



Asian Modernity: Images of New Women from Chinese and Japanese Posters in 1920-30s

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Japanese Studies

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In early twentieth century, Shanghai and Tokyo were the biggest commercial cities which took the lead in becoming mass consumer societies in East Asia. With the development of women's education, mass media, popular culture, and retail establishments, there emerged a group of New Women categorized as "female students", "professional women", and "housewives". They subsequently became the main bearers in the formation of the modern consumer society, as well as the nation-state. By showing the New Woman selling both foreign and domestic products such as cigarettes, clothing, cosmetics, medicine, and other daily necessities in posters, this paper examines how Western ideas of aesthetics, health, sanitation, and science promoted and shaped the formation of modernism in China and Japan. I will also analyze how images of New Women and their lifestyles are presented, how these New Women are constructed to be ideal models of modern consumerism so as to aspire other consumers' emulation through the purchase of good and services, and how images of New Women become the goods themselves.

Dr Yongmei Wu is a postdoctoral fellow with Japanese Studies at the School of Modern Languages and Cultures. Her research interests are focused on women as subjects of selling, enjoying, and consuming modernity in East Asia during the early twentieth century; the presence of Japanese popular culture in China; social issues in China and Japan such as aging, social security system, gender and women, family, youth employment and subcultures among young people. Her publications include *The Care of the Elderly in Japan* (Routledge 2009).

Please contact Dr. Adelyn Lim (adelyn@hku.hk) or Ms Christy Ho (chhristy@hku.hk) should there be any questions.

