

## **Anti-parasite vs. Anti-mosquito —Anti-malaria Program in Colonial Taiwan**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The anti-malaria program in colonial Taiwan has always been regarded as a scientific and modern disease control policy, or been described as a success in implementing the “anti-parasite measure”. This paper argues that the anti-malaria policy under Japanese rule was not wholly based on professional knowledge, and the policy-making process, instead of being consistent or static, involved dynamic revisions and frequent compromises with reality.

The Geography Information System (GIS) is employed in this study as a tool for handling spatial data, analysis and map-making. Since the “anti-parasite measure” had been implemented at selected points initially, GIS proves to be very efficient in mapping the locations of these points. The distribution analysis shows that these points were chosen not according to scientific epidemiological investigation. Rather they were selected to protect the Japanese and their interests. This also provides evidence that the spread of malaria is closely related to regional environmental development.

Since 1919, the focus of the anti-malaria program had shifted from “anti-parasite” to “anti-mosquito”. This drastic change in policy was neither an accident nor a coincidence. The remarkable worldwide success of the anti-mosquito strategy in the 1910s had aroused great hope in this prevention approach. At the same time, Taiwan suffered from another outbreak of malaria after the anti-parasite measure had been practiced for some years. These two reasons contributed to the change in the disease control strategy.

However, the anti-mosquito approach in Taiwan proved to be fruitless for several reasons. First, unlike other countries, this measure was carried out in colonial Taiwan by district officials who only received short-term expertise training. As a result, wrong decisions were inevitable. Moreover, residents were often forced to comply with the government measures without any compensation. Their reluctance worsened the situation and the anti-mosquito program was doomed to failure. In the

late 1920s, with the optimism of the anti-mosquito measure gradually fading, and the lukewarm effort of the government in its implementation, the anti-parasite measure once again became the main strategy of the anti-malaria program under Japanese rule.

Prior researches on the anti-malaria program in colonial Taiwan have much simplified the scene. In fact, there was an inconsistency between principle and practice. It is this inconsistency that reflects the real essence of the anti-malaria program in colonial medicine: Using the simplest method to achieve the maximum effects.

Through the above-mentioned observations, this paper aims to clarify fallacies in previous studies, and tries to point out the unique features of the anti-malaria program in colonial Taiwan.

**Keywords:** Malaria, GIS, Colonial Medicine, Scientific Colonialism, Anti-Malaria Program