

Selling new identity and lifestyle to Japanese Women during the era of Mass-Auto-Mobilization

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Abstract

This paper examines advertising of automobiles in women's magazines as an example of the realization of gender stereotypes in Japanese society (1955-1970). Research based on a visual and textual analysis of car advertising, which provide a broad look at the messages used to reach women consumers about liberation and new lifestyles, as well as her position in society. The gender stereotypes depicted in car advertising also provide a glimpse what Japanese society regarded as appropriate role for the women during this time. Following the transition of women's images from the beautiful car model, which only emphasizes cars beauty, to the passenger next to the male-driver and toward the driver seat and car ownership, we conclude that cars ads not only reflected dramatic economic and social changes that occurs in Japanese society during post-war period, but also helped to shape a new set of values in Japanese woman, introduced a new lifestyle, as well as gave them unique opportunity to complete their identity and illuminate the difference between "real self" and "ideal imaginary self".

Key words – women images, car advertising, identity, lifestyle, Japan

Paper Type – Research paper

Theoretical background

There are several known approaches to the relationship between advertisements and customers, which can be divided into three major groups. A number of authors consider that it is society that influences advertising (Williamson, 1978; Brozen, 1974; Hovland and Wilcox, 1989). Others believe that advertising influences and assists society and its members (Courtney and Lockeretz, 1971). Finally, the third group of authors believes that there is a constant mutual influence between advertising and society (Sivulka, 1997; Hill, 2002). A common theme in advertising revolves around issues of lifestyle and image. Consumers are encouraged to buy the "right" fashion, the "right" television, and the "right" car." But the ads do not stop there. Consumers also discover that to be socially acceptable, they had to look and smell a certain way, maintain spotless homes, and be married with children. And, the prime target of this all this promotion was a woman, who controlled the major share of household spending.

As a theoretical model, the symbolic self-completion (Wicklund and Gollwitzer, 1982) has influenced this work. According to this theory consumers consume products, which help them to complete their identity. People want to be different from each other or identify themselves as belonging to a certain group, using symbols to complete their self-identity. These symbols can take the form of expressions, gestures and even brand name products. Only when they find products that express themselves, their goals, personality and its peculiarities, do consumers decide to purchase these products. By doing so, consumers add something to his/herself and complete his/her identity. In the process, people not only complete their identity, but they also become closer to the image of their ideal self. That is, we are not only completing our identity, but we also are narrowing the gap or eliminating the difference between the "real self" and the "ideal, imaginary self".

Although Japanese society is generally considered a homogenous society and lacks individuality (Ueno, 1987; Skov and Moeran, 1995), there also exists a strong trend to express individuality. A clear example is the attraction Japanese feel for branded goods or goods with limited availability, such as Louis Vuitton, Gucci, and Chanel; the Japanese have one of the highest sales rates in the world for such goods. Although this tendency has manifested itself in the past twenty years, it has long been latent in Japanese society and can also be seen in numerous advertisements during the studied period.

In human identity, gender characteristics are one of the most important components. In a given society or culture, a set of behavioral norms are typically divided into “male” or “female” roles, which also can include a division of labor – men’s work and women’s work. Depending on the social group or system, the vision of masculinity and femininity is different. It also can be dynamic and changing.

Japanese Statistic Burou data shows that since 1958 the number of Japanese employed in industry increased above the number of people engaged in agriculture (Somusho Tokeikyoku, *Kakeichosa* 1987), which is evidence of the strong migration and urbanization trends observed in post-war Japan. Japanese family also underwent significant transformation from the traditional extended family including members of at least three generations to a nuclear family consisting of a “salary man” husband and his wife, who in most cases was a “full-time housewife”. Life in a city and in the countryside were considerably different, such change affected the lives of women most significantly. These women had no established role models to follow in the cities and started to look for means to fill that emerging gap.

Advertising then occupied a special position in women’s lives, as it introduced new products to save them money and time, as well as to make life more enjoyable. Certainly, advertising was not the only phenomenon that influenced these women. They were also members of a society and their purchasing decisions were also influenced by their families, friends, social class position, as well as by movies, books and theater.

Subject of the research

During the postwar period, the wider introduction of home appliances also significantly decreased the amount of time spent by Japanese women on housework, thus allowing them pay more attention to goods or items that could be associated with leisure. One of these significant items was a car. This study then examines the advertising of automobiles targeted to women; it is both dynamic and static. This work especially concentrates on what kind of identity had been introduced to Japanese women in a fifteen-year period during the postwar period, 1955 through 1970. It also explores the factors behind the changes of the selling appeals and the portrayal of women in car advertisements aimed at a female audience.

At this time, advertising was within the reach of every Japanese family and arrived even in ordinary Japanese houses through monthly magazines. Magazines at that time were one of the most accessible media, delivering news and information about the trends of the changing Japanese society, for these particular reasons they were chosen as the primary data source of this research [1]. The pages of *Fujin Koron* and *Josei Jishin* provide a particularly rich source of advertisements that reached Japanese women. During the postwar period, these magazines ranked the highest in terms of issues sold countrywide and reached two different strata of the Japanese society. *Fujin Koron*, which was established in 1916 by Chuo Koronsha Publishing House and representative of the “old” Japanese mass media. It is a general educative magazine, which represents the set of values of the ideal Japanese homemaker’s world to the woman reader. The magazine also targeted upper middle-class women who were interested in serious literature. The other woman’s magazine, *Josei Jishin*, was established in 1958 by Kobunsha Publishing House. In November 1963 this magazine coined the word “Office Lady” and is mainly targeted at low-middle class and working class women. This new type of media appeared after WWII filling in a newly appeared gap in readers’ interest of that social group. They also reflected many of the changes that occurred in Japanese society and women’s social status during the prewar and the postwar period, and also helped form a new set of values in Japanese women.

Thus, this study examines the postwar development of mass automobilization from the beginning in the 1950s through the peak in the early 1970s. For many years, car advertising in Japan had been targeted to men, since men were not only drivers but also buyers of most automobiles. The advertisements typically focused on mechanical style and performance, the pleasure of driving and enjoying free time, as well as on cars as a status symbol. Despite the growing recognition of the influence of women in the purchase of family cars became evident in the 1950s and 1960s, women’s influence on the buying decision and their increasing purchasing power was a consequence, not a cause, of their greater acceptance into modern Japanese consumer society. This study does not attempt to make conclusions only from advertisements, but also examines data from magazine articles as well as empirical analysis for support. It is believed that such an approach creates a broader and more objective picture of the gender views in the studied period. Finally, this study is part of larger research effort to examine advertisements and the identity of Japanese women, analyzing four different products that became accessible to the middle class in post-war Japan and represent different dimensions of

their changing lifestyle: 1) Home appliances and liberation from heavy housework/increase of free time 2) Cosmetics and beauty as a social obligation 3) Cars and expansion of mobility space and 4) Liquors and the different levels of emotional liberation. Analysis of all these factors gives a broader look on the formation of women's identity, but detailed discussions on the other factors are beyond the scope of the present paper.

Historical background: late 50s and first Japanese mass cars, changes in the perception of leisure and their impact on woman's image

For a long time before WWII cars were considered a luxurious item as well as a symbol of higher social status. Many middle-class people could not afford an automobile. However, since the late 50s the number of Japanese families who owned the “三種の神器” – “the three divine products”, namely a washing machine, a refrigerator and a black and white TV, started to increase. At this time Japanese automobile industry started its real development and took serious steps to develop its mass-consumer automobile industry.

In 1954, Japan started to hold annual motor shows, which attracted more attention to automobiles from the public. But compared to home appliances the acceptance of cars was slow to take hold (Takada, 1987, pp. 16, 107-108). The first cars were so expensive that ordinary Japanese could only dream about them. Four years later in 1958, cars became more popular with the launch of Subaru 360 produced by Fuji Tekko. In the following year Nissan released “Blue Bird” Toyota - “Publica”, and in 1960 Mitsubishi made “Mitsubishi 50”.

Mass production of cars in Japan began in 1958. Numerous magazine articles and car advertisements then began to recommend to Japanese families to buy a family car. Some even explained how to save money from daily expenses in order to save enough for a car (*Josei Jishin* 1960, 25 May, pp. 96-97). These advertisements stated that even if your monthly salary were 24 490 yen, you should save at least 3000 yen a month and buy a coupe car priced at 300 000 yen. Because “owning a car is even more important than purchasing a new kimono or furniture” (*Josei Jishin* 1960, 25 May, p. 97). In reality, however, only people with extremely high income could really save enough to purchase a car and it remained impossible for ordinary Japanese. Therefore, magazine articles emphasized the necessity of sacrifice for a new car, which would bring happiness to every household (Ibid, p.97). “Owing a car is even more important than a house”, was emphasized in some advertisements in 1960s (*Josei Jishin* 1961, 21 August, p. 89). Yet, it was a time when buying a car was a big deal and not everyone could afford it. Thus, cars were presented as “the sole luxury item in monotonous everyday life” (Ibid, p. 89). A typical advertisement of the time explains: “Don't think that a family car is a distant dream. If you really want to buy it, you can buy it”, because “cars bring not only comfort, but a lot of positive influence on your household management. A car is also an art of living only by having it (トク)”.

Nevertheless, the real democratization and popularity of cars would not take place until the late 1960s, when more people could afford to purchase automobiles as a result of an increase in household income and decreases in car prices. By then magazines started emphasized that if you can't afford buying a new car you can at least buy a second-hand one, which only cost 50 000 yen at that time. Although magazines advertising worked hard to sell cars, they weren't in a wide spread use. In 1962, for example, only 7 people out of every 1000 owned a car (Suzuki, 2000, p. 250), and mass popularization of cars started only at the end of the decade. This soon changed.

The year of “my car” was 1966. An array of car models then would dramatically alter the idea of leisure of Japanese women and the lifestyle of Japanese families of the period, providing us with rich information about the social changes in post-war Japan. Nissan Sunny and Toyota Corolla automobiles rolled off the assembly lines. In the same year Mazda offered its first family car. These three models became the main representatives of the Japanese family car market. And, they also became associated with 新三種の神器 – “the [new/next] three divine products” for Japanese consumers, also known as the three “C's”: a car, a color TV and an air conditioner, reflecting a new and stronger consumer desire, changes in consumers' behavior and transportation preferences.

Perhaps more than anything else automobiles influenced Japanese perception of traveling. Previously, travel involved an onerous process, where people depended on buses and trains. However, cars offered unique limitless opportunities to travel everywhere, without the confines of space and time. Therefore, cars offered Japanese people not only freedom of movement but also freedom to

travel whenever they wanted (Suzuki, 2000, p. 26). In this way, the popularization of cars and leisure strongly influenced the behavior of Japanese people.

Although cars are a product with strong male characteristics, automakers also used feminine appeals to reach the women’s market. This research will show that as the position of women and the concept of leisure in the Japanese society changed, advertisers began to target the women consumer and the portrayal of women in advertisements changed. The increasing utilization of home appliances allowed Japanese women escape from the hard and boring household routine and have more free time to spend, for example, on hobbies or leisure activities. During “高度成長期”, the period of high economic growth after WWII, women became more interested in the world outside of their homes. Previously, leisure was defined as “a free time when a person does not work or do housework”. However, in this period next to the word “余暇” a new transcribed word レジャー [Leisure] appeared and started to gain popularity. This word provides a new glimpse on the meaning of the Japanese lifestyle. レジャー even received the prize for “a fashionable word of the year” (Takishima, 2000, p. 26). In this way, Japanese women’s “liberation” from housework allowed them to spend more time with their families outside home. This innovative way of spending weekends away from the home then would have a significant impact on the popularization of family cars, as evidenced in car advertisements, especially in women’s magazines. Despite this slow development, many women’s images started to appear in car ads, since automakers have begun to recognize women as an important target.

Late 50s: Images of a “beautiful woman” emphasizing “beautiful car”

When the first affordable car appeared in Japan at the end of 1950s, it was a totally new and unfamiliar product to Japanese women. Therefore, advertisements of the time did not only show the product, explain its positive sides and make an impression about it, but also had to make consumers want it. As a result, during this period images connecting cars and women’s beauty as a women’s gender characteristic start to appear both in *Fujin Koron* and *Josei Jishin*. For example 1959 Isuzu advertisements said: “It will make your dress one level more beautiful. Hillman” (*Fujin Koron* 1959, 24 July). The graphic portrayed beautiful women in western dresses that look at cars. In different advertisements for the same product we see “A charming car. But you are in a light nice dress. Who drives in Hillman looks very charming” (*Josei Jishin* 1961, 24 July). In the same year in different car advertisements we see women in evening dresses trying to open the door of a car standing by the sea and saying, “Driving Hillman is the most fashionable thing” (*Josei Jishin* 1959, 24 July) [Figure 1].



Figure 1.
Hillman 1959

(Courtesy of Isuzu)

In another advertisement, a woman in a very nice dress sits near by a car in a place like a golf course (*Josei Jishin* 1959, 4 September) All these images have same leitmotiv that nice car “will emphasize your nice dress”. Thus, a nice dress emphasizes the beauty of the car by accumulating the beauty of a women’s image. During that time the same images of beautiful ladies standing or sitting nearby a new car also appear on the cover of some magazines (*Josei Jishin* 1959, 16 September; 18 November). But images in advertising have been limited only to the use of women’s beauty to attract attention and associate women’s attractiveness with automobile styling.

Beginning of 1960s: woman moving next to the driver

This combination of “a beautiful woman plus a nice new car” became dominant in car advertisements. At the same time, the gender role of women started to change slowly. For example, beautiful women not only just stood in front of or sat nearby cars, but for the first time they appeared inside the cars, sitting as a passenger. In 1961, for example, on Blue Bird advertisements claimed that “we invented 36 new ideas for you. From a cosmetic set to a pocket for your high hills” and we see a woman who is sitting next to driver, putting her lipstick on while watching herself in the car mirror (*Fujin Koron* 1961, June). Similarly, there are advertisements talking about designing a car for women’s comfortable daily life. Because women usually carry many small things they need in their everyday life, the Blue Bird car advertisement tried to catch women’s eyes while emphasizing peculiarities. However, it is not that manufacturers wanted to emphasize “femininity” on this model. It is for the first time that carmakers pointed women as the main target of their advertisement.

Turning point (1961): women start approaching the driver’s seat

By the early 1960s, women moved from the passenger’s seat to the driver’s seat. For example, in a Blue Bird advertisement of March 28, 1961 we see a woman dressed in a cocktail dress and seated in the driver’s seat (*Josei Jishin* 1961, 28 March). However, she is not driving yet, she is just sitting. Very soon women started to appear as drivers. For example in August of the same year we see ads of Toyota Publica that tell women: “Your seat is the driver seat!” (*Josei Jishin* 1961, 21 August).



(Courtesy of Toyota)

Figure 2.
Toyota Publica
1961

Other ads ask them to participate and don't allow only man to have the fun of driving (*Josei Jishin* 1964, 20 July). Next to them, however, remained a man, who appeared to still be in control.

At the same time, magazines also start to publish articles about cars. As driving a car was a relatively new experience at that time, magazines started with the explanation that a car is a very comfortable [device (tool)], and described how driving could enrich women's leisure time. These articles were talking not only about the recreational aspect of owning a car, but also gave technical explanations, such as where and what kind of gasoline to use, as well as explanations about some basic driving skills. In 18 May, 1960 *Josei Jishin* published an article called "It will move like this!" The article shows and explains the role of all buttons and tumblers on the front panel of the car as well as explanation about the different types of roads in Japan ("*Kore de ugokimasu*" 18 May 1960, p. 58). Some magazines even provided advice on how to save gasoline by more reasonable means of driving. The explanations involved not only calculations and numbers, but tried to involve readers in the gasoline-saving process. In April 1959 women readers were invited to so a "gasoline-saving-run" (*Josei Jishin* 1959, 3 April). A quiz called "How much gasoline [spends] a winner-car?" was offered to the readers (*Josei Jishin* 1959, 5 May). In this way, magazines educated even those readers who did not know what a car is and how much gasoline normally is consumed.

During this time some issues of the two magazines provided information of the car assembling process. In February *Fujin Koron* 1961 published a story about a reader's visit to a car factory, where she had seen how a conveyor, assembling a thousand new "Mitsubishi 500" worked.

During this period, automakers together with magazine editors and writers generated a myriad of public relations activity. In April 1961, for example, they selected one woman among readers to participate in Hillman long distance run (*Fujin Koron* 1961, April). Participants paid 3000 yen and should drive 500 km from Tokyo to Osaka, winner of the rally was going to win 100 000 yen. So, because of advertisements, articles and other PR activity car, which was completely strange world before, became more familiar and friendly-looking item for women's; to all women's, those who was just seating nearby husband or boyfriend, who drive, and especially to those who has a will to drive by themselves.

Magazine articles and advertising not only encouraged women to drive an automobile, they also introduced a new theme – encouraging women to make their dream of owning an automobile a reality. In November 1961, for instance, *Fujin Koron* published an article call "How to become a women-owner-driver?" (*Fujin Koron* 1961, November, p. 313). According to this article recently number of people who going outside of the city during weekends has being increased as well as number of women started thinking about should they buy a car. Articles introduce a line of cars with price of 300,000 yen and different ways of buying it. Also article emphasize that "become a owner is not easy, but it is necessary to make a decision. If you made it once it would e easy to make it happens. So, take to attention this article and start (to realize) put some efforts to make your own dream come true" (Ibid, p. 317).

What kind of women were able to drive a car at that time? According to the *Asahi Shinbun* newspaper from 17 of May 1961 in Tokyo driver license to all kind of vehicles own 100 000 people. Al well as 27 driving school being already established and seven new was going to open soon (*Asahi Shinbun*, 1961, 17 May). Also according to statistics, among people who were taking license number was salary men and people working at banks, then constructors, architectures, company owners, students, doctors, teachers (Takada, 1987, p. 256). Most of them were male. Clearly, many middle class men had become interested in driving a car and so had the women. Even the women were not that high in social hierarchy. The high interest to the driving is also evidence by the results of the survey, conducted at that time. To the question "What do you want to learn now?" many responders answered: "First is cooking and second is driving" (*Shukan Bunshu*, 1963, 19 June).

Mass media played a crucial role in encouraging women to learn how to drive and to buy an automobile, by introducing driving as cool, fashionable and trendy. Despite the stereotype that women are not good users of technical equipment, women had already proven that they could learn new technology. Through newspapers, magazine ads, and demonstrators, women had learned how to use a wide range of complex home appliances, from washing machines to rice cookers. A common theme in advertising these early home appliances was to show that they could be easily operated by women. Automakers then applied a similar strategy to car advertisement.

1960s: when car becomes a mass product

Leisure and woman's images in car ads

The popularization of automobiles went hand in hand with popularization of leisure. Advertisement contributed to this process by introducing a variety of images of different people who are happily enjoying their leisure activities. For example, a girl says that she never feels tired from long travels by car, because it is comfortable to drive (*Josei Jishin* 1961, 16 October). Such ads also suggested that car ownership would drastically change a women's life. For example, a 1963 Mazda ad called the car "an indispensable tool to an enjoyable modern life", because cars are an "instrument to create and enjoy free time" (*Josei Jishin* 1963, 18 February). Indeed, cars became an important instrument of leisure, which had a big influence on modern life.

For middle-class women to completely enjoy their cars, they also needed leisure time, which, in part, began with the popularization of home appliances. Ads for washing machines, refrigerators, and vacuum cleaners all promised to release women from time-consuming housework. As women enjoyed more free time coupled with the mobility offered by automobiles, advertising images began to show women driving on their own or with women friends. For example, one ads shows two women at the beach saying that "it is as easy as driving a car." The ad urges you "to also easily enjoy driving." (*Josei Jishin* 1961, 16 May). Another ad shows three women enjoying themselves by the river. "Let's go to the sea. Let's go to the mountains. It is so exciting to drive a car through the wind" (*Josei Jishin* 1963, 29 April). Other images appeared with groups of women driving together and saying, "Let's go together." "Let's completely enjoy weekends." (*Josei Jishin* 1963, 20 May). Other ads illustrated talked about freedom and leisure. We also see the image of four women is at the beach saying that "Sunday is Carol day" (*Josei Jishin* 1964, 18 May).

In various Carol ads we observe a number of images, and some of them saying, "If you have a Carol, you can fully enjoy your summer." (*Josei Jishin* 1964, 13 July). Further we see three girls in the countryside looking at some cows and saying that car helps you feel the coming spring (*Josei Jishin* 1965, 15 February). Another ad says that personal car gives a woman the possible of spending an economic and rational summer (*Josei Jishin* 1964, 24 August). Another ad talking about connection between freedom and driving, this is taking their youth to different places (*Josei Jishin* 1964, 18 May). Interestingly, advertisements never miss the opportunity to emphasize the importance of following the rules on the road, as well as general rules of behavior such as properly disposing of trash when picnicking (*Josei Jishin* 1963, 29 April). Such explicit explanations were needed in this introduction of leisure and cars (we can even say about educational role of advertisement.)

Still, at the beginning of the 1960's automobile ownership was not easily achievable for ordinary families to buy cars and road infrastructure was underdeveloped. Even for people owning cars, driving in big cities was not an easy task. "A car owner drove all the way to the center of the city and searched for a parking lot for one hour, but all the parking space was occupied. So he drove back home and came back to the city again by subway." ("Hashiru kuki o butsubuse", *Bessatsu Shukan Sankei* 1962, April).

Nevertheless, advertisements were preparing the ground for improving the existing situation at that time. Moreover, women at that time not only were not able to go for a drive with friends or on their own, but in general they couldn't afford owning a private car. Despite the contradicting reality, it is important to emphasize that this images were dominating the period.

Image of an independent woman

Ads were depicting many independent women driving cars and magazines articles were creating this image. In these articles the main idea was that car will make woman independent and will change her lifestyle. One article is narrating a typical day of a woman's life and says that a car will help a woman not to carry heavy shopping bags. The woman can even go to a date even at five o'clock in the evening. Above this, if you have a car, you can be invited to go out more often, and can find a way not sleep your weekends away and be more active (*Josei Jishin* 1967, 26 June). In other words, by owning a car a woman not only changes her pattern of spending Sundays, but her entire life becomes more active and enjoyable. Moreover, articles say that sitting in the driver's seat is like sitting in your life's driving seat and taking your life under control (*Josei Jishin* 1961; 21 August, 91).

Active woman were often connected with speed. For example, in the article in *Josei Jishin* named "Feeling the luxury of fast speed in your heart" is telling about the 24-year old Ms. Shizuka, who has confidence in driving at a high speed (*Josei Jishin* 1962, 9 July, 19). Obviously, among women of that time there were some who believed that driving at high speed is like taking your life under control.

Usually even now speed is associated with male gender, but in the given case, woman is the person controlling car speed. It had become possible for women to enjoy a typically male hobby. Ms. Shizuka also mentions in the article that driving at high speed directly influenced her confidence at work. The car helps her expand her movement limits and enter into territories traditionally reserved for men. Moreover, it also means that the woman does not depend on anyone and she is in control of her life. Owing and driving a car was also transformed into a symbol of woman's independence, especially economic independence achieved through work. The woman image from ads introduces her car as an instrument helping her to get five minutes earlier to work and is indispensable to her commuting (*Josei Jishin* 1961, 18 September). But articles do not only introduce imaginary women, but also real women commuting to work. Also article in *Josei Jishin* from 1964 is introducing a woman with a secondary education, who works as a sales person and she also use a car for work and for leisure (*Josei Jishin* 1964, 31 August, pp. 140-141). As well as during this time ads started to emphasize that car is very important private asset for single women, which is very modern and trendy (*Josei Jishin* 1962, 22 December). Other ads call it "the only one practical thing women can take as a wedding gift as a bride" (*Josei Jishin* 1962, 29 October, p. 175). So, this is showing how owning and driving a car become associate as a symbol of women's independence.

In those days, the cheapest car coast 300,000 yen and it is could be doubt was single independent women able to buy car by her own. Magazines was emphasizing that it is possible to buy a car even for lady, who earn 15,000 yen, if she save money, "because time when car was owned only by really rich people is gone and now 2of 3 readers are able to buy a car. You just have to make a decision you want it" (*Josei Jishin* 1962, 29 October, p. 175) So, magazines were trying to say that now is a time when women became brave and powerful enough to make such decision alone. But this explanation was very far from reality.

Magazines even made the point that it was possible to buy a car together with somebody else and share it (*Josei Jishin* 1962, 3 September, p. 115). If a woman was not able to buy a car alone and purchased it with other people, it is doubtful that she would consider sharing such an expensive item with people other than family members. But may be because even if single women will tight her belt and save every penny, it was not possible to buy a car alone, so magazine would provide her with such idealistic/unreal advises. So, it is necessary to mention again that during this period single women didn't have enough financial recourse to buy car by herself.

The ads have actively presented an attractive image of an independent woman, and kept persuading that Japanese women may evolve to become like that, and with a little more effort to take, they even will buy a car. Hence, a question, was that image really that of an ideal image for Japanese women of that time? According to statistics, in the post- war Japan the women's desire to marry and have a family remained quite high so until the seventieth. The people who went through all the hardships of the war wanted to find their happiness in the family, even the Office ladies (OL) kept working until they married, then returned to the office as part time employees only after their kids went to secondary school (so called U-curve model). Not only that, in Japan, the social stereo types as to how "the women's life should look like" were very strong. According to such stereotypes, that is to be the life of – the woman-mother and women –wife.

It should not be stated, that Japanese women took the ads presented image of an independent woman as the ideal image to dream of, yet the contents and the symbols behind this image, were certainly very attractive, and, in many ways did present an ideal image. To a large extent, this image of an independent woman was rather a symbol of a new life style, which in the post- war Japan was associated mostly with foreign, primarily, American life style. As a matter of fact, as far as back as in the 20th America, Ford, Chrysler, and General Motors already recognized the importance of tailoring their products to women, and in the early 30th 21% of those driving the cars were women (Hills, 2002, p. 171).

It is most likely that while looking at the independent women images Japanese women were not so much dreaming about the independence per se, but rather about the life style with the freedom of movement, and where a woman would be able to buy a car, and enjoy high standards of living disregarding the social stereotypes. Dreams of independence itself came later...

It is important to understand how image of car was connected to the image of independent women and how they influenced society. But even if all these active, independent and self-oriented women's who appeared in ads was very far from reality, its became a certain image of "imaginary" independent women, her life style and even beauty, for which many Japanese women's felt great attraction. And it

was a significant change, taking to accordance that in the end of 50s women's images were used only because of its natural beauty. So, saying it in other words, carmakers in car advertisements made a certain ideal image of women of all decade of 1960s. Women image flying in the sky and telling: "Sister, don't you want to fly your heart on the sky?" (*Josei Jishin* 1969, 23 August). So, car stopped to be only item which emphasize women's beauty, but it became a something what makes women actively will to participate in a new activity.

Compact cars and women's images

In addition to mentioning how women's life become active if she will drive a car, car ads were emphasizing the feeling of independence and the simplicity of driving. For example 1965 ad asks: "Why this car is so popular among women's?" and give an answer, "because you can trust it", it is easy driven (*Josei Jishin* 1965, 30 August). To emphasize easiness of driven 1966 's Subaru ad provide recipients with an image of one women's feat in high hill and slogan saying "you can drive within one foot when you tired and want your left foot to rest a bit. So you can drive only with right foot" (*Josei Jishin* 1966, 8 August). Beside this, ad provide with image of men in uniform, an expert, who explain to the women that "she haven't seen such tough car in her life" (*Josei Jishin* 1962, 17 December), but at the same time it is easy in use (*Josei Jishin* 1965, 15 February).

Thus, the advertisements tried to change the image of car from a "complicated mechanism" to one that a woman can easily use. According to Sugiyama Manabu (Sugiyama, 2000, p. 124), the advertisement emphasized comfort and utility functions of car for the women's market. But it is necessary to mention that more number of cars, which was advertised in this way, was a small -tank cars, which were recommended for leisure, model as a "Carol" being called "easy in use, easy driving cars". Here we can see how advertisement made a connection and easy to drive, small cars became associated with women.

Images of couples in car ads

Small car ads appeared with images of single women or group of women's, but also images of couples. At the time, family cars ads showed images mostly of couples, no children. Most of these ads showed couples driving on a date, having a conversation by the sea (*Josei Jishin* 1961, 17 July), or in the mountains, or having a "holiday in coupe" (*Josei Jishin* 1960, 26 October). So the ads suggested that to the coupe was the best model for couple on weekend's leisure and active dates.

As a result, the ads sometimes used romantic appeals. They presented the car as a "something" that produces special feelings, like love and friendship. What sometimes the copy described as a "private driving for two in love" (*Josei Jishin* 1965, 14 June). The driving experience then created "a special mood of two people, which cannot be interrupted by anybody else" (*Josei Jishin* 1962, 16 April). The message behind these advertisements was that a car would make you attractive to the opposite sex. It also provided a unique, private space, which will allow you to keep your love alive by sharing new experiences with a person you really loved. For example, one ad with the picture of two people in the car there is the slogan: "She likes Corona", "because of wonderful feelings" (*Josei Jishin* 1961, 21 January). And it is not clear, whether this "wonderful" feeling is the experience of the driving the car or is it the "wonderful" feeling of driving with him. In any case, this ad associated these "wonderful" feelings with the advertised car.

At the same time there are many images of couples on an active date as evidenced in a series of Publica car ads. We see a couple skiing with the headline, "Era of Publica come to a ski sloop" (*Josei Jishin* 1962, 26 February), or an image of a smiling couple standing in the snow nearby with the claim, "Publica is tough enough for snow" (*Josei Jishin* 1962, 18 February). These kinds of images appear not only in small and family cars, they are more predominant in sports car advertisements. We see couples nearby river (*Josei Jishin* 1963, 23 September), holding each other under the three (*Josei Jishin* 1965, 26 April), or holding hand nearby sea. Sport car recommended for those "young people, who love nature and love driving" (*Josei Jishin* 1965, 26 July). It is obvious, because sport car is mainly two seats car and it's fancy -it can develop a very high speed, so its looks more appropriate for couple then for family.

If we compare images of couple in small, family cars and in sports car we can clearly see that sports car couple images have more body contact (holding hands etc), where in other couple just driving a car or standing/seating nearby car. As well as sport car ads usually speak to the men then to the women and present car pictured with male gender characteristics, where car has "spiritual sports

body burning mans mind” (*Josei Jishin* 1969, 6 December). And small cars usually represented with female gender characteristics.

When we look at images of couples in car ads, it is necessary to remember that the idea of dating in Japan is a preparation stage for marriage, which was a strong societal norm of that time. So, women were then shown as part of a couple mean with the strong possibility future marriage. Such ads also would also draw women into thinking about the dating-marriage process. At the same time, we should think not only about the pressure of social norms, but also marriage was still an economically positive move for a woman. She will be financially secure, because her husband will support her. Through marriage, she can then secure a home furnished with expensive home appliances and a car, since most women could not afford to buy a car with their own earnings. So, when women were dreaming about a “fun life with a car”, this dream also brought another dream – to marry a man, who can financially provide her with such a life.

Images of couple on long drives could be also newlyweds, who were on their honeymoon. Magazines articles emphasized the “beauty” of this kind of honeymoon and were even advising people how to plan such journey, where you will spend only 20,000 yen for a three day trip (*Josei Jishin* 1959, 20 March, p. 63). Articles also suggested “for modern couples a driving honeymoon is the most appropriate way to honeymoon” (*Josei Jishin* 1959, 2 December, p. 70). Happy couples were telling promising from magazines pages: “Let’s go to honeymoon by car. Finally we can make this dream, we dream about from the time we being engaged, come true” (Ibid, p. 70). Still, we shouldn’t forget that really popular type of car of the 1960s was not a sport car but family car.

Family images in car ads

By the mid-1960s, the car was no longer a dream product and soon became part of everyday Japanese life. In 1966 after the “New Publica”, Toyota introduced the “Corolla”, which became part of the car boom right after the Tokyo Olympic Games. The expression “My Car” became popular, as the price of cars became more affordable to the middle-class. Even homemakers could afford to save the one thousand dollars for a car. Over the three-year period from 1963 to 1966, car sales rose from 14 to 20 percent (*Mono no tanjyo. Ima no seikatsu* 1990, p. 170). From 1966, the car became an everyday item for Japanese families (*Toyota jidosha gojyunen shi* 1987, p. 56) As a result, this period can be called the popularization and democratization of the car.

The accounting books for family daily expenses also provide evidence that cars had arrived to Japanese households. Before 1969, daily expense record books for a family living in a city with more than 50,000 people did not even have a column for “car expenses/gasoline.” After this year, records show that the average family spent 619 yen monthly as a car expenses and this amount slowly increased every year (*Kakei Chosa Showa 38 nen kara 60 nen made* 1985). The content of ads and magazine articles addressed how to save for a car but also to set aside extra money to pay for expenses such as gasoline, repairs, parking, and insurance. So, the mass media became closer to describing not only the pleasures but also the reality of auto ownership than ever before.

At the same time, government invested in expanding infrastructures, which contributed to the car usage. Two of the first roads (number 1 and number 4) were opened just before Tokyo Olympic Games in 1964, as well as part Tokyo-Hachioji of so call Central Automobile road was opened in 1967. Also highway call Tomei highway was opened 2 years later in March (*Nihon Jidosha Kogyo Shi* 1973, p. 78). So, following raffle increasing numbers of automobiles, from middle of 1960s necessary infrastructure was also build, which open a possibility for formation of a new society – society on the wheels. And only during this period images have being drown in car advertising for already a long time could become a reality.

Only from this period articles in *Josei Jishin* (magazine for working class women’s) also started to emphasize that “era of automobiles has began” (*Josei Jishin* 1966, 24 January). This magazine ad was mainly showing family cars. Women’s in car images of *Josei Jishin* are mainly a wife’s and mothers, who spending happy leisure time with her family. Those families spending leisure time in ski resort (*Josei Jishin* 1962, 12 November), on the beach (*Josei Jishin* 1966, 13 June), making barbecue together (*Josei Jishin* 1963, 11 November-Figure 3), or just communicating with nature (*Josei Jishin* 1965, 4 October)



(Courtesy of Subaru)

Advertising copy emphasizing possibility to “drive right from in front of your house in your convenient time” (*Josei Jishin* 1966, 24 January). Mothers in this kind of ads usually smiling happily, taking care of kids (*Josei Jishin* 1966, 30 May), holding them, or sitting with kids in the car and watching things outside (*Josei Jishin* 1962, 21 May), or driving kids somewhere (*Josei Jishin* 1963, 15 July). So, those mages put an impression that marriage, having kids, becoming a mother and spending leisure time with family is “the happiness” of the women life.

It is important to take a look of the number of kids in automobile advertising with family images. Among various family images, in most of them we see parents and two kids. Usually parents are sitting in front, while two kids are occupying back seats (*Josei Jishin* 1963, 21May), or sitting on the back daughter are trying to hold mother, who are on the driving seat, while sun and father standing outside (*Josei Jishin* 1962, 21 May); or image of driving car, with family with two different sex kids inside (*Josei Jishin* 1966, 21 May); or family of four is making barbecue together (*Josei Jishin* 1961, 11 November). As a variations of images we also see image of family, where father is driving, sun is seating next to him, while mother is seating on the back (*Josei Jishin* 1962, 26 March), or sun touching mother, who is seating next to father who is driving (*Josei Jishin* 1965, 22 November), or mother is playing with son, while talking with husband (*Josei Jishin* 1966, 18 July).

Also there are several images of mother, who is driving and daughter seating next to her (*Josei Jishin* 1963, 15 July), or who seems to be proud of her kids and her car. One of the images showing two women’s with two small boys standing next to small wall (usually dividing two houses) and talking about “neighbors who also bought Publica” (*Josei Jishin* 1967, 14 February). So, its feel like all these images trying to set a family standard - with “one baby and one car”. It is crucial that in all images women appear like a mother, s well as number of kids in family images is never more than three, but in the most of them there are just two children. Of course, it is illustrate concept a car like a space for five people. The average number of children in pre-war time Japanese family was dominant to four or five persons. But after Second World War because of governmental “Program of family planning” and the fact that ministry of health allowed free selling of contraceptives so call “revolution of two babies (futarikko no kakumei) (Ochiai, 2001, p. 54) has taken place and the average number of children in one family has decreased to two persons. According to Emiko Ochiai, dramatically changed number of children’s in Japanese families also influenced a fact that core of society has being changed from people, living in countryside and involved to agriculture to people living in big cities and working in a company’s (salary men). So, those children are being expected to produce material valued products slowly moved to the category of consumers of these products (Ibid, p. 60). Children did not contribute to agricultural works as expected; rather than being productive they became consumers. But the decreasing number of children’s in Japanese family had economical reasons on the back. Parents, who moved into the big cities was not able to raise and educate four or five children, so women’s started to use contraceptives to stop birth rate on two or three babies.

Of course, the government probably non-directly (but still) was trying to control the politics of birth by introducing to people the idea of birth control. For example, in 1948 Japanese government made a special law, which allowed aborts even on the late numbers of pregnancy, as well as accepted

Figure 3. Subaru 360 1963

sale of 7 contraceptive medicines, which was not allowed till this time. During this time copy of Yamanouchi pharmaceutical company, saying: "First daughter is called Hime, second is son called Taro, third one is contraceptive drug called ..." has become one of the most famous slogan in postwar Japan (Yasuda, 2001, p. 12). So, this example illustrate the fact that formation of new image of Japanese family being influenced not only by the governmental policy, but also by images and copies of products not related to political issues. Since ads also carried ideological meaning. So, images of automobiles ads, where happy looks family with a certain number of kids, spending leisure time together, shaped an ideal family image of the decade.

Thus, it is important to emphasize the variety of women's images in automobile ads of this decade. On the one hand, they ads typically pictured women as a "caring mothers" (賢母的なimage), reflecting society's norms and ideals about mother and family. They also illustrated an idealistic belief about how women should spend her leisure time, suggesting suggested that the family go together somewhere on weekends and vacations. On the other hand, the popularization of automobiles occurred within a process of self-identification of the Japanese middle class, which was able to happen because of the rapidly growing economy. Products, which before had been only available (and associate) only for the highest class, now became affordable and available for more people.

Changing reality of 1970s and cars, women's, men's and family images transformations

Starting from 1970s women's really became to drive cars. According to Japanese Police office information, 24% of Japanese adult population on 1969 holds driver licenses, and only 4% of them were women's. But in 1970 percents of women's holding driver license increased to 6% among 28% and on 1976 it increased to 10% into 35% (Japanese Police Statistics Data Book about drivers 1966-1976). Image of women's in car advertising wildly spread from 1960s, but in 1970s with increasing number of women's who owned a driving licenses, so reality finally could became ever closer to images in advertising.

During 1970s images of women's in advertisement become participate in extreme sports and leisure. She is diving and copy is emphasizing: "Not just watching journey anymore, we are participate in journeys! From now-go play tennis, golf, camping!" (*Fujin Koron* 1977, July). But at the same time, women's still pictured in attractive for men cute style (*Fujin Koron* 1971, August). At the same time, during this period, with stably increasing number of family cars ads, numbers of sports car ads are also increasing very rapidly. Women pictured in sports cars ads look sexier than ever in car ads (*Fujin Koron* 1978, January, February, July; 1979, April). For young people, however, the automobile had become more than a means of transportation, it also was a sexual symbol. Articles referred to the automobile as a place for sexual activity, with expression such as "one more love hotel" and a "moving room" (*Heibon Panchi*, "Ugoku heya.Kuruma no nakano sex", 1968, 27 November). According to the magazines, some consumers start to consider such factors space, comfort, and privacy, when they were choosing a new automobile (Takada K., 1980, p. 35).

At the same time, during this time images of married couple and family members in car ads also slowly changing. For example, family members illustrated as pilots (*Josei Jishin* 1971, 23 June), when husband and wife described as good friends and even lovers (*Fujin Koron* 1970, January). Although car ads of the 1960s were mainly illustrated with children's images, images of married couples without children appeared in the 1970s. They are traveling by car and talking pictures of each other, or husband even makes jokes on smiling wife and putting a basket on her head and copy ask women: "Wife, are you loved by your husband?" (*Josei Jishin* 1974, 30 March) This slogan appearing all through this campaign (*Fujin Koron* 1972, December). This direct question about existence of "love" in family, as well as this kind of image content, appear in ads for the first time. However, especially during 1970s advertising continuing to emphasize for necessarily of love between husband and wife, while illustrating it by smiling women's images. According to the Japanese reality, where most marriages were still arranged, these copies' looks modern. But at the same time, this kind of image could appeal to increasing number of marriages made not by parent's arrangement, but because of love, like it happened even in Japanese Royal family.

Also, according to Takishima, during 1970s disposition of women in ads is changing, from this period it is not a "man and women", but "women and man" couple (Takishima, 2000, p. 40). In images we see men is seating next to the women, who is driving (*Fujin Koron* 1973, January), husband and wife are presented as "lovers" and generally idea of existing and necessity of love between husband and wife is becoming stronger.

Also we should emphasize that it is tendency in car ads of 1970s, when humans started to disappear from the images. Instead of human images show clear image of car, explaining its characteristics and emphasizing that new era expect a new style of life, with a new car. This kind expression of love to car illustrate a “new face; new hobby” of people in 1970s (*Fujin Koron* 1979, January). This car of new era is not necessarily comfortable or practical in usage, but people trying to receive more so call added value. Sometimes this value described as “quality” and “quality” explained as “a special drama” (*Fujin Koron* 1979, January). So, ads has been connecting “drama and passion” directly to the car value. At the same time, advertising of 1970s started to emphasize on the “high quality” of Japanese car, wildly recognized on international arena. So, in a way, during 70s car becoming like a fetish for its buyers.

During 1970s Japanese people started to recognized connections between rapidly increasing number of automobiles and problem of environmental pollution and some people even start to doubt that slogan “one car to every family” is right. In 1976 head of Tokyo Metropolitan Government even published edict, which was called to hold environmental pollution and decrease the number of private cars in the Japanese capital. Very high strafe, accorded to this edict, for those who missed road rules supposed to decries number of private cars in Tokyo to the level, which was six years before that (Takada, 2000, p. 268).

In this situation carmakers couldn’t ignore problems of environmental pollutions, and started to emphasize in cars ads that they already started to look for the solution of this important problem. It is crucial that in these kinds of ads they use various women’s images. Advertising from the magazines pages started to call attention of women’s and ask; “Is your husband understand that cars should be energy-saving and use low-gasoline-recourses?” (*Fujin Koron* 1979, November). So, in a way advertisements tried to emphasize that it is a women’s business to think about how to save environments. Same kind of PR strategy has being used also in home appliances advertising before.

Conclusion

During the fifteen-year period 1955 though 1970, Japanese car advertising both reflected and shaped women’s identity as evidenced in campaigns for small cars, sport models, and family sedans. During this period, small cars were generally associated with women, because they were easy to drive, maneuver, and park, as well as economical. They also were associated with independent women, the working woman who could afford to purchase these models. Although car ownership became associated as a symbol of women’s independence, most Japanese women felt that they had to be married to complete their identity. They also benefited by such a union economically, through the financial support of a husband, and personally from a fulfilling family life. In part, this explains why so many images of car advertisements, even for sports cars, rarely show a single person but mainly happy and loving couples. Ads glorified leisure activities and the pleasures of driving to the mountains, the ocean, and other recreational areas. But in family car advertising, ads portrayed images of happy young wives and mothers with children and husbands who took control of the driving. All of these images suggest how a family should spend their leisure time and appropriate gender roles. From this time, automobiles became a central part of the middle-class leisure activities, reflecting changes in Japanese society, sexual/gender attitudes, and mobility.

The representations of women in this postwar car advertising can be categorized into two groups: the happy mother and the independent young woman. On the one hand, the image of the happy mother reinforced the conservative beliefs of women’s role in the traditional Japanese family; the good wife and caring mother. These family images also helped to form new idealistic images of the Japanese family, which suggested how they should spend their leisure time and even recommended an ideal family size. Behind all these images was ideology. Japanese society considered marriage between a man and a woman necessary to meet societal obligations, but the government also wanted to decrease the average family size from five or six children to two, as Japan shifted from an agricultural society to an urban one. Moreover, these images of happy families were also part of a larger marketing strategy to reach the women’s market, since women influenced major family purchases such as automobiles. By purchasing the advertised model, women would not only complete their identity as caring wives and loving mothers, but the car itself would also express their status, personalities, and peculiarities. Thus, the purchase of the advertised automobile brought them closer to the image of their imaginary, sometimes ideal self and sold them new life style. In many cases the life style depicted in ads meant better and richer life style of American people, and women in particular. For which many women in post-war Japan had a strong longing.

Until the middle of the 1960s, car advertisements tended to be more idealized and ahead of reality. Car ownership for most Japanese middle-class families was still a dream and out of women's reach. From the late 1960s, however, the gap between the ideal and reality narrowed, as more Japanese families could afford to buy an automobile. Thus, car ownership provided more Japanese women with an opportunity to complete their identity, eliminating the difference between the "real self" and the "ideal imaginary self."

Notes

1. This paper is part of a project conducted by the author during her doctoral studies at Tokyo University, Japan. The research discusses "Formation of Japanese women's identity during the post-war period as seen through the advertisements of four products: home appliances, cosmetics, cars and liquors as seen through product advertisements". (Tokyo University, Tokyo, Japan, 2005. Library of the National Diet.)

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