

Changes in Women's Status and Literary Representation of Working Women in the Japanese Colonial Period

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Abstract

Being colonized and oppressed has been the mainstream perspectives of researches about literature in the Japanese colonial period, and yet there are different aspects of literature waiting to be explored. In addition to the discourse of colonialism and oppression, there is a lot more space to be developed in studies of working women portrayed in literature of the Japanese colonial period. In this period, Taiwan experienced the process of modernization, which gave rise to many new occupations. In their literary representation, these newly emerged occupations expressed the trendiness and sense of new culture. As both the colonial government and the civil society advocated the prohibition of foot-binding, the establishment of girls' education, the encouragement of women's employment, there were corresponding subject matters in literary texts. Women's jobs include: nurses, teachers, phone operators, tea-pickers, actresses, tobacco workers, bus attendants, textile sock workers, textile workers, midwives, geishas, general laborers. This paper is concerned with the following issues: the changes of women's status, different interpretations of working women by various writers, differences among various newspapers, differences between Japanese and Taiwanese, and differences among traditional literature, modern literature, poetry, essays and fiction.

**Key words: working women, women's literature, feminist literature,
modern/traditional literature, the Japanese colonial period**