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To cite this article: Sumei Wang (2017): Radio and Urban Rhythms in 1930s Colonial Taiwan, Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television, DOI: [10.1080/01439685.2017.1285152](https://doi.org/10.1080/01439685.2017.1285152)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01439685.2017.1285152>



Published online: 16 Feb 2017.



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RADIO AND URBAN RHYTHMS IN 1930S COLONIAL TAIWAN

Sumei Wang

This article examines the history of radio and, how the consumption of radio might have transformed urban rhythms in colonial Taiwan. Being assisted by well-developed cultural industries, including magazines, newspapers, films and popular music, the influences of modernity had penetrated everyday life in Japan by the mid-1920s. The enthusiasm towards modernity reached the Japanese colonies in the 1930s. Until the outbreak of the Second Sino–Japanese War in 1937, Taiwanese society underwent a decade-long proliferation period of consumption, influenced by the convergence of urbanism, colonialism and modernism. The ‘modern’ experiences in 1930s Taiwan were largely influenced by media technologies. By conducting an examination through the story ‘Inviolable Destiny’ and other historical materials, this article shows how the consumption of radio signified multiple distinctions among ethnicities, classes, genders, generations and spaces in colonial Taiwan. The combination of radio and print media constituted an intertwined network that shaped the tempos of urban life. A constructed standard national time converged with rational institutions and generated a massive scale of coordination between Taiwan and the rest of the world. Radio did not only broadcast the content, which transferred public affairs into the private space, but also formulated a hidden rhythm of structured punctuality in daily life.

The radio was introduced to Taiwan in 1925, the same year that Japan established the Tokyo Broadcasting Bureau. Being able to transmit information immediately and synchronically, the radio was the most impressive media technology during 1920s–1940s. However, investigations of the early history of radio consumption have largely been limited to Western societies. Colonial studies have typically

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emphasized administrations and political structures, whereas the cultural and social histories of everyday technologies remain a field yet to be explored.¹

In Taiwan, after the Second World War, because the nationalist government was eager to eliminate Japanese influences, colonial studies were discouraged for decades. To date, few research papers have addressed the subject of radio broadcasting in colonial Taiwan. For example, Shao-Li Lu investigated how the colonial government's monopoly over radio enabled it to discipline and civilize the people²; Yi-Lin Ho traced the development of the radio industry supported by the government³; and Pei-Hsien Hsu examined how the state advocated radio gymnastic exercises to modernize citizens' bodies.⁴ Nevertheless, the experience of modernity does not only entail control and discipline. Information is scant on how users interacted with radio, how radio fitted into modern lifestyles, and what the practice of listening to the radio might signify.

Modernity was never a unified experience introduced from the West. Peter J. Taylor insisted that, when discussing modernity, we must ask questions such as 'who is modern?' and 'whose modernity is it?'⁵ Taiwan in the 1930s was influenced by the convergence of urbanism, modernism, feminism, industrialism and colonialism. The people on the island experienced rapid transitions in both material and nonmaterial aspects. In my discussions of radio in colonial Taiwan, I explore the interactions between media, consumerism and modernity; namely, how modernity was experienced in Taiwan.

'Inviolable Destiny' was a story series published in the newspaper *Taiwan Sinminpo* from July 1932 to January 1933.⁶ Although 'Inviolable Destiny' is a love story that depicts conflicts between Western individualism and Chinese patriarchy, it also includes rich descriptions of urban life and economic affairs. My investigation of radio history in Taiwan is based on traces of information in the novel, as well as from other historical archives of newspapers, magazines, and biographies. I examine how the practice of radio-listening in 1930s Taiwan was related to the emergence of popular culture and the shaping of urban rhythms, in Henri Lefebvre's terms, and the embedded awareness of punctuality.⁷ In the following pages, I first trace the early history of radio in Japan and Taiwan, then conduct an analysis of how radio can formulate punctuality in modern life, before further exploring the details of how radio was used in colonial Taiwan.

Introducing radio to Taiwan

Formerly called 'wireless', the radio afforded real-time communication over long distances. During the Great Kantō earthquake of 1923, the spread of information was chaotic, and the damage that ensued made post-crisis communications difficult. The radio transmitted information synchronically and immediately, and thus, enabled efficient coordination and cooperation. Major newspapers began to adopt radio facilities, and the government established the Tokyo Broadcasting Bureau in 1925. The first official broadcast was launched on 22 March, 1925, with which Japan advanced into the radio era. Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai (NHK) was founded in 1926 to manage radio stations throughout the country. Registrations and monthly fees were required if one wished to own radio facilities at home.⁸

In February 1925, when *Osaka Asahi Shinbun*, then a leading national newspaper, began to test its broadcasting facilities, delegates in the public and private sectors gathered in a meeting room in Taipei's Bureau of Communication, in the governor-general's office. They concentrated on a signal transmitted using a radio, and were amazed to be able to hear voices from Osaka synchronically. A few months later, the government introduced the radio to Taiwan by holding exhibitions and conventions to celebrate the 30th anniversary of colonial rule. Radio receivers and speakers were installed in public spaces, including parks, hospitals, schools, temples, local post offices, assemblies and city halls. In addition, automobiles equipped with speakers were tasked with driving through streets and alleys, so that more people could have access to radio content. During the 10 days of trial broadcasting, three broadcasts were available per day: in the morning from 11:15 am to 12:00 pm, in the afternoon from 2:15 to 3:00 pm and in the evening from 7:15 to 9:00 pm. The programmes included newspaper digests from *Taiwan Nichi Nichi Sinpo*, *Japan Dentsu Shinbunsha* and *Osaka Mainichi Shinbun*, as well as speeches, Western orchestral music, Japanese and Taiwanese traditional music and weather forecasts.

In 1927, the governor-general's office in Taiwan formulated 'Regulations for Radio Listening in Taiwan', which listed details regarding owning, listening to, and interfering with a radio. By this time, only 128 families owned radio receivers in Taiwan. They could receive signals from Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya, Shanghai and Manila. In November 1929, Emperor Shōwa's coronation ceremony was broadcast in real time over the radio, so that people in the colonies could experience the details along with the people in Japan. Through this synchronicity, the state strived to create a unified national identity. In October 1928, the first radio station JFAK was formally established in Taipei, which was a 1-KW-powered radio station. Registration was required for listeners, and the \$1 monthly fee was waived during the period of experimental broadcasting.⁹

The radio was a novel technology in the 1920s. During this period, Japan's Taishō (1912–1926) to early Shōwa, because of the rise of purchasing power, improvements in education, and the introduction of new technologies such as films, phonographs, and radio from the West, newspapers, magazines and records became popular among ordinary people. Shunya Yoshimi indicated that the most crucial characteristic of the time was 'the formation of cultural industries that targeted mass audiences through new media technologies.'¹⁰ This wave of mass consumption reached the Japanese colonies in the 1930s. From Tokyo to Osaka, and from Seoul to Taipei, the influences of imperialism and capitalism coexisted.

Gotō Shinpei, the former head of civilian affairs in Taiwan's colonial government, was the first president of NHK. In his inaugural speech, he expected the radio to enhance equal opportunities among regions, genders and classes, to create a revolution in family life, to expand civil knowledge and to quickly transmit economic information.¹¹ The radio had many avid listeners at that time. The fans studied how to transmit signals through machines and were devoted to transforming the functions of radio receivers. Akiko Tayama indicated that the radio craze was perfectly complementary to the enthusiastic atmosphere towards modernism in Taishō Japan.¹²

From the 1920s to the 1930s, Marx-influenced European theorists were critical of mass culture. The theories proposed by Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno

as well as the scholars of the Frankfurt School suggested that cultural hegemony was hidden in the mass media and that mass production by cultural industries damaged the value of pure art.¹³ By contrast, in Japan, although certain scholars followed a Marxist approach and were sceptical of the influx of mass media, others remained positive regarding the new development. Harry Harootunian stated that ‘the Japanese, when contrasted to Europeans, seemed more enthusiastic about the promise offered by the new everydayness and thus willing to explore the possibility of newness for life vastly different from the one most recently lived in the immediate past.’¹⁴

Among the thinkers who welcomed the influences of new media, Hatsunoske Hirabayashi (1892–1931) was the most impressed. Similar to Walter Benjamin, Hirabayashi considered that novel technologies, including films, photography, music and radio, made art and information available to large numbers of people. He believed that technologies could remove art and culture from the monopoly of the bourgeoisie and bring them closer to the masses. Hirabayashi determined that mechanization penetrated Japan in three stages: (1) the machine appeared with the imitation of Western clothing, food, housing and consumption; (2) an acceleration in the tempo of life and the growing importance of speed; and (3) the influence of technology on the human spirit; society reconfigured a new culture and social order that was progressive, rational and scientific.¹⁵ In his commentary entitled, ‘How does modern life change’, Hirabayashi asserted the following:

Modern civilisation is so called electric civilisation. Everything of modern life is supported by electricity. ... From Meiji to the early Taishō, Japan was in a period of rapid Westernisation, in which governments, schools, hospitals, companies, banks, factories, trains, steamboats, post offices, communication and other systems were introduced into the society. ... From late Taishō to Shōwa, western civilisation has further diffused into our everyday life. This is a period of globalisation. We are now in the middle of this process.¹⁶

Therefore, radio was introduced to a Japan that was enthusiastic towards modernity. The Japanese government’s dedication to promoting the technology symbolized the state’s determination to keep pace with the United States and European countries. In February 1929, a magazine issued by Taiwan Association of Communication (TAC) published a series of articles on the radio. Among them, one entitled ‘How to Perceive Radio’¹⁷ argued that the radio could be used to educate, discipline, and entertain the people of the colonies to achieve the goals of cultural assimilation and consolidation. Another article entitled ‘The Era of Radio’ saluted the advent of the radio as follows:

Recently in Taipei, everyone has been immersed in the waves of radio. ... With a few expenses and simple facilities, you can listen to the JFAK programmes every evening. ... Without radio, the world would fall into darkness. Radio is becoming part of our daily necessities. Ever since its trial broadcasting from last November, now there have been six thousands registered listeners and more to come. ... We are truly happy. Because radio would help the under-developed Taiwan to improve itself.¹⁸

This paragraph clarified that the radio was considered a means for civilization to ‘improve’ Taiwan, which was lagging behind mainland Japan. One year after the

foundation of JFAK, the number of radios registered surpassed 9400, and only one-fourth of them were Taiwanese, because the programmes and content targeted only Japanese residents in Taiwan.¹⁹ Therefore, evidently, not everyone had the opportunity to listen to the radio. Because the radio was a modern and expensive technology and a novelty in the 1920s and 1930s, listening to the radio was a practice that distinguished classes and ethnicities.

On 15 January 1931, the governor-general's office in Taiwan announced that the experimental period for radio broadcasting was over. Taiwan Hōsō Kyōkai (THK), a new statutory body, was established to oversee promotion of radio, the training of repairmen, and the prevention of signal interference. Because the population of Japanese residents numbered only 270,000 in Taiwan, compared with the five million native Taiwanese, THK acknowledged that, to increase the number of radio subscribers, the programmes had to attract Taiwanese listeners. Therefore, programmes on Taiwanese music, history, entertainment, and business information were introduced. The radio station also invited artists to perform their music in real-time broadcasts, and reviewed newly released pop music records.²⁰ From 1934, radio stations in Taiwan were able to receive signals from mainland Japan. People in all of the Japanese territories could thus listen to the same content and receive information synchronically. This was another advancement in the construction of a collective national identity.

According to the THK archives, in the early 1930s, JFAK produced numerous featured programmes.²¹ For example, 'Classic Taiwanese Stories' introduced traditional stories such as 'Records of the Three Kingdoms' in Taiwanese. Others included 'Hiking Routes in Taiwan', 'Household Affairs Q&A' and 'Gardening Times'. To broadcast concerts in real time, JFAK created a musical room in New Park in Taipei. Initially, only Japanese artists were invited, with local Taiwanese bands becoming involved later. On 9 September 1934, THK produced the programme 'Taiwanese Evening', made available to listeners across all of the Japanese territories, and it later became a regular monthly show. This revealed that Taiwan was not only a passive receiver situated on the fringe of the Japanese Empire; on the contrary, through radio broadcasting, it could transmit its own culture to the mainland, and thus was also an exporter of culture.

Following JFAK, radio stations were gradually established across the island; the Tainan Radio Station (JFBK) in 1932, Taichung Radio (JFCK) in 1935, a transmitter in Minxiong in 1940, the Chiayi Radio Station in 1943 and the Hualien Radio Station in 1944. By the end of Japanese rule, Taiwan had six radio stations in operation. Although throughout colonial rule the registration of Taiwanese radio receivers remained limited to the elite class, more people could access the radio in public spaces such as cafés, parks, city halls, schools, train stations and other meeting places.²²

Radio, punctuality and the domestication of standard national time

The relationships and affairs of the typical metropolitan usually are so varied and complex that without the strictest into an extricable chaos. ... If all clocks and watches in Berlin would suddenly go wrong in different ways, even if only

by one hour, all economic life and communication of the city would be disrupted for a long time. ... Thus, the technique of metropolitan life is unimaginable without the most punctual integration of all activities and mutual relations into a stable and impersonal time schedule.²³

Having observed and experienced the great transformation of European cities in the late nineteenth century, Georg Simmel was the first scholar to write on the rhythms of urban life. 'Punctuality' is an essential quality of metropolitan life. Coordination among the complex and enormous scales of the division of labour depends on a standardized schedule. According to Nigel Thrift, by the late eighteenth century, 'most towns in Britain were still wrapped in their own 'time zones'.'²⁴ In 1784, the first regular coach service was arranged between London and Bristol. Time differences at various places caused extreme inconveniences as more cross-regional transportation services provided. In 1842, it was agreed by British railway companies that all stations should adopt Greenwich time.

Greenwich Mean Time was later a common reference for American and Canadian Railways, which further developed into an international standard-time system. Eviatar Zerubavel stated that, in 1884, delegates from 25 countries participated in the International Meridian Conference, in which Greenwich Mean Time was set as the global time standard.²⁵ With the meridian passing through the centre of the transit instrument of the Greenwich Observatory as the first meridian, the world was divided into 24 time zones, which would be 15 degrees wide in longitude and separated by 1-h differentials. When the International Meridian Conference was held in October 1884 in Washington, D.C., in the United States, Japan was the only participant from Asia. Not all countries committed to using the time standards established in the conference, but Japan did. Since the Meiji Restoration of 1868, the emperor had announced the abandonment of the traditional calendar in favour of the Gregorian calendar. In 1886, the emperor decided to establish Japan Standard Time for the entire nation, which was 9 h ahead of GMT. By adopting an international standard, Japan demonstrated its ambition to pursue modernity as well as to civilize and to industrialize its nation, and to actively become involved in international affairs.²⁶

Whereas time zones were standardized on the basis of practical needs for cross-regional communication in Britain and its North American colonies, the Japanese Empire introduced the system in Taiwan. On 17 June, 1895, Japan declared sovereignty of the empire over Taiwan. On 27 December, 1895, the previous Japan Standard Time was renamed to Central Standard Time, and the new Western Standard Time (WST) at 120° longitude was created to include Taiwan, Penghu, Yaeyama, and the Miyako Islands. Japan Standard Time was 1 h ahead of WST, which was abandoned in 1937, because radio and air flights enhanced better coordination among various Japanese territories and the time differences became unnecessary.²⁷ Before Japanese colonization, people in Taiwan followed a lunar calendar that divides one month into three 'xuns', and a day consists of twelve periods. In an agricultural society, timekeeping was unnecessary because nature was the chief influence of the rhythms of life. With the introduction of the international standard-time system in Taiwan, the island, which was originally situated at the periphery of the Qing Empire and followed the natural rhythms of

an agricultural society, was forced into a regime of industrialization and globalization. Japan was the first modern state to rule Taiwan, and punctuality was necessary for the efficient management of the colony. By establishing railway and postal systems, as well as institutions such as schools, hospitals, police stations, courthouses, the army and governments, the state formulated a modern rhythm in Taiwan.

Railroads from Keelung to Takao were completed in 1908 and were further extended to Pingtung in 1925, connecting cities across the western parts of Taiwan.²⁸ In addition, by 1934, 12 regular shipping routes connected Taiwan with the world, with three of them shuttled between Taiwan and Japan five times every month.²⁹ The maintenance of regular transportation and a timetable depend on punctual timekeeping. Lu stated that the rationality of time management was an indicator of governmentality and the colonial state's endeavour to discipline its people.³⁰ However, timekeeping is also necessary for synchronization and the coordination of social practices, particularly for practices across cities, regions and countries. The urban residents in Taiwan comprised 14% of the population in 1900, and later increased to 25% in 1940.³¹ By 1928, the population of Taipei numbered 300,000, reaching 437,000 in 1940.³² In addition to colonialism, modernity and globalization had made punctuality essential for metropolitan life.

Although clocks and watches had become commonplace in metropolitan cities by the end of the nineteenth century, their spring-driven mechanics slowed easily. Clocks and watches had to be adjusted daily to continue working and be synchronized to standard time. Initially, clocks were synchronized according to the sound of a cannon fired daily by the military at 12:00 pm.³³ From 1906 the Taipei Observatory was connected with the Tokyo Observatory through a telegraph; from 1911, the Taipei Observatory obtained its own facilities to secure precise longitude data, and thus, assumed the responsibility of timekeeping.³⁴ All train stations and postal offices were required to confirm the precise time with the Taipei Observatory 3 min before noon through a telephone or a telegram. As a timekeeping network emerged throughout the island, the cannon notice was abandoned in 1921.

Mass communication technologies such as the radio and television transmit news and entertainment to domestic audiences over wide areas. Raymond Williams called it 'mobile privatization,' because the media conferred unexampled mobility to people who never had to leave their houses.³⁵ The radio, which brought public affairs into homes, also helped generate a precise temporal measurement in the private sphere. With radio broadcasting, the synchronized, nationwide time became relayed directly and simultaneously into millions of living rooms. Shaun Moores described the phenomenon as a 'domestication of standard national time.'³⁶ His research on the early experience of radio in Britain also demonstrated that the radio schedules formulated 'time bands' for audiences and influenced their daily routines. The British Broadcasting Corporation also contributed to a collective national identity by creating an annual broadcast calendar of significant national events and religious festivals, and what Benedict Anderson termed an 'imagined community' emerged silently.³⁷

Similarly, for Japan and Taiwan, when the radio began to deliver signals into living rooms, the timekeeping system became privatized. According to the National Radio Survey 1932 in Japan, news (19.5%), timekeeping (16.6%), and weather

forecasts (16.2%) were the most popular services for listeners.³⁸ The next day's schedule of radio programmes was published in newspapers. Audiences thus expected to know what would be broadcasted on the radio the following day. Robert Snow indicated that the mass media does not simply deliver content but also influences the daily rhythms of people and society.³⁹ Because the time of radio programmes was designed to follow the structure of weekdays and weekends and was carefully divided into seconds, the rhythms of modern life became embedded in daily routines.

After the advent of the radio in Taiwan, every day at 11:59 am and 9:20 PM, immediately before the end of broadcasting, the radio announcer began a count-down: 50, 40, ... 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 s. The audience gradually became used to the temporal order provided by the radio. The first programme on the radio every day was Radio Calisthenics. The practice originated from a U.S. insurance company, and was listed among radio programmes for the first time on 7:00 am, 1st November, 1928, to celebrate Emperor Shōwa's coronation. Later, radio calisthenics became widely advocated by the state to improve national health. Since then, radio calisthenics has become a part of everyday life for the Japanese.⁴⁰ In the 1930s, although not everyone had the opportunity to listen to the radio at home, many had participated in radio calisthenics assemblies held by schools or local governments. Table 1 shows the JFAK programme schedule on 11 October, 1931.⁴¹

On 21 April 1935, a major earthquake occurred in the Hsinchu-Taichung area. All radio stations cancelled scheduled programmes and transmitted real-time reports on the disaster.⁴² Similar to the development after the Great Kantō earthquake, the radio was appreciated for being able to transmit messages immediately and calm the chaotic situation. By 1937, the radio was considered a necessity of life, and the government was urged to lower fees and improve facilities so that rural residents could easily access the broadcasts.⁴³

TABLE 1 Programme schedule on JFAK, 11 October 1931

6:30	Morning greetings, radio calisthenics, weather forecast
8:00	(unclear in print)
9:30	Household affairs Q&A: How to make a traditional taste
10:00	Family cooking's: Lunch with ham and salad
11:59	Timekeeping, weather forecast, news report
12:20 pm	Music records: Kabuki
2:50 pm	Sports contests
5:30 pm	Common senses for modern citizens
6:00 pm	Children's time
6:30 pm	Speech: 'My third visit to Taiwan'
7:30 pm	Folk songs
8:00 pm	Radio drama
8:40 pm	Film stories
9:20 pm	Timekeeping, weather forecast, news reports

‘Inviolable Destiny’ and the daily rhythms of 1930s Taipei

Written by Lin Huikun, ‘Inviolable Destiny’ was the first story in a series published in newspaper *Taiwan Sinminpo* in 1932. Lin was born in 1902 in Tamshui, a town near suburban Taipei, and he obtained an undergraduate degree in Economics from Kyoto Imperial University. He later became a manager in Tamshui Credit Union. The story concerns Li Jinchi, a young man who grew up in a rich family and was educated at a university in Kyoto, and his pursuit of free love. He meets a beautiful girl in a large temple in Taipei and falls in love at first sight, but grows deeply frustrated after they are married. The story is set in 1930s Taipei, and therefore, includes rich depictions of urban life at the time. For example, buses, taxis and bicycles pass through busy cities; viewing movies in theatres was a form of popular entertainment for urban residents; and young females could visit public spaces unaccompanied. All of these examples indicate modern life in metropolitan Taipei. The following is a paragraph excerpted from the narrative:

It was three thirty in the afternoon when Li Jinchi and his friend came to Meiji Cafe in Taipei City. ... The waitress came with soda and left. ... Speakers of radio began to transmit Japan economic news with a bit of noise. ... He stared at somewhere, appeared to be concentrating on the news report, but actually his mind was thousands miles away. Right the moment, in his eyes, what he could see was all about the girl’s pretty smiles. Even the blaring radio could not wake him up.⁴⁴

In the 1930s, because the quality of sound from early radio was poor, many people had bad experiences similar to those of Jinchi. Tayama cited a cartoon by Hosokibara Saiki, in which one man hears the same music from several stores as he strolls through the streets.⁴⁵ At first, he thinks that the records are scratched, but later realizes that this is a new technology called the radio. This example shows that, in the early stages of the radio, the sound was considerably worse than that of phonographs. However, being able to access the radio was a novelty, and therefore, public entertainment spaces such as cafés, restaurants and dancing halls would install speakers for the radio to attract customers and passers-by.

Financial news was scheduled for regular daily broadcasting since the founding of JFAK. Real-time communication enabled by radio contributed to a closer relationship between Taiwan and the world. On 27 June, 1931, *The New York Times* reported an announcement from the New York Stock Exchange that it had admitted to dealings with the Taiwan Formosa Electric Power Company when it was issued interim receipts for \$22,800,000 in 40-year bond-sinking funds. Reports indicated that the 5.5% bonds, ‘guaranteed by the Imperial Japanese Government, was brought out by J. P. Morgan & Co., Kuhn, Loeb & Co. and associates, was quickly sold. In the investment circle the view is expressed that this maybe the forerunner of other pieces of foreign financing.’⁴⁶ This case showed that the Japanese government was actively engaged in global capital markets, and that financial news updates were crucial for both economic and political reasons.

An observation of the daily JFAK programmes in the early 1930s shows that financial news reports were often scheduled in the afternoon. For example, on 16 February 1931, the day JFAK celebrated its fourth anniversary, a morning

programme lasting one and a half hours reported the prices of necessities such as vegetables, followed by 2 hours in the afternoon reporting prices on the rice market, in addition to an analysis of Japanese stock and commodity markets supplied by *Nippon Dentsu Shinbunsha*. A Mister Huang from Tainan City, interviewed by Ho said that he bought a radio receiver to obtain trading information for stock exchange markets.⁴⁷ Investors in Taiwan could purchase equities in Japanese businesses in mainland Japan through local brokers.

From 1934, JFAK began to transmit programmes from JOGB, the broadcasting bureau in Kumamoto. Subject to weather conditions, the signals between Taiwan and Japan were unclear from April to September.⁴⁸ Despite this limitation, financial news from JOGB was broadcast uninterrupted throughout the year. Some scholars commented that the programmes broadcasted from mainland Japan in Taiwan were intended to create a sense of collectivity and consolidate a Japanese national identity. This was perhaps the state's original intention. However, if they had been concerned with only politics, JFAK should have broadcast directly from the political centre of Tokyo. To Taipei, Osaka is a closer city than Tokyo, both in geographic distance and business activities. Numerous stockbrokers in Taipei had established their headquarters in Osaka and most advertisers of *Taiwan Nichi Nichi Sinpo* were merchants based in Osaka.⁴⁹ Although the radio in Taiwan was monopolized by the state, the development of radio broadcasting in Taiwan was affected not only by politics but also by multiple forces including economic, cultural and other social influences.

In addition to the creation of a synchronic experience and the collective imagination of the nation, radio brings punctuality to everyday life, and enables large-scale coordination. Before the radio, timekeeping was typically conducted in public spaces with large clocks installed in train stations or parks for common reference. The radio turned timekeeping into a private routine practice in daily life. In 'Invincible Destiny', one evening, Jinchi and his friends gather at a traditional restaurant, 'Penglai Chamber'. When they leave the restaurant, it is already 8:40 PM. After a short stroll, his friend Yushen looks at his watch and says to Jinchi 'Too bad! It's already five past nine!' Jinchi wanted to take the nine-thirty bus and tells Yushen 'We can't possibly catch the bus. That was the last one.' Hence, they walk. On their journey to Taiheicho, they stop at the Shuanlien railroad crossing, waiting for the train to Taipei Station to stop. Finally, they board a blue bus to Shilin at Mackay Hospital.⁵⁰ This short sequence of events shows that taking buses and trains was common in 1930s Taipei. As Simmel shows, mass transportation systems depend on punctual timetables, indicating a massive scale of coordination in metropolitan life.

Lin was familiar with business affairs, and he provides a rich description of commercial activities in the story. He shows how people in colonial Taiwan lived at various rhythms. For example, all property transactions, loans, and deposits had to clear their final settlement of the year by the winter solstice, which was the busiest day of the year for banks, solicitors, and registry offices. However, the settlement day for retailers, restaurants and grocers was the lunar New Year's Eve. By contrast, because the Japanese follow the Western calendar, all official institutions and Japanese-owned businesses had to settle their payments by 31 December. When the government celebrated New Year's Day and all those

employed by Japanese businesses had a day off, the Taiwanese families celebrated only traditional Chinese New Year and therefore all the meals were as usual. In colonial Taiwan, the coronations and funerals of emperors were significant events, and the birthdays of Chenghuang, the Chinese gods of cities, also incited bustling festivals. People in Taiwan had become accustomed to living in the mixed rhythms woven by both new and old orders.

The new order was introduced not only by the state but also by the modern media, which influenced urban rhythms deeply, but in an almost unnoticeable manner. In 'Inviolable Destiny', the lead female character, Chen Fengyin, is introduced when her sister excitedly shares a report in a newspaper with her, which states that the film 'Nananomi' is to be shown at Shinkan Cinema.⁵¹ Fengyin is a well-educated young woman who graduated from a girl's senior high school but did not pursue a career. Like many of her peers at the time, she typically stays home, but newspapers bring the outside world into her private space. She learns a substantial amount of information from newspapers, comments on them and discusses them with her father, Chen Taishan. Jinchi, the protagonist, is a newspaper journalist.

In the 1930s, at least two regular broadcasts were dedicated daily to news reports on the radio. Initially, the radio stations did not produce their own reports, but broadcasted news segments from *Taiwan Nichi Nichi Sinpo*, *Osaka Asahi Shinbun* and *Osaka Mainichi Shinbun*. JFAK radio announcers also had to be skilful shorthand typists, so that real-time news from JOGB could be reedited and announced to audiences in Taiwan within minutes. Local radio stations such as in Tainan (JFBK) and Taichung (JFCK) offered news briefs from local newspapers. Cheng-chi Li observed that the newspaper market in Taiwan was highly competitive in the 1930s, with more than a dozen daily papers fighting for readership.⁵² He estimated that daily newspapers in Taiwan had a readership of more than 1 million by the mid-1930s. Unlike the radio, which was controlled by the state throughout the colonial period, numerous newspapers were privately funded. For example, *Taiwan Sinminpo*, the paper that published 'Inviolable Destiny', was founded by Taiwanese elites and always advocated equal rights between the Japanese and the Taiwanese.

Aside from news reports, radio programmes often introduced popular music records, which reflected the popularity of the phonograph in urban areas at the time. In 'Inviolable Destiny', when a friend of Chen Taishan visits the house to act as a matchmaker one evening, he overhears music coming from the neighbour's phonograph. In another scene, when Jinchi is in a bad mood, his friend invites him to Dousei Club after dinner to have fun. After entering the club, he witnesses a jazz band comprising seven musicians and 15 dancing girls with short haircuts, donning Western- and Taiwanese-style dresses, waiting on customers. 'The sound of record music from phonograph flew into the room during the breaks of band performance'.⁵³ The phonograph had become a form of popular entertainment in Taiwan in the late 1920s. A leading record issuer of that time was Columbia Records. The company named its label for its cooperative relationship with Columbia Records in the United States. Dousei Club, founded by a Taiwanese merchant in 1930, was the largest dance hall in Taipei. Lin weaved a considerable amount of factual information into his narrative. Similar to mainland Japan, dance halls, cinemas and department stores were popular entertainment spaces for urban citizens.

Information on popular culture, such as on films, music and news, converged and was exchanged and circulated in places such as dance halls and coffee houses. In August 1934, *Taiwan Nichi Nichi Sinpo* published 'Twenty-four Hours under Camera', which was a collection of 24 snapshots illustrating the activities of everyday people. One photograph illustrated couples dancing at a ballroom at 9:00 PM, with another showed customers chatting with waitresses in a café an hour afterward.⁵⁴ Coffee houses were common meeting areas offering sodas, ice cream, and Western-style meals. As mentioned in the novel, cafés were frequented chiefly by university students, businessmen, the staff members of companies and civil servants. Although women could visit cafés as well, the most featured attraction of a café was the flirting between waitresses and their male customers. Cafés typically played music from phonographs and radios to customers and passers-by. Dancing girls, café waitresses and the young middle classes and highly educated people had greater access to new media technologies.

As Pierre Bourdieu argues, consumption reveals a distinction of class.⁵⁵ In colonial Taiwan, media consumption was a form of distinction in modernity, ethnicity, gender, generation, and urbanity. For example, as shown earlier, registered radio receivers in Taiwan were owned mostly by Japanese residents. Numerous cafés, dance halls and restaurants used radio broadcasting to attract customers. Therefore, regular radio listeners were among the rich, young, and well-educated men and women in cities, plus those who provided such services in their workplaces.

Conclusion

Based on the narrative of 'Inviolable Destiny' and other materials, I discussed how urban rhythms in 1930s Taipei were influenced by media technologies, including newspapers, the radio, films and phonographs. Structured punctuality became embedded through activities such as reading daily newspapers, timekeeping at home, listening to the radio, catching buses and meeting with friends at synchronized times. The standardization of time was the result of transportation development in the West, and was foreign to Taiwan until the colonial state imposed it on the island. The promotion of Western systems in Japan demonstrated the state's ambition to modernize the country and its enthusiasm towards novel technologies in society.

This article examined how the radio and other media were used in 1930s Taiwan, and how the usage might have transformed the urban rhythms of that time. In the 1930s, radio, films, phonographs, newspapers and magazines constituted a complex media network that boosted the influence of modernity. Before the Second Sino-Japanese War of 1937, the island populace enjoyed a period of proliferating consumption. The leisure class frequented theatres, dancing halls and department stores in the cities. The telephone was in common use, and phonographs and radios were installed in popular spaces, such as cafés and restaurants, for entertainment. The newspaper and magazine markets were in fierce competition. People in Taiwan experienced rapid transitions in both material and nonmaterial aspects.

Although this is a subject with limited academic exploration, my argument contests the common view that regards the radio as an instrument of social control and a vehicle for the promotion of hegemony. On the contrary, I reviewed the social background in the interwar period of Japan and indicated that, overall, Japanese society was excited by novel technologies and modern lifestyles. Being assisted by well-developed cultural industries, including magazines, newspapers, films and popular music, the influences of modernity penetrated everyday life by the mid-1920s. The enthusiasm towards modernity reached the Japanese colonies in the 1930s. Until the Second Sino-Japanese War of 1937, Taiwanese society experienced nearly a decade of proliferation in consumption, influenced by the convergence of urbanism, colonialism and modernism.

The ‘modern’ experiences in 1930s Taipei were largely entangled with colonialism. The colonial state shifted Taiwan from an isolated periphery of the Chinese Empire into the world of globalization. Whereas nature was the chief influence of the rhythm of an agricultural society, a constructed national standard time converged with rational institutions and brought the island into a massive scale of coordination with a globalized world. The radio did not only broadcast content, which transferred public affairs into the private space, but also formulated a hidden rhythm of structured punctuality in everyday life. This investigation of radio consumption in 1930s Taipei showed how people became accustomed to a mixture of values, orders, conditions, and differentiations. There is no universal modernity, but there is always a contested history of multiple modernities.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Funding

This work was supported by the National Science Council in Taiwan [grant number 100-2410-H-004-168-MY2], [grant number 99-2410-H-004-171].

Notes

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