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Nationalist and Feminist Discourses on *Jianmei* (Robust Beauty) during China's 'National Crisis' in the 1930s

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The female body – its meaning and ownership – has long served as a signifier for competing nationalist and feminist discourses on womanhood in modern China. Woman's body, as a site of contested meanings, reflected the uncertain status of women as national subjects.[1] That uncertainty was particularly evident during China's 'national crisis' (*guonan*) following the 1931 Mukden Incident, which launched a series of Japanese aggressive military manoeuvres in the north and east coast and lasted until Japanese defeat in 1945. During that time, Chinese nationalists, attempting to reinforce the strength of their threatened nation, encouraged Chinese women to become physically strong. As part of the state-building project, the Nationalist government went as far as using legal and administrative procedures to enforce the development of strong physiques and participation in *tiyu* (sport; physical education; physical culture)[2] as a woman's civic obligation.

At the same time, the female body was taken as the site to hold the unchanging essence and moral purity of the Chinese nation.[3] The national leader Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek) and his wife Song Meiling launched the New Life Movement during the 1930s to renew a wartime citizenry dedicated to family, society and national goals by instilling ideas of self-discipline and moral regulation, 'allegedly the factors behind China's historical greatness', and to purify and correct the morality of the masses who were corrupted by Communism.[4] Jiang declared that 'today we all recognise the important place of the [Confucian] ideals of *li*, *yi*, *lian*, *chi* [civility, righteousness, incorruptibility, sense of shame] in revolutionary nation-building [*gemin jianguo*]'. Song Meiling described the spiritual and moral reinvigoration of Chinese society as the basis of the nation's political and economic reform.[5] Physical discipline was soon connected to the state's control over the morality of its citizenry. For the 1933 Fifth National Games, Jiang cabled from Nanchang where he was stationed with Song Meiling to purge the Communists, stressing that 'all types of *tiyu* competition require a certain kind of discipline. Cultivating our national virtues of civility, righteousness, incorruptibility and sense of shame, while setting a good example for the younger generation, has much to do with *tiyu* as well'.[6]

Although male bodies also had to be trained, the burden of embodying 'traditional moral and spiritual greatness' fell upon women, taken to be the weaker sex. The New Life Movement scrutinised women's bodies in accordance with the Confucian standards of *fenghua* ('morality' or 'moral transformation of [society]'), which had lain at the heart of state-controlled moral and spiritual normative traditions since classical times. As this essay shows, however, the campaign to discipline and train citizens' bodies eventually went beyond the state's control; popular urban newspapers and magazines promoted *tiyu* using the rhetoric of patriotism, modernisation, aesthetics and fashion, which often exceeded the strictures of *fenghua* morality.

State and popular discourses were both informed by the 'life reform movement' (*Lebensreformbewegung*) popular in the early twentieth-century United States and Europe, especially Germany. Advocates of the movement built a cult of 'health' and 'beauty' on the 'rediscovery of the human body' through sport, gymnastics, dance and particularly 'physical culture' (*Körperkultur*) centred on popular hygiene such as open-air exercise, diet, clothing reform and natural therapies that highlighted the sun and nudism (*Freikörperkultur*).[7] But the meanings of physical health and beauty, which attempted to recapture 'genuine' and 'natural' life forces to counter 'artificial' modern civilisation, were publicly contested in the formation of class, gender and racial identities.[8] Henning Eichberg highlights the interaction of body culture with spatial and environmental aspects of society. He recognises that 'what the human body should be, do and look like is "constructed" by diverse discourses and practices in a specific society'.[9] Similarly, when the practices and ideals of 'health' and 'beauty' – and their multiple and contradictory meanings – were translated into China as *jianmei* (robust beauty) cultivated by *tiyu* during the 'national crisis', discourses of the fit body and physical beauty were recreated and refashioned by local dynamics. The goal of this essay is to illuminate this process of translating the cult of 'health' and 'beauty' into local Chinese discourses.

Scholars have analysed the interactions between *tiyu*, feminism and nationalism in modern China. Fan Hong focuses on the liberating role *tiyu* played in freeing women's bodies and improving their status in Republican China. Andrew Morris challenges Fan's 'liberating' narrative by arguing that limitless manipulation and national ends in modern *tiyu* trumped the possibilities for women rather than allowing them to address and shape their identities for themselves. You Jianming's position is contradictory. Treating 'female ball game players' (*nü qiuyuan*) active in eastern China from 1931 to 1937 as a unique category among new urban women, You highlights their contribution to women's rights and liberation through 'transcending the barriers of gender, thus sharing honours and competing with their male counterparts for ball courts'. Through a reading of newspapers and magazines, You explores the image of 'female ball game players' and its complex interaction with the general public. Tracing the development, goals and methods of Chinese women's *tiyu* since the turn of the century, You concludes that 'suppressed by nationalistic and procreative issues', women's rights proponents 'failed to win for the woman's body a more autonomous elbowroom' through *tiyu*. You noted the public promotion of *jianmei* as fashion during the 'national crisis'. However, she believes that *jianmei* was ultimately used by men to judge women's bodies and was dominated by nationalist goals.[10]

In this essay, I show how feminist and nationalist dimensions intertwined subtly in the translation of the modern Western categories of *jianmei* and *tiyu* into China during

the 'national crisis'. I examine *Linglong*, a weekly women's magazine published in Shanghai from 1931 to 1937, to show the various interactions between *fenghua* and the new fashion concept of *jianmei.* The interaction of state-regulated female body codes in the New Life Movement and *jianmei* (cultivated through *tiyu*) backed by a populist feminist agenda affected popular culture in contradictory ways. On the one hand, the plain, makeup-free style in *jianmei* exemplified moral women's austerity. Conversely, the bare legs and feet of *jianmei* female bodies were often viewed as 'harmful to public morals' (*youshang fenghua*). Within these contradictions, Chinese women gained an enabling female space through complex interactions with the nationalist agenda as *jianmei* and *tiyu* became prevalent in fashion and the mass media.

Prasenjit Duara argues that although 'different women's groups and publications loosely affiliated with the Nationalist Party expressed radical and feminist points of view . . . the dominant political tendency represented the view of a modern patriarchy'. He suggests that 'women's passivity and their being spoken for represented the political meaning of their gender'.[11] In *Linglong*, editorials by one of its chief editors, Ms Chen Zhenling, and the contributions by other urban educated women, offered an alternative voice that has been generally neglected by scholars who focus on state or institutional forces. Women, especially those who were educated and urban, fashioned active roles for themselves within a limited space through nuanced and complex negotiations with the dominant but self-contradictory wartime patriarchal nationalist forces.

One of the ways that it did this was via discussion of *jianmei*. European life reformers popularised and publicised ideas of the healthy and beautiful body in the cinema and the popular press via photographs, drawings, anatomical models, textual descriptions and exercise guides.[12] Similarly, *jianmei* entered Chinese popular culture through the cinema and the press, especially highly successful pictorial magazines published by the Commercial Press and Liangyou Publishing House. Liangyou's flagship journal, *Liangyou huabao* (*The Young Companion*, 1926–45), 'ushered in a phase of pictorial journalism which reflected this urban taste for the "modern" life'.[13] With the growth of literacy among women in the Republican era, women's publications emerged as an integral part of the rising popular press. According to *Linglong*'s 'Survey of Women's Magazines and Journals across the Nation' in June 1933, there were twenty-three women's periodicals of various kinds across major cities in China.[14]

Among popular women's periodicals, *Linglong* distinguished itself as the standard for promoting *jianmei* and *tiyu* for women. In 1931 *Linglong* initiated a column to advocate *tiyu* and advance health through *tiyu* photographs and articles. Readers were asked to provide relevant materials. In 1932, an editorial stated that 'our magazine particularly carries *tiyu* news, especially women's'.[15] By 1933, the magazine was urging its readers to recommend the magazine, 'as the only mouthpiece for all sisters, paying special attention to women's *jianmei*', to friends and relatives so that all could rid themselves of their sickly appearance.[16] The name *Linglong* (literally, chiselled) is from the expression '*xiaoqiao linglong*', used to describe objects or people as small-sized but elegant. According to a middle-school student athlete, Lan Diqing, 'today I see the little and lovely copy of *Linglong*, of which I have heard for a long time. Its elegant look and rich contents show the good future of women in our nation and explain why society views the magazine so highly' (Figure 1).[17] True to its name, the magazine was pocket-sized, ranging in length from 30 to 80 pages. Its contents

Figure 1: Female athletes appreciated the popular magazine *Linglong*. Li Yinan (on the left) from Dongnan Tiyu School, a participant of the 1933 National Games, praised *Linglong* as 'women's parents, older brother, lawyer, teacher and camp'. A middle-school athlete Lan Diqing (on the right) writes, 'Today I see the little and elegant copy of *Linglong*, of which I have heard for a long time. Its elegant look and rich contents show the good future of women in our nation and explain why society views the magazine so highly. In this difficult society, women of iron and blood struggle to find their way, with help from their comrades. Let us move bricks and rafters to build a fancy mansion, and stand on its top to shout, "Long live Chinese women [three times], and long live *Linglong*"'. *Source: Linglong*, vol. 4, no. 3, issue 128, 17 January 1934, pp. 160–61. Courtesy of the C. V. Starr East Asian Library, Columbia University.

varied from love, sex, marriage, fashion, makeup, *tiyu* and entertainment to interior decorating, popular psychology, new careers, war and politics; they took the form of articles, advice columns and commercial advertisements as well as illustrations and photographs. It was published by the Sanhe (Three-Harmony) Publishing House in Shanghai, which also ran entertainment businesses such as ping-pong houses and sold medicines to cure women's diseases (both advertised in *Linglong*).[18] When the first issue of *Linglong* came out on 18 March 1931, it was inexpensively priced at seven-hundredths of an ounce of foreign silver, or twenty-one copper coins,[19] and it was available nationwide, in such dispersed urban centres as Chengdu, Hankou, Ji'nan, Quanzhou, Kaifeng, Hangzhou, Mei County in Sichuan, Tianjin, Nanjing, Yunnan, Shanghai, Hangzhou, Ningbo, Changsha and even overseas in Sumatra.[20]

Linglong became a multi-vocal space for women. Educated urban young women such as students, teachers and other professionals were fans, but workers, housewives and labourers also conversed through advice columns about new and old social situations faced by women. *Linglong* called for contributions about 'housewives, arranging the home, sewing, cooking, education, practical issues and teachers, workers and farmers' lives and marriages'.[21] Conversely, *Linglong* included the voices of men, especially those of its chief photography editor, Mr Lin Zemin, and its founder, Lin Zecang, who were concerned with 'women's issues'.

Echoing the state ideology of patriotism of the 1930s, *Linglong* repeatedly called on women to make sacrifices for the nation, educate themselves in politics and develop courage, power and bodies as tough as men's. In 1937, on the eve of Japan's invasion of northern China, *Linglong*'s editor urged feminists to prioritise nationalist concerns because women's liberation had to be sought through national liberation. The editor contended that 'the urgent task for women today is to unite and fight for the national liberation movement because all citizens, male or female, should struggle in such a "national crisis"'.[22] At the same time, although the term 'feminism' (*nüquan zhuyi [zhe]*) never appeared in the magazine, *Linglong*, in proclaiming itself on almost every front cover to be 'the mouthpiece of women's circles, and the only weapon to launch attacks on men', exemplified a feminist agenda.[23] The very 'contradiction' between patriotic nationalism and feminism demonstrated the complicated interaction between these discourses. While voicing women's special interests, rights and identities, *Linglong* embraced nationalistic rhetoric that sought both to empower women and to endorse gender equality, hence justifying and legitimising women's expanded space.

To the editors of *Linglong*, the Western category *jianmei* and advocacy of a strong physique for women were at the core of the magazine's feminist agenda. The caption to a photograph of a row of strong Western women aiming rifles reads: 'Women's rights/power in the modern world are well developed [*jinshi nüquan fada*]'. The magazine claimed that women surpassed men in various fields, but regretted that women's natural physique was weaker. To counteract their 'natural' deficiency, women globally should pay close attention to *jianmei* and *tiyu*.[24]

Consistent with the concept of *jianmei* as Western, *Linglong* presented its feminist agenda behind *jianmei* in a global context by importing news and stories about women around the world, particularly the West. The value of the stories is not in their historical authenticity but in what they can tell us about the attitudes and sensibilities of the editors and readers. *Linglong* expressed deep worry about the international trend of the 'women going home movement', and that 'the good wife, wise mother' ideal would

negatively affect the Nationalist government. Using the rhetoric of linear historical progress, *Linglong* identified that trend with 'feudal China', and purported that the progressive and modern state in China that had liberated Nora would not return her to darkness.[25] They opposed the Labour Meeting of the United Nations that banned women from heavy manual labour, arguing that no limitations should be placed on women's proven physical capacities. The editors pointed out that, in the United States, the seemingly gender-neutral clause that companies should lay off one member of married couples first actually targeted married women.

Linglong also condemned the 'dictatorship in Europe' for 'pushing the wheel of history back to the darkness'. It argued that gender discrimination was the basic principle of Nazi Germany. Although German women were sometimes praised in the Chinese press for being as masculine as men, especially in terms of physical training, it was said that masculine women and effeminate men were hated in Germany. *Linglong* declared that Germany's 'Three K [*Kinder*, *Küche*, *Kirche*]' movement was outmoded and an 'insult and challenge to women in the world'.[26] *Linglong*'s radical criticism of the West, especially the Nazis, focused on women's equal rights and opportunities in the work place. The cosmopolitan outlook of *Linglong* may also be seen in its bilingual covers, which offered an English title, *Lin Loon Ladies*' *Magazine.* Although *Linglong* did not explicitly declare itself to be a feminist magazine, we can infer its feminism from its acknowledgment of women as an oppressed group, provision of a public forum to address women's issues, advocacy of women's equality especially in physical and economic capacities and engagement with international feminist movements. How it expressed that feminism was, however, constrained by the social, and most especially the political, context of the 'national crisis'.

Jianmei cultivated through *tiyu* as Western and modern

When *jianmei* emerged as a significant women's urban fashion aesthetic during China's 'national crisis', it was closely associated with *tiyu.* For women, *tiyu*, or the cultivation of muscle strength, was a necessary tool to cultivate a *jianmei* body. But what exactly was *jianmei*? In 1933, *Linglong* declared that 'this journal pays special attention to *jianmei*', and started a 'Beauty Advisor Column' (*meirong guwen lan*), as the primary forum for the debate on *jianmei.* Writers and editors contributed articles and responded to readers' comments.[27]

Jianmei cultivated through *tiyu* was presented as international (i.e., Western) and modern through examples of Western women. It was argued that since their specialised schools and magazines actively advocated physical activities and health, Western women enjoyed exercise, paid close attention to their weight and posture, and were usually very *jianmei*. Chinese magazines featured photographs of white women in miniskirts, bathing suits or gym shirts and shorts, ice skating, jumping over gymnastics horses, standing on their heads and dancing, to show that 'Western women have gained *jianmei* physiques through athletic exercise'. The camera angles frequently accentuated bare, strong legs. The caption of a photograph of a scarcely clad woman with strong legs and wearing high heels read, 'it is not about new clothes; she is just showing you her *jianmei* legs'.[28] Magazines used paintings and photographs of nude Western women with 'healthy curves' to persuade Chinese women to shift their attention away from pretty faces and towards robust physiques.

The primal energy evoked by the 'natural' athletic body became a significant theme. Unspoilt nature – the antithesis of the contrivance of modernity – was worshipped by European life reformers: sun and water became symbols of cleanliness, strength, beauty and sexual innocence. Fit and beautiful nude bodies 'framed' in these elements were elevated into a spiritual principle and constituted part of the pure, reverential contemplation of nature.[29] Photographic portrayals of 'Sun Bathing' and a 'Primal Fit and Healthy Life' (*Yuanshi de jianmei shenghuo*), depicted nude white women sunbathing on the beach, lying on grass in front of a pond or playing in water in various athletic poses.[30] However, *Linglong* also made the connection between the 'natural' body and the body revered by European Fascist movements, reporting that Benito Mussolini had ordered women to pay attention to *jianmei* and commanded artists to depict women's *jianmei* curves because 'a weak mother cannot give birth to strong children'.[31]

Images of glamorous Hollywood stars reinforced *jianmei* as a fashionable Western aesthetic. *Linglong* quoted Greta Garbo in 1936 as saying that, '*Jianmei* is our lifeline and supply of food and clothing . . . The proper sports for me are golf and bicycling'.[32] In addition to beautiful faces and artistic talents, *jianmei* physiques appeared to be indispensable for success in Hollywood. In the pursuit of a sturdy figure, sport replaced dieting. In one cartoon, *Linglong* showed Jean Harlow, Marlene Dietrich, Joan Blondell, Janet Gaynor and Joan Crawford as representatives of modern feminine beauty. While the editors admired Dietrich for her 'lively and mysterious style', Blondell for her 'lively gestures to artists' taste', Gaynor for her gentleness and Crawford for her distinctive sensual beauty, they lauded Harlow as 'exemplifying *jianmei* for modern women'. The central figure of the cartoon, with wide shoulders and long legs, is Blondell who was depicted as a 'famous artist's ideal girl', but *Linglong* editors interpreted her as the anonymous global 'standard beauty' that combined the above assets (Figures 2 and 3). Through the years, *Linglong* showed numerous Hollywood actresses as '*Jianmei* Stars'. Horse riding was a popular sport, and many photographs showed actresses jumping fences on horseback. Starlet Claire Dodd cut a striking pose in riding attire – boots, loose masculine pants and a wide belt. Other images were more improbable, showing actresses clad in tight tank tops and shorts or miniskirts but wearing high-heeled sandals while dancing, hitting tennis balls, bowling, lifting free weights, doing gymnastics, posing with basketballs or, most oddly, learning to sprint from world-class male runners. Even demure actresses with slender figures were described as robust athletes.[33]

Life reformers who accepted eugenics in Weimar racial science and medicine viewed physical beauty as an indicator of a healthy constitution. A healthy and beautiful body was characterised by the harmonious and purposeful interactions of its constituent parts. Ideal health and beauty were promoted as the 'science of the normal' that could be manipulated, managed and disciplined through specific measurements.[34] Accordingly, *Linglong* frequently presented absolute (not 'average') 'international' standards of *jianmei* in terms of exact measurements. In 1932, it reported that although the Venus de Milo of Greek antiquity had stood as the norm for *jianmei* for hundreds of years, (Western) aesthetics experts had now elected a more beautiful American woman to replace her. The Venus's measurements were: 5 feet, 5.5 inches tall, 120 pounds, with 34.5-inch chest, 5.43-inch wrists, 26-inch waist, 36.5-inch hips, 21.5-inch thighs, 13.4-inch calves and 8-inch ankles.[35] In 1934, *Linglong* reported that an International Beauty Institute (*Guoji meirong yuan*) had invited representatives from various

nations to meet every March to adjudicate an annual beauty norm. The institute set the measurements for a woman's 'international standard beauty' for 1935 to be 5 feet 7 inches tall, 130 pounds, 35-inch chest, 35-inch hips, blond and physically fit. Actress Mae West met the standard.[36] In March 1935, *Linglong* reported that the institute met in New York for the Twelfth Beauty Examining Conference, and decided that Miss 1936 should be of 'small and lilting figure [*liuxian xing*] without heavy makeup' to incorporate naturalness into modern beauty. In addition, 'the hair was to be at least two inches long, the wave of hair should not be too thin and the neck should be revealed'. A twenty-three-year-old dancer who weighed 100 pounds and was around 5 feet tall with natural brown hair was considered a candidate.[37] While unequivocally Western, the standards for *jianmei* on the pages of *Linglong* were also fickle and often contradictory.

'Translating' *jianmei*: discourses of Chinese modernity

When *Linglong* 'translated' and popularised Western, modern categories of *jianmei* and *tiyu* among urban literate women in China, the editors faced an interesting twist of racial dynamics. The weekly publication viewed Chinese women as lacking *jianmei* qualities and lagging behind the *jianmei* standards of the West. To change this, it encouraged fashionable Chinese women to relate to the images of Western women and match 'international' (Western) standards. Corresponding to the self-Orientalism in state discourse that viewed the Chinese as physically weak and sick, *Linglong* argued that the women of the 'Sick Man of Asia' were, essentially, even weaker. It viewed Chinese women's 'genetically weaker physiques' as a significant hindrance to gaining equality with Chinese men and the cause of their inferiority to Western women.

After reporting the standard measurements required for entrants to Miss 1934–36, *Linglong* begged, 'reader sisters, please examine your own weight, height, chest, hips and waist to see whether they fit the standards of this year or next year'.[38] Fitting the frame of beauty without racial adjustment confirmed the inadequacy of Chinese women. 'Our nation's women can be *jian* [fit] but not *mei* [attractive], or *mei* but not *jian*. We do not have the type of *jian* and *mei* woman'. The chief editor, Ms Chen, raised the only dissenting voice in an answer to a nineteen-year-old girl's question regarding standard weight. 'The International Beauty Institute sets standards annually, but they do not apply to our nation at all because the standards do not make allowances for differences in race and regions'. Yet the editor followed the pattern and set rough standards for women of the Chinese nation – 5 feet tall and 130 pounds. Gradually, though, precise standards dissolved into the rather more vague 'wide chest', 'large and erect breasts', 'high nipples', 'ample behind', 'slender waist', 'even-proportioned figure' and 'strong legs'.[39]

Although the failures of Chinese female athletes in international games confirmed the inadequacy of Chinese women, *Linglong* promoted Chinese athletes as models and bridges towards the adoption of Western categories of *jianmei*.[40] Their images, in competition and in standard and fashionable athletic poses, were common. Under the caption '*Jianmei* Gestures', female athletes were shown in track events, throwing and jumping in field events and in ball games.[41] Dancing was considered one significant *tiyu* activity that linked *jianmei* with fashion. From 1932, dancers began to wear short dresses, sleeveless shirts and gym shorts to show their *jianmei* legs and arms.[42] Other

Figure 2: 'The poses of the international standard beauties'. The central figure in the drawing is called the 'ideal girl'.
Source: Linglong, vol. 5, no. 2, issue 168, 16 January 1935, pp. 98–9. Courtesy of the C. V. Starr East Asian Library, Columbia University.

Figure 3: *Source*: *Linglong*, vol. 5, no. 2, issue 168, 16 January 1935, pp. 98–9. Courtesy of the C. V. Starr East Asian Library, Columbia University.

photographs emphasise robust legs. The reader sees, for example, groups of 'robust athletes' in shorts and sneakers crouched to reveal their sturdy figures, highlighting their legs. Five thick-legged girls from Southeast *Tiyu* School, who posed with their left arms tucked behind them and their right arms up, elbows out, with their hands tucked behind their heads, were labelled as 'the strongest' in the Second Shanghai Middle School Games. In a photograph captioned, 'The Healthy Legs of Students from Dongnan', the camera focused on the legs of a row of girls lying on their bellies while turning their heads back towards the camera. In the same caption, it was explained that 'developing *jianmei* legs needs daily exercise' (Figure 4).[43]

Jianmei athletes brought athletic elements into contemporary fashion poses. Under the caption '*xiong* [grand or masculine] among Women', the national sprint star Qian Xingsu appeared with fashionable bobbed hair and a *qipao* (a modern dress popular in the Republican era) behind bamboo stalks (Figure 5). Other '*jianmei* athletes' wore *qipao* with numbers on them, just like athletics sweaters, or matched their Western coats with numbered sweaters. School athletics teams in fashionable dresses deployed themselves around sporting equipment such as gym bars and basketball hoops under the label '*jianmei* girls'.[44] Athletics outfits were promoted as chic.

The circulation of new images of Chinese female athletes with bobbed hair, T-shirts and gym shorts in popular magazines promoted the aesthetic concept of *jianmei* as an alternative to current urban fashion norms of slender beauty in high heels, *qipao* and with perms. Setting regional stereotypes against each other, *Linglong* called 'female compatriots' from the northern province of Shandong with tanned skin, tall figures and strong bodies 'a female army of amazons', admirable representatives of the *jianmei* ideal. Shanghai-style 'modern girls' were called on to learn from Shandong girls, remove their high heels and makeup and dash to the athletics fields.[45] Despite the outstanding performance of Shanghai teams in various games, 'the pale modern girls' and *mingyuan* (young bourgeois ladies of note) from Shanghai were viewed as mere 'Lin Daiyu-style sickly beauty', Lin being a depressed and tubercular heroine in the eighteenth-century novel, *Story of the Stone*, whose beauty was based on her sickly weakness.[46]

Linglong presented the shift to *jianmei* from the traditional 'Lin Daiyu-style sickly beauty' as 'scientific' linear progression. According to editor Chen Zhenling,

> Human views of 'beauty' evolved with time through education. Due to the restriction of Confucian morals (*lijiao*), bound feet and the absence of female exercise, the depressed, sick, thin-faced Lin Daiyu became the model followed by women and appreciated by men. With time, change, new expectations for women and the advocacy of publications, *jianmei* has come to be appreciated and round-faced women loved.[47]

In this formulation, weak women in high heels appeared not 'modern' but backward and shameful. An advertisement for *Baofeijiao*, a medicine for respiratory diseases, depicted the dangers faced by those in high heels. A slender woman in a short tight skirt, fitted medium-length coat and high heels, wearing a scarf over her permed hair, held a handkerchief to her mouth while walking in heavy rain. A hole in the ground before her warned: 'beware of falling into the trap of tuberculosis [*feilao*]'. A strong physique was now considered the basis for a firm will, noble character, foresight and the great hopes of modern men and women. Physical training on athletics fields and mental training were taken as essential requirements for 'new women'.[48] Writer Zhu Yaoxian viewed

Figure 4: Big and strong legs were emphasised in the concept of *jianmei* (robust beauty).
Above: The strongest athletes from Dongnan Girls' Tiyu School at the Second United Games of Shanghai Middle Schools
Below: 'Developing *jianmei* legs needs daily exercise. Here are the healthy legs of the students from Dongnan'.
Source: Linglong, vol. 3, no. 14, issue 94, 10 May 1933, p. 604. Courtesy of the C. V. Starr East Asian Library, Columbia University.

Figure 5: 'The national sprint champion, Qian Xingsu: the *xiong* (grand or masculine) one among women'.
Source: Linglong, vol. 5, no. 11, issue 177, 27 March 1935, p. 662. Courtesy of the C. V. Starr East Asian Library, Columbia University.

the 'tanned *jianmei* women jumping and running on the grass-covered athletics fields, something never before seen', as evidence of progress. 'Their determined, enduring and brave spirits are admired by their weaker sisters and surprised men'. Echoing Chen, one woman argued that beauty had progressed. Modern women were more beautiful than those in the past because of 'progress in clothing', lively facial expressions influenced by Western films and, most important, 'tender figures with even-proportioned muscles' gained through *tiyu*.[49]

Soon, *Linglong* was presenting *jianmei* as the 'general desire of modern women'. By 1936, Chen Zhenling presented a reader's letter 'regarding the key to *jianmei*' as 'a general concern of girls'.[50] *Linglong*'s readers responded enthusiastically and participated actively in the redefinition and reconstruction of Western *jianmei* and *tiyu* for Chinese women. An editorial in *Linglong* drew attention from a woman's face to her figure by declaring that 'makeup is deceptive and temporary, but *jianmei* is self-cultivated and will last until old age if you persist'. '*Jianmei* is not about being big or fat or using makeup, but having a fit physique, healthy skin colour and lively gestures'.[51]

Readers, both male and female, and the editors discussed the *jianmei* of specific parts of the female body. Most attention was drawn to women's breasts and legs, which had never before been considered an important aspect of Chinese feminine beauty. Whereas male readers framed the discussion around hygiene centred on women's weaker physique and reproductive organs, women were mainly concerned with the aesthetic dimension.[52] Editorials and articles offered 'must-know' secrets to achieving *jianmei*, such as exercise, being worry-free, getting enough sleep and good nutrition, proper medicine, surgery and books. Western women were cited as models for following these rules. Writers criticised Chinese females for being lazy about hygiene, but 'fortunately they are beginning to pay attention to the benefits of swimming'.[53]

Tiyu and *jianmei* entered into the sensibilities of ordinary urban, literate young women who were attracted to fashion and being 'modern'. They were promulgated as necessary qualities for modern national womanhood, as indicated by the captions to photographs published in *Linglong*.[54] Here, ordinary women appeared in stadiums wearing T-shirts, shorts and sneakers, carrying tennis and badminton rackets. Lines of girls in shorts and T-shirts, lying face down on the ground holding their legs with their hands, represented pioneering, modern girls who practised bare-handed gymnastics.[55] Even fashions such as permed hair, fancy and tight-fitting *qipao* and high heels, which were identified with the Lin-Daiyu sickly style, began to be associated with such sports as swinging, roller skating and miniature golf (Figure 6).[56] Women were sorted into categories according to various standards, such as noble, cute, motherly, funny, mysterious, masculine, family-oriented, weak or playful, but there was always a *tiyu*-related category, characterised as 'active, open and agile'. Plain, short and lightweight clothing, more or less following men's styles, was recommended. Long dresses and 'French-style high heels' were discouraged for fear of 'hurting the natural and relaxed beauty' of the *tiyu* style.[57]

While *jianmei* promoted by popular magazines such as *Linglong* became an integral part of urban femininity, it also penetrated various artistic fields of 'modern' popular culture including photography and cinema. *Jianmei* justified the depiction of partially bare female bodies on artistic grounds, deemed free from moral sanction. Nonetheless, it seems that Chinese models were not readily available for such poses. In the series of nude photographs published in *Linglong*, the same model of a slight and unbalanced

Figure 6: A lady plays miniature golf in the Haibing (beach) Hotel in Shanghai. *Source: Linglong,* vol. 4, no. 26, issue 151, 29 August 1934, p. 1684. Courtesy of the C. V. Starr East Asian Library, Columbia University.

figure with a large lower belly and small breasts was used again and again; however, the photographers portrayed her in imitation of Western themes of bodily expression, and to experiment with a distinctive image of Chinese or 'Oriental' physical beauty. Evoking an atmosphere of biblical paradise, the model stood, smiling towards the camera, in front of a willow tree in a lush garden. In 'Regret', the model knelt on a piece of stone topped by a large cross with her head bowed in front. The breasts were emphasised by specific positioning of the hips, hands and arms. In other photographs, such as 'Oriental Body Beauty', 'Chinese Body Beauty' or 'Quiet Beauty', the same model was shown presenting traditional Chinese musical instruments in various gestures.[58] Although these images had little to do with *jianmei*, the popularity of *jianmei* ideals had altered readers' expectations to such an extent that they appeared less risqué than trite.

Athletic *jianmei* emerged as an integral element of Chinese domestic cinema and female stardom.[59] As physical fitness became an essential requirement for female beauty rather than a threat to femininity, even the demure Chinese 'movie queen' Hu Die was photographed playing tennis. In contrast, the new trend of physical fitness among actresses shook the confidence of 1920s popular actress Ruan Lingyu, noted as she was for her weak beauty, and contributed to her depression and suicide.[60] *Jianmei* and athletics activities became such popular clichés for depicting Chinese movie actresses that the magazine commented with sarcasm: 'female movie stars took athletics activities as the fashion for the year before last; writing was the fashion last year, and what about this year?'[61] In its 'Movies' column, *Linglong* introduced and commented on international and domestic films and actors as well as cinema gossip. Approximately one-third of each issue contained colour illustrations of Hollywood movie stars who exemplified *jianmei* physiques, as well as domestic *jianmei* stars and even fashion poses of ordinary readers.

What are the implications for constructing femininity of this growing visibility of women's bodies in public spaces? Leo Ou-Fan Lee points out the necessity of interpreting mass print culture and cinema through not only the institutional, but also the social context. He argues that nation as a 'community' and 'modernity' are both 'idea and imaginary, both essence and surface'. Focusing on the pictorial magazine *Young Companion*, Lee demonstrates that the images and styles in popular newspapers, novels and periodicals contributed to the rise of a contour of collective sensibilities and significations in the 'public sphere' and conjured up a collective visionary imaginary of modernity. They 'do not necessarily enter into the deepest of thought' and go beyond the ideological confines of government policy.[62]

Lee suggests that the publicly displayed 'modern' women's body, either in fancy dress or nude, played crucial roles in shaping imagined modernity in the public arena of urban society. Resisting the facile accusation of 'male gaze and lust, hence leading to objectification and commodification of the female body', Lee ponders,

> But what if some (even large numbers) of the readers were women? And what if pages of nudes were placed in the journal together with pictures of Chinese and world leaders, athletes and Hollywood movie stars? . . . I would argue that the display of the female body had become part of a new public discourse related to modernity in everyday life.[63]

Building on Lee's argument, I wonder what might be the difference if the editors and contributors of the journal were women? Would the display of the robust female body

be part of a female-to-female feminist discourse? The answer is evident in the following episode. It was rumoured that eleven young men led by a certain Ouyang Hai launched a campaign to select 'Miss Guangzhou' by focusing on *jianmei* thighs – 'thick, big, firm, smooth and well-proportioned'.[64] *Linglong*'s female writers quickly condemned it: 'beauty selection manipulated by men focuses on sensuality [*rougan*] and legs for their pleasure. That is the biggest shame for women, and we are absolutely against it'. Criticising the 'Miss Guangzhou' competition as the 'thigh beauty' (*datui meiren*) selection, the female writer called on Chinese and foreign sponsors of 'Miss Shanghai' to use as criteria of judgement morality, talent and *jianmei*.[65] Female editors had to tread a thin line when it came to presenting images of healthy athletes, who appear innocent and almost desexualised. Furthermore, they reiterated that the ideal woman was an all-around citizen exemplary not only in *jianmei* physique, but also in morality and talent.

In sum, in translating an imported ideal of *jianmei* into a sign of Chinese female modernity, *Linglong* played a significant role in the history of modern journalism and Chinese modernity.

Jianmei and the state

The reception of *jianmei* took a downwards turn with the advent of the New Life Movement in 1934, which was in part a response to the national crisis engendered by Japanese aggression. The Nationalist government sought to impose dress codes, limit prostitution and in so doing exert ultimate control over women's bodies. The desire for healthy female bodies did not diminish, but women wearing leg-baring sports attire were deemed harmful to public morality. Herein lies a fundamental contradiction in the discourse of *jianmei* in the 1930s.

A deeper contradiction lies with the very conditions of China's desire for modernity. In order to appear modern, China needed to retain a degree of Western cosmopolitanism; in order to assert its unique identity, China tried to identify national essences in spirit, morality and culture. Women's bodies served as the site for the clash of these two impulses. On the one hand, the Nationalist state wanted to abolish 'feudal' and 'backward' restrictions on women's bodies to show progress. On the other hand, the liberation of women's bodies from state control was attacked as Westernised and harmful to the traditional moral and spiritual essences advocated in the New Life Movement.[66]

In theory, *tiyu* remained a desired national undertaking. The 1929 *tiyu* law, which was carried over to the 1930s, addressed the need to fight against traditional attitudes that would hamper a successful *tiyu* programme for women. Article 4 stated, 'all customs that hinder the regular physical growth of young men and young women should be strictly prohibited by the counties, municipalities, villages and hamlets; and their programmes should be fixed by the Department of Education and the Training Commissioner's Department.'[67] Although this clause was primarily directed at the prevalent rural customs of breast-binding and footbinding, it was instrumentalised in quite other ways.[68]

The official discourse on *jianmei* during the New Life Movement was overwhelmingly negative, lumped with skin-revealing 'Western' dress and even prostitution. The attire of 'modern girls' as evinced by calendar models and movie stars – heavy makeup, permed hair, fancy clothes and high heels – was labelled as 'bizarre dress' (*qizhuang*

yifu) harmful to morals and was banned. In June 1936, the Nationalist government deemed it illegal for women to wear extravagant clothes and permed hair. Jiang Jieshi instructed officers on the streets to enforce the law by accompanying violators to their homes to change their clothes, and by jailing and fining those who resisted. As a result, fewer modern fashionable women were seen in public. When the actress Huang Jing arrived by boat in Chongqing in a Western dress revealing part of her breasts, soldiers stopped her at the pier and told her to go back to the boat to change. Since her luggage had already been sent to the hotel, she had to borrow clothes from a servant before being allowed to land.[69] The Nationalist government went as far as launching a 'hair-tying movement', promoting the traditional *ji* (a bun on the back of the head). On 21 January 1935, the Nanchang Military Headquarters ruled that soldiers could not marry women without *ji*. A clause was added to the New Life Movement rules, discouraging women from wearing their hair loose, bobbed or permed.

Local authorities responded to the central state's directives in various ways. The municipal authority of Hangzhou and one governor, Huang Shaohong, banned permed hair as the first step in enforcing the New Life Movement, because women in their territories travelled to Shanghai and spent large amounts of money on permanent waves. The leaders of Shanghai women's circles advocated that the *ji* was preferable to hair-cutting in terms of cost, time and even natural beauty. The Shanghai Girls' Middle School, the private Peiming Girls' Middle School and women's groups in Ji'nan, Daxia and Fudan Universities proposed organising an Alliance of Female Students for Long Hair (*Nüxuesheng xufa da tongmeng*) to dissuade students from cutting their hair. The Educational Bureau of Guangdong drafted strict dress codes banning female students from permanent waves, makeup, high heels or jewellery such as diamond rings or bracelets.[70] Urban young men in various cities (particularly Hangzhou, Nanjing and Tianjin) voluntarily organised 'modern fashion destruction troupes' (*modeng pohuai tuan*) with strong fascist overtones to enforce violently the state bans in public spaces.[71]

The banning of 'bizarre dress' went hand in hand with the promotion of a plain style that formed the basis of an alternative *jianmei* image of healthy womanhood.[72] This alternative image was welcome to many urban women and men who were disenchanted with what they deemed as excessive Westernisation. As early as 1931, some literate urban women attempted to legitimise an alternative image of 'new women' based on *tiyu* and *jianmei*, as opposed to the 'modern girls' identified with heavy makeup and fancy clothes. Gradually, *jianmei* and 'bizarre dress' became opposite sides of a dichotomy in the New Life Movement. Female educators such as Cao Xiuling, a Wuben Women's School graduate and teacher at Huifen Women's School in Shanghai, advocated disciplining the disgraceful and superficial fake 'new women' and 'modern' beauty marked by attractive clothes or foreign creams or powders, and creating authentic ones through *tiyu* and *jianmei*. While 'modern girls' were labelled 'flower vases' and 'playthings', a writer in *Linglong* suggested using 'girl of this age' or 'girl of today' for the 'real new/modern woman' who had a clever brain, the ambition to fight for great causes and, most important, a *jianmei* physique.[73]

Like some in the German life reform movement, the New Life Movement presented fancy appearance as foreign and corrupt, associated with gender mixing in entertainment venues and the decline of women's purity and morals, while it viewed clean, simple and practical clothing as indigenous, culturally authentic, moral and identified with motherhood in a domestic sphere.[74] *Tiyu* was prescribed as treatment of this fancy

appearance. *Linglong* reported that 'different nations hold different views on women's *jianmei* and status. Some respect women's dignity [*renge*], while others take women as playthings and women's dress styles are influenced consequently'.

But how far *Linglong* raised voices in opposition to those that wanted to close down the choices available to women about how they looked and what national style they represented, is ambiguous. One contributor described how Germany had lost its original national character and united spirit after its women's clothing styles became fancy and colourful as a result of 'bad' influences from southern Europe. In order to pursue motherhood, it was said that German women abandoned exotic and fancy clothes in favour of hygienic and artistic clothing. Furthermore, it criticised Japanese women for their lewd overuse of face powder while admiring the German Nazi party's banning of women with makeup in its political meetings.[75] An editorial explicitly condemned female 'bizarre dress' in China as having been influenced by evil, extravagant Western customs.[76] Indulgence in social life, fancy clothes and hedonism were criticised as the wrong direction for Chinese women, who had only recently gained freedom after the May Fourth Movement had advocated wholesale Westernisation.[77] In this way, the anti-fashion proposal in *Linglong* was a veiled discourse for the superiority of Chinese culture and morality. This claim, however, rings hollow because both the terms and standards of judgement were Western.

Of the various ways to abolish women's 'bizarre dress', the most commonly used was to identify it with prostitution.[78] It is in this area that the state's attempted control over women's bodies reached extreme proportions. The Shanghai Provincial Police Bureau Zhou Quanchu ordered prostitutes with fashionable clothes and modern makeup to wear a badge shaped like a peach flower in order to distinguish them from ladies and female students from good families. The strategy was tried in Hankou and Nanjing as well. Prostitutes resisted having to wear the badges by hiding them inside their clothes or underneath large scarves, so the authorities established follow-up policies. The Public Safety Department in Hankou proposed to the city government that specific areas be reserved for prostitutes, who were at the time living throughout the city. Gradually, the peach-flower badge requirement was replaced by permed hair and high heels. Shanxi province ordered prostitutes to wear high heels and permed hair, or be punished as illegal secret prostitutes. On 1 May 1935, prostitutes in Taiyuan were ordered to start wearing the badges, permed hair and high heels.[79] The former fashionable attire of urban modern girls became unequivocally associated with degraded womanhood.

Patriotic, pure and moral womanhood cultivated by *tiyu* and *jianmei* cut a visual contrast with decadent figures in the pleasure quarters. In a photograph series entitled 'South and North Poles', fancy-looking prostitutes posed near a door. Female members of a Chinese hiking team (*Zhonghua buxing tuan*) with short hair, plain T-shirts and *qipao* were presented in contrast. The team was said to have walked for two years and to be planning to walk for eight more, investigating the situations of citizens across the nation.[80] Since mothers and wives fulfilled their patriotic obligations by raising their families, women in pleasure quarters were expected to be reformed into patriotic citizens through serving in combat or helping mothers and wives with household work. The precondition was training their will and dignity through *tiyu* and military drills.[81]

In the capital, Nanjing, singers were similarly trained as part of the New Life Movement and were organised into first-aid teams in preparation for war. In 1934, after

someone cut the fashionable clothes of a 'modern girl' as she crossed Taiping Road, popular singers in the Qinhuai area (a traditional pleasure quarter) were scared into wearing the plain clothes of 'national products' with little or no jewellery. The singers, to reinforce their new image of 'cherishing youth, having a sense of shame and fostering the New Life Movement', reduced their time for socialisation and exercised every morning by riding bikes and doing breathing exercises.[82] A female correspondent to *Linglong* founded the School for Women of the Pleasure Quarters (*Jiaofang nüzi minzhong xueshe*), which charged only one *yuan* for registration. *Tiyu* was a significant part of the curriculum, along with general academic education, proper morals for women (*fudao*) and domestic training.[83]

However, urban literate women were not satisfied with the anti-prostitution drive of the Nationalist government. Some opposed the authorities' association of 'bizarre appearance' with prostitutes and the plain *jianmei* style with 'women of good family'. The Women's Progressive Association (*Funü xiejin hui*) of Taiyuan asked the city to rescind the order that prostitutes wear high heels and permed hair. They feared that glamour would become the privilege of prostitutes and that women of 'good families' supporting the New Life Movement would lose control in the domestic power balance, jeopardising family and social stability.[84] Concerned with the dignity of prostitutes as women and with their potential virtues, as exemplified by historical legendary prostitutes whose stories centred on courage and patriotism, some women writers for *Linglong* called on 'the gentlemen in authority' to be 'generous, tolerant and more careful about their attitude'. They called on social forces including education rather than state power to persuade women to adopt a *jianmei* plain style.[85]

One 1936 editorial in *Linglong* went as far as to advocate the decoupling of women's hairstyle and morality, hence returning the agency of self-fashioning to the women, prostitutes included. This editorial argued that hairstyles as mere decoration should not be controlled or manipulated by men. 'Perming, cutting or keeping their hair long are women's personal freedoms, and have nothing to do with so-called moral questions'. 'Do they not know that the officially sanctioned *ji*-chignons can be as costly and sensuous [as permed hair]? So, women's problems will never be solved until women themselves are involved'. Some women called for a ban on the sensuous styles of the chignons; progressive women were to cut their hair in the interests of gender equality, modernisation and civilisation.[86] The plain *jianmei* style fitted perfectly with the image of the virtuous and patriotic 'new woman' and therefore had a broad appeal in a period of 'national crisis'.

State and journalistic discourses on dress and the anxiety of modernity took the most radical form in a concerted attack on the exposure in public of bare female skin. By order of Mayor Yuan Liang, the Beiping Social and Public Safety Bureaux made it illegal to reveal female legs and feet unless performing manual labour. *Qipao* hemlines were required to be within one inch of the top of the foot, the sleeves down to the elbow, the collar one-and-a-half inches high and the side splits no more than three inches above the knee. Short tops were to cover the belt loops and be worn with skirts. Knitted short tops without buttons were banned. Trousers had to be worn with tops that were loose around the waist and that covered three inches of the seat. The shortest pants had to extend four inches below the knee. Walking on the street in pyjamas, slippers or bare feet was banned. Female government employees, teachers and students, and female dependants of male government employees were ordered to begin following

the law within half a month, and other women within one month. Policemen on duty were responsible for enforcing the law and violators were to be detained and punished. The order was printed and distributed to households by the Public Safety Bureau. The local government of Xi County in Anhui punished men with bare arms and women showing their chests with one day of manual labour to enforce the rules of the New Life Movement.[87]

Besides regulating the length and shape of women's clothing, the authorities instituted a series of gender segregation measures to counter the liberatory threats brought about by the display of women's bare skin. The Guangdong Political Research Association (*Zhengzhi yanjiu hui*) banned men and women – including those from official families – from swimming, walking, travelling, eating and living together outside the home. Theatres were not to show movies performed by both men and women (actors would play the roles of the opposite gender). In order to ban co-education, Beiping Mayor Yuan Liang ordered Social and Public Safety Bureaux to recruit and help contractors build women's dormitories in various districts.[88]

The official fear of exposed female skin in public was symptomatic of a larger anxiety about the visibility of women in city streets and new urban professions. This attitude was widely shared among the urban population, as evinced by an essay in *Linglong* by a male contributor who contended that the massive numbers of women seeking economic opportunities in cities were transformed into 'abnormal "modern girls" who abandoned family, chastity, friendship and honesty – enjoying pleasure without restriction'. In support of his argument, the writer paraphrased an article with a similar tone from the Japanese newspaper *Yomiuri Shimbun*, called 'Chinese Modern Women and Women's Education'. The journalist's solution was 'to return to ancient ideas and respect traditions, banning men and women from walking together, and women from revealing their legs or feet'.[89]

But the Nationalist state had to maintain a delicate balance in order to discipline and exert control over women's bodies. On the one hand, they sought to liberate women from traditional restrictions and to bring them up as healthy citizens. On the other hand, they invented a spiritual 'national essence' to curb the liberating trend brought about by the new fashions in the media and public culture. Within this context, bare skin was no longer an expression of the desirable *jianmei* style associated with *tiyu* but was instead construed as the most bizarre of all appearances. The campaign against bare skin in public represented the most draconian measure of the Nationalist state's attempt to control women's bodies.

Official discourse did not remain unchallenged. Although a 1934 editorial in *Linglong* called upon youth to obey the official ban on bare skin and mixed-gender social activities, female authors in *Linglong*, who viewed these bans as 'hostile', 'insulting' and 'hysterical' with 'anger' and 'shame',[90] defended bare-skin fashions and *jianmei* in their own discourses of civilisation.

Resistance from urban writers

We have seen that the New Life Movement promoted Confucian morals as Chinese national essence and rejected *jianmei* bare skin as an example of Western material civilisation. However, the flip side of timeless 'national essence' is stagnation and backwardness. The defenders of bare skin played up this underside: 'it seems that every

barbarian nation has, or had, a tendency to regulate women's appearance and segregate genders to enforce morality'. Using a liberal progressive logic, they attacked the New Life Movement ban as 'going against the trend of history' and asked rhetorically, 'should China keep pace with the currents of the time or return to the ancient barbaric convention of locking women at home?' During the opening ceremony of the North China Games on the morning of the national day in 1934, Madam Yu Xuezhong, who had bound feet, was invited to cut the ribbon. People laughed that 'maybe female athletes with bare chests and legs betrayed the New Life Movement. Madam Yu ... with her bound feet ... may fit the New Life Movement better!'[91]

One powerful critique of the official obsession with bare skin took the form of advocacy for female livelihood. 'In order to relieve the "national crisis", the New Life Movement should shift attention to economic development and national defence', wrote one contributor. Under the pseudonym 'A Rural Woman in Shanxi Province', the author called attention to rural poverty – the root cause that deprived girls of clothing. 'We fifteen- or sixteen-year-old girls in the countryside work in the cold fields with bare feet and legs because we do not have money to buy trousers and shoes. But the officials and moral defenders in urban social and public safety bureaux ignore our needs and only focus on abolishing bare legs and feet'.[92]

Others resisted by deploying the authority of science. In 1934, for example, the Beiping Women's Association (*Funü hui*) argued that bare feet and legs should not be banned because, according to medical science, it was hygienic to reveal the legs and feet during the hot summer, allowing the sun to kill germs and reduce disease.[93] Several *Linglong* authors echoed this argument by stating that women whose legs were covered with long trousers tended to become emaciated.[94]

This might also have been because they were not following what was presented as a natural impulse in Western societies in the form of nudism. While the naked body, and especially the Western Classical male nude body, took on numerous meanings according to who was promoting it in early twentieth-century Europe, its promoters in *Linglong* narrated the rise and fall of Roman and Greek history in terms of the appreciation of the beauty and strength of the male body, and stated that the Greek legacy of appreciating the innocent beauty of the body was reborn in the modern arts.[95] Nudism and the North American and European 'nudist movement' (*luoti shenghuo yundong*) – discussed at length in *Linglong* – were, moreover, regarded as entirely natural, and associated with freedom from sexual connotations. *Linglong* believed that the movement originated in Germany where, it said, because of the popularity of naturalism, the human body and sexual liaisons between men and women were not viewed as 'shameful' or 'mysterious'. Under the heading 'Glimpses of German Nudist Life', the editors of *Linglong* introduced a series of photographs featuring individuals, couples, families and groups of various ages and gender, with outdoor athletics activities as the most common theme. Large nude women were shown in various poses, climbing cliffs and sitting or standing in the mountains.[96]

Linglong described the nudist movement as universal and lasting. The nudist organisation in the Finnish capital, for example, was commended for its strict regulations; only those who were strong and free of disease were qualified and members were required to take an oath to join. Males and females supervised each other to make sure that no one fell into romantic relationships; non-family members were not allowed to kiss.[97] The nudist movement in the United States, in turn, appeared institutionalised,

commercial and fashionable. According to a newspaper article, 100 nudists gathered in a 700-acre 'nudist yard' in San Diego to exhibit the pleasure of bareness to visitors. Its 'nudist queen', a beautiful twenty-two-year-old girl, announced that she would travel to New York to carry on her 'natural life' there. Her harmonious and loving family life (five of her ten siblings were believers in nudism) was emphasised to highlight the moral correctness of her actions.[98] Nudism, it was concluded, reduced the mystery of the human body and improved morals and happiness.[99] Besides progressive trends from the West, defenders of naturalism also called attention to 'primitive' minorities who, like innocent children, were construed as effortless practitioners of naturalism with physical strength and beauty. A translated German book, *Declined Civilisation* (probably Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West*), was cited as stating that natural human bodies with developed muscles and shiny skin exercised in the sun, cold water and air, were healthy, authentic and moral, as shown by 'primitive' societies.[100] Similarly, women of Tibet, Hainan Island and the Yao ethnic group in China were admired for enjoying bare-skinned customs, strong physiques, positive gender roles and free romantic relations in their simple and natural lives.[101] The counter-discourse of urban writers against the official ban on bare skin thus took the form of a discourse of civilisation and barbarianism, which was fraught with ambiguities.

In conclusion, when the Western modern concept of *jianmei* was transformed and promoted among urban Chinese women as fashion during the 'national crisis', its meanings shifted constantly within various contexts – as modern *tiyu*, as morally threatening bare skin and as progressive naturalism. *Linglong* demonstrated that China participated in the global media – news and trends from Europe travelled quickly – and that Chinese modernity was constructed from Western ideas and motifs, in a discursive field dominated by the West. *Jianmei,* like Chinese modernity, was the result of cultural translation. Yet resourceful editors and readers found a space to critique both the West, in the form of Nazism, and the nationalistic state, in the form of the New Life Movement. In this we see the 'feminism' of *Linglong* and the *jianmei* discourse it helped to popularise.

Notes

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1. For example, Chinese women's bound feet once symbolised Chinese masculine power and control through related patriarchal values such as erotic sexuality, dependence and obedience. In imperialist narratives, victimised, footbound women were transformed into a symbol of the backwardness and barbarity of the already effeminate 'Sick Man of Asia'. For subtle values and meanings involved in footbinding, see Dorothy Ko, *Cinderella's Sisters: A Revisionist History of Footbinding* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).
2. When Western 'sport', 'physical education' and 'physical culture' were translated into Chinese as *tiyu*, their imported meanings were adapted to local understandings and needs within institutional discourse in the national context of state-building. Therefore, when *tiyu* finally gained fixed meaning during the 'national crisis', it involved not only Western sport, physical education and physical culture stressing hygienic therapies, but also ancient and folk forms of Chinese physical activities such as martial arts,

strategic chess, qigong, mountain climbing, boating and military activities. For more discussion of *tiyu*, see Susan Brownell, *Training the Body for China: Sports in the Moral Order of the People's Republic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), pp. 16–17; Andrew Morris, *Marrow of the Nation: A History of Sport and Physical Culture in Republican China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), pp. 1–4, 12–13, 16, 31, 71–2, 75–6; Yunxiang Gao, 'Sports, Gender, and Nation State during China's "National Crisis" from 1931 to 1945' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Iowa, 2005), pp. 1–4.

3. Prasenjit Duara, 'The Regime of Authenticity: Timelessness, Gender, and National History in Modern China', *History and Theory* 37 (1998), pp. 287–308.
4. Prasenjit Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), p. 142.
5. Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, p. 152.
6. *Zhonghua Minguo ershier nian quanguo yundong dahui zongbaogao shu* (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1934), Section 2, pp. 3–4.
7. Life reformers disagreed on the means to achieve a healthy and beautiful physique. Some condemned competitive sport as one-sided and only focused on physical culture. See Julia L. Foulkes, *Modern Bodies: Dance and American Modernism from Martha Graham to Alvin Ailey* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), pp. 86, 206, n. 65; Michael Hau, *The Cult of Life and Beauty in Germany: A Social History, 1890–1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), pp. 1–2, 179; George L. Mosse, *Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 95; George Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1985), pp. 47, 57. For one theory on the origins of the term 'physical culture', see Susan Brownell, 'Thinking Dangerously: The Person and his Ideas', in John Bale and Chris Philo (eds), *Body Cultures: Essays on Sport, Space & Identity by Henning Eichberg* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 22–46, here p. 41. Henning Eichberg, 'New Spatial Configurations of Sport? Experiences from Danish Alternative Planning', in Bale and Philo (eds), *Body Cultures*, pp. 68–83.
8. See Hau, *Cult of Life and Beauty in Germany*, pp. 1–3, 4–8, 32, 199, 201–2; Foulkes, *Modern Bodies*, p. 206, n. 65; Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality*, pp. 51, 59–60, 129, 178.
9. John Bale and Chris Philo, 'Introduction: Henning Eichberg, Space, Identity, and Body Culture', in Bale and Philo (eds), *Body Cultures*, pp. 5, 8.
10. Fan Hong, *Footbinding, Feminism and Freedom: The Liberation of Women's Bodies in Modern China* (London: Frank Cass, 1997); Morris, *Marrow of the Nation*, p. 5. You Jianming, 'Jindai Huadong diqu de nü qiuyuan (1927–1937)', *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindai shi yanjiusuo jikan*, 32 (1999), pp. 57–125, here p. 59; 'Jindai nüzi tiyu guan chutan', *Xin shixue* 7 (December 1996), pp. 119–58.
11. Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, pp. 133, 141.
12. Hau, *Cult of Life and Beauty in Germany*, pp. 2, 178; Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality*, p. 10.
13. Leo Ou-Fan Lee, *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China 1930–1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 64, 67.
14. The thirteen in Shanghai included *Women's Daily*, the weekly *Linglong*, biweekly *Women's Voice* and *Women's Pictorial*, the monthly *Women* (*Nüzi*), *Modern Women* (*Xiandai funü*), *Women Youth* (*Nü qingnian*), *Nüduo*, *New Family and Modern Parents*, *Woman and Family*, a periodic supplement to the daily *Morning News* (*Chenbao*), the weekly *Modern Domestic Affairs* supplement to *Xinbao* and the 'Woman and Family' column in *Oriental Magazine* (*Dongfang zazhi*). The four in Beiping included *New Women* (*Xin funü*), a periodic supplement to *North China Daily*, the weekly *Women and Youth* (*Funü qingnian*) in the daily *Morning News* (*Chenbao*), *Women Weekly* (*Funü zhoukan*), a supplement to *World Daily* (*Shijie ribao*), and the weekly *Family Paradise*, a supplement to the *Morning News*. The two in Hong Kong included the monthly *Modern Women* (*Dangdai funü*) and *Women's Weekly*, a supplement to *Oriental Daily*. Nanjing had the monthly *Women's Shared Voice* (*Funü gongming*), Hangzhou had the every-ten-day *Funü xunkan*, Zhengzhou had *Women's Weekly*, a supplement to *Zhengzhou Daily*, and Tianjin had the weekly *Family*. *Linglong* 100, 21 June 1933, p. 964.
15. *Linglong* 58, 13 July 1932, p. 375.
16. *Linglong* 94, 10 May 1933, pp. 574, 602–3.
17. *Linglong* 128, 17 January 1934, pp. 157–64.
18. *Linglong* 186, 5 June 1935, pp. 1295, 1274. The company headquarters enjoyed a prestigious address at 56 Nanjing Road, Shanghai.
19. The estimated monthly social expenses including movies for an average dance hostess in Shanghai was twenty Chinese *yuan*. One yuan equalled 100 copper coins. This confirms Lee's assertion that books in the 1920s and 1930s were relatively cheap in order to promote new culture and education for those who could not afford to go to school. Lee, *Shanghai Modern*, pp. 27, 47.

20. 'Benshe qishi', *Linglong* 234, 29 April 1936, pp.1224–5; 232, 24 June 1936, pp. 1056–7.
21. 'Bianji zhe yan', *Linglong* 196, 7 October 1935, p. 1985. The famous writer Zhang Ailing (Eileen Chang) stated that every female student in the 1930s read *Linglong*. Zhang Ailing, 'Tan nüren', in *Zhang Ailing dianchang wenji* (Harbin: Harbin Publishing House, 2005), vol. 4, p. 64.
22. 'Yi jiu san qi nian dui funü jie de xiwang', *Linglong* 268, 6 January 1937, pp. 5–8.
23. The term *nüquan* (women's rights/power) first entered public discourse when reformers began to address the 'women problem' for national strengthening after China's defeat in the Sino–Japanese war in 1895. See Mizuyo Sudo's article in this volume. In the May Fourth period (1915–25), Chinese terms including *nüzi zhuyi* (female-ism), *nüxing zhuyi* (feminine-ism), *funü zhuyi* (womanism), *nüquan zhuyi* (the ism of women's rights) and *fumineishimu* (feminism) appeared to 'grasp the complexity of Western feminism'. Wang Zheng, 'Feminism: China', in Cheris Kramarae and Dale Spender (eds), *Routledge International Encyclopedia of Women: Global Women's Issues and Knowledge*, vol. 2 (New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 736–7.
24. *Linglong* 81, 11 January 1933, p. 22.
25. Nora became a familiar symbolic figure after Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* was translated into Chinese in the May Fourth Movement as part of the discussion of 'women's questions'.
26. 'Guoji funü menhu kaifang liangmeng dahui', *Linglong* 133, 21 March 1934, pp. 455–6; 'Xianqi liangmu de xinxing', *Linglong* 159, 31 October 1934, pp. 2163–6; 'Shijie funü de eyun', *Linglong* 182, 8 May 1935, pp. 905–6; Pingzi, 'Deguo xianqi liangmu xunlian shuo', *Linglong* 283, 28 April 1937, pp. 1270–72; Shi Minyu, 'Xitele dui deguo funü de qiwang', *Linglong* 128, 17 January 1934, pp. 131–4; 'Ducai xia de funü', *Linglong* 148, 25 July 1934, pp. 1451–2.
27. *Linglong* 104, 26 July 1933, p. 1216.
28. Moli, 'Yundong yu Zhongguo', *Linglong* 1, 18 March 1931, pp. 24–5; 41, 22 December 1931, p. 1631; 58, 13 July 1932, pp. 360–61; 61, 3 August 1932, p. 527; 78, 14 December 1932, p. 1326; 88, 22 March 1933, pp. 362–3; 89, 29 March 1933, pp. 308–9.
29. See Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality*, pp. 48, 50–53, 139, illustration 16 between pp. 96–7.
30. *Linglong* 29, 30 September 1931, pp. 1076–7; 35, 11 November 1931, p. 1368; 183, 15 May 1935, pp. 997–9; 191, 3 July 1935, p. 1527.
31. 'Mosuolini chang jianmei', *Linglong* 91, 12 April 1933, p. 405. See also Mosse, *Image of Man*, p. 95; Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality*, pp. 48–65 on the integration of the cult of the physique into Nazi and Fascist ideology.
32. Whether Mussolini and Garbo had actually made these remarks is beside the point. What is significant here is the way the *Linglong* writers used the influential Western figures in their efforts to popularise the translated concept of *jianmei*.
33. *Linglong* 10, 20 May 1931, pp. 352, 359; 27, 15 September 1931, p. 1011; 52, 2 June 1932, p. 77; 62, 10 August 1932, pp. 552–3; 67, 14 September 1932, p. 797; 'Nü yundong jia de mingxing', *Linglong* 102, 12 July 1933, p. 1134; 148, 25 July 1934, pp. 1484, 1494; 162, 28 November 1934, p. 2398; 172, 20 February 1935, pp. 352–3; 183, 15 May 1935, pp. 997–8; 'Shijie biaozhun meiren zhaoxing', *Linglong* 168, 16 January 1935, pp. 98–9; 'Gelantai Jiabao de huazhuang tan', *Linglong* 264, 1936, pp. 3683–4; 'Jianshen yundong', *Linglong* 283, 28 April 1937, pp. 1205–6.
34. Hau, *Cult of Life and Beauty in Germany*, pp. 6–7, 32–44, 183.
35. 'Jianmei de biaozhun', *Linglong* 74, 16 November 1932, p. 1112.
36. 'Weilai zhi guoji biaozhun meiren', *Linglong* 150, 15 August 1934, p. 1589.
37. 'Yi jiu san liu nian de tiaojie', *Linglong* 196, 7 October 1935, pp. 1941–2.
38. *Linglong* 181, 1 May 1935, p. 846.
39. *Linglong* 39, 9 December 1931, p. 1534; 'Biaozhun de tige', *Linglong* 229, 10 June 1936, p. 805–6; 'Shaonü men de qieshen wenti, zhenyang shi shenti jianmei', *Linglong* 136, 11 April 1934, pp. 645–7.
40. None of the five female athletes who participated in the Berlin Olympics in 1936 was taller than 1.60 m or weighed more than 55 kilos. It was argued that the 'disadvantage in natural physique', in addition to 'inactive advocacy, incomplete measures and poor organisation' were attributed to 'the limitation that only two women participated [in competition], and they did not win anything'. Li Sen (1.58m, 55kg), Yang Xiuqiong (1.57m, 52kg), Zhai Lianyuan (1.56m, 53kg), Fu Shunyun (1.60m, 54kg), Liu Yuhua (1.55m, 54kg). Zhonghua tiyu xiejing hui [China National Amateur Athletic Federation] (ed.), *Chuxi di shiyi jie shijie yundong hui Zhonghua daibiao tuan baogao* (Shanghai: 1937), part 1, pp. 56–8. Linling, 'Canjia shijie yundong hui tandao woguo nüzi tiyu shifou jinbu', *Linglong* 262, 18 November 1936, pp. 3488–9.
41. In photographs of short-haired women leaping over hurdles, the camera focused on their well-muscled legs. At the finish line one sees the dashing winner's outstretched arms and twisted, gasping facial expression. In the javelin and shot-put competition, images depicted the power of muscles with the body leaning far

backwards. Photos singled out individual ball players for their aggressive gestures under the label *jianjiang* (robust athletes). High-jumpers going over the pole were shot from above with the audience, dwarfed, on the other side looking up into the sky at the athletes. *Linglong* 28, 23 September 1931, p. 1028; 52, 1 June 1932, 76; 85, 15 February 1933, pp. 216–17; 94, 10 May 1933, p. 601; 168, 16 January 1935, pp. 96–7; 189, 26 June 1935, p. 1399; 217, 1935, p. 4223.

42. *Linglong* 51, 25 June 1932, pp. 24–5; 56, 29 June 1932, p. 265; 61, 3 August 1932, p. 508; 95, 17 May 1933, pp. 662–3; 159, 31 October 1934, pp. 2192–3.
43. *Linglong* 28, 23 September 1931, pp. 1018, 1024, 1026, 1047; 72, 26 October 1932, pp. 1032–3; 94, 10 May 1933, p. 604; 127, 10 January 1934, p. 84; 135, 4 April 1934, p. 578; 145, 25 April 1934, p. 1252; 161, 21 November 1934, pp. 2318–19; 168, 16 January 1935, pp. 96–7; 186, 5 June 1935, pp. 1238–9; 189, 26 June 1935, pp. 1398–9; 242, 24 June 1936, p. 1839.
44. *Linglong* 63, 17 August 1932, p. 599; 97, 31 May 1933, p. 780; 89, 29 March 1933, p. 307; 101, 5 July 1933, p. 1041; 134, 18 March 1934, p. 543; 161, 21 November 1934, pp. 2318–19; 169, 23 January 1935, p. 158; 172, 20 February 1935, p. 322; 174, 6 March 1935, p. 450; 171, 6 February 1935, p. 276; 173, 27 February 1935, p. 415; 177, 27 March 1935, p. 662; 182, 8 May 1935, p. 912; 194, 24 July 1935, p. 1767; 284, 5 May 1937, p. 1302. For *qipao*, see Antonia Finanne, 'What Should Chinese Women Wear? A National Problem', in Antonia Finanne and Anne McLaren (eds), *Dress, Sex and Text in Chinese Culture* (Clayton, Australia: Monash Asia Institute, 1999), pp. 3–36.
45. *Linglong* 71, 19 October 1932, p. 1006.
46. Cao Xueqin (1717–63), *Honglou meng*.
47. Zhenling, 'Xiandai nanzi dui nüxing mei muguang zhi zhuanyi', *Linglong* 95, 17 May 1933, pp. 635–7.
48. *Quanyunhui teji* (Shanghai: Tiyu shenghuo chuban she, 1948), p. 56. Miss Peifang, 'Xin nüxing de liangda xunlian', *Linglong* 76, 30 November 1932, pp. 1203–4. Feisi, 'Zhe shidao xuyao na yi zhong nüxing?' *Linglong* 259, 28 October 1936, pp. 3256–8.
49. Zhu Yaoxian, 'Cong nüzi tiyu kandao nüzi jianglai de mingyun', *Linglong* 94, 10 May 1933, pp. 575–6; Shen Yixiang, 'Xiandai funü heyi bi congqian funü haokan', *Linglong* 25, 2 September 1931, pp. 901–2.
50. 'Mianbu taishou bujiu fa', *Linglong* 104, 26 July 1933, p. 1216; 'Shaonü men de gieshen wenti, zenyang shi shenti jianmei', *Linglong* 136, 11 April 1934, pp. 645–7.
51. Zhenling, 'Xiandai nanzi dui nüxing mei muguang zhi zhuanyi', *Linglong* 95, 17 May 1933, pp. 635–7; 'Haolaiwu nüxing de jianshen meirong shu', *Linglong* 148, 25 July 1934, p. 1489.
52. See Gao, 'Sports, Gender, and Nation-State', pp. 307–10 for the rich literature discussing *jianmei* of specific parts of the female body by *Linglong*'s male and female readers and editors.
53. Zhang Guiqin, 'Wo de jianshen shu', *Linglong* 7, 29 April 1931, pp. 221–2; Ping'er, 'Jiaozheng zitai', *Linglong* 30, 10 October 1931, p. 1152; 25, 2 September 1931, pp. 927–9; Miss Liu Meiying, 'Jianbian de jianshen shu', 29, 30 September 1931, p. 1073; 'Weisheng guicheng', *Linglong* 59, 20 July 1932, p. 399; Aimei, 'Huanfei yanshou ruhe shizhong', *Linglong* 232, 24 June 1936, pp. 1051–3; Miss Shi Yunfang, 'Tan jianmei de tujing', *Linglong* 241, 17 June 1936, pp. 1734–7; 'Jianbian er youxiao de jianmei fa', *Linglong* 258, 21 October 1936, pp. 3203–4; Miss Liuying, 'Shouren zeng fei fa', *Linglong* 261, 11 November 1936, pp. 3443–7.
54. *Linglong* 42, 1 January 1932, p. 1652; 43, 13 January 1932, p. 1719; 50, 18 May 1932, p. 2054; 73, 9 November 1932, p. 1058.
55. *Linglong* 40, 16 December 1931, p. 1580; 68, 21 September 1932, p. 841; 137, 18 April 1934, p. 733; 145, 25 April 1934, p. 1250; 179, 10 April 1935, p. 728.
56. *Linglong* 39, 9 December 1931, p. 1530; 151, 29 August 1934, p. 1684; 182, 8 May 1935, p. 921; 184, 22 May 1935, cover.
57. He Jing'an, 'Funü caiyi shi ying zhuyi zhi yaodian', *Linglong* 192, 3 July 1935, p. 1619.
58. *Linglong* 43, 21 November 1932, p. 1724; 51, 25 May 1932, p. 23; 61, 3 August 1932, p. 507; 66, 7 September 1932, p. 767; 68, 21 September 1932, p. 845; 69, 5 October 1932, p. 894; 78, 14 December 1932, p. 1323; 100, 21 June 1933, p. 974; 107, 23 August 1933, p. 1442; 155, 3 October 1934, p. 1967; 174, 6 March 1935, pp. 480–81.
59. In 1935, the Film Star Photograph Company (*Yingxing zhaopian she*), based in central Shanghai, released a special *jianmei* issue for its mass circulation series, *Album of Stars*, with each volume selling for 0.2 *yuan*. The issue included not only well-known younger *jianmei* stars who were once trained in song and dance troupes, but also older stars who had never revealed their skin. This showed how much *jianmei* had become a generally appealing quality for Chinese cinema stars to possess. *Linglong* 189, 26 June 1935, p. 1444.
60. *Hu Die nüshi xiezhen ji*, vol. 12 (Shanghai: Liangyou tushu yinshua gongsi, 1933), p. 8; Li Lili, *Xingyun liushui pian* (Beijing: Zhongguo dianying chubanshe, 2001), p. 168.

61. *Linglong* 127, 10 January 1934, p. 123.
62. Lee, *Shanghai Modern*, pp. 46, 63.
63. Lee, *Shanghai Modern*, pp. 65, 74.
64. 'Guangzhou xuanju datui meiren', *Linglong* 198, 21 October 1935, p. 2042.
65. 'Xuanju Shanghai xiaojie', *Linglong* 198, 21 August 1935, p. 2074.
66. E.g., the Nationalists considered Communism, the original target of the New Life Movement, illegitimate on the grounds that the physical appearances of Communist women did not fit into state codes. After the split between the Nationalist Party and the Communist Party in 1927, Nationalist Party forces killed thousands of 'modern' women because they were accused of 'free love', or sometimes simply because they had bobbed hair, unbound feet or a local reputation for opposing familial authority. When the actress Li Lili travelled across Shaanxi to Inner Mongolia to make a movie in 1940, she was told that some foot-bound women with heavy makeup dancing on the streets in Xi'an were Communists. Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, p. 137; Li, *Xingyun liushui pian*, pp. 114, 119.
67. Zhongguo di'er lishi dang'an guan (ed.), *Zhonghua Minguo shi dang'an ziliao huibian*, vol. 5, no. 1: Wen Huan [Culture] 2 (Nangjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1991), p. 930.
68. 'Nüzi shouruo de yuanyin', *Linglong* 137, 18 April 1934, pp. 727–8; Zhaoliang, 'Cong chanzu shuodao luozu', *Linglong* 151, 29 August 1934, pp. 1654–6; 'Shanghai nüzhong qudi nüsheng shuru', *Linglong* 206, 9 October 1935, pp. 3393–4; 'Gaogeng xie de haichu', *Linglong* 234, 1936, p. 1215.
69. The tabloids rumoured that Huang had dressed inappropriately to attract newspaper attention and promote her film, which was to be shown in Chongqing. See 'Huang Jing yixiang tiankai de xuanchuan fangfa', *Diansheng*, 19 June 1936, p. 590.
70. 'Funü yu xufa yundong', *Linglong* 171, 6 February 1935, pp. 259–60; 'Xin shenghuo yundong zhi funü xufa yundong', *Linglong* 171, 6 February 1935, pp. 306–7; 'Qudi funü shimao fuzhuang', *Linglong* 221, 22 January 1936, pp. 157–8.
71. 'Xu Lai wei modeng pohuai', *Linglong* 136, 11 April 1934, p. 700. William C. Kirby, 'The Internationalization of China: Foreign Relations at Home and Abroad in the Republican China', in Frederic Wakeman Jr and Richard L. Edmonds (eds), *Reappraising Republican China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 179–204, here pp. 190, 195, suggests that Chinese young men's militarist organisations such as the Blue Shirt Society (resembling the Italian Blackshirts) played an important role in the New Life Movement, which combined Confucianism with Fascism. It seems that the 'modern fashion destruction troupes' were inspired by the Blue Shirt Society.
72. Similarly, popular hygiene literature of the European life reform movement doubted the legitimacy of cosmetics and cosmetic surgery as contradictory to a person's real character. Hau, *Cult of Life and Beauty in Germany*, p. 180.
73. Cao Xiulin, 'Xin nüzi ying you zhi zhunbei', *Linglong* 3, 1 April 1931, p. 79; 4, 8 April 1931, p. 124; Zhiying, 'Yao xian mei de liliang', *Linglong* 3, 1 April 1931, pp. 89–91; Miss Xiuling, 'Nü yundong jia zhuji', *Linglong* 50, 18 May 1932, pp. 2074–5; Li Mingxia, 'Zuo yiwei xiandai nüzi', *Linglong* 196, 7 August 1935, pp. 1911–12.
74. As a common style of dress, *qipao* can be categorised as either 'fancy' and 'bizarre dress' incompatible with *jianmei* or plain clothing consistent with *jianmei* based on fabric, cut and decorations. Karl Gerth, *China Made: Consumer Culture and the Creation of the Nation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), p. 22, suggests that 'the conditions of production rather than the national origins of the style or type of good defined product-nationality'. For comments on German opposition to women's fashion associated with corrupt, artificial urban life, see Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality*, p. 55.
75. Qiong, 'Tan Deguo jin nüzi tu zhifen', *Linglong* 107, 23 August 1933, pp. 1399–1401; Jiang xinlang, 'Fufen ye shi yishu', *Linglong* 3, 1 April 1931, p. 91; Miss Yunfang, 'Fufen fengchao: wo guo jiaoyu jie youwu ganxiang', *Linglong* 13, 10 June 1931, p. 443; 'Xuefu bianwei zhifen chang', *Linglong* 130, 31 January 1934, p. 263; Huasheng, 'Cong Deguo de weisheng fuzhuang yundong tandao Zhongguo shimao funü de yanghua', *Linglong* 221, 22 January 1936, pp. 167–9.
76. Chen Mulan, 'Tan funü yu shechi ping', *Linglong* 240, 10 June 1936, pp. 1669–71.
77. Lian, 'Zai guoshi weidai zhong, xin nüxing yinggai zenyang', *Linglong* 260, 4 November 1936, pp. 3328–30.
78. Gail Hershatter, *Dangerous Pleasures: Prostitution and Modernity in Twentieth-Century Shanghai* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 246–70, suggests that, since late Qing, nationalist and feminist writers linked prostitution with national weakness and the quest for modernity. It was more explicit during the 'national crisis'.
79. 'Changsha jinü pei taozhang', *Linglong* 173, 27 February 1935, p. 445; 'Taiyuan fandui jinü tangfa gelü', *Linglong* 184, 22 May 1935, pp. 1131–2; 'Taiyuan jinü shixing tangfa he chuan gaogeng xie', *Linglong*

185, 29 May 1935, p. 1210; 'Hankou jiang huading changji qu', *Linglong* 191, 3 July 1935, p. 1574; 'Qudi funü shimao fuzhuang', *Linglong* 221, 22 January 1936, pp. 157–8; 'Guangdong funü buyong toujin', *Linglong* 221, 22 January 1936, pp. 186–7.

80. 'Nanbei ji', *Linglong* 153, 19 September 1934, p. 1805.
81. 'Riben yiji he nü zhaodai yiqi jiaru guofang yundong', *Linglong* 283, 28 April 1937, pp. 1225–6.
82. As part of the efforts to embrace a new modest image, they tried to learn modern, socially relevant plays (*huaju*) in addition to the traditional *pingju* romances. 'Guanyu shoudu genü de xunlian', *Linglong* 240, 10 June 1936, pp. 1645–6; 'Shoudu jinü zhi jinbu', *Linglong* 137, 18 April 1934, p. 726.
83. 'Zhenjiang zhuzhi jiaofang nüzi minzhong xueshe miaowen', *Linglong* 190, 26 June 1935, pp. 1525–6.
84. 'Taiyuan fandui jinü tangfa gelu', *Linglong* 184, 22 May 1935, pp. 1131–2.
85. 'Qudi funü shimao fuzhuang', *Linglong* 221, 22 January 1936, pp. 157–8; 'Zhenjiang zhuzhi jiaofang nüzi minzhong xueshe miaowen', *Linglong* 189, 26 June 1935, p. 1526.
86. 'Funü yu xufa yundong', *Linglong* 171, 6 February 1935, pp. 259–60; Pengzi, 'Zhengqi tangfa zai Hangzhou', *Linglong* 221, 1936, p. 184.
87. Pingzi, 'Qudi nanzi qizhuang yifu', *Linglong* 158, 24 October 1934, pp. 2101–3; 'Nannü luti fa zuo kugong', *Linglong* 197, 14 August 1935, pp. 2061–2.
88. Several telegrams from Beijing appealed to the Department of Education to stop Mayor Yuan Liang's ban on co-education, in order to protect equality in education. At the same time, the head of the Henan Education Bureau announced that the bureau would combine girls' and boys' middle schools in 1935, in order to save money and develop general education. Ni, 'Biekai shengmian de jinling', *Linglong* 151, 29 August 1934, pp. 1651–3, 1709; 'Pingshi choushe nüzi gongyu', *Linglong* 191, 3 July 1935, p. 1572; 'Nannü luoti youyong', *Linglong* 191, 3 July 1935, p. 1573; 'Yu shixing nannü tongxue', *Linglong* 198, 21 October 1935, p. 2143.
89. Jingzi, 'Waiguo zuojia de Zhongguo nüxing guan', *Linglong* 194, 24 July 1935, pp. 1760–62.
90. 'Jinzhi luozu sheng zhong yi fansheng', *Linglong* 151, 29 August 1934, pp. 1664–5, 1709; Linjun, 'Qudi funü luotui', *Linglong* 152, 20 September 1934, pp. 1715–16; Miss Liu Mei, 'Shehui fugu qingxiang zhong funü ying you de zijue', *Linglong* 157, 17 October 1934, pp. 2035–8.
91. '"Sancun jinlian" yu xin shenghuo', *Linglong* 158, 24 October 1934, p. 2114.
92. Shanxi yi cungu, 'Qing jiuji chizu luotui', *Linglong* 154, 26 September 1934, p. 1856; 'Jinzhi luozu sheng zhong yi fansheng', *Linglong* 151, 29 August 1934, pp. 1664–5; Miss Liu Mei, 'Shehui fugu qingxiang zhong funü ying you de zijue', *Linglong* 157, 17 October 1934, pp. 2035–8.
93. 'Jinzhi luozu sheng zhong yi fansheng'.
94. Xiujuan, 'Luti fasheng wenti', *Linglong* 4, 8 April 1931, p. 112.
95. Miss Qixiu, 'Luoti wenxian', *Linglong* 191, 3 July 1935, pp. 1519–22; Yingwu, 'Luoti mei suyuan', *Linglong* 186, 5 June 1935, p. 1034.
96. *Linglong* 29, 30 September 1931, pp. 1076–7; 39, 9 December 1931, pp. 1532–3; 50, 18 May 1932, p. 2069; 53, 8 June 1932, pp. 120–21; 60, 27 July 1932, p. 460; Lisha, 'Ziran shenghuo yu Deguo funü', *Linglong* 88, 22 March 1933, pp. 344–5.
97. Zeng Na, 'Luoti da jihui zhi canju', *Linglong* 56, 29 June 1932, p. 281; 'Daojie luoti zhuyi zhe', *Linglong* 197, 14 August 1935, p. 2060; Fenzhen, 'Fenlan zhi luoti zhuzhi', *Linglong* 221, 22 January 1936, pp. 178–9; 'Xiangfen liao de dongji yundong chang', *Linglong* 271, 27 January 1937, pp. 311–4.
98. Ma Xiaojin, 'Tan Luoti', *Linglong* 189, 26 June 1935, pp. 1441–2; 191, 3 July 1935, p. 1528; Xiangcun, 'Luoti jiating', *Linglong* 241, 17 June 1936, pp. 1794–8; 'Meiguo de luoti xueyuan', *Linglong* 271, 27 January 1937, pp. 312–13.
99. *Linglong* 2, 25 March 1931, pp. 46–7; Lisha, 'Ziran shenghuo yu deguo funü', *Linglong* 88, 22 March 1933, pp. 344–5; 'Huabu zhi Yadang Xiawa', *Linglong* 97, 1933, p. 763; 'Dongjing wu chunü', *Linglong* 169, 23 January 1935, pp. 143–4.
100. *Linglong* 43, 13 January 1932 [wrongly dated 1931], p. 1723; 102, 12 July 1933, p. 1103; 206, 9 October 1935, p. 3344; Zhaoliang, 'Luoti yu fushi', *Linglong* 225, 26 February 1936, pp. 463–6.
101. Tan Xishan, 'Luoti, bansu, shi hewu: yiguo qingdiao', *Linglong* 232, 24 June 1936, pp. 1025–7; 'Qingshi zhi liubing yundong', *Linglong* 225, 26 February 1936, pp. 526–7; 228, 18 March 1936, pp. 724–5; Yaofang, "Guangxi Yaoren funü de shenghuo", 97, 31 May 1933, p. 760.