

## **Seeking Refuge from Air Raids and Politics: Go-playing of Wu Xinrong**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In Japanese colonial Taiwan between 1931 and 1945, board games like Mahjong and Go (碁) had different fates under Japan's "national policy." This paper explores three related issues: the popularity of Go among both Taiwanese and Japanese in Taiwan during the wartime years; factors that motivated a growing number of Taiwanese in that period to learn Go-playing from the Japanese; and the role of Go in the daily life of Taiwanese during the change of regime in the early postwar era. The exploration focuses on the personal experience/diaries of Wu Xinrong, a Taiwanese doctor whose favorite social entertainment between 1940 and 1948 was Go-playing.

The following conclusions can be drawn from the analysis. First, Wu Xinrong started to learn Go-playing in 1940; and by playing the game with Japanese authorities in Taiwan, he tried to discern their mindsets regarding colonization. Second, Go-playing was the best pastime during blackouts and air raids in the Second World War. In particular, after the sudden death of Wu's wife, this game became his means to escape loneliness and to interact with his close friends. Third, in the postwar years, Wu sought refuge from political disturbances by avoiding contact with the outside world; while playing Go with his old friends became his most cherished enjoyment, particularly as he entered old age and experienced physical ailments.

**Keywords:** Air Raid, Go, Wu Xinrong, Blackout