

# Indonesian Women's Image on Newspaper Advertisement in Japanese Colonial Era: A Historical Multi-Modality Study

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**Abstract**—This research was aimed to know what did Japanese colonial perspective of Indonesian women, the involvement of Indonesian women in public especially in Japanese colonial press, and also to know Indonesian women's important on newspaper advertisement in Japanese Colonial. This research was using some literatures. The methods of this research were using the steps of heuristic, verification, and historiography. There are 4 result of this study; those are household woman, dandy woman, career woman, and artist.

**Keyword:** *Newspaper advertisement, Japanese Colonial, Indonesian Women History.*

## I. Introduction

The focus of this research is about Indonesian Women in Japanese Colonial. As Anton Lucas was questioning the same thing in his article: Women in Revolution: The Experience during Colonial and revolution 1942-1950. The women's role as nurse, chef, and tailor were helpful. Moreover some of the women were learning lineup and the sincerity as mom in wartime is very hearty.

In Japanese Colonial, women's power was used as propaganda. The fact was the note from Mitsoee, she is Jenderal Tojo's daughter which already 25 years old. Jenderal Tojo is an Indonesian military that lead women in Nagatoco Japan. The note was said to all girls to in line helping Indonesia to ruin England and America ("Puteri Jenderal Tojo", Asia 16 June 1943). The propaganda was used to drive out America and England.

Japan wanted Indonesian women to focus on domestic life rather than public, it was same as Japanese women. Japan thought that an ideal woman is housewife woman that willing to sacrifice their life to their country. Mr. Soedjono said that "Japan has a good spirit. All Japanese people were willing to sacrifice their life and treasure to this war. Within this war all the Nippon's people were unite under the

government ("Poetri-Poetri in Nippon", *Pandji Poestaka* 18 July 1942).

This research is about women image in newspaper advertisement in Japanese Colonial. This topic was chosen because the newspaper's development was good at that time. The news was written good, such as politics, education, economics, or even social culture. Furthermore, Japan was using newspaper as propaganda.

## II. Research Method

The methods of this research were using the steps of heuristic, verification, and historiography (Helius Syamsudin, 2007). In heuristic step, the researcher looked for the literature in Kollese Ignatius Library Yogyakarta, Region I Library of Yogyakarta and Jakarta National Library. NIOD Dutch was helping this research as well cause it has the online scan form of the Japanese Colonial news paper in Indonesia.

There are primary and secondary sources. Primary source was using contemporary newspaper, such as *Panji Pustaka*, *Pemandangan*, *Asia Raya*, *Pembangun*, *Pewarta Perniagaan*, *Pewarta Selebes*, *Djawa Baru*, *Pustaka Radio*, *Sinar Baru*, *Sinar Matahari*, *Suara Asia*, *Surat Sebaran*, *Timor Sjoeho*, and *Tjahaya*. Interpretation step and verification process were used to construct the historical facts of Indonesian women in Japanese Colonial. It was taken from contemporary newspaper, and it was compared to the historiography as well. Then, historiography was the last step. All data were provided in this step, the data has already selected and interpreted chronologically.

## III. Result and Discussion

### A. Japanese Colonial Government and Indonesian Women

Japan was attacking Pearl Harbour on 7 December 1941. It ignited the American President, Franklin D. Roosevelt, to sign declaration of war on

Japan. It also followed by Tjarda van Starkenborgh, the Governor of Dutch East Indies. But then, Japan cannot be defeated. At the end, Dutch was surrender without cuts by signing the negotiation in Kalijati Subang, West Java on 8 March 1942. Letnan Jenderal Hitoshi Imamura became Japan's representative, while Dutch was represented by Letnan Jenderal Ter Poorten. By signing the negotiation, Dutch officially step down and replaced by Japan.

Indonesian people were very happy when Japan replaced Dutch. Just like saving them from Dutch colonial. This supported by Jayabaya's prediction, it said that there will be come one who has a yellow-skinned and slanted eyed nation. Japan used it to support their colonialism. They wanted to change Indonesian rule as they were become the new government. It made them doing propaganda incessantly. Japan wanted Indonesian people become racist and hate Western people much. All things about western should be changed into Japanese things. The last, Indonesian people should believe that someday Japan will lead Asian Countries. To make the plan easier, in March 1942 Japan made 3A action (Nippon The Leader of Asia, Nippon The Guard of Asia, Nippon The Light of Asia). This action was led by Perinda's figure, Samsudin, his job is to lead Indonesian people to support Japanese government. Not only that, Indonesian women were involved in this action, it proved by founding 3A housewife action (Gerakan istri 3A). This action was led by Maria Ulfah Subadio and Barisan Putri Asia Raya.

On the other hand, Japan was using Indonesian women as magazine cover. It was the other tool of propaganda, just like *Djawa Baroe* magazine. It was the official magazine of Japan government. Japanese or even Javanese women with Japanese style was used as the cover of the magazine. Japan was willing Indonesia will follow Japanese fashion.

Japan has aim, it was becoming the best thing among others. They gave chance to Indonesian people to go to Japan and after going back to Indonesia they will give teach other about Japanese thing. Such as Mr. Soedjono, he was giving the chance to go to Japan to teach Indonesian Language. His family was brought as well, his wife and his three sons were following him. After came back to Indonesia, he was so amaze with Japanese life that full of simplicity and independence, as he said:

.... The real was coming and its simplicity was surprising for the new people. The governance and the feeling were flowing as the beauty of nature. Not only that, the other thing was regulated by rules (*"Kehidupan di Nippon"*, *Pandji Poestaka* on 26 September and 3 October 1942)

Japan asked Indonesian women to be the same as Japanese women. They think that Japanese woman

is the ideal women of Asia that should be followed. Japanese women was pictured as an intellectual woman because they should get in school when they already 6 years old. Not only that, Japanese woman was a delicate woman, respect their parents and siblings, diligent, deft, and respecting their culture. When they already married, they will able to take care of their children and household life. The other skill of Japanese woman was able to play guitar and *origami*, and making tea. The last, they were very loyal and obedient to their country (*"Perempuan Nippon"*, *Pandji Poestaka* 25 April 1942). This image was used to create willingness of Indonesian women to have the same skill as Japanese women.



Figure 1: The cover of *Djawa Baroe* magazine showed an ideal woman. She was treating her son become good army which have willingness to sacrifice his life for the country. (*Djawa Baroe*, 15 Desember 1943)

The condition impact Indonesian Women, for example in household needs. Japan force Indonesian people to give all harvest, it made the people hardly fine staple food. Barkah Alganis Baswedan said:

Rice is our staple food but at that time, it is very hard to find it. Japan was forbidden the family who has more than 4 kg rice. When a family have 100 kg rice, they were under arrest. The condition was more severe because the sellers were afraid to sell it in market. To overcome that condition, we bought its food directly to the seller and they will bring it to our house. It was brought stealthy, and covered by vegetables. Swapping rice by our used clothes because it was very hard to have a new clothes at that time (Penerbitan Sejarah Lisan Masa Jepang, 1988: 27).

Hafni Zahra Abu Hanifah, the other housewife in Japan Colonial added:

3 years is quite long for them (Japan) to stay. I never saw sugar, and when we wanted to drink tea, we used to add palm sugar. Rice was hard to get, or even vegetables. Me and my family were plant it in our yard to fulfill our needs (Penerbitan Sejarah Lisan Masa Jepang, 1988: 28).

But then, Japan asked for the vegetables that already plant in people yard. It used to feed their

army and they also asked Indonesian Women to be more creative to plant the vegetables in the yard. The highest leader of Japan Army, Gunseikan, *Rukun Tetangga* was not be implemented yet, moreover they needed to plant some foods in their yard to fulfill their needs ("Mulailah dengan Rumah Tangga Sendiri", *Asia Raya* 16 Februari 1944).



Figure 2: Indonesian women were planting vegetables in their yard to fulfill Japan army. They looked happy but in fact, they were very sad (*Djawa Baroe*, 15 December 1943)

Japanese rules made Indonesian women were so depressed. But in newspaper, it was written Indonesian women were so happy planting vegetable and working under Japanese Colonial. Not only that, Japan also used Indonesian figure to persuade Indonesian people. They guided Maria Ulfa. She spoke up some things in parliamentary session. She said Indonesian women should help the army by supporting in backline. Some acts should be done such as eradicate illiteracy, reform people's health, and building women's dorm ("Kedudukan Perempuan dalam Masa Baru", *Asia Raya* 19 June 1943).

Jendral Tojo said "the women's duty is stay at home and become housewife". KH. Mas Mansyur added with Islamic rules ("Dimanakah Tempat Perempuan?", *Asia Raya* 20 November 1943). Jendral Tojo was comparing to the women in America and England that became soldier, and it was not appropriate for Asian women because being housewife is the best for women.

The condition were getting worst, women should plant cotton and castor plants in the yard. Not only that, Japan asked forcefully Indonesian people to give their treasure. It was on December 1944 until January 1995, they said it was to support their army during the war and they will turn it. In fact, they were use it and did not give it back.

#### A. Indonesian Women Image in Newspaper Advertisement

A housewife women is a future image of women by Japan. Even there will be other profession but the first was housewife. Based on 3 newspapers: *Djawa*

*Baroe*, *Asia Raya*, and *Pandji Poestaka*, there are 4 categories of women image:

##### 1. Housewife Woman

A housewife is a woman that doing basic thing at home such as washing and cooking. They also became good wife to their husband and take care of their children. And also take care of the food and health of their family.

There are several advertisement for women, those are food, pharmacy, traditional medicine, or even tonic for sex. After they drink those traditional tonics, their husband will love them much. The advertisement of baby needs such as milk and food was using women as well.



Figure 3: Wine advertisement to support women's health (*Pandji Poestaka*, 10 October 1942)

The women offered some modern medicine but their more likely like the traditional one. *Sambilot* leaf was used to replace *pil kina* and *lender kayu waru* was used for sore. Betel leaf and calx can be used for boil, it is very easy to use it just put the ingredient above the boil. Those ingredients were easy to get and it was cheaper than buying the modern one.



1 kotak „Bisamon“ (obat dada istimewa)  
harga f 3.25. Djamoe beranak 1 engka  
boeat 50 hari harga f 7.—

Figure 4: Slim beauty product advertisement

In Japanese colonial, Indonesian women has already known several types of flour such as *kejabe* flour. It contains 25% soy flour, 60% tapioca flour, 7.5% corn flour, and 7.5% rice flour. *Kejabe* flour contains more fat but the women like it more than wheat flour. It can be used as a bread ingredient as well ("Beberapa Keperluan Sehari-hari", *Pandji Poestaka* 31 October 1942). Some Japanese food has



already known in Indonesia, it was a chance for Japan because they opened some Japanese cooking course. However, tea, coffee, and traditional drink still became the favorite one.

*Pandji Poestaka* magazine was wrote cooking tips to help women. Such as the use of fireplace or *anglo*, it is cheaper and tidier. It can use husk to be its fuel. The husk must be compacted before get in to the fireplace.

Not only that, the magazine also wrote the tips to keep the heat of rice. First, set up medium empty container, put some straw inside it. It is use to cover the container. Then, put rice container inside it. It will keep its heat ("Mudah dan Hemat", *Pandji Poestaka* 15 August 1942).

## 2. Dandy Woman

Dandy woman was taking care of their beauty so much. Based on the fact, woman is worry to be ugly. Then, the magazine wrote one of way to keep women's beauty. The use of cosmetic was regarded to be the tips, so that it introduced to all women widely by writing some advertisements. Those were advertisement of powder, perfume, eyebrow pencil, skincare, and accessories. Not only that, the advertisement of women's bag, shoed, and jewelries were written as well.



Figure 5: The advertisement of curly hair (*Pandji Poestaka*, 15 Oktober 1943)



Giwang bg. Sakura, kirim f 0.75. Tjintjin No. 1, 2, 3, & f 0.85, No. 4 f 0.75. Tjintjin mata model berlian berkilau f 0.90. Ta' bisa hilang didjalan, tambah ongkos f 0.20.

Figure 6: Jewelry Advertisement (*Pandji Poestaka*, 1 Juni 1943)

In that time, there were 2 woman's hair styles. It was *konde* and *jalinan tunggal* or *jalinan ganda*. After Japan came, it added *ciodai*. *Cioda* used to women when they get in to line up army. Indonesian women have traditional way to keep their cleanness of their hair. They used traditional ingredient to wash their hair. Pomade was used as well, but it use coconut oil. It added some fragrance of flowers to make it better. The flowers could be jasmine, *kenanga*, or *cempaka*.

The other way to relieve bug from women's hair was using vapor and lettuce oil. First, the scalp should be evaporated and after that add the lettuce oil. Rub the hair hardly, and then wrap it for a night. The last, washed the hair in the next day.

## 3. Career woman

Career woman identified as a worker that work in a public. They usually have one exact profession. They were valued by their intelligence. The advertisement of women career were glasses and some courses, such as typing course and administration course.



Figure 7: typing Course Advertisement (*Pandji Poestaka*, 6 February 1943)



Figure 8: Typing Course (*Pandji Poestaka*, 1 March 1945)

#### 4. Artist

Artist is women that work in broadcasting industrial. They can be an actress or a cast in a drama. The advertisement showed their cast in a drama and it attracted movie and drama lovers.



Figure 9: Poelointen film advertisement (*Djawa Baroe*, 14 April 1943)



Figure 10: Warnasari Drama advertisement (*Djawa Baroe*, 9 December 1943)

Union and Djawa film industries were closed after Japan came to Indonesia. The actress such as Fifi Young, Dahlia, Sally Young, Soelami, dan Titing joined to Bintang Soerabaja on December 1945. This drama group was usually performed for Japan army. Film industry was rise up again because Japan used it for propaganda. The plot was tell about the spirit of people to support Japan as the leader of Asia. The other drama groups named Tjahaja Timur and Warnasari. The first was played by Indonesian artist and the second was known as a music group.

#### IV. Conclusion

There are four woman images from advertisement in *Djawa Baroe*, *Asia Raya*, dan *Pandji Poestaka* newspapers. Those are housewife woman, dandy woman, career woman, and artist. Housewife woman is a woman that doing basic thing at home such as washing and cooking. They also became good wife to their husband and take care of their children. And also take care of the food and health of their family.

Dandy woman is the woman who cares of their beauty so much. Career woman identified as a worker that work in a public. They usually have one

exact profession. Artist is women that work in broadcasting industrial. They can be an actress or a cast in a drama. The advertisement showed their cast in a drama and it attracted movie and drama lovers. From those four images, housewife woman advertisement showed a lot in Japanese colonial newspaper.

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