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Original Research Article

Training National and Vocational Women: Characteristics of Curriculum of Female Secondary Education in Colonized Manchuria

ABSTRACT

The Japanese-controlled Manchuria regime set up a specialized curriculum and published special textbooks for girls, with the purpose of training girls to become “good wives and wise mothers”. This research mainly focuses on the school curriculums made by the Manchukuo government. The curriculums of Manchukuo female secondary schools were analyzed during three different periods, which also linked up the Manchukuo female education with Japan’s larger imperialist goals, including its intentions concerning the role that Chinese women would play in the empire. Manchukuo education officials continued to emphasize females’ natural duty as “Good Wives, Wise Mothers” in the early period, while increasing the emphasis on Japanese language, vocational, and patriotic content. Despite the rhetoric which emphasized women either becoming teachers or mothers, the curriculum and content of the education also moved towards training women to be able to work more in other vocations. This research open a new way to understand the females who lived in Japanese-controlled Manchuria, and thereby understand how this education impacted on the thinking of the women of Northeast China about their roles in the home and in society.

Keywords: Manchuria, Curriculum, Female education, Japan

1. INTRODUCTION

After the Manchurian incident in 1931, Japan occupied the three provinces of Northeast China and in 1932 a pro-Japanese government was established, called Manchukuo. The Manchukuo government was abolished in 1945 after the defeat of Imperial Japan. Despite the name, Manchus formed a minority in Manchukuo. Manchukuo female secondary education can be divided into three periods. From the state’s founding in 1932 until the end of 1937 education retained much of the style of the previous Republic of China system, although some content was deleted, such as the nationalist “Three People principles”. Education was administered by Manchukuo Education Ministry.

In 1937, the government instituted a full reform of the education system, which was enacted in April 1938. The 1938 reform, called the “Shingakusei”, not only changed the education system, it also changed education principles, practices, and teaching methods. Also, the Education Ministry was combined into the Civil Affairs Ministry. The Manchukuo government began to carry out the wartime system education when the Pacific War broke out. In December of 1942, Manchukuo government issued the Basic national principles and National guidelines, and made changes in the curriculum. Also, the Education Ministry was re-established [1].

While there has been a growing amount of scholarship on education in occupied Manchuria, few papers have analyzed female education. Wang Yeping divides the history of Manchuria education into three stages: early colonial education (1932-1937), maturity colonial education (1938-1940), and final colonial education under the wartime system (1941-1945)[2]. Wu Qiang wrote about how Manchukuo government textbook policy developed. The government’s first effort was to identify and censor previous Chinese textbooks. They then went all out to compile the new textbooks in line with colonial interest [3]. Du Xueyuan has only one chapter talking about the female education, detailing the different levels of female education and the strong resistance of the female students [4]. Liu described how female students covertly resisted the pro-Japanese aspects of the education. Female education in Mongolia lagged behind the rest of the country because of the sparse population in the region [5].

The Japanese-controlled Manchuria regime, however, was very interested in female education. It set up a specialized curriculum and published special textbooks for girls, with the purpose of training girls to become “good wives and wise mothers”.

2. METHODOLOGY

I intend to link up what I find about Manchukuo female education with Japan’s larger imperialist goals, including its intentions concerning the role that Chinese women would play in the empire. This research mainly focuses on the school curriculums made by the Manchukuo government. I analyze the curriculums of Manchukuo female secondary schools during the three different periods. I hope my research can open a new way to understand the females who lived in Japanese-controlled Manchuria, and thereby understand how this education impacted on the thinking of the women of Northeast China about their roles in the home and in society.

3. CURRICULUMS OF FEMALE SECONDARY EDUCATION

3.1 1932-1937

There is no known set curriculum for Manchukuo female secondary schools in the 1932-1937 period; we do have 1932 and 1933 curriculums for the Fengtian Provincial First Female Lower Secondary School, the model school for female secondary education for the entire country. Based on the comparison of the curriculums of the Fengtian Female Normal School in 1926 (Table 1) and the Fengtian Provincial First Female Lower Secondary School in 1932 (Table 2), I found that the curriculum changed in three ways: separation, integration, and merging and deletion. Here, I will describe the different characteristics and emphases of female education in 1932-1933 through analyzing the changes in the curriculums.

First, in 1932 some subjects were separated into two or three subjects, illustrating their importance to the government. For instance, the foreign language course (mainly teaching English language) was divided into a Japanese language course and an English. Japanese language became an independent course. In any case, Japanese language instruction increased significantly in 1932.

Table 1. Curriculums of female education in 1926

Curriculum	Foreign language	National language	Mix math	Mix science	History	Geography	Music
Time for every week	6	6	6	2	2	2	1
Curriculum	Physical	Art	Handcraft	Civics	Vocational Guidance	Healthy	Total
Time for every week	3	1	1	1	1	2	34

Note: Unit of time: class hours; Data quotations from the book "*Fengtian sheng nuzi shifan zhongxuexiao ji fushu xiaoxue mengyangyuan yilan*, 1926" (Fengtian Female Normal School 1926: 14-15).

Table 2. Curriculums of female education in 1932

Curriculum	English	Japanese	Chinese	Morality	Filial Piety	Mencius	Math	Algebra	Geometry
Time	3	6	6	1	3	4	6	5	5
Weekly time	3	6	6	1				6*	
Times for a year	7	7	7	7	1	1	4	2	1
Time for a year	21	21	42	7	3	4	24	10	5

Continued.

Curriculum	Nature Science	History and	Music and physical	Art	Zuo Ye (Handwork,	Self-study	Total
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	Geography					Household Affairs)		
Time	2	3	4	3	1	3	8	63
Weekly time	2		4	3	1	3	1	36
Times for a year	7	3	7	6	7	7		
Time for a year	14	9	28	18	7	21	8	234

Note: Unit of time: class hours; *: combined time for Math, Algebra and Geometry; Data quotations from *Fengtian Jiaoyu* Vol.1 No.4, 1933 (The Fengtian First Female Secondary School, "Embodiments of Labor Education", 1933(6): 9-10)

The Morals instruction increased significantly. In 1926 (Table 1), "Civic Studies" was taught only one hour a week, for second and third graders. In 1932, this class was divided into three separate courses, "Morality", "Filial Piety" and "Mencius". "Morality" was taught one hour a week, in all grades. In addition, the special Confucian courses of "Filial Piety" and "Mencius" were added. Furthermore, in 1933 the Fengtian Provincial Female Lower Secondary School issued a revised curriculum that increased the academic hours of "Mencius". This demonstrates female education's shift from a Republic of China-inspired ideological education to one, which focused on traditional Confucian classics.

The "Handicraft" course was changed into "Zuo Ye", which referred to household affairs and handicrafts. The "Zuo Ye" class was taught three hours a week, which was triple the amount taught in 1926. Within the "Zuo Ye", the sub-subject of "Household Affairs" was highlighted. Female students were expected to learn more about family life skills than professional skills, so that they could adapt responsibility as housewives, rather than train for a handicrafts job outside of the home.

Second, some of the subjects were merged into a single subject. For example, the courses of "History" and "Geography" were merged into one course named "History and Geography", though the overall academic hours of this course were not modified. Meanwhile, the courses of "Music" and "Sports" were merged into "Music and Sports". The teaching time was changed from one hour for "Music" and three hours for "Sports" into three hours for "Music and Sports" every week. In total, academic hours were decreased by one hour every week.

Third, some of subjects were deleted. For example, the contents of "Physical Health" were deleted or added into "Household Affairs". "Civics" curriculum was changed to morality curriculum, but the content changed. The 1926 "Civics" focused on the ideology of "Three People Principles", which was the guiding ideology of the Republic of China, and included content critical of Japan. So it is not surprising that it was deleted after the Manchuria Incident.

Furthermore, "Vocational Guidance" which was taught in the third year of second female education in 1926 was also deleted in 1932. "Vocational Guidance" was deleted, probably because female students were only expected to take charge of family affairs in the

home or work as teachers in school, so giving work guidance for female students was probably considered to be useless.

Comparing Table 1 and Table 2, the courses of national language, foreign language and math were always the main curriculums and equally emphasized in 1926 and in 1932. But the proportion of handcraft curriculum increased from 3% to 8%. So it can be seen that there was increasing attention paid on household affairs. Meanwhile, teaching time was also increased about two or three hours every week. Subjects that were considered important to female education were picked out as an independent curriculum and given more time to teach. Such as subjects of “Japanese Language”, “Morality”, “Filial Piety”, “Mencius” and “Household affairs”. Female students were expected to cultivate three skills: speaking and using the Japanese language, having correct morals, especially filial piety and understanding Mencius spirit, and having the skills to take charge of housework. Some basic science knowledge was kept to let female students advance with the times. Some courses, such as “Nature”, “Science”, “History and Geography”, and “Music and Sports” also helped female students to have the abilities to improve the family, to educate their children, and to accept and love their new state. Subjects that could waste energy or mislead female students, such as “Civics” and “Vocational Guidance”, were deleted.

It can be concluded that female education paid more attention to Japanese language education, study of the traditional teachings of the Confucian classics, and domestic education after Manchuria Incident. The female character that the Manchukuo government wanted to build can be seen clearly, to train female students to be “good wives and wise mothers”. The one avenue open to women outside of the home was to become a good teacher. In short, female education was more liberal and comprehensive in 1926, but more narrow and restricted in 1932-1937.

3.2 1937-1942

Several changes can be found by comparing Table 2 with Table 3. First of all, the curriculum of “Morality” was changed into “National Morality”. Academic hours of “Natural Morality” were increased by one hour every week. In 1937, female education in morality for students was limited to national morality and clarification of the foundation spirit. Foreign language curriculum was deleted. Japanese language was classified as one of the national languages course. Because Japanese language was regarded as national language as well as “Man Yu” (Chinese language). English language was deleted completely. The academic hours arranged for Japanese language curriculum was increased from three hours to six hours every week. In contrast, the curriculum of “Man Yu” was set at just three hours every week. It can be concluded that female education emphasized Japanese language instruction more than Chinese language. The government was eager to improve student’s Japanese language skills of Japanese language.

Table 3. Female secondary education curriculum hours from 1938 (Time for every week)

Curriculum	National language		National Morality	Math	Science	History and Geography	Music	Physical
	Chinese	Japanese						
Grade 1	3	6	2	3	4	4	2	2
Grade 2	3	6	2	3	4	4	2	2
Grade 3	3	6	2		\	\	2	2
Grade 4	3	6	2	\	\	\	2	2
Grade 3 and 4 rating in year	8%	16%	5%	0%	0%	0%	5%	5%

151 *Continued.*

Curriculum	Art	Household Affairs		Sew	Education	Vocational Training		Total
		Lecture	Practice			Lecture	Practice	
Grade 1	1	2	2	5		2		38
Grade 2	1	2	2	5		2		38
Grade 3	1	3	4	8	2	2	3	38
Grade 4	1	3	4	8	2	2	3	38
Grade 3 and 4 rating in year	3%	18%		21%	6%	13%		

152 Note: Data quotations from the book “*Wei Manzhou guo nuhua jiaoyu*”, 1951 (Information
153 Office, Ministry of General Affairs of the State Council of Manchukuo 1937: 890, Dongbei
154 shifan shifan daxue jiaoyu xi 1951: 50).

155
156 The subject “Music and Sports” was separated again. Each subject was given two
157 hours every week, which increased by one hour totally than that in 1932. For the purpose of
158 improving female health and spirit of perseverance, they strengthened the emphasis on
159 physical exercise.

160 Academic hours of “Mathematics” were cut in half from the 1932 level, from 6 to 3
161 hours. Academic hours of “Science” were increased by one or two hours every week.
162 However, the curriculums of “Mathematics”, “Science” and “History and Geography” were
163 arranged only in the first and secondary year. In consideration of the government’s vision of
164 female duty, females were not expected to learn deep knowledge of math, science, history or
165 geography. Basic knowledge, which may be used in family and daily life, was enough for
166 them. So in 1937, these curriculums were given shorter time than in 1932.

167 It is noteworthy that “Zuo Ye” (Handicrafts) was divided into two independent
168 curriculums: “Household Affairs” and “Sewing”. “Household Affairs” and “Sewing” were taught
169 for four hours and five hours every week, respectively. So the academic time of “Zuo Ye”
170 tripled from three hours to nine hours every week. What is more, the academic hours were
171 increased to fifteen hours every week in the third and fourth years. In these years, these
172 subjects were taught five times the amount that they were taught in 1932. The subjects
173 “Household Affairs” and “Sewing” took up large proportions of female education. The reason

lies in the fact that the female duty on family, society and state. Female students were expected to acquire knowledge and skills to lay a solid foundation for advancing family, to serve for nation defense and to save resources for the country.

Besides these changes, the curriculums of “Shi Ye” (Vocational Training) and “Education” were added into female education in 1937. “Shi Ye”, which included theoretical and practical courses, was taught for two hours every week in the first and second year and five hours every week in the third and fourth year. “Education” was given only two hours every week in the last two years for female students. Hence, female education laid more emphasis on proficiency of using knowledge they learned.

In general, the academic hours for female students increased five hours every week totally in 1937 comparing with that in 1932. In addition, the three main subjects (national language, foreign language and mathematics) in 1932 were transferred into Japanese language, “Household Affairs”, “Sewing”, and “Vocational Training” in 1937. Academic hours for the curriculums of mathematics, science, and history and geography were cut down and shifted into learning household affairs, sewing skills and practical exercises. Meanwhile, time for learning English language was also diverted into Japanese language learning. Japanese language, sewing, handicrafts, and vocational education were the primary knowledge the government wanted females taught from 1938 to 1942. Therefore, vocational, practical, and unique teaching was emphasized in this period.

3.3 1943-1945

Following the new principle of female education, the curriculum in 1943 was significantly changed in three areas: “Founding Spirit”, “Ti Lian”, or “Physical Training”, and “Vocational Education”. History education (and Geography education) was curtailed and folded into morality education to create the “Founding Spirit” course. “Physical Training” replaced the earlier “Physical Education”, moving away from sports, towards military training and obedience. Vocational Education featured a slight decrease in classroom education time, but a significant increase in off-campus hands on vocational work experience.

3.3.1 “Founding Spirit”

For the Female National Higher School, the new course “Founding Spirit” (was created by combining the courses “National Morality” and “History and Geography [6]”.

Manchukuo education official Hikari Yasuhiro’s explained the logic behind combining the two old courses into a new “Founding Spirit” course by discussing these two old courses’ objectives: “The course of ‘National Morality’ was to teach students Manchukuo’s position and mission in the world, and comprehend the essence of “Founding Spirit” completely. The course of ‘History and Geography’ was to teach students more details about the development of culture and the current situation of Manchukuo, Japan and other main countries all over the world, and to make stable foundation for the development of “Founding Spirit”. ... So it is

reasonable to combine these two courses into one. ... Both “Founding Spirit” textbook and ‘Guo Shi’ textbook will be used in the new course “Founding Spirit” [7]. Hence, the contents of new course “Founding Spirit” were current situation and future trends of Manchukuo, and the relationship between Manchukuo and other main countries.

The new “Founding Spirit” course was to use two textbooks, “Guo Shi”, which was to include both History and Geography materials, and “Guo Ben (“Nation Foundation”)” which was to include morality material [8]. Nagao Gunta profiled the new course “Founding Spirit”: “1) the basic points of the course are the foundation of country and the purpose of imperial edicts. 2) The goal of the course “Founding Spirit” is to train students become a loyal citizens who could understand the meaning of “Founding Spirit” and have a new view on Manchukuo. 3) The “Founding Spirit” and ‘Guo Shi’ can be viewed as the whole ‘Founding Spirit’. 4) The citizens’ moral cultivation and practical training should meet the specialization of our country, and pay attention on its comprehensive and practical needs [9].” Again, Nagao largely ignores issues of history, instead linking the curriculum to practical issues closely connected to life and the state’s practical needs. Students were expected to understand the national current situation as the government presented it, love the country, and become loyal citizens of Manchukuo.

Kazuo Isoda has noted, “Because of [Japan’s] defeats in the war, the planned “Guo ben” textbook that was planned to be used by National schools and Normal schools was not published...The “Guo Shi” textbook has not yet been found, so it is difficult to find more information about it [10].” Although it may never have been published, the new “Guo shi” textbook would have focused on the recent foundation of Manchukuo, relationships between Manchukuo and other countries, and Manchukuo’s geography, society, and economy, and the future of the state. Pre-1931 history of the region, including the Manchukuo emperor’s own ancestral Qing dynastic history, would have been excluded. The content’s focus on “Founding Spirit” was to encourage students to understand the current state of the country, and devote themselves to participating in the country’s future.

3.3.2 “Ti Lian”

In the new education act in 1943, the course “Physical Education” was changed to “Ti Lian”, or “Physical Training”. Hikari Yasuhiro expounded the goals of the course “Ti Lian” in details: “This course should try to build up a strong constitution and active personality based on the students’ body and mental situation, and pay high attention on national group training, obedience to rules, coordination, responsibility, and other good qualities for training nationals. It can be seen as reasonable scheme under the current situation. Changing the name of the course from ‘Physical education’ to ‘Physical Training’, also expresses its significance. In addition, it should use military drill, in order to foster citizens with pure honesty and loyalty, and improve their ability for the national defense [11]. ” Female secondary education included this “Physical training” course, training students’ bodies for the sake of the nation and good for the national defense. “Physical Training” was different from “Physical education”; it placed

a greater emphasis on military training and obedience, while nothing was mentioned about playing sports. Female secondary education not only had the purpose to strengthen students' bodies, but also intended to prepare the girls to be able to support the military in wartime.

"Ti Lian" was considered just as important as any of the other subjects. The Manchukuo government wanted female students not merely to acquire basic modern life knowledge and skills but also to build healthy bodies and obedience at the same time. There was 2 hours a week arranged for Physical Education in Middle schools in 1936. Then in 1938, it was 2 hours again. But in the 1943 system, it was 3 hours a week for National High School and Female National High School [12]. The emphasis can be seen in the creation of special physical training days. Under the 1943 Ministry of Education regulations, special all-day vocational and physical training sessions were created. The boy's National High Schools spent 45 days a year on vocational and physical training, while the Girls National High Schools spent 20 days a year, or 9% of school days, on vocational and physical training. Clearly the normal study time for students was significantly reduced, and greater weight given to physical training and labor service.

3.3.3 "Shi Wu"

For the third point, in National High Schools and Female National High Schools, another new course, "Shi Wu" was created by combining five courses: "Education", "Household Affairs", "Sewing", "Handicrafts", and "Shi Ye" (Vocational Training)[13]. The objective of the new course "Shi Wu" was "'vocational training' with the purpose of educating and training students in daily life knowledge and skills, help them to adapt the environment, cultivate in them a diligent spirit, guide them understand their duty, and teach them to devote themselves to the public. Now we all know Manchukuo education need to develop its vocational education characteristics . . . So we decided to combine these courses into one course [14]." That is to say, the new course "Shi Wu" had three main goals: 1) Modern knowledge: it would train students to become modern females who keep up with changes in daily life skills. 2) Diligent spirit: it would train students in traditional female morality; 3) Public devotion: it would cultivate students' ability to recognize their responsibilities to devote themselves to the country by doing work.

In another article, the textbook editor Fu Xizhen wrote about female education, particularly on the course "Shi Wu" in the Female National Higher School. "The objective of the course "Shi Wu" was established based on the national real life, with the aims to educate and train students with knowledge and skills of household affairs, train the students in research and creativity skills, and let them use these skills on their own. Meanwhile, this course should train them in the good morals of diligence and thrift, train them with good habits (such as compliance with orders, cleanliness, and obeying public morality)[15]". Two more key points on the course "Shi Wu" were pointed out: training in research and creativity skills, and the good habits of thrift and other public morals. Fu Xizheng stated that "the course 'Shi Wu' could be taught in three sections: 1) Household affairs and Farm work; 2) Parenting and

291 Education; 3) Sewing and Handicrafts [16].” Fu, in describing, “Shi Wu”, included farm work,
292 unlike Hikari.

293 So, while “Household Affairs”, “Sewing” and “Vocational Training” were emphasized
294 in female middle schools in 1937, female students were now also expected to learn farm work.

295 In 1937, the course of “Vocational Training” in female secondary education trained
296 students for a specific set of vocational opportunities, such as being a teacher, clerk, or
297 secretary, which required mental work, but not hard physical labor. But in 1943, Kai Fulu, the
298 chancellor of Xinjing No. 2 Female High School, commented, “To resolve the shortage of
299 labor, women should work in society to take place of men. Some jobs such as mechanical
300 workers and operators can be done by women [17]”. Kai’s comments indicate the contents of
301 the “Vocational Training” course in 1943 became wider and more diverse. It had come to
302 include training females to do jobs, which required physical labor.

303 Vocational education time in secondary education had risen significantly in 1938,
304 going from two hours a week for each grade prior to 1938, to 12 to 21 hours a week in the
305 1938 system [18]. In 1943, the number hours for “Shi Wu” decreased to 10 to 12 hours a
306 week. However, at this same time a new program of “whole day internship” was created, in
307 which secondary students spent as many as 15 7-hour days on hands-on projects outside of
308 the school grounds, for a total of 105 additional hours a year. Therefore, although classroom
309 vocational education may have decreased, the amount of total time spent on vocational
310 training actually increased greatly under the 1943 system.

311 A second education reform in 1943 aimed to prepare students to contribute to the war
312 effort in a more concentrated fashion. Vocational education, forced student labor, and,
313 surprisingly, a more student-focused, flexible education approach, were all seen as ways of
314 training women to take an active part in the war effort, and not just prepare them for domestic
315 roles.

316 **4. Conclusion**

317 Female secondary education mainly focused on three aspects to training female
318 students as new “Good wives and wise mothers”: 1) Modern science and technology
319 education: the building of modern family under the wartime system, including the value of
320 thrift. 2) Labor education. Under the wartime system, female was trained to have diligent
321 ability and more professional skills to work for the national production. 3) Ideological
322 education. Female education tried to encourage students to value the state and its ties to
323 Japan.

324 Under the wartime system, a new concept of “Good wives and wise mothers” for
325 female secondary education developed based on the interests of country and the needs of
326 the war. The focus of female education continued to shift from family to country. For instance,
327 the course of house economics were no longer training females how to increase the quality of
328 life for the family as it did before, but instead trained them how to save more resources for the
329 country and society. What is more, the needs of the war caused the rhetoric to change in a
330 way in which females were encouraged to find an occupation, not for their own personal

331 fulfillment, but for the contribution they could make for the country. The people were being
 332 mobilized for war, and many men had left their positions to serve in the military. Women,
 333 therefore, were being asked to serve the state both by taking up some of the roles that men
 334 had played.
 335

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- 361 18. Vocational education in the 1938 lasting 12-21 hours a week comes from "*Riben qinhua*
- 362 *jiaoyu quan shi*", p. 161. However, Hikari Yasuhiro, *Jianguo Jiaoyu* Vol.9 No.1. 1943(1)
- 363 gives a slightly lower number, stating that under 1938 system vocational education was
- 364 held 10 hours for 1st and 2nd year, and 18 hours for 3rd and 4th years.
- 365