Embodiment and Subjectivity of the Advertisement in 1935

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ART 272: Embodiment and Subjectivity in Later Chinese Art

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Qipao:

“At the time it was considered a very daring style, revealing the shape of a woman’s figure as never before ”

“With most fashion activities taking place in Shanghai, it was not surprising that the next development in Chinese dress should take place there.”

“ the iconic garment by which Chinese women are still known throughout the world, and which provides constant inspiration for fashion designers in the West. ”

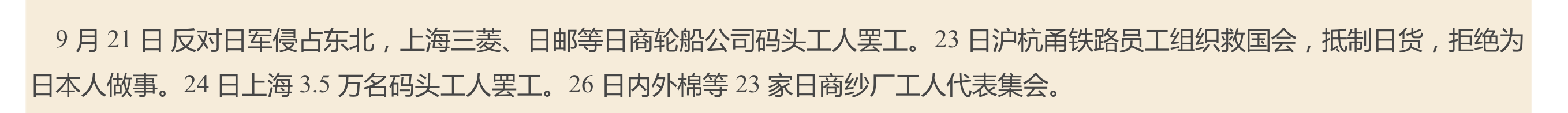
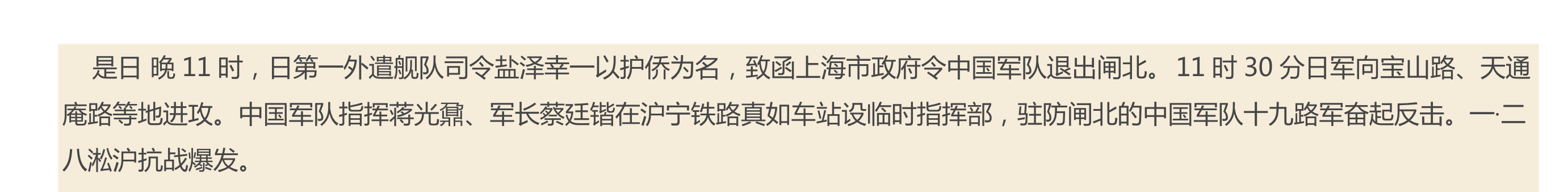
“Women with style copied the permanent wave favored by Shanghai movie stars. ”

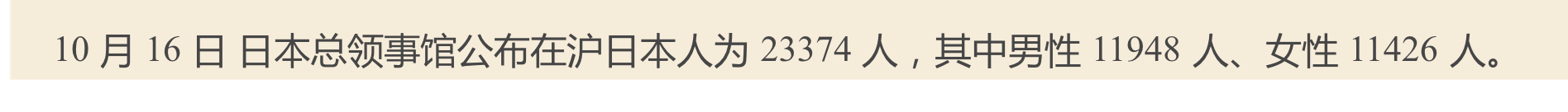
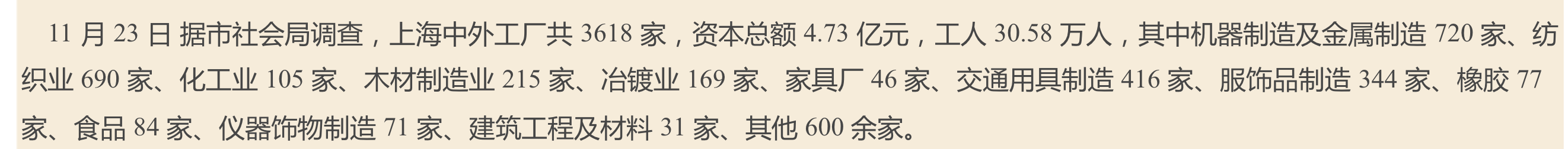
“With their glamorous poses, wavy hair, arched eyebrows, and coy looks, their influence was pervasive ”

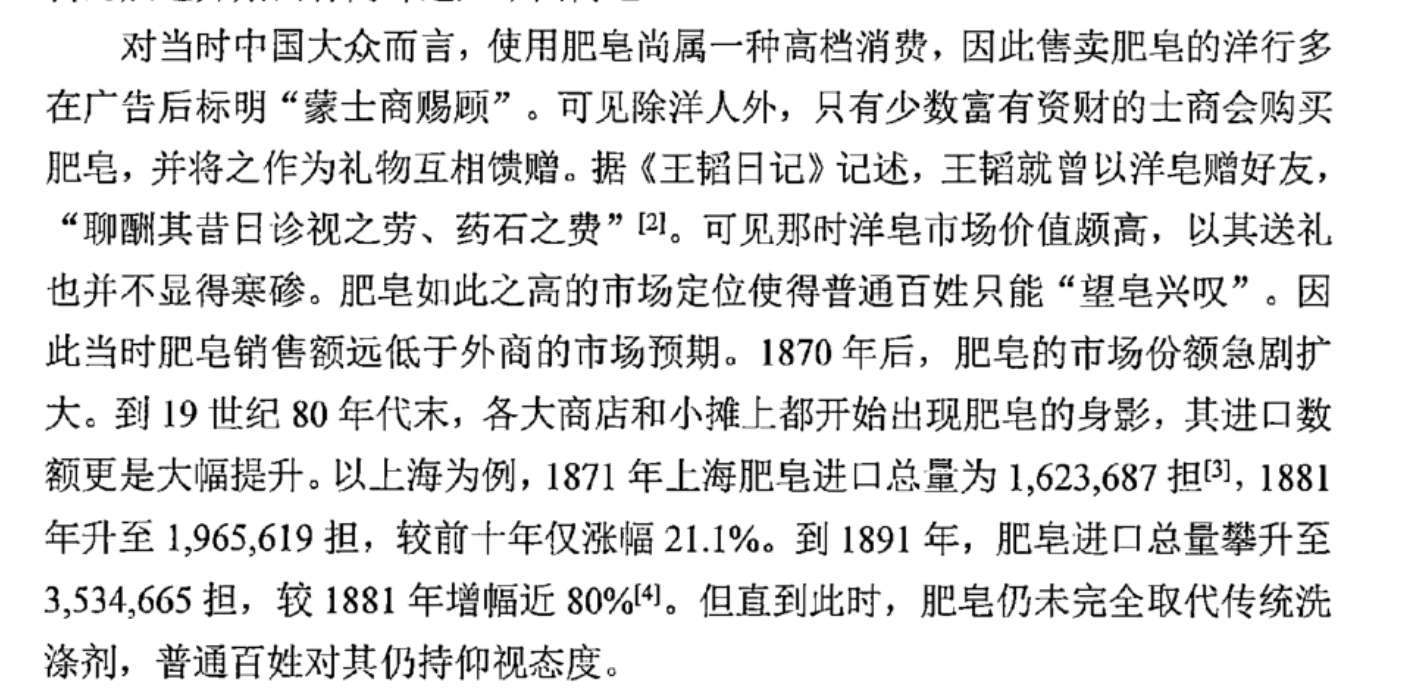
“During the 1930s, hemlines dropped to the ankle, and by the middle of the decade they covered the feet in some cases (Figs. 297, 299–301). Gradually, the cheongsam became quite a fitted garment. Some, worn by very fashion-conscious women, had side slits reaching right up to the thigh. These styles were provocative and accentuated a woman’s sexuality, emphasized by legs clad in silk stockings (a recent innovation) and high heels.”

Excerpt From: Valery Garrett. “Chinese Dress.” Apple Books.

Semicolon

1935  



With dark yellow as the main color frame, two women in qipao are playing golf in an advertising poster for a Shanghai soap company in 1935.1 The Chinese brand of the soap was “Baiyushuang”, which is the name of a famous opera actress in Shanghai in 1930s. However, the English brand of this soap, “Victoria”, was from Europe, and the manufacture factory was from Japan.2 This poster perfectly recreates the image of women and unveils the multicultural society in modern Shanghai. Therefore, this paper will discuss these women and their clothes, and indicate how elements in this advertisement embody the identities about women in Shanghai.

By 1888, the modern soap industry began to appear in China. Subsequently, Shanghai gradually became the center of Chinese soap industry with its unique industrial advantages and treaty port. With boycott foreign goods movement intensified since 1920 due to the Japanese attacks, the competition between the foreign and Chinese soap industry were never ceased.

Qipao is the symbol for the evolution of the modernization in China.