

## **Social Observation, Political Participation and Intellectual Resources of Huang Wang-cheng in 1920s**

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### **ABSTRACT**

With reference to *The Diary of Ng Ong-Seng*, this paper analyzes the observations, choices, actions and thoughts of Huang Wang-cheng in the 1920s and discusses how and why Huang, as a local Taiwan intellectual, engaged in political and social movements initiated by overseas students from Tokyo. While everyone has different living environment, background knowledge and thinking, through analyzing one's personal factors, life experiences and social contexts would shed light on how one would deal with and make choices in face of significant historical events.

In terms of personal factors, unfair treatments suffered by Taiwanese under Japanese colonial rule were not only the main reason why Huang resigned from the public elementary school, but also inspired his strive for equality. Therefore, when Huang worked for Tsai Lien-fang's family in Taichung as a tutor and asset manager in the early 1920s, he paid close attention to and supported the Taiwan Parliament Petition League Movement. Moreover, through the social network of the Tsai family, he became acquainted with the core members of the Movement such as Lin Hsien-t'ang. Huang returned to his hometown Hsinchu in 1925, thereafter served as a speaker of Taiwan Cultural Association and a journalist of *The Taiwan Minpao*. In this way, he could provide steady income for his family while pursuing his own ideals.

As for life experiences, Huang, when working in Tsai family, also made friends with Qian Ze-shen, a youth from Nanjing. His acquaintance with Qian fostered in him a habit to speak Mandarin and interest in vernacular literature. Qian also provided him knowledge of the situation in China. These life experiences later became invaluable assets for Huang when he got involved in political and social movements, wrote articles and commentaries on the then political situation in East Asia.

Regarding social contexts of the 1920s, first of all, *The Taiwan Minpao* containing articles primarily written in vernacular literary style grew into an important journal that

represented the aspirations of Taiwanese and instigated public opinion. Huang's creole writing style, which was a mix of vernacular Taiwanese, Japanese and Mandarin endowed him with an opportunity and a unique qualification for being employed by *The Taiwan Minpao*. Secondly, the 1920s saw a large number of libraries set up as 'reading facilities', a symbol of modern civilization. Against such background, Hsinchu Library of Hsinchu State became an important channel through which Huang gained access to new information and knowledge. What he learnt from reading was then passed onto the readers of *The Taiwan-Minpo* through the articles he wrote.

**Keywords:** Huang Wang-cheng, Social Observation, *The Taiwan Minpao*, Intellectual Resources, Reading Facilities