

## **Movement and Relocation of the Blind in Taiwan during Japanese Colonial Period**

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### **ABSTRACT**

People with visual impairment are often considered economically disadvantaged, restricted in mobility and consequently limited in range of activities. In fact, towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the blind from Taiwan shuttled across the Strait under the auspices of Western Christian missionaries. During the Japanese colonial period, the blind from Taiwan travelled to study in Japan, while their Chinese counterparts came to study in Taiwan, again under the encouragement and assistance of missionaries. The then colonial employment policy is another important factor contributing to the mobility of the blind. Since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, many people with normal vision began working as masseurs and acupuncturists in Japan, jeopardizing the livelihood of the local blind. On the contrary, in Taiwan only the blind could learn massage and acupuncture in schools for the blind. With the banning of traditional Taiwanese massage in colonial Taiwan, many Japanese blind relocated to Taiwan for work during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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