1 Colonial Taiwan
(1895–1945)

Japanese colonization was a huge factor in Taiwan's development in terms of both economics and social welfare. Modern social work was introduced to Taiwan by the Japanese rather than by the Ch'ing Dynasty, the former rulers of Taiwan, and under the Japanese government, the state mentioned welfare money as part of the regular governmental budget for the first time. We will expound welfare development in colonial Taiwan from five perspectives: origins, structure and administration of the state welfare system, state welfare measures, welfare expenditure, and the impact of welfare measures.

ORIGINS

Before Japanese colonization, the Ch'ing Dynasty had established many welfare measures in Taiwan. Most of them were based on traditional Chinese relief measures in mainland China, and focused on assistance for the poor, women and children.

At the heart of welfare measures in Ch'ing Taiwan was the Yang-chi-yuan which accommodated the disabled, the poor, the sick and the homeless (Taiwan Provincial Documentary Committee, 1971:64; hereafter cited as TPDC). Though the titles of the relief agencies were quite different, they performed similar functions as the Yang-chi-yuan. There were 17 relief agencies in Ch'ing Taiwan. Eight of them were established by local government, five by the collaboration of public and private sectors, and only two by the local gentry (TPDC, 1971:64–8).

Agency relief for widows and orphans in Taiwan had existed since 1870. There were eight agencies in Taiwan, all of which were established by the local gentry or through the collaboration of public and private sectors (TPDC, 1971:89–91).

The characteristics of medical relief were quite different from other relief efforts. In Ch'ing Taiwan, there were four agencies for medical relief. Half of them were established by the Christian missionaries for the purposes of spreading the gospel and introducing Western medical knowledge to Taiwan. Thereafter, the others were established separately by the
local gentry in Hsinchu and the Ch’ing Government in Taipei (TPDC, 1971:111).

Apart from the above major forms of social relief, many welfare measures originating from mainland China were also transplanted to Taiwan, such as the various granaries which stocked rice for famine relief and the public cemeteries for the dead who had no families or relatives. Furthermore, because Ch’ing Taiwan was an underdeveloped area full of settlers and travellers who had left their homeland to build businesses, wayfarer assistance such as free ferries, pavilions and lodging were developed for needy travellers (TPDC, 1971:68–111).

Lin sums up the provisions of social relief by the state and the gentry in Ch’ing’s Taiwan, and finds that welfare measures provided by the gentry or co-sponsored by the gentry and the government accounted for 53.7 per cent of all agencies (Lin, 1990:56–7). He concludes (Lin, 1990:57):

> the government most often played the role of encouragement and advocate. The gentry played central roles in the general field of social relief in Ch’ing Taiwan, donating to, supporting, and executing the activities. The division of labour between the state-sponsored and the gentry-sponsored institutions was based on the cause and severity of need. The former provided traditional and basic assistance for the very poorest, while the latter aided people during emergencies. One can further conclude that state-sponsored institutions provided a refuge for people with national and general needs, while the gentry-sponsored institutions aided those with local and specific needs.

Although there is a lack of comprehensive statistics about the scope of the above welfare measures, it is easy to believe that provision must be limited. For example, the registered poor who received regular assistance from local governments in Ch’ing Taiwan mostly numbered less than 60 every hsien (similar to a county in size) (TPDC, 1971:2–4). This figure changed little during the 200 years of Ch’ing rule, though the population increased greatly over this period. However, the Ch’ing Government was aware that the state, especially local authorities, should have responsibility for care of the very poorest. The *Ch’ing Lu* (Law of Ch’ing) required this of local government officials (TPDC, 1971:1):

> Those who are widowers, widows, orphans, single people, and disabled persons are too poor to self-subsist and have no relatives to feed them. If the responsible officials of local governments should care for them but do not, they are to be punished with sixty beats by caning. If