

## **Natural History, Anthropology and Knowledge Construction of “Race” in Modern Taiwan: Local History with Global Concept**

Wei-Chi Chen

### **ABSTRACT**

This paper explores the unfolding of modern knowledge of race and racial classification in Taiwan. Ever since natural history became a discipline of study in the early modern era, race has emerged as a global concept of universal human classification. The scientific study of diverse human societies as a discipline began with natural history and evolved into branches of human science, namely ethnology and anthropology. The knowledge construction of human diversity had also changed its focus from identifying distinctive racial characteristics and cataloging human taxonomic units to analyzing the social functioning of human groupings. Although participants in knowledge construction of race carried with them various purposes, such as evangelization, commercial or political interests, they all re/present the societies under study using race, or other concepts of human unit derived from it. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the diverse local human societies of Taiwan were classified and categorized within the global knowledge framework of race by naturalists, missionaries, and anthropologists. The scientific claim of race knowledge in Taiwan made by missionary-naturalist George MacKay and anthropologist Ino Kanori had excluded other representation of local knowledge. Despite of the emergence of other concepts of social classification in modern knowledge construction of human society, race still remains nominally a social unit for identification and distinction.

**Keywords:** Natural history, Anthropology, George Leslie MacKay, Tashiro Yasusada, Ino Kanori, Mori Ushinosuke, Race, Social Classification, Knowledge Construction, Global Concept