving birth, abortion was also considered as alleviating burdens for women: it was argued by Zhi Min that parents should not lose

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their rights of enjoying life with the heavy burden of rearing children. The government should play an active role, following what the Soviet Union’s government did. It was said that poor working women of Soviet Union could apply for free abortion if they could not raise their children. Alternatively they were subsidized by the government to bring up their children. Similar expectations on the Chinese government were implied. Zhi Min’s stance on femininity determined her attitude towards this controversial issue.

To further legitimize the request for government’s support towards birth-control, it was argued that such support was vital to the righteous upbringing of the younger generation. Tao Zhicheng addressed the necessity of birth control considering Chinese children’s current condition: families with more children could not give enough care to each child and the children ended up being taken care of by nannies; the lower-class family could not provide enough living material to their children, who would suffer from malnutrition. Mrs. Sanger was greatly needed according to the author to propagandize and direct birth control in China. Also the government was to pay attention and provide its support towards this issue. The concern of the nation’s fate regarding its younger generation became the legitimate reason to appeal to the government for attention towards birth control.

**Public children-rearing**

Children-rearing methods formed a major concern among the *Women’s Weekly* contributors. Good methods were considered to benefit both the mother and the child, but these could only be realized through the support of the government. As mentioned in the

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177 Huang Zhuofu, “Sulian yu deguo funü de laodong baohufa” (Labor protection legislations for women in the Soviet Union and Germany), *Women*, vol. 89, December 30, 1936.

178 Tao Zhicheng, “Jiujiu haizi he shao sheng haizi” (Saving the children and bearing less children), *Women and Family*, vol. 11, April 14, 1937.
previous chapter, a column of correspondence was established on the *Women’s Weekly* to answer parents’ questions. Apart from this enlightening work, some detailed plans for an enhanced social welfare were suggested to facilitate children-rearing. Children’s summer health camp was implemented due to the neglect of children’s physical health in education.\(^{179}\) Children’s protection and education in the Soviet Union was thought to be the most advanced and was introduced to readers through a translation of an English book *Nursery School and Parent Education in Soviet Russia*. The book highly praised the “Experimental kindergarten” in the Soviet Union as it tested “suitable methods of infant education”; more importantly, “educational concept and facilities that have been experimented and proved have rapidly spread to the whole Russia”, resulted in the “high-standard education” in many factory kindergartens.\(^{180}\) Such promotion of children’s education would naturally be impossible without the government’s sponsorship, which was even more explicitly expressed in another article about women and children’s welfare in the Soviet Union, “such a social burden covering everything [referring to the welfare to women and children] is naturally consuming. But the governmental social insurance [paid by the work institute instead of the workers: noted by the author in the same article] realized these legislations to practice the interest of the masses”\(^{181}\).

Government’s support on children-rearing was considered by relevant articles on the *Women’s Weekly* to be a way out of the dilemma faced by women between family and social roles: most of these articles were in favor of the establishing of kindergartens to

\(^{180}\) Qin Yunfen, “Su’e shiyan tuo’ersuo de ying’er jiaoyu gongzuo” (Infant education in the experimental kindergartens of Soviet Russia), *Women and Family*, vol. 13, April 18, 1937.
\(^{181}\) Qin Yunfen, “Sulian muying baohu de lifa” (The Soviet Union’s legislations to protect mother and infant), *Women and Family*, vol. 20, June 16, 1937.
improve child education. Chen Wenyi felt it necessary for women to rescue themselves from being enslaved by children, the main drive behind the setting up of kindergartens. By sending children to kindergartens, Xi argued, educated women could do more work for the society. The family would become more simplified and would only be the lodgings for the couple. Thus “virtuous wife and good mother” would automatically disappear. For the children of uneducated women (including women workers and rich idling housewives who were called tai tai), it was for the sake of the children themselves to be sent to kindergartens to receive professional caring. Government’s support in alleviating women’s burden should be embodied through kindergartens. “Two minimum requirements for factories to establish kindergartens” required that all kindergartens should be free and fully equipped to allow working class women to benefit from them. The model of the kindergarten was an inspiration from the Soviet Government policies. The mobile kindergartens on carts in the collaborative farms of Soviet Union were considered of great convenience to working women as the babies “were taken care of by nurses of the farm” yet “could be fed by their mothers at any time”.

**Government support for women’s participation in professions**

The contributors of *Women’s Weekly* expressed their frustration over their obstacles in entering the workforce and their expectations on the government to solve the problem through their published articles. In reply to an unmarried girl’s letter “Maternity”, the

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184 Jing Yuan, “Duiyu gongchang shezhi tuo’ersuo de liangge zuidi yaoqiu” (Two minimum requirements for factories to set up kindergartens), *Women’s Weekly*, Vol. 53, April 15, 1936.
185 Illustration, “Eguo jituan nongc hang zhi liudong tuo’ersuo” (Russian collaborative farms’ mobile kindergartens), *Women*, vol. 82, November 18, 1936.
author described her pain of taking care of her child. She disagreed with this girlfriend of hers who advised the author to be happy with a child, “When child comes, I have to sacrifice everything for him. Do you call it happiness? I cannot go out very easily now; sometimes when I go shopping, my heart is fully tied to the child. If I’m in the middle of my reading, the child’s cry could break the peaceful heart completely. What else can I do? I have to feed him every four hours, which is really troublesome. Let alone other troubles! …I think we are really unlucky to be born in this time; if it was before, we can simply hire a nanny and leave everything to her. Unluckily we received new education and do not want to give up the responsibility of being a mother.” 186 The dual responsibilities within and outside family that new women were supposed to fulfill seemed unrealistic to the author, without any aid.

“Old path” was an even clearer declaration of the women’s frustration of not being able to fulfill her youth dream of a hopeful life: she used to have many aspirations and dreams in her twenties. But ten years past since then and she miserably turned from a “little girl full of great expectations” into “simply a mom of three children.” 187 Apparently she was not satisfied with her role of being only a mom but not willing to give up the duty of maternity. The expression of educated Chinese women’s real life frustration called for a resolution.

The government was certainly expected to do more to help women fulfill their responsibilities. One article expressed its dissatisfaction towards the ambiguity of the Nanjing government’s “policy and social attitude towards women’s issue”: “Questions like what exactly was the difference between two sexes, what kind of professions should

women take to contribute to the human race and be worthy of the name of equality, how men and women divide work and how to re-conciliate between career and maternity call for resolutions”. Besides, many women refused or could not afford the price of bearing children. The collapse of femininity and women’s position outside family would “cause serious problem for the society later on”.188

In the practical sense, the difficulty for women to participate in professions complicated the issue and also invited discussions on resolutions: one side of the opinions argued that women should put love and family life as priorities;189 but for the majority of the Women’s Weekly contributors, it is necessary for the government to help women out of the dilemma by smoothing out as many obstacles as possible, especially in the balancing of the two roles. Solutions to major practical difficulties include abortion and birth control, public children-rearing were discussed above. The expected result of an improved social welfare system for women was reflected through the example of the Soviet women. The contributors envied the Soviet women’s freedom and various choices in their professions: “they (Soviet women) have a wide range of working positions and are active in politics”;190 women were given “full rights and value” and “female students are abundant”;191 wives of the Soviet red army officers were seen to proudly participate

189 Zhang translated H. G. Wells’ book in an attempt to give an answer. The chapter argued that even though women were liberated from the burden of children-rearing by the implementation of children-rearing, socialization of education and housework and police force to protect women instead of men, the convention that men were dominant still prevented women from getting equal working opportunities. Thus to women “love should be more important than professions” and their working schedule should be flexible. Qi Sun translate, “Jiejue nüzi hunyin yu zhiye de chongtu de sange yuanze” (Three principles to solve the conflicts of women’s marriages and professions), Women’s Weekly, Vol. 52, April 8, 1936.
190 Jing Yuan, “Xin Su’e de xin funü”.
191 Miao Yuzheng, “Sulian funü jinri de diwei”.
the military parade in Moscow\textsuperscript{192} and the female workers organized horse guard army;\textsuperscript{193} the readers also saw a portrait of a 26 years old female captain of the Soviet Russia\textsuperscript{194} and a 16 years old female conductor of the Russian symphony choir.\textsuperscript{195} Every dream of the Chinese female intellectuals was being fulfilled in the Soviet Union, whose women projected a utopian image of a new woman; none of these, however, by the logic of the \textit{Women’s Weekly} contributors, could be accomplished without the government’s sponsorship.

\textit{Women’s suffrage movement}

Compared with other advocates on government initiatives, women’s participation in politics represented a more active step for the Chinese women intellectuals to seek governmental support for the women’s movement and ultimately to practice their authority as social reformers through participating governmental management.

Chinese women’s suffrage movement was promoted as early as in 1903 in Jin Yi’s book \textit{nū jie zhòng}, and later the western women’s movements for suffrage were introduced by newspapers. After the 1911 revolution, the Tongmenghui female members were among the first to request women’s suffrage and they wished to write “gender equality” into the temporary constitution of the Republic of China but failed. In the early Republic, only a few participated in the women’s suffrage movement but these were mostly radical activists. Violent confrontations happened constantly. These women failed

\textsuperscript{192} Illustration, \textit{Women}, vol. 74, September 9, 1936.
\textsuperscript{193} Illustration, \textit{Women}, vol. 84, December 2, 1936.
\textsuperscript{194} Illustration, \textit{Women}, vol. 80, November 4, 1936.
\textsuperscript{195} Illustration, \textit{Women}, vol. 84, December 2, 1936.
to achieve anything due to little support from the public arena. Women’s participation was generally opposed by male intellectuals and GMD members.\textsuperscript{196}

In 1931 the Guomindang Nanjing government enacted the Provisional Constitution of the tutelage period of Republic of China and recognized women’s suffrage. On May 5\textsuperscript{th} 1936 the Guomindang Nanjing government published the draft of the constitution of the Republic of China and the eight article of the constitution confirmed all people of the Republic of China as hereby equal by law. However, the contributors of the \textit{Women’s Weekly} still felt it was necessary to strive for actual gender equality through women’s active participation in politics.

The opening national assembly reiterated the need for women’s suffrage in the 1930s. The \textit{Women’s Weekly} contributors took great hope in their campaigns of instating female representatives and gaining authority: they wished that through the petition of women’s association, the national assembly would set a quota to guarantee women delegates and nominate women’s delegates; thus women’s movement could be in an active position and educated women could bear the responsibility to defend women’s right for the poorer women who “know nothing about politics and political participation but only bear the oppression and pains.”\textsuperscript{197}

The government was expected by the \textit{Women’s Weekly} to support women’s suffrage movement, because participation in politics was considered part of a woman’s right in

\textsuperscript{196} Please refer to chapter 1: “Guomindang’s feminist discourses from Sun Yat-sen to Jiang Jieshi(Chiang Kai-shek)” and “The emergence of women intellectuals in the late Qing period and their feminist discourses”.

\textsuperscript{197} Rui Xian, “Nüzi yu zhengzhi”.
becoming an equal citizen of the Republic. Xu Ruoping, the leader of GMD’s women’s association in Jiangsu, used governmental legislations in order to defend of women’s suffrage: women were supposed to participate in politics as “the central government has clear regulations that men and women are equal in legal, political, economical and educational rights”. Bao Lengxue reflected on the past suffrage movement and pointed out that nowadays, suffragettes realized the reality of Chinese women’s disadvantaged situation in education, professions and finance, and it was appropriate to focus on a quota of women’s delegates to guarantee opportunities for women. Such quota in turn was expected to be guaranteed as “we believe that the wise government must not disappoint us.”

Xu Ruoping also expressed her expectation of the women intellectuals who were running for delegates of the National Assembly to act better as spokespersons for less advantaged women. Female delegates were expected to strive for women’s welfare as listed in the Constitution. To better represent the common women’s interest, these female candidates and women with the expectation to become politicians were also called to cultivate themselves as qualified politicians. Behind such expectations was Xu Ruoping’s self-perception as the model of female pioneer, who was responsible for leading women’s movement.

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200 Bao Lengxue, “Women yao canjia guomin dahui de zhixian yundong” (We should participate in the Constitution-drafting movement of the National Assembly), *Women and Family*, vol. 22, July 7, 1937.
The national assembly was delayed time and time again and finally opened in 1946. The next year, representation by women had a quota of 10-20%. The process of placing women into place of power within the assembly occurred at a slow pace and painstakingly, due to the ignorance of male delegates. Nevertheless, the fervent advocacy for participation in governance in the Women’s Weekly again demonstrated women intellectuals’ attempt to be the legitimate social reformers.

3. GMD’s attitudes towards women’s movement

The Women’s Weekly contributors proposed women-relevant social reforms to be carried out under the GMD’s umbrella, but the government’s attitude was disappointing. Women’s movement at the GMD-controlled regions in the 1930s turned out to be rather sporadic; the Nanjing government’s measurements regarding women’s movement was expressed but with the intention of taking control rather than giving support.

During the period concerned in this thesis, the GMD’s relative institute for guiding women’s movement was the Women’s branch in the Mass Training Committee of the GMD headquarters. The mass training committee (CTM) was founded on June 15th, 1928. According to historian Huang Jianli, this CTM was activated in May 1928. There was also a Central Training Department led by Ding Weifen. In April 1929, the CTM at party headquarters was dissected into three less significant bodies: a mass training section under the Central Training Department, a mass organization section under the Central Organization Department and a Planning Committee for the Training of Masses. Local CTMs under the GMD city party branches were kept until November 1930. In 1936,

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202 Zhang Yufa, pp. 66-68.
204 Politics of Depoliticization, p. 68.
the CTM was renamed as the Mass Training Department (MTD) under GMD’s Central Executive Committee. The establishment of MTD was in a tone of “have-to” rather than “ought-to”. The mass training became necessary as it could help governing; more specifically, it could help train the people to be ready for the impending convening of the national assembly. While the party did not pay much attention to mass training before, they felt it necessary to work more on it. Much effort in the beginning was put into coping with workers’ strikes and students’ movements.

For the 1936’s attempted National Assembly specifically, although women delegates were active in participating in the legislations during the National Assembly, the GMD government remained suspicious of the various representatives. Candidates from various occupational groups sitting as representatives of the national assembly were kept under tight control. They were supposed to provide their personal details and connections with the party’s government and other social organizations to the local Party’s offices.

*In-cooperation of the local offices and paralyzed women’s organizations*

While the central government tried very hard to form an organized system from top to bottom for mass mobilization, the local government or the party offices did not completely follow the orders from the top. When the central government wanted to obtain the candidates’ details, the answers given by the local party’s offices showed that they were unprepared for the national assembly although the opening of this assembly had

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206 In “A summary of work”, February 14-29, 1936, it said that the party’s outlines for mass training were under constant revision due to the change of environment and now not only new outlines but detailed projects would be made. It was admitted in this document that many people’s organizations in the past only existed nominally or “with complicated contents”. The mass training work was not well organized or under the party’s control.
207 “A summary of work”, January 27- February 1, 1936.
208 A confidential letter from The Mass Movement Directory Office, MTD to the Central Executive Committee of GMD to all the party’s offices of provinces and cities, Nov. 11, 1936.
already been delayed by then: The northern-eastern China’s party office replied that there were no occupational groups under them; the Guangzhou party’s office said that the results of the candidates were not ready for reporting yet; the party’s special office of Yue-han railway even claimed it was not sure of the specific proceedings of election.  

Similarly, the plan to establish an organized system of women’s committees was never achieved. An Outline of Women’s Association (funü hui) was issued for enforcement on September 17 of 1932 by the Central Executive Committee. It authorized “Women’s Association” as the only legal form of women’s organizations and prescribed the procedure for the establishment of its offices in counties, cities and provinces. The women’s association in counties or cities could only be established with at least 15 founder-members and the approval from the local party’s offices. The provincial women’s association had to be organized with at least 9 counties or cities’ women’s committees. If it was too difficult for a province to have nine sponsoring counties or cities, it could be allowed to have a women’s association with at least 50 founder-members. The women’s committees were answerable to the respective local government authorities and the Ministry of Interior was in overall control. Had such unified system been built up completely, the women’s movement would be under GMD’s tight control and would work efficiently. But the result was a big disappointment. In 1934, Pi Yishu, the head of the women’s branch of MTD sent all the local party offices in the provinces, cities and counties an official letter urging them to organize women’s committees quickly. It described the state of being of women’s committees in different places:

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209 “The reply to the confidential letter from the Northern-eastern China party’s office”, the Guangzhou party’s office and the party’s special office of the Yue-han railway.
210 “Funühui zuzhi dagang” (An outline of the organizing of Women’s Association).
I find that there are women’s committees in four provinces Yunnan, Gansu, Jiangxi, Jiangsu and four cities Nanjing, Beiping, Qingdao, Guangzhou. Some are in preparation like Guizhou province and Hankou. Some have organized preparation committee but are not according to the law and thus were denounced by the local party’s office like Tianjin. Some announced establishment on the newspaper but have not been reported to our department by the local party’s offices, like Hunan, Zhejiang provinces and Hankou, Shanghai. As for Anhui, Shanxi, Sichuan provinces, it is unlikely that they have established any association since there is neither report of preparation nor announcement of establishing. For the provinces of Hebei, Fujian, Guangxi, Hubei, Suiyuan, Henan, Shanxi, although there are women’s committees in some counties, the number of such counties is not enough for establishing women’s committees in each of these provinces according to the law. For Ningxia and Qinghai provinces, they begged for pardon of our department for not being able to establish women’s committees since their women were too short of knowledge.

Finally she had to admit that “women’s movement in general was disorganized with little progress.”

There is one specific case in the Special Party’s office of the 14th division of the Guomindang army: the office organized the Preparation Committee for the Women’s Association (Funü xiehui choubeichu), with a purpose to extract information from the Communist armies. Although it was criticized by the MTD that such conception on women’s association was too narrow, it is a good case to show the ignorant and utilitarian attitude of common local party leaders towards women’s movement.

Government’s reluctance towards promoting women’s movement

The central government did not place women’s mobilization as its top priority. It was mentioned before that most of the central government’s effort was spent on coping

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211 An official letter from women’s section of MTD to party’s offices in all provinces and cities, “please quickly establish women’s committees according to the law and guide those whose organizations are not mature”, May 26, 1934.
212 “An order from the MTD to the Special Party’s office of the 14th division of the land force”, September 14, 1932, with an attachment of the working report from this Special Party’s Office sent on September 9, 1932.
with workers’ strikes and students’ protest movements. The lack of attention by the
government towards women’s movements could also be observed through complaints
that the women’s committees did not get enough money for their operation. In 1933, the
women’s branch of MTD sent out questionnaires on women’s organizations to all
provinces and cities all over the country. Eight provinces and five “special districts”
tebieshi responded. Of the 79 women’s organizations from these regions, 40 claimed to
have financial difficulty to carry on the work. Financial difficulty was the single most
important problem for women’s organizations. The lack of government support
significantly weakened the newly established women’s organizations. It would have been
understandable at the beginning when everything had to be initiated and the MTD could
not communicate with the local women’s organizations effectively. However, an
investigation on the GMD’s motive of mass training would reveal more serious problems.

The purpose of GMD’s women’s mobilization was to serve the nation immediately
during the crisis of Japanese invasion. This deep sense of national crisis, together with the
economic invasion of imperialists regulated the curriculum of GMD’s mass training
program. The Outline of Organizing Women’s Association declared that the purpose of

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213 The survey responses were sent by Hebei, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Hubei, Hunan, Yunnan,
Guangxi, Xikang provinces and Nanjing, Tianjin, Beiping, Guangzhou, Hankou. Zhejiang
province sent a survey of 31 women’s organizations with only the titles, as they were newly
founded and no work was done yet. So Zhejiang’s survey was not taken into this calculation of
79 total women’s organizations.

214 Other problems include the inefficiency of members within the organizations (8 cases) and
the conservative power’s prevention of women’s movements (15 cases, including the situation
that women’s knowledge was infantry). Seven organizations claimed no difficulty in work
while 39(including the 31 newly-found women’s organizations in Zhejiang province where only
titles were recorded) left this item blank in the questionnaires.

215 There was a dismissal of all people’s organizations in 1929 and until 1930, the policies from
the MTD were still in transition. The MTD in Hebei Province sent an enquiry on whether the
old regulations on youth and women’s movement were still in effect before the new regulations
were received. See the official letter from MTD of Hebei’s Coordination Committee to the
MTD of GMD’s Central Executive Committee, February 28, 1930.
establishing such associations was to “awaken the responsibility of women as national subjects; improve their morality and intelligence; mobilize them to join the national revolution (guomin geming) and enhance themselves as well as their families’ and their country’s welfare.” Women’s movement led by GMD in this period was to train women into qualified national subjects to carry on their responsibility towards the nation. An outline of women’s General education was sent by the MTD to all the local party’s offices which defined women’s General education as “defense of the nation from humiliation, the responsibility of national subjects, the Three People’s Principles (sanmin zhuyi), domestic management, public and domestic hygiene, children’s education, common etiquettes, promotion of national products, domestic craftwork, women’s professions, promotion of standard Chinese, reading or other items concerning daily lives, law and economics.”

A concern for improving women’s skills in order to work efficiently in the society was expressed here due to the fact that the villages were facing bankruptcy with the intrusion of imperialism and hungry peasants thronged the cities to work in factories as discussed in Women’s Weekly. The number of female workers surpassed that of their male counterparts. It would be helpful if institutes for general education and skill training for women could be established according to this outline. However, the detailed

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217 Funü yundong zhidaogao yang cao’an [A draft of guidelines for women’s movement], May 30, 1934 (it was approved by the Central Executive Committee on June 9, 1934) 722:394 Archive of the MTD of GMD’s Central Executive Committee.
219 “Factories conforming to the standard of factory law in leading cities”. The number of female workers employed was 67,466 and male 60,164 in 1934; the figures were 42,906 and 28,575 respectively in 1935. The Directorate of Statistics, Statistical Abstract of the Republic of China, (Chongqing, 1940), pp. 70-73.
plans, such as the establishment of women’s ancillary schools, women’s reading groups, women’s mobile libraries were supposed to be sponsored by the organizers themselves, usually the local women’s organizations.\(^{220}\) Such organizations, as said before, were themselves short of money already.

Another important step made in the mobilization of female national subjects in this period, was to promote national products by women’s organizations under the guidance of the party. The idea (realistic or not) behind such movement before the anti-Japanese war was that the consumption rate of cosmetics took up most of the imported goods and caused the adverse balance of international trade.\(^{221}\) The MTD first called upon all women’s organizations to lead women using only national brands products. Later it drafted an act about women using national products to be practiced by the women’s committees, women’s movement leaders and female teaching staff all over the country under the guidance of local party’s offices.\(^{222}\) In Shanghai, a Women’s National Products Promotion Committee was founded to urge common women to use national products. The result, however, was not very evident because, after half a year’s promotion, the adverse balance of international trade was still growing.\(^{223}\)


\(^{221}\) See an official letter from the MTD to all the party’s offices in the provinces and cities “an order to local women’s committees to lead women answering the call for using national products”, September 4, 1934.

\(^{222}\) An official letter from the MTD to all the party’s offices in the provinces and cities “an order to local women’s committees to lead women answering the call for using national products”, September 4, 1934; and “A summary of the work”, April 20-25, 1936.

\(^{223}\) A report from Tang Naixin, the investigator from the MTD to Shanghai, to the MTD, September 18, 1934.
Independent intellectuals\textsuperscript{224} like Yan Yangchu, the founder of the National Association for the promotion of Mass Education, made clear of his position in promoting the mass education movement that “religious or political believes are the choice of people’s own and are not propagandized in the mass education”. \textsuperscript{225} Ten years after, he had even harsher words for the GMD’s motive of promoting mass education and mobilization:

For the past decades, the government and the society focused mainly on the general plans and guidelines at the top. They paid no attention to the basic work among the mass. The expenditure on mass education and training constitutes only tiny part of the country’s total budget… The attitude of the whole society towards the mass was either ignorance or disparagement. People treated mass education as something not urgent and trivial. There was also no place for mass education even in the descendents of great educationists. Even when they noticed it once in a while, they would not bother participating. There were many places or mass educational institutes that were conducting mass training work, but their mass training was only conducted orally, boasted on paper and wall corners… Until now when the crisis had befallen, with thousands of lands lost and thousands of men dying did people realize the importance and impendence of training and organizing the mass…Thus they started seeking to do something for the mass… How unbearable it is really to talk about mass training and organization only until now!\textsuperscript{226}

\textit{Response from the Women’s Weekly}

Women’s Weekly might also realize that the GMD government could not be counted, as felt by Yan Yangchu. The mass training program conducted by MTD of GMD seemed to emphasize only the duty instead of the welfare of common people. Its work was thus hollow in content and was not impressive enough to win the public trust. The intensified

\textsuperscript{224} “Independent intellectuals” here refer to intellectuals who were neither within the GMD nor the CCP.
war crisis also put an end to *Women’s Weekly*’s expectations of government support to promote women’s social welfare. One article even suggested a family cooperation plan as a temporary resolution. According to this plan, several families could collect money to build public libraries, playgrounds, entertainment rooms, gardens and bathrooms.²²⁷ Expectations remained expectations and women would only expect their needs met when the nation came back to peace. It was a long wait.

However disappointing the real situation was, advocations for government initiative to improve women’s welfare were still made on the *Women’s Weekly* fervently. Xu Ruoping, who advocated women’s suffrage movement, put the blame of difficulties in the work of Jiangsu women’s associations mainly on women themselves. She felt that, although the lack of financial support from the government made work difficult, it was women who refused to cooperate, and the female party members who lacked organizational skills that made the work impossible.²²⁸ Thus we can draw a conclusion that the intention behind the promotion of a government-initiated women’s movement on the *Women’s Weekly* was but a process of self-identification of women intellectuals. They perceived themselves to be qualified and legitimized social reformers who bridged over the government and the rest of Chinese women.

²²⁸ Xu Ruoping, “Jiangsu shenghui fuyun tuidong de kunnan” (The difficult in promoting women’s movement by Jiangsu women’s associations), *Women*, vol. 92, January 20, 1937.
Chapter 4 Women Intellectuals as the New Women in Shaping a Modern Chinese Nation

The concept of female citizens, the standard for new woman in China since the late Qing was imagined through constant reflections on China within the international arena. Women’s Weekly’s discussion on new women certainly involved reflections on their western others, that is, western women and the “western powerful countries” (xi fang lie qiang). The contributors reaffirmed their identity as new women through their discussions on China and world events. They first of all possessed cosmopolitan viewpoints and were privileged to have international contacts, which allowed them to stand above the general public and guide Chinese people to cope with the international situation with the right attitude: they thought that China should emerge into the world while at the same time recognize its distinction. Secondly they assimilated themselves with the advanced western (in their opinion) women who conformed to the “new virtuous wife and good mother” standard and criticized Chinese “modern girls” through criticizing their western counterparts. Finally they reiterated their expectations on the Chinese general public and the state to support women’s movement so that China could catch up with the world trend; and through providing their own response to the west, they carried out their responsibilities to be social commentators with great concerns towards the nation, which were entirely appropriate as “new virtuous wives and good mothers”.

As Joan Judge wrote after a study of female citizen discourses on late Qing textbooks, “modern Chinese citizenship was the product of an often discordant merging of past and present, indigenous and foreign principles”. Joan Judge, “Citizens or Mothers of Citizens? Gender and the Meaning of Modern Chinese Citizenship”, Merle Goldman and Elizabeth J. Perry ed., Changing Meanings of Citizenship in Modern China, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2002), pp. 23-43. Liang Qichao disqualified the cai nu (talented women) in the Chinese tradition as being modern women because their learning was outdated. Hu Ying, Tales of Translation, pp. 6-8.
1. International outlook and nationalist concerns: women intellectuals’ talents and virtue demonstrated

The contributors to the *Women’s Weekly* demonstrated their cosmopolitan identity through their comprehension of western culture and their ability to observe Chinese problems in an international context. The modern girls’ behavior of following western fashion blindly was again disqualified to be the right attitude for new Chinese women; instead, the contributors emphasized recognizing China’s distinctive situations and not following the west in solving its problems.

*Cosmopolitan identity of the Women’s Weekly contributors*

To comment on world situations, the contributors first of all had to justify their privileged roles as having international contacts and cosmopolitan viewpoints. The introductions on women’s lives abroad were usually written by women who stayed overseas, like Hou Zhenting in the United States and Mei in the Netherlands. It was still considered fashionable after the May Fourth to demonstrate one’s knowledge of western literature and social theories in writing. In the beginning issues a column called “The world of female writers’ was set to introduce prominent female writers in the western world, including Greek poetist Sappho, British writer Jane Austen, Mrs. Browning, Charlotte Bronte, Illiot and Christina Rosseti. The comments of world famous literary figures were quoted to praise the children230 and women231. One article showed how women’s vanity was recognized by quoting from *Vanity Fair* that a man “whose vanity is more than women’s” and also by quoting Arthur Schopenhauer’s comment on how

women look at each other with jealousy.\textsuperscript{232} A citation from Bebel that “women are the first human beings to be slaves” was used for revealing gender inequality.\textsuperscript{233}

Quoting the research results of western scholars lent authoritative voice to arguments. The opinion of “A famous American doctor” was considered convincing by the author that children’s personalities were shaped early and it was necessary to train children with good habits.\textsuperscript{234} An American doctor’s survey that 30% of divorce cases in America were due to diseases was used to show the necessity of pre-marital health check.\textsuperscript{235} H. G. Wells’ book was translated in the hope of solving women’s dilemma between career and family life. In introducing a book about the psychology of children-rearing written by an American scholar, Guang Zhao first quoted the example of Zhu Ziqing, one of China’s famous literati, who beat his young children and did not think it violent until after. This example showed that, according to Guang Zhao, “even a reputable and well-cultivated person like Mr. Zhu abused his children like this, let alone the rest [of Chinese parents]!” Thus the introduction of this book was necessary in bringing up children properly.\textsuperscript{236} The famous Socialist theorist Kautsky’s book, The \textit{Agrarian Question}, was quoted to make the point that women labor dominated the rural economy. China was “no exception”.\textsuperscript{237}

\textbf{Putting China into the international arena}

\textsuperscript{232} Xin Ming, “Xurong de biaoxian” (The manifestation of vanity), \textit{Women}, vol. 94, January 27, 1937.
\textsuperscript{233} Zhang Yunhe, “Nüren bushi hua” (Women are not flowers), \textit{Women and Family}, vol. 3, February 17, 1937.
\textsuperscript{234} \textit{Women’s Weekly}, vol. 19, August 28, 1935.
\textsuperscript{235} Liang, “Zuishao xiandu de hunqian shenti jiancha” (Minimum pre-marital health check), \textit{Women and Family}, vol. 9, March 31, 1937.
\textsuperscript{236} Guang Zhao translate, “Yuer xinli xue” (The psychology of children-rearing), \textit{Women’s Weekly}, vol. 49, March 18, 1936.
\textsuperscript{237} Bai Hua, “Nongcun funü laodong wenti” (The issue of rural women), \textit{Women’s Weekly}, vol. 60, June 3, 1936.
The *Women’s Weekly* contributors felt their superior status in the Chinese society in that they were able to criticize “backward” Chinese characteristics with distance. They often adopted comparisons with the west to point out the shortcomings in the Chinese characteristics.

Such comparison was also due to the recognition of a heated competition among nations. The threatening of a world war was felt by people at that time. Zhou Jingsheng wrote articles for *Women* to introduce the world’s political situation. He expressed his hope for The League of Nations to be strong presence in mediating conflicts between countries, especially when the military competition became more and more intense.²³⁸ Lin Shuang (the literally means “freezing cold frost”, indicating critical condition) gave an even more compelling description of the worldwide competition that “the more civilized the world is, the more cruel people become, and the existence of the weak is less guaranteed; only the strong is the heavenly selected. Thus people of the modern world formed competition among nations to guard their own existence…Living in such a world, if any nation’s most components cannot understand such a jungle law and not fulfill his or her duty to protect the existence of the nation, they could only be the testers of the strong nations’ bomb and gas”.²³⁹ The recognition of world competition urged the contributors to keep Chinese people informed of their backwardness compared with their opponents and thus strengthen themselves to be better competitors.

Peng Erkang called for Chinese people’s attention to mother’s education as the current time is “a time of heated competition of life and death among nation states (minzu

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²³⁹ Lin Shuang, “Feichang shiqi funü de zeren” (Women’s responsibilities in the special period), *Women*, vol. 81, November 11, 1936.
guojia). When the European and American countries “not only actively promote citizen’s compulsory education, but also pay attention to the promotion of pre-school education”, the Chinese society still had backward family system and “contaminated (wuzhuo)” society; even worse, most women lived corrupted lives themselves. Chinese children had to grow up in a disadvantaged environment.\(^{240}\)

As for unsuccessful tryouts of western methods in China regarding children and women’s welfare, it was thought by the contributors that Chinese people were to be blamed. In responding to the complaints about children getting sick in the summer camp established after the western example, Zhi Min defended that it was the Chinese’ own fault: “Foreigners, whatever they do, are always highly-spirited and responsible… People who are in charge of such children’s travel camps could take good care of other people’s children like their own. So the parents are willing to send their children to such camps to live good lives and receive good training.” But in China, on one hand, Chinese people “lack the sense of responsibilities”; on the other hand, common Chinese children were usually spoiled and too weak to join any children’s public organizations and constant travel. The result was more devastating, “Foreign children, because of this traveling habits, could get close to the ‘nature’ while at the same time fight against the ‘nature’ and put ‘nature’ under control. But Chinese children are isolated from ‘nature’. Since they are unfamiliar with ‘nature’, they cannot control ‘nature’ or ‘use the nature’ but are controlled by ‘nature’.”\(^{241}\) Another article charged Chinese family to have the habit of improvidence. They spent much money on unnecessary socializing compared with European and American families; while latter had higher qualities in accommodation and

\(^{240}\) Peng Erkang, “Ertongjie ying wuwang mujiao” (Mother’s education should not be forgotten in the children’s festival), *Women*, April. 7, 1937.

\(^{241}\) Zhi Min, “Ertong yu ziran” (Children and nature), *Women’s Weekly*, vol. 15, July 31, 1935.
Chinese people were also unwilling to do charity work, which led to the lack of fund for promoting women and children’s welfare. While in Germany such funding helped relieve poor families with many children.

The Chinese society was also intolerant of women compared with the west. The famous marriage of Duke Windsor aroused much adoration and frustration by the contributors. After praising Duchess Windsor (or Mrs. Simpson) to be a charming lady, another article tried to draw people’s attention to Duke Windsor’s marriage so that “these conservative country people could change some of their previous attitudes towards marriage”. The article argued that marriage was so important since it “concerned greatly each individual’s life interest, career accomplishment and children’s dispositions”, “the marriage resolution should not only be sought by others, but also should not allow intervention of others’ opinions”. Other than arranged marriage, Chinese people also had the problem of paying too much attention to family status in marriage, while Edward (Duke Windsor)’s marrying a divorced commoner was “extremely courageous” and taught a lesson to the Chinese.

The constant references of foreign countries (mostly western countries) were also out of a quest to evaluate China’s development within the international community. Chinese women’s movement was in comparison to the one in the Europe, through which

243 Jin Zhen complained in her letter to her friends that they had hard time asking for donation door-to-door in China. “Funü yu ertong yingxiang minzu de fuxing” (Women and children concern the revival of the nation), Women’s Weekly, vol. 64, July 1, 1936.
244 Duanmu xian, “Xinbosen furen zhe ge ren” (Mrs. Simposon in person), Women, vol. 86, December 9, 1936.
245 Ya Sheng, “You aidehua de lian’ai shijian xiangdao woguo de hunyin zhidu” (Thinking of our marriage system from Edward’s love affair), Women, vol. 88, December 23, 1936.
the conclusion was drawn that it started late yet grew fast.²⁴⁶ Yun Cun advocated women’s vocational education because little result was produced out of “two hundred years women’s liberation movement” and “in many countries in Europe and America, women have already obtained some social status; but women in most countries are still in the state of subjugation”. From the author’s indication, China was included in “most countries” and enjoyed little benefit out of women’s liberation movement; it was time to push Chinese women’s movement a step forward, that is, to encourage women’s economic independence, which could only be achieved when women obtain vocational skills.²⁴⁷ Chinese women were also informed of women-and-family-related issues abroad.²⁴⁸

China was also expected to be participants of the worlds’ affairs. It was reported that the National Children’s Welfare Association sent out YWCA staff Ding Shujing to report at the International Children’s Conference in Brussel on China’s five-year plan to promote children’s welfare.²⁴⁹ The then fashionable “mass wedding” (jituan jiehun)²⁵⁰, promoted by the New Life movement and was held in Shanghai and Nanjing for several

²⁴⁶ Xu Guoping, “You funü yundong xiang dao yonggong funü” (Thinking of hired women from women’s movement), Women and Family, vol. 4, February 24th, 1937; Parents were guided to read children’s education books among which books of foreign authors held half, Zha Jiemei, “Fumuhui tushu xuanmu” (Selected bibliographies for the Parents’ Association), Women’s Weekly, vol. 37, December 25, 1935; the book The Family published in America was introduced for reference on Chinese family issues because relevant research “is most advanced in America” while weak in China, Long, “Guanyu jiating wenti de yi ben xin shu” (A new book about family issues), Women’s Weekly, vol. 34, December 4, 1935.


²⁴⁸ “Shangyue guowai de funü yu jiating wenti” (Women-and-family related issues abroad in the past month), Women and Family, vol. 9, March 31, 1937.


²⁵⁰ Mass wedding was promoted during the New Life movement and was held several times in Shanghai and Nanjing. Couples held their weddings together in a hall and the ceremonies were simplified compared with usual Chinese weddings. The wedding was promoted because it was cost-saving and yet solemn. Fu Xin, p. 36.
times was justified by an article as a contribution to the wedding ceremonies because it eliminated the religious and sexual indication of previous weddings all over the world.\footnote{Zha Jiemei, “Hunyin zhidu shanbian de shiji yu jiehun de shiming” (The development of marriage laws and the mission of mass wedding), \textit{Women’s Weekly}, vol. 12, July 10, 1935.}

One article described women’s status in the Republican China as “completely equal and free as men in legal, social, educational and economical conditions” and should not be misled by Hitler and Mussolini’s slogan to keep women at home.\footnote{Miao Yuzheng, “Funü zhiye de poqie xuyao” (Urgent need of women’s professions), \textit{Women’s Weekly}, vol. 37, May 12, 1936.} It was this cosmopolitan angle to view China’s problems that was considered modern in the \textit{Women’s Weekly}.

\textbf{The nationalist sentiment and the role of imperialism}

Although considering China within the international background, \textit{Women’s Weekly} contributors considered it more advanced or more modern to recognize China’s uniqueness, which was in contrast to the superficial adoption of western methods and movements.\footnote{Huang Shuzhen considered that current Chinese society lacked a central ethics and was guided by a “superficial Europeanization”. Huang, “Xiandai zhongguo yu xiandai zhongguo funü”.} Man Zhi commented while in her article concerning children’s problem in China,

\begin{quote}
Chinese culture is in the sway of the cradle of the world culture and the mood to accept foreign cultures is intense. We certainly cannot say that certain social movement in China is driven only by curiosity but it (curiosity) does weighs much. So the children’s movement in reality cannot avoid the pattern of copying, swallowing without digesting (\textit{hu lun tun zao}), and is not suitable to our nation’s condition.\footnote{Man Zhi, “Cong zhongguo jiating jiegou poushi ertong wenti” (Cut-away study of children’s problems from the Chinese family structure), \textit{Women’s Weekly}, vol. 29, October 30, 1935.}
\end{quote}

This is one attitude commonly shared among the \textit{Women’s Weekly} contributors that China was unique and Chinese intellectuals understood her uniqueness as the best. The
strong sentiment of Chinese nationalism was expressed throughout the discussions in the *Women’s Weekly*. Chinese children’s problems were argued as different from those of the European and American countries in its formation: The latter emerged after the industrial revolution which was its background; while in China it was caused by the “unreasonable family system”. Thus it required different resolution, that is, a resolution “starting from the resolution of family problems”.  

Zhong Xun suggested big complexes of apartments with public dining rooms, kindergartens and shared servants for Chinese families in big cities. Such advice was based on the idea that Chinese families were big and not as “well-equipped” as families in Europe and America where “housewives spend less time”. A housewife even went one step further to complain that common people blamed Chinese wives as lazy when compared to housewives in Europe and America, which was unfair because Chinese families are too big and complicated to be handled by housewives only. Chinese food was also more time-consuming. Cheap labors in China also encouraged people to hire helpers and if they did not do so, a large number of unemployment would be expected.

Chinese modern girls were more directly mocked for their imitation of western fashion and life style on the *Women’s Weekly*. It was said that hair perm does not suit Chinese women because it is “a western thing”: “European and American women are mostly with high nose and concaved eyes. Their faces are more curved, thus match an all-over-head perm”. But Chinese women look uglier in it. Such “blind imitation” showed

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255 “Cong zhongguo jiating jiegou poushi ertong wenti”.
256 Zhong Xun, “Chifan nan” (Difficult to make a living), *Women and Family*, vol. 7, March 17, 1937.
“their [modern girls’] own weak will and heavy dependency, which are the silliest”.\textsuperscript{258} An article “A small matter” even did not miss the fact that women follow husbands’ sir names. When her male friend objected married women using their maiden names because European and American women did the same way, the author could not agree with this opinion because “not everything done by foreigners is good or right”.\textsuperscript{259} Female students were advised to play more Chinese sheets of music and “do not think that those not printed on foreign sheets of music are not worth playing”. Such advice was made upon the assumption that music was “the great expression of human beings” and was supposed to “cultivate nationalism (\textit{guomin xing}) that is [currently] absent”.\textsuperscript{260}

The strong nationalist sentiment was partly due to the threat felt from the “western imperialist”. Xu Ruoping regarded current Chinese society as “semi-colony oppressed by imperialism” which added to Chinese women’s misery.\textsuperscript{261} Such sentiment, as will be illustrated later, complicated the attitudes towards the western countries and compelled them to seek the Soviet Union model, as will be examined later.

The western existence in China became suspicious, especially the role of Christianity. Gao Mai, in mentioning the missionary social work in China, had assured their accomplishment and “their spirit of service, the enduring attitude and hard work are worthy of our gratitude”; however, caution should be paid because their work was limited by “their lack of acquaintance to the national situation (\textit{mei yu guo qing})” and more

\textsuperscript{258} Zhi, “Cong jinzhi diantang toufa shuo qi” (A discussion out of the abolition of hair perm), \textit{Women’s Weekly}, vol. 21, September 11, 1935.
\textsuperscript{259} Tang Ruoxiu, “Yi jian xiao shi” (A small matter), \textit{Women’s Weekly}, vol. 49, March 18, 1936.
\textsuperscript{260} Jing Songming, “Yidian guanyu xuanxiu gangqin de yijian” (A little advice on choosing piano), \textit{Women’s Weekly}, vol. 66, July 15, 1936.
\textsuperscript{261} Xu Ruoping, “Zhongguo funü ying zenyang zou shang jiuwang zhi lu” (How should Chinese women get into the path of national salvation), \textit{Women}, vol. 82, November 18, 1936.
importantly, “some other purposes”. Christianity did not escape the suspicion of being the tools of imperialist invasion to China by the Women's Weekly. Xin Ye signed that Yantai women were “under the control of church forces” and “actually such potential force of religious invasion is not only in Yantai, as far as the imperialist force reaches, the church power increases as a result”. Although the GMD authority was tolerant to Christianity in the 1930s and even Chiang Kai-shek was converted by his wife, the general public opinion was still disfavoring it. Other than being tools of imperialist invasion, Christianity, as a religion, was furthermore considered a distraction of people’s attention to the national salvation task, as what Xin Ye argued “I feel that everyone should not devote the whole life into religion, but rather do some social work; in nowadays country, even every woman holds some duty, how can we indulge ourselves in religion all day long?”

The nationalist sentiment also resulted in Women’s Weekly’s particular attitudes towards two countries: Germany and Japan. The expansion of Fascism in Germany and Japan caused uneasiness among the contributors; also the two countries were both competitors for China to catch up with. As a result, they were given negative images in general by relevant articles in the Women’s Weekly. German women were thought to be under “hard oppression” that they were “forced to leave politics and social professional lives and closed at home”. Such policy aimed at solving the problem of unemployment by replacing women of all professions with men. It was considered a “reversal (fan dong)

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264 Xin Ye, “Jiaohui shili longzhao zhe de yantai yiban funü shenghuo xiezhen”.
of women’s movement”. Hitler’s slogan of “women go back home” continued to be combated in various articles for its confinement to women’s social activities. Japanese women were described in lest favor within a sketch of world women: “Japanese women can truly be counted as the most obedient women of the world…they have to bear men’s arrogance both in society and family…[Wives] obey absolutely to their husbands’ orders—what is the point of living like this?” An illustration showed Japanese children were given gas masks as toys and commented it as “the cruelest phenomenon of mankind”; “if children are blank paper sheets the Japanese children are blood-contaminated paper. Our country does not need barbaric civilization, but ‘humane’ civilization; humane civilization can last while barbaric civilization can only show off for a while.”

Thus the quest to put China onto the international stage, and the threat felt from the imperialism dominated Women’s Weekly contributors’ attitudes towards the western presence in China, western countries and western women. In the second part I shall discuss how they searched for their counterparts as “new women” and how they distinguished themselves from the rest of the women in the western world and Japan.

2. Assimilation to advanced western women

265 Zhou Xin, “Xituole tongzhi xia de deguo funü” (German women under Hitler’s rule), Women’s Weekly, vol. 6, May 29, 1935.
268 Women, vol. 86, December 9, 1936.
Compared with Liang Qichao and the May Fourth male intellectuals, the Women’s Weekly not only denied the genetic superiority of western women but also assimilated themselves only to the “advanced” western women, “advanced” according to the standard of “virtuous wife and good mother”. Common western women were sisters of international women’s movement and they were not necessarily “advanced”. These points would be elaborated in the following paragraphs to show how the Women’s Weekly contributors reassured their positions as advanced women through differentiating western women according to the “new virtuous wife and good mother” standard and assimilated themselves to the “advanced” western women.

**Western sisters in the women’s movements**

In the late Qing content, the western women, or “xi fu” stood as mysterious figures that represented the modernity that Chinese scholars like Liang Qichao looked up to; they were however described to be no superior to the Chinese women in a sense that gender equality and women’s liberation were universally applicable. In “Women and sin”, a comment was made on an accident in Yantai in 1935, in which a female student was beaten to death by the police, “Christian women cannot cut their hair, because the Bible said that long hair was women’s honor. Buddhist women cannot enter the temples to offer incense at their wish, because women are not always clean…Catholic women have to cover part of their faces with cloth because the nuns’ hearts will easily go bad and they should not look at this lustful world. Chinese women have to obey their husbands; western women also have to take care of their husbands.”

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269 Hu Ying in her book *Tales of Translation* elaborated how the three popular foreign female figures, Sophia Perovskaia, Joan of Arc and Madame Roland were translated into heroines that carried national salvation causes.

women’s “pain” all over the world with the similar tone: American female teachers were in reality deprived of their rights to marry; Polish, German and Japanese female workers enjoyed no special treatment during the time of pregnancy and giving birth. Britain did not recognize illegitimate children and punished an unemployed female worker for not being able to look after her baby and later let a banker adopt the baby. Netherlands and Portugal forbad charging men who had babies with other women. 271

Since women were suffering everywhere, saviors were needed to lead the women’s movement. This task certainly fell on the shoulders of “educated women”. This point was made in an introduction to French women’s lives. French women’s ability were questioned by men although in France “women’s understanding of men and men’s understanding of women are deeper than any other countries”, and women themselves were “not concerned of anything other than domestic matters”. But, French women’s movement for political rights should only be “a matter of time” as “we believe that those women who received higher education, with their wisdom and ability, will surely obtain their righteous power and rights equal to that of men”. 272 Although this is a translation from an English text, the tone was however just like a direct address to Chinese women intellectuals to assure them the necessity and their leading roles in the women’s movement. 273 Women intellectuals had worldwide leading roles in the women’s movement according to the author. A similar opinion was expressed through another

271 “Shijie geguo funü de kutong” (Women’s pain in the world), Women, vol. 84, December 2nd, 1936.
272 Xin Ming translate, “Faguo de funü yundong” (Women’s movement in France), Women’s Weekly, vol. 67, July 22, 1936.
273 This article, like most translated articles in the Women’s Weekly, has no reference to the original text. Also considering the general translating practice in early 20th century China, it was not inappropriate to guess that in translation adjustments were made for the purpose of persuasion.
introduction of French women’s movement, which was considered “not well responded” due to the fact that French women lacked interest in public affairs: they still consider marriage as their ultimate goals in life and were “born in disfavor of revolutions”. Thus Common French women needed salvation from those who were conscious of revolutions, that is, the women intellectuals.  

To reassure the women intellectuals of the necessity in leading women’s movement, Rui Xian demonstrated that their American counterparts had already started to do so. She commented that American women’s organizations found the “tricks” men played to respect women, such as “ladies first” principle, deceiving in gender relations. They presented petitions to the government to guarantee the rights of female officials and female workers. The author supported such a movement as it showed that American women wanted to “gain real gender equality from superficial gender equality”. The American women who participated in this petition were first organized into committees, which was what the women’s movement advocates in China wished to have for Chinese women; their insight in gender relations that they could see through the superficial gender equality for substantial promotion of women’s social status, won applaud of the author; finally they were active in political participation. All these qualities demonstrated that these petitioning American women represented the future of American women’s movement in every aspect. The confidence in these American women projected the author’s confirmation that Chinese women intellectuals, too, could act in the same role.

*Exotic western women*

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274 RUI Xian translate, “Faguo funü” (French women), *Women*, vol. 90, January 6, 1937.
275 Rui Xian, “Meiguo da xuanju qianxi funü jie de huodong” (American women’s activities before America’s election), *Women’s Weekly*, vol. 64, July 1, 1936.
Sometimes western women’s lives were simply described out of curiosity, with the simple intention to keep Chinese women up-to-date with current affairs. In such introductions western women turned to the subjects of description without stance; there were no single clear attitudes towards these women either, but certainly not of admiration. Hou Zhenting attended a tea party held by an American housewife and she wrote down the details in a slightly satiric tone: the hostess asked her guests to wear a certain kind of clothes; the American tai tai group were all well dressed and they could climb up the hill to the house with high heels; the house was too small for the crowd invited and the guests queued all the way down the hill and they “were punished to stand up to three hours and finally just had a cup of coffee and two pieces of cakes”. American landladies’ lives were busy and tough, unlike the Chinese ones. Secretaries in America were usually women and the reason was simply that men felt upset about losing control of families and having female secretaries could make the offices’ atmosphere pleasant and peaceful like at home. Dutch women’s lives were introduced extensively by a correspondent living in the Netherlands. She depicted the “simple” and “healthy” Dutch women being busy with housework; but they were not “new women” because they were concerned with no politics although they had the suffrage rights; instead they spent more time spying on their neighbors through mirrors and gossiping.

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were also revealed in detail to satisfy readers’ curiosity towards European royal families. 280

These articles were usually written by correspondents who lived in foreign countries. They were advantageous enough to enjoy a broadened living space and get into direct contact with foreign women. Thus they were privileged to bear the task of informing their fellow Chinese women of the world outside, which is part of the enlightening effort of being Chinese women’s saviors.

*The western “virtuous wife and good mother”*

The strongest assimilation lied into the selection of advanced women’s models from the west, which was not surprisingly according to the standards of “new virtuous wife and good mother”. Just as how they differentiated Chinese women according to their standards of new Chinese women, western women did not stand as a single model for Chinese women to look up to.

Examined by the standard of a “new virtuous wife and good mother”, western women were stereotyped into three categories by relevant articles in the *Women’s Weekly*: the advanced western women, the unenlightened western women and the idealized Soviet Union women to whom only positive words were given. One article gave a sketch of world women: “Silent and firm” and well educated English women were brought up under tight supervision of their mothers and they were good at housework and were concerned with politics; “independent” American women were treated as equal as me and “never forget they are members of the society and are not content with comfortable family lives”; French women were not as romantic and luxurious as people usually

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280 Mei, “Helan nühuang jiqi nüer yueliyana gongzhu” (Dutch queen and her daughter Princes Gnliana), *Women’s Weekly*, vol. 34, December 4, 1935.
thought, but rather “hardworking and simple”, well educated and economically independent; “beautiful and congenial” Italian women were superstitious due to a lack of education; German women were hardworking, simple and patriotic but “their interest in politics is not comparable to British (women) and usually abstain from voting in general elections”; Soviet women’s social status were equal to men and could participate in all sorts of professions: “all in all they display themselves to be women of new time in all aspects”.  

Advanced women’s lives were supposed to be active and lively. And it was described that people in European and American countries shared the similar criteria: they felt that women should have confidence and consciousness of independence, know how to manage households, know how to dance and play all kinds of games to get more chances of socializing with men. They should know how to manage their voices; they should have hobbies to cope with loneliness. Such criteria were based on the assumption that a young girl has both professional and family life; she is to socialize with both men and women and she has her own circles.  

The model for all-round active lives was best found among American women, providing their advantaged living environment. Hu Yunhua wrote that American college girls were hard working as well as good at socializing. Even the old women would go to college—“they really have the spirit of young people to seek improvement in knowledge. It is truly worth our respect”. American women in general “do not have the concept of chastity” yet “everyone knows the method of contraception”. Many of them would not

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282 Xin, “Yiban oumei renshi xinmu zhong de shaonü wu yao” (Five necessary qualities of young women in the general opinion of Europeans and Americans), Women’s Weekly, vol. 27, October 16, 1935.
get married just to enjoy the freedom to be single. They did not take divorce seriously either. \(^{283}\) Hu later wrote a special article about American female students who were happy angels: “They were busy with dancing parties, talking about make-ups and dresses all the time. They only notice others’ good and beautiful parts. They never discuss things bad about others because there is no point to talk about that: only special beauty is worth noticing.” “How much joy do they add to their own lives—these innocent, lively and trouble-free girls!” \(^{284}\) American women just could not be introduced enough for their lively lives. They were again praised by Qin Zexian as “the most congenial in the world” as well as “hardworking”. Old women still study in colleges and they are open to show their lovers. Middle-class women were eager to do some social charity or adopt children. They liked to be independent and so they all look for jobs, poor or rich. Rich girls also like to ravel. Both female students and women had entertainment. Their lives are “always joyful and lively”. \(^{285}\)

Maternity and domestic virtue was certainly what western model women should have. American housewives were “not as lazy as Chinese housewives” although their houses were more “scientificified” and easier to handle. \(^{286}\) Franklin Roosevelt’s mother’s account was translated in which she was a loving mother who influenced Roosevelt through the childhood education. \(^{287}\) Stalin’s mother Mrs. Ekaterina’s introduction was even more provocative. She was respected because she “did hard work for this great

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\(^{283}\) Hu Yunhua, “Meiguofunü shenghuo za tan” (Random talks on American women’s lives), Women’s Weekly, vol. 48, March 11, 1936.


\(^{285}\) Qin Zexian, “Meiguofunü de texing” (The characteristics of American women), Women’s Weekly, vol. 60, June 3, 1936.

\(^{286}\) “Meiguofunü shenghuo za tan”.

\(^{287}\) Sheng Ming translate, “Luosifu zongtong de muqin de zishu” (The self-account of the mother of President Roosevelt), Women’s Weekly, vol. 68, July 29, 1936.
leader”, which made the interviewers “deeply moved”. An American mother was able to take care of their babies properly, “She read already many books about children-rearing” so that children “have no bad habits”: They breastfed their babies in the first 5 to 6 months and then fed them milk powder, thus “not only the children are healthy, but also the mothers have obtained much convenience”; babies did not have the habit of being carried all the time; they were fed and brought out for fresh air every day in a regular time. Mothers did not sacrifice their personal lives and did not complain of having babies. They “never make their houses messy just because they have children…they still dress up…and go out to join their groups as usual, like banquets, clubs”. It is a praiseworthy attitude to the author: “it is not that mothers are not responsible to their children, but that women do not destroy their own lives when they become mothers”. One illustration showed a British female journalist typing with child in arm and at the same time helping her husband with the farm business”. The illustration reads “model of virtuous wife and good mother”.

In reputing western women’s images as luxurious consumers, their spirit of service was promoted by the contributors. French women were not as luxurious and romantic as what common Chinese would think they were hardworking and responsible. Middle-class French women were “not approaching guys easily and they are always accompanied by relatives and friends when going out”. These could not sound more familiar to the Chinese audience, considering the modern girls lingering the dancing halls and movie theatres. The author went on to say that, more commonly French women “who received

288 Shi Rui, “Sidanlin de muqiin yikatailinna taitai fangwen ji” (Visiting Stalin’s mother Mrs. Ekaterina), Women, vol. 72, August 26, 1936.
289 Guo Xue, “Meiguuo muqin” (American mothers), Women, vol. 75, September 16, 1936
290 Women, vol. 77, October 14, 1936.
higher education” were not as easygoing with guys “as the female students in the United States”. And what put the modern girls in shame most is that all French women were hard- working and “even the upper-class professional women do not consider doing “tough work” as shameful, unlike the ‘vases’ in China”. The bitter comparison did not end criticizing the dull life of “modern girls”, but was rather linked to the fate of the nation, “Some people say that seeking only individual’s enjoyment and happiness is Chinese people’s traditional thought and their only purpose, while other people live for serving, mutual-help and everyone’s happiness. The reason for China’s backwardness may be because of this.”291 Modern girls were again charged as against the benefit of the country by being those who sought “only individuals’ enjoyment”. But the abnormal should not be representatives of the whole women, just as the common French women were unlike what people usually thought them to be.

To correct Chinese female students’ tai tai habit, German female students’ lives were represented as a sharp contrast. An account of an American woman who joined the German women’s voluntary service camp was translated to describe the fulfilling life in the camp, where they lived a simple life according to a strict routine. They served in various works including sewing, laundry, cooking and help the farmers in the field. The translator wrote a separate article after the translation entitled “What an ideal and meaningful life it is”. She felt that such camp life could discipline women to be “brave, diligent, unselfish and conscious of serving the nation and people”. Such camp training was therefore necessary to Chinese female students who “seek only stimulations of sound

and color (sheng se ciji)”.  

Another article made even obvious comments that compared with German female students who served in factories during vacation, the Chinese students sought materialistic enjoyment first, “There are flushing toilettes, hot showers and beautiful environment in college...The life [in college] is just like that of living in Europe and America”. Because of this, the Chinese female students were “isolated from society” and became “virtuous wives and good mothers” in order to “keep living their European and American style life”. German female students offered an alternative. The Chinese ones should be organized to be led into the society, because “those living in the hell, female workers, prostitutes and peasant women” were to be rescued by those who “received higher educations”. In this German female students could “impose upon us stimulation and reference”.  

Western women were also patriotic participants of professions and military training. It was said that American women were concerned of political matters and church meetings were the spots for them to discuss current national, social and family development issues. Every one of them “thinks herself to have great duty towards the nation”. Now they were even receiving nursing training to prepare for the war. The author sighed that “their country is much stronger than ours and will not be more dangerous in war; think about it, isn’t learning nursing more important to us than to them?” Florence Nightingale also made a perfect example of virtuous wife and good mother in war. This founder of nursing career was praised for her “conscience to save the country and love to the people”, whose example was worth following for Chinese nurses.

293 Song Ying, “Deguo nü xuesheng de laodong jingshen” (The labor spirit of German female students), Women’s Weekly, vol. 54, April. 22, 1936.
294 “Meiguo funü shenghuo za tan”.
“especially when our country is in a special period”. Illustrations also participated in shaping female citizens who were supportive of national defenses. There were Japanese women in a school specially designed to prepare women to become military officers’ wives; Japanese prostitutes who held the opening assembly of women’s association of national defense in Tokyo; British women’s anti-gas training; four women winners of bailout competition in Moscow, French air force nursing team, Hungarian countrywomen’s anti-gas training and Spanish women militia. There are also illustrations on women’s physical competition or performance in later issues, such as Japanese women’s judo performance, an American female athlete’s performance, British and American women’s mechanical dancing performance, Italian women’s displaying all kinds of postures when playing tennis and Japanese woman’s wrestling with a man. An interesting observation is that, when stepping into 1936, more illustrations of women and children’s military training and physical competitions substituted the former paintings, literary and mythical figures, which indicated a call for women to prepare for the coming war.


295 Hu Zhunwu, “Hushi shiye chuangshiren nandingger nüshi” (Miss Nightingale the founder of nursing career), Women and Family, vol. 15, May 12, 1937.
299 Women’s Weekly, Vol. 16, August 7, 1935; another illustration of women joining bailout training in Soviet union can be found in Vol. 36, December 18, 1935.
300 Women, Vol. 65, July 8, 1936.
301 Women, Vol. 65, July 8, 1936.
305 Women, Vol. 67, July 22, 1936 and Vol. 72, August 26, 1936.
306 Women, Vol. 73, August 26, 1936.
The women contributors acted as social reformers as said in chapter three. Using western references is but another form of persuasion. They suggested the government to take care of women’s welfare and the society to pay more attention to gender inequality, which were crucial in China’s survival over the world competition among nations.

**Western countries’ support for women**

As said in the beginning of the chapter, it was frequently mentioned in the articles of *Women’s Weekly* that the current world was having a competition among nation states; western countries’ support for women were introduced extensively by articles in the *Women’s Weekly* with a consciousness that a modern Chinese government should not fall behind governments from the west. In “From infant death to birth control”, Man Zhi compared the European and American countries’ decreased infant mortality rates to China’s increased one. She contributed the decrease to the development of science and social system of western countries. When advocating abortion and birth control, Zhi Min commented that “Now countries all over the world, except for countries of dictatorship, intended to spread the contraceptive knowledge among people. Books, newspapers and magazines of contraceptive knowledge, directing centre for the process of contraception, private-run or government-run, are everywhere. The establishment of such directing centre, in my opinion, has great benefit towards the future of the whole nation, at least towards the health of the whole nation.” However in China, contraceptive methods were not widely introduced to common people, thus the promotion of contraception in China was necessary. In a similar tone, another article addressed the unbalanced sex ratio in China compared to the west. Such an unbalanced sex ratio could

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308 Zhi Min, “Duotai yu jieyu”. 
“lead to social disturbance and even influence the population increase which is crucial to the existence of the nation.” Since it was caused by Chinese women’s high mortality rate when giving birth, it was important that women be educated with hygiene knowledge. The western countries where “the science is well developed and medical science is promoted; both men and women know the importance of hygiene” certainly became the ideal condition that this article wished China to reach; and the way to reach the goal was through the government’s promotion of hygiene education.  

There was even an introduction of American women’s prison with a hilarious title and subtitle “Women’s prison in civilized country: even the upper-class Chinese family could not be compared with” to exaggerate the gap between western countries and China regarding women’s social welfare.

Other than criticizing the insufficiency of Chinese government to promote women’s welfare, relevant measurements from western countries were introduced by some articles on the Women’s Weekly in response to its advocate of public children-rearing in China. In 1935, a children’s health summer camp was installed by the children’s year promotion committee. It aimed at “enhancing children’s physical wellness” and was said to be inspired by the Open-air Recovery Schools in European and American countries, such as Germany and Denmark. Japan also had three-week open-door schools near Tokyo. Arrangement of establishing such schools were described in detail. Government was expected to subsidy such schools so that more families could send their children in at low

310 Ming, “Wenming guojia de nüzi jianyu” (Women’s prison in civilized country), Women’s Weekly, vol. 54, April 22, 1936.
costs. This was feasible as the British government had set an example.\textsuperscript{312} One of the article addressed Germany’s fast growth from a defeated country in the World War I to a “powerful country” and it was due to “their sparing no effort in children’s cultivation”.\textsuperscript{313} Jin Zhen who was visiting Germany wrote a long letter to her friends to introduce German government’s effort in helping families with children. She believed that such support aimed at “strengthening the nation” and she also expressed her worry towards Chinese children, “[in China] since those who engage in women’s movement couldn’t bring us to the society and we stay at home, we have to bear the pain of giving birth physically and mentally. The government currently cannot give us any support. A family raises a lot of children. It must be poor; the children had to grow up depending on their fates. What a bad influence it is going to have upon a nation’s prosperity.” Although Germany was condemned for Hitler’s unfavorable slogan, its government’s subsidies towards families with children were regarded as references for the Chinese government.\textsuperscript{314}

\textit{Advantageous living environment of western women}

The western society was also considered more developed by many \textit{Women’s Weekly} contributors, in which women had better life than their Chinese sisters with less social conventions and more support from the government; such developed society became the ideal for the women intellectuals to look up to.

\textsuperscript{312} Xin Han, “Ertong xingfu de xiansheng: yingguo yinger xuexiao de gaijin” (The herald of children’s happiness: the improvement of British infant schools), \textit{Women}, vol. 65, July 8, 1936.
\textsuperscript{313} Wu Min, “Lun ertong de jiaoyang wenti” (Discussing the issue of children’s cultivation), \textit{Women}, vol. 71, August 19, 1936.
\textsuperscript{314} Man Zhi, “Deguo de xin sheshi” (New facilities in Germany), \textit{Women}, vol. 74, September 9, 1936.
It was indicated in the articles of *Women’s Weekly* that western women enjoyed the achievements of women’s emancipation earlier than their Chinese sisters. Hu Qiwen, in “The tragedy of Chinese women” concluded that Chinese women were still “far from emancipation” after a comparison between Chinese and western women. “In the west those who bound their waists were only the few noble women while bound-feet Chinese women were all over the country. It is common in the west for men and women to shake hands and kiss. While in China they should ‘have no physical contact except between husband and wife’ (*shou shou bu qin*)… when the western women have already had marriage freedom, Chinese people were in heated debates over the remarriage of Wei Wenxiu. …Nowadays western women could receive modern education, new knowledge, new culture and even knowledge of sex; while among Chinese women, the illiterates are still dominant. They remain ‘blind to words’ (*wen mang*) and ‘mute to words’ (*wen ya*). Women’s emancipation was far from finished. And the social conventions still stood as big obstacle.” To find the correct path to women’s emancipation, according to Hu, Chinese women’s movement had to meet the international women’s movement. Chinese women suffered from a high mortality rate due to the lack of hygiene knowledge while in the west “science is well developed” and “medical science is promoted” that “both men and women know the importance of

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315 Wei Wenxiu was an ex-concubine of the President of the Beijing government, Li Yuanhong. She was criticized by many major newspapers in the Republic for her marriage with a merchant of 10 years younger than her. She was even expelled by the Qingdao (where she lived) Municipality. But women’s newspapers supported her and criticized social injustice towards widows, concubines and re-married women. Yuxin Ma, *Nation, “-Isms” And Women’s Media Public: Change of Chinese Women’s Press, 1898-1937*, pp. 225-231.

hygiene”. Pin Hua suggested that widows’ remarrying should not be gossiped any more as “Recently European and American countries leave the widows to remarry at their wishes and interfere no more, nor do they scorn them. This is the evolution of their culture”. Although China was already “influenced by the European and American ‘rain and wind’ and gradually went on the road of freedom”, further steps were still expected on this road and letting the widows remarry should be promoted by “advanced women”. Thus the purpose of making such comparison was to show the gap between Chinese and western society and the necessity of Chinese women’s movement.

The opinion that western women were living a more comfortable life than Chinese women could also be reflected through description of common women’s lives in the west. American women were provided with freedom of marriage and education, and housewives had easier time because “the whole country is scientifized”. In America the social conventions were loose to women that “children of old virgins (lao chunü), unmarried women and widows also need to be reared according to the law…The society do not gossip about them; they themselves do not have to feel shameful”. This was thought to be advanced because illegitimate children would be able to keep their lives and thus their mothers “make great contribution to their country”. British middle-class families are clean and orderly, because they adopted “xiao jiating” (nuclear family) system which was considered modern to the Chinese; also the family was stable economically as the middle class British received compulsory education and would

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usually get steady job afterwards “because of their social stability and politically on track”.

The well-developed women’s military training in western countries had already brought benefits and was quoted as justifications for women’s participation in professions: “during the war, especially in Germany and France, women’s positions in the society became important since the men were recruited to the front. Not only the common careers such as nursing, but also all the responsibilities of security, traffic, transportation in the society were taken by women. The performance of women, just as in the hands of men’s, was orderly, swift and efficient.” It was said that current countries including Germany, Italy, Soviet Russia, Britain, France and the United States took such lessons and now conducted military training towards women.  

Peng Zhi wrote in “The new start of women’s lives after the European war” that after the World War I in Russia, Selvia, Britain women were organized into military training while in England, America and France women took jobs that men used to do. Olive Schreiner’s work *Women and Labor* was quoted to argue the necessity for women to work: the deterioration of national economy deprived women of their “proper duty”, i.e. the producer of families. They were to be given working opportunities to solve the crisis of less-needed motherhood. So “the development of women’s lives, like other matters, shall also shift [focuses] driven by the force of economy”.  

Women’s participation in professions was justified as necessary internationally due to the aftermath of WORLD WAR I. Another article expressed the

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322 Yu Ying, “Erci dazhan qianxi oumei lieqiang de qianghou nüxing xunlian” (Women’s military training in European and American powers before the WORLD WAR II), *Women’s Weekly*, vol. 4, May 15, 1935.
similar opinion: “Since the European war, the living standard in each country increases, it is very difficult for common families to reach above the average level...In such a special condition, there is no other way but to let housewives work”.\textsuperscript{324} The cooperative movement originated from the UK was also considered an opportunity for women’s economic equality and thus was introduced. It was said that in the cooperative banks, women were no longer excluded from being clerks, “what they care is morality, no longer gender... [Employees] should all be honest, simple and hardworking... [while] common women are mostly simple, hardworking, careful and swift, better than men in many ways”.\textsuperscript{325}

The cross-reference of western women’s living conditions in the \textit{Women’s Weekly} expressed indirectly the contributors’ dissatisfaction towards the indifferent government and a less tolerant society in China. And the bright life of western women was regarded as the future of Chinese women’s lives. The women contributors acted again as enlighteners through foretelling such a future.

\textit{The Soviet Union model for new government and new women}

In terms of government support and new women’s models, the Soviet Union represented the utopian world in all the relevant articles in the \textit{Women’s Weekly}. It was discussed in the Chapter 3 how the \textit{Women’s Weekly} contributors advocated a government-supported women’s movement following the Soviet Union pattern. Other than the pragmatic needs of copying the government’s measurements, the Soviet Union

\textsuperscript{324} Wei Wei, “Xiandai zhufu laogong dongji de fenxi”(An analysis of the modern housewives’ motives to work), \textit{Women’s Weekly}, vol. 20, September 4\textsuperscript{th}, 1935.

\textsuperscript{325} Wang Shaolin, “Cong hezuo yundong shuodao funü de diwei” (Talking of women’s status from the Cooperative Movement), \textit{Women’s Weekly}, vol. 63, June 24, 1936.
model brought new hope for Chinese women and the Chinese nation, which in the eyes of the contributors, needed drastic changes to jump out of the current “crisis period”.

The utopian model was consoling to Chinese because the Russian women were considered no better than China before the 1917 revolution. Anton. P. Chekhov’s domestic drama *The Three Sisters* was transformed into something metaphorically significant. Hu Qiwen commented that there were many women in China who were just like the three sisters with unfulfilled dreams. “They used to shout ‘freedom’, shouted to walk out of the ‘doll’s house’” but now “their voices are too weak and reduced to painful groaning”. The three Russian sisters, however, were “luckier” than their Chinese fellows because “the thunderstorm of revolution has suppressed their weeping”. Hu went on with her disappointment in Chinese women’s condition, “How about the ‘three sisters’ in China? How about the “modern” women? I think the cry of Chinese ‘three sisters’ will not stop in the near future”. Russia had progressed further through revolution, while the future of Chinese women was still unclear. Qi Han also expressed the similar anxiety of Chinese women’s lagging behind: “[Russian] female workers used to be more miserable than Chinese ones; now they can work in all sorts of areas”; Russian women’s educational level “were in about the same level as [women] in out country” but now “those who study in high school and university occupy 32.5% of the total [women population]”; Russian women can work “in both light and heavy industries”; she did not forget to add a contrast to the Chinese modern girls that Russian women “are those who really make a living on their own” and “they do not like make-up—they feel that being natural is their beauty”; finally, as models of new women, Russian women “keenly

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326 Hu Qiwen, ‘Chaihuofu ming ju san zimei, aoerjia, masha, yinalin: zhongguo de san zimei ne?’ (Chekhov’s famous play The Three Sisters, Olga, Masha, Irina: where are the three sisters in China?), *Women’s Weekly*, vol. 28, October 23rd, 1935.
promote causes of national constructions, general issues concerning the family and many
general knowledge and hygiene of children-rearing”. All in all, Russian women “were
really women of the time” and “it will be an incomparably huge shame to have
gorgeously dressed (hua zhi zhao zhan) women to represent the civilization of a
country”.

There was no clear preference of Communism here: the author was more
expecting a sanctified Chinese society that went through drastic changes. The anxiety
was expressed to the unchanged position of women despite the past women’s movements
in China. The Soviet Union stood as an incentive for the Chinese to follow.

Soviet Union also represented the new hope in the context that the rest of the
“capitalist world” was falling in the understanding of the women intellectuals: “in the
current time, which is the end of the capitalism, the whole world is devoted in crazy
killing. Everything is walking to demise; everyone is struggling in bitterness and gloom.
Their life see no future and their thoughts have nothing to count on.”

Compared with the Soviet Union, where women “already became the important components of the
society”, the European and American women’s emancipations were “only restricted to a
few”. Miao Yuzheng claimed that women of Soviet Union had “become social
members with full rights and value”. They were given working opportunities in all fields
and female students were abundant due to the promotion of women’s education. The
government subsidized huge amount to women’s giving birth and children-rearing.
Women were also active in politics. “Nowadays women in the Soviet Union are truly

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327 Qi Han, “su’e funü shi shidai de funü” (Women in the Soviet Russia are women of the time),
Women, vol. 80, November 4, 1936.
328 Hong Ying, “funü hujiia qu” (Women go back home), Women and Family, vol. 12, April 21,
1937.
329 Jing Yuan, “Xin su’e de xin funü” (New women in the new Soviet Russia), Women’s Weekly,
vol. 50, March 25, 1936.
emancipated. Every one of them has totally free and independent status”.

Miao Yuzheng in another article further expressed her opinion on current women’s lives of the world as “projected two completely different pictures”: one is the picture of “all the capitalist and semi-colony and colonies”, where women’s lives are “miserable” because “the governments actively drive women out from public affairs back home”; the other one is the “new socialist Soviet” whose women’s lives represented “a splendid picture” because the 1917 revolution “completely eliminated all the confinement to Russian women and realized real gender equality”. Liao perceived the Soviet model as a way out for women’s movement, as indicated in the title of her article. The sympathy had already extended to the Communist advocate, that “changing current unreasonable political and economical organizations is the right path for women to seek liberation”.

It was not clear here whether Liao preferred a Communist revolution. But her concern was certainly out of an expectation for a drastic change to better social conditions for women.

We can see here the categories of world countries in the concept of contributors to the Women’s Weekly. The western countries were more advanced than China in government’s support and social conditions for women. But they were regarded as competitors. The Soviet Union was described as a perfect model. These women contributors expected that, by following the Soviet Union model, China could rise again and could be even more powerful than the west. The impatience to catch up with the west was best described in the worship of the Soviet Union.

4. Conclusion

331 Miao Yuzheng, “fuyun de chulu” (Women’s movements’ way out), Women, vol. 73, September 2, 1936.
The contributors’ attitude towards the west was defined by their domestic concerns: the depiction of western women was a reconfirmation of intellectual women’s advancement and the modern girls’ disqualification of being new Chinese women; the admiration of the western countries’ governmental support towards women and children’s welfare also stood as a critique of GMD government’s insufficiency in the above matter.

Through this whole process of persuasion, the contributors of Women’s Weekly again exalted their position to be Saviors of the rest of Chinese women and to be the qualified social critics towards the government and society, or in one term, the “new women” of China.
Conclusion

The New Chinese woman’s image as a “new virtuous wife and good mother” first appeared in the *Women’s Weekly*, a supplement to the Guomindang’s official newspaper *Central Daily News*, in May 1936. This image was produced as a reflection of the women intellectuals who contributed writings to the newspaper, and their self-perceived identity as the representatives of new Chinese women.

The writers of the magazine formed a part of the group of women intellectuals who contested for the leading position in the Chinese women’s movement since the Late Qing, as examined in Chapter 1. Their writings in the *Women’s Weekly* adapted three strategies that argued for their qualifications as the new Chinese women. These strategies were discussed in Chapters 2, 3 and 4. First, they denounced the legitimacy of the Shanghai “modern girls” and lower class Chinese women as the new Chinese women by setting up the new criterion of a “new virtuous wife and good mother”. Second, they took up the role of spokespeople on the part of the general population of Chinese women in petitioning the society and the government to improve women’s welfare. Third, they extended their concept of domestic concerns from the discussion of women’s conditions within China to taking examples from all over the world. Through this, they reconfirmed their position as the cosmopolitan Chinese woman, living in a new era of international ties.

*Tracing the history of “New Woman” discourses*

In Chapter 1, we see that the discourses of a New Woman’s image have always been linked to discussions on the modernization of China. At the turn of the twentieth century, several different forces- the late Qing reformers, the new youth groups of the May Fourth
era, the *Guomindang* authority, the early female revolutionaries and finally, the new generation of women intellectuals participated in the journalistic discussions like Chen Xuezhao, thereby contributing towards the promotion of a New Woman’s image in order to address their own political or social concerns.

The Qing Reformers, with Liang Qichao as their representative, regarded the strengthening of Chinese women as a path to restoring the “sage-hood” of male scholars. The restoration of the “sage-hood” would bring forth the revival of “benevolence”, by which social hierarchies were maintained. Women within the social hierarchies were to perform their roles as mothers and wives, and they could perform their domestic roles better if their bound-feet were released and they received education. The ultimate purpose of the promotion of the anti-foot-binding movement and women’s education was to reach a restored society where benevolence was practiced by sages, so that China could compete with the west.

The May Fourth new youth, who were deeply attracted to individualism, used women’s liberation as a metaphor for the liberation of individuals from Confucian family hierarchies. “Nora” became the single most popular image among the new youth, for her simple gesture of stepping out of her family. But this advocacy for women’s liberation unintentionally had adverse effects to women who were not directly involved in the trend. Many young students divorced their wives from arranged marriage and married those who could provide better companionship. Thus, the promotion of a new Chinese woman enabled the new youth themselves to step out of their families, but did not work for the greater good for all women.
The Guomindang dominated the Chinese political stage since 1927. Among the dominant concerns of this group was the shaping of a female citizen that would contribute to the new Republic. The New Life Movement defined in detail how women should behave and what they should wear. The mindset behind such detailed instructions was that Chinese people were not to be trusted as being able to act as citizens of a modern country, and would have to be placed under the party’s tutelage.

When a number of female intellectuals first emerged as a result of the promotion of women’s education at the end of the Qing dynasty, they began competing with their male counterparts for the dominant status to carry out feminist discourses. Early female Tongmenghui revolutionaries went beyond their virtuous wife and good mother roles that were approved by the male intellectuals, and participated actively in the revolution against the Qing government. They suggested that women’s education must be determined by women themselves and the abolition of foot binding was an activity that should be aimed at achieving gender equality. Their unconventional activities in the revolution, such as fund-raising, logistics, espionage and assassination all spoke loudly of their own perception of what the New Chinese Woman should be.

During the May Fourth era, New Woman’s discourse addressed women’s liberation as a metaphor for breaking out of the Confucian family hierarchies. Female intellectuals like Chen Xuezhao, though sponsored by her male patrons, did not agree with the assumed right of male intellectuals to promote a New Woman’s image. She was frustrated that men simply married different women and expected them to just bear children and provide entertainment. She felt that women should make their own decisions


on how to handle their own problems, to improve themselves, and to use their talents for
the greater good of society.\textsuperscript{332}

Both the late Qing women intellectuals and the May fourth figures like Chen Xuezhao stressed the lack of right male intellectuals had to speak up for Chinese women due to their gender-confined point of views. This led to the situation where the women intellectuals took it upon themselves to become the leading force of the women’s movement. The contributors of the \textit{Women’s Weekly} in the 1930s carried out the task of defining the new Chinese woman, forming a platform where women intellectuals were able to legitimately air their opinions in public, and take up their role as the leading social force. These writers also ultimately formed the new generation of Chinese women.

\textit{“New Virtuous wives and Good Mothers” as against the Shanghai modern girls and less-advantaged women}

\textit{Women’s Weekly}, being the supplement of GMD’s official newspaper \textit{Central Daily News}, promoted the model of a “new virtuous wife and good mother” for Chinese women, a model which was in line with GMD’s New Life Movement requirements for a new Chinese citizen. The criteria of this model are that women receive modern education and be able to contribute to the country either at home or in society. This model is promoted as a direct response to the Shanghai modern girl phenomena and the existence of illiterate lower-class women.

The \textit{Women’s Weekly} argued that a “new virtuous wife and good mother” would be a better qualified citizen than a Shanghai modern girl, who indulged in material enjoyment and refused to take on any domestic or social responsibilities. The Shanghai girl was also mocked by the \textit{Women’s Weekly} contributors for her luxurious lifestyle, and

\textsuperscript{332} Please refer to Chapter 1 of this thesis, p. 37.
they embraced the beauty of simplicity. A “new virtuous wife and good mother” however would have the ‘scientific’ knowledge of domestic management, be able to support her husband, and educate her children to be good citizens. In the working society, instead of being a “flower vase” woman for decorative purposes, the “virtuous wife and good mother” was strong and would not give in to the social bias present against them when they entered the professional working society.

A “new virtuous wife and good mother” should also be willing to save her less advantaged sisters from economic and social oppression. The lower-class women were objectified within the publications as victims of gender bias (concubines and prostitutes) and imperialist invasion (female factory workers). The editors believed that these women were unaware of women’s liberation and its benefits. Moreover, their existence represented the country’s worsening condition. The less advantaged women, female workers, rural women prostitutes, little-daughter-in-laws and concubines were reminders of the bankruptcy of the rural economy, and thus saving these less-advantaged women was considered to be an act of saving the country. The virtuous wife and good mother was expected to educate her less-advantaged her sisters; she should petition the government to give them financial provisions; she should also participate in politics to speak up for them. The discourse of saving the less-advantaged women was intertwined with the women intellectuals’ reflections on their own roles to be performed in the current Chinese society- they were to be the spokespeople of the less-advantaged as part of their earlier role being the ‘virtuous wives and good mothers’.

The “virtuous wife and good mother” was considered by the Women’s Weekly to represent the New Chinese Woman, given that she was better qualified to be a good
citizen than the Shanghai modern girls and the less-advantaged women. More importantly, the criteria of the new virtuous wife and good mother of being both educated and socially responsible, naturally qualified the women intellectuals for the position of being the new Chinese women.

**Women intellectuals as spokespeople for the Chinese women**

In order to make Chinese women adhere to the practice of becoming “new virtuous wives and good mothers”, the *Women’s Weekly* contributors felt obliged to exercise their function as social critics in order to help create a more conducive atmosphere for women to carry out their dual responsibilities at home and in society. They saw themselves as the spokesperson for the rest of the women in the country and believed that they were able to bridge between the public and the government.

In response to this line of thinking, the editors of the magazine criticized social biasness against women, and called for a cooperative attitude from the Chinese men. For example, the criticisms made by them against beauty pageants were made with the intention of preventing uneducated women like Xu Lai from falling into the traps of a ‘lustful’ society. By doing so, this act asserted the women intellectuals’ insights into unhealthy gender relations.

More importantly, *Women’s Weekly* also petitioned the GMD government to be more committed towards improving women’s welfare, such as the legalization of abortion and the spread of knowledge about birth control; the set up of kindergartens; support for professional women; and finally the nomination of female representatives at the national assembly. When the GMD government showed reluctance in sponsoring women’s movement’s activities, the *Women’s Weekly* contributors looked towards the
Soviet Union as a model for the GMD government to follow. This shows that they perceived the women intellectuals to be an independent force and were able to voice out Chinese women’s needs even though it meant criticizing the government.

*A Women intellectuals as the new women: international outlook*

The *Women’s Weekly* contributors also projected their domestic concerns, as mentioned above, via their depictions of what foreign women were achieving overseas. Apart from this, the editors of the *Women’s Weekly* reaffirmed their identity as new women through their discussions on China and the world events.

First of all, these women possessed cosmopolitan viewpoints and were privileged to have international contacts, factors which allowed them to adopt an ideological position above the general public and to guide the Chinese people in coping with the international situation with the right attitude.

Secondly, the women intellectuals connected themselves with advanced western women, who in the eyes of these writers, conformed to the “new virtuous wife and good mother” standard. By doing so, these writers were able to criticize the Chinese “modern girls” through their own analysis of their western counterparts.

Finally, they promoted again support for the women’s movement to the Chinese general public and the state so that China would be able to catch up on the world trend. By providing a “sophisticated” response to the west, the magazine editors carried out their responsibilities as social commentators with great concern towards the nation, and in turn they were accorded with the “new virtuous wife and good mother” position. Thus, through the writings on foreign women’s living conditions, the contributors of *Women’s Weekly* consolidated women intellectuals’ position as the ‘Saviors’ of the Chinese
women and their qualified role as social critics of government and society. These attributes naturally pushed the women intellectuals to the position of being the new Chinese women.

*Women intellectuals as the new Chinese women: past and present*

*Women’s Weekly* contributors wrote to promote a New Woman’s model, which qualified women intellectuals to be the new Chinese women.

Such a group identity persists in among women intellectuals even in today’s Chinese society. Since the 1980s a group of gender study scholars including overseas Chinese scholars consciously gathered and recognized themselves as one social force to challenge the hegemonic representations of Chinese women from the Women’s Federation of the Chinese Communist Party. These scholars formed a gender study group around Li Xiaojiang, the founder of the Gender Study Institute in Dalian University. They continue to believe that Chinese women’s roles in the future will be better defined with the further development of gender studies. Their establishment of institutions, seminars, journals displayed much of their determination to carry on building a leading force for Chinese women’s movement.

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----722:78 “Gaibu cha guomin dahui daibiao houxuanren, yuehan tielu, Guangzhou, Shanghai zhonghua haiyuan gonghui tebie dangbu gaihui guomin dahui daibiao houxuanren xingming, jiguan lüli biao baogao” 该部查国民大会代表候选人、粤汉铁路、广州、上海中华海员工会特别党部呈报该会国民大会代表候选人姓名、籍贯履
历表报告 (The department-censored reports on names and resumes of delegates for the National Assembly and of delegates from special GMD offices of Yuehan Railway, Guangzhou and Shanghai Zhonghua Seamen Labors’ Union), March 1931-July 1937

----722: 394 “Gaibu ni gongren, funü yundong zhidaogangyao, zuzhi dagang ji geji minzhong tuanti zhengli weiyuanhui zuzhi, fuwu tiaoli, banshi tongze deng wenjian” 该部拟工人、妇女运动指导纲要，组织大纲及各级民众团体整理委员会组织，服务条例，办事通则等文件 (The department-drafted outlines for guiding labors’ and women’s movements, organizational charts and organizations for all-level organization committees of people’s organizations, principles of service and regulations etc.), August 1929-May 1935.

----722:804 “Beiping tebieshi dangwu zhidaowei yuanhui xunweihui yijiu erba nian qi zhi shi’er yuefen gongzuo baogao” 北平特别市党务指导委员会训委会一九二八年七至十二月份工作报告 (Work Report of MTD of GMD Directing Committee in Beiping special district, July to December 1928), July-December 1928.

----722:1868 “Gaibu tuijin ge shengshi funühui zuzhi qingkuang ji gesheng fuxie daibiao Shi leideng qingshi zuzhi quanguo funü xiehui zhi laiwang wenshu he zhongguofunü weilao ziwei kangzhan jiangshi zonghui gongzuo baogao” 该部推进各省市妇女会组织情况及各省妇协代表石磊等请示组织全国妇女协会之来往文书和中国妇女慰劳自卫抗战将士总会工作报告（The organizations of women’s associations in all
provinces and cities, correspondences of representatives such as Shi lei petitioning organizing a nation-wide women’s association and work report of Chinese Women’s General Committee to Requite the Soldiers in the War）June 1928-November 1937.

----722:1869 “Gaibu niding yu banfa funühui zuzhi dagang shixing xize, funü changshi jiaoyu yundong gangyao, jihua zhidao nongcun funü yundong shishi banhfa ji funü xiehui zuzhi tiaoli”该部拟定与颁发妇女会组织大纲施行细则、妇女常识教育运动纲要、计划指导农村妇女运动实施办法及妇女协会组织条例 (The department-drafted regulations in practicing organizational outlines of women’s associations, outlines of women’s general education movement, practicing methods of planning and guiding rural women’s movement and organizational regulations on women’s associations), October 1928-May 1934.

----722:1705 “Jiangsusheng, Nanjing, Shanghai shi wenguanchu qingshi jieshi ge ‘minzhong’ tuanti zuzhi fangmian wenti deng xingwen” 江苏省、南京、上海市文官处请示解释各‘民众’团体组织方面问题等行文（Jiangsu Provincial, Nanjing and Shanghai municipal civil offices ask for instructions on explaining issues concerning organizations of all ‘people’ organizations），May 1929-Dec. 1930.

722:1866 “Gaibu pai Tang Naixin diaocha shanghai fuyun qingxing ji funü tuanti, gongchang nügong shenghuo zhuangkuang diaochabiao he zhonghua funü yundong tongmenghui jianzhang, xuanyan, duizhang mingdan” 该部派唐乃炘调查上海妇运情形及妇女团体、工厂女工生活状况调查表和中华妇女运动同盟会简章、宣言、队长名
单（The department-sent investigator Tang Naixin’s report on Shanghai’s women’s movement and women’s organizations, investigations on female factory workers’ living conditions and Zhonghua Women’s Movement Association’s general regulations, declarations and name list of branch coordinators），August 1933- August 1934.

----722:1872 “Hebei, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Hubei, Hunna, Yunnan, Guangxi, Xikang, Nanjing, Tianjin, Beiping, Guangzhou, Hankou shengshi dangbu chengsong funü tuanti diaochabiao” 河北、江苏、浙江、湖北、湖南、云南、广西、西康、南京、天津、北平、广州、汉口省市党部呈送妇女团体调查表(Charts of investigations on women’s associations sent by party offices from Hebei, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Hubei, Hunan, Yunnan, Guangxi, Xikang, Nanjing, Tianjin, Beiping, Guangzhou, Hankou), March 1933-May 1934.

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