

MAKING HYGIENIC MODERNITY VISIBLE:

KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION, EVERYDAY LIFE, AND TAIWAN IN
ASIA'S "COLONIAL MODERN"

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JUNE 7, 17:00-18:15 ROOM 301, 3F,
BUILDING 10, SOPHIA UNIVERSITY

This paper explores the issue of “omissions in the process of translation” and the nature of “knowledge consumption.” The growing importance of the everyday life approach in recent postcolonial studies reveals to us a much more complicated set of interactions or negotiated processes between modes of power than was previously appreciated. I take the 1925 Taipei exhibit on police and hygiene as a case study, and focus on the issue of colonial modernity with regard to everyday life in Taiwan under Japanese rule (1895-1945). The new turn of colonial studies rests on a rich ground of “things visible” and “tangible.” Public hygiene – both in terms of the upkeep of the environment and the cleanliness of the individual – was thus a key concept behind the new hygienic technology. This approach addresses the issue of “omissions in the process of translation” and the nature of “knowledge consumption.” In particular, I examine how the colonial knowledge of hygienic modernity was presented and made visible. In an ironic twist, that is to argue, hygienic modernity made visible the power projection knowledge translation in everyday coloniality.

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Language: English / No Prior registration necessary / This talk is organized by Prof. Angela Yiu (FLA, Sophia U.)

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