

Sanitation, Hygiene and Public Health: Changing Thoughts of Public Health in Colonial Taiwan*

Shi-yung Liu*

ABSTRACT

This article is a preliminary study on the changing thoughts of sanitation and health in colonial Taiwan. The author attempts to trace the links between various statements related to sanitary conditions in colonial Taiwan and medical theories and progress across a wide range of western works. It is aimed at demonstrating how medical and public health progress or definitions in the West enacted the thoughts of sanitation and health in Taiwan. Some historians argued that the Japanese practitioners imposed the hygienic values in Taiwan for the purpose of colonial rule, this study, however, suggested that such values might simply percolate downward or at least around in colonial Taiwanese society randomly. In conclusion, the changing thoughts of sanitation and health in colonial Taiwan have highlighted the differences — in particular the greater role of the state in promoting sanitary policies — as well as the similarities to the changing mainstream from the German model to the Anglo-American model.

Keywords: sanitation, hygiene, public health, miasma theory, acclimatization, colonial policy

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** The author is an Assistant Research Fellow of the Institute of Taiwan History, Preparatory Office, Academia Sinica.