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Gendering Chinese diaspora: *New Women's Monthly* and transnational sisterhood in postwar Malaya

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ABSTRACT



Studies on the Chinese diaspora often privilege male subjects as agents of mobility, the patriarch in kinship, social networks and livelihood, and producers of knowledge and thoughts, perpetuating an androcentric understanding of Chinese-ness and diaspora. This article challenges the dominant framework and highlights the uneven ways of being diaspora in Malaya and the different political, social, and psychological experiences between men and women and between women born overseas and locally. It traces the cultural production, thoughts, and networks of Chinese women in postwar Malaya by uncovering a short-lived socialist Chinese-language women's magazine titled *New Women's Monthly*, founded by Chinese feminist intellectual Shen Zijiu. The article argues that the fluidity of transnationalism mediated the communication of ideas in the new freedom in postwar Malaya, but nationalist movements could not accommodate it. It investigates the ways the editors and writers imagine a model New Women image through transnational sisterhood narratives and how they wove together the macropolitical discourse of nationalism and practical discussion of women's emancipation, solidarity, and mobilization. These imaginations showcased the complex interplay of the women's gendered intersubjectivities of the self, the family, the nation, and the world, through which women were empowered and constrained at the same time. In the end, Shen Zijiu's harsh criticism of "Miss Nanyang" indicated her nationalist expectations for Chinese Malayan women to serve both Malaya and China were impractical and resulted in the exclusion of sisterhood for the creation of a modern national identity.

KEYWORDS

Malayan women; Chinese diaspora; Shen Zijiu; *New Women's Monthly*; women periodical; transnationalism; sisterhood; socialism

A transnational time during the Malayan Spring

On 8 March 1946, International Women's Day, a Chinese-language women's magazine was born in Singapore.¹ Its founding issue features a cover photo of a woman fighter from the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA)—a wartime resistance group formed by the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) and supported by the British during the Japanese occupation. Editors at *New Women's Monthly* (henceforth *NWM*) was upfront about their anti-imperialist and socialist stance. They tasked themselves to promote women's writing and be the platform for discussing the theories and practices of the women's movement in postwar Malaya (*NWM*, March 8, 1946).

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NWM was founded by renowned feminist activist Shen Ziju,² who also served as its chief editor. Shen and her husband Hu Yuzhi, then chief editor of *Nanyang Siang Pau*, returned to Singapore in 1945 from Sumatra, Indonesia, where they sought refuge during the Second World War.³ The couple founded New Nanyang Publisher with investments from businessman Tan Kah Kee and Shanghai Book Company owners Chen Yoh Shoo and Wang Shuyang. Hu Yuzhi founded and edited the current affairs magazine *Feng Xia Weekly*, which Victor Purcell, the British colonial officer in charge of local Chinese affairs, praised as “far above the level of any Chinese journalism which we have had before in Malaya” (Harper 1999, 74). The publisher also founded the daily newspaper *Nan Chiao Jit Pao*, and its evening edition was published a few months later. According to Chen Mong Tse (2013), son of Shanghai Book Company founder Chen Yoh Shoo, *New Women Monthly* and *Feng Xia Weekly* quickly became the top-selling local magazines shortly after their release, due to their sharp and provocative perspectives that stood out.

It was a time of the “Malayan Spring”—a term coined by writer Han Suyin (1967, 11) to refer to what was considered the golden age of Mahua (Chinese Malayan) literature. A euphoria of liberation prompted the publication of hundreds of new literary works. Radical newspapers and magazines had mushroomed and remained until the launch of the anti-communist Malayan Emergency by the British in June 1948. It was a time when people struggled to return to normal life, colonial scrutiny was at its loosest, and different sectors were imagining the substance of a new society. As historian T. N. Harper (1999) puts it:

The Malayan Spring saw a widening of the public sphere, whereby new moods, vocabularies, and techniques were introduced into political life that would resonate throughout the late colonial period. For the men and women of 1945, the overriding task was to test the limits of the new freedom [...]. An important manifestation of this [...] was the struggle between colonial democracy and the “New Democracy” of the left. (75)

While Hu and Shen were underground Chinese Communist Party (CCP) members, they were publicly known as members of the China Democratic League (CDL) in Malaya, working closely with the CCP. The Maoist ideal of “New Democracy” was repeatedly called upon in their writings, as opposed to the liberal but colonial democracy discourse introduced by the British. Historian Seng Guo-Quan (2020) argues that these CCP intellectuals’ articulation of socialist universalism in the Chinese language and context “gave the overseas Chinese unique access to the vanguard socialist and revolutionary theory” and “made the adoption of local nationalisms both imaginable and attractive to their overseas Chinese readers” (8). Their presses discussed global politics and international affairs, particularly those in China, but also attracted writers to debate local politics, such as the constitutional proposals to form the Malayan Union in 1946 and the Federation of Malaya in 1947.

During the Malayan Spring and the struggle for independence, neither colonialism nor nationalism was in full control. As I will show in the article, it was the fluidity of transnationalism that mediated the communication of ideas in the new freedom, but it was one that nationalist movements could not accommodate. Due to the limits of its founders’ identities as CCP underground members and public figures of CDL in Malaya, publications in New Nanyang Publisher were cautious not to interfere in local politics explicitly. For example, one of the biggest events during this period was the all-Malaya *hartal* (strike) on 20 October 1947, which was called by leftist forces in Malaya to oppose the constitutional proposal drafted together by right-wing nationalist United Malays National Organization (UMNO) and the British.⁴ CDL publicly stated their position as a China political organization and would not participate in the *hartal* or interfere in local politics (Chui 2007, 104–105). This stance would eventually lead to disagreements between the CDL and

the MCP, as the former emphasized the “dual tasks” of overseas Chinese, while the latter stressed the adoption of a Malayan identity.⁵ This ideological difference is less obvious in *NWM* due to its focus on women’s issues, but traces can still be noticed when comparing Shen Zijiu and other local female writers’ focus and perspectives.

This article focuses on the immediate postwar period, from September 1945 to the launch of the Malayan Emergency in June 1948, when the Chinese diaspora in Malaya struggled to participate in the constantly changing political situation. To borrow historian Shelly Chan’s (2018) idea of the “diaspora time” in viewing migration as a matter of temporality and not just of spatiality between homeland and diaspora, this period saw the intersection and overlapping of “diaspora time” and “national time” for Chinese writers both coming from China and those born locally. In China, the civil war between the Kuomintang and CCP continued soon after the war, while in the Malay world, the returning colonizers strived to make plans for the new society amid intense nationalist movements, racial conflicts, and economic rehabilitation.⁶ For overseas Chinese in the Malay world, it was a time when their anticolonial revolutionary struggle had to be transnational. It was transnational not only in the sense that people were crossing national borders but also that people of different nationalities were coming together in this “contact zone,” and thus, forging new identities that “are not containable within a simple homogeneous idea of national culture within national boundaries policed by the nation state” (Dirlik 2004, 14–15). In this regard, marking a clear line between pro-China and pro-Malaya intellectuals in this period could not fully manifest the complexities of their transnational network and discourse.⁷

Local newspapers and prints, such as *NWM* and *Feng Xia*, could easily be seen as communicating nationalism, as Benedict Anderson’s classic *Imagined Communities* has set the tone for the study of vernacular presses in colonized societies through the lens of nationalism. However, aspects of transnationalism deserve to be studied carefully, especially in the contact zone like the Malay world, which functions as a site of interaction through migration and transregional connections. In the study of print culture and identity in the Malay world, scholars have examined the cosmopolitan or globalist consciousnesses among Anglophone, Malay, and Arabic intellectuals in Malaya and Singapore (Harper 1997; Kahn 2006; Lee 2021; Lewis 2009; Mandal 2017). In contrast, the role of the Chinese-language press has often been observed in a binary light, as to either communicating long-distance nationalism toward China or developing local Chinese culture (Carstens 1988; Hara 2003). One recent study by Rachel Leow (2020) has shed important light on the underexplored transnational anarchist imagination in a local Chinese newspaper in pre-war Kuala Lumpur.

The imagined nation in the Andersonian sense is also a gendered one, which is often conceived as “a deep, horizontal comradeship” made possible by “fraternity” (Anderson 1983, 7). The same line of national imagination also occurs in the field of overseas Chinese or Chinese diaspora studies, where a masculine narrative of migration has been the dominant, if not superior, framework of analysis. As shown by Rachel Leow (this issue), men dominate the textual documentation of overseas Chinese histories through patrilineal “ancestral archives” and the emphasis on networks, lineage, and kinship ties. In addition, scholars also pay attention to male mobility in business connections, clan associations, and many other political, economic, and cultural activities. In such cases, literature on overseas Chinese women and gender issues in the Chinese diaspora remain overshadowed. Scholars working on Chinese Malayan women have dealt with issues around marriage and family (Freedman 1957), female labor (Ho 1958; Lai 1986; Low 2014), prostitution (Khor and Khoo 2004; Lai 1986; Warren 1993), and society in general (Fan 2019; Lebra and Paulson 1980). However, very few studies have explored their participation in radical politics (except Khoo 2004), their sisterhood imagination, and articulations of thoughts in writings.

Historian Karen Teoh (2018) broke new ground in investigating the transnational women's networks by studying Chinese- and English-medium girls' schools in Malaya. In addition to archival materials, Teoh examined personal writings in school magazines and conducted oral interviews with the female practitioners themselves, which allowed their voices and lived experiences to be told. Particularly, she explores the intersections of national, ethnic, and gender identities among these overseas Chinese women in a time of political instability, in which, she argues, students and teachers from Chinese-medium girl schools tended to be more politically aware and active than their English-schooled counterparts, and their school curricula more progressive. As she puts it, "often considered a marginal population in overseas migration, Chinese women in fact took bold, creative, and complex actions to participate in global networks" (Teoh 2018, 11). Many writers and readers in *NWM* went through the same line of Chinese education in Malaya, which explains the transnational activism observed in the magazine.

Transnational imagination plays an important role in the lives of these politically conscious women. As Teoh (2018) argues, Chinese women in Singapore and Malaya bore "the triple burden of ethnonational, diasporic, and colonial expectations" (5). Yet, Teoh refuses to celebrate the diasporic in-betweenness but carefully examines how the external factors, such as the colonial environments, ethnonational traditions, and gender expectations, laid claim to the women and further complicated their identity formation. Teoh argues that it was the Chinese-medium school formal education that introduced the women to some kind of "transnational idealism," but unfortunately, it was one that "nationalism could not accommodate" (145). In fact, it was also one that the colonizers could not tolerate; hence, the results of the Chinese schools' endeavors to cultivate an image of "a stable, modern, and desirable population in their new countries of settlement" (4).

Against this backdrop, the transnational idealism and socialist universalism articulated in the *NWM* were radical but perilous and could only exist in the brief period of the Malayan Spring. One can imagine that it could never escape colonial scrutiny for long. Indeed, a total of 28 issues were published monthly from March 1946 until June 1948, when the anti-communist Malayan Emergency was officially launched and ended only 12 years later.⁸ Hu Yuzhi and Shen Zijiu quietly left Singapore for Hong Kong a few months before the Emergency, and then returned to China.

This article contributes to the line of interrogation on transnationalism and gender through the lens of "transnational sisterhood." As noted by modern Chinese literature scholar Yun Zhu (2017, xiii), sisterhood narratives mediated "a spectrum of subject positions" and negotiated "not only female subjectivities but also gendered intersubjectivities." This article explores the ways female emancipation and solidarity were mediated through transnationalism by identifying the images of New Women and the narratives of transnational sisterhood in Malaya through *NWM*. It seeks to answer: What do these narratives tell us about the colonized women's changing ideas about the self, the family, the nation, and the world? How do these ideas interact with nationalist, diasporic, and colonial expectations of the Chinese women in Malaya? In what ways were the women simultaneously empowered and constrained in such narratives?

By anchoring transnational sisterhood as a point of entry, this article proposes that such narratives allowed Chinese women in Malaya to visualize and practice local political struggles as modern citizens of a (yet-to-be) independent nation. They made visible the uneven ways of being diaspora in Malaya and the different political, social, and psychological experiences between men and women and between women born overseas and locally. Transnational sisterhood also helps register the imagined community of Malaya as a contested site of modernity, political articulation, and gender solidarity in which women explore different meanings of politics through their writings and organizing work, one that encompasses macropolitical ideals and micropolitical expressions.

Nevertheless, such discourse was met with the urgent demands of nationalist movements during that time, and the latter left less room for transnational idealism to thrive.

In the next sections, I will first examine how *NWM* serves as a platform for women's political organizing in postwar Malaya that transcends ideological differences. Second, I will analyze the creation of the New Women image, one that is politically engaged, morally superior, and imagined through a transnational sisterhood lens. Such narratives, however, were met with challenges in the nationalist period when transethnic collaboration was urgently needed. Last, I will highlight the magazine editor Shen Zijiu's criticism of "Miss Nanyang" to show how this exclusion of sisterhood indicates the challenges of creating a modern national identity for Chinese women in Malaya.

Organizing Chinese women in Malaya

As a comprehensive women's magazine, *NWM* covered a wide array of genres and topics, including social commentaries, reports on women's movements in various towns in Malaya, interviews with female leaders and lower-class workers, articles on reproductive and parenting knowledge, as well as creative literary works. After the Japanese invasion of China in 1937, Chinese women's organizations mushroomed in Malaya on an unprecedented scale. They were either independent mutual-aid groups or affiliated groups with the China Relief Fund, which focused on donation drives, propaganda, and female education (Fan 2019, 207–211). The anti-Japanese nationalist sentiment helped mobilize local Chinese women, and their political and social struggles in Malaya were inevitably connected to those in China. As a continuation of the wartime efforts, women's associations throughout Malaya were officially established after the war. To contribute to these developing female forces, *NWM* sought to "bear the responsibility" to promote the "discussion of theory and practice" of the burgeoning female movements run by the "New Mahua Women" (*NWM*, March 8, 1946, 1). The editor stressed the importance of forming a "united front" among women, connecting progressive women and those who "hadn't entered the women's movement" (1).

The first issue of *NWM* featured the writings of the most famous female activists in postwar Malaya, including Shen Zijiu herself; Lee Kiu, an MPAJA and MCP member and the first president of Singapore's Women's Federation; Eng Ming Ching (a.k.a. Suriani Abdullah), MCP leader in Perak; and Liew Yuen Sien, long-time principal of the Nanyang Girls' High School; among others. Shen Zijiu praised the newborn women's movement in Malaya and self-effacingly stated her "transient guest" status (*NWM*, March 8, 1946, 9), different from other Mahua women who were directly involved in local politics. Her article "Commemorating March 8" was the fifth article in the founding issue of the journal, while other local-born women activists' writings appeared in front of her. Lee Kiu opened the magazine with a historical introduction on the origins and development of the Mahua women's movement, while Eng Ming Ching urged the Mahua female intellectuals to be aware of their responsibilities and lead the women's movement. As communists, Lee, Eng, and Shen were on the same page in proclaiming that only when political freedom and democracy are achieved can women be truly emancipated. Nonetheless, it became ambiguous when the question of which national movements they were referring to was raised. For Lee and Eng, the struggle for a free and democratic Malaya was of utmost priority. Eng further stressed that it was New Democracy that needed to be realized in Malaya, or else the women's movement would be hardly achievable. She claimed that Soviet women living in socialism were those who had obtained real freedom and emancipation. Nonetheless, Shen reinforced that Chinese women in Malaya had two tasks in the national liberation movement: one being the multi-ethnic nationalist united front in Malaya and the other being the united

front among overseas Chinese for the cause in China. In the coming issues, she would supply the readers with more news on China's civil war and their female leaders, especially Zhou Enlai's wife, Deng Yingchao, who was a close friend of Shen.

This New Women discourse was woven together with the macropolitical discourse of nationalism on the one hand and feminist emancipation on the other. In the name of the latter, early issues of *NWM* served as the bonding agent for women from different positions, statuses, and ideologies. Since the disagreements between MCP and CDL started to grow in 1947, we hardly see any articles by Lee Kiu and Eng Ming Ching or any writers on Malayan politics explicitly in the later issues. Updates on Chinese politics would overshadow them. In addition, Liew Yuen Sien, a pro-KMT female principal, whose speeches and articles were also covered in the earlier issues of *NWM*, would later have a toxic solution of nitric acid thrown on her face in 1951 by communist sympathizers (Teoh 2018, 1–2). This not only shows the ferocity of ideological rivalry but also the intensity of gendered violence and the challenges women leaders faced in the period.

Print periodicals such as *NWM* were products of teams involving editors, writers, and readers. Unlike other women's magazines edited by men, the women-focused space that *NWM* created between 1946 and 1948 managed to transcend political rivalry in the name of women's emancipation. It allowed postwar Malayan women to gather on the same platform amid growing political turmoil inside and outside the Chinese community in Malaya. This was possible because of the self-claimed transient, outsider nature of the *NWM* editor and the CDL intellectuals. Although it is clear that they were tasked with organizing overseas Chinese support of the Chinese revolution, their tones of national and women's liberation characterized by socialist universalism had created leeway for their readers to identify with nationalism on their own terms. As such, Shen Zijiu became a perfect nationalist and feminist model from the outside and did not face the same scrutiny and demands in local movements. Unlike her, Lee, Eng, and Liew had to be seriously involved in the politics in Malaya and even take strong stands on local issues such as obtaining citizenship in Malaya, something Shen would not actively promote.

An interesting aspect of print periodicals is that what the prints do is more complex than what they declare they do (Hockx, Judge, and Mittler 2018, 9). Despite having a strong political tone throughout the editorials, non-political women's issues occupied about half the magazine's space, as *NWM* also solicited articles from women all over Malaya who were neither political nor left leaning. The amateurish writers would write about their livelihood as factory workers or cabaret dancers and their tragic lives in polygamous marriages, and a few would compose literary works about women's lives in Malaya.⁹

NWM also offers important glimpses into women organizing grassroots networks in postwar Malaya, which has received very little attention from scholars. It encouraged Malayan-wide contributors to send in reports on women's movements and interviews with their leaders and invited cadre members to reflect upon their organizing strategies and the challenges they had encountered. These articles are crucial materials to study postwar women's organizations. In their articles, female activists write about the history of the development of their organizations. Many are from small towns in Negri Sembilan, Perak, Terengganu, Malacca, Kelantan, Alor Setar, Cameron Highlands, Kuala Lipis, Kulai, Jasin, Tangkak, Pahang, and others. Most articles are written in a similar tone and template, narrating how their groups were established soon after the war and received tremendous support from local women. Groups in bigger towns had a few thousand members, and small towns had a few hundred. Their common routine work was to settle family disputes, assist in marriages, funerals, and childbirths while managing literacy classes, night schools, choirs, and study groups.

However, most had experienced serious slander and menace, resulting in members quitting the organization. For example, Wen Ru from Kuala Lipis wrote that some "feudal public" liked to call

them names after two members decided to separate from their families and be independent (*NWM*, October 8, 1946, 6). The slanderers renamed the women's association "whore association," "divorce association," or "husband-control association," further prohibiting their wives and daughters from going near the association (7). The female activists then decided to form a home visit team to explain their causes, which successfully gained back some members. The attacks show that women activists were particularly subjected to gendered abuses and vicious questioning of morality, as women played the symbolic role of keepers of family virtue in traditional society. Women activists and their followers were seen as trespassing into men's territories, enjoying too much mobility, and their chastity was constantly being highlighted and questioned.

NWM also invited experienced female activists to share their knowledge on organizing work. Writers like Lee Kiu, Yang Bifang, Bing Ling, Bai Bing and Gu Ying—primarily members of the newly formed Singapore Women's Federation—shared ways to train cadre members, invent new propaganda strategies, and recruit stay-at-home mothers, among other issues. One recurring theme in these articles was the activists' challenges in approaching lower-class and elite women. For example, Gu Ying wrote that female activists should work toward a united front and avoid promoting slogans and actions that are "over-left" (*NWM*, April 8, 1946, 5). She noted that their biggest weakness was the empty, abstract, and subjective slogans, such as "Down with Three Obedience and Four Virtues!" or "Down with Courtesan-like Decorations!" (*NWM*, July 8, 1946, 3). This had proven to be detrimental rather than helpful in recruiting women into their movement.

One interesting example she gave was how her comrades talked about ideas of New Democracy (*xin min zhu*) to an elderly woman from a rural village for two or three hours but received a lukewarm response. The woman responded in Hakka dialect: "Where are the *xin mi zhu* (new rice to cook)? We don't even have *kiu mi zhu* (old rice to cook)!" (3) The author then urged her readers to deeply understand the suffering of lower-class people and use grassroots language to explain the causes of their suffering. It is noteworthy that the female activists' political concepts and languages were derived from a Mandarin Chinese vocabulary, which many overseas Chinese migrants in Malaya did not speak. Here, Seng's (2020) argument that access to Chinese revolutionary theory allows overseas Chinese to adopt local nationalism needs to be further unpacked with a gender lens. In Malaya, men generally had greater access to formal education conducted in Mandarin Chinese, while most women were illiterate and spoke only dialects. According to Fan (2019), women's literacy rate in 1947 was only 188:1,000, while almost half of the male population was literate (492:1,000) in Malaya. How were the grand political ideas of New Democracy translated and communicated to different dialect groups and the illiterate women in Malaya? The women activists were at the forefront in actualizing it through a vernacular means, but not necessarily printing it in Chinese characters or uttering it in Mandarin.

In brief, unlike its sister publication *Feng Xia Weekly* (edited by Shen's husband Hu Yuzhi) that devoted much space to covering current international affairs, particularly those in China, *NWM* had to combine discussions of the local and personal with the macropolitical. To organize women, who were not as mobile as men, the appeals had to be local in the sense that the politics they encountered everyday mostly happened in their family and around their neighborhood. Yet, Shen Zijiu, the editor, tasked herself to interweave macro and micropolitics in *NWM* by connecting the issue of women's emancipation with socialist nation-building, combining the personal, the social, and the national. This was done by promoting the desirable images of New Women in the discourse of transnational sisterhood.

New Women, transnational and transethnic sisterhood

Shen Ziju and *NWM* introduced progressive feminist thoughts to overseas Chinese women. An editor at *NWM*, Li Jinyu, recalled vividly how Shen Ziju's earlier works enlightened her and her classmates in Nanyang Girls' High School in the 1930s and how her "thoughts and spirits were shaken" when reading *The Women's Life* magazine edited by Shen Ziju in China (Li 1991, 133–134). Lee Kiu (2000, 88) also mentioned that she was influenced by Chinese leftist books when she was a student at Nanyang Girls' High School, including *On New Women*, written by Russian revolutionary A. M. Kollontai, which Shen Ziju translated from Japanese into Chinese. Li and Lee were both cadre members of the newborn women's federation in Singapore in 1945. According to Li (1991, 137), the young group was "pretty naive" then, and it was Shen Ziju who advised and guided them to unite women from all sectors, regardless of what social status and occupation they belonged to.

Shen, a pioneer feminist figure from China, played her role in translating feminist thoughts to the overseas Chinese women's movement. Not only that, but the internationalist vision in *NWM* also allowed local women to relate their situation to the global feminist movement, thus making their participation in local politics and movements thinkable. In every issue, they translated and published news on global women's movements, such as the revolutions in Spain, Bulgaria, the Soviet Union, China, and Indonesia. By writing about stories of Chinese female revolutionaries like Deng Yingchao, Song Qing Ling, and He Xiang Ning, as well as Spanish feminist Dolores Ibárruri (a.k.a La Pasionaria), *NWM* created exemplary role models for Malayan women—ones that were patriotic, revolutionary and without self-interest. The magazine also made correspondence with the socialist feminist Women's International Democratic Federation led by Ibárruri, putting Malaya on the global women's network map (Li 1991, 138).

These projections of exemplary women and their movements allowed *NWM* readers to identify with global feminist development through the trope of transnational sisterhood. In such imagination, the images of role models were incorporated, expanded, and relocated back to Malaya, as can be seen in some writers' interviews with local women activists for their remarkable anti-imperial achievements. Well-known figures like Eng Ming Ching and Lee Kiu were introduced, but lesser-known grassroots activists were featured too. One sentimental article featured "an extraordinary figure in an ordinary time"—a 70-year-old lower-class woman who supported anti-Japanese efforts during the war and whose husband died in torture (*NWM*, April 8, 1946, 22). The self-sacrificing woman was active in the women's association, inspired other young activists, and shouted, "long live the liberation of the Chinese people" and "long live freedom and equality" in her speech (23).

As we can see from the tone and cover images of *NWM*, modern New Women were supposed to be morally superior women who were brave, organized, and had strong national and class awareness. This New Women archetype was derived but different from the May Fourth's New Culture Movement in the early twentieth century, which was focused on modern personhood liberation through education and was narrated by an elite culture community (Ferry 2018, 5). Mahua New Women were unlike the Bluestockings of Japan in the early twentieth century who were not attached to current political events but intensely focused on achieving self-discovery, which the Bluestockings thought was hindered by gender and not class (Bardsley 2007, 13). In this regard, the class-conscious Mahua New Women were in contrast with the cosmopolitan, bourgeois "modern girls" in 1930s Shanghai who were subjected to urban consumer culture and misogynist representation of female sexuality (Zhu 2017, 113–147; Stevens 2003, 94–99). They were also different from their modern Strait Chinese sisters in Penang from Anglophone, urban middle-

class backgrounds, who promoted cosmopolitan civic culture in their magazines (Lewis 2009). The Mahua New Women's transformation from a backward woman to a modern one also represented the transformation of a colonized society to a modern, independent multicultural nation.

NWM could easily be analyzed by scholars through the lens of ethnonationalism and communalism, but this article contends that it was transnationalism that helped them navigate their double identity as Chinese people living in modern Malaya. Transnational discourse in *NWM* also illustrated the temporal discordance in the traveling of feminist theory from China to Malaya, for the latter's colonial, non-homogenous society had very different contexts. Karen Teoh (2018, 103–104) noted that the use of May Fourth and New Culture discourse was extended and entrenched in the Chinese diaspora, even after such movements had long faded in China. Fearing that a radical pursuit of social change might jeopardize their acceptance into the new Southeast Asian states, overseas Chinese girls' schools tended to “retrench their message of radical change and shift toward more gender stereotypical and locally oriented future” (Teoh 2018, 103). As a result, the Republican-era approach to female education was preserved. This insightful observation explains why on the one hand, *NWM* strongly promoted women's participation in radical, socialist movements (as an extension from what Shen Zijiu advocated in her *The Women's Life* magazine in 1930s China), and on the other hand, New Women in 1940s Malaya found themselves still struggling with relatively “old” women's issues, such as family, marriage, and education in a traditional society. The repressive colonial condition also restricted the imagination and creation of a radical New Woman.

In this respect, while promoting transnational politics and the universalist approach to women's issues, *NWM* needed to be local as well. The local activists found themselves in a challenging position trying to emulate the New Women archetype in their actual groundwork in Malaya. For instance, in addition to facing translation and literacy issues, women activists were also concerned with how to present themselves to the public—their appearance, attire, and gesture. In her article “Change Our Working Style,” Bai Bing (*NWM*, August 8, 1946, 3) took issue with the “fist salute,” a.k.a. the “New Democracy salute,” practiced by many female activists. She said the gesture gives the “reactionaries” a chance to label the women as communists and would scare away the middle- and upper-class women. Another thing she pointed out was the all-white modest attire that women organizers tended to wear, as it did not fit well with village work nor did it appeal to the middle- and upper-class women. “We should not particularize ourselves,” she said (3). Another author, Jiang Shangbing (*NWM*, August 12, 1947), also mentioned that short hair, white clothes, and canvas shoes had become trademark images of female activists in Malaya, emphasizing their plain, solemn characters. However, such an appearance not only hindered their work but also scared away other women. These writings demonstrate the authors' realization that the superior image derived from the New Women imagination were in fact problematic and less practicable. *NWM* then became a crucial sisterhood space for female activists all over Malaya to debate the direction of their movements, self-criticize their actions, and receive advice from experienced activists.

Forging transnational sisterhood is not contingent upon gender alone but also on class and race. The backbone of the movement was literate women from lower- and middle-class backgrounds who tried hard to approach and recruit women of all classes. The leftist magazine shows great sympathy toward lower-class working women who were viewed as the most oppressed in the modern capitalist world. Many articles on cabaret dancers, prostitutes, and waitresses published in *NWM* tended to “correct” the negative public opinion of these women by showing that they were forced to work in the industry due to financial hardships. In a different light, articles and interviews with female workers in rubber estates, tin mines, factories, and construction sites praised

them as a respectable, hardworking but oppressed class in colonial society. Class consciousness also defines the construction of New Women in Malaya, in which sisterhood narratives mediate the empathetic connection among women.

Such sisterhood narratives were also extended inward to households and families, as *NWM* positioned itself as the knowledge provider to the modern woman and homemaker. It covered wide-ranging topics concerning women, including physiological knowledge of menstruation, mental health, and birth control, as well as abortion, same-sex relationships, and parenting. The magazine also provided readers with housekeeping tips such as recycling, chicken feeding, ways to store bread, and making handmade bags, ironing boards, and dresses. Like many women's magazines and newspaper supplements, *NWM* also had a column to answer questions readers sent in, mostly concerning their marriages and relationships. These questions provide a cursory lens into the issues facing postwar Malayan women, such as polygamy, extra-marital affairs, divorce, and tensions with in-laws.

In their replies to the letters, *NWM* editors criticized mainstream stigmatization of women's chastity, but they were also not supportive of pre-marital sex. They fiercely condemned polygamy, which was still widely practiced in Malayan Chinese society. They encouraged women to take charge of their own lives, including getting a divorce, embracing the freedom to choose their spouse, being financially independent, reading more books to understand their problems, and making more friends for social support. For women who were doubtful of whether they should marry men of lower-class backgrounds, the editors criticized their class discrimination and urged them to get rid of such thinking before starting a relationship.

While *NWM* made efforts to inculcate gender and class consciousness among Mahua women, its transnational sisterhood narrative faced a real challenge when it came to addressing the women's movement in Malaya across different ethnicities. In 1947, prominent Indian-born Malayan women activist Checha Davies, a.k.a. Mrs. E. V. Davies, told other international women delegates in New Delhi that "Malaya had no national movement for women" (*Indian Daily Mail*, May 16, 1947, 4). She opined that Malayan women were bound by political and religious interests in their respective ethnic groups (Chinese, Indian, and Malay) and could not attain uniformity politically and socially (4).

NWM also reported Malay and Indian women's movements in Malaya, although they were largely disproportionate to reports on global movements. Less was said in the magazine about actual collaborations between multi-ethnic women groups in Malaya beyond sending representatives to each other's celebration events. The postwar period saw intense racial conflicts, and one of the key contestations between the left and the elite-colonial forces was the issue of citizenship for non-Malays. In her article urging Mahua women to recognize their political rights and fight for local citizenship in Malaya, MCP leader Eng Ming Chin criticized that some Chinese women were too proud to be "grand citizens" of the Republic of China and cared even less to be "citizens in a small colony where they would be mixed with the Malays" (*NWM*, June 8, 1946, 4).¹⁰ Yet, the editors of *NWM* were silent on the issue of citizenship. While the magazine agreed that the trans-ethnic nationalist movement was one of the two responsibilities borne by Mahua women, the space to address and promote transethnic women's united front was not given in *NWM*.

One inter-ethnic interaction could be traced in the report on the visit of Khatijah Sidek to the *NWM*'s office. Khatijah was a Sumatra-born woman activist who headed the paramilitary group *Puteri Kesatria* (Women Warriors) in the Indonesian independence movement, and she would later become an iconic Malay feminist.¹¹ A reporter recorded the conversation between Khatijah and Shen Zijiu; however, in the article, both figures were not portrayed in an equal light (*NWM*,

July 8, 1946). The author described Khatijah as having “a very yearning look on her face” when Shen spoke, as if Shen’s image was larger than hers (10). They exchanged information about women’s movements in Malaya and Indonesia, and Shen Zijiu asked why anti-Chinese killings occurred in Java.¹² Khatijah explained that they worked well with the Chinese women in Bukit Tinggi, Sumatra, but some collaborated with the Dutch colonizers, and those needed to be “eliminated” (12). Shen then explained to Khatijah that most overseas Chinese sympathized with Indonesian independence, but it was local Indonesians who retaliated randomly and that would dampen the Chinese’s enthusiasm or even evoke resentment toward the locals. As a result, Shen suggested that Chinese Indonesians should “maintain a sympathetic neutral stance” in the Indonesian independence struggles against the Dutch (12). She went on to urge Khatijah to promote these thoughts to the general public. As the reporter described, “Miss Khatijah listened and nodded repeatedly in agreement” (12).

In her memoir published years later, Khatijah (2001, 72) did not mention this meeting but observed during this trip to Malaya that there was “great misunderstanding on many things between Malays and Chinese, due to British and Japanese policies.” From this example, we can see that the transethnic sisterhood and collaboration in Malaya was subjected to a culture of distrust and suspicion between ethnic groups since the war.¹³ Competing racial discourses associated with political supremacy and cultural superiority had also significantly racialized the postwar social landscape.

To a certain extent, transnational sisterhood narratives allowed *NWM* to circumvent being embroiled in the contentious interracial relationship in Malaya. Shen Zijiu’s suggestion that the Chinese in Indonesia should maintain a “sympathetic neutral stance” also indicated hers and *NWM*’s similar position for the Chinese in Malaya to keep a distance from local politics, although some of their writers pursued otherwise. As a Malayan women’s magazine, *NWM* left barely any trail when it came to promoting local transethnic collaboration among women in Malaya. This was in fact the most viable option for CDL intellectuals during that time, given their stance on not interfering in local politics. However, such distancing was paradoxical since their advocacy for women’s participation in movements was strongly political and, to a great extent, nationalist too.

As I will show in the next section, the nationalist expectation of Mahua women being able to act politically while also being in diaspora was elusive. The contested images of Mahua New Women thus revealed many aspects of anxieties of the modern nation project in Malaya. In late 1947, when the Malayan Emergency was imminent and the leftist movement was heavily suppressed, Shen Zijiu called out “Miss Nanyang,” who, according to her, was the cause of the failing struggle.

“Miss Nanyang” and the ambiguous mother nation

Women in Yan’an and the Soviet Union were repeatedly referenced in *NWM*, as they were viewed as the most emancipated women in the world. In this way, issues surrounding women’s emancipation seemed to have an endpoint, and the destination was a socialist nation. In the later writings of Shen Zijiu in 1948, when the political turmoil in Malaya had worsened, she pinpointed the causal factor of the foreseeable failure of their struggle on the nature of “Miss Nanyang”—a term she coined to refer to the educated young women activists who turned back from their movements.

Shen Zijiu promoted a united front for Mahua women since the early issues of *NWM*. As an experienced feminist activist and simultaneous “transient” outsider, she exercised great caution when commenting on local women’s movements. In the three years from 1945 to 1948, the tone

of her comments on Mahua women and their movements changed from polite to candid, then to harsh criticism. In late 1945, before *NWM* was founded, she wrote an article in *Feng Xia Weekly* (December 31, 1945) titled “Prospects of Women’s Movement Malaya,” delineating the favorable conditions and challenges for the local women’s movement. In addition to the social context that might hinder the movement’s progress, she also noticed that local women tended to be “narrow-minded,” as they mostly stayed at home and had little exposure to society. She advised the female activists not to criticize them, as people were still not used to living collectively, and the women’s movement was only burgeoning (*Feng Xia Weekly*, December 31, 1945). In September 1946, she described the characters of Mahua youth and women as typically “passionate, brave, and pure” (*NWM*, September 8, 1946, 6). However, they still bore “traditional spirits” because the feudal atmosphere in Malaya was still very strong (6). As for the women activist newcomers, she thought they were a group of young women whose “life experience was simple but had progressive thinking” (6). In the article, she disapproved of the activists’ strategy of distancing themselves from middle-and upper-class women who wore elegant clothes or liked to wear makeup. Again, she stressed the importance of a united front for women and urged activists to sympathize with rich housewives suffering from feudal traditions such as polygamy. She advised them not to overemphasize political propaganda but focus more on serving and mobilizing women of all statuses and classes.

However, after more than one year, she had less sympathy for educated women and proclaimed that they were the ones hindering the revolution. In December 1947, she blamed educated women for having “highly idealized” dreams in relationships, careers, and revolutions, as they thought all of these could be achieved easily (*NWM*, December 8, 1947, 2). In February 1948, two months before Shen Zijiu left Malaya, she wrote her harshest article titled “Misses Stepping Forward,” criticizing the educated Mahua women, or “Miss Nanyang,” for their opportunistic character (*NWM*, February 8, 1948, 1). She said that Miss Nanyang was a product of the commercial-centric overseas Chinese community, shaped by the selfish and opportunistic nature of the commercial world. Even though some of the progressive ones resisted their born homes and even contributed to the social movements, they would easily give up on encountering setbacks and difficulties. Shen deemed them “fragile flowers” who could not escape “relapsing into servitude” (2).

The gesture of Miss Nanyang stepping into their career path is similar to those who only look strong from the outside but are weak on the inside. Similar to when they are in gymnastics classes or ball games, their appearances look healthy and energetic and very presentable as they step forward, but that gesture could not last long. The reason why they look strong outside but are weak inside is simple, it is because this harmful commercial-centric society has nurtured their merchant-like temperament—good at being opportunistic, selfish, greedy for money, but are timid, cowardly, weak-willed and lack resilience against reality. (*NWM*, February 8, 1948, 2)¹⁴

At the surface level, Shen’s strident criticism seemed to target the personal attitudes of local Chinese women. However, the paternalistic comments not only revealed the anxieties associated with the women’s movements in Malaya and the future of the magazine but also the changing political expectations of local Mahua women, whom Shen first perceived as being passionate, brave, and pure, then being opportunistic, servile, and cowardly.

In practical terms, women’s movements throughout Malaya had come to a critical juncture at the time of Shen’s writing. The arrests, crackdowns, and deportations of Chinese activists by the British were warnings to those still involved. Importantly, Shen was not criticizing the women whom the movements were unable to recruit but the backbone of the movements themselves—

the educated Mahua women. Other articles in *NWM* also mentioned the increasing number of members who quit the local women's groups, most of whom were educated women. The situation foreshadowed the end of *NWM*, which could no longer serve its purpose to organize and radicalize Chinese women in Malaya for political goals.

Moreover, Shen's demeaning criticisms were incongruous and conflicting with the progressive, transnational, socialist universalism that *NWM* aimed to promote. Her exclusion of Miss Nanyang from sisterhood manifested condescending elements of cultural and ethno-national superiority against local Mahua women. The hurling remark objectified Miss Nanyang as morally corrupted gold diggers, but, in fact, it indicated Shen's disillusion with and the exclusion of Mahua women from her nationalist sisterhood in general. They were not able to help achieve the national dreams—the socialist revolutions in both Malaya and China. Her resolution can hardly be conceivable without tensions that pull Mahua women on two opposing ends in their movement.

The trope of a self-centered Miss Nanyang who could not devote herself to the political struggle revealed the level of identity anxiety; she could not represent Nanyang or Malaya as a whole, as much as Shen would like her to. There is no such nation called Nanyang or Mahua, and her struggles were not necessarily recognized as “national” in that sense. Her long-distance nationalism toward China was marginal too. This anxiety also explains why, unlike the cases of many post-colonial societies, the tropes of Mahua women as national mothers or dutiful daughters were not called upon in *NWM*. In the magazine, Indonesia's Kartini and China's Deng Yingchao and Song Qingling were referred to as the mothers of these nations, but the mother image of the new Malayan nation remained obscured. The imagined “mother nation” lay either in the northern mainland to which Miss Nanyang had never been or in her land of birth, which she could also not completely lay claim to.

In *NWM*, Shen and other locally born contributors had different priorities when it came to mobilizing women for national movements. Since Eng Ming Ching and Lee Kiu stopped contributing articles to the journal after a few issues, it was clear that commentaries on politics and trans-ethnic collaboration in Malaya were overshadowed by reports on current affairs in China and overseas Chinese solidarity with China. While encouraging Mahua women to participate in local women's movements, Shen's ultimate role as a CDL and CCP member was to mobilize them, as members of overseas Chinese, for a socialist China. Miss Nanyang failed to meet her expectation.

As such, Miss Nanyang is the Chinese woman in the diaspora at home. The euphoric moment of the Malayan Spring allowed them to imagine themselves in a bigger role in society and the nation, but there was more than one nation to be served. Although transnational idealism introduced them to the wider world, which helped them relate with other women globally, their credibility as national members was constantly scrutinized and questioned. Their diasporic identity was one that nationalism could not accommodate. The 12-year Malayan Emergency that soon followed would intercept their radical movements and writing, crippling the dreams of making Malaya a site of transnational feminist solidarity to make way for the construction of an anti-communist nation.

After the Emergency, *NWM* writers had very different lives. Shen Zijiu quietly left Singapore to join the communist struggles in China and became the Minister of Propaganda and Education in the All-China Women's Federation after the communist takeover in 1949. She would remain in high-ranking political positions until she died in 1989. Lee Kiu left her Malayan “homeland” (*gu xiang*) in September 1947 for which she had “shed blood, sacrificed, and fought” and “returned” to the “ancestral land” (*zu guo*) in China that she had never been to (Lee 2000, 105). Unfortunately, the excitement of a “return compatriot” was short lived; she was soon accused of political crimes

and was among those purged in the 1950s but survived. After spending a few years in jail, she was sent by the CCP to work in a factory until her retirement in 1980 and carried the grudges with her. When she finally met Shen Zijiu in China during the tough years, Shen's unwelcoming facial expression was as "tough as iron" (Lee 2000, 108). A not-so-glorious story of diaspora. Eng Ming Ching took a different journey. She joined the guerrilla force of MCP in 1948 and became the party central leader known by many as Suriani Abdullah, her Muslim name after marrying Abdullah C. D., who was later appointed Chairman of the party. Spending most of her life as an underground communist in the jungle, she remained in one of the "peace villages" in Southern Thailand after MCP laid down their arms in 1989 and lived there until she died in 2013. Other lesser-known contributors remain silent in history, and much work is needed to uncover their voices.

Concluding remarks

New Women Monthly was a short-lived socialist women's magazine founded in 1946 with nationalist aims to mobilize Chinese women in Malaya. The short-lived Malayan Spring provided the soil for it to flourish, while its contributors, many of whom were also women activists, engaged in various issues from women's emancipation and organization to leftist politics and modern citizenships. All of which was communicated through the discourse of transnational sisterhood in imagining a politically engaged, morally superior image of New Women. Such narratives showcased the complex interplay of the women's gendered intersubjectivities of the self, the family, the nation, and the world.

By examining the writings and voices of female practitioners in postwar Malaya, this article has suggested a reorientation toward understudied archives to make visible how diasporic experiences function in different and uneven ways between men and women, as well as between China-born and local-born activists. For women who were not as mobile as men, transnational sisterhood narratives made their self-emancipation and political participation thinkable and thus relatable to the global feminist movements. In the magazine, macropolitical ideas were combined with the discussion and practice of the local and the personal. For the women activists on the ground, who were the targeted readers and writers of the magazine, their encounters with politics were the local, mundane, micropolitical appeals involving family, marriage, and relationships. In a way, being in diaspora was not in their favor.

The magazine's chief editor Shen Zijiu urged Mahua women to participate in two united fronts—one being multi-ethnic nationalism in Malaya and the other being Chinese nationalism supporting the communist struggle in China. That transnational idealism gradually became an oxymoron running toward two opposing ends, which foreshadowed the end of the magazine. The magazine is a testimony of how fluid diasporic identities and transnational imagination expressions could not meet the urgent nationalist demands, both in colonized multicultural Malaya and in civil-war-embroiled China. The demands would eventually prompt the exclusion of women from sisterhood, as seen by Shen's harsh criticism of "Miss Nanyang."

The Malayan Emergency, which was launched in June 1948 and ended only 12 years later, muted the above-contested articulations of a modern national identity for Mahua women and Malaysians in general. Today, Malaysia is still living in the shadow of its anti-communist past, one that eliminated the memory of transnational, transethnic, socialist experiments and experiences as a consequence of nationalism and racialization.

Notes

1. This article refers to Singapore as being part of Malaya, as what was generally perceived by the people in 1940s, including the authors in the magazine. The official creation of Federation of Malaya in 1948 did not include Singapore, but a new federation Malaysia was formed on 16 September 1963 by the merger of the Federation of Malaya with the former British colonies of North Borneo, Sarawak and Singapore. Singapore separated from Malaysia on 9 August 1965 and became an independent nation.
2. Shen Zijiu was born in 1898 in Hangzhou to a business family. She belonged to the May Fourth generation who pursued feminist ideals of women's liberation in education and career and became the editor of "The Women's Garden" (婦女園地), the weekly supplementary section of the *Shanghai News* (Shen Bao 申報) in 1934. Before long, Shen moved on to the pro-CCP magazine *Women's Life* (婦女生活) in 1935. The women's periodical remained an important anti-Japanese publication that mobilized women's participation in the national salvation movement. Shen joined the CCP in 1939, and two years later, she was sent by Zhou Enlai to assist Hu Yuzhi in Singapore, who had come a year earlier. Also a member of the May Fourth generation, Hu studied in Paris in the 1920s. Before arriving in Singapore, he was already a renowned journalist and writer who edited *Eastern Miscellany* (東方雜誌) in Shanghai and had translated Edgar Snow's *Red Star Over China* into Chinese. In Singapore, Hu and Shen worked closely in *Nanyang Siang Pau* and were active in the China Relief Fund; they married in 1941 in the British colony.
3. Their group, who fled Singapore for Sumatra in 1942, included left-leaning intellectuals such as Zhang Chukun (張楚琨), Wang Jiyuan (王紀元), Shao Zonghan (邵宗漢), Wang Renshu (王任叔, a.k.a. Ba Ren 巴人), and the renowned writer Yu Dafu (郁達夫), who disappeared and is believed to have been arrested and executed by the Japanese. All came to Singapore from China before the war, and the majority were underground CCP members (Seng 2020). See Hu and Shen (1985) for reflections on their exiles in Indonesia.
4. The word *hartal* is used in many Indian languages to refer to strike action and mass protest, particularly in the Indian independence movement in the early twentieth century. The multicultural leftist movement in Malaya took inspiration from its South Asian counterpart, which shows important aspects of political and cultural transnationalism occurring in the contact zone. See Abdul Rahman Embong (2015) for the contestation for constitutional proposals between the pro-colonial and leftist camps in Malaya and see Amrith (2011; 2013) for the studies of the Indian diaspora in the region.
5. A literary polemic started in late 1947 on "the uniqueness of Mahua literature" (馬華文藝獨特性) was a crucial debate, with Hu Yuzhi defending CDL's stance in *Feng Xia Weekly* and MCP writer Zhou Rong (周容) fiercely criticizing the "qiaomin writers" camp (overseas compatriot writers 僑民作家), asking Mahua writers to write about the "here and now" in Malaya, but not China. See Fang Xiu (1987) and Show (2021).
6. For post-war racial conflicts in Malaya, see Cheah (2012) and Harper (1999).
7. For example, historian Fujio Hara in his study of *Feng Xia* literators (2016) and his earlier work (2003) on Malayan Chinese identity makes a clear distinction between the "two camps."
8. *Feng Xia* also stopped publication in June 1948 at Issue 132, but two months later, *NWM* and *Feng Xia* continued to publish jointly as *Feng Xia-New Women Temporary Joint Periodical* (風下新婦女臨時聯合刊) for a few more issues until April 1949.
9. Due to limited space, the creative and literary aspects of *NWM* will be dealt with in another article by the author, see Show (2023).
10. In an opinion poll conducted by the *Nan Chiau Jit Poh* (*NWM*'s sister publication) between March and June 1947 involving more than 20,000 people, it was found that as many as 95.6% of the readers were willing to "be Malayan citizen without relinquishing Chinese nationality," while only 3.1% were willing to "relinquish Chinese nationality and become Malayan citizen" (Chui 2007, 185). This means that the majority of Malayan Chinese hoped to preserve their dual national identities at that time, and this was also what Eng Ming Ching agreed in her article. However, political tensions in Malaya did not allow for such an ambiguous identity recognition. According to Chen Ping, the Secretary-General of the MCP, the party had already established a clear national identity in 1946, which was to become Malayan and fight for Malaya, not China (Chin 2003, 146).
11. That year, Khatijah (2001, 72) visited various women's groups in Malaya and Singapore to "look into the position of the women there, and to organize them." She would return to Singapore a year later and

marry a Malayan citizen. In 1953, she joined the women's wings of UMNO and became an important leader in the Malay women's movement until being expelled from the party three years later.

12. Anti-Chinese violence during the revolutionary years (1945–1949) was severe, and the Tangerang Massacre from 1945 to 1946 was widely reported on but less researched. Most attributed the motive of violence to Chinese collaboration with the Dutch, and the number of casualties remains contested, ranging from a few hundred to a few thousand, while tens of thousands fled their home and became refugees. See Ravando (2014) for a thorough historical analysis of the massacre.
13. Like their Chinese counterparts in Malaya, Malay women became more politically aware and socially engaged during the Japanese occupation, albeit at opposite political poles. In the cultural sphere, female Malay writers during the period viewed the occupation as a new age (*zaman baharu*), and the Malay women in the era were the “New Women” (*puteri-puteri zaman baharu*), with Japanese women becoming the perfect model of modernity to emulate (Mahani 2010, 266).
14. All translations from Chinese in this article are the author's unless otherwise stated.

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Special terms

<i>New Women's Monthly</i>	新婦女月刊	Liew Yuen Sien	劉韻仙
Shen Zijiu	沈茲九	transient guest	過路客
Hu Yuzhi	胡愈之	Wen Ru	文如
New Nanyang Publisher	新南洋出版社	Yang Bifang	楊碧芳
Tan Kah Kee	陳嘉庚	Bing Ling	冰玲
Chen Yoh Shoo	陳岳書	Bai Bing	白冰
Wang Shuyang	王叔暘	Gu Ying	古瑛
<i>Feng Xia Weekly</i>	風下周刊	Li Jinyu	李今玉
<i>Nan Chiao Jit Pao</i>	南僑日報	Jiang Shangbing	江上冰
Lee Kiu	李球	Misses Stepping Forward	小姐的開步走
Eng Ming Ching	應敏欽	gu xiang	故鄉
		zu guo	祖國

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