

## The Magazine

*Every female student had an issue of Ling long magazine in hand during the 1930s. On the one hand, Ling long imparted the beauty secrets of movie stars, and on the other hand instructed "beautified" and "made up" girls how to keep close guard against the attacks of men, because all men harbor bad intentions. True dating is dangerous, but marriage is even more dangerous, because marriage is the tomb of dating.*

Female Shanghai author Zhang Ailing, "Talking About Women" (1944).

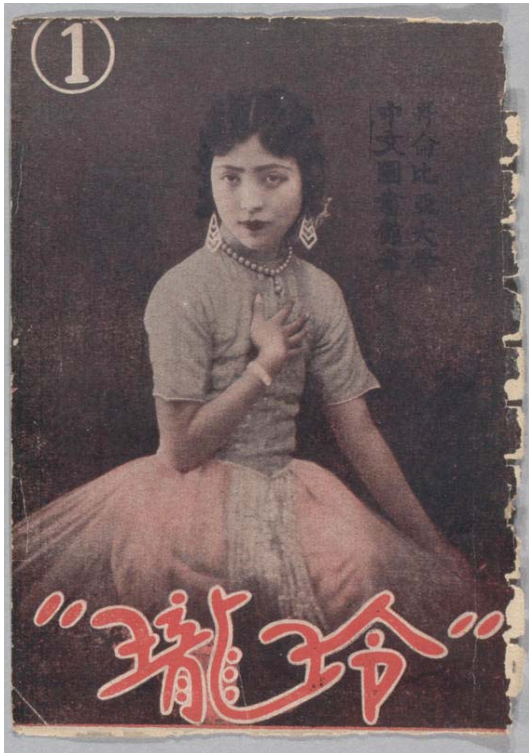
Between 1931 and 1937, the Sanhe publishing company, located on Nanjing Road in Shanghai, published *Ling long* magazine, which they called *Linloon* magazine in English. This pocket-sized weekly stood only 13 centimeters high. According to the first issue, the magazine cost seven *fen* 分 (7/100ths) of a foreign ounce of silver or 21 copper coins and an extra two *fen* (2/100ths) of a foreign ounce of silver in other cities. Mr. Lin Zecang was the main backer of the magazine. The editorial board included Mr. Zhou Shexun (entertainment), Ms. Chen Zhenling (women's features), and Mr. Lin Zemin (photography). Both men and women contributed photographs and articles, though the majority of articles appear to have been written by women as indicated by the title *nushi* 女士 (lady) placed next to their name.

The goal of the magazine was "to promote the exquisite life of *women*, and encourage lofty *entertainment* in society." The magazine was divided into two parts, indicated by the front and back covers. The front cover usually featured a photograph of a woman who represented the magazine's ideal of the modern woman, while content on the back cover was usually related to the cinema. The magazine was read in both directions. The articles that read from front to back were usually more instructional and related to women's issues. Articles and photographs that read from the back cover were often concerned with entertainment or unusual feature stories.

The word *ling long* 玲瓏 (elegant and fine) has an etymology that reaches back to a collection of onomatopoeic words from the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) signifying the sounds of pieces of jade clinking together.<sup>1</sup> The classical meaning of *ling long* also connoted delicate female handiwork. The editors of *Ling long* magazine redefined this word to mean modern female style. Just like the onomatopoeic sound of the word *ling long*, articles and photographs on the magazine's pages reverberated like clinking jade. Although certain columns on movies, child-rearing, and legal advice appeared with some regularity, the magazine did not maintain a standard format, and articles often contradicted one another. For example, one article might have showcased the latest movies from Hollywood, while another article attempted to drum up xenophobic patriotism. These different viewpoints came together like clinking pieces of jade in the cacophony that was *Ling long* magazine.

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<sup>1</sup> Craig Clunas, *Superfluous Things* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 85.



The first cover of *Ling long* magazine. Issue 001 (1931), Page 1.



The first back cover of *Ling long* magazine. Issue 001 (1931), Page 36.



Back cover of *Ling long* with the title "Movies" and an unusual Chinese transliteration *mu wei* 慕味 (screen flavor), instead of the common term for movie, *dian ying* 电影 (electric shadow). Issue 138 (1934), Page 832.



Front cover of a special issue on swimming. Issue 243 (1936), Page 1881.



Back cover with a photograph of Charlie Chaplin. Issue includes several photographs of Chaplin's visit to China in the spring of 1936.

Issue 229 (1931), Page 840.



An unusual front cover featuring a non-Chinese woman.

Issue 082 (1933), Page 49.



Article titled "The Ideology of Not Marrying." The woman in the autographed photograph is the author, Yang Yizhu. Issue 001 (1931), Page 12.



Article on home economics with a photograph of the author, Zhang Pinhui. Issue 002 (1931), Page 45.



Most photographs of women in *Ling long* were taken outdoors. Posing with an automobile was a favored stance. Issue 168 (1935), Page 109.



Miss Zhang Wen behind the camera. Issue 229 (1936), Page 819.