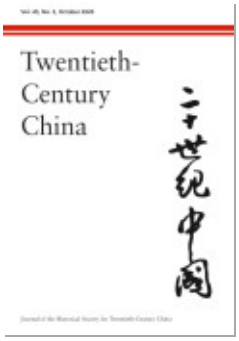
Beyond "Good Wives and Wise Mothers": Feminism as Anticolonialism in Manchukuo Schools



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BEYOND "GOOD WIVES AND WISE MOTHERS": FEMINISM AS ANTICOLONIALISM IN MANCHUKUO SCHOOLS

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This article investigates how Chinese female students in Manchukuo expressed female emancipation and anticolonial ideas in their secondary schools. The colonial government tried to teach a conservative "good wives and wise mothers" ideology, and many students replied by advocating rhetoric of female emancipation that some called "beyond good wives and wise mothers." Although they were not free to openly oppose the existence of the colonial regime, their advocacy of female emancipation can be read as acting in lieu of such open opposition. Examining the interplay between the state's messages and the students' advocacy in school journals clarifies the tensions among colonialism, anticolonialism, patriarchy, and feminism. The articles published in these journals suggest Manchukuo women saw a link between their opposition to Japan's conservative gender policies and its colonial rule. This linkage helped Manchukuo women avoid the tension found in other colonial societies between efforts at female liberation and anticolonial nationalism.

Keywords: colonial, education, female student, gender, journal

Introduction

The Japanese military seized Northeast China in 1931 and established the puppet state of Manchukuo the following year. The state existed until the defeat of imperial Japan in 1945. As in other Japanese colonies, as well as in the contemporary Western colonial empires, the state used female education as a way to help promote its colonial goals. This included teaching Chinese women the conservative domestic values of "good wives and wise mothers" (良妻賢母 *liang qi xian mu*; GWWM), an ideology that they saw as helping to tie women's efforts to the goals of the state. Japanese colonial officials claimed that modernity had helped to cause moral degeneration

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among women and "exhorted Chinese women to fulfill their 'natural' responsibilities as citizens, wives, and mothers of the Japanese Empire."[1]

Schools, as windows and channels of power and domination, are bidirectional sites in which student thoughts can be expressed—in school magazines and interstudent discussions—and in which the state can direct its message to the students, through the curriculum, the actions of schools authorities, and even in those same school magazines.[2] This article examines the nature of Manchukuo female education first by observing general attitudes about women and education at the time of the creation of Manchukuo, then by looking at the new state's curriculum and other official statements on education, and finally by examining how this education played out in two leading female secondary schools. In particular, I examine the contents of student journals published by those schools. These school journals, despite potential censorship, served as channels for students to express opposition to traditional patriarchy and, implicitly, to colonial oppression. Many students replied to the GWWM education by advocating for female emancipation, a rhetoric that students like Bai Yuzhi (白玉芝 dates unknown) and Sun Zhuan (孫竹安 dates unknown) called "beyond good wives and wise mothers" (超於良妻賢母 *chao yu liang qi xian mu*; BGWWM). While this advocacy of expanded roles for women was presented on the surface as important to the female students, it can also be read as a subtle criticism of the very existence of the colonial state, a position the students were not free to express.

Manchukuo's policy of using a conservative rhetoric around women and domesticity gave the students an opportunity to criticize a state ideology without openly attacking the existence of the state, allowing them to avoid the tension found in other colonial societies, such as early twentieth-century India, between efforts toward female liberation and anticolonial nationalism, as will be discussed below.

Colonial powers in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century frequently portrayed the state of women in colonies as repressed and uncivilized, thereby helping to legitimize their own, supposedly civilized, rule. While neither Britain nor France put significant funds into female education by the early twentieth century, there was growing rhetoric in those countries that held that an improvement in the status of women would be necessary for improving colonial societies.[3] Japan went further than the Western colonial states, putting considerable effort into female education in its empire, as a part of its attempt to legitimize colonial rule and to teach messages useful to its goals. Japan's main message about females, however, was not that they had been repressed under the previous regimes (a theme favored by other colonial powers); eschewing a rhetoric of liberation, Japan focused mostly on the idea that women's service in domestic roles was a key part of society.

1 Norman Smith, "Regulating Chinese Women's Sexuality during the Japanese Occupation of Manchuria: Reading between the Lines of Wu Ying's *Yu* (Lust) and Yang Xu's *Wo de riji* (My Diary)," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 13, no. 1 (2004): 58.

2 Laura L. Terrance, "Resisting Colonial Education: Zitkala-Sa and Native Feminist Archival Refusal," *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 24, no. 5 (2001): 623.

3 Tamara L. Hunt and Micheline R. Lessard, eds., *Women and the Colonial Gaze* (London: Palgrave: 2002), 1; Margaret Zoller Booth, "Education for Liberation or Domestication? Female Education in Colonial Swaziland," in Hunt and Lessard, *Women and the Colonial Gaze*, 174–87; Micheline R. Lessard, "Civilizing Women: French Colonial Perceptions of Vietnamese Womanhood and Motherhood," in Hunt and Lessard, *Women and the Colonial Gaze*, 148–61.

In the early twentieth century, the Japanese imperial government began to institute female education in its new colonies like Korea, with the goal of molding the native students into "loyal and obedient" Japanese.[4] Colonial governments saw colonial girls as future mothers who could transmit Japanese culture and language to the next generation, thus furthering assimilation.[5] Japan devoted more attention and money to female education in its colonies than Western colonial powers, and it replicated those efforts in occupied Manchuria. For example, Prasenjit Duara has pointed out that the Manchukuo Ministry of Education tried to win over the conservative elite and reinforce "the regime's sovereignty claims" through its conservative school curriculum messages, in which it represented the traditional, domestic woman as "the soul of East Asian civilization."[6]

Chinese women in Manchuria were faced with a colonial regime that advanced a conservative gender ideology. This message ran counter to the strong link between Chinese nationalism and women's liberation that had developed in China in the previous decades; Chinese women in Manchuria, therefore, were able to use long-established ideas of women's liberation as a way of indirectly criticizing the colonial regime.

Examining the interplay between the state's messages and the students' advocacy in school journals, as well as other evidence of independent student behavior, such as anti-Japanese activities in the period 1925–1931, clarifies the tensions among colonialism, anticolonialism, nationalism, patriarchy, and feminism in colonized Manchuria.

Wang Jingsong has examined Manchukuo student and popular journals and concluded that expressions of protofeminist "New Women" ideas were immediately smothered by the Manchukuo government, which worked to enforce GWWM as the official gender ideology.[7] This article, however, will demonstrate that the female students continued to write in support of New Women ideals until at least 1937. In that year the state increased its censorship of the school magazines, ending the ability of students to publicly express New Women ideas and driving them to underground journals and writing clubs.

Tension between National Liberation and Female Liberation in Asia

Asian societies facing Western imperialism often witnessed a significant tension between the goals of national and female liberation. Many anticolonial nationalists, such as Mohandas Gandhi, used neo-patriarchal rhetoric to criticize the colonial regime and called for a return to traditional gender roles along with national liberation. On the other hand, colonial governments made some efforts at social reform, including women's education. Regardless of the regimes' motivations, these efforts

4 Jiweon Shin, "Social Construction of Idealized Images of Women in Colonial Korea: the 'New Woman' versus 'Motherhood,'" in Hunt and Lessard, *Women and the Colonial Gaze*, 162–73.

5 Lee Kyong-Won, "Role Differentiation by Gender and the Education of Women in Korea: A Double Structure in Education," *Japanese Journal of Family Sociology* 5 (1993): 87–100.

6 Prasenjit Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 147.

7 Wang Jingsong, "Wei Manzhouguo xiaoyuan wenhua Beijing zhongde nüxing xinwenxue jiqi cunzai yijing" [Changes in the discourse on campus new women's literature in Manchurian areas under Japanese rule], *Funü yanjiu luncong* 11 (2008): 50–58.

could be read as acting in the interests of women's liberation. The British in India, for example, attempted to end the practice of sati and child marriage and built schools for girls.[8] Metropolitan women's groups in India sometimes campaigned against traditional practices that they saw as negatively impacting women.[9] Thus, in India, colonized women faced calls for neo-patriarchy among many nationalist intellectuals who linked "modernization" and female liberation with imperialism and the colonial regime that oppressed them. An example of this tension is a case in which Bengali women trying to improve female education in the 1920s faced the opposition of neo-patriarchal Indian nationalists, groups that they saw as allies in other causes.[10]

While the nationalist movement in India was dominated by socially conservative forces in the early twentieth century, more socially progressive actors prevailed in the Chinese nationalist movements by the 1920s. Chinese feminists overwhelmingly saw themselves as nationalists, even though the political parties rarely made feminist goals a top priority. This sense of shared goals meant that feminism and nationalism coexisted with much less tension in China than they did in India.

Sanjay Seth, comparing nationalist reactions to modernity and the "woman's question" in India and China, found that late nineteenth-century nationalists in both societies held to ideas of female betterment of the "Good Wives and Wise Mothers" type, but not to real individual liberty. However, she postulated that India and China went in different directions in the 1920s, the time of the rise of Gandhi's Congress Party and the May Fourth movement in China, because of their different experiences with Western imperialism. Because India had been completely colonized by the British, Indian nationalists, confronted with Western modernity as a part of British rule, were more likely to turn against modernity—including ideas of greater individual freedoms for women—in their anticolonial struggle. China, while threatened by imperialism, did not experience on a large scale the daily humiliations of colonization. It was psychologically easier, therefore, for Chinese nationalists to be able to examine and appreciate aspects of Western modernity without feeling that they were collaborating with an enemy.[11]

Ideas about Women in Japan and China

To understand Manchukuo education, and the reactions to that education among Chinese girls, there needs to be some discussion of gender ideologies in Japan and China.

Japanese leaders brought to their colonies a conservative ideology of gender, usually called "Good Wives and Wise Mothers." The concept has antecedents in writings from

8 Michelle Tusan, "Writing *Stri Dharma*: International Feminism, Nationalist Politics, and Women's Press Advocacy in Late Colonial India," *Women's History Review* 12, no. 4 (2003): 623–49.

9 Lessard, "Civilizing Women," 148–61. Nupur Chaudhuri, "The Indian Other: Reactions of Two Anglo-Indian Women Travel Writers," in Hunt and Lessard, *Women and the Colonial Gaze*, 125–34.

10 Barnita Bagchi, "Towards Ladyland: Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain and the Movement For Women's Education in Bengal, c. 1900–c. 1932," *Paedagogica Historica* 45, no. 6 (2009): 743–55. See also Mrubakubu Sinha, "Gendered Nationalism: From Women to Gender and Back Again?," in Leela Fernandes, ed., *Routledge Handbook of Gender in South Asia* (London: Routledge, 2014), 17–18.

11 Sanjay Seth, "Nationalism, Modernity, and the 'Woman Question' in India and China," *Journal of Asian Studies* 72, no. 2 (2013): 276.

Japan's Edo period, when Confucian scholars called for greater restrictions on women's roles and strict obedience to patriarchal authority.[12] In the late nineteenth century, officials and educators concerned with Japan's security and influenced by developments in female education in the West frequently wrote about the need for educated housewives, using the term GWWM.[13] In 1872 Japan's first public education act included requirements for female education,[14] and in 1885 the minister of education linked GWWM female education with national security.[15] The government promulgated Higher Girls School regulations in 1895 and 1898 that established the concept of GWWM as the fundamental principle of female secondary education.

Koyama Shizuko listed three central characteristics of GWWM thinking at the end of the nineteenth century: (1) men and women differ both physiologically and mentally; (2) women can contribute to their country indirectly; and (3) women are inferior to men.[16] Even as the urban middle class began to accept women working in a wider variety of positions, the three basic points remained in place and calls for equality were largely ignored by the government.[17]

Early reformist nationalists in Qing China tended to accept and promote the idea of GWWM. For example, in 1897 Liang Qichao criticized previous mainstream Confucian ideas about the roles of women and advocated formal women's education as a tool for training girls to take up the socially important role of "good mothers."[18] Most Chinese reformers held that modern women had a responsibility to educate the next generation. The public schools during the late Qing and early Republican periods therefore emphasized women's domestic roles.[19]

Beginning in the 1910s, however, the use of the phrase GWWM declined among Chinese intellectuals as progressive nationalists came more to the fore and the focus of writings on women shifted to encouraging self-fulfillment.[20] *New Youth* (新青年 *Xinqingnian*; 1915–1925), the key journal of the New Culture movement, included several articles on female education; these often negatively compared the Japanese-derived GWWM ideology to Western-derived images of "Modern Women." Hu Shi first used the term "beyond good wives and wise mothers" (BGWWM) to refer to a wider vision of women's roles in a 1918 *New Youth* article. He explained, "In the future, female education should pay

12 Yamazaki Junichi, *Retsujoden: rekishi o kaeta on'na-tachi* [Biographies of exemplary women: women who changed history] (Tokyo: Gogatsu shobō, 1991), 327.

13 Masashi Fukaya, *Education for Good Wife and Wise Mother* (Nagoya: Reimei shobō, 1998), 11.

14 Mitsui Tametomo, *Nihon fujin mondai shiryō shūsei 'daiyonkan' kyōiku* [Data integration of Japanese women's problems: vol. 4, education] (Tokyo: Domesu shuppan, 1977), 144.

15 Ōkubo Toshiaki, *Mori Arinori zenshū ken 3* [Collected works of Mori Arinori, vol. 3] (Tokyo: Senmon-do shoten, 1972), 611.

16 Koyama Shizuko, *Ryōsai kenbo to iu kihan* [Norm of good wives and wise mothers] (Tokyo: Keiso shobō, 1991), 522.

17 Koyama, *Ryōsai kenbo,* 164.

18 Jin Jongwon, *Higashi ajia no ryōsai kembo ron tsukurareta dentō* [Good wives and wise mothers of East Asia: created traditions] (Tokyo: Keiso shobō, 2006), 6.

19 Helen M. Schneider, *Keeping the Nation's House: Domestic Management and the Making of Modern China* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2012).

20 Shirōuzu Noriko, "Chugoku ni okeru 'kindai kazoku' no keisei: josei no kokuminka to nijū yakuwari no rekishi" [The formation of the "modern family" in China: the history of women's nationalism and dual role], *Jinbun kagaku* 6 (2004): 140.

more attention to personal cultivation and the development of female personalities.… Girls must build their own ideas and recognize their value."[21] He derided Chinese women for valuing GWWM and praised American women for valuing BGWWM.[22] Furthermore, anti-Japanese feeling was growing at the time, and many intellectuals linked GWWM ideas with Japanese imperialism.[23]

Another indication that GWWM ideas had gone out of fashion in the Chinese intellectual world during the May Fourth era is the evolving content of the *Ladies' Journal* (婦女雜誌 *Funü zaizhi*; 1915–1931), a popular women's magazine. In the journal's early period, many of the magazine's authors wrote positively about GWWM. However, when Zhang Xichen (章錫琛 1889–1969) became the editor in 1920, the journal began to shift toward more progressive stands on women's equity, education, marriage, and employment.[24] Yuxin Ma, in her study of women's journals, found an overwhelming desire among the female authors for gender and political emancipation and economic independence. Many authors criticized the traditional Confucian family and called for open access to birth control.[25]

Beginning in the early Republican period, however, Chinese feminism also presented strong nationalist feelings. As Louise Edwards has stated, "Nationalism was embedded in almost all aspects of Chinese feminism."[26] Even though nationalist goals often overshadowed female emancipation—the suffrage movement was unsuccessful at the time—Chinese feminists throughout the country continued to be supporters of Chinese nationalism.

Before the founding of Manchukuo, urban Northeast Chinese female students were clearly influenced by the legacy of the May Fourth movement, including nationalism and feminism, and participated in political movements and anti-Japanese activities. For example, students from Cuiwen Female High School (萃文女子中學校 Cuiwen nüzi zhongxuexiao; CFHS) in Changchun attended an anti-imperialist parade in 1919.[27] Likewise, in the aftermath of the massacre in Shanghai on May 30, 1925, students from the Fengtian Female Normal School (奉天女子師範學校 Fengtian nüzi shifan xuexiao; FFNS) participated in an anti-Japanese petition procession. The FFNS students made street speeches, distributed leaflets, protested in front of the British and Japanese consulates, and petitioned the provincial government.[28] A few years later, Inoue Teruo (井上暉雄 dates unknown), a Japanese teacher in Jilin Province, claimed that anti-Japanese activities in

21 Hu Shi, "Yipusheng zhuyi" [Ibsenism], *Xin qinnian* 6, no. 4 (1918): 4.

22 Hu Shi, "Meiguo de furen" [American women], in Ouyang Zhesheng, ed., *Hu Shi wenji* [Anthology of Hu Shi] (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1998), 491.

23 Shirouzu, "Chūgoku ni okeru 'kindai kazoku' no keisei," 135.

24 Murata Yujirō, *"Fujo zasshi" kara miru kindai Chūgoku josei* [Examining modern Chinese women in *Ladies' Journal*] (Tokyo: Kenbun shuppan, 2005), 12.

25 Yuxin Ma, *Women Journalists and Feminism in China, 1898–1937* (Amherst, NY: Cambria, 2010), 179, 187–88.

26 Louise Edwards, "Chinese Women's Campaigns for Suffrage: Nationalism, Confucianism and Political Agency," in Louise Edwards and Mina Roces, eds., *Women's Suffrage in Asia: Gender, Nationalism and Democracy* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), 75.

27 Zhang Xianda, "Cuiwen nüzi xuexiao de wangshi" [History of Cuiwen Female Middle School], *Changchun wanbao*, August 4, 2014, B17, http://ccwb.1news.cc/html/2014-08/04/content_388202.htm.

28 Bao Weiguang, "Dongbei diqu diyige nü gongchandangyuan" [The first female Communist party member in Northeast China], *Lantai shijie* 7 (2001): 36.

the 1925–1931 period were particularly strong among educators and students in Jilin, where CFHS was located, and that female middle-school students and female normal-school students participated.[29] Thus, it appears that students from both of these schools had a history of nationalist activism before the Manchurian incident and the Japanese occupation in 1931. Furthermore, female middle-school students from religious schools secretly provided evidence of Manchukuo police oppression to the League of Nations Lytton Commission in the spring of 1932.[30]

Although there were no outright expressions of feminism in the records of these Chinese nationalist demonstrations, there is evidence that Chinese women in the region saw the two movements as linked. In April 1934, two years after the establishment of Manchukuo, the Fengtian Education Association, a Japanese-dominated official organization of educators, produced a report that claimed that anti-Japanese socialists were using feminism as one of the three main tools to draw students away from loyalty to Manchukuo (the others being bribes and nationalism). It noted that the cities of Northeast China had been centers of anti-Japanese activity before Manchukuo was founded and that therefore special efforts—including the formation of a Student Thought Improvement Committee—needed to be made to ensure students would not be lured away by feminism and other nationalist temptations.[31]

Female students, therefore, shared in the wider trend among intellectuals and revolutionaries.[32] As Norman Smith has argued, prominent Chinese women writers in Manchuria supported female emancipation and Chinese nationalism.[33] Chinese women writers often subverted the Japanese-run colonial institutions they were associated with, using the opportunities provided to them to make subtly critical observations about the colonial society and patriarchal structures.[34] This study builds on Smith's work by going beyond his adult authors and concentrating on the writings of female students who reacted to the ideology of GWWM.

29 Inoue Teruo, "Omohi dani-san" [Memories], in Arakawa Ryuzo, ed., *Mantetsu kyōiku kaiko san jū-nen* [Looking back on southern Manchuria railway education on its thirtieth anniversary] (Dalian: Minami Manshū tetsudō kabushiki gaisha chihō-bu gakumu-ka, 1937), 211–13.

30 Xu Bingsan, "Weiman tizhi xia zongjiao tuanti de chujing yu yingdui: yi jidu xinjiao wei li" [Situation and response of religious groups under the puppet Manchukuo system: a case study of Protestantism], *Kangri zhanzheng yanjiu 2* (2011): 51–59.

31 Hōtenshō kyōikukai [Fengtian Provincial Education Association], *Hōtenshō kyōikukai gaikyō* [General report on Fengtian Province education] (Fengtian: Hōtenshō kyōikukai, April 1934), 8; Tokyo University Library.

32 Norman Smith, *Resisting Manchukuo: Chinese Women Writers and the Japanese Occupation* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007), 3–40; Fukao Yōko, "Manshū ni ikita kanjin josei: tamashi no shokuminchika/datsu shokuminchika to iu shiten kara" [Han Chinese women living in Manchuria: the colonization and decolonization of souls], in Ikuta Michiko, ed., *On'na tachi no Manshū: taminzoku kūkan o ikite* [Manchuria women living in multiethnic space] (Osaka: Osaka daigaku shuppan-kai, 2015), 234–353; Kishi Yōko, "'Manshūkoku' no josei saka: Meinyan o yomu" [Female writer of Manchukuo: reading Mei Niang], *Kan* 10 (2002): 155–63.

33 Norman Smith, "Disrupting Narratives: Chinese Women Writers and the Japanese Cultural Agenda in Manchuria, 1936–1945," *Modern China* 30, no. 3 (2004): 295–325.

34 Smith, *Resisting Manchukuo*, 3–40; Smith, "Regulating Chinese Women's Sexuality," 49–70.

Manchukuo Female Education: Good Wives and Wise Mothers

The next section will examine how Japanese officers took control of the education system and used GWWM and Confucian rhetoric to shape Manchukuo women from 1932 to 1936. It looks at both general state education policies and their implementation at two female secondary schools.

FFNS was established in 1906.[35] It was one of the oldest and most influential female public schools in the region. Cuiwen Female High School (CFHS) was founded in Changchun in 1907 by the Irish Presbyterian Church. FFNS was Manchukuo's largest female normal school, with over twice as many students and teachers as any other. CFHS was one of four middle schools in Manchukuo's capital city and had a reputation for excellence.[36]

After the founding of Manchukuo in 1932, the colonial state swiftly moved to assert control over education. It imposed the use of authorized textbooks on both the public FFNS and the private CFHS.[37] It also established school inspections at provincial and county levels.[38] The promulgation of a new school system in 1937 gave the authorities the opportunity to strengthen the regime of school supervision. Each school's vice principal now had to be Japanese, giving considerable authority to Japanese in the running of the schools.[39] Religious private schools enjoyed relative autonomy in the early Manchukuo period, but starting in late 1935 their students and teachers also began to be threatened with arrest for failure to comply with demands of the regime. In 1940 the state forced many religious schools to transfer control of their schools to the state.[40]

The state emphasized absolute obedience in schools. Bai Guangtian (白廣田 dates unknown), the director of discipline at FFNS, described the process of managing students' ideas and behaviors in a 1937 article in the journal *Fengtian Education* (奉天教育 *Fengtian jiaoyu*). First, the school established a system of supervision by dividing students into "student association groups" (學友區 *xue you qu*). Second, Bai said, "Teachers must inspect students' behavior at any time and place, and then they can give appropriate and effective training for students." In order to "understand students' behavior and progress," teachers were to fill in each student's "student personality survey book" (學生個性調查簿

35 Archives of Liaoning Province, "Minguo Liaoning chengshi yingxiang xilie: Fengtian sheng nüzi shifan xuexiao" [Liaoning City impression series of the Republic of China: the Fengtian Female Normal School], *Lantai shijie* 30 (2015): 1.

36 Mei Niang, "Wo de qingshaonian shiqi (1920–1938)" [My adolescent life (1920–1938)], *Zuo jia* 9 (1996): 57–69.

37 Manzhou diguo wenjiaobu [Manchukuo Ministry of Education], *Manzhouguo wenjiao nianjian* [Manchukuo cultural and educational yearbook] (Xinjing, Manchukuo: Manzhou diguo wenjiaobu, 1934), repr. in Shi Lizhen and Wang Zhimin, eds., *Wei Manzhouguo shiliao* [Historical materials of Manchukuo] part 4, vols. 17–18 (Beijing: Quanguo tushuguan wenxian fuzhi Zhongxin, 2002), 98, 183–84.

38 Qi Hongshen, *Dongbei difang jiaoyu shi* [History of northeast China local education] (Shenyang: Liaoning daxue chubanshe, 1991), 295–96; Manzhou diguo wenjiaobu, *Manzhouguo wenjiao nianjian*, 108–9.

39 Qi Hongshen, *Jianzheng riben qin hua zhimin jiaoyu* [Witness to Japanese colonial education in China] (Shengyang: Lianghai chubanshe, 2005), 266–68.

40 Xu Bingsan, "Weiman tizhi xia zongjiao tuanti," 51–59. F. W. S. O'Neill, "The Church of Christ in Manchuria," *International Review of Mission* 24, no. 4 (1935): 515–23, accessed September 25, 2019, https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1758-6631.1935.tb04822.x.

xue sheng gexing diaochabu), which included the student's academic process, ideology (思想傾向 *sixiang qingxiang*), appearance, character, and work attitude. Third, students were required to write self-evaluations in a daily diary and carry a handbook of school rules. Students who were determined to "have bad behavior or thoughts" were dealt with in three possible ways: "admonition; heavy reprimand (forced to complete a special assignment and remanded to parents for discipline); and school suspension." Bai also emphasized the role of physical education in training students to learn obedience.[41]

Former students have testified that the Manchukuo female schools went beyond contemporary norms in terms of trying to manage students' behavior. They reported that campus management was militarized and corporal punishment was frequently used by Japanese teachers and administrators. For example, Pei Suyun (裴素雲 dates unknown), who studied at Xinjing First Female National High School in 1937, testified about frequent beatings by Japanese teachers: "Students could be whipped by a rattan, so they were scared to resist. Students [being punished] had to bow their heads and accept their punishment without complaint, otherwise they would be punished even more severely."[42]

The state made housework training, which was the core of GWWM education, central to its female education curriculum. The 1933 Female Secondary Education Regulations stated: "Attention should be paid to housekeeping training in particular, for the good of family life."[43] This attention was reflected in the curriculum established in 1934. Housework and Sewing-Crafting were two of the compulsory subjects in normal female schools. Housework was held for six hours per week and Sewing-Crafting for seven hours per week. These two courses occupied 37% of the instructional time in each week of classes. In 1926, FFNS's handicraft curriculum had occupied only 3% of school time, so the 1934 curriculum represented a major shift. "Vocational Guidance," on the other hand, which was part of secondary female education in 1926, was deleted in 1934. Also, in that year, academic courses such as Chinese, Japanese, History, and Geography were each taught for just 2 hours a week, or 5.7% of the school week, for a total of 22.7%. The state officials treated Housework and Sewing-Crafting as the essential courses in female high normal education, and they appear to have been working to limit students to becoming housewives or teachers.[44]

A school handbook also testified to the changes in education philosophy in the region. The FFNS 1926 school handbook emphasized a student-centered curriculum, in which teachers helped students express and prepare for their individual ambitions, develop their research ability, and take responsibility, thus imbuing them with "a spirit of self-reliance."[45]

41 Bai Guangtian, "Benxiao xunyu zhi shiji" [Practice of discipline in my school], *Fengtian jiaoyu* [Fengtian education] 5, no. 6 (1937): 5–11; National Library of China, microfilm edition, series CJ-04174, box 3, 1–3.

42 Qi, *Jianzheng riben qin hua,* 222.

43 Manzhou diguo wenjiaobu, *Manzhouguo wenjiao nianjian* [Manchukuo cultural and educational yearbook] (Fengtian: Guowuyuan wenjiaobu, 1934), 53; Kyushu University Library.

44 Manzhou diguo wenjiaobu, "Gaodeng shifan xuexiao guize di5, di7" [Higher normal school principles #5, #7] (Manzhou diguo wenjiaobu, 1934), repr. in *Wenjiao yuebao*, no. 6 (June 1936): 9–10; *Wei Manzhouguo qikan huibian* [Compilation of Manchukuo journals], vol. 1 (Beijing: Xianzhuang shuju, 2008), 485–86.

45 Fengtian nüzi shifan xuexiao [FFNS], *Fengtiansheng nüzi shifan zhongxuexiao ji fushu xiaoxue mengyangyuan yilan* [General view of Fengtian Female Normal School and its affiliated primary school

The handbook did not emphasize gender differences or domestic roles for women, did not speak of special rules or objectives for girls, and did little to delineate a special curriculum for girls. The school operated in the spirit of liberal education, which had gained popularity in China since the visit of the American educator John Dewey (1859–1952) from 1919 to 1921. After 1931, the state changed the focus to training female students to be GWWM and strengthening awareness of traditional Confucian morality. For example, the following mottos of female secondary schools in Manchukuo were less about personal fulfillment than about loyalty and domestic roles: Good Wives and Wise Mothers (Fengtian Jimin Female National Higher School and Jilin Female National Higher School) and Loyal, Filial, and Virtuous (Siping Female National Higher School).[46]

The valorization of traditional, domestic women was part of an effort in the first years of Manchukuo to encourage adherence to traditional Confucian morals, including devotion to one's family, obedience to authorities, and loyalty to one's superiors. Soon after the state's creation, the Manchukuo Ministry of Education instructed schools and departments to hold biannual ceremonies to worship Confucius and to organize lectures to promote the spirit of Confucius. It encouraged studying the Confucian classics, honoring cases of filial piety, and celebrating "virtuous women." While the ministry was preparing new school textbooks, it instructed the schools to use the Confucian classics as the main textbooks.[47] A detailed description of a Confucian ceremony held by FFNS was published in the school journal, which noted that the speeches focused on ideas about obedience and gender roles, such as the sentiment that "men should be loyal and faithful, women should be obedient and keep their chastity."[48]

The state's emphasis on GWWM and the narrowing of expected careers for women in the early years of Manchukuo can be seen in articles by educators and officials in the journal *Fengtian Education*. The articles demonstrate that there was a shift toward a greater focus on women's roles as wives and mothers, with teaching the only other occupation choice. For example, in 1933 the administration of the Fengtian First Female Secondary School wrote that girls' schools needed to cultivate future good mothers, aware of their role in the family. A focus on academics would only cause students to become frustrated with their education.[49] FFNS discipline director Bai Guangtian wrote that female secondary students had two missions: to become good teachers whose upstanding morality would influence the people with their example of industriousness, fortitude, and interest in public affairs and to be become good mothers teaching their children at home.[50]

Fengtian Education articles also showed that Manchukuo officials linked women's domestic efforts with the larger state project. Fengtian Female Vocational Schoolteacher

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and nursery] (Fengtian: Fengtian nüzi shifan xuexiao, 1926), 14; Library of China Northeast Normal University.

46 Qi, *Jianzheng riben qin hua,* 549–52, 541–43, 231.

47 Manzhou diguo wenjiaobu, *Manzhouguo wenjiao nianjian*, 1063.

48 Li Diantang, "Kangde er nian chuji shang ding sikong jiangshuci" [Words of sacrifice to Confucius in the spring of Kant year 2], *Xingren jikan* 2 (1935): 88–87. See also "Juxing si kong jiangyanhui" [Hold a speech on sacrificing to Confucius], *Cuiwen jikan* 8 (1935): 117; Library of Beijing Normal University.

49 Fengtian First Female Secondary School, "Laozuo jiaoyu shishi fang'an" [Embodiments of labor education], *Fengtian jiaoyu* 1, no. 4 (1933): 4–5.

50 Bai Guangtian, "Nüxue xunyu de yanjiu" [Research on female education], *Fengtian jiaoyu* 2, no. 3 (1935): 64.

Liu Rongfu (劉榮甫 dates unknown) wrote in a 1935 article on female education that the first job of education was to teach students to be honest and to love their own country.[51] A Manchukuo government official wrote in a 1936 essay subtitled "The Essence of Female Education" that women needed to be taught that they were naturally different from males, with their own unique instincts and characteristics that would contribute to the prosperity of their families and the security of the state. He wrote, "Female education is to develop female instincts, and to promote the country's full development.…We cannot have a division between the two [gendered] forces [of yin and yang]."[52]

These writings on female education indicate that there was a tension within Manchukuo education: the schools were expected to cultivate the girls to be GWWM in the home but also to train them in abilities useful to society. This contradiction reflected the larger tension over women's roles throughout the Japanese empire: in the 1930s, a conservative resurgence pushed for women to refocus on the domestic sphere, while wartime exigencies drove Japan and its colonial regimes to push women into activities and employment outside of the home. As Prasenjit Duara stated, "Women [were] mobilized through segregated organizations and to serve in gendered roles and functions . . . through these means, the regimes sought to protect the gendered ideology of women as embodied cultural assets."[53]

In Fengtian, therefore, the objective of female secondary education before the establishment of Manchukuo had been to train female students in a comprehensive and liberal way, without prescribing certain occupations or roles for them. However, during the period 1932–1937, the rhetoric on female education changed from a focus on freedom, opportunities, and individual morality to one that was more limited: to a focus on teaching female duties toward family and society. Although the rhetoric allowed for educated women taking jobs, their efforts were to be for the benefit of the home and the state, conceptions fundamentally different from the trend of growing opportunities for professional women in the West, who were often portrayed as working for their own personal betterment.

Resistance to Colonial Female Rhetoric in Manchukuo Student Journals

An examination of school journals shows that some female students were unsatisfied with the emphasis on domestic roles. They expressed progressive ideas about wider roles and opportunities for women, speaking out against the expectations for women expressed by the colonial government. These expressions can be read both literally as support for female emancipation and also as stand-ins for dissatisfaction with the colonial regime.

The students appear to have had room to express their ideas because of the relatively light supervision of the school journals in the early years of Manchukuo, due to inspectors focusing mostly on the content of textbooks at that time and to the support students

51 Liu Rongfu, "Xianzai Manzhou xunyu nüsheng ying tebie zhuyi zhi shixing jiqi sheshi fangfa" [Points for special attention on practices and methods in current Manchukuo female education], *Jianguo jiaoyu* 2, no. 3 (1935): 67; Bun bukagakushō Library.

52 Nawa, "Nüzi jiaoyu jiangxi huiyilu: nüzi jiaoyu benzhi" [Women's education seminar: the essence of female education], *Fengtian jiaoyu* 4, no. 7 (1936): 106–9.

53 Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, 143.

received from Chinese teachers. The Manchukuo writer Li Zhengzhong (李正中 1920–), who established the school journal *Nanfeng* (南風 South wind) at the Xinjing College of Law in 1939, claimed that both the name of the journal and his articles were expressions of his resistance to Japanese colonialism. He wrote, "As the chief editor of the school journal, I had the right to publish articles as I wanted," and "the school journal acted like a semi-underground organ."[54] It appears that school journals were under the control of the schools themselves and that chief editors sometimes had autonomy in selecting content. In this relatively loose environment, school journals could serve as platforms for spreading student ideas, including the opportunity to speak in resistance to patriarchal and colonial ideologies.

Campus literature flourished during the early period of Manchukuo. A 1934 literary collection of writings by female students, *Chuang qiancao* (窗前草 Grass at the window), was reprinted three times.[55] Among the school journals created during this period were *Shikishima* (敷島 Shiki island; a Xinjing Female Middle School journal, 1943), *Shen shui* (瀋水 Shen river; a Nanman Middle School journal; 1936), *Qizhong xiaokan* (齊中校刊 a Qi Middle School journal and a Qiqi Ha'er Middle School journal; 1935), *Xingren jikan* (興仁季刊 Vitalizing benevolence quarterly; 1934–1936; XRJK), and *Cuiwen jikan* (萃文季刊 Literature assembly quarterly; 1932–1939). Of these, the only journals for which copies are extant are *Cuiwen jikan* and XRJK. The content of those two journals, especially XRJK, will be the focus of the rest of this article. Although I cannot claim that these two journals by themselves represent the thoughts of all Manchukuo female secondary school students, they do give a glimpse of the world of female secondary education in two of the largest metropolitan areas. *Cuiwen jikan*, the school journal of the CFHS, was compiled by the CFHS Alumni Association and was supported by the Irish Presbyterian Church. It issued two volumes each year, up to the last known extant volume published in Spring 1939. XRJK was edited by the Student Association of FFNS. For the second issue of XRJK, there were nine editors (including teachers and students) and three supervising directors. The three directors were Hou Dexi (侯德錫 dates unknown), the headmaster of FFNS, Xiao Shuseng (蕭淑笙 dates unknown), the principal of the attached primary school, and Xue Lanshi (薛蘭石 dates unknown), the director of third-year normal classes. The journal, therefore, was edited by Chinese teachers and students, under the supervision of Chinese administrators.[56] Beginning with the third issue, the leadership was reorganized into an editorial department with 13 members. Xue Lanshi became the main director, and the other members were teachers and students, including two first-year middle students. All expenses of XRJK were paid

54 Jiang Lei and Jin Hong, "Dikang wenxue zuojia 'feidianxing' jingli de dianxing yiyi—yi Li Zhengzhong wenxue shengya wei ge'an" [Typical significance of the "nontypical" experiences of resistance literature writers: a case study of Li Zhengzhong's literary career], *Shenyang shifan daxue xuebao (shehui kexueban)* 41, no. 3 (2017): 7–14.

55 He Airen, *Chuang qian cao* [Grass at the window] (Changchun: Changchun yizhi shudian, 1934; repr. 1937 and 1938); Chu Guoqing, "Teshu yujing zhong de chuanmei: wei Manzhouguo qikan gaishuo" [Media in special context: the general introduction of Manchukuo journals], in *Wei Manzhouguo qikan huibian* [Assembled journals of Manchukuo], vol. 1 (Beijing: Xianzhuang shuju, 2008), 22.

56 Fengtian shengli nuzi shifan xiehui [Student association of FFNS], *Xingren jikan* 2 (1934): 1. Reproductions of *Xingren jikan* can be found in *Wei Manzhouguo qikan huibian*, vol. 1.

from the school budget, under the approval of the headmaster.[57] The XRJK journal rules stated that student submissions would make up the bulk of each issue.

It is not clear from the extant documents how much day-to-day supervision and control the school administrators exercised over the journals. As we will see, the XRJK faculty editor, Xue Lanshi, was arrested for a time, which may have had an impact on the editorial staff. The content of the journals, however, indicates that the editors allowed a significant breadth of opinions on female roles. Although the 1935 XRJK rules said that there should be no discussion of social or ideological issues, in fact there was a great deal of such discussion. This suggests that, as in the case of Li Zhengzhong and his journal *Nanfeng*, the authorities largely left these journals alone and that the editors enjoyed a certain amount of autonomy.

To turn to the content of the magazines, the student authors expressed a wide variety of criticisms of traditional and GWWM ideas about the roles of women and made calls for progressive change. Some writers supported the more conservative GWWM policies. In 1934, for example, in the second issue of XRJK, Bai Yuzhi, a fifth-year normal student and a school leader, contributed an article that named and defined two competing ideologies in female education: GWWM and BGWWM. In describing GWWM, she combined traditional roles with practical economic necessity: "Females should be virtuous and capable housewives but also obtain independent economic ability, so they do not need to completely rely on males." Bai described BGWWM as females enjoying a social freedom that goes beyond economic necessity—they are able to work the same jobs as males and become leaders of society. She said the key differences between the two ideologies were questions of gender equality and leadership. Her conception of GWWM emphasized the responsibility of women toward the family, while her conception of BGWWM resembled Western feminism, recognizing women as independent actors in society.

Although Bai recognized the positive possibilities of BGWWM, she expressed a preference for the more conservative GWWM. "We should promote female education… and train specialized females, but we need to emphasize housework education."[58]

Yin Chunzhen (尹春珍 dates unknown), a second-year middle student, criticized the calls for female emancipation, labeling such efforts "merely vanity and a sweet dream." She encouraged women to become GWWM, because "[strengthening] the family is the first step in developing a country.… Women should be 'good wives' in order to raise a peaceful family. Women should be 'good mothers' so that they can raise good children."[59] Wang Xiaozhi, a FFNS third-year normal student, agreed with Yin, writing that "women should pay more attention to the family and take more responsibilities in the family than men." Wang also argued, however, that, like men, women should find employment outside the home.[60]

Sun Zhu'an (孫竹安 dates unknown), a third-year normal student, writing in the same 1934 issue, also used this dichotomy between GWWM and BGWWM to discuss

57 "Sanyue disanci xiaowu huiyi" [No. 3 school council in March], *Xingren jikan* 3 (1935): 80.

58 Bai Yuzhi, "Nüzi jiaoyu mantan" [On female education], *Xingren jikan* 2 (1934): 15–16.

59 Yin Chunzhen, "Nüzi jiaoyu de mudi" [The goal of women's education], *Xingren jikan* 2 (1934): 25.

60 Wang Xiaozhi, "Duiyu xiandai nütongxue yidian quangao" [Some advice for female students], *Xingren jikan* 2 (1934): 35.

women's literature. She praised BGWWM literary authors for their wide interests, including "independence, the study of literature, social education, school education, physics, and engineering," while criticizing authors who wrote from the GWWM viewpoint for their narrow focus on domestic issues. She claimed that women with the wider worldview had the ability to surpass men as successful writers.[61]

However, most of the responses to the concept of GWWM focused on three main aspects: gender equality, economic independence and humanism, and free marriage. This complex of progressive positions, which can be read as veiled criticism of the larger colonial structure, will be analyzed in the next section.

Gender Equality, Economic Independence, and Free Marriage in the Student Journals

Several of the articles advocated gender equality. Xu Fengzhen (徐鳳貞 dates unknown), a FFNS third-year middle student, wrote, "Males and females are both human, just different in their gender! Why do men always despise women?"[62] Liang Miaoping (梁渺萍 dates unknown), a CFHS fifth-year middle student, wrote in despair about the recent weakening of female empowerment: "Voices calling for equal rights for men and women seem to have disappeared. Women have access to higher education, but it is still rare to see women in a higher position."[63]

Several of the articles called on women to recognize oppression and strive for equality. Zhao Yuqing (趙玉清 dates unknown), a FFNS fourth-year normal student, criticized women without ambition: "There is a kind of women who jeers at and slanders women who have advanced beyond them, seeing them as peculiar, useless, and arrogant."[64] Qu Zeyuan (曲則媛 dates unknown), a FFNS third-year normal student, expressed her fear that the feminist movement was regressing: "I don't know what happened, but a kind of 'blind thought' has infiltrated females' thinking, which lowered their success, made them gradually bow their heads, and even crawl…. How pathetic!" She said educated females were regressing toward a "false modern" position. She appeared to refer to the May Fourth movement as a high point of feminism, and what she called "blind thought" was perhaps an allusion to the current GWWM ideology. In other words, GWWM ideology may have implied some degree of equality with males, but it actually delivered little for women. Qu exclaimed in the end, "Skin-deep reform is not what females need!"[65]

Wang Xiaozhi called on girls to stand up to males as equals. "If students want to be equal with men and not be their slaves, they should build their own careers and be leaders of women in society."[66] Dong Jiayi (董佳怡 dates unknown), a FFNS second-year middle

61 Sun Zhu'an, "Tantan nüzuojia" [On female writers], *Xingren jikan* 2 (1934): 27.

62 Xu Fengzhen, "Nüzi yu mianqu nanren qingshi de yaosu" [Removing the elements by which males despise females], *Xingren jikan* 2 (1934): 17–18.

63 Liang Miaoping, "Tantan xiandai nüqingnian de chulu" [On the forward way of modern women], *Cuiwen jikan* 8 (1935): 9–10.

64 Zhao Yuqing, "Nannü pingquan mantan" [On equal rights of men and women], *Xingren jikan* 2 (1934): 18–20.

65 Qu Zeyuan, "Guanyu funü de yiduanhua" [A word given to women], *Xingren jikan* 2 (1934): 20.

66 Wang, "Duiyu xiandai nütongxue," 35.

student, asked women to learn and emulate the "Hua Mulan" (花木蘭) spirit, referring to the Sui-era poem about a woman who dresses as a man to take her father's place in the army. "Today all women are advocating equal rights with men.… You must become another Hua Mulan, acting without fear!"[67]

In an atmosphere in which the Manchukuo government promoted the ideas of GWWM, trying to strengthen awareness of traditional Confucian morality and weaken the influence of Western female emancipation ideas, several students wrote to applaud females' public actions of bravery and freedom, rather than modesty, and called for gender equality.

Several authors emphasized women's independence and ability to compete with men in social, political, and economic fields. They called for more education in skills that would help open up wider occupation choices, leading to greater economic independence.

Sun Chao (孫超 dates unknown), a FFNS fifth-year normal student spoke of economic power as being the way to achieve change and said that women needed to become economically independent.[68]

Cheng Ruixin (程蕊新 dates unknown), a FFNS first-year normal student, criticized both GWWM education and those well-educated females who did nothing to encourage reform or equality but rather conformed to their families' expectations. She also bemoaned the lack of occupational opportunities for women and the way they were treated as "flower vases," existing only as decorations and not as people of substance.[69]

Liu Zongyu (劉宗玉 dates unknown), a FFNS second-year normal student, wrote in her essay "Abandonment" about a girl who hoped to "build larger factories and charities. Then all the aspiring young people in the country would respond to her call. All the poor people would live happily and well."[70] Liu is one of several authors who expressed humanist ideals, including responsibility toward the poor. This idea can also be found in the writing of adult Manchukuo female authors such as Mei Niang (梅娘 1920–2013), who worked to combine their feminist discourses with humanitarian concerns, critiquing a contemporary society that was dominated by both patriarchal and colonial interests.[71]

Several of the articles criticized the patriarchal custom of arranged marriage. At this time freedom of choice in romantic love was a potent symbol of the modern world, and arranged marriage was a frequent target of scorn for modernizing Chinese. The fact that GWWM education did little to oppose arranged marriages must have made it seem old-fashioned to these students.

Two stories written by FFNS second-year normal students, "Women's Life" and "After the Mother Died," described the miserable states of two female students whose lives were upended by arranged marriages. The authors lashed out at both the patriarchal system and the students' failure to try to escape their fathers or fight against the system.[72]

67 Dong Jiayi, "Lun Hua Mulan" [On Hua Mulan], *Xingren jikan* 4 (1935): 87.

68 Sun Chao, "Nüzi jiaoyu yu shehui zhi lianxi" [A connection between female education and society], *Xingren jikan* 2 (1934): 16–17.

69 Cheng Ruixin, "Nüzi qiuxue zhi mudi nüzi zhiye zhi qiantu" [The purpose of female education and female career prospects], *Xingren jikan* 2 (1934): 6.

70 Liu Zongyu, "Yi qi" [Abandonment], *Xingren jikan* 3 (1935): 60.

71 Wang Xiaoping, "Narrating Oppressions against the Chinese 'New Woman': Mei Niang on Japanese Colonial Domination," *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* 18, no. 2 (2012): 95–118.

72 Liu Hanzhao, "Nüren de yisheng" [Women's life], *Xingren jikan* 5 (1935): 67–68; Cai Jusun, "Muqin sihou" [After the mother died], *Xingren jikan* 5 (1935): 69–71.

In the essay "Only to Do," Ji Xiu (紀琇 dates unknown), a FFNS sixth-year middle student, described a friend, Miss D, who publicly fell in love with a boy, ignoring others' criticisms. Ji praised her bravery, calling it "a revolution." Ji saw the freedom to love not just as a personal issue but rather as part of a larger struggle for female independence. These writings often called on women to act bravely as models for society. "Miss D, you are a leader of our time, a leader of young people … you never fear what others think. Your actions are valuable for society."[73]

From Female Advocacy to Political Subversion

Student authors used a variety of strategies to link their advocacy for women's emancipation to problems in the political system. Deng Xuefang (鄧雪芳 dates unknown), a FFNS first-year middle student and one of the journal's student editors, wrote an article in which she quoted a proverb, "Using the words of one's enemy may help one defeat the enemy" (他山之石可以攻玉 *Ta shan zhi shi keyi gong yu*). She then linked female advancement to the Confucian concept of "the paradise of the kingly way" (王道樂土 *wangdao letu*), an idea of a strong government leading to a prosperous society, which the Manchukuo government had taken as one of its mottos. She claimed that women were a key element of achieving the social peace implicit in the idea of a "paradise." In order for women to best fulfill that role, they needed to achieve legal, political, economic, and educational equality, as well as freedom of speech and assembly.[74] Using "the words of [the] enemy" to make her point, Deng Xuefang was able to link her advocacy for women's emancipation to the political situation. She concluded, "In order to change women's situation, we need to first change the political system."

Other authors used positive examples from foreign countries or other parts of China to support their criticisms of Manchukuo society and thereby make implicit criticisms of the Manchukuo state. For example, Liang Yuwen (梁毓雯 dates unknown), a FFNS second-year normal student, contrasted the relatively free life of women in other cities in China with the oppressed state of women in Manchukuo. Among her friends in Manchukuo, four had marriages determined by their family when they were children. Although they received good educations, they led miserable lives. One chose to commit suicide, while the others continued sadly under patriarchal oppression. She then described the free and happy life of a classmate who fled to Tianjin, outside of Manchukuo.[75] In her article, therefore, Liang combined several elements. By contrasting life in Manchukuo and Tianjin, she struck a nationalistic note. At the same time, she used her images of women's predicament in Manchukuo to criticize the colonial regime and express the desire to escape the colonial rule.

Sun Yulan (孫毓蘭 dates unknown), a FFNS first-year middle student and one of the journal's student editors, made what can be read as an indirect criticism of Manchukuo's education system. Sun condemned the state of education in Republican China,

73 Ji Xiu, "Zhi you zuo" [Only to do], *Xingren jikan* 2 (1934): 22.

74 Deng Xuefang, "Wangdao zhengzhi xia de funü" [Women under the paradise of the kingly way], *Xingren jikan* 2 (1934): 38–45.

75 Liang Yuwen, "Wo de pengyou men" [My friends], *Xingren jikan* 2 (1934): 8–12.

particularly damning their girls' schools for focusing on "females' home management, teaching subjects like morality, sewing, cooking, household affairs, etc."[76] On the surface, she was positive about Manchukuo, although she expressed concern about gender inequalities between male and female education and the shortage of female schools. Her criticism of Republican China's focus can be read as a veiled criticism of Manchukuo's female education, which was similarly focused on domestic skills.

Pointedly, none of the articles appearing in the journal used Japan as a positive example. Instead, they frequently used Western countries as positive examples. For example, both Sun Yulan and Zhao Yuqing wrote articles that praised the status of women in Western countries and compared it favorably to the situation of women in Manchukuo.[77] Zhao was forthright in her feminism and criticized the lack of political rights in Manchukuo: "Females do not have the right to vote or be elected, and no one even discusses the possibility of females participating in politics." She also criticized "laws that treat females as unequal to males, such as inheritance laws. Without inheritance rights… females are not economically equal."[78] Another article claimed the protagonist went to Europe with her friend to study "advanced science," just as her father had done.[79]

Wang Shufang (王淑芳 dates unknown), a FFNS second-year normal student, used Western examples to illustrate her defense of female emancipation. She claimed that contemporary women were demanding liberation because of influence from enlightenment ideas and the French Revolution.[80] She mentioned the examples of feminist pioneers Marie-Jeanne "Manon" Roland de la Platière (1754–1793), Anne Louise Germaine de Stael-Holstein (1766–1817), and Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–1797) to defend her calls for equal education and job training opportunities. She argued that those claiming male superiority were only trying to "maintain their authority." She dismissed the idea that female emancipation would result in "seized men's rights, ruined families, and a breakdown in public order."

These articles highlight these students' interests in placing the Manchukuo experience in a wider social and political world context, going beyond their school lives, and lacing them into the struggles of the wider world. Although political activism by students in Asian colonial societies was not uncommon,[81] it is notable that such progressive opinions appeared in a student journal under an oppressive regime like Manchukuo. An examination of the history of *Xingren jikan* and the trends in the articles' themes demonstrates a decrease in progressive articles by the final 1936 issue.

Taking Bai and Sun's dichotomy as a measuring stick, *Xingren jikan*'s articles on gender can be divided into two groups: (1) GWWM articles that celebrated women's domestic roles and (2) BGWWM articles that emphasized women's activities outside

76 Sun Yulan, "Nüzi jiaoyu jinxi de bijiao" [A comparison of women's education between the present and the past], *Xingren jikan* 2 (1934): 12.

77 Sun Yulan, "Nüzi jiaoyu jinxi de bijiao," 12; Zhao Yuqing, "Nannü pingquan mantan," 18–20.

78 Zhao, "Nannü pingquan mantan," 18–20.

79 Yang Huizhong, "Xiwang" [Hope], *Xingren jikan* 2 (1934): 59–61.

80 Wang Shufang, "Funü wenti mantan" [A discussion of women], *Xingren jikan* 4 (1935): 3–4.

81 See Sudipa Topdar, "Duties of a 'Good Citizen': Colonial Secondary School Textbook Policies in Late Nineteenth-Century India," *South Asian History and Culture* 6, no. 3 (2015): 417–39; Pok-kwan Chiu, "'A Position Of Usefulness': Gendering History Of Girls' Education In Colonial Hong Kong (1850s–1890s)," *History of Education* 37, no. 6 (2008): 789–805.

the home and women's desires for equal rights. A few articles combined aspects of both BGWWM and GWWM. I measured how many articles supported each position. The 36 articles that reflected BGWWM ideas accounted for 71% of the 51 total articles on gender, three times the number of articles that reflected GWWM ideas (Table 1). This ratio is evidence that BGWWM ideas were influential among female students in the early Manchukuo period. There was, however, a shift over time. While articles that reflected BGWWM ideas appeared much more often than GWWM articles in the first three issues during 1934–1935, this imbalance decreased slightly in late 1935, and then eventually BGWWM ideas disappeared in the final issue in 1936 (Table 1). This conservative trend suggests that authorities began to enact stricter censorship over the magazine or at least pressured the editors into stricter self-censorship.

The BGWWM articles in XRJK are critical of traditional patriarchal positions that limit women's participation in society, force them to marry, and channel them into lives centered on the domestic sphere. Likewise, colonial officials encouraged educated women to focus on domestic duties as a way to stabilize colonial rule. The state wanted to train girls to be mothers who could support a stable family and who could teach their children the pro-Japanese and pro-obedience messages they had learned in schools. With this confluence of patriarchal and colonial support for female domesticity, the student authors' critiques of patriarchy can be read not only as a push toward female liberation but also as criticism of the colonial regime. Whether because of simple inattention or a focus on other priorities, the officials chose to let the journal continue to publish these antipatriarchal BGWWM articles throughout 1934 and 1935. By 1936, however, the faculty advisor had been removed from her position (as will be discussed below), and the final 1936 issue clearly reflected a censoring of the student authors' feminist ideas.

School Oppression and Student Resistance in Female Secondary Schools

This section will use postwar testimonies to examine instances of school oppression and student resistance to provide context for students' acts of resistance in the school journals. As mentioned above, the state emphasized absolute obedience in schools. Zhang Ruixue (張瑞雪 1929–), a student at the Xinjing First Female National High School, commented, "The relationship between teachers and students was that of complete obedience. The teachers' word was law, even when they were wrong. Students were beaten when they stepped out of line."[82] Fear of punishment and possible expulsion resulted in a tense relationship with the Japanese teachers.

Some Chinese teachers looked for opportunities to inspire student patriotism in the face of Japanese supervision. Several students have testified that teachers who were found to have written anything anti-Japanese or participated in any anti-Japanese activities were jailed, tortured, and even executed.[83] The fate of Xue Lanshi, the journal's main faculty advisor, may have played a role in the journal's demise. In the penultimate issue, the afterword says that Xue had been assigned by the government to edit textbooks in 1935,

82 Topdar, "Duties of a Good Citizen," 687.

83 Topdar, "Duties of a Good Citizen," 687–88, 500–501.

Table 1. Gender-Themed Articles in *Xingren jikan*

Issue and Year	Number of Articles	Number of Gender-Themed Articles	Number and Percentage Featuring GWWM	Number and Percentage Featuring BGWWM	Number and Percentage Featuring Both
No. 2 (1934)	151	27	5 (3%)	20 (13%)	2 (1%)
No. 3 (1935)	42	7	1 (2%)	6 (14%)	0
No. 4 (1935)	55	7	1 (2%)	6 (11%)	0
No. 5 (1935)	72	7	2 (3%)	4 (6%)	1 (1%)
No. 6 (1936)	79	3	3 (4%)	0	0
Total	399	51	12 (3%)	36 (9%)	3 (0.7%)

GWWM, "good wives and wise mothers" (良妻賢母 *liang qi xian mu*); BGWWM, "beyond good wives and wise mothers" (超於良妻賢母 *chao yu liang qi xian mu*).

which would lead to a slowdown in the publication of the journal.[84] However, Guang Zhuanglin (廣莊璘 1917–), who was a FFNS normal student from 1932 to 1935, and who had two articles in XRJK, later testified, "Xue Lanshi disappeared one day. Later, we found out she had been arrested. It took a long time for her to return to school, and we were very worried about her. When she returned, she … avoided answering any questions from the students."[85] The progressive articles published while Xue was the main faculty advisor at XRJK may have been a factor in Xue's arrest. FFNS student Wang Yuhuan (王玉環 1925–) reported that six male teachers were arrested in June 1935 and never returned. "The whole school was shrouded in terror," she claimed.[86]

Former FFNS student Guang Zhuanglin testified that FFNS students felt able to confide in some Chinese teachers. She told of how the students were instructed to write about an event welcoming the emperor of Manchukuo, Aisin Gioro Puyi (愛新覺羅·溥儀 1906–1967). The students told their Chinese teacher they would not write the essay, and in reply she pleaded with them to submit. Although she sympathized with them, she told them they had no choice, concluding, "I am a colonial slave, like you." Deng Qichao (鄧其超 1925–), who entered FFNS as a middle school student in 1939, testified about an influential history teacher named Liu Derun (劉德潤 dates unknown). She related that one day Liu closed the doors of the classroom and tearfully said, "I'm not afraid of whoever may inform against me today in this class. I want to tell you the true history." He risked his life to talk about the September 1931 Manchurian incident and took some students to visit the scene of the incident.[87]

Underground reading and writing clubs provided a channel through which students could gain access to progressive books. If the school journals were a public platform for disseminating ideas of resistance to colonialism, then the reading clubs were a covert alternative. Yu Manxi described a secret FFNS reading club named "Anti-Manchukuo and Anti-Japan." She claimed they studied Chinese history and read banned books on Marxism and revolution, some of which were smuggled in from the Soviet Union.[88] Mei Niang claimed female students at her school held covert reading clubs, where they read Maxim Gorky, Nikolai Gogol, and the anticolonial authors Xiao Jun (蕭軍 1907–1988) and Xiao Hong (蕭紅 1911–1942). She said the participants tried to write their own anticolonial pieces. "We wrote with great enthusiasm to express our dissatisfaction with society, and all the despair, darkness, and injustice we felt in our childish hearts."[89]

These reading clubs' activities were often curtailed by arrests. The Japanese arrested several students of the government-run Jianguo University in 1942 or 1943 for lending forbidden books to other students.[90] Mei Niang recalled another episode: "Xie Shaozhen [薛紹珍], a member of the reading club, disappeared, and the bookstore beside our school was closed down. They said they were spreading anti-Japanese speech. The school and

84 Huo Shijun, editor's note, *Xingren jikan* 5 (1935): 100.
85 Qi, *Jianzheng riben qin hua*, 61.
86 Qi, *Jianzheng riben qin hua*, 347.
87 Qi, *Jianzheng riben qin hua*, 61, 403.
88 Qi, *Jianzheng riben qin hua*, 419–20.
89 Mei, "Wo de qingshaonian shiqi," 66.
90 Qi, *Jianzheng riben qin hua,* 419–20.

police carried out a thorough examination."[91] With the help of her teachers, the reading club was disguised as a pro-Manchukuo organization and successfully avoided further trouble.

These types of resistance activities by female students and others may have played a part in stimulating colonial officials into changing the education system. The Manchukuo government in May 1937 announced a "New Education System" that changed the school structures and curriculum. The overall length of education was shortened, the graduation age became younger, higher education was weakened, and there was a greater focus on the cultivation of basic technical skills and patriotic Manchukuo material.

Manchukuo Education Trends in 1937 and After

Manchukuo education officials appear to have become increasingly concerned with student calls for liberal individual rights. Perhaps in response to discussion of women's emancipation, beginning in 1937 there was a shift in female education rhetoric in the official journal *Fengtian Education* from an emphasis on traditional roles toward celebration of patriotism and criticism of feminism and Western individualism. Females increasingly were encouraged to avoid "selfish" Western ideas, including individualism, materialism, and feminism, and authors frequently spoke of rectifying the "mistakes" of past educators. Although the magazine had included criticism of Western ideas as far back as 1932, the criticism became especially frequent in 1937. Writers insisted that so-called Eastern values such as diligence, patience, and affinity for one's family were more beneficial to females.

Satō Yoshiko, a Japanese educator who gave a government-sponsored lecture on vocational education for female teachers in 1937, discussed how educated females could be misled by Western ideas:

> The objective of female education is to train females to be "good wives and wise mothers." … The Western ideology of materialism, which says that males and females are equal and that females need to be liberated and which denies the female nature, has greatly influenced many.… It has placed the nation in danger.… Eastern family-centered society is not compatible with Western individualism. Females should return to the home and let the world understand the Eastern ideology of "good wives and wise mothers."[92]

She further claimed that Western ideas had ruined many females:

> There are two extreme types of women: one type is weak and incompetent in daily life, influenced by common customs and lacking in deep relationships.… Another type, the intellectual woman who received an education equal to men, has been damaged by ideas of gender equality. They loudly proclaim that women have the same duties as men, and they take part in street demonstrations while foisting their housework onto maids. They just enjoy themselves and never work.[93]

91 Mei, "Wo de qingshaonian shiqi," 66.

92 Satō Yoshiko, "Joshi kyōiku-sha no shimei" [The mission of women educators], *Fengtian jiaoyu* 5, no. 9 (1937): 135.

93 Satō, "Joshi kyōiku-sha no shimei," 139–40.

Satō linked teaching GWWM concepts with strengthening devotion to the colonial state. She wrote, "The nourishment of families by females will develop national character and also contribute to human development.… Female education teaches females to understand their natural duties, improve the family, and take part in the completion of the sacred goal of 'paradise of the kingly way.'"[94]

Satō also quoted a document by Nakano Hidemitsu—who was a Kwantung Army officer and chairman of the Manchukuo Imperial Defense Women's Association—on national spirit. Nakano criticized Western ideologies as individualistic and egoistic and claimed that "people who are individualistic and egoistic lack respect for public property and public morality."[95]

Pro-Manchukuo authors blamed Western ideologies for damaging the national spirit as well. The Chinese educator Ren Zhongxiao (任忠孝 dates unknown) wrote in *Fengtian Education* in 1941:

> In the Republic of China, Western thought, which advocated equality and freedom, greatly impacted females. Females would talk glibly about freedom and equality and equal gender rights.… They tried to make reforms, but instead their blind worship just led to pathetic mistakes.… Every country has its own spirit and morality. Western thought damaged the national spirit by encouraging people to abandon our country's original spirit and morality without any introspection.… Three bad results occurred in education: first, females (especially high-school students) became arrogant; second, females never learned how to find a suitable marriage partner; third, females found that none of the knowledge they gained in school was of any use in building up their new families.[96]

Therefore, Ren continued, "Manchukuo female education should try to remove malign ideas that originated in Europe and America and instead try to meet the real needs of society by developing the natural female spirit."[97]

Although there is no discernible direct connection between the BGWWM student journal articles and the increasingly conservative and antifeminist articles in *Fengtian Education* in 1937 and later, it is clear that the kind of attitudes found in the female student journal articles helped spur this conservative backlash from the colonial authorities.

Conclusion

Liu Yuzhen, a FFNS third-year middle student and one of the journal's student editors, wrote in her essay, "The Spirit of Modern Women": "How unlucky women are, trapped by their responsibilities to the family and the expectation to be obedient

94 Satō, "Joshi kyōiku-sha no shimei," 135–37.

95 Satō, "Joshi kyōiku-sha no shimei," 140–41.

96 Ren Zhongxiao, "Nüzi jiaoyu: Manzhou guomin gaodeng xuexiao jiaolun" [Female education: the teaching of Manchukuo national high school], *Fengtian jiaoyu* 7, no. 7 (1941): 87.

97 Ren, "Nüzi jiaoyu," 87.

'good wives,' and gentle 'wise mothers.'"[98] Liu advocated a progressive form of female liberation—one that seemed far from possible in contemporary Northeast China—and criticized the mottos used in the colonial state's education curriculum. The Manchukuo female secondary students examined in this study were not free to openly oppose the existence of the colonial regime, but their criticisms of traditional patriarchy can also be read as acting in lieu of more dangerous direct political opposition to the colonial regime.

In the early colonial period, female students found a relatively permissive space to express their positions. Articles related to "beyond good wives and wise mothers" accounted for the greater part of students' articles. However, these more progressive articles decreased in *Xingren jikan* between 1934 and 1936, and they vanished in the final issue. Furthermore, the arrests of students, teachers, and magazine editors and the state's criticism of Western-derived ideologies demonstrate that colonial supervision strengthened over time and that the state was concerned with students' progressive feminist positions. Female students found that underground journals and writing clubs were the only outlets left for their efforts to express their frustrations with patriarchal and colonial structures.

In some early twentieth-century Asian societies, such as India, colonial regimes, however unpopular they might have been, were not seen as defenders of a traditional patriarchal order. Sometimes Asian nationalists rejected progressive modernity, creating a tension between anticolonial nationalism and support for women's rights. Historical circumstances helped to shape a situation in 1920s China, however, in which there was a much clearer connection between feminism and nationalism.

In occupied Manchukuo in the 1930s, the connection between Chinese nationalism and feminism remained strong. When Japan invaded, it brought with it a conservative "Good Wives and Wise Mothers" ideology, and naturally that ideology came to be linked with the colonization effort. Chinese women in Manchukuo who favored female liberation could easily make the link between female liberation and nationalist, anticolonial efforts, allowing them to support both positions without any sense of contradiction.

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98 Liu Yuzhen, "Xiandai funü yingju de jingshen" [The spirit of modern women], *Xingren jikan* 2 (1934): 26–27.