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Presenting an Egalitarian Multicultural Empire through Transparent Media: Photographic Reporting in Print Mass Media in Late Interwar Japan

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Abstract

Facilitated by technological advances in cameras, printing methods and equipment, photojournalism blossomed throughout the world during the interwar period. It offered readers insights into the contemporary world, providing access to diverse peoples and remote locations through a combination of photographs and text. Japan was no exception. However, unlike Europe or North America, where the primary medium for disseminating knowledge through images was photo magazines or newspapers, in interwar Japan it was mass-market women's magazines that popularised the practice of using images to convey information within society. This paper specifically examines representations seen in a particular photo-article genre known as the "life pictorial", published in the best-selling women's magazine *Shufu no tomo* ("Housewife's Friend"). The analysis of these articles demonstrates how they contributed to the circulation of an imagined geography in 1930s Japanese society by presenting an image of a utopian multicultural Japanese empire that covertly intimated a distinct social, ethnic and racial hierarchy. Furthermore, this analysis explores how the magazine guided and shaped its readers' visual literacy by training them in how to "read" these photo articles, in a time before state censorship became fully entrenched.

Keywords: Japan, photography, report, magazine, women, photojournalism, late interwar period

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Under-analysed photojournalism: Photo articles in mass-market women's magazines in late interwar Japan

The development of photojournalism in the 1920s and 1930s

With the development of graphic magazines, the interwar period[1] witnessed a manifestation of what Walter Benjamin described as "the desire of contemporary masses to bring things 'closer' spatially and humanly" (Benjamin 1968: 223; see also Benjamin 2015). Advancements in printing processes, cameras and related materials and equipment facilitated the widespread adoption of photographic images in periodicals worldwide in the 1920s and 1930s. In the 1920s, art directors and editors in France and Germany became more attentive to layout. A style of picture story featuring text and multiple photos that developed in Germany spread to other European countries and North America in the 1930s, bringing about a heyday of photographic periodicals and photojournalism. Both pictorial magazines and tabloids enjoyed wide circulation, with some, such as the *Daily Mirror*, the *Daily News*, *Die Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* and *Life* reaching more than one million copies.[2] Through photographic images with associated text, increasing numbers of readers gained knowledge about far-away places and people they would never meet in person, a phenomenon that transpired simultaneously throughout the world, though with some regional differences.

A similar phenomenon can also be observed in Japan.[3] During the First World War, Japanese newspapers, which had already begun incorporating photographs

1 While in English the "interwar" period usually refers to the period between the end of the First World War (November 1918) and the beginning of the Second World War (September 1939), in the East Asian context its end varies depending on what one regards as the start of wartime in the region. It could be 18 September 1931, the day of the Mukden Incident (Manchurian Incident or 9.18 Incident); it could be 7 July 1937, the day of the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, i.e., the beginning of the Second Sino-Japanese War; or it could be 7 December (8 December, Japan time) 1941, the day of the beginning of the Asia Pacific War, when Japan joined the Second World War. (On the debate concerning the definition of "wartime", see Faison 2021: 15–16). While I do agree with the view that the "Manchurian Incident" and subsequent various "incidents" had an impact on Japanese society, and the following years observed a growth of militarism and patriotism, from the viewpoint of censorship and control of thought, I see 1937 as a watershed. For, as media historian Park Soon Ae argues, it was only from the time of the Marco Polo Bridge Incident that the Ministry of Home Affairs (*naimu shō*) began the serious, systemic use of the media to mobilise its citizens and for foreign propaganda (Park 2005: 24 –27, 30 –31, 37–40). Still, one should keep in mind that East Asia was not free of battles and propaganda during this "interwar" period. On propaganda in modern Japan, see Kushner 2021 and Ueda 2021.

2 The *Daily Mirror* became the first British daily paper to sell more than one million copies in 1912; the *Daily News* became America's best-selling periodical in 1926 with sales of about one million; *Die Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* sold 1.6 million copies in 1926 and 1.9 million in 1931; *Life* magazine's circulation surpassed one million as early as four months after its re-launch as a photographic news magazine in 1936. See Gidal 1973: 11, 16; New York Daily News 2021; Times 1937; Read 2017: 424.

3 For the introduction of photographs into Japanese periodicals up to the early 20th century and photo periodicals in the 1920s, see Kaneko et al. 1987: 135–136, Nakai 1987: 89–90, Kaneko 2003: 186–187. See also corporate histories of major newspapers of the day, such as *Asahi*, *Mainichi/Tōkyō nichinichi* and *Hōchi*.

in 1904, gradually began to replace illustrations in articles on current issues with photos. In the 1920s, many new periodicals printed using the photogravure process appeared. While a few big newspaper publishers such as Asahi and Mainichi had started printing Sunday visual supplements in 1921 in Osaka and in 1922 in Tokyo, several monthly photo magazines were launched in 1922, including *Kokusai shashin jōhō* ("International Photographic Information"), *Kokusai gahō* ("International Pictorial") and others, followed by the weekly *Shūkan shashin hōchi* ("Weekly Photo Hōchi") and the daily *Asahi gurafu* ("Asahi Graphic"), founded in 1923.

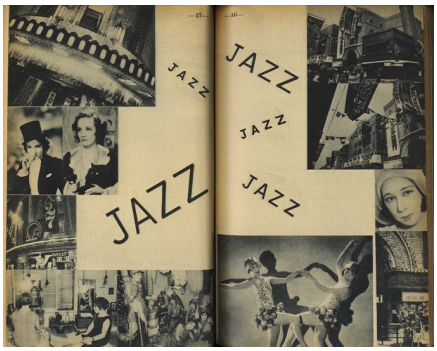

Figure 1

Dai Tōkyō no seikaku [The Character of Greater Tokyo] by Horino Masao (photographs) and Itagaki Takao (editing), featured in *Chūō kōron* in October 1931. Photograph courtesy of Sanko Library

In the early 1930s, graphic montages by Horino Masao and other photographers[4] who were strongly influenced by the New Objectivism and Bauhaus design movements in Germany started to appear in periodicals such as *Chūō kōron* ("Central Review", a general magazine for intellectuals) and *Hanzai kagaku* ("Crime Science", a decadent entertainment magazine).

Inspired by the 1931 travelling exhibition in Japan of the "Film und Foto" Section of the "Internationale Ausstellung" (held in Stuttgart in 1929) and picture stories introduced from Europe by Natori Yōnosuke, who had worked as a photojournalist in Germany and returned to Japan in 1932, periodicals carrying European-style photo reports appeared, such as the semi-official graphic propaganda magazine *NIPPON*, which targeted readers outside of Japan (1934–1944), and *Hōmu raifu* ("Home Life", 1935–1940), a luxurious graphic magazine for the upper and upper-middle classes.[5]

Photo articles in late interwar Japan

Unlike in the West, however, the distribution of photo magazines or photo newspapers was never widespread in interwar Japan. Even the most renowned photo magazine, *Asahi gurafu* (1923–2000), was initially plagued by an operating deficit, which compelled the editors to change its publication frequency

4 Their modernist experiments came under the rubric of "New Photography" (*shinkō shashin*). On "New Photography" in Japan, see Takeba 2003: 144–155.

5 The pioneering photojournalists' use of photographs in graphic journalism came to be called *hōdō shashin* ("news photography" or "photojournalism"), translated from the German term *Reportagefoto* (Kaneko 2003: 191). For the development of graphic magazines in the 1930s, see Ishikawa 1995; Nakai 1987; Shiroyama 2014-a, 2014-b; Shiroyama/Hori 2006; Shiroyama/Kohara 2015. On the history of photography appearing in Japanese magazines, see Iizawa 1987; Inoue 2009, 2012; Kaneko et al. 1987; Kashiwagi 1987: Chapter 2; Kawasaki/Harada 2002; Kuwahara 1987; Nakai 1987; Ōkubo 2011; Shigemori 1987; Tagawa 1988; Kaneko 2003; Tamai 2017.

from daily to weekly (Soeno 2004: 51). The photo weekly had a circulation of only several tens of thousands of copies per issue even amidst the sort of magazine publishing boom of the early 1940s following the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937, when the major popular magazines were enjoying circulations of more than a million copies each.[6]

Tabloid newspapers were not popular in interwar Japan, either. Journalists Ōta Masataka and Yoshimoto Hachirō, both of whom had experience working abroad, lamented in 1931 and 1937 respectively that there were no successful tabloids or photo newspapers in Japan (Ōta 1931: 12–14, Yoshimoto 1937: 358). Moreover, considering their target readership, it is doubtful that the graphic montages in *Chūō kōron* and *Hanzai kagaku* or the photo stories in *NIPPON* and *Hōmu raifu*, which were heavily influenced by their European counterparts, reached large numbers of readers in Japan. It should also be noted that magazines for intellectual readers in interwar Japan did not carry photo articles as a regular feature; they comprised a sort of special supplement, inserted irregularly in only several issues a year.[7] Similarly, despite the fact that rising literacy rates and increased discretional spending helped to boost circulation[8] of prominent national daily newspapers to one million or more readers per issue as early as 1924,[9] visual supplements in these publications were typically limited to just a few pages and lacked photo articles featuring multiple images accompanied by extended text.

Given this context, the prevalence of photographs in mass-market women's magazines of the time is noteworthy. Interwar women's magazines increased their use of visuals from just a few pages to more than thirty pages per issue by the end of the 1920s. The development was so dramatic that an investigation conducted by the Ministry of Home Affairs argued in 1929 that "*Fujin gahō* ["Women's Pictorial", the oldest and most well-known pictorial for women, launched in 1905] is losing its uniqueness, for recently ordinary [women's] magazines have come to carry as many photos as the pictorial magazine" (Naimushō keihokyoku 1929: X–26, 30). In 1931, magazine editor Satō Sumiko made a similar observation when she reported that mass-market women's magazines, which used to almost ignore the visual section, now included pictorial

6 Cf. JACAR 1941: 63. On pictorial magazines during wartime, see Park 2005: 40–41. On the wartime magazine boom, see Satō Takumi 2003: 330–339.

7 For example, while *Chūō kōron* started carrying photo articles in its January 1930 issue, the magazine included fewer than four photo articles per year until 1939.

8 Compulsory elementary education was implemented in 1872 and was extended from four to six years in 1907. In 1907, 97.38 per cent of children (96.14 per cent of girls, 98.53 per cent of boys) were enrolled in elementary school (Monbushō chōsakyoku 1962: 180). Thus, by 1910, almost all children, both boys and girls, were receiving state-mandated education. On the steady increase in miscellaneous expenses among all the different classes in Tokyo from the end of World War I until around 1935, see Nakagawa 1985: 370–401.

9 The circulation of national newspapers, such as *Ōsaka asahi shinbun* and *Ōsaka mainichi shinbun*, had already surpassed one million in 1924. In the same year, the estimated total daily circulation of the 63 major daily newspapers reached 6.25 million, meaning about one in every two households in Japan bought a newspaper (Uchikawa 1976: 198–199, 294–295). On the readership of the modern Japanese newspaper, see Yamamoto 1981.

sections that filled from 48 to 50 of the 480–490 total pages of each issue and seemed to be ushering in a new era of women's magazines as "magazines to look at (*miru zasshi*)" (Satō Sumiko 1931: 296, 298, 299). Their pictorial sections continuously expanded thereafter, reaching almost 80 (sometimes as many as 90) pages by the mid-1930s. Moreover, in addition to their dedicated pictorial sections, these popular women's magazines also had numerous photographs inserted in the section formerly known as the "text section (*honbun-ran*)", thus providing their readers with visual experiences throughout each issue.

The pictorial sections of 1930s mass-market women's magazines were quite large in scale compared to those of other genres of periodicals. As mentioned above, general magazines for intellectuals did not include a regular visual section; any photographic articles contained in them appeared as a sort of special supplement. Likewise, although other entertainment magazines also evidenced an increase in visual content during this decade, they dedicated far fewer pages to their pictorial sections than women's magazines. For instance, the visual section of the most popular entertainment magazine of the time, *Kingu* ("King", 1924–1957), ran only about twenty pages in 1931. It gradually expanded and by 1936 reached around forty pages, but this was still only about half of the corresponding section in mass-market women's magazines. Another popular entertainment magazine, *Shin seinen* ("New Youth", 1920–1950), which targeted urban youth and was known for its modernist novels and detective stories, had only a sixteen-page graphic section in 1936 (Hasegawa 1987: 166). In fact, of all periodicals in the 1930s, mass-market women's magazines were second only to graphic weeklies in terms of the number of pages they dedicated to their visual sections each month. The most popular of the weekly photo magazines, *Asahi gurafu*, spared 24 to 25 pages for photo articles in 1931, which did not much change until 1937, when it expanded to 27 to 32 pages. In terms of the number of pages dedicated to visuals per issue, mass market women's magazines were the most prominent among all types of periodicals in Japan.

It should be noted that the content of the photo sections of women's magazines in the late interwar period was more diverse than we might expect from this type of magazine. In addition to photographic articles on subjects such as cooking, childcare, beauty, fashion, etiquette, fictional stories and the like, they devoted a substantial number of pages to reporting on topics highlighting various corners of society.[10] For example, there were articles examining the cultivation or production processes of familiar items such as oysters, dried seaweed, soap, cups or plastic toys; features providing information about the latest modes of transportation, such as airplanes; or segments offering readers a glimpse into

10 In fact, the percentage of practical articles on household chores in both the pictorial section and the text section of the women's magazine gradually decreased after the mid-1920s. In the case of the July 1937 issue of *Shufu no tomo* (published in June 1937), for instance, visual reports or "soft news" constituted 38 per cent (29 pages) of the 76-page pictorial section, while 33 per cent (25 pages) was used for show business news articles, 18 per cent (14 pages) for cultural articles and 11 per cent (8 pages) for practical articles.

the private lives of other people. One of the most frequent types of photo report was the *seikatsu gahō*, or "life pictorial," which presented the daily lives of a wide variety of people, mostly within the Japanese empire. In the case of the best-selling women's magazine *Shufu no tomo* ("Housewife's Friend"), which first introduced this genre of photographic article, one or two multiple-page life pictorials appeared along with other kinds of photo reports in almost every issue from the end of the 1920s onward. In comparison, photographic articles in *Asahi gurafu* were, at most, two pages in length at the time.[11] In a sense, the extensive photographic reports in the women's magazines could be considered two-dimensional social field trips, enabling readers to make imaginary visits to areas that they had never visited and would likely never have occasion to visit, or to meet people whom they had never met and would never have a chance to meet in person. In this sense, mass-market women's magazines can be understood to have served as a form of photojournalism in late interwar Japan.

A brief history of visual news media in Japan

An examination of the historical context of visual news media in Japan provides a better understanding of the significance of the interwar popular women's magazine as a visual news medium. Despite Japan's long history of visual media, the regular publication of visual news media was not widespread in Japan until the early 1940s. While one-page illustrated broadsides (*yomiuri* or *kawaraban*) did exist in the early modern period from around the seventeenth century onwards, these were irregular publications that were issued in conjunction with significant events such as large fires, major earthquakes, the arrival of foreign ships, and the like. In the early Meiji period, one-page multi-coloured woodblock newssheets (*nishiki-e shinbun*) were published with some regularity, but they served as news media only for a very short period of time, between 1874 and 1877, only to become cheap souvenirs from big cities thereafter.[12] Amidst the turmoil of rapid socio-cultural changes, the first pictorial magazine in Japan, *Fūzoku gahō* ("Pictorial of Japanese Customs"), was launched in 1889 and continued until 1916. As explained at the beginning of its first issue, however, this pictorial's main purpose was to preserve a visual record of old and new cultures and customs for future generations, and not to report on current news, though it did not ignore such content entirely, covering major events such as wars or disasters.[13]

While various types of pictorial magazines appeared thereafter, pictorial magazines reporting the news did not last long in Japan. Like the former one-page broadsides, they were published only on the occasion of major events,

11 On the layout of *Asahi gurafu* of the time, see Kaneko 1999: 95–97.

12 On *yomiuri* (*kawaraban*), see Nakayama 1974 and Tomizawa 2004. On *nishikie-shinbun*, see Tomizawa 2004 and Tsuchiya 1995, 2002: 83–111.

13 "Hakkō shuisho [Foundation Prospectus]." *Fūzoku gahō* 3, February 1889, p. 1.

such as the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905). Another visual medium produced from the late nineteenth-century until the 1920s in Japan was the news-reporting picture postcard (*jiken ehagaki*), but it was also issued upon major social events and not routinely.[14] While the stable and continuous publication of news pictorial magazines was realised in the 1920s, as explained above, these did not enjoy great commercial success in Japan. A breakthrough for the genre was made in the early 1940s by the government propaganda weekly *Shashin shūhō* ("Weekly Photographic Bulletin", 1938–1945), which reached a circulation of 0.2 million in March 1941, though it remained no match for popular periodicals such as entertainment magazines and women's magazines.[15] The other visual news medium, the newsreel, also attracted viewers, but regular screenings only took root in the late 1930s.[16]

Therefore, it was arguably a new experience for people in late interwar Japan to encounter, on a regular basis, images of people far-removed from the spheres of their daily lives, through the multi-page photo articles offered by mass-market women's magazines.

The interwar Japanese women's magazine as a general home entertainment magazine

One should keep in mind the enormous commercial success of Japanese interwar women's magazines as well as the wide range of their readership, which compel us to reconsider our preconceived image of them as periodicals intended for married women, containing practical articles concerning household affairs. According to circulation data by periodical genre compiled by the major magazine agent Tōkyōdō from 1927 to 1941, the women's magazine was the best-selling magazine genre between 1929 and 1934, and even during other periods, when it ceded its top position to the entertainment magazine, it maintained a very close second place. For example, in 1932, the women's magazine (eight major titles) sold 16.8 million copies per year, while the entertainment magazine (eleven major titles) sold 14.2 million and the magazines for intellectuals (ten major titles), 7.1 million (Tōkyōdō tōkeibu 1935: frontispiece). Taking into consideration other means of access, such as group purchase and rental bookstores, the number of readers of these magazines would have been much higher. The popularity of women's magazines was such that a few months after the

14 On news-reporting postcards, see Kashiwagi 1987: 67–92, Satō Kenji 1994: 16–71, Tagi 1983.

15 JACAR 1941: 63.

16 Despite their first appearance in Japan around the turn of the century and unsuccessful attempts since 1914, regular screenings of newsreels finally began in 1930 and became more firmly established during the mid- and late 1930s, when major newspapers partnered with domestic and foreign film companies as well as news agencies to screen newsreels at regular intervals (at first monthly or bi-weekly and later weekly). This trend was accelerated when Dōmei tsūshinsha (the official news agency of the Japanese government) began production of its own newsreels in July 1937, after the Marco Polo Bridge Incident (Tsūshinshashi kankōkai 1958: 498–499, Tanaka 1980: 366–369, Park 2005: 27–28).

Marco Polo Bridge Incident on 7 July 1937, Minister of the Interior Baba Ei'ichi solicited the cooperation of the presidents of ten leading periodical publishers, including two major women's magazine publishers (Shufu no tomo-sha and Fujokai-sha), in launching the national spirit mobilisation movement (*kokumin seishin sōdōin undō*) (Hashimoto 1964: 484).[17] This eloquently affirms that the government duly acknowledged the impact that these women's magazines had on society.

The other important yet often overlooked aspect of Japanese interwar popular women's magazines is their wide-ranging readership. Unlike earlier women's magazines, such as *Fujin sekai* ("Women's World", 1906–1933) and *Fujin no tomo* ("Women's Friend", launched as *Katei no tomo* or "Household Friend" in 1903), which were aimed at middle-class women with a secondary education or higher, those launched in the late 1910s and early 1920s, such as *Shufu no tomo* ("Housewife's Friend", 1917–2008) and *Fujin kurabu* ("Women's Club", 1920–1988), attracted readers who had been neglected by Japanese publishing culture, namely, women from lower classes, as well as the existing educated female readers (Nagamine 1997: 173–185).[18] Through his detailed investigations of readership surveys and reading-related practices, publishing historian Nagamine Shigetoshi has pointed out that, until the 1910s, there had been a large gap between women with just an elementary education, such as female factory workers (*jokō*), and those with secondary education, including professional women (*shokugyō fujin*) and female [high-school] students (*jogakusei*), in terms of reading rate, volume of reading and the availability of women's magazines for them.[19]

Although gaps in reading habits between these two groups remained, after around 1920 the practice of reading women's magazines began to spread not only among professional women, female students and housewives (*shufu*) in middle-class urban households, but also among lower-class women, such as female factory workers and female domestic workers (*jochū*).[20] Rental bookstores, local libraries, factory reading rooms, group purchasing practices and street peddlers selling old issues for lower prices offered less affluent women access to these magazines as well (Nagamine 2001: 19 –93). It would seem that middle-class women, represented by professional women and female students, frequently subscribed to these new popular women's magazines, while also supplementing their reading with the women's literary magazine *Fujin kōron* ("Women's Review", 1916–present) (Nagamine 1997: 188–189). Furthermore, in the late interwar period, readers of popular women's magazines existed in

17 In addition, one of the other eight publishers was Kōdan-sha, a company that published various kinds of periodicals, also including one women's magazine (*Fujin kurabu*).

18 On the readership of *Shufu no tomo* versus that of the other women's magazines, see Terade 1982: 58.

19 Between 1919 and 1932, the magazine reading rate among female factory workers ranged from 8.7 per cent to 54.6 per cent; between 1922 and 1934, the magazine reading rate among professional women ranged from 59 per cent to 83 per cent (Nagamine 1997: 163).

both urban and rural areas. According to a 1933 nation-wide survey on reading materials that canvassed approximately 3,000 members of the women's youth league, *Shufu no tomo* and *Fujin kurabu* were the leading magazines subscribed to in all regions: urban, rural and industrial areas, as well as fishing villages.

Additionally, quite a few critics during Japan's interwar period commented on mass-market women's magazines' innovative and accessible editorial style and their propensity for commercialism and entertainment. In one of his serial articles on the history of magazines in Japan, critic Aono Suekichi argued that "no sector made as dramatic progress as the women's magazine did. … [Recently,] their [women's magazines'] thorough commercialism, and its accompanying sensory stimulation, entertaining and 'practical' qualities, have gained the power to lead magazine culture, in a sense" (Aono 1933: 9).[21] Tellingly, philosopher and critic Tosaka Jun cites the inclination of women's magazines toward gossipy human interest stories, roundtable articles and show-business-related content, as well as their male readers, when calling these periodicals "general [entertainment] magazines" (*ippan zasshi*), pointing out that "many women's magazines are like entertainment magazines, while many entertainment magazines are like women's magazines" (Tosaka 1937: 345).[22] The characteristics of interwar Japanese women's magazines that Aono and Tosaka referred to, together with their heavy use of visual material, were to become indispensable attributes for postwar popular periodicals.[23] In a sense, then, the interwar mass-market women's magazine anticipated the new editorial style of popular magazines that would come to dominate in the coming decades.

As mentioned in Tosaka's essay cited above, numerous contemporary commentators, including the aforementioned 1929 study by the Ministry of Home Affairs, also noted the existence of male readers of the mass-market women's magazine.[24] Readership surveys, though sporadic at the time, reveal that, despite words such as "Housewife" or "Women's" in their titles, interwar women's magazines had some male readership, even if mostly as "secondary readers", i.e., having borrowed copies from female family members or browsed them at libraries (Nagamine 1987: 187–194).[25] Their engagement is clearly evidenced

20 For related statistical data and analysis, see Nagamine 1997: 157–189, 198–202. Female factory workers also read magazines on morality and ethics provided by factories or retreat groups as a component of their labour management programmes (Nagamine 1997: 189–191).

21 On other similar comments, see Maeshima 2016: 4–5.

22 Media historian Satō Takumi (2002: 26–33) also mentioned the importance of women's magazines by referring to *Shufu no tomo*'s influence on *Kingu*'s editing style, reader involvement and media events, although he did not examine their implications in the context of publishing history.

23 For a comparative analysis of the editing tendencies of post-war popular magazines, including *Heibon* and *Myōjō*, compared to pre-war counterparts such as *Kingu* and *Kōdan kurabu*, see Satō Takeshi et al. 1954: 296–301.

24 For contemporary comments on male readers of women's magazines, see Maeshima 2016: 5–6.

25 According to visitor data from Asakusa Library in Tokyo in 1924, for instance, the best-selling women's magazine *Shufu no tomo*, along with the literary magazine *Chūō kōron*, business magazine *Jitsugyō no Nihon* and the science pictorial magazine *Kagaku gahō*, placed 10th place among magazines read by men with jobs, and another popular women's magazine *Fujin kurabu* was in 11th place (Nagamine 1987, 193–194; these statistics are based on the survey appearing in *Shiritsu toshokan to sono jigyō* 28, March 1925).

by letters from male readers and articles geared toward a male audience.[26] Through the employment of accessible editorial techniques, such as the use of heavily oral writing styles and visual images, as well as an emphasis on human interest stories and entertainment content, these periodicals reached a relatively wide strata of readers across age, region, marital status and, to some extent, social class and gender, demonstrating their impact on society as a major mass media outlet. Thus, retaining their self-designation as periodicals for women (*fujin zasshi*), they became general home entertainment magazines by the mid-1920s (Maeshima 2013, 2014b).[27]

Under-analysed photojournalism and its lingering impact

Despite the prevalence and visual prominence of photographic reports in mass-market women's magazines in interwar Japan, scholars have paid little attention to these publications, not to mention their "life pictorials" in particular. While women's magazines have been well-studied in both Japanese and Anglophone academia,[28] the focus of such research has lain primarily on their construction, dissemination and transformation of discourses, representations and practices concerning women, leaving their significance in other respects, including photo reportage, under-studied. Likewise, scholars have conducted historical as well as analytical investigations of the social use of photographs in interwar and wartime Japan, including those appearing in graphic magazines, state-led propaganda projects and works by Japanese photographers in Japan's peripheries,

26 For example, one can find articles for men in *Shufu no tomo* from as early as 1917 (Maeshima 2016: 66). Likewise, in 1920, even before contemporary commentators began to address the issue of male readers of women's magazines, about 14 per cent of readers' letters (23 out of 170) contributed to *Shufu no tomo* were from male readers. In addition, some letters from female readers revealed that they were enjoying the magazine with their husbands or sons. For more on letters from male readers of the magazine, see Maeshima 2016: 178–180. While we cannot take their statements at face value and can surmise that some of them, if not all, might have been written by the editors, the continual references to male readers in women's magazines and by contemporary commentators suggest that male readers of these periodicals did exist, at least to the extent that such statements did not seem unnatural. Note that editors and critics in interwar Japan also called mass-market women's magazines "home magazines (*katei zasshi*)", suggesting that they were for all the members of the household (Maeshima 2016: 67).

27 Even after the Second World War, women's magazines' popularity did not disappear, nor did their male readers. According to a table summarising the results of the annual reading survey by Mainichi Shimbun-sha for the 30-year period between 1947 and 1976, in the "magazines I always read (including weekly magazines)" (from 1959, "monthly magazines I always read") category for all readers, women's magazines such as *Shufu no tomo, Fujin kurabu, Shufu to seikatsu* and *Fujin kōron*, were in the top ten from 1947 to 1958, and in the top three from 1959 to 1976 (Mainichi shimbun-sha 1977: 255–263). One of them, *Shufu no tomo* even ranked first overall for both men and women in both the "magazines I always read" and "magazines I buy and read monthly" categories in 1950, 1951 and 1972 (Mainichi shimbun-sha 1977: 261, 276). Since 1961, when they started separating the tabulations for men and women, women's magazines ranked within the top 20 "monthly magazines I always read" among men from 1963 to 1970 (or until 1976 if household magazines such as *Ie no hikari* and *Kurashi no techō* are included) (Mainichi shimbun-sha 1977: 264–269). The transformation of women's magazines and a reconsideration of their position in the context of the history of publishing and reading culture in modern Japan will be further elaborated in my forthcoming monograph.

28 A few such studies are: Frederick 2006; Kimura 1992, 2010; Hou / Nakamura 2022; Imai / Selden 1994; Ishida 2015, 2021; Ishii / Jarkey 2002; Maeshima 2012, 2014a; Sato 2003; Silverberg 2007.

colonies and Manchukuo.[29] Yet, photojournalism in interwar popular media, such as mass-market women's magazines, has remained almost untouched.

This is partly because most of the photos and photo reports appearing in interwar Japanese popular women's magazines lacked credits identifying their photographers or editors, and hence, they have tended to be taken lightly in historical studies of photography, which emphasise identification of and attribution to an individual creator. Most photo articles in women's magazines were likely to have been produced by staff photographers and editors, many of whom were not remembered individually as innovative creators in the history of photography or publishing. Moreover, documents concerning them usually do not survive. Presumably, these factors, namely, the anonymity of the producers, the sparseness of related data/documents and their lack of originality, have hindered research on photojournalism in interwar popular women's magazines.[30] Nor have studies on propaganda paid enough serious attention to interwar popular women's periodicals. While recent historical studies do acknowledge not only state-led propaganda but also unofficial propaganda from the trans-war perspective,[31] their main focuses have still been on wartime publications or overtly political cases. In such studies, the seemingly non-political content in interwar "feminine" media tends to be ignored.

Fortunately, in the case of the best-selling women's magazine of the time, *Shufu no tomo* ("Housewife's Friend"), we have adequate documentation, such as company histories and books produced by those involved in its production, which removes some of the difficulties in conducting research on its photo articles. Focusing on a particular kind of photo report called the "life pictorial", which appeared in this most popular women's magazine (or, more accurately, home entertainment magazine), this paper will analyse representations of various peoples and places, mainly, but not limited to, those within the boundaries of the empire, including in Japan's colonies. As Judith Butler's insights on war photography suggest, in considering the photography in these magazines, it is quite essential to examine "not only what it shows, but also how it shows what it shows" (Butler 2009: 71). Therefore, in order to better consider the implications of these photo reports, this paper also addresses their production processes, modes of expression and historical contexts, as well as the intersections of desire on the part of related parties, i.e., their producers, readers and featured subjects, and their underlying views of photography. The repercussions of these photo reports for wartime visual propaganda are discussed as well.

29 In addition to the above-mentioned studies, recent relevant research includes Allen 2014, 2016; Barclay 2010, 2016; Charrier 2014; Handa 2019; Kim 2010, 2012, 2016; and Shepherdson-Scott 2016. On colonial visual representations including photographs of Taiwan in the late 19th century, see Fraleigh 2012.

30 For similar reasons, despite their importance in terms of the social use of visuals, photographs and photo articles produced by newspaper companies and news agencies have not been regarded as serious research subjects, as pointed out by Ishikawa 1995: 240 and Numata 2021:159.

31 On recent research, see Kushner 2005; Germer 2011, 2012, 2013 and studies in Ueda 2021. See also Dower 1986.

The photography department and the *Shufu no tomo* visual section

The pioneering photo department and the *ST* visual section

Shufu no tomo ("Housewife's Friend", hereafter *ST*) was launched in 1917 by founder Ishikawa Takeyoshi (a.k.a. Takemi), who had worked for several publishers in Tokyo in sales, advertising, accounting and editorial offices starting from 1903, after dropping out of secondary school in Ōita, Kyūshū, for financial reasons. Observing the strong sales of women's magazines and books related to home life, Ishikawa started his publishing business with the belief in the importance of "offer[ing] useful and living knowledge to the masses" who aspired to the middle-class lifestyle yet could not afford to realise it completely (Ishii 1940: 240). From its modest beginnings, selling just 10,000 copies in 1917, *ST* experienced a steady rise in circulation with each issue. By 1921, it had reached an impressive 220,000 copies, a feat the company history proudly hailed as "Number one in the East" (Shufu no tomo-sha 1996: 19). It did not abandon the publishing industry even after the popular entertainment magazine *Kingu* was launched at the end of 1924 and quickly became Japan's first million-copy-selling periodical in 1925. In 1934, *ST*'s circulation soared to 1,000,000, and by 1943 it had further escalated to an astonishing 1,638,800 copies (ibid., Shufu no tomo-sha 2021). *ST*'s high advertising fees attest to its sustained influence in the industry. From the 1920s to the early 1940s, *ST*'s advertising fees were the highest among Japanese periodicals, and by 1938 they had become 6.5 greater than those of *Kingu* and *Fujin kurabu*.[32] *ST*'s commercial success was bolstered by its constant development of various new editing techniques to make it more accessible and enjoyable (Maeshima 2016: 69–74). The integration of more visuals was one such tactic.

Ishikawa's publishing company, Shufu no tomo-sha (hereafter STS) established a photography department in 1921 and its own photo studio in 1925, which was quite early for an ordinary magazine publisher in Japan (Shufu no tomo-sha 1967: 85, Yasukōchi 1968).[33] Whereas publishers of pictorial magazines, such as Hakubunkan and Kinji gahō-sha (later renamed Doppo-sha in 1906 and Tōkyō-sha in 1907, respectively), had their own photo departments or photo sections, ordinary publishers established their photo departments much later: Chūō kōron-sha in 1934 and Bungei shunjū in 1953 (*Fujin kōron* 1934 (June): 19; Higuchi 2007). While Kōdan-sha founded its photo department

32 In 1938, *ST*'s advertising fee for its back cover was 10,000 yen, whereas that of the other two magazines was just 1,600 yen (Ishida 2017: 230–240; statistics are based on *Kōkoku nenpō*, the "Advertising Annual Report"). On *Kingu* and *Kōdansha*, see Satō Takumi 2002.

33 The pioneering freelance photographer Horino Masao recalled that STS was the only publishing company that had a photography department in the early 1930s (Horino 1995: 22).

slightly after STS in 1924, it did not have its own photo studio until 1968 (Kōdan-sha shashi hensan iinkai 2001: 370). In fact, STS's establishment of its photo department was as early as or in some cases even preceded the major national news agencies and the big national newspapers: Nihon denpō tsūshin-sha (now Dentsū) founded its photo department in 1919, Teikoku tsūshin-sha in 1921, Asahi shimbun-sha in 1928 (the graphics office for *Asahi gurafu* was established in 1922), Mainichi shimbun-sha in 1932, and Yomiuri Shimbun-sha in 1933 (Nakai 1987: 153–156).[34] Against the backdrop of such a context, it is not surprising that STS's founder Ishikawa Takeyoshi enthusiastically stated, "STS will lead the way in creating the magazine photograph (*zasshi shashin*)" upon establishing its photography department (Yasukōchi 1968: 180).

The first director of the STS photography department was Yasukōchi Jiichirō, who was recommended to Ishikawa by Takakuwa Katsuo, the editor-in-chief of the prestigious photography magazine *Camera*. Originally from Fukuoka in Kyūshū, Yasukōchi was a semi-professional amateur photographer who had run his own photo studio in Suita near Osaka. Following his wife's death, he relocated to Tokyo hoping to work for a company, teach the company's photo club and contribute photographs and essays to respected photography magazines such as *Asahi kamera* ("Asahi Camera") and *Kamera* ("Camera"). Ishikawa had been seeking someone uninfluenced by prior media experience who could foster a distinct company style, so Yasukōchi must have seemed the right person for the job.[35]

Having its own photo department enabled *ST* to incorporate original photos without relying on photos borrowed from photo studios or news agencies, which was the common practice for most newspaper companies and magazine publishers at the time.[36] This change brought about the development of photo articles that were completely independent of the articles in the text section of the magazine, which, in turn, led to expansion of the pictorial section as a whole. In the early 1920s, *ST*'s pictorial section consisted of only several pages, just like other popular magazines. The section gradually expanded to 11 pages in 1923, 35 pages in 1928, and 60 to 70 pages in 1930. By the August 1933 issue, it had reached around 85 to 90 pages, accounting for almost 20 percent of the 500-page issue.

34 See also the company histories of these newspapers.

35 On the establishment of the STS photo department, see Yasukōchi 1968: 68– 69, 72. Shufu no tomo-sha 1967: 85.

36 In 1931, the journalist and the editor-in-chief of *Asahi gurafu*, Sugimura Sojinkan (1931: 22) wrote: "In the past, newspaper photography and plate making were entrusted to plate makers such as Meiji and Tsujimura, which supplied all the newspaper photographs. At present, however, each newspaper company has its own in-house department specialising in photography and prepress, which are responsible for their own production."

Production: The people involved in *ST*'s photo articles

STS's photography department with its dedicated studio eventually developed into a cutting-edge institution with all the latest equipment. At first, Yasukōchi was the only member of the photography department. The number of people working there gradually increased, and by 1933, it had expanded to six. All of the staff had received training at or had worked for photography studios, while a few of them had also learned photography at the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts (now Tokyo University of the Arts) (Yasukōchi 1968: 107–108; Shufu no tomo-sha 1967: 137, 239–240). Their training was similar to that of well-known photographers such as Domon Ken, Horino Masao, Kimura Ihee and Watanabe Yoshio, who were contributors to Natori Yōnosuke's *NIPPON* and later became known as pioneering photojournalists.[37]

Yasukōchi himself, while relatively overlooked in the current annals of Japanese photography history, was not an unknown figure during that era. In the 1930s, he published at least five photography-related books (in 1933, 1934, 1935, 1937 and 1938), including one volume in the photography seminar series from Arusu (Ars); held at least two solo exhibitions in Tokyo; taught a radio seminar on photography; contributed photos to the leading pictorial weekly *Asahi gurafu*; and wrote articles as a commentator or expert in prestigious photography magazines such as *Shashin shinpō, Shashin geppō*, *Camera, Asahi Camera* and *Foto taimusu* ("Photo Times"), to which he also contributed his photographs. Many of the other members of the STS photography department, such as Terasaki Kameyoshi, Sakai Tokio and Tominaga Ichirō, also contributed their works to these magazines. In contrast to the members of the photography department at Kōdan-sha, almost all of whom were young apprentices (*shōnen buin*) at the publisher and thus complete novices in the field, those at STS were relatively well-trained professionals (Shashi hensan iinkai 1959: 599–604).

STS's photography department enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy in producing photo articles for the pictorial section. At first, all the photographic articles appearing in *ST*, both in the pictorial section and in the text-based section, were produced by Yasukōchi and Ishikawa under the latter's close supervision. The STS founder admonished the photographer not to aim for a self-satisfying photograph, but rather to aspire to a "magazine photograph to be seen and read [by many people]", implying the need to distinguish between photographs created as art works and those made for the mass media (Yasukōchi 1968: 179). In the five years following the establishment of the photography department, however, Ishikawa, who otherwise retained a powerful say in editorial meetings, left control of the pictorial section completely to Yasukōchi. It is worth noting, though, that by that time, Yasukōchi had al-

37 On their career backgrounds, see Tōkyō-to shashin bijutsukan 2005: 284–289 (Domon Ken), 367–368 (Horino Masao), 149–152 (Kimura Ihee), 438–441 (Watanabe Yoshio). In fact, Yasukōchi also contributed to *NIPPON*. On *NIPPON*, see Shiroyama / Hori 2006.

ready fully internalised the founder's objectives for the magazine through years of collaboration with him (Yasukōchi 1968: 77, 78).

Due to the lack of data and production credits for *ST* photo articles until the mid-1930s, it is not clear exactly who was involved in their production and in what way before that time.[38] However, company histories and writings by the first photo department head suggest that it was mainly Yasukōchi who was in charge of the entire process of producing photo articles (particularly the life pictorials), from proposing the plan to making site visits, interviewing people, collecting materials, taking photos, writing text and constructing layout. Other members of the photography department were also occasionally involved in photo-article making.[39] Thus, unlike later editorial practices, the production of photo articles at STS in the interwar period was not divided into different specialised sections, nor was the photographer's job secondary to the editor's (Yasukōchi 1968: 36, 121, 142, 151, 155). In addition, photographers with no affiliation with STS also contributed to *ST*. According to memoirs written by Natori Yōnosuke and Horino Masao, emerging freelance photographers in early 1930s Japan, such as Okada Kōyō, Okamoto Tōyō, Horino Masao and Watanabe Yoshio, offered their works to various mass-market magazines, including *ST* (Natori 1963: 132–133, Horino 1987: 7–3). Nonetheless, their work was indistinguishable from other work in *ST*, suggesting that their styles were adjusted to conform to the format used in this popular periodical – the signature style created through the collaboration of Ishikawa and Yasukōchi.

Discrepancies and asymmetries in the dream of a multicultural egalitarian empire

Life pictorials in the intimate style: Japan as an egalitarian empire populated by diligent, home-loving subjects

Yasukōchi later recounted that Ishikawa believed that the purpose of including increasing numbers of photos in the magazine was both to entertain and to instruct the reader, while Yasukōchi himself also regarded periodical photographs as a convenient means for conveying to busy readers the ever-expanding body of information about modern society in an effective and concise manner (Yasukōchi 1968: 179–180, Yasukōchi 1935: 204–205). *ST* developed various

38 Those that did include credits named either the magazine publisher's photo department or Yasukōchi. Occasionally, photos intended for aesthetic appreciation appeared with production credits other than the STS photograph department or Yasukōchi.

39 The similarities to texts and photos cited or referred to in Yasukōchi's books suggest that Yasukōchi himself was the main photographer producing the life pictorials (Yasukōchi 1938: 228, 1968: 279). On the making of photo articles in *ST*, see also Shufu no tomo-sha 1967: 627.

different photo article genres, but the photographic report called the "life pictorial" (*seikatsu gahō*), which depicted the lives of various people throughout the empire and appeared mainly in the visual section, but also sometimes in the text section of the magazine, was one of the most popular in terms of content. This multi-page photo report launched in the late 1920s was also the feature to which Ishikawa and Yasukōchi devoted the most energy.[40] By inserting one or more life pictorials along with other types of photo reports in every issue from 1932 onward, they attempted to "systematically capture everything on earth in the net of photographs" (Yasukōchi 1935: 209). In the beginning, life pictorials in *ST* were mostly didactic, providing the magazine's readers with a model of a normative middle-class lifestyle.[41] Soon, however, they started reporting on a wider variety of people in society, depicting not only well-known celebrities, such as popular movie stars, intellectuals, politicians and imperial family members, but also ordinary, anonymous people such as shop clerks, farmers and fishers. Some life pictorials featured places rather than people, such as places of worship and schools.[42] Life pictorials soon spread among other women's magazines and entertainment magazines, and regularly appeared in mass-market magazines well into wartime.[43]

Figure 2

Sayo Fukuko san no asa kara ban made [A Day in the Life of Miss Sayo Fukuko: From Morning to Night], featured in *Shufu no tomo* in February 1936. Photograph courtesy of Oya Soichi Library

A considerable number of life pictorials in *ST* employed what I call an "intimate style," that is, a photo article consisting of multiple photographic images accompanied by highly dialogic text. Pictures were mostly half-length or close-up realistic straight photos, or snapshots of the featured persons in motion, which became possible with new portable cameras by makers such as Contax and Leica. Such techniques are quite common now, but were innovative for periodicals at

40 Note that one of the books by Yasukōchi published in 1939 emphasised the importance of photo reports such as the life pictorial, dedicating an entire chapter to this photo report genre.

41 Early examples of didactic life pictorials include "Akachan no ichinichi (A Day in the Life of a Baby)" (*ST*, August 1929), "Kateiseikatsu no ichinichi (A Day of Home Life)" (*ST*, December 1929), "Totsuguhi no ichinichi (A Day in the Life of a Bride)" (*ST*, January 1930).

42 Some examples of *ST* life pictorials include: a "working woman" (June 1930); an entertainer/actor (January 1932); a nurse (in Manchuria) (February 1932); a (former and current) imperial family member (February 1932); a farmer (June 1932); a place of worship (July 1932); a nun (September 1932); a military school (June 1933); an intellectual (March 1934); a member of the Manchurian royal family (April 1934); a fisher (June 1934); a military facility (October 1934); a national border area (February 1935); people in colony (June 1935); a warship (October 1935); a military officer (December 1935); a politician (January 1936); soldiers (February 1936); and the "snow country" (December 1936).

43 This type of photo article appeared under a variety of titles in women's magazines and entertainment magazines, such as *katei gahō* ("home pictorial"), *tanbō gahō* ("report pictorial"), *shijō kengaku* ("virtual field trip"), *hōmon gahō* ("visit pictorial"), *XX no goseikatsu* ("XX's life"), *YY o tazunete* ("visiting YY"), *ZZ no ichinichi* ("a day in the life of ZZ"), and so on. The last appearance of a life pictorial in *ST* during wartime featured a dormitory for bereaved mothers and children in the December 1942 issue.

the time (Gidal 1973: 14). Photos were usually laid out in loosely chronological order, either across a two-page spread or foldout page, or on consecutive pages. These sequentially arranged photos were often printed full bleed (to the very edge of the page – another modern editing technique)[44] with little or no margin except for space for the text, helping readers to vividly imagine the lives of the featured people (Figure 2).

Most of the text was written in direct speech, presented as the utterances or inner thoughts of the subjects of the articles. Therefore, readers were invited to "witness" or "spy upon" the lives of those who appeared in these articles, or to identify directly with the featured subjects. Sometimes speakers even "talked" directly to the reader, inevitably placing the subject and reader in an "I-You" relationship, enabling the reader to imagine a face-to-face conversation in real time.

> Since living here in a residence hall is different from living at home with my parents, I have to take care of my own affairs myself. See? I am quite good at sewing, don't you think? I can always make a *yukata* [casual cotton kimono] at least. Hehehe [...][45]

In other words, highly colloquial texts in intimate-style life pictorials became "discourse" in Émile Benveniste's sense, using contextual words (deixis) such as "here" and "now" to immerse readers in the world of representation in their imagination (Benveniste 1971: 223–230). In this way, readers of these new photo articles could feel as if they themselves were standing within the represented world (diegesis), either witnessing the speakers chatting with each other, overhearing the protagonists' inner thoughts, or being spoken to by the persons depicted by the photo article. In either way, readers can quite easily feel an affinity with or at least the vivid presence of the people appearing in such articles, where their natural-looking images and words, putatively quoted as if being spoken, seem to come to life.

Reading such photo reports in this intimate style must have been a quite novel experience for many of the readers, because sequentially arranged photographs as regular content had been rare in Japanese mass-market periodicals until this time, let alone being accompanied by dialogic text expressing the utterances or inner thoughts of the subjects. Arguably, *ST* was the first Japanese periodical to systematically introduce narrative into photo articles.[46] This

44 From the end of the 1920s onward, illustrated magazines such as *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung, Illustrated London News*, *Picture Post*, *Life and Look* printed full bleed (Gidal 1973:14).

45 "Sayo Fukuko san no asa kara ban made [A Day in the Life of Miss Sayo Fukuko: From Morning to Night]", *ST*, February 1936.

46 This style was also adopted for the articles in the body section of *ST* and other women's magazines. To be more accurate, sequentially arranged photo articles had already appeared in *ST* since the early 1920s, though the accompanying texts were explanatory statements that described each photo from the outside. Chronologically arranged magazine photographs can even be seen in periodicals published as far back as the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905; Ōkubo 2011). However, while sequential photos appeared occasionally, apart from the ciné-roman (photographic reproductions of film in print media) and the roman-photo (fictional stories told through a series of photos), this distinct layout style was never continuously and systematically used in Japanese periodicals until the 1920s. On the transitions in the use of photographs in Japanese periodicals and *ST's* introduction of sequence into photo articles, see Maeshima 2007.

intimate style, with chronologically arranged photos and highly oral texts, also resonated with new media of the time such as television and talking films. In fact, Ishikawa confessed that he became fascinated by the still new and underutilised technology of television, which urged him to transform his magazine into a periodical "to look at", using ample visual material (Ishikawa 1960: 67).[47] Similarly, in his book, Yasukōchi (1935: 168–169, 180, 194, 202–204) himself repeatedly remarked on his keen interest in realistic photographic expression, such as snapshots under natural light and serial photographs.

Figure 3

Shokugyō fujin no asa kara ban made [A Day in the Life of a Working Woman: From Morning to Night], featured in *Shufu no tomo* in February1933. Photograph courtesy of Oya Soichi

In terms of the connotative role of the images, people featured in life pictorials were usually depicted as hard-working, home-loving people. An article about a day in the life of a woman working at a department store offers a good example of such a case (Figure 3). Presenting the woman's life scene by scene from morning until night, this article suggests that not a single minute of her day was without meaning. Even leisure activities like taking a tea ceremony lesson had a specific purpose as "a part of home education". In addition, the article indicates that though she works diligently at the department store, she does not forget her love for housekeeping activities such as cleaning and sewing. This same approach was applied to articles featuring well-known people, including artists, intellectuals, politicians and stars in show business. When reporting on celebrities, life pictorials focused not on their public activities, as existing photo articles conventionally had done, but rather, they presented aspects of their private lives and other human qualities – in a manner akin to Erich Salomon's approach to the photo article in Europe (Freund 1980: 118)[48] – and particularly their love for home life. In a sense, then, *ST* shifted the subject matter of photographic reporting from the public sphere to the private sphere.

47 Ishikawa even visited Waseda University on 16 November 1933, to observe a television experiment (Ishikawa 1980: 480, 505–506).

48 Note that, while Erich Salomon is known for his candid photographs, photos used in *ST*'s life pictorials were not all completely candid: in fact, many of them were staged, as can be seen in the examples in this paper.

Figure 4

Mohanteki fūfuai ni kagayaku Miyake Setsurei hakase to Kaho fujin no ichinichi no goseikatsu [Shining with Ideal Conjugal Love: A Day in the Life of Dr Miyake Setsurei and Mrs Miyake Kaho], featured in *Shufu no tomo* in November 1935. Photograph courtesy of Showa-kan Library

Thus, when a life pictorial in *ST* featured the elderly couple of philosopher and journalist Miyake Setsurei and novelist Miyake Kaho, neither the older couple's writings nor their public lives were presented; rather, the article focused on their home life as affectionate grandparents and model citizens (Figure 4). Readers of *ST*'s life pictorials were invited to believe that all Japanese subjects led a somewhat similar home life, or at least that they shared the same strong affinity for home life while working hard as members of society, no matter how their social status or living situation might differ. Yasukōchi's autobiography suggests that this emphasis on the similarities among subjects throughout Japan was exactly what the producers of these photo articles intended to show to the readers. Believing it to be "an important task for *ST* to show with pictures that there is no difference between the home life of members of the imperial household and that of ordinary people" (Yasukōchi 1968: 119), he recollected, Yasukōchi even used a personal connection with the chief steward of the royal household to obtain access to take original photos of imperial family members.

Figure 5

Kan'in no waka miya hidenka no goshufu toshite no gonichijō [Daily Life of Princess Kan'in no miya as a Housewife], photographed by STS Photo Department, featured in *Shufu no tomo* in April 1935. Photograph courtesy of Showa-kan Library

He managed to shoot scenes of the wives (i.e., the princesses) doing housework, which they usually never did, making the photos quite unique and different from the officially sanctioned portraits that were usually published, which portrayed the ladies and gentlemen dressed up in Western-style attire in public settings (Yasukōchi 1968: 119–121). A notable example of this approach is the photo story on Princess Kan'in-no-miya, which shows scenes of the princess ironing her husband's shirts, or of the couple strolling around the house together (Figure 5). Differences in social position, financial situation and lifestyle were not emphasised in life pictorials.

Suppressed discrepancies among the featured

Despite the producers' intentions and their underlying dominant message, however, these articles did not, in fact, treat all of their subjects in the same way. First, as shown in the above examples, ordinary people usually, though not always, tended to be depicted in a series of small-scale photos, whilst socially recognised people were represented with large, full-page pictures, in a manner quite similar to portraits of movie stars. Likewise, whereas famous figures were referred to by name without fail, ordinary citizens tended to appear in photographic reporting in an anonymous fashion: in a sense, they were presented as representatives of various categories, such as farmer, shop clerk or Buddhist priest. Sometimes, linguistic styles used in these articles contributed to differentiations among the featured. This can most typically be seen in articles about the royal family. The above-mentioned article on the imperial couple, for instance, contains little direct speech, and most of the descriptive statements employ the highest form of honorific language, demonstrating the editor's respect toward the subjects and inviting readers to share this feeling.

In this way, the article manages to differentiate the featured royals from other Japanese people, while still emphasising the "ordinariness" of their life by including scenes such as ironing shirts, brushing clothes and shoes, and the like, thus stressing the royals' ostensible similarity to regular citizens. It should be noted that life pictorials never featured the lives of those at the bottom of the social ladder. Excluding the poor and equalising the lifestyles of those who were included allowed these photo reports to create an image of an ideal egalitarian society.

Notably, in certain cases the use of a different mode of expression, which I would like to call the "detached style", implicitly encouraged readers to differentiate themselves from featured subjects who were supposed to be leading similar lives. In contrast to the intimate style, in this style of photo article, most of the photos were taken from a distance and the accompanying text explained photos extradiegetically, i.e., from outside of the world of representation, or diegesis.[49] Whereas the dominant mode of expression among life pictorials was intimate or vicarious, one can sometimes find a detached style employed in this photo story genre, representing people's lives or activities collectively in a dry manner. This detached or observational style appeared most frequently in articles reporting on the lives of people at a distance from the centre of the empire, such as farmers, fishermen, professional woman divers, and so on, or workers in facilities such as schools, hospitals, places of worship, and the like.

Often, however, some techniques of the intimate style are also applied to stories in the detached style. For instance, in the case of a life pictorial about

49 For more on diegetic levels, see Genette 1980: 227–237.

orange pickers (Figure 6), the dominant mode is observational, with an explanatory writing style and photos mostly taken at a distance, which gives readers the impression of observing the subjects from outside of the represented world, creating an imagined sense of distance from them. Yet, one can also read a conversation taking place among the orange pickers alongside their photos; the text accompanying the picture of one woman on a different page even includes an inner monologue. Thus, readers could also feel a sense of intimacy toward these women or feel their presence quite vividly to some extent. In this way, these photo articles covered people living in the Japanese Empire from diverse social strata, ranging from anonymous farmers, store clerks and nursing school students to celebrities such as famous actors, artists, entrepreneurs, politicians and members of the royal family, emphasising the supposed similarities they shared in terms of their diligence and love of home life.

Figure 6

Mikan toru Izu no otome [Orange-Picking Maidens in Izu], photographed by STS Photo Department, featured in *Shufu no tomo* in July 1937. Photograph courtesy of Oya Soichi Library

Representations of the colonised

Drawing upon Edward Said's arguments in *Orientalism*, geographer Gregory Derek defines "imaginative geographies" (also known as "imagined geographies") as "representations of other places – of peoples and landscapes, cultures and 'natures' – that articulate the desires, fantasies and fears of their authors and the grids of power between them and their 'Others'" (Gregory 2009: 369–371).[50] Considering their presence in publishing and reading culture in interwar Japan and their emphasis on photographic reporting, one cannot overlook, though nor should one overestimate, Japanese mass-market women's magazines' contribution to the construction and dissemination of Japan's "imaginative geography" as well as its own self-image as presented through visuals. Indeed, the photographs' underlying logics of representation and modes of expression trained readers' receptivity to the state's colonial policies and wartime propaganda.

50 On "imaginative geography," see also Said 1978: 49–73, Gregory 1995. While sharing with Said and Gregory the understanding of geography as a cultural construct, historian Emma Jinhua Teng observes among studies of imaginative geography the tendency to dramatise distance and difference by focusing on "their land" and, drawing on Benedict Anderson's "imagined community" (Anderson 1983), proposes its variant form "imagined geography" that is primarily concerned with "our land" (Teng 2007: 10–12; see also Teng 2006). Life pictorials in late interwar Japanese periodicals, the focus of the analysis in this study, include representations of both people in "their land" and those in "our land". Therefore, this paper uses the two terms (namely, "imaginative geography" and "imagined geography") interchangeably.

As part of the presentation of the "imagined geographies" of the wider Japanese Empire, the variety of people and places featured in life pictorials continued to expand. Whereas *ST* had already included life pictorials about people living in remote farming villages since 1932, beginning in 1935, the magazine started reporting on the lives of people at the peripheries of the Japanese Empire, such as in towns along national borders and in the Japanese colonies.[51] The emergence of reports on non-Japanese peoples in the colonies or semi-colonies, such as the Taiwanese, Korean, Southern Islanders and Ainu, is particularly noteworthy; up to this point, their lives had not usually been featured in popular magazines. In these life pictorials featuring "contact zones" (Pratt 1991: 33–40), ethnically non-Japanese peoples on Japan's peripheries were referred to as *dōhō* (fellow citizens) or *Nihon kokumin* (Japanese citizens). While overtly derogatory expressions such as *banjin* (barbarian) do appear, overall, the texts are written in a seemingly friendly, if paternalistic, manner. Just as in articles about ethnically Japanese people, these photo articles on non-Japanese subjects of Japan focused on their everyday lives with an emphasis on their family ties and love for home life. Descriptions of their everyday domestic lives, such as scenes of dining, washing clothes, playing games, gathering with family, and the like, implied similarities among Japanese subjects that spanned across ethnic differences. Nevertheless, a closer reading of these apparently sympathetic descriptions is needed, since, as Nicholas Thomas (1994) and Ann Laura Stoler (2002) have argued, such representations tend to present less dramatic but more enduring colonial discourses.

While referring to these subjects as "one of us" and mentioning cultural similarities, at the same time, the photo stories on the colonised highlight their differences from the Japanese through allochronic discourse. In these articles, the people featured are usually presented in supposedly "traditional" or "authentic" dress, sometimes not in keeping with their current customs and in contrast to the male Japanese journalists interviewing them, who appear in Western clothing that visually signals their modern sensibilities and middle-class status,[52] as if to stress the cultural diversity of the empire and the legitimacy of Japanese rule and modernisation efforts. In photographing Ainu people, for instance, the magazine producers staged cultural performativity, requesting that the featured subjects wear traditional costumes and act out their rituals, even if these practices had become almost obsolete due to the assimilation policy

51 "Hyōsetsu ni tozasareta Karafuto kokkyō ni dōhō imon no shashin gahō [Photo Report about Our Fellow Citizens in the National Border Area in Icy Snow-Bound Sakhalin]," *ST*, February 1935; "Taiwan no banjin no katei seikatsu tanbō gahō [Pictorial of a Visit to Barbarian Families in Taiwan]," *ST*, June 1935; "Ainu-jin no seikatsu tanbō gahō [Pictorial of a Visit to the Ainu People]," *ST*, February 1936; "Yami-zoku banjin no seikatsu gahō [Life Pictorial of the Barbarian Yami Tribe]," *ST*, September 1936; "Chōsen fujin no seikatsu gahō [Life Pictorial of Korean Women]," *ST*, December 1936.

52 *ST*, June 1936 is a typical example. Note that the appearance of a reporter/photographer was quite rare in photo articles in *ST*.

imposed by the Japanese government.[53] Thus, as Johannes Fabian (1983) has observed, those perceived as "Other" are relegated to the past: coevality is denied to them.[54] On the infrequent occasions when non-Japanese people in the empire appeared in Western clothing in the features, the text always made a point of mentioning or suggesting that their successful modernisation had been realised thanks to Japan.[55] Frequently, photos of active, diligent children in Western clothes at modern schools were placed next to those of adults in traditional costume. Together with the accompanying text, these images served to emphasise the contrast between a new generation becoming modernised through the help of the Japanese government and an older generation of "happy-go-lucky" or "lazy" adults (Figure 7).[56] Moreover, the featured subjects are frequently referred to as having "childish" or "laid-back" attitudes, which were also described as "lovable", and as adoring the Japanese and Japanese customs.[57]

Figure 7

Hyōsetsu ni tozasareta Karafuto kokkyō ni dōhō imon no shashin gahō [Photo Reportage about Our Fellow Citizens in the National Border Area in Icy Snow-Bound Sakhalin], captured by our correspondent, featured in *Shufu no tomo* in February 1935. Photograph courtesy of Showa-kan Library.

The choices of which subjects were presented and which were ignored in these photo articles are also noteworthy. Life pictorials preferred to cover Ainu people, south islanders and indigenous Taiwanese highlanders with little Chinese influence (*seiban*), who had already been regarded as inhabitants of the peripheries in premodern East Asia and presumably appeared to be distant from the Japanese in terms of customs; they did not feature peoples of Chinese descent, Korean intellectuals and Sinicised indigenous Taiwanese peoples (*jukuban*). Moreover, the fierce resistance against the Japanese government in these areas[58] was never mentioned nor even hinted at in these photo reports. In this way, life pictorials depicted these people as undercivilised model minorities who docilely accepted Japanese rule. Unlike in the cases of Western colonisers and their non-Western colonial subjects, distinctions in physique and appearance between the colonising Japanese and their colonial subjects were not immediately evident, so physical differences between the Japanese and non-Japanese were exaggerated (or, more precisely, invented), both in the photos

53 In particular, see *ST*, February 1936.

54 On the construction of an allochronic discourse, see Fabian 1983, especially p. 31.

55 *ST*, February 1935; *ST*, June 1935; *ST*, February 1936.

56 "[About a fishing man] How carefree he looks!" (*ST*, February 1935); a "slightly lazy" lady chats while she washes her clothes by stomping her feet (*ST*, June 1935). A similar emphasis on indigenous Taiwanese men that contradicted the reality could be also found among picture postcards (Barclay 2010: 86–87).

57 References to childishness and a laid-back attitude: *ST*, February 1935; *ST*, June 1935. References to longing for Japaneseness: *ST*, June 1935; *ST*, February 1936; *ST*, June 1936.

58 For example, the Musha Incident (Wushe Incident), a military resistance by the indigenous highlanders against Japanese rule in 1930. On the Musha/Wushe Incident, see Ching 2000.

Figure 8

Taiwan no banjin no katei seikatsu tanbō gahō [Pictorial of a Visit to Barbarian Families in Taiwan], captured by STS Special Correspondent, featured in *Shufu no tomo* in June 1935, page 434. Photograph courtesy of Ishikawa Takeyoshi Memorial Library

and the texts, for example, by stressing the latter's shortness in stature, their small slanted eyes or their different skin colour, whether it was "too white" or "too dark" (Figure 8).[59] In addition, the work of non-Japanese colonial subjects was not shown in photos and their names were almost never mentioned in the texts, even when it was obvious that Japanese reporters relied on their assistance for their travels and interviews. When the texts referred to local indigenous aides, such as officers, they were usually treated collectively and not named individually, whereas Japanese people in the border towns, both men and women, were often identified by name and their diligence and bravery were highlighted through personal anecdotes.[60]

The pure detached style and erased resistance

It is notable that all of these stories relied on a style different from the intimate mode described earlier. Quite a few of the photos of non-Japanese people were taken from a distance, capturing exotic landscapes or views of interior spaces, suggesting that it was the setting and not the individual people that was the intended focus of the article. Sometimes bust-length portraits of local people were inserted, but in the fashion of a kind of ethnic specimen, either with eyes staring straight into the lens as if alarmed or tense, or striking a pose, likely as instructed by the photographer. Moreover, in the life pictorials about non-Japanese people in the empire, photos were not arranged chronologically, but rather seemed to be placed at random. Therefore, readers were not easily able to envision how these people led their everyday lives. A report on Korean women clearly epitomises this tendency (Figure 9): pictures of *kisaeng* (female entertainers) in a houseboat dancing and singing songs "just like those of the Joseon Dynasty" (another anachronism),

Figure 9

Chōsen fujin no seikatsu gahō [Life Pictorial of Korean Women], photographed by STS Photo Department, featured in *Shufu no tomo* in December 1936. Photograph courtesy of Showa-kan Library

59 *ST*, February 1935; *ST*, June 1935; *ST*, June 1936; *ST*, September 1936.

60 For example, "Hokusen kokkyō no katei o hōmon suru ki (A Report on a Visit to Families on the North Korean Border Area)." *ST*, January 1935. In this article, the mention of the name of "Police inspector Sai [Che]" and a few of his utterances are an exception, though it includes no photo of him. The other Korean people are referred to collectively as "Korean," "Korean officer" and "Korean policemen".

students at a *kisaeng* training school, girls enjoying playing on *neolttwigi* (seesaws) and a mother with two small children in traditional costumes are scattered across the pages without any sequential or narrative order, much as they might appear in a travel guidebook.

The text segments of photo articles on non-Japanese people were not narrated in the voices of the people featured. Rather, they were usually presented from the point of view of a third-person narrator, who explained the corresponding images in a very dry or detached tone from outside the world of representation (the extradiegetic level), leaving the reader with a strong impression of objectivity.[61] Though appearing objective, the text clearly echoes an Orientalist view of the subjects and people featured: the text relegates contemporary Korean people to the past, to an insipidity and irrationality that obscures the similarities observed between Korean and Japanese New Year customs.

> The two beauties in the houseboat [decorated] with a male phoenix head, quietly floating on the Taedong River, are *kisaeng* [female entertainers] from Pyongyang. Their mellow banquet songs and dances just like those of the Joseon Dynasty cannot but naturally intrigue travellers. On New Year's Day, girls in Korea enjoy playing on seesaws [*neolttwigi*], just like girls on the main islands of Japan enjoy playing at battledore. Sometimes adult women join them too. It is said that the banging sound of the board drives out the demons, but it looks monotonous and not interesting at all. However, the ones doing it seem to enjoy it a lot, and they play at it without speaking for 30 or even 40 minutes.[62]

This was quite different from the texts accompanying photo articles written in the intimate style, which consisted of mostly either quoted words or the inner thoughts of the featured subjects, narrated from within the world of representation (the intradiegetic level), and was usually used for photo reports featuring ethnically Japanese people.

In this way, non-Japanese people came across as being observed, analysed, explained, defined and represented by the Japanese. As a result of the combination of the above-mentioned characteristics of photos, layouts and texts, readers found themselves in the privileged position of the coloniser observing the featured subjects from a distance. Thus, these articles invite the readers, regardless of their age, gender or class, to align with the privileged coloniser's gaze of the middle-class male photographer/reporter, through whose eyes they

61 In fact, the dry, objective tone of the text of photo reports in the detached style is also linguistically and stylistically supported. In detached-style life pictorials, the text is often, though not always, written in the *da/dearu* style, using endings that are supposedly colloquial, yet in effect are used in academic or news reporting, in which the narrator is vestigial or suppressed, and thus sounds objective. On the other hand, in intimate-style life pictorials, text is rendered in the *desu/masu* style, the polite colloquial ending that is used for spoken words as well as writing. This evokes a specific context of communication and a certain personal relationship between the speaker and the interlocutor, and hence, sounds subjective. In a sense, then, the distinction between the *da/dearu* style and the *desu/masu* style in Japanese corresponds to the dichotomy in the French language articulated by Émile Benveniste as consisting of the *histoire* (story or history) – (historical) narration marked by the aorist or preterite (*passé simple*) forms and the third-person (*non personne* in Benveniste's words) narrator – and the *discours* (discourse or conversation), marked by the temporal and spatial deictics and the first- and second-person pronouns (Benveniste 1971: 205–214).

62 "Chōsen fujin no seikatsu gahō [Life Pictorial of Korean Women]", *ST*, December 1936: 248–249.

obtain glimpses of the private lives of the featured colonised subjects. In a sense, these photo features bring the colonial gaze into the domestic sphere in Japan.

Still, it is worth noting that the colonised people were not simply passive objects waiting to be described and observed by the colonial gaze; they had their own agency, and records of their acts of resistance exist, if not directly on the pages of the magazine. In his autobiography, Yasukōchi lamented that he was not able to photograph the lives of the Korean people as he had wished, because the local indigenous people had rejected his request to photograph them. His explanatory, guidebook-like photo report featuring Korean people was, then, a consequence of their resistance to being merely "observed" by the coloniser. Likewise, the photographer also confessed that, in fact, the principal of a girls' high school in Sakhalin initially refused his request to have the students exercise on the school grounds; it was so cold that they usually would not do such a thing outside in the winter (Yasukōchi 1968: 273, 315–316). However, these small resistances and negotiations were invisible in the final articles (Figure 7, Figure 9).

Obscuring hierarchical diversity and asymmetrical responses

As shown above, the divergent representations and modes of expression used in the life pictorials about non-Japanese peoples in the empire clearly demonstrate that the denomination of "our fellow citizens", which was used in the slogans encapsulating the state's colonial policies emphasising unity across ethnicity (*naisen ittai, isshi dōjin*), consisted merely of superficial, insubstantial words.[63] It should be noted, however, that the Orientalist "othering" of the colonised subjects in *ST*'s life pictorials was not effected through a simple clear binary opposition.[64] As Oguma Eiji pointed out, the issue of the self-image of the "Japanese" in modern Japan "cannot be understood simply within the framework of Orientalism",[65] or, more accurately, the framework cannot be directly applied to it. The existence of photo reports in the detached style featuring ethnically Japanese people, which I mentioned earlier, obscures the boundary between Japanese and non-Japanese colonised people. With explanatory texts limiting the utterances of the featured and photographs capturing them from a distance, often arranged in non-sequential random order, these

63 For the transitions in us/Other-related discourses behind colonial policies, see Oguma 1995, 1998, 2002/1995.

64 On Orientalist othering and its underlying binary opposition, see Said 1978 and Spivak 1985: 247–272.

65 "The formation of a national self-image is linked to a great extent to the relationships with the Other. […] [T]he discourse on the self-image of the 'Japanese' in modern Japan was inseparable from the discourse on the West and various Asian countries, and on the minorities within Japan herself. In modern Japan, however, this issue cannot be understood simply within the framework of Orientalism, in which the representation of the East is created by the West. At the same time that Japan was subjected to the Orientalising gaze of the West, she was colonising various nations of Asia" (Oguma 2002/1995: xviii–xix). Drawing on Oguma's insights into Japan's ambiguous position in discursive formation of its self-image, Handa Yuri's analysis of *Manshū gurafu* (Pictoria Manchuria or Manchuria Graph) also reveals that the simple binary opposition of the East/West or the colonised/coloniser cannot be applied to Japanese colonial images (Handa 2019).

photo articles collectively presented the lives of unknown Japanese people in rural areas or workers in a similar manner to those of the colonised peoples. Identifying with the position of the photographer/reporter, readers of these articles, in turn, find themselves as distant observers of these Japanese people featured in photo reports presented in the detached style. The style seems to deliberately preclude a sense of affinity or intimacy for the featured, even if detailed visual as well as verbal descriptions might offer readers insights into their lives. Still, it should not be overlooked that, whilst usually life pictorials depicted those featured as home-loving and hard-working people, only the life pictorials on colonised non-Japanese peoples were silent on their diligence or modernity and refrained from using any techniques of the intimate style, implying their position at the bottom of the racial hierarchy defined by modernity and proximity to the centre.

Things are further complicated by photo reports about "foreigners" that featured Caucasian (European and North American) people and Manchurian royal family members. While referred to as "foreigners" (i.e., "not Us"), they were not fully "Others" in terms of the relation to the reader that was implied through the modes of representation and expression utilised in other life pictorials. For example, through images of a family gathering, playing with a baby or doing light housework like sewing, the Manchurian royalty were portrayed with familiarity and respect as modern Asians who, just like Japanese royals and celebrities, love family and hard work.[66] The mode of expression employed in these photo reports is the intimate style, consisting of multiple large, full-page photographs taken at close range, arranged mainly in chronological order, with text often citing utterances of those pictured in direct speech (Figure 10). It should be noted that ordinary people in Manchuria were not depicted in *ST*'s photo articles. In other words, Manchuria, Japan's "ally", was symbolically represented by Manchurian royals, who, like the Japanese, were portrayed in a friendly manner as hard-working, family-loving neighbours sharing the same historical moment with "Us", whereas

Figure 10

Manshū koku kōtei no goreimai Jin Yunying fujin no goseikatsu gahō [Life Pictorial of Manchukuo Emperor's Younger Sister Jin Yunying], photographed by STS Photo Department, featured in *Shufu no tomo* in November 1936. Photograph courtesy of Ishikawa Takeyoshi Memorial Library

66 "Manshūkoku shissei reimai no shin katei hōmon gahō [A Pictorial of a Home Visit to Younger Sister of Chief Executive of Manchukuo (i.e., Aisin-Gioro Puyi's younger sister Jin Yunying)]," *ST*, April 1933; "Manshūkoku kōtei no go-reimai In Un fujin no goseikatsu gahō [A Life Pictorial of Mrs. Jin Yunying, a Younger Sister of the Emperor of Manchukuo]," *ST*, November 1936. In the letter, together with Jin Yunying, her husband Runqi, son Zongyan, and elder brother Pujie also appeared. For studies on discursive and representational tactics concerning Japan's self-image making through graphic magazine images in Manchuria, see Handa 2019 and Shepherdson-Scott 2016.

ordinary Manchu people were excluded from the shared world of apparent equals imagined through the life pictorial.

On the other hand, a photo article featuring the life of Hollywood star Shirley Temple employs the intimate mode, with large, chronologically ordered pictures accompanied by text full of her own words – just like those about Japanese celebrities and Manchurian royals.[67] Figuratively speaking, if the colonised were presented in life pictorials as the "Other" within "Us", these foreigners represented by American celebrities and Manchurian royalty were presented as "Us" within the "Other". Nonetheless, it is obvious from Shirley Temple's line of sight, poses and facial expressions that these were staged photographs in which she acted out her "daily life". Thus, her life pictorial was inserted in the magazine as a sort of entertainment article to be consumed by the curious gaze of Japanese readers. Similarly, the photo article on the Dionne quintuplets in Ontario ("the [symbol of] triumph of modern parenting methods") provided curious readers with interesting objects to observe (Figure 11).[68] Unlike the previous example, this reportage was presented in the detached style, with photographs scattered randomly across the two-page spread, focused on the children's cute facial expressions and gestures. Despite the explanatory style of the accompanying texts, however, they do not sound dry thanks to the friendly tone effected by the first-person narration. Thus, while such "foreigners" were portrayed in photo reports in a friendly manner as "Us" (or as neighbours equal to "Us") sharing contemporaneity, sometimes they were reduced to objects of entertainment for the Japanese.

Figure 11: Sekai no kiseki: Itsutsu-go shimai no seikatsu gahō [A Miracle of the World: A Life Pictorial of Dionne quintuplets], featured in *Shufu no tomo* in July 1936. Photograph courtesy of Ishikawa Takeyoshi Memorial Library.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that the white-centric/Euro-centric hierarchical worldview, typical of Orientalism, was not entirely subverted or denied through these depictions, though it may have been shaken slightly. This is clearly demonstrated in life pictorials featuring Caucasian mothers and children.[69] Presented in the detached style with small sequentially arranged photos and explanatory text, they served as practical, didactic visual articles to demonstrate

67 "Tenpuru-chan no ouchi no seikatsu [Home Life of Little (Shirley) Temple]," *ST*, January 1936. On implications of American mass culture in the 1920s and 1930s Japan, see Silverberg 2007.

68 "Sekai no kiseki: Itsutsu-go shimai no seikatsu gahō [A Miracle of the World: A Life Pictorial of the Dionne quintuplets]," *ST*, July 1936.

69 "Seiyō no kodomo no ichinichi [A Day of a Western Children]," *ST*, October 1932; "Mohan-teki na Doitsu-shiki ikujihō [An Exemplary German Educational Method]," *ST*, February 1933.

exemplary lifestyle and parenting methods based on both motherly affection and discipline. The featured subjects of these photo articles were portrayed as figures whom readers should emulate. It is notable, moreover, that in these didactic life pictorials, as well as the more entertainment-oriented examples cited above, Caucasian people appeared primarily as children; that is, they were incorporated into the seemingly egalitarian world of life pictorials only in a diminished form. Thus, the presence of "unthreatening" Caucasian people symbolically functioned in life pictorials to affirm Japan's position as a modern nation on a par with other developed major powers, even as it implicitly suggested the lasting symbolic power of the "white" people.[70]

In other words, the intersection of the modes of expression and the categories of featured people constituted a gradient continuum, with articles on the Japanese themselves, or other modern peoples living in the putative "centre", depicted in the intimate, vicarious style at the one end, those on colonised indigenous people living in the alleged peripheries of the empire described in the detached, observational style at the other end, and numerous articles in diverse degrees of mixed styles in between. Such a continuum of representational styles managed to show Japan as a multicultural utopian empire in an ideal cosmopolitan world, while both stressing a kind of unity among home-life-loving, mostly diligent Japanese subjects, yet at the same time implying differences among them. The tactics at work behind the representations and modes of expression used by *ST*'s life pictorials might have been discernible only to careful readers at that time. Interestingly, however, although the producers (photographers and editors) did not overtly highlight differences among the featured subjects, readers' responses to life pictorials appearing in the magazine were quite clearly divided, as if subconsciously reacting to the subtle differentiations and hierarchisations among them; whereas letters from readers sympathetic to featured Japanese people often appeared in the magazine, no such letters referring sympathetically to non-Japanese people appeared.[71]

70 For similar, though slightly different, symbolical nuance of representations of Caucasian people appearing in interwar Japanese advertisements, see Maeshima 2014a.

71 For some examples of readers' letters sympathetic to ethnically Japanese subjects, see *ST*, February 1935, pp. 588–589.

Implications of life pictorials

Ironical overdetermination

To fully understand the implications of *ST*'s life pictorials, it is crucial to consider the timing of their emergence, the expectations of those involved and the underlying view of photo reports. As stated above, *ST* life pictorials appeared toward the end of the 1920s and gradually expanded the range of people and places they featured in the 1930s. This was a period of socio-economic disparity in Japan resulting from continuous depressions and frequent famines,[72] which led to agrarian disputes and labour disputes, such as the Noda Soy Sauce Company strike (1927–1928) and the Mitsubishi Aircraft Company Nagoya Factory Strike in 1933, as well as successive (attempted) coup d'états and assassinations of prime ministers and military officers from 1930 onwards.[73] At the same time, while contending with resistance as well as tightening assimilation policies in its colonies, Japan experienced increasing isolation on the international political scene due to its expansionist policies, most significantly the Manchurian Incident in 1931, the subsequent "foundation" of Manchukuo in 1932 and Japan's eventual secession from the League of Nations in 1933.[74]

Nevertheless, life pictorials in *ST* never dealt with such socio-political contradictions. Instead, they consistently centred on the everyday lives of Japanese citizens, highlighting their shared similarities, such as their love for home life and strong work ethic. Over time, the range of featured individuals gradually expanded, encompassing a broader spectrum of society. Even as coup d'états or assassinations occurred or were attempted, life pictorials were able to provide readers with glimpses into the lives of the leading figures of the country and its allies, including Japanese royal family members, politicians and military officers. After the declaration of the establishment of Manchukuo in 1932, for instance, life pictorials featuring the royal family members of this puppet state of Japan also appeared. Meanwhile, during the consecutive depressions and famines, the types of people featured in Japan expanded to those beyond the

72 Starting in the late 1920s, Japan suffered a series of socio-economic depressions: the Shōwa Financial Crisis in 1927, the Great Depression in 1929, the Agricultural Depression due to overharvest in 1930 and the Shōwa Depression in 1930–31. Famine in the Tōhoku area in 1931, 1934 and 1935 aggravated the situation. On the economy, depression and labour movements, see Gordon 1985 and 1991, Nakamura 1997, Taira 1997.

73 Examples include: an attempted assassination of Prime Minister Hamaguchi Osachi in 1930; abortive coup d'états in 1931 (the March Incident and the October Incident or the Imperial Colours Incident); an attempted coup d'état in 1932 (The May 15 Incident); an attempted coup d'état in 1934 (the Military Academy Incident, also known as the November Incident); an assassination of Major General Nagata Tetsuzan by Lieutenant Colonel Aizawa Saburō in 1935 (the Aizawa Incident); and an attempted coup d'état in 1936 (the February 26 Incident, also known as the 2-26 Incident).

74 On Japan's assimilation policies in its colonies, see Caprio 2009, Chen 2001, Ching 2001, Komagome 1996, Miyata 1985. On the overall history of interwar Japan including politics, political thought, colonial policies and international relations, see Arima 2001 and Kitaoka 1999.

centre of the empire and modernity, such as farmers and fishers, with the occasional inclusion of photo reports on Caucasian people. After Japan's departure from the League of Nations in 1933, they started featuring ethnically non-Japanese imperial subjects as well. In a sense, during the 1930s, a period marked by Japan's growing isolation from the international community, economic depressions and famines, the life pictorials featured in the best-selling popular magazine took on a unique role. By reporting on the putatively similar lives of a diverse range of individuals, from both the central regions and peripheries of Japan, as well as beyond the country's borders, they seemingly aimed to highlight Japan's national unity while concealing its military aggression, international conflicts and domestic disturbances. At the same time, these life pictorials celebrated the cultural and ethnic diversity within the empire and showcased the cosmopolitan nature of the world.

It should also be noted that the *ST* life pictorials examined so far were not produced as propaganda under instruction from the state; the systemic use of media to mobilise the citizenry started after the Marco Polo Incident (Park 2005, 24–27, 30–31, 37–40). Rather, they were in a way a product of the personal aspirations of the parties involved. As already mentioned, the founder of STS, Ishikawa Takeyoshi, and STS's first photography department head, Yasukōchi Jiichirō, aimed to "create a magazine photograph" that would provide readers with both knowledge and pleasure (Yasukōchi 1968: 180). As for life pictorials, they hoped to arouse their readers' sympathy or affection toward the featured subjects (Yasukōchi 1968: 180).[75] In this regard, the circumstances of the first session photographing members of the Japanese royal family is quite telling; it was realised by Yasukōchi's tireless efforts to convince the chief steward of the royal household that showing similarities in their lives would deepen the sense of kinship between the royal family and the people (Yasukōchi 1968: 119).[76] Ishikawa's and Yasukōchi's longing for an egalitarian society based on a mutual sympathy among its members reflects *ST*'s affinity for modest social reformism.[77]

75 As a photographer, Yasukōchi had another ambition for this photo article genre; in one of his books, he advocated candid family photographs captured by a small portable camera, encouraging readers to record scenes from their daily lives through "natural" unposed photographs. He presented a life pictorial on a mother and her baby, consisting of candid snapshots, as a good example of such a new style of home/family photo (Yasukōchi 1935: 161, 164, 168–169, 179, 209). This practice spread widely in society later from the 1950s (Kai 2021: 120).

76 Similarly, he used the logic of "goodwill between Japan and Manchuria [*Nichi-Man shinzen*]" in negotiating for photographing the empress of Manchukuo (Yasukōchi 1968: 241).

77 While *ST* is known for its contribution to disseminating discourses concerning the gendered division of labour, it was not entirely conservative during the interwar period. Reflecting Ishikawa's religious belief as a Christian as well as his sympathy for social reformism, the magazine also carried some liberal content, including articles about moderate social activists, such as Kagawa Toyohiko, Kujō Takeko and Abe Isoo, and humanitarian managers such as Mutō Sanji, Ōhara Magosaburō, Hatano Tsurukichi, and the like. The magazine frequently included articles on progressive topics such as the abolition of prostitution and the use of birth control, the latter of which led a right-wing group to attack STS in 1928 (Shufu no tomo-sha 1967: 156–160).

The inclusion of life pictorials was also a part of an effort to promote sales. Yasukōchi believed that photos of rarely pictured subjects, such as Japanese and Manchurian royal family members or residents in the national border areas, would pique the interest of readers and inspire them to purchase the magazine. Ishikawa encouraged such "extraordinary (*toppina*)" ideas from the head of his photo department (Yasukōchi 1968: 118–119). Thus, the photo article genre was also introduced in order to increase the magazine's sales by appealing to the readers' latent desire to see rare images. The prescience of their insights into their readers' curiosity and unspoken desires is proved by the popularity of these life pictorials.

This tactic also suggests that *ST*'s photo articles would not have been realised without the keen interest of the public. Needless to say, as above anecdotes imply, the most important support for life pictorials came from the readers. In addition, sometimes the featured people themselves explicitly expressed their desire to show their lives to other Japanese citizens through photo reporting. When Yasukōchi visited a village of border guards in Sakhalin, he recollected, the chief of the guards passionately entreated: "Probably, no one in the urban areas such as Tokyo knows that there are those living like this at the Northern periphery of Japan. Please let them know that young people here are guarding the Northern border day and night, putting up with everything" (Yasukōchi 1968: 295).[78]

Although there was no direct intervention from the state in the making of these magazine articles, episodes reported by the reporters/photographers suggest an implicit collaboration between the government and STS prior to the implementation of the state's full-fledged propaganda policy. For example, the magazine's correspondents needed official permission to enter the area populated by indigenous Taiwanese highlanders.[79] Likewise, the episode mentioned above concerning the first photographing of Japanese royal family members also suggests that photo reports on them were made possible through private collaborations between the magazine staff and the Imperial Household Ministry. From these anecdotes, one could regard *ST*'s photo reports as a sort of "embedded reporting" in a broader sense.[80]

Thus, *ST*'s life pictorials were founded at the intersection of the logic of capitalism, the ambitions of the editor and the photographer, the readers' curiosity and people's earnest desire for sympathetic understanding from others in the society. They were also built on people's yearning for a peaceful, egalitarian society

78 Similar entreaties from those featured can be found in other *ST* articles, including *ST*, May 1935: 226–227, 242.

79 *ST*, June 1935: 431. Visiting villages along national borders was also made possible through semi-official support.

80 The *Oxford Dictionary of Journalism* defines "embedded reporting" as follows: "Journalistic coverage by reporters who are allowed to locations and/or organizations on condition that they accept certain limitations on their activities" (Harcup 2014: 94).

based on mutual understanding and confronted resistance from colonised indigenous peoples who wish to keep their private lives from the coloniser's gaze. These wishes were not necessarily primarily political. However, given the Orientalist and imperialist inclinations of the majority of those involved as well as support for social reformism so moderate that it almost amounted to acceptance of status quo, they resulted ironically in presenting a worldview that aligned closely with the government policies, and thus, functioned as de facto propaganda even without direct official intervention from the state.

Photography as a "despotism of meaning" presented as "transparent" media

A more fundamental and enduring implication of *ST*'s life pictorials is their educational function. The magazine's photo reports not only provided readers with an imagined geography that aligned with the state's policies, but they also served as a means of instructing readers on how to interpret and engage with photo articles. With simple chronological layouts and text directly accompanying photos, almost all the photo articles appearing in *ST* guided readers to a single interpretation, allowing no other possible understanding of them. The underlying view of the role of the photograph in such photo articles is undoubtedly referential: that is, the photograph is seen as supposedly transparent media reflecting or mirroring the objective reality. While producers of life pictorials were eager to "capture everything on earth in the net of photography", they never had any doubt that their photo articles captured reality, nor did they question whether it was even possible to do so. In his books on photography, Yasukōchi (1935: 48, 180) repeatedly insisted on the importance of photography reproducing "what it looks like (*me de mita kanji*)", implying that there is the only one way to express reality "just as it is (*arino mama*)".[81] Apart from his aforementioned strong interest in replicating a moving-picture-like sequence through chronologically arranged photographs, he did not elaborate much on his thoughts about photo arrangement or layout. Yasukōchi's views of photography present a sharp contrast to those of then-emerging photojournalists such as Horino Masao and Natori Yōnosuke, who, inspired by European (mostly German) photojournalists, were keenly aware of photographic reality as differing from a mere reproduction of what one sees, as well as the importance of the combination, order and arrangement of photographs in creating meaning in photo articles.[82] The simple, easy-to-understand style

81 Similar expressions can be found in the following of his writings: Yasukōchi 1934: 34; 1935: 107, 161, 180; 1938: 168.

82 Due to limitations of space, a comparative consideration of these different views on photography and photographic reporting will be left to another paper. On the contrasting views on photographic images between Yasukōchi and Horino, see Kaneko 1999b. For Natori's view on photography and photo articles, see Natori 1963.

of *ST*'s life pictorials echoes Ishikawa's editorial policy of making the magazine understandable to all readers so as not to insult them.[83]

In other words, neglecting the mediatedness and artificiality of the images, photographers and editors at STS produced their photo articles in a way that compelled the reader to accept them as the unvarnished truth, or an objective portrayal of reality. This is an act of perception resulting from what Jonathan Crary (1992: 150) would describe as "the increasing standardization and regulation of the observer" within whose subjectivity "vision became relocated". In this regard, design historian Kashiwagi Hiroshi's analysis of *Shashin shūhō* ("Weekly Photographic Bulletin", 1938–1945) is deeply suggestive. He observes that this official domestic propaganda pictorial also employed a controlling editing principle in its photo articles. Photographs (over which illustrated characters with speech bubbles were sometimes overlaid in montage) were often arranged in a simple order of sequence or narrative, sometimes even numbered like cartoons to keep the reader from getting lost when reading the article. To each photograph, a section of text was attached, usually providing a direct explanation of the image outside of the diegesis or sometimes representing the utterances of the people in the world of representation. Through their simple photo arrangement, layout and correlation of image and text, these photo articles guided the reader to register the material in a particular way, suppressing other possibilities of meaning-making. Kashiwagi (1986: 55–57) terms this notably manipulative editing style "despotism of meaning (*imi no sensei*)".[84] There, readers find themselves in the position of being passive receivers of meaning imposed by the media.

In this way, one can see many similarities between *Shashin shūhō* and *ST* in the fundamental manipulative editing principles and referential views of the role of photography that underlie their photo articles.[85] Thus, as the product of the intersection of the logic of capitalism and the desires of the involved parties, *ST*'s life pictorials contributed to establishing a foundation for war-time

83 A biography of Ishikawa cited his words on editing as follows: "Readers feel insulted when they find words they do not understand in the magazines they love to read. Therefore, I took pains to make the magazine as easy to understand and easy to read as possible, so that any reader could read it clearly and understandably" (Ishii 1940: 234).

84 In this essay, Kashiwagi saw similarities between *NIPPON* and *Shashin shūhō* in their tendency to guide the reader's interpretation of the photo articles. However, the arrangement of photographs and the relationship between photos and accompanying text in *NIPPON*'s photo stories are more complex. In contrast, in terms of simple formats, one can observe more similarities between *ST's* life pictorials and *Shashin shūhō*'s photo articles. As Inoue Yūko (2009: 184) pointed out, indeed, many of the pioneering photojournalists contributing to *Shashin shūhō* were quite conscious that, unlike existing news photograph that functioned as representation or record, the photographic report (*hōdō shashin*) should express the photojournalist's intention. Yet, perhaps, in order to convey a certain meaning to the reader, they had to rely on a simple style more similar to *ST*'s photo article, with which readers were already familiar. On *Shashin shūhō*, see also Tamai 2017.

85 In this regard, though it was made in reference to a context that is geographically and temporally distant, the following statement by Judith Butler is still relevant to the discussion in this paper: "The photograph is not merely a visual image awaiting interpretation; it is itself actively interpreting, sometimes forcibly so" (Butler 2009:71).

visual propaganda. While disseminating an imagined geography that aligned with the state's policies and thus connecting the domestic sphere and the public sphere, they invited readers to assimilate the gaze of the middle-class male Japanese photojournalist. At the same time, these photo articles compelled readers to internalise certain uses of photos and editing techniques that trained their eyes to read photo articles as simple reflections of reality – a practice that was to be extensively deployed later in wartime propaganda.

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