

# Representing Colonial Modernity in Taiwan: Gotō Shimpei and the Formation of Japanese Colonial Discourse, 1902-1905

Prof. Lung-chih Chang  
Academia Sinica, Taiwan

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## Abstract

Between the pacification of local “bandits” in 1902 and victory in the Russo-Japanese War of 1905, the Japanese colonial state in Taiwan moved from consolidation to development and initiated a series of official propaganda and history projects. This lecture intends to critically examine the instrumental role of Japanese civil administrator Gotō Shimpei (1857-1929, tenure 1898-1906) in formulating the cultural politics that marked early colonial rule. The

discussion will focus on two major categories of Japanese colonial discourse on Taiwan: one is official publications such as *Formosa (Taiwan): its current financial and economic situation* (1902), and *Progress in Taiwan (Formosa) during the past ten years 1895-1904* (1905). The other is government-sponsored projects such as Inō Kanori’s *Ten-year History of the Japanese Occupation of Taiwan* (1905) and especially Takekoshi Yosaburō’s *Japanese Rule in Formosa* (1905). Based on an analysis of the political contingencies, cultural technologies and ideological constructs exemplified by these representative works, Professor Chang argues that far from being rational or teleological, the formation of Japanese colonial discourse was essentially a historical process that

reflected complex tensions of empire and competing visions of modernity. In addition, by exploring the question of colonial knowledge production and representation, this lecture hopes to shed light on important cultural aspects of Japanese colonialism and the significant impacts on post-colonial identity politics in Taiwan.

**Lung-Chih Chang** is a Professor at the Institute of Taiwan History, Academia Sinica in Taiwan



Universiteit Leiden