

## **Notions of Female Held by Traditional Literati in Colonial Taiwan**

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### **ABSTRACT**

From the late 1920s, self-awareness began to sprout among the female in Taiwan. As a result, more and more women joined the labor force and the women's liberation movement started to take root. Traditional literati commonly held a stereotypical image of female as being deeply influenced by Confucianism, and hence, relatively conservative. How such perspective changed and evolved under the impact of the new era merits further exploration. This paper reviewed the notions of female held by traditional literati as expressed in their poems, prose and diaries.

Traditional literati inherently expected high moral norms from female, often eulogizing virtuous women of chastity, filial piety, integrity and courage; while they themselves kept concubines and mistresses and frequented brothels, showing double standards.

From the 1920s, their notions of female gradually became more advanced. They began to emphasize female education, advocate gender equality, recognize the contribution of working female, support physical education among female, honor female literati, and encouraged female to participate in public activities. Nevertheless, there was still discrepancy among the literati, with the majority still clinging to the traditional view that "the male is the breadwinner, the female is the homemaker". They adhered to the belief that the objective of female education was to turn them into "capable wives and good mothers" and the purpose of physical education among female was for them to produce healthy children. Such notions revealed that their perspectives still remained narrow and confined.

Keywords: Traditional Literati, Notions of Female, Lin Hsien-tang, Chang Li-jun, Lin Chih-hsien