

A Dam Utopia: Planning and Design of Shihmen Dam during Japanese Colonial Era

Ya-wen Ku, Yu-chen Chien

ABSTRACT

This research aims to re-think the inception, transformation, development and revival of the idea of constructing a dam in Shihmen during the Japanese colonial era, an often neglected fact in previous studies that usually adopt an oversimplified or monotonous perspective. Shihmen Dam, completed in 1964, was the first multi-purpose reservoir in post-war Taiwan. However, this idea, once considered utopian, emerged as early as the beginning of the 1900s. It originated from an integrated water management concept that prevailed in the West, was transplanted to the East Asian colonies in the 19th century and repeatedly appropriated under various political, social and economic considerations during the whole colonial era. This study traces the implementation of this idea, and discusses the significance of this case study in the context of technological history and environmental history.

Keywords: Shihmen Dam, Talsperre, Official Irrigation Systems, Flood Control Project of Tamsui River, Water Control