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Distribution of Taiwanese overseas dental students in 1937



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Japan ruled Taiwan since 1895 and initiated the development of Taiwan's modern medical system. In 1899, the Taiwan Government Medical School was established and a school education system for cultivating physicians was launched. However, until the end of Japanese rule in 1945, a school education system for cultivating dentists was not established. Even so, the Taiwan's dental system still flourished during the Japanese colonial period (1895–1945). In addition to the Japanese dentists who came to Taiwan for their practice and careers, the regular dentists in Taiwan during the late Japanese colonial period were mainly Taiwanese dentists who went to Japan to study the dentistry and returned to Taiwan for their practice after completing their dental education.^{1,2}

According to the memories of Dr. Yu-Ching Hong (the second former director of the dental school of National Taiwan University) graduating from the Kyushu Dental Medicine College: "During the Japanese colonial period, Taiwan never established a school related to the dental education. Therefore, all dentists on our island at that time had to go to Japan or Choson to study the dentistry, completed their dental education and then returned to their hometown to start their dental business."³ However, there is no relevant research to further analyze the specific distribution of Taiwanese overseas dental students during the Japanese colonial period. Thus, we tried to discover the distribution of Taiwanese overseas dental students through

the collection and analysis of the relevant historical documents.

This article used the historical research method to excavate the records of the distribution of Taiwanese overseas dental students from the relevant literatures. The most important document was the investigation report on Taiwanese students studying abroad (late 1937) completed by the Security Section of the Police Bureau of the Taiwan Government in April 1938. We extracted the content about the dentistry and drew the distribution map of Taiwanese overseas dental students in 1937 (including the name of the dental education institutions and the number of their Taiwanese dental students), as shown in Fig. 1.

In 1937, there were a total of 165 Taiwanese overseas dental students located in 13 dental education institutions in Japan, Choson, and Manchukuo. Among them, the largest number was 150 (90.9 %) dental students in 11 dental education institutions in Japan. The rest dental students included 14 (8.5 %) students in the Gyeongseong Dental Medicine College in Gyeongseong, Choson (current Seoul, Korea) and one (0.6 %) student in the Russian expatriates First Dental Medicine College in Halbin, Manchukuo. Among the 150 dental students in Japan, the highest number was 103 students in 7 dental education institutions in Tokyo, followed by 25 students in the Kyushu Dental Medicine College in Fukuoka, 16 students in 2 dental education institutions in Saitama, and 6 students in the Osaka Dental

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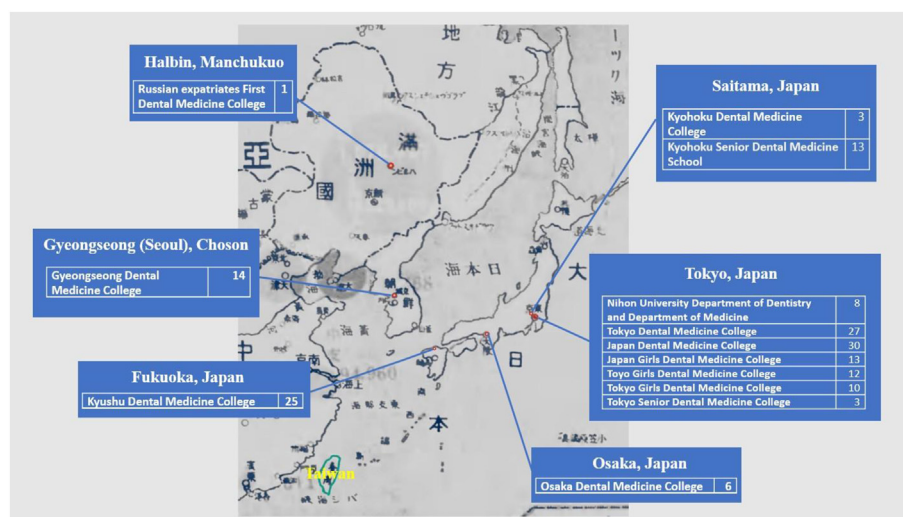


Figure 1 The distribution map of Taiwanese overseas dental students in 1937 (including the name of the dental education institutions and the number of their Taiwanese overseas dental students). This distribution map was based on the map of East Asia approved by the Japan government in 1936. This study marked the cities where each dental education institution was located on the map. It should be noted that there were 2 types of dental education institutions and 2 types of medical education institutions in the Nihon University. However, the original investigation report only calculated the number of Taiwanese overseas students for one type of dental education institution and medical education institution, and it was a combined calculation.

Medicine College in Osaka. Among different overseas dental education institutions, the Japan Dental Medicine College had the most Taiwanese overseas dental students (30 students), followed by the Tokyo Dental Medicine College (27 students) and the Kyushu Dental Medicine College (25 students). There were also 3 dental education institutions that exclusively recruited female dental students, all in Tokyo, with a total of 35 Taiwanese overseas female dental students, accounting for 21.2 % (35/165) of all Taiwanese overseas dental students. The other 130 Taiwanese overseas dental students should be all males, accounting for 78.8 % (130/165) of the 165 overseas dental students. In terms of their geographical location, Fukuoka was the closest to Taiwan, while Halbin was the farthest from Taiwan.

Taiwanese overseas studying in Japan began in November 1895. The Taiwan Government put a lot of effort into education and encouraged Taiwanese to send their children to Japan to study. The purpose was to try to make Taiwanese people to see what Japanese civilization actually looked like at that time, and its political intentions were obvious. There had been a growing trend among Taiwan's upper class to send their children to study in Japan. In 1906, the number of Taiwanese overseas students was only 36, but by 1921 it increased to 699. After the outbreak of the Pacific War in 1942, there were 7091 Taiwanese overseas students. The increase in the number of Taiwanese overseas students studying in Japan from the early days to the end of the Japanese rule showed that studying in Japan had become increasingly popular. The class of students studying abroad comprehensively covered higher education, high schools, and even primary schools. Data by 1937 showed that most Taiwanese overseas students studying in Japan were concentrated in Tokyo and Kyoto, with 70%–90 % of students studying in Tokyo in particular.⁴ When Taiwanese overseas students studying in Japan

received higher education, most of them chose medical-related majors. Among them, the most studied the medicine, followed by the dentistry and pharmacy. According to the list of dentists in 1939, there were only 33 Taiwanese female dentists on the list, accounting for 14.67 % (33/225) of all Taiwanese dentists at that time.⁵ In 1937, 21.2 % (35/165) of Taiwanese overseas dental students were females. Therefore, it could be seen that the trend of Taiwanese female students choosing to study the dentistry was gradually becoming more and more popular.

Although the policy of encouraging Taiwanese to study in Japan during the Japanese colonial period was the political intentions of the rulers, with the increase in the number of Taiwanese overseas dental students returning to Taiwan after completing their dental education, in addition to improving the level of dental technology in Taiwan at that time, these Taiwanese overseas dental students also laid the foundation for the continued development of Taiwan's dental community after the World War II.

Declaration of competing interest

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

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