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A preliminary study of a dental advertisement in a Taiwan's newspaper during the Japanese colonial period

KEYWORDS

Taiwan;
 Medical advertisements
 in newspapers;
 Pediatric dentistry;
 Orthodontics;
 Dental clinic

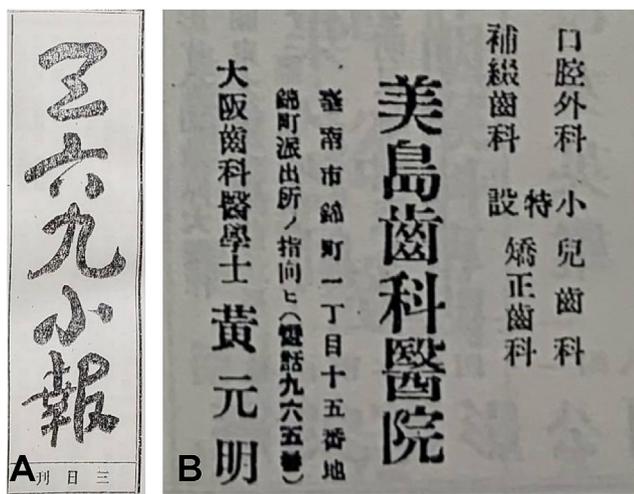
There are many historical materials that can provide valuable information for the study of medical history, including the early medical academic journals, professional books, the documents or statistical data from the government, the medical institutions and organizations and their internal documents, and even the sections related to medical description among the non-medical documents, such as the medical advertisements in the newspapers.^{1,2} During the Japanese colonial period (1895–1945), the modernization system was systematically introduced to Taiwan through the government power for the first time. In addition to the Western medical system, the introduction of the newspaper system was also one of the important processes in Taiwan's modernization. The Taiwan New Newspaper published in Taipei in 1896 and the Taiwan Newspaper Order promulgated in 1917 were the important milestones in the development of newspapers in Taiwan.³

The "369 Tabloid" was a local newspaper in Tainan during the Japanese colonial period. It was a research material for the Taiwan history and the local literature and history. This newspaper used Chinese as the common language, and was first published on September 9, 1930. It was published on the 3rd, 6th, 9th, 13th, 16th, 19th, 23rd, 26th

and 29th of every month, thus it was named after 369. It was published nine times a month and closed on September 6, 1935.⁴ This study selected the "369 Tabloid" as the research material due to the preservation and utilization characteristics of the newspapers (Fig. 1A). The first dental advertisement appeared in this newspaper on October 6, 1930, but a more detailed dental advertisement appeared on January 3, 1931 (Fig. 1B). Through analyzing the advertisement content, it could be seen that the proprietor of the advertisement is Mei-Tao Dental Hospital (Mei-Tao means beautiful island, while hospital is equivalent to the today's clinic.), which specialized in the oral surgery, prosthetic dentistry, pediatric dentistry, and orthodontics, and emphasized that the orthodontic department was specially established. The name of the dentist in charge of this dental hospital was Dr. Yuan-Ming Huang, who obtained a bachelor's degree in dental medicine from Osaka, indicating that he graduated from the Osaka Dental College. However, it should be noted that the Osaka Dental College was established in 1917 and upgraded to the Osaka Dental University in 1947. The advertisement also included the clinic's address (located in Tainan City) and the telephone number (Fig. 1C).

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Mei-Tao Dental Hospital

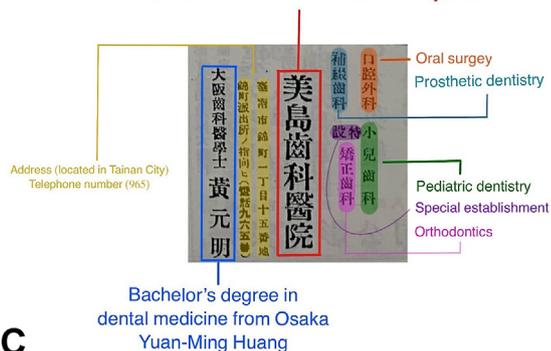


Figure 1 A more detailed dental advertisement in the “369 Tabloid”. (A) The masthead of the “369 tabloid”. (B) A more detailed dental advertisement with multiple specialties in the “369 Tabloid” published on January 3, 1931 for the first time. (C) The schematic diagram shows the English translation of each block of the text in this advertisement. The bachelor’s degree in dental medicine from Osaka indicates that the dentist in charge of this dental hospital, Dr. Yuan-Ming Huang, graduated from the Osaka Dental College. However, it should be noted that the Osaka Dental College was established in 1917 and upgraded to the Osaka Dental University in 1947.

This was the first time that an advertisement appeared in this newspaper claiming that the dental clinic offered the pediatric and orthodontic treatments. From this advertisement, it could at least be proved that the pediatric dentistry and orthodontics were regarded as one of the dental professional branches in Taiwan. The history of this concept could be pushed back to the 1930s. On the other hand, the pediatric dentistry in the advertisement also proved that there was actually a demand for professional diagnosis and treatment of pediatric dentistry in the folk life or social life at that time. The advertisement revealed that the dentist in charge of the dental hospital was a bachelor in dental medicine from the Osaka Dental

College (the current Osaka Dental University), indicating that in addition to the Department of Dentistry of Nihon University, the Osaka Dental College may also be one of the main schools for Taiwanese to study dentistry in Japan at that time. Our previous study on the 1939 dentist list in Taiwan found that Taiwanese dentists were mainly concentrated in Tainan Prefecture at that time.² Therefore, it is foreseeable that the children in Taiwan (Tainan) had the opportunity to undergo orthodontic treatment at least in the 1930s.

According to literature, the children’s oral problems at the beginning of the 20th century may be dominated by the dental caries, gingivitis, tooth hypoplasia, and malocclusion. In the early times, the majority of children’s dental treatments involved the tooth extraction caused by dental caries or tooth replacement. In the subsequent development, the concept of conservative dentistry gradually gained attention, so the treatment of dental caries tended to focus on tooth filling and restoration to avoid premature tooth extraction. At the same time, the concept of oral health care was strengthened to prevent the dental caries or gingivitis.⁵ Based on Western experience, the children’s orthodontics seems to have developed earlier than tooth conservative treatments (such as tooth fillings, restorations, and root canal treatments). The development process of the Taiwan dentistry may also have a similar situation. In the 1930s, the Taiwan dentistry had incorporated the concept of the children’s orthodontic treatment, and only then did the words pediatric dentistry and the special establishment of orthodontics appeared in the dental advertisement.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest relevant to this article.

Acknowledgments

None.

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