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A pictorial semiotic analysis of Taiwan Women's Sphere during Japanese occupation of Taiwan

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Taiwan Women's Sphere Japanese occupation of Taiwan female images pictorial semiotics



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Taiwan Women's Sphere is the only women's magazine published in Taiwan during the period of Japanese occupation. Its object was to assist in developing women's culture in Taiwan. Taiwan Women's Sphere can be viewed as an important medium representing images of upper-class females during Japanese Occupation of Taiwan. Using the analytic principles of pictorial semiotics proposed by French semiotician Roland Barth, the present research analyzes advertising and pictorial texts containing female images and provides an in-depth discussion of the cultural and societal factors influencing such representation. Our research results indicate that the female images represented in Taiwan Women's Sphere fit into "the culture of girl's high schools" during Japanese occupation. "The culture of girl's high schools" connotes both the influences of Japan and the West, which play significant roles in the modernization process of Taiwan. A modernized Taiwan was not only influenced by Japanese colonizer but also by the western cultural elements selected by Japan. . In addition, another significant female role portrayed by Taiwan Women's Sphere was "a dutiful wife and also a loving mother." Such an image implies that females were "ideal women" only when they were married and practice their dual roles as wife and mother in the familial space... After 1937 when Sino-Japanese War broke out, contents of Taiwan Women's Sphere were censored closely by the colonial governments. A certain number of the pictures printed on this magazine are related to the Kouminka Movement such as the portrayal of the kouminka family and war-supporting women engaging in various activities.

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