

Leisure Life of a Rural Youth in Taiwan under Japanese Rule: “Diary of Chih-ying Lu”

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ABSTRACT

With reference to the diary of Chih-ying Lu from 1933 to the early 1940s, this research explored various aspects of leisure life in the township of Ta-shu, Kaohsiung Prefecture. As mentioned in his diary, Lu had engaged in different leisure activities such as billiard, swimming, baseball, and violin. The choice of leisure activities in fact would depend on one's marital status, interpersonal relations, and self-gratification. At different stages of life, Lu achieved different levels of self-satisfaction/achievement through participation in leisure activities. When Lu first started farming, he satisfied himself with winning sports games. After being a secretary of the agricultural cooperative, Lu's focus shifted to the social functions of leisure activities. As a nine-to-five office worker, Lu had to coordinate the rhythm of leisure with standard working hours and routine work week schedule. Although leisure activities are conducive to self-achievement, they also consume time and stirred anxiety under the pressures of reality. Engaging in leisure activities can sometimes regulate work stress and life responsibilities, and can sometimes create conflicts in time management. Furthermore, according to Lu's diary on participation of leisure activities organized by the Youth League, it was clear how the social mobilization mechanism during the war encouraged engagement by igniting the participants' emulation and enthusiasm to pursue self-achievement, rather than through rigid implementation of social education. The study of leisure history on the basis of Lu's diary provides a new perspective different from studying statistics and yearbook records, enables further understanding of the function and significance of leisure activities with full consideration of the participants' social identity and family roles in the context of everyday life.

Keywords: Leisure, Billiard, Swimming, Baseball, Violin, Sports, Youth League