

*The Representation of Women's Sexual Subjectivities in Republican China: A Case  
Study of Ling Long Women's Magazine (1931-1937), Shanghai,*

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Abstract

In line with the “sexual turn” in historical research, this thesis analyzes women’s sexual discourses in one of Shanghai’s most popular women’s magazines during the 1930s, *Ling Long Women’s Magazine* (*Ling Long* for short, 1931-1937). Sexual experiences, feelings and concepts of female writers are uncovered to shed light on the studies of urban women’s daily lives and the sexual culture in modern China at that time.

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Literary discourses on sex in Tanci(彈詞) and Chinese dramas(戲曲) have indicated that traditional Chinese women, most of whom were talented ladies from middle class families, expressed their sexual desire in an allusive and strategic way. In contrast, female authors of *Ling Long* discussed sex straightforwardly, and even expanded the types of sexual discourses. In addition to literary discourses including sexual novels and erotic poems, there were also daily life essays on sexual thoughts and current event reports of sex-related cases. Most of the female authors who discussed sex in *Ling Long* were middle school students. The transformations of female writers' social identity constitutions and the way they expressed sex, indicated the significant influence of modern society on women.

Through critical textual analysis and contextualization, this thesis ascertains that women's discourses on sex in *Ling Long* reveal the diversity of female sexual subjectivities. For example, some female authors voiced their anti-sexuality intention after experiencing sexual harassment, some urged for editors' advice on certain sex-related problems, and, some even out-rightly expressed their sexual desires. These multiple female voices indicated that sexuality was an essential topic for urban women. Furthermore, the large number of women's anti-sexuality discourses in *Ling Long* revealed that women's sexual security was frequently threatened in the public sphere during the 1930s. In contrast, some other discourses detailing women's own sexual desire challenged the gender norm of sexually active men versus asexually passive women.

In brief, this thesis attempts to perform a methodological application of textual and contextual analysis to gender and women's history.

### ***Ling Long's* Publication Background and its Editors**

*Ling Long* was published by a company named Sanhe Publishing House (三和出版社). This company was established and owned by Lin Zecang, a graduate student from the business department of Kwang Hua University in Shanghai.<sup>1</sup> Until it closed in November 1954, Sanhe Publishing House had produced a series of popular

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<sup>1</sup> Lin Zecang, "In Memory of the Establishment of Fifteen Weeks of Sanhe Company," *Movie Voice*, 6:1(Jan. 1937), pp. 79-80.

magazines, including *Ling Long*, *Pictorial Weekly* (攝影畫報), *Movie Voice* (電聲), *Family Companion* (家庭良友) and, *Essence* (精華).<sup>2</sup> While these magazines disseminated information about gender/women's issues, photography techniques, movies and family life, respectively, they were edited by the same group of people. Because of this, we found that discussions on women's emotions and private lives in *Ling Long* were reprinted in *Movie Voice* and *Family Companion*, and, in addition, there were movie columns in *Ling Long* and *Pictorial Weekly*. As indicated by an editorial article in *Movie Voice*, these magazines were companion publications, in which the topics and contents were correlated.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, there were advertisements praising *Ling Long* and soliciting subscriptions to *Ling Long* in *Pictorial Weekly*, *Movie Voice* and *Family Companion*, which were helpful for expanding *Ling Long*'s readership and for maintaining its seven-year publication period.<sup>4</sup>

*Ling Long* was a popular magazine with a special focus on the issues of women's daily lives, such as cosmetics, house-keeping, movies (both Hollywood and Chinese), child rearing and sex. By examining the names of the editorial board members across issues of *Ling Long*, we identified a large number of editorial staff responsible for the magazine at Sanhe Publishing House: Lin Zemin, Xu Bingduo, Zhao Baiye, Xu Jinsheng and Ye Qianyu, served as art editors; Liang Xinxi, managed the movie column; and Chen Zhenling, was in charge of the remaining sections.<sup>5</sup> Among these editors, the most noteworthy is the chief editor, Zhenling's personality, which was brought out in *Ling Long*, was of a reasonable and warm-hearted woman with a modern educational background and a devotion to women's features. The column entitled "Chief Editor's Words" in each issue of *Ling Long* illustrated her strong feminist intention to comfort pain and depression among female readers.<sup>6</sup> However, through critical textual and contextual analyses, we discovered another facet about "Ms. Chen Zhenling's" personality. In the tenth issue of another women's magazine

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<sup>2</sup> "Huadong Xingzheng Weiyuanhui Xinwen Chubanjū guanyu Tongyi Sanhe Chubanshe Xieye de Han" 華東行政委員會新聞出版局關於同意三和出版社歇業的函 (The Letter of Approval for the Discontinuation of Business at Sanhe Publishing House) 上海市檔案館藏 (Materials in Shanghai Archives), B128-2-1192-95, 1954.

<sup>3</sup> "Women de Hua: 'Yue Ji': Gei Yingmi zhiwai de Xin Gongxian" 我們的話:「月輯」——給影迷之外的新貢獻 (Our Words: Monthly: A New Contribution to Movie Fans) *Movie Voice*, 2(Jan. 1939), p. 139.

<sup>4</sup> Zhang Peilin 章霽琳, "Minguo Chengshi Nuxing de Xing Lunshu Kongjian: Yi 1930 Niandai Shanghai Linglong Zazhi Wei Yanjiu Ge'an" 民國城市女性的性論述空間——以1930年代上海《玲瓏》雜誌(1931-1937)為研究個案 (The Space for Sexual Discourses of Urban Women in Republican China: A Case Study of Ling Long Women's Magazine (1931-1937), Shanghai) (M.Phil Diss., The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2011), pp. 42-44.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, pp. 43-55.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

in Shanghai from the 1930s, *Queen* (皇后). One of its editors, a male intellectual named Chen Xia (陳霞), stated that he had also previously edited *Ling Long* and that his main responsibility was to edit articles on women's heartfelt feelings, including their reflections on relationships, either joyful or sad.<sup>7</sup> Obviously, this statement was contradictory to the previously mentioned concept that Chen Zhenling was the only editor who took charge of the section on women's features. Thus, we may question whether "Chen Zhenling" was a real woman or just a symbolic construction, which implicitly indicates a group of editors of both sexes. In fact, we can identify more discrepancies in *Ling Long* itself. For example, in its nineteenth issue, some editorial articles were attributed to "Ping Xia" (萍霞), a name seldom seen in the sections introducing *Ling Long's* editorial board.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, Sanhe Publishing House had sorted women's articles in *Ling Long* by category and published them as series of books. In the preface of one of these books entitled *Pregnancy Notes* (產前須知), we can find the editor's name, Lu Ping (露萍),<sup>9</sup> which was also unfamiliar. Generally speaking, the names occupying the signature positions supposedly belonging to Chen Zhenling further convinced us that "Chen Zhenling" was only a construction of a nonexistent feminist editor.

Nevertheless, it appears that this symbolic female figure significantly influenced *Ling Long's* female readership. As indicated in *Ling Long*, many female readers considered "Chen Zhenling" to be a reliable advisor on typical private problems. Responding to "her" call for "making this magazine your soul home to pour out everything in your heart," these female readers actively contributed to *Ling Long*, especially through their essays on female hygiene, love affairs, and sex.

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<sup>7</sup> Chen Xia 陳霞, "Qizou Niangniang Qiansui" 啟奏娘娘千歲 (Report to the Queen) *Queen*, 10(Oct. 1934), p. 13.

<sup>8</sup> "Weiming Suibi" 未名隨筆 (An Essay Untitled), *Ling Long*, 3:90(1933); "Lu Ping" 露萍 (Azolla Imbricata), *Ling Long*, 3:90(1933); "Tiangou Rou" 天狗肉 (The Meat of Heaven Dog), *Ling Long*, 3:90(1933).

<sup>9</sup> Lu Ping 露萍, "Chanqian Xuli" 產前序例 (Preface of *Pregnancy Notes*), in Lu Ping ed., *Pregnancy Notes* (Shanghai: Sanhe Publishing House, 1933), p. 2.

## One Type of Women's Voice on Sexuality: "Men are Sexually Immoral"

In general, women's most common discourses on sexuality in *Ling Long* were those criticizing men's sexual desires and "improper" behaviors towards women. Some examples are as follows:

Most men don't care about their career developments. The only thing that they care about is how to seduce women effectively.<sup>10</sup>

Some men treat women well, but it's just for the ultimate purpose of fulfilling their sexual needs through women's bodies.<sup>11</sup>

Relationships between the two sexes always begin with handshaking, then kissing, and then the last step, having sex. After men have fulfilled their sexual needs, they become very cold towards women.<sup>12</sup>

Moreover, a large number of the articles contributed by women explicitly described contemporary legal cases about sexual harassment, sexual abuse and the rape of women.<sup>13</sup> For example, an article entitled "A Rickshaw Puller Raped A Young Girl" detailed how a rickshaw puller in Shanghai cajoled a 14-year-old girl to enter a hotel room and raped her. This female author continued as follows:

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<sup>10</sup> Ms. Xiuling 繡翎女士, "Buyao Yanre Nanzi de Zhipiao" 不要眼熱男子的支票 (Don't be Attracted by Men's Money), *Ling Long*, 1:19(1931), p. 659.

<sup>11</sup> Liang Shaoxia 梁少霞, "Nanzi de Xingwei" 男子的行為 (Men's Behaviors), *Ling Long*, 2:64(1932), p. 633.

<sup>12</sup> Xue Jinwan 薛金婉, "Lianai Jiehun yu Xing de Anwei" 戀愛結婚與性的安慰 (Love, Marriage, and the Comfort of Sex), *Ling Long*, 1:42(1931), pp. 1656-1657.

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, Ms. Xiuzhen 秀貞女士 "Bukan Ru'er de Chouwen: Shouxing de Ren Zhennan An" 不堪入耳的醜聞：獸性的任振南案 (A Horrible Scandal: Ren Zhennan's Rape Case), *Ling Long*, 1:20(1931), pp. 709-710; He Aiyun 賀愛雲, "Jinggao Fuhua Qingnian" 警告浮滑青年 (Warning Frivolous Young Men), *Ling Long*, 1:27(1931), p. 998; Madam Liang Meizhen 梁美貞女士, "Huanyin hou de Ta" 歡飲後的她 (A Drunk Woman), *Ling Long*, 1:30(1931), p. 1227; Liyu 麗玉 "Nuzi de Weixian Shiqi" 女子的危險時期 (The dangerous Period of Women), *Ling Long*, 1:40(1931), p. 1572; "Dangbu Zhiyuan Youjian Shaonu" 黨部職員誘姦少女 (An Officer of the Party Headquarters Seduced A Girl), *Ling Long*, 2:70(1932), p. 945; "Mei Jiaoyu Nuzi de Weiji" 沒教育女子的危機 (Crisis of Uneducated Women), *Ling Long*, 2:72(1932), p. 1042; "Wanfu de Sedan Baotian: Jici Jianyin Yangnu" 晚父的色膽包天：幾次姦淫養女 (What A lascivious Foster Father: Raped His Adopted Daughter for Several Times), *Ling Long*, 2:75(1932), p. 1186; "Qiangjian Tongyangxi" 強姦童養媳婦 (A Child Bride being Raped), *Ling Long*, 2:76(1932), p. 1231; "Youjian Yiqi" 誘姦遺棄 (A Girl Being Seduced and Then Abandoned), *Ling Long*, 3:85(1933), p. 209.

Every day, we see the news about women being raped in different Shanghai newspapers. What huge humiliations women have been suffering!<sup>14</sup>

We cannot exclude the possibility that this statement was exaggerated. However, considering the large number of articles about sexual harassment and assault cases in *Ling Long*, we can extrapolate that women's sexual security was frequently threatened in the public sphere during the 1930s. Additionally, this fact helps us to further understand women's shared anger and anxiety behind these anti-sexuality discourses. In 1934, *Ling Long*'s editorial staff compiled these discourses into a book called *Men's Ugly Performance* (男子的醜態).<sup>15</sup>

In the following section, we will primarily concentrate on the different anti-sexuality discourses contributed by two female authors, Wu Xiuqing (吳秀清) and Zhang Pinhui (張品惠). While Wu Xiuqing severely accused men of sexually objectifying women in workplaces, Zhang Pinhui focused more on the harm of premarital sex to women.

In the article "Vases with Red Flowers," Wu Xiuqing suggested that men always ignored women's intelligence and working capabilities. Instead, she described, they pay close attention to women's feminine appearances. Additionally, men unjustly mocked women as "flower vases," which essentially meant that women were beautiful, but useless.<sup>16</sup> Wu asserted that these types of mockery not only reflected men's gender discriminations but also their sexual fascinations towards women.<sup>17</sup> To avoid being abused as "flower vases," Wu offered a suggestion to *Ling Long*'s female readers:

We must show others our dignity and liberality at all times. We should not seduce men. On the contrary, we need to live independently without support from our families. We have to work hard and devote ourselves to country-building achievements!<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> "Baochefu Jianyin Younu" 包車夫強姦幼女 (Rickshaw Puller Raped Young Girl), *Ling Long*, 2:54(1932), p. 175.

<sup>15</sup> Chen Zhenling ed., *Men's Ugly Performance* (Shanghai: Sanhe Publishing House, 1934).

<sup>16</sup> "Flower Vase" was a popular title used by men to describe women in the workplace in big cities like Shanghai and Guangzhou during the 1930s. See, for example, Chin, Angelina Y., "Labor Stratification and Gendered Subjectivities in the Service Industries of South China in the 1920s and 1930s: The Case of *Nü Zhaodai* (女招待)," *Research on Women in Modern Chinese History*, 14(Dec. 2006), pp. 125-178; Lien Ling-ling, "Seeking Independence" or "Coveting Modernity"? The Emergence of Women Clerks and the Formation of Their Images in Modern Shanghai," *Research on Women in Modern Chinese History*, 14(Dec. 2006), pp. 1-50.

<sup>17</sup> Wu Xiuqing 吳秀清, "Vases with Red Flowers," *Ling Long*, 1:42(1931), pp. 1659-1660.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

Wu tended to believe that the label of “flower vases” would quickly disappear if all women lived this way. However, as identified by research on gendered workplace cultures in Republican China, women’s one-sided attempts to change their disadvantaged positions in gender-power relationships always failed.<sup>19</sup>

Wu’s discourses also indicated her knowledge about the symbolic relationship between nationalism and women’s liberation in modern China. According to her intention of living independently, we can conclude that she completely accepted the male-dominated mainstream ideology of the May Fourth period, that women should stop depending on their natal families and become self-supported social beings, similar to “Nora,” the female protagonist of Ibsen’s famous novel *A Doll’s House*. As described in the novel, Nora left her husband, who suppressed her free will, and left the family to seek out a new life. This novel was translated and introduced to Chinese readers by a well-known intellectual, Hu Shi (胡適), in the 1900s. Through re-interpretation, a group of male May Fourth intellectuals that included Hu Shi, “Nora” gained new significance in the Chinese context. It became a symbolic model for Chinese women, inspiring them to lead an independent, modern life. Some historians of modern China have identified male-centrism in the definition of “Chinese Nora” and propaganda about Chinese women’s emancipation has been based on this male-centrism.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, the Wu case vividly shows how this type of male ideology influenced ordinary Chinese women.

In an article entitled “Reflections of the Modern Time,” once again, Wu showed her complete acceptance of another popular agenda proposed by male intellectuals, which called for individuals to sacrifice of personal inclinations in favor of the good of the country.<sup>21</sup> The only difference between Wu’s and men’s nationalist knowledge was that instead of men’s criticism of women’s incapableness, Wu denounced men’s ineffective nationalist construction because they wasted too much time seeking sexual

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<sup>19</sup> See, for example, Hui-chi Hsu 許慧琦, *Nala zai Zhongguo: Xin Nuxing Xingxiang de Suzao ji Qi Yanbian, 1900s-1930s* 「娜拉」在中國：新女性形象的塑造及其演變，1900s-1930s (Nora in China: The Construction of the Image of Modern Girl and Its Developments, 1900s-1930s) (Taipei: Department of History, National Cheng Chi University, 2003), pp. 245-262; Lien Ling-ling, “Seeking Independence” or “Coveting Modernity”? The Emergence of Women Clerks and the Formation of Their Images in Modern Shanghai,” pp. 1-50; Cheung, Yin-ki, “Modern Women in Republican Shanghai, the 1920s-1930s: Discourses and Images” (M. Phil. diss., Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2004), pp. 50-66.

<sup>20</sup> See, for example, Hui-chi Hsu, *Nora in China: The Construction of the Image of Modern Girl and Its Developments, 1900s-1930s*.

<sup>21</sup> See for example, Liang Qichao 梁啟超, *Xin Min Shuo* 新民說 (The New Citizen) (Taipei: Zhonghua Book Company, 1959), p. 87; Hu Shi, “Bu Xiu” 不朽 (The Immortal), *New Youth*, 6:2(Feb. 1919).

fulfillments.<sup>22</sup> The juxtaposition of national matters with gender and sexual problems made Wu's discourses unique among all of the sexual discourses presented by women in *Ling Long*. In addition, although Wu seldom discussed women's sexual needs, it is highly possible that she did not consider the topic of women's sexual fulfillments as significant as national achievements.

Unlike Wu Xiuqing, Zhang Pinhui paid little attention to national issues. Instead, she focused more on gender relations in marriages. Zhang was an intellectual with a master's degree from Yenching University and who taught at a Shanghai university.<sup>23</sup> As illustrated in most of her articles in *Ling Long*, she did not appreciate the extreme hostility between the two sexes. Although she was aware of women's disadvantaged positions in the patriarchal society of that time, she suggested that women should get along with their male mates and live in a harmonious married life with them.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, in line with many male intellectuals who thought highly of women's family roles, she encouraged women to be "virtuous wives and good mothers."<sup>25</sup> As detailed in one of her articles:

If a young lady lacks self-awareness in fulfilling her responsibilities as a virtuous wife and a good mother, she need not marry. If she gets married, she has to recognize that being a "mother" is a dignified and honorable role. Simultaneously, she needs to be a good wife, making the family a harmonious paradise.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Wu Xiuqing, "Reflections of the Modern Time," *Ling Long*, 1:25(1931), p. 906.

<sup>23</sup> Zhang Pinhui, "Zhangfu You Waiyu" 丈夫有外遇 (When Your Husband Has An Affair), *Ling Long*, 1:1(1931).

<sup>24</sup> See, for example, Zhang Pinhui, "Qizi yu Zhangfu Zhengbo Heyi" 妻子與丈夫爭駁何益 (No Benefit for A Woman to Argue with Her Husband), *Ling Long*, 1:5(1931); Zhang Pinhui, "When Your Husband Has An Affair"; Zhang Pinhui, "Zenyang Qu Zaocheng Meiman Jiating" 怎樣去造成美滿家庭 (How to Sustain Harmonious Home Life), *Ling Long*, 1:6(1931); Zhang Pinhui, "Weihe Zhangfu Yao Bijian Qizi" 為何丈夫要避見妻子 (Why the Husband Doesn't Want to See His Wife), *Ling Long*, 1:30(1931); Zhang Pinhui, "Xie Gei Pengyou Zhangfu de Xin" 寫給朋友的丈夫信 (A Letter to A Female Friend's Husband), *Ling Long*, 1:10(1931).

<sup>25</sup> For an example of research on the male-dominated proposal to encourage women to be "virtuous wives and good mothers" during the 1930s, see, for example, Jung-won Jin 陳延媛, "Jianjie Jindai Yazhou de Xianqi Liangmu Sixiang: Cong Huigu Riben, Hanguo, Zhongguo de Yanjiu Chengguo Tanqi" 簡介近代亞洲的"賢妻良母"思想—從回顧日本、韓國、中國的研究成果談起 (The Ideology of "Virtuous Wives and Good Mothers" in Modern Asia: An Introduction of Research in Japan, Korea and China), in *Research on Women in Modern Chinese History*, 10(Dec. 2002); Xia Xiaohong 夏曉虹, *Wanqing Wenren Funu Guan* 晚清文人婦女觀 (Male Intellectuals' Viewpoints On Women in the Late Imperial China) (Beijing: Zuojia Chubanshe, 1995); Hui-chi Hsu, *Nora in China: The Construction of the Image of Modern Girl and Its Developments, 1900s-1930s*; Lin Yutang 林語堂, "Hunyin yu Nuzi Zhiye" 婚嫁與女子職業 (Marriages and Women's Careers), *The China Times*, (Sep. 1933); Joan Judge, *The Precious Raft of History: The Past, the West, and the Women Question in China* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2008), pp. 107-122.

<sup>26</sup> Zhang Pinhui, "Xiangei Tongzhennu de Hua" 貢獻給童貞女的話 (Suggestions for Unmarried



She also noted that for the ultimate purpose of becoming a “virtuous wife and good mother,” a woman should first get married to a responsible and reliable man. She advised unmarried young women not to carelessly have sex with someone they might not know well:

In today’s society, there are some men who are seemingly considerate, modest, tolerant and decent, but actually, they are really “beasts in human attire.” If women fall into the trap of (having sex with and) getting married with these men, their married lives will be meaningless, and their goals of becoming “virtuous wives and good mothers” will not come true. Since there is no guarantee to future happiness, I suggest that unmarried young ladies not be so foolish as to offer their impeccable bodies for men to fulfill their sexual needs.<sup>27</sup>

In fact, many of “Chen Zhenling’s” discourses, or rather those of *Ling Long*’s editorial staff concerned the harm of premarital sex on women. As these discourses described, it was possible that a woman could suffer from a relationship breakup after having sex with her male mate before marriage, and it would be difficult for a woman who lost her virginity to get married to another man.<sup>28</sup> However, Zhang’s discourse mentioned another possibility that was different from that of “Chen Zhenling’s” but equally tragic for women. Zhang worried a woman might decide to get married to a man because of a sexual experience between them, but then later, the woman might find that the one she married was hypocritical and irresponsible. Certainly, her dream of becoming a “virtuous wife and good mother” would then be shattered.

However, simultaneously, Zhang encouraged unmarried young women to discuss sexual problems with their male mates. As she detailed in the article “Suggestions for Unmarried Young Ladies:”

You should actively talk about your body and sex with your boyfriend, so as to realize whether or not he understands how noble and decent sexual issues

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Young Ladies), *Ling Long*, 1:17(1931), pp. 581-582.

<sup>27</sup> Zhang Pinhui, “Suggestions for Unmarried Young Ladies (to Continue),” *Ling Long*, 1:20(1931), p. 706.

<sup>28</sup> See, for example, Zhu Mulian 朱慕蓮, “Chunu de Xing de Kumen” 處女的性的苦悶 (The Sexual Desire of A Virgin), *Ling Long*, 2:69(1932), pp. 875-877; Yanqian 豔倩, “Reqing Jinzhang Ji Nan Dikang zhong: Wo Weiyi de Chunu Xian Gei Ta” 熱情緊張極難抵抗中：我唯一的處女獻給他 (Enthusiasm and Anxiety: I Irresistibly Gave My Virginity to Him), *Ling Long*, 3:86(1993), pp. 250-253.

are. When you are talking, you have to manifest your dignity and generosity as a virtuous wife would. Then, he will respect you and treat you sincerely.<sup>29</sup>

It seems that Zhang believed that sex was an important topic for both sexes. On the one hand, she believed that the quality of sexual knowledge was a crucial standard to judge the “qualification” of a man; on the other hand, talking about sex naturally was a useful way for women to show their femininity and to attract a “qualified” man for marriage. It is not necessary to assess the objectivity or the practicality of Zhang’s viewpoints. On the contrary, we should recognize her good-will to protect other women against sexual and emotional injuries.

However, not all of the female authors in *Ling Long* were against premarital sex. In the following section, we shall pay close attention to several short love/sexual stories in *Ling Long*, which were contributed by Wu Lijuan (吳麗娟), a female middle school student in Shanghai during the 1930s. According to these stories, we see that Wu was aware of the importance of women’s sexual fulfillments before marriage.

### **Sexual Imaginations of Unmarried Young Women: A Case Study of Wu Lijuan’s Love/Sexual Stories**

Wu was a productive writer and appeared in a number of Shanghai’s women’s magazines during the 1930s, including *Ling Long*, *Girlfriend* (女朋友), *Women’s Lives* (婦女生活) and *Queen*. She contributed many essays discussing family systems, sports, public health, women’s careers and fashion.<sup>30</sup> Wu also contributed short stories about women’s life experiences, primarily using female students and social butterflies as her characters. Love and sexuality in these women were repeatedly explored in these stories.

First, we need to focus on one of her stories entitled “Foxtrot of Love” (愛的狐步舞) that was published in the ninetieth issue of *Ling Long* in 1933. This story described how a young girl, who was a social butterfly, fell in love with a male college student,

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<sup>29</sup> Zhang Pinhui, “Suggestions for Unmarried Young Ladies,” p. 582.

<sup>30</sup> See, for example, “Da Jiating Zhidu yu Xin Nuzi” 大家庭制度與新女子 (Extended Family System and Modern Women), *Girlfriend*, 16(1932); “Yundong yu Xiuxi” 運動與休息 (Sports and Relax), *Women’s Lives*, 1:31(1932); “Chuchuang Li de Jiao: Zhe Liang Zhi Jiao Gendeshang Shidai Ma?” 櫥窗裡的腳——這兩隻腳跟得上時代嗎? (Two Feet in the Showcase: Do These Two Feet Keep Pace with the Time?), *Girlfriend*, 18(1932); “Xin Zhuang de Shiming: Yan Qi Chou Yang Qi Mei” 新裝的使命——掩其醜揚其美 (The Function of Modern Clothes: To enhance Somebody’s Advantages and to Avoid His/Her Disadvantages), *Girlfriend*, 19(1932); “You Zhiye Tandao Pinqing Guanggao” 由職業談到聘請廣告 (Associating Women’s Careers with Recruitment Advertisements), *Girlfriend*, 23(1932).

moved to live with him, and then, was ultimately abandoned by him. According to the title of this story, we may easily recall another story, “Shanghai Foxtrot” (上海的狐步舞), which was written by the flagship novelist of the “Chinese New Sensation School” (新感覺派), Mu Shiyong (穆時英). “Shanghai Foxtrot” was published in a popular Shanghai magazine called *Modernity* (現代) in 1932. After publication, it immediately became fashionable among readers in metropolitan areas.<sup>31</sup> Comparing “Foxtrot of Love” to “Shanghai Foxtrot” using Leo Lee and Shu-mei Shih’s analysis about the language features, images, metaphors and grammatical meanings of “Shanghai Foxtrot,” we can realize that “Foxtrot of Love” was partially an imitative work of “Shanghai Foxtrot.” In addition to imitating the title of Mu’s story, Wu dedicated a large portion of her story to describing Shanghai’s splendid sceneries, especially by describing people’s luxurious lives in ballrooms. Moreover, she borrowed Mu’s unique narrative method, which was called “the montage technique” by scholars of modern China’s literary history, including Leo Lee and Shu-mei Shih. More specifically, the method combines a series of scenes and plots into a sequence with special optical effects to condense the space and time of the story.<sup>32</sup> The term “montage” was initially introduced in cinema, and then became increasingly applicable to various other fields, including literary studies.<sup>33</sup>

To effectively reveal the similarities between the narrative modes of “Foxtrot of Love” and “Shanghai Foxtrot,” it is necessary to make a comparison.

A selection from Mu’s “Shanghai Foxtrot” is shown below (emphasis has been added for clarity):

**Shanghai, an evil city, is exactly the hell built upon the paradise! ...**

There are legs of street trees painted white, legs of telegraph poles, and the legs of girls which are heavily powdered. There are streetlights in pink, in violet, and in green everywhere. (Inside the ballrooms) there are dresses and mandarin coats waving. And there are elegant high-heeled shoes moving. There are white shirt collars of men and smiling faces of women. Women

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<sup>31</sup> Ye Lingfeng 葉靈風, “Sanshi Niandai Wentan de Yike Huixing: Ye Lingfeng Xiansheng Tan Mu Shiyong” 三十年代文壇的一顆彗星：葉靈鳳先生談穆時英 (A “Comic” in the Literary Circle of the 1930s: Mr. Ye Lingfeng Talked about Mr. Mu Shiyong), *The Four Seasons* 四季, 1(1972), p.30.

<sup>32</sup> Shu-mei Shih, *The Lure of the Modern: Writing and Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917-1939* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), pp. 204-370; Leo Lee, *Shanghai Modern: The New Flowering of A New Urban Culture in China, 1930-1945* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 121-231.

<sup>33</sup> Karel Reisz, *The Technique of Film Editing* (London: Focal Press, 1981); Arthur Knight, *The Liveliest Art: A Panoramic History of the Movies* (New York: Macmillan, 1978).

adorned with ear rings with shoulder-length jade pendants are stretching their arms. Round tables are in order, but chairs are out of order. There are scents of wine, perfume, sandwiches and cigarettes. Someone sitting in the corners alone is drinking black coffee.<sup>34</sup>

The following is a selection from “Foxtrot of Love:”

There are spring flowers, autumn moon, summer sunshine, and winter white snow. Everything is changing, all the time. Besides, there are big asses of American girls and black eyes and sharp noses of Asian girls who dressed in clothes with high collars. **The ballroom, an evil place, is exactly the hell built upon the paradise!** There are soft jazzes, and young ladies flirtatiously saying “my little sweet-heart.” There are strong fragrances of champagne, French perfume, and women’s bodies. Men and women hugging together are crazily dancing, which look like five-minute or ten-minute dating shows.<sup>35</sup>

First of all, it is apparent that the sentence stating “the ballroom, an evil place, is exactly the hell built upon the paradise” is an imitation of the opening sentence of “Shanghai Foxtrot.” Furthermore, we can easily recognize that Wu tried to represent a busy and fast-paced Shanghai city and its luxurious ballroom sceneries in her story, just as Mu Shiyong did.<sup>36</sup> Similar to Mu, Wu had a clear intention to depict women’s bodies and their sexuality. Leo Lee and Shu-mei Shih have noted that a male-centrism existed in most of Mu’s (and other writers of the “Chinese New Sensation School,” such as She Zhecun and Liu Na’ou) novels depicting modern lives and relationships of metropolitan citizens. By displaying their female characters’ bodies and sexual activities, these novels objectified women as men’s “sexual playthings.”<sup>37</sup> However, it is too arbitrary to assert that Wu Lijuan was inclined to objectify women. In fact, evidences from the basic plots of “Foxtrot of Love” revealed that although Wu was deeply influenced by Mu’s writing styles, in writing this story, she was primarily concerned with women’s emotional and sexual wellbeing. For example, when depicting the male protagonist, Hong (鴻), who abandoned the female protagonist,

<sup>34</sup> Mu Shiyong, *Mu Shiyong Daibiao Zuo* 穆時英代表作 (The Magnum Opuses of Mu Shiyong) (Beijing: Dazhong Wenyi Chubanshe, 2005), p. 83.

<sup>35</sup> WuLijuan, “Foxtrot of Love,” *Ling Long*, 3:10(1933), p. 14.

<sup>36</sup> About the analysis of the storytelling skills of “Shanghai Foxtrot,” see Shu-mei Shih, *The Lure of the Modern: Writing and Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917-1739*, pp. 302-338.

<sup>37</sup> Shu-mei Shih, *The Lure of the Modern: Writing and Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917-1739*, pp. 204-370; Leo Lee, *Shanghai Modern: The New Flowering of A New Urban Culture in China, 1930-1945*, pp. 121-231.

Qing (清), Wu sarcastically denounced Hong as a deceptive heartbreaker and simultaneously expressed her deep sympathy to Qing as an innocent girl who suffered pain.<sup>38</sup> Additionally, it is important to note the way Wu described Qing's appearance and temperament. Unlike the erotic descriptions in the quoted passages mentioned above, Wu emphasized Qing's modesty and femininity. Undoubtedly, these characteristics were completely different from the "lasciviousness" and "sensuality," which were used to describe those "modern stunners" in Mu Shiyong's novels.<sup>39</sup>

To summarize, "Foxtrot of Love" provided a glimpse of men's popular erotic literature's influence on ordinary Chinese women during the 1930s. This story also represented women's sexual experiences from the female perspective, which essentially resisted the male-centered view of gender and sex. In addition, although Wu Lijuan concluded this story with a disappointing ending, the breakup of a relationship, she remembered to detail the love and sexual happiness that Qing had achieved from the relationship. It is evident that Wu recognized the importance of sexual fulfillments to women. This knowledge was also exemplified in another short story of hers, "Mysteries of Love."

"Mysteries of Love" was published in the ninety-eighth issue of *Ling Long* in 1933. This approximately five-hundred-word story demonstrated the sexual experiences of two young lovers who were classmates in a Shanghai middle school. Like Qing of "Foxtrot of Love," the female protagonist depicted in "Mysteries of Love," Xuefen (雪芬), was an innocent girl who longed for love. According to various passages in this story, we see that Xuefen became increasingly active and passionate in a relationship. These sections are shown below:

At first, they (the two lovers) spoke less, but sometimes smiled at each other mysteriously. No one knew that they were in a relationship. Once, Xuefen asked Xianguang (俠光, the male protagonist) to lend her a pencil. He took out his pencil, held it in his mouth for a few seconds, and then passed it on to Xuefen. She received it and blushed. However, by imitating him, she held the pencil into her mouth for a few seconds as well.

<sup>38</sup> Wu Lijuan, "Foxtrot of Love," pp. 367-368.

<sup>39</sup> Wu Lijuan, "Foxtrot of Love," p. 368; Leo Lee, *Shanghai Modern: The New Flowering of A New Urban Culture in China, 1930-1945*, pp. 121-231; Peng Hsiao-yen 彭小妍, *Haishang Shuo Qingyu: Cong Zhang Ziping Dao Liu Na'ou* 海上說情慾：從張資平到劉呐鷗 (Discussing about Sex in Shanghai: From Zhang Ziping to Liu Na'ou) (Taipei: Bulletin of the Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy, Academia Sinica, 2001), pp. 65-103; Zhang Yingjin, *The City in Modern Chinese Literature and Film: Configurations of Space, Time, and Gender* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press), pp. 117-231.

It was a silent night with the moonlight shining. After having made sure that most students had fallen asleep, they started their amorous activities. Xianguang sneaked out of his dorm and upstairs. When he reached the block Xuefen lived, she had been waiting there. Then, they gazed affectionately at each other. Xuefen smiled charmingly and said, “Dear Mr. Li, you come! Please help me revise today’s English course!” Actually she had already finished it. But Xianguang also pretended to have forgotten their purpose of dating, and said, “Oh! Miss Guo! It is really my pleasure to help you!” Then, they walked into Xuefen’s room arm in arm. After half an hour, a spring breeze gently blew over.<sup>40</sup>

What is worth mentioning is that in traditional Chinese cultural context, “spring” (春) is a word of abundant metaphorical meanings. One layer of its meaning refers to sexual ideologies and activities. For example, in different types of classical Chinese literature, we can find that the chamber of a pubertal girl is called “spring boudoir” (春閨), which indicates that the room owner is precisely in the biological stage of sexual arousal. Simultaneously, there is a specific description for girls’ sexual arousal, that is, “yearning for spring” (思春).<sup>41</sup> Sometimes, casual sex between male and female is abstractly described as “a spring breeze has blown over” (春風一度).<sup>42</sup> According to these concepts, we can postulate that the descriptions of the third quoted passage mentioned above, such as Xianguang and Xuefen’s secret meeting at night in the name of schoolwork, their affectionate eye contact, their entry into the room in an intimate manner, and in the end, the description that “a spring breeze blew over,” undoubtedly represented the process of their preparation and ultimate act of sex. As indicated earlier, from accepting bashfully the rule of her lover’s intimate game, to flirting with her lover and engaging in sexual acts, Xuefen gradually became an active subject of full sexual consciousness.

After mentioning the “spring breeze” between the two lovers, this story ended with an exclamatory sentence, “Alas! This is the mysterious of love!” Wu Lijuan never

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<sup>40</sup> Wu Lijuan, “Mysterious of Love,” *Ling Long*, 3:18(1933), pp. 851-852.

<sup>41</sup> See, for example, Xiao Gang 蕭綱, “He Xiangdong Wang Mingshi Yue Qingcheng” 和湘東王名士悅傾城, in Xu Ling 徐陵 ed., *Yutai Xin Yong* 玉台新詠 (New Songs from a Jade Terrace) (Taipei: Shijie Shuju, 1972); Wang Shizhen 王世貞, “Zoulin Huishi” 鄒林會試 (Participations of Zou and Lin to the Metropolitan Examination), in Wang Shizhen, *Ming Feng Ji* 鳴鳳記 (The Record of the Phoenix) (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1959).

<sup>42</sup> See, for example, Pu Songling 蒲松齡, “Hehua San Niangzi” 荷花三娘子 (Lady Lotus), in Pu Songling, *Liaozhai Zhi Yi* 聊齋誌異 (The Classical Ghost Stories) (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Wenyi Chubanshe, 2004).

discussed whether these two lovers were eventually married, but her discourse revealed that she did not necessarily link women's love/sexual fulfillments together with marriage.

In addition to *Ling Long*, Wu also had sexual stories published in other women's magazines. For example, one of her stories, "Under Neon Lights: Some Sections of a Diary of a Social Butterfly," was published in the twenty-first issue of *Girlfriend* in 1932. This story helps us to understand Wu's sexual knowledge more deeply by describing the sexual life of a social butterfly in the first-person point of view. The female protagonist of this story, "I," was an individual who actively pursued emotional and sexual happiness; and more specifically, she enjoyed hugging and kissing her lover. Wu detailed the intimate nightlife that her character spent with her lover, which is illustrated by the following quote:

Peiqi (her lover) asked me to stay and sleep with him tonight at the Cangzhou Hotel. I refused gently. But to comfort him, I kissed him passionately. By the time I left the Cangzhou Hotel, it was two o'clock in the morning.<sup>43</sup>

In this passage, "I" was characterized as an independent woman freely enjoying sex and her relationship. Undeniably, the first-person narratives of this particular story suggested that Wu expressed her own sexual desires through her literary writing, especially when compared to the previous two stories.

Similar to Wu Lijuan, there were still other female authors who discussed women's sexual desires in *Ling Long*. For example, a female middle school student, Xu Bihuang (徐碧璜), elaborated that sexual desires were normal and necessary to young girls. Another female middle school student, Cheng Qianping (程倩萍), composed a poem describing a girl's sexual imagination by using the metaphor of a "spring breeze".<sup>44</sup> There were also articles portraying married women's sexual lives. In the following section, we shall concentrate on an article entitled "The Wedding Night" (新婚第一夜) by Qingbo (晴波), to explore the topic of sexual subjectivities of married women.

### **Sexual Experience of Married Women: A Case of Qingbo**

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<sup>43</sup> Wu Lijuan, "Under Neon Lights: Some Sections of a Diary of a Social Butterfly," *Girlfriend*, 21(1932), pp. 12-13.

<sup>44</sup> Xu Bihuang, "Qingchun de Weiji" 青春的危機 (The Dangers of Puberty), *Ling Long*, 1:1(1931), pp. 80-81; Cheng Qianping, "Zui de Chunfeng Zui de Xin" 醉的春風醉的心 (A Charmed Heart in the Spring Breeze), *Ling Long*, 3:11(1933), p. 377.

Qingbo's article "The Wedding Night" described marriage as experienced by a young woman named Hui (惠), in the first-person point of view. There is little evidence to judge whether it was a record of Qingbo's real experience; however, even considering it as fictional, we can explore Qingbo's sexual knowledge through critical textual analysis of her work.

Differ from the female characters in Wu Lijuan's stories, the female protagonist, Hui, was depicted as a traditional woman who grew up in an extended family. This implied that she had much less access to men in the public sphere and knew much less about sex than the female students who acquired information about modern daily life more conveniently through various publications and discussions with peers. Similar to many girls in extended families, Hui accepted an arranged marriage. A large portion of this story then attempted to elaborate the process of Hui's sexual arousal and sexual intercourse with her husband on their wedding night.

If "Hui" accurately represented the author Qingbo, then we question whether a paradox was hidden in the narratives. That is, how significant transformations might have been experienced by Qingbo to make her change from a traditional girl with little sexual knowledge to a modern woman with an intention to record the sexual details of her wedding night and to send this record to *Ling Long*, a modern media source. Ultimately, these private expressions were turned into an article accessible to the public.

However, even if Hui's experience was fabricated, "The Wedding Night" was still a fascinating story worth analyzing. First, we can conclude that Hui was a girl deeply attached to her natal family and that she had been reluctant to move into her husband's house. Even when lying down in the bed with her husband, she kept missing her natal family. As depicted in the story, when she was startled by the cat's meows outside of the house, the first thing came into her mind was as follows:

If I am still at home, I should have hidden in Grandma's arms and have requested her to hug me tightly. Now, the only thing I can do is to wrap the quilt around my body.<sup>45</sup>

Certainly, her husband finally realized her abnormal situation, and comforted her with affectionate words and tender touches, which was also the foreplay of their sexual

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<sup>45</sup> Qingbo, "The Wedding Night," *Ling Long*, 3:36(1933), pp. 1971-1977.



intercourse. Owing to her husband's comfort, Hui began to recognize him as "a kind man without any hateful manners." Furthermore, she admitted that she gradually became relieved while having intimate contacts with him. In other words, Hui, a traditional girl without any sexual experience, naturally accepted sex and learned to enjoy sexual pleasures with sufficient emotional guidance from her husband. We can assert that the author, Qingbo, would never oppose the point of view that to help women successfully enjoy sex, their male mates, who play a dominant role in sexual intercourse, should offer appropriate emotional comfort and guidance to their female partners.

Another issue worth exploring in this story was the way Hui gained sexual knowledge. As narrated in the story, there were three women who discussed sex with Hui: Hui's female friend, named Hu (瑚); Hui's grandmother; and Hui's nanny, who accompanied Hui on her wedding day. The related conversations and interactions between these women and Hui were described as follows:

One day, my friend Hu said to me: "When you get married, you have to sleep with a man. He will play with your breasts." But when I asked how she knew this kind of thing, she just smiled without answering.<sup>46</sup>

On the wedding night, my nanny whispered in my ear: "It is very late! It is time to sleep. After a while (when you sleep with your husband), you should allow him to do anything to you." I nodded mutely, thinking about what was the "anything" he might do to me. Before my nanny, Grandma told me the same, and I was still confused.<sup>47</sup>

According to these passages, Hu primarily expressed her erotic imagination without offering practical marriage-related knowledge about sex, such as how to harmonize their sexual lives and how to avoid sexual diseases. "Grandma's" and the nanny's emphasis on women's obedience in sexual activities indicated their ignorance of women's subjectivities. However, through these discourses, we can recognize another potential viewpoint of Qingbo's: the intimate relationship between female relatives and friends is an effective form of interpersonal communication about sexual knowledge. In fact, some other female authors in *Ling Long* also suggested that although knowledge about sex was easily found in a variety of newspapers and magazines during the 1930s, it was important for young girls to get instructions from their female

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid, p. 1977.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, p. 1974.

relatives. For example, Chen-huang Shuqing (陳黃淑清) stated that because her mother never taught her how to properly address sexual problems, she suffered many troubles and pain throughout puberty.<sup>48</sup> Another author, Xu Bihuang, indicated that information about sex from peer groups had a large influence on young girls. Xu reminded female students to selectively apply the sexual knowledge provided by their friends and classmates to avoid the bad influence resulting from incorrect sexual opinions.<sup>49</sup> Differing from the “Grandma” and the “nanny” of Qingbo’s story, Chen-huang and Xu showed their attentions to women’s subjectivities and sexual wellbeing.

In addition, there was yet another type of women’s discourse on sex found in *Ling Long* that referred to women’s homosexuality.

### “Same-sex Love/Sexuality” in Women

In her book on women’s homosexuality in Modern China, *The Emerging Lesbian: Female Same-Sex Desire in Modern China*, Tze-lan D. Sang demonstrated that from the 1920s onwards, women’s sexual intimacy became an increasingly heated topic among male intellectuals. Most criticized this as a “fashion” of sexology, a category of scientific knowledge from the West. Male intellectuals renamed this fashion “women’s ‘same-sex love’ (同性愛),” and considered it as a “mistaken passion,” or rather, a certain type of biological and mental disease caused by a detrimental, external influence. In their debates, most same-sex feelings of love among women were believed to have originated from experiences at all-female schools. Sang asserted that these discourses uncovered the shared unconscious understandings of male intellectuals to regulate women’s bodies and desires.<sup>50</sup> In *Ling Long*, there were also many authors of both sexes, including the editor “Chen Zhenling,” whose viewpoints aligned with the male intellectuals who regarded women’s same-sex desires as abnormal from a pathological perspective.<sup>51</sup> For example, in “Chen Zhenling’s” reply to female readers’ letters regarding concerns about same-sex love, “she” wrote:

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<sup>48</sup> Chen-huang Shuqing, “Ertong yu Xing Jiaoyu: Yige You Jingyan Muqin de Xushu” 兒童與性教育——一個有經驗母親的敘述 (children and Sex Education: A Mother’s Experience), *ling Long*, 1:22(1931), pp. 752-754.

<sup>49</sup> Xu Bihuang, “The Dangers of Puberty,” pp. 80-81.

<sup>50</sup> Tze-lan D. Sang, *The Emerging Lesbian: Female Same-Sex Desire in Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), pp. 99-126.

<sup>51</sup> See, for example, Zhenlan 珍蘭, “Tongxing Ai Shi Shensheng de Ma?” 同性愛是神聖的嗎？ (Is Same-sex Love Sacred?), *Ling Long*, 2:62(1932); Ping 萍, “Tongxing Ai zhi Yuanyin yu Bihai” 同性愛之原因與弊害 (The Causes and Harm of Same-sex Love), *Ling Long*, 4:163(1934); “Tongxing Ai de Xue’an” 同性愛的血案 (The Bloody Case Cause by Same-sex Love), *Ling Long*, 2:53(1932); Ye Ying 葉瑩, “Tongxing Ai Budi Yixing Ai” 同性愛不敵異性愛 (Love between the Two Sexes are

Same-sex desire is evil. It is abnormal and harmful to your health. ... You should love a man with the same passion as you love women.<sup>52</sup>

Your health will be damaged if you have sex with a woman. ... You will always be tired and age quickly. ... Same-sex desire is a disease. The best way to cure it is to contact suitable men.<sup>53</sup>

Considering that *Ling Long* was a fashionable magazine propagandizing society's most popular ideologies at the time, we can speculate about the viewpoint's popularity among readers that women's homosexuality was considered abnormal. However, we should be aware of the other voices represented in *Ling Long*. For example, a female author named Yuan Yunfang (袁韻舫) mentioned that: "Regardless of whether relationships are between the two sexes or within the same sex, true love happens only once. That is the first time you fall in love with someone. This type of love is called 'virginal love.'"<sup>54</sup> It is obvious that Yuan believed there was no essential difference between heterosexual love and same-sex love. Additionally, this description of "virginal love" suggests there might be sexual meanings contained in Yuan's understanding of "love."

In another article entitled "Same-sex Love," the female author Wei Suying (韋素英) vividly described the intimate interactions between female teachers and female students at an all-female school. The following is a passage from the article:

One day, after class, Shu (a female student) recalled that Ms. Wu was sick, so she visited Ms. Wu's to see if she got better. Since she returned to the classroom a little bit late, her classmates started making fun of her. Ping, the most famous joker of the class, said to all: "Absolutely, now she (Shu) is savoring the sweet kiss Ms. Wu gave her!"<sup>55</sup>

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Better Than Same-sex Love), *Ling Long*, 2:79(1932); Fei 菲, "Tongxing Ai Liangnu Bu Jia" 同性愛兩女不嫁 (Two Female Lovers Determined not to Marry with Men), *Ling Long*, 4:128(1934); Aiqing 愛卿, "Dushen Zhuyi yu Tongxing Ai" 獨身主義與同性愛 (Celibacy and Same-sex Love), *Ling Long*, 2:77(1932).

<sup>52</sup> Lady S.C.H S.C.H 女士, "Tongxing Ai de Nuzi" 同性愛的女子 (A Woman of Same-sex Love), *Ling Long*, 6:14(1936), pp. 1045-1047.

<sup>53</sup> Jianming 劍明, "Chenni zai Tongxing Ai" 沉溺在同性愛 (Indulgence in Same-sex Love), *Ling Long*, 6:33(1936), pp. 2252-2254.

<sup>54</sup> Yuan Yunfang, "The True Love is the Most Precious" 真愛情最難得, *Ling Long*, 3:97(1933), p. 765.

<sup>55</sup> Wei Suying, "Same-sex Love" 同性愛, *Ling Long*, 3:93(1933), pp. 553-554.

We can easily recognize that these female students never regarded same-sex desire and sexuality as abnormal, but deemed them as casual topics for free discussion. There is no doubt the author, Wei Suying, shared this point of view.

In addition, He Bifang (何碧芳), a female middle school student from Shantou, Canton province, contributed several articles to *Ling Long* to express her strong affection for a female friend, Mei (梅). These articles included essays on daily life, short stories and poems. One of He's essays, "Depression," was published in the hundred and eightieth issue of *Ling Long* in 1935. In this essay, she elaborated on how she was attracted by Mei's body and femininity:

Mei is very impressive. She is tender but articulate. She has an endearing smile and a graceful figure. I can hardly imagine myself loving her more.<sup>56</sup>

He's desire was also reflected in one of her poems, "Hey! Do You Believe?:"

... Mei is my lover.  
She is a woman.  
However, I love her more than men!  
She is much more tender than men.  
And she is much more beautiful than men!  
Thus I love her more than men!<sup>57</sup>

In summary, He was fascinated by Mei's feminine appearance and temperament. When comparing Mei to men, He absolutely loved her more.

### Conclusion

In *Ling Long*, women's discourses about sex were diverse. A large portion of these discourses described the phenomena of men's erotic desire of women and highlighted contemporary sexual harassment and assault cases against women. These discourses indicated that women's sexual security was frequently threatened in the public sphere during the 1930s. However, simultaneously, these discourses also demonstrated that many women were aware of these dangers. By using media such as *Ling Long*, women attempted to arouse the awareness of other "sisters" to guard their sexual security. Among these female authors, Wu Xiuqing was critical of men, stating that when men

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<sup>56</sup> He Bifang, "Kumen" 苦悶 (Depression), *Ling Long*, 5:180(1935), pp. 800-801.

<sup>57</sup> He Bifang, "Hey! Do You Believe?" 喂，相信否？ *Ling Long*, 4:146(1934), p. 1305.

interacted with women, their only purpose was to fulfill their own sexual needs. To some extent, this assertion was exaggerated. However, undoubtedly, it represented Wu's (and many other female authors') anger and anxiety about women's sexual insecurity. According to these discourses, we can also realize that sexual security was a universal challenge for women in the 1930s, whose entry into the public sphere was not long enough to effectively understand men's personalities and to appropriately deal with their relationships with men. That is why Zhang Pinhui suggested to women that they should not have sex with men before marriage.

Nevertheless, not all of the female authors in *Ling Long* linked sex closely with marriage. Wu Lijuan was a typical example of this divergence. She contributed a series of sexual stories to *Ling Long* and other women's magazines during the 1930s. In her stories, unmarried women, both female students and social butterflies, all had clear intentions to realize their own sexual desires and to enjoy sexual pleasures. It is also worth considering whether Wu Lijuan had injected her own sexual imagination into those stories.

The attempt to explore women's sexual subjectivities was also found in Qingbo's "The Wedding Night." In this article, Qingbo elaborated the sexual experience of a newly-married woman. In Qingbo's view, men's appropriate comfort and guidance to women were necessary to ensure that heterosexual couples experienced harmonious sex lives.

In addition to heterosexuality, female (and male) authors also heatedly discussed women's same-sex love/sexuality. Despite Yuan Yunfang's statement regarding the acceptability of same-sex love, or He Bifang's passionate expressions of her strong affection towards a female friend, the dominant male-centered ideology of women's same-sex sexuality based on sexology and pathology persisted and was used to regulate women's bodies and sexuality. However, as exemplified by the articles published in *Ling Long*, we can infer that women who held same-sex intentions likely owned some type of space in the popular discourse, whether it was through mass media or in the context of their daily lives.

According to women's literary discourses on love and sexuality in traditional Chinese culture, Hua Wei and Hu Hsiao-chen postulated that due to the gender constraints based on Confucian ethics, there was an extremely limited possibility for women to challenge their inherent identities as sexual objects. Thus, traditional Chinese women often had to express their sexual desire allusively and strategically. In contrast, and as

demonstrated in this paper, the female authors of *Ling Long* expressed their sexuality in a much different way. Not only did they discuss sex straightforwardly, but they also had clear intentions to highlight women's sexual subjectivities. The significant transformation of the way women expressed sex indicated that this group of gendered human beings were deeply influenced by their metropolitan context.

For women who needed to share their thoughts on sex, *Ling Long* was an important and unique discourse space for women.



