



## Correspondence

# The excavation of the book “Essentials of Oral Hygiene” written by Dr. Heijirou Oohashi and published in 1944



### KEYWORDS

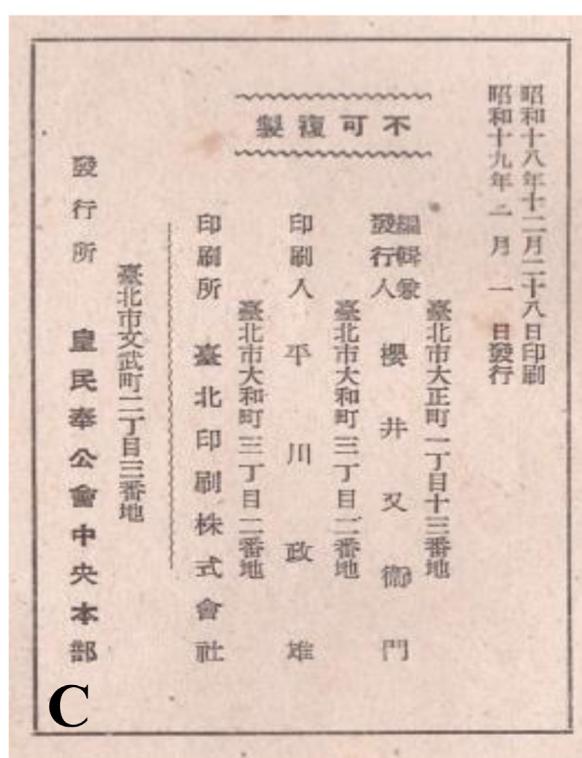
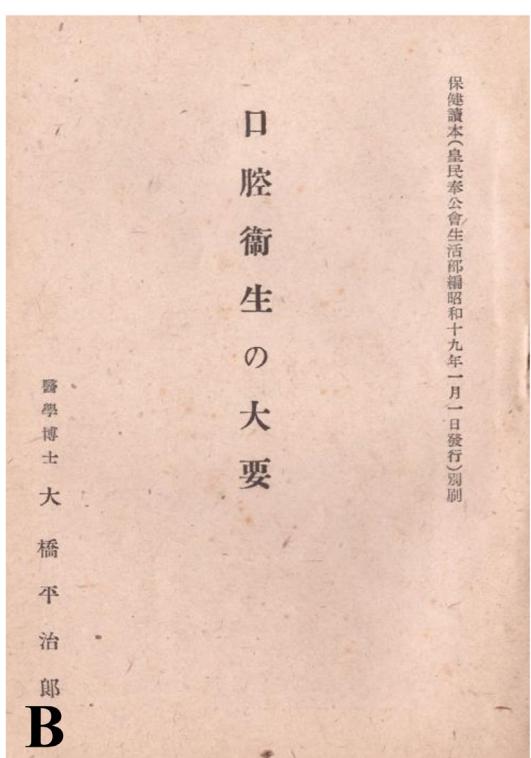
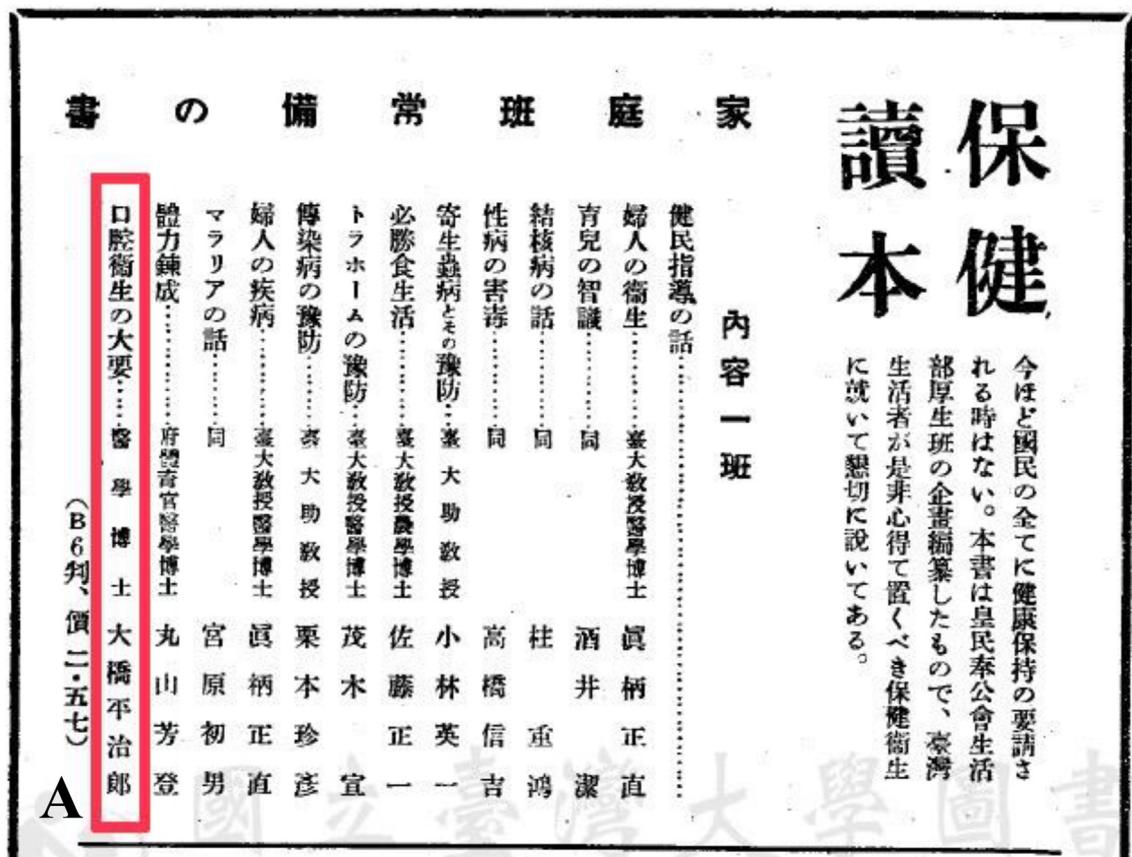
Oral hygiene;  
Dr. Heijirou Oohashi;  
Dental education;  
Dentist

The modern medicine and the medical education system were first introduced to Taiwan during the Japanese colonial period (1895–1945). With the introduction and development of the holistic modern medicine, the modern dentistry in Taiwan had also developed. The earliest official record of a dental clinic in Taiwan was in 1896, when Dr. Chiyomatsu Sakai applied for a license to open his own dental clinic on the main street of Taipei City. The first hospital dentist was Dr. Masayoshi Tomisawa in 1906, when he served as an attending dentist in the dental treatment room of Taiwan Government Taipei Hospital.<sup>1</sup> The regular dentists in Taiwan were mainly the Japanese dentists who came to Taiwan for their practice and careers and the Taiwanese dentists who went to Japan to study the dentistry and returned to Taiwan for their practice. As the dentist number grew, the island-wide Taiwan Dental Association (TDA) was established in 1916. In addition to improving the Taiwan's dental technology level, promoting the oral health knowledge, and correcting the oral care concept among the public were also the key tasks of the TDA.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the concept of oral health care had gradually entered the daily life of the Taiwanese people.

According to the TDA's documentary records, the TDA launched an oral hygiene implementation campaign since 1929. Its main works included providing oral hygiene lectures to the school teachers, setting up the dental clinics in the high schools in Taipei City, holding “Caries Prevention Day” activities, conducting oral examinations for the primary and high school students in Taipei City, and popularizing the oral hygiene concept and oral disease prevention

among the public.<sup>2</sup> However, there was a paucity of the surviving documentary records about the oral hygiene implementation campaign. Fortunately, there was the book “Essentials of Oral Hygiene” written by Dr. Heijirou Oohashi, the former teacher in charge of the dental lectures in the Taipei Imperial University, giving us a chance to get a glimpse of the key contents of public oral health knowledge in the oral hygiene implementation campaign. As Dr. Shizuo Kobayashi, the president of the TDA in the 1940s, said: If the dentists of our generation did not record the history of dental development since Japan ruled Taiwan, and then the subsequent dentists would not know how the Taiwan's dentistry developed.<sup>2</sup> We digitized the contents of this book and were honored to introduce the contents and background of this book using historical research and document analysis methods in this study.

Dr. Heijirou Oohashi's articles on the oral hygiene were included in a book titled “Health Readings” published in 1944 (Fig. 1A). According to the advertisement of “Health Readings”, this book was a common book for families and appealed to all citizens to stay healthy. This book was planned and compiled by the government to explain in detail the health and hygiene knowledge that the Taiwanese residents should pay attention to. It was published by the Taipei branch of Tokyo Publishing House. The “Essentials of Oral Hygiene” we found was a separate volume, which contained the same articles written by Dr. Oohashi in the “Health Readings” and was published by the Kominhokkai (Public Service Association of Imperial Subjects) in 1944 (Fig. 1B and C). This book comprehensively covered the basic dental



**Figure 1** The excavation of the book "Essentials of Oral Hygiene" written by Dr. Heijiro Oohashi and published in 1944. (A) The advertisement of "Health Readings" pointed out that this book was a common book for families and appealed to all citizens to stay healthy. Dr. Heijiro Oohashi's articles on the oral hygiene were included in this book. This image was obtained from the National Taiwan University Library. (B) The book "Essentials of Oral Hygiene" written by Dr. Oohashi we found was a separate volume. (C) This separate volume was published by the Kominhokokai (Public Service Association of Imperial Subjects) in 1944.

knowledge in only 40 pages. These contents were displayed as the oral hygiene knowledge that Dr. Oohashi considered as what the public should know. These contents included: (1) The anatomy of teeth: the types of teeth, the shape and name of teeth, the histology of teeth, the nerves related to face and teeth, and the arrangement and occlusion of teeth; (2) The development of teeth and their control by the environment: the growth of teeth, the completion and growth period of teeth, the key to tooth quality, and the factors controlling tooth development; (3) The tooth development and nutrition; (4) Various factors leading to low tooth quality: vitamins, lipids, carbohydrates, proteins and lime salt, endocrine organ dysfunction, childhood infectious diseases, trauma, and oral bacterial toxins; (5) Dental caries: direct factors of dental caries, dental caries and culture, prevalence rate of dental caries, six-year-old molars (first molars), complications caused by the dental caries, the theory of dental focus infection (oral focus infection); (6) Alveolar pyorrhea: causes and symptoms; (7) Chewing; (8) Practice of the dental care. Furthermore, Dr. Oohashi's final postscript pointed out that these articles convert the rigid dental knowledge into the popular explanations. The dentists can freely choose and use the contents as a lecture material for the oral hygiene education. Apparently, Dr. Oohashi realized that just publishing oral hygiene books was not enough. Promoting oral hygiene education to the public through the dentists was an effective way to popularize the oral health knowledge for the public.

At the end of 1928, Dr. Oohashi who graduated from the Japan Dental Medicine College in 1921 came to Taiwan to teach the medical students the dentistry. In 1939, the Taipei Imperial University established the Chair of Dentistry in the Medical Faculty. Dr. Oohashi was appointed as the teacher in charge of this department for the university-level dental education. After the World War II, he was retained as a professor (a retained Japanese teacher) of NTU. After March 1947, he returned to Japan. In total, Dr. Oohashi devoted himself to the dental education in Taiwan for about 19 years.<sup>3-5</sup>

Regarding the introduction of the modern dentistry, in addition to the development of the dental profession, the establishment of the dental management system, and the provision of the oral health care, it also includes the construction and strengthening of the dental knowledge system. However, it is not only the professional knowledge and skills for the dentists, but also the general oral health knowledge and self-oral care skills for the public. The health care book "Essentials of Oral Hygiene" written by Dr. Oohashi is a concrete action taken by a dental professional and dental educator to promote the oral health and knowledge for the public.

## Declaration of competing interest

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

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