

Two Faces of Socialist Weiqi, 1956-1966

By

Zhao Yiyang

Advised by: Jacob Eyferth

BA Preceptor: Thomas Gimbel

MA Preceptor: David Cantor-Echols

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Abstract

The thesis examines the two major developments of the game of Weiqi in the People's Republic of China (PRC) from 1956 to 1966. The game was traditionally considered as an art form, but in 1956, the socialist state redefined it as a sport. Moreover, starting in 1960, China and Japan used the game in a diplomatic role by exchanging Weiqi delegations. Employing a variety of sources, including archival materials, oral history, newspaper articles, rulebooks, and game records, this thesis argues that these two processes were intertwined. In the early 1950s, Weiqi was relegated as a United Front affair. Yet, through establishing Weiqi as a sport in 1956, the Chinese state extended its direct control over the game. It thus was able to use to the game on the diplomatic stage. On the other hand, the so-called "Weiqi diplomacy" facilitated the making of Weiqi as a sport, as Chinese sports leadership learned organizational skills from the Japanese Nihon Ki-in. The Weiqi exchanges also prepared Chinese officials with invaluable experience that they utilized in other forms of cultural and sports diplomacy.

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Note on Terminology

Weiqi 圍棋 is known as Go in English. I have decided to use the Chinese transliteration in my thesis instead of the English term for three main reasons. Firstly, I want to highlight the Chinese origin of the game, while the English word “Go” comes from the game’s Japanese name, *igo* 囲碁. As I will show in the following thesis, Weiqi’s status as a Chinese invention has profound implications. Secondly, the main historical agents in my thesis, Chinese players and Chinese Communist Party leaders, knew the game by the name of Weiqi. Thirdly, the term “Go” may be confused with the verb “to go.” The Japanese refer to the game as *igo* 囲碁, simply, *go* 碁. Nevertheless, for the sake of consistency, I have decided to use Weiqi throughout my thesis even when discussing the game in Japan. For Weiqi terminologies, I adopt standard English expressions. However, for unique Chinese or Japanese rules, I use transliterations from Chinese or Japanese.

I have similarly decided to transliterate Chinese chess as Xiangqi 象棋. I want to avoid confusion with chess, which is known as *guojixiangqi* 國際象棋 (“International Xiangqi”) in China.

Introduction

During the Cultural Revolution, the game of Weiqi was not spared the trouble. Weiqi is a Chinese boardgame with a history of perhaps more than 3,000 years, and it has been the quintessential game of the Chinese literati, at least since the Tang dynasty (618-907).¹ However, Weiqi's status of being one of the traditional "Four Arts" (四藝) only rendered it part of the "Four Olds" (四舊) during the Cultural Revolution.² Weiqi was banned in some public places, and *Weiqi 圍棋*, the only monthly journal of the game, was forced to end publication.³

The most serious blow came in October 1969. By that time, the National Sports Committee (NSC) was in the hands of the Military Control Committee (MCC).⁴ The MCC representative at the NSC reported the scheduled abolition of several sport programs, including Weiqi, to Premier Zhou Enlai. Zhou instructed that Weiqi must be saved for diplomatic purposes.⁵ Unfortunately for Weiqi, Zhou Enlai's order was, in the end, ignored. Weiqi lost its status as a sport and would not recover until 1973.⁶ However, this interaction between Zhou and the MCC official reflects the two major developments of Weiqi in the People's Republic of China. Firstly, for Weiqi to lose its status as a sport, it had to become a sport in the first place. Never before did Weiqi have any association with sport. It was, after all, a traditional art form. However, the socialist

¹ Marc L. Moskowitz, *Go Nation: Chinese Masculinities and the Game of Weiqi in China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 42.

² The "Four Arts" included Chinese zither, Weiqi, calligraphy, and painting. The "Four Olds" were Old Ideas, Old Culture, Old Customs, and Old Habits.

³ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo 超越自我* (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1986), 158–59.

⁴ Xiong Xiaozheng and Zhong Bingshu, eds., *Xinzhongguo Tiyu 60nian 新中国体育60年* (Beijing: Beijing tiyu daxue chubanshe, 2010), 128.

⁵ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 168–69.

⁶ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 169.

state recognized it as a sport in 1956 and, therefore, started the process of transforming it into one. In Zhou's response, he pointed to the other development of Weiqi in socialist China. Indeed, Weiqi served diplomatic purposes. From 1960 to 1966, Japan sent Weiqi delegations to China annually, and China returned with four delegations to Japan. This "Weiqi diplomacy" was crucial for Sino-Japanese relations.

This thesis traces these two developments of Weiqi in socialist China in the 1950s and 60s. I argue that the processes of making Weiqi a sport and using it diplomatically were intertwined. On the one hand, putting Weiqi under the Chinese sport organization made Weiqi diplomacy possible, and experiences gained through Sino-Japanese Weiqi interactions were utilized in other forms of sports diplomacy. On the other hand, learning from the Japanese fostered the systemization of Weiqi in China, thereby bolstering its status as a form of sport. To be sure, these two processes were not without tensions between them, and the focus seems to have shifted to the diplomatic side in the 1960s. Nevertheless, they worked well together overall and produced significant political effects, both domestic and international. On the domestic side, since it was a common belief that the fortune of Weiqi correlates with the fortune of the nation, Chinese communists sought to show the achievements of socialist construction by improving the players' skills in Weiqi. Establishing it as a sport program and learning from top Japanese players served this aim. Weiqi also proved crucial to China's diplomatic policy towards Japan. Weiqi found its way to Japan at least by Chinese Tang dynasty, and it had become the national game (国技) of Japan. By the twentieth century, Japanese players were far superior to their Chinese counterparts in terms of skills. More

importantly, Japanese Weiqi players had close ties to the ruling Liberal Democratic Party. Thus, the Chinese sought to impress the visiting players through carefully designed reception, thereby attempting to influence the Japanese elites.

A few caveats are necessary. While discussing Weiqi in China, I am more concerned with elite Weiqi players who became state-sponsored athletes than amateur players. The everyday experience of playing Weiqi at parks, teahouses, and Weiqi clubs in China was varied and worthy of further research, but it goes beyond the scope of this research, which is more interested in state initiatives and their political effects. Elite and ordinary players felt the impacts of the developments of Weiqi since 1956 differently. The elite players arguably experienced more differences than park-goers, so I choose to focus on the former rather than the latter. It is also important to recognize that the sport-ization of Weiqi was by no means inevitable. There existed several competing projects for Weiqi in socialist China. Many players voiced their own schemes for Weiqi reforms. I will take some of them into account to highlight the players' agency. Nevertheless, since this thesis focuses on the state-led project, I will not be able to cover all the competing plans.

Scholars have approached Chinese state-led sports projects from the Republican era onwards from various perspectives. In *Marrow of the Nation*, Andrew D. Morris argues that the very concept that *tiyu* 體育 (sport/physical culture) offered was instrumental in transforming the Chinese people from imperial subjects to citizens of a modern nation-state.⁷ While Morris focuses on the sports program of the Chinese

⁷ Andrew D. Morris, *Marrow of the Nation: A History of Sport and Physical Culture in Republican China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004).

Nationalists, Zeng Biao works on its Communist counterpart by studying the sports activities in the Jiangxi Soviet in the 1930s.⁸ Zeng reveals that Communist sports helped the masses in the Red Area in preparing for the war. Amanda G. Shuman's dissertation examines state-sponsored sports in socialist China between 1949 and 1966, the period on which this thesis focuses.⁹ She makes a careful distinction between mass sport and elite sport and argues that the Chinese state used sports to mold ideal socialist subjects while simultaneously challenging the Western dominance of international sports through elite sports. While these studies have furthered our understanding of sports' role in state-building, they tend to see sports as a fixed category involving not only Western sports but also militarized sport and martial arts. I would challenge this view by considering the case of Weiqi. Weiqi was recognized as a sport only in 1956, and it took several steps to establish Weiqi's status as a sport. This process is arguably not finished till this day, as people still sometimes question whether Weiqi is a sport. Therefore, I propose that sport's meaning is not fixed but is an ongoing project.

Scholars of Chinese sports have generally agreed upon the importance of Soviet influence.¹⁰ For Weiqi specifically, existing literature has suggested that China only recognized Weiqi as a sport based on the Soviet chess example.¹¹ While acknowledging the Soviet influence on Chinese sports, I intend to highlight the peculiarities of the Chinese sports project. I hypothesize that the 1956 reclassification

⁸ Zeng Biao, *Zhongyang Suqu Tiyushi 中央苏区体育史* (Nanchang: Jiangxi gaoxiao chubanshe, 1999).

⁹ Amanda G. Shuman, "The Politics of Socialist Athletes in the People's Republic of China, 1949-1966" (PhD diss., University of California Santa Cruz, 2014).

¹⁰ Shuman, "The Politics of Socialist Athletes in the People's Republic of China, 1949-1966"; Xiong Xiaozheng and Zhong Bingshu, *Xinzhongguo Tiyu 60nian*; Zeng Biao, *Zhongyang Suqu Tiyushi*.

¹¹ For example, Liu Shancheng, ed., *Zhongguo weiqi shi 中国围棋史* (Chengdu: Chengdu shidai chubanshe, 2007), 280.

of Weiqi was due more to the Chinese's desire to develop an unique sports project that incorporated different sorts of indigenous physical culture than the model of chess in the Soviet Union.

Sports historians have also paid serious attention to sports' utility in diplomacy.¹² Historians of Chinese sports prove to be no exceptions. The so-called "ping-pong diplomacy" between China and the United States has perhaps garnered the most scholarly attention.¹³ The international politics around China's participation in the Olympics is also covered by scholars in the field.¹⁴ Others like Amanda G. Shuman, Fan Hong, and Lu Zhouxiang highlight the Chinese participation in the Games of the Newly Emerging Forces and examine its diplomatic utility.¹⁵ Shuman also notes the Sino-Japanese "volleyball diplomacy" – the Daimatsu Hirofumi delegation in 1965.¹⁶

The Sino-Japanese "Weiqi diplomacy" is not a novel topic either. Several Chinese journal articles have already touched upon it.¹⁷ However, these essays merely repeat the same anecdotes without verifying the historical facts. With the exception of Zhang Jianwei's article, none of them employs any primary sources, and even Zhang only uses

¹² For example, see Heather L. Dichter and Andrew L. Johns, eds., *Diplomatic Games: Sport, Statecraft, and International Relations since 1945* (University Press of Kentucky, 2014).

¹³ For example, see Xu Guoqi, *Olympic Dreams: China and Sports, 1895-2008* (Harvard University Press, 2008).

¹⁴ Xu Guoqi, *Olympic Dreams: China and Sports, 1895-2008*; Susan Brownell, "'Sport and Politics Don't Mix' China's Relationship with the IOC during the Cold War," in *East Plays West: Sport and the Cold War*, ed. Stephen Wagg and David Andrews (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 253–71.

¹⁵ Shuman, "The Politics of Socialist Athletes in the People's Republic of China, 1949-1966"; Fan Hong and Lu Zhouxiang, "Politics First, Competition Second: Sport and China's Foreign Diplomacy in the 1960s and 1970s," in *Diplomatic Games: Sport, Statecraft, and International Relations since 1945*, ed. Heather L. Dichter and Andrew L. Johns (University Press of Kentucky, 2014), 385–407.

¹⁶ Shuman, "The Politics of Socialist Athletes in the People's Republic of China, 1949-1966," 333–58.

¹⁷ For example, Zhan Shizhong, "Chen Yi Yuanshuai de 'Weiqi Waijiao' -- Zhongriguanxizhengchanghua Jincheng Zhong de Teshu Yimu 陈毅元帅的'围棋外交'——中日关系正常化进程中的特殊一幕," *Fujian Dangshi Yuekan*, no. 10 (2001): 9–12; Shi Shantao, "'lanhua Waijiao' Yu 'Weiqi Waijiao' -- Zhongriguanxizhengchanghua Guochengzhong de Liangze Quwen '兰花外交'与'围棋外交'——中日关系正常化过程中的两则趣闻," *Dangshi Wenhui*, no. 9 (2009): 20–23; Peng Hui, "Weiqi Tanlu, Miaoshou Huajiangju -- Chen Yi Yishou Jihuo Zhongri Jiaowang de 'Miaoqi' 围棋探路,妙手化僵局——陈毅一手激活中日交往的'妙棋,'" *Shijiqiao*, no. 18 (2011): 30; Zhang Jianwei, "Zhongguo Weiqi Waijiao de Lishi Kaocha Yu Xinshidai Zhanlue Suqiu 中国围棋外交的历史考察与新时代战略诉求," *Zhongguo Weiqi Luncong* 5 (2020): 276–93.

Chinese Weiqi journals and fails to consider any Japanese sources or Chinese and Japanese archival materials. These shortcomings make the existing works unconvincing.

This thesis reexamines the “Weiqi diplomacy” based on Chinese and Japanese sources, archival materials, and oral history. I seek to go beyond the simple anecdote of Chen Yi and Matsumura Kenzō agreeing upon a Weiqi delegation in 1959. I agree with the existing literature that this instance helped to thaw the ice between China and Japan after the 1958 break. Nevertheless, I take it as merely the start of the larger “Weiqi diplomacy.” I propose to take the Sino-Japanese Weiqi interactions from 1960 to 1966 as a whole as the true “Weiqi diplomacy.” I think the regularized Weiqi delegations between two countries were diplomatically significant. Specifically, I argue that by strategically receiving the Japanese players, the Chinese attempted to impress them with achievements of socialist construction, thereby seeking to influence the Japanese politicians whom these players had a close relationship with. Moreover, I will show that the experiences gained through this “Weiqi diplomacy” were utilized in other cultural diplomacies, including the volleyball case Shuman studies. Furthermore, I take the “Weiqi diplomacy” not as an isolated event but as a process that coexisted with the transformation of Weiqi into a sport. I think these two complementing developments constituted the larger Weiqi project in socialist China. In this way, I consider the domestic impacts of the socialist Weiqi, including but not limited to the “Weiqi diplomacy.”

This thesis builds on a variety of sources. I consult Chinese archival materials along with state organs such as *People's Daily* 人民日報 to study state initiatives. I have

visited Jiangsu Provincial Archive and Shanghai and Hangzhou Municipal Archives, and they provide important documents, including reports on the organization of provincial Weiqi teams, players' payrolls, and local sports committees' internal reports on receiving Japanese Weiqi delegations. I rely heavily on Japanese newspapers, especially *Asahi Shinbun* 朝日新聞, for the details of the Japanese delegations from the visitors' perspective. I complement these news reports with the players' own accounts of their experiences from their autobiographies as well as their writings in Weiqi journals. For players who did not leave little writings behind, oral history proves invaluable. I have interviewed the daughter of the 1960 Chinese national Weiqi champion to learn about her father. Moreover, I seek to highlight the players' agency in shaping Weiqi in China by studying their speeches at local Political Consultative Conferences, the introductory manuals they authored, and player-led Weiqi clubs. Finally, I consider the Weiqi rules published by the National Sports Committee to demonstrate in concrete terms how the Chinese sport officials transformed Weiqi into a sport.

Living off the Board: Weiqi Players in the Early Twentieth Century

As one of the “Four Arts” 四藝 (Chinese zither, Weiqi, calligraphy, and painting), Weiqi has been the quintessential game of the Chinese literati for the past millennium. As such, it becomes a common theme in Chinese poetry. Indeed, based on one account, more than a hundred Tang poets wrote about the game, while the number of Song poets who wrote about it exceeds four hundred.¹⁸ Lu You 陸游 (1125-1210), a renowned poet from the Southern Song Dynasty, alone crafted over 130 Weiqi-related poems.¹⁹ Through playing and watching the game, the literati not only sought enjoyment but also attempted to cultivate their minds as well as contemplate the transcendental world of the immortals.²⁰

Yet Weiqi was never the monopoly of literati elites. There existed a number of Weiqi professionals who lived off the game. Unfortunately for them, they were never title of state subsidies as their Japanese counterparts did in the Tokugawa period (1603-1867). Nevertheless, they were able to carve out a career thanks to the vibrant urban Weiqi culture. Some top players served as private tutors or guests at wealthy patrons’ places. Recalling the guests in the Southern Song dynasty, Wu Zimu 吳自牧 wrote

¹⁸ Han Fei, “Lun Tang-Song Shige Zhong de Weiqi Huodong 论唐宋诗歌中的围棋活动” (Master’s Thesis, Nanjing, Nanjing Normal University, 2017), 22.

¹⁹ Guo Yajun, “Lu You Weiqi-Shi Yanjiu 陆游围棋诗研究” (Master’s Thesis, Chongqing, Xinan University, 2018).

²⁰ Zu-yan Chen, “The Art of Black and White: Wei-Ch’i in Chinese Poetry,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 117, no. 4 (1997): 643–53; Qi Dongfang, “Literati and Poems about Go (Weiqi 圍棋),” trans. Luke Habberstad, *The Journal of Chinese Literature and Culture* 3, no. 1 (2016): 85–107; He Yunbo, *Weiqi Yu Zhongguo Wenhua 围棋与中国文化* (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2001), 365–87; He Yunbo, “Weiqi Yu Yili: Sixiangshi Shiye Zhong de Song-Dai Weiqi Shige 围棋与义理: 思想史视野中的宋代围棋诗歌,” *Zhongguo Yunwen Xuekan* 27, no. 3 (July 2013): 65–70.

that “There were also people who talked about the past and the present, recited poetry, played Weiqi and lute, played pitch-pot and polo, and painted bamboo and orchids. They were called ‘catered guests,’ also known as idle people.”²¹ This practice continued in the Qing dynasty, where wealthy Weiqi enthusiasts in commercial centers such as Suzhou and Yangzhou patronized legendary Weiqi masters Fan Xiping 范西屏 (1709-?) and Shi Ding’an 施定庵 (1710-1770), two legendary Weiqi masters.²² These Weiqi patrons organized tournaments with substantial prizes, such as the famous “Ten Games at Danghu.” 当湖十局. A wealthy Zhejiang gentry hired Fan and Shi, both in their prime, to play at his place. They played thirteen games, and eleven of them survive to this day.²³ Besides providing for the Weiqi masters, the Weiqi patrons sponsored the publications of the players’ writings, thereby allowing masters like Fan and Shi to translate their exceptional skills into books.²⁴

Others who were either unqualified or unwilling to become guests earned a living by setting up a spot in the marketplace and profiting from playing Weiqi with others for stakes or teaching others to play. The literati looked down on them and derogatorily referred to them as “Weiqi Workers” 棋工.²⁵ However, these players enjoyed some respect from the common people and claimed to earn decent incomes.²⁶ A comment from the High Qing noted that “anyone who is skilled in Weiqi can quickly earn 1,000

²¹ Wu Zimu, “Menglianglu: Juan shijiu 夢梁錄：卷十九,” Chinese Text Project, accessed June 3, 2022, <https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&chapter=658485>.

²² Fuyunmozaizhuren, *Haichang Ermiao Ji* 海昌二妙集 (Tianjing: Tianjing guji shudian, 1986), 1–6.

²³ Liu Shancheng, *Zhongguo weiqi shi*, 198.

²⁴ Liu Shancheng, *Zhongguo weiqi shi*, 205–6.

²⁵ Liu Shancheng, *Zhongguo weiqi shi*, 138.

²⁶ Liu Shancheng, *Zhongguo weiqi shi*, 138.

jin (596.816 kg, though it probably did not mean to be descriptive) gold.”²⁷ This may be an overstatement, but it is likely that these players were materially well off.

The collapse of the Qing dynasty in 1912 had little impact on the livelihoods of Weiqi professionals. Like in the past, some of the best Weiqi players sought the patronage of wealthy and influential Weiqi enthusiasts, while others resorted to Weiqi gambling to make a living. Arguably one of the most significant patrons of Chinese Weiqi in the early twentieth century was Duan Qirui 段祺瑞 (1865-1936), a prominent Beiyang warlord. The Communist Marshal Chen Yi 陳毅 (1901-1972) famously commented that “Duan Qirui did a lot of bad things in his life, but he did some good things for Weiqi.”²⁸ According to a former servant, Duan played Weiqi almost every afternoon and sponsored several renowned players for his entertainment, providing them with salaries ranging from eighty to a hundred yuan per month.²⁹ For example, in 1925, Duan paid the then 11-year-old future superstar Wu Qingyuan 吳清源 (1914-2014) a hundred *yuan* per month. Wu had recently lost his father, but this income was large enough to sustain his family of six.³⁰ Besides the regular salaries, Duan occasionally offered the players bonuses while playing.³¹ Another significant supporter of Weiqi was Zhang Danru 張澹如 (1882-?), born into a wealthy family of salt and silk merchants, with an elder brother who was an early patron of the Nationalist

²⁷ Quoted in Zhu Chunsheng, “Xu Xingbiao Zhuan 徐星標傳,” in *Tiexiaoan Shichao 鐵簫庵詩鈔*, 250, accessed October 28, 2021, <https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&res=91385>.

²⁸ Quoted in Zhao Zhiyun, “Jindai Weiqi Dahoutai Duan Qirui 近代围棋大后台段祺瑞,” *Zhongguo Weiqi Nianjian* 1992 (1992): 424.

²⁹ Wang Chuqing, “Duan Qirui Gongguan Jianwen 段祺瑞公馆见闻,” in *Wenshi Ziliao Xuanji* (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Chubanshe, 1982), 254.

³⁰ Kiriya Keiichi, *Go Seigen to Sono Kyōdai: Goke No Hyakumen 吳清源とその兄弟：呉家の百年* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2005), 59–60; Mizuguchi Fujio, *Shinzuī Wa Chōwa Ni Ari : Go Seigen Go No Uchū 真髓は調和にあり：呉清源碁の宇宙* (Tokyo: Nō-san-gyoson Bunka Kyōkai, 2003), 20.

³¹ Zhao Zhiyun, “Jindai Weiqi Daihoutai Duan Qirui,” 427.

Party.³² Unlike Duan, who mainly supported players in Beijing and Tianjing, Zhang sponsored players in the South. He established the “Shanghai Weiqi Research Association” 上海圍棋研究會, a Weiqi club that paid players who were invited to participate.³³

However, securing patronage was a privilege only a few players were able to enjoy, and even the best players sometimes had to find other means of livelihood. This was especially true when Duan lost his power in 1926 and Zhang lost his business in the 1930s. As a result, players turned to playing Weiqi for stakes in order to make a living. Weiqi gambling was generally conducted in teahouses, with Haifengxuan 海丰軒 and Dechang 德昌 teahouses in Beijing being popular among higher-class Weiqi gamblers in the 1920s and 30s.³⁴ Meanwhile, Weiqi fans from the laboring masses tended to frequent cheaper teahouses such as Huoshenmiao 火神廟 and Longfusi 隆福寺.³⁵

Two main methods were used for gambling on Weiqi. One way was for players to arrange a stake for a single game, with the winner taking all the money.³⁶ The majority of better players, however, preferred the other method. Before the game started, the players would agree on how much a point was worth, and the winner would receive money based on how much he won by.³⁷ For instance, if a player won by five points and they had agreed that a point equaled one *yuan*, he would receive five *yuan*. This system certainly favored strong players, but the existence of handicap allowed worse

³² Liu Shancheng, *Zhongguo weiqi shi*, 245.

³³ Liu Shancheng, *Zhongguo weiqi shi*, 245–46.

³⁴ Chen Dai, “Huiyi Beijing Ersanshi Niandai de Weiqi Huodong 回忆北京二三十年代的围棋活动,” *Tiyu Wenshi* 184, no. 2 (1984): 44.

³⁵ Luo Jingsheng, *Dangdai Beijing Weiqi Shihua 当代北京围棋史话* (Beijing: Capital Normal University Press, 2019), 23.

³⁶ Luo Jingsheng, *Dangdai Beijing Weiqi Shihua*, 24.

³⁷ Luo Jingsheng, *Dangdai Beijing Weiqi Shihua*, 24.

players to stand a chance at better players. Moreover, playing against stronger players for stakes was “a way to pay tuition to them.”³⁸ Good players did not necessarily need to pay for the stakes themselves. In the late 1940s, Huang Yongji 黄永吉 (1928-2012), a future national champion and then a college student in Nanjing, regularly attended Weiqi teahouses in Nanjing. Despite not having much money, fellow teahouse players, aware of Huang’s skills, offered to pay for his gambling funds so they could enjoy watching him play. Huang won a substantial income this way and was able to purchase four nice suits.³⁹

Besides gambling themselves, elite players were sometimes entrusted to run Weiqi teahouses. For example, Cui Yunzhi 崔雲趾 (1892-1973), an elite player in Beijing and a former guest of Duan Qirui, ran several Weiqi teahouses over the years, including the aforementioned Huoshenmiao teahouse.⁴⁰ As the host, Cui earned money by taking a percentage of the guests’ betting money.⁴¹ Another way of earning was through the sale of admission tickets. Guests could play as many games as they wanted, provided they paid for the tickets.⁴²

The Guo brothers exemplify the experiences of elite players at the Republic era. Guo Xuchu 過旭初 (1903-1992) was born in 1903, and his brother Guo Tisheng 過惕生 (1907-1989) was four years younger than him.⁴³ Their family hometown, Shexian 歙縣 county, Anhui province, had a rich Weiqi tradition and had produced a

³⁸ Chen Dai, “Huiyi Beijing Ersanshi Niandai de Weiqi Huodong,” 44.

³⁹ Interview with Huang Liping, Huang Yongji’s daughter, interview by Zhao Yiyang, June 27, 2022.

⁴⁰ Luo Jingsheng, *Dangdai Beijing Weiqi Shihua*, 25.

⁴¹ Luo Jingsheng, *Dangdai Beijing Weiqi Shihua*, 25–26.

⁴² Luo Jingsheng, *Dangdai Beijing Weiqi Shihua*, 25.

⁴³ Zhou Peijin, ed., *Shexian Nianjian 歙县年鉴* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 402–3; Su Jie, “Weiqi Yuanlao Guo Tisheng 围棋元老过惕生,” *Jianghuai Wenshi* 1996, no. 2 (April 20, 1996): 77–84.

number of top players in the Qing dynasty.⁴⁴ The Guo family had a strong connection to Weiqi, with one of their ancestors being the best player of late Ming, Guo Bailing 過百齡 (1587-1660), and their father being a literati-amateur player.⁴⁵ Influenced by their hometown and family, the brothers began learning Weiqi from a young age.⁴⁶ At age twenty-one, Xuchu attracted Duan Qirui's attention after winning a tournament in Beijing, who sponsored him for two years being ousted from power in 1926.⁴⁷ He then moved to Shanghai and secured Zhang Danru's sponsorship.⁴⁸ In the same year, the 19-year-old Tisheng also left home for Shanghai.⁴⁹ After making a name for himself in Shanghai, Tisheng went to Beijing and further enhanced his reputation by playing with Gu Shuiru 顧水如 (1892-1971) and Wu Qingyuan.⁵⁰ In 1927, Gu introduced Tisheng to serve Duan Qirui, who had moved to Tianjing.⁵¹ Although Tisheng was a better player than Duan, he accepted the three-stone handicap Duan offered to entertain the powerful patron.⁵² Probably since playing Weiqi alone was increasingly hard to sustain oneself in the late 1920s, Xuchu moved to Wuhan and found employment at the Railroad Bureau.⁵³ Tisheng soon joined his brother in Wuhan, and they created a Weiqi club there.⁵⁴ Unfortunately, the disastrous 1931 Yangtze–Huai River floods cut the Guo

⁴⁴ Chenxing, "Qiuping Chicheng Wushiqiu -- Fang Zhuming Weiqijia Guo Tisheng Xiansheng 楸枰驰骋五十秋——访著名围棋家过惕生先生," *Beijing Tiyu* 1981, no. 3 (April 1, 1981): 2.

⁴⁵ Chenxing, "Qiuping Chicheng Wushiqiu," 2; Su Jie, "Weiqi Yuanlao Guo Tisheng," 77.

⁴⁶ Zhou Peijin, *Shexian Nianjian*, 403.

⁴⁷ Zhang Shuguang and Wu Baole, "'Beiping Weiqishe Tekan' Qisheng Nie Weiping de Qimenglaoshi Guo Xuchu Yizhu 《北平围棋社特刊》棋圣聂卫平的启蒙老师过旭初遗著," *Dongfang Shoucang* 2010, no. 9 (September 15, 2010): 68.

⁴⁸ Zhou Peijin, *Shexian Nianjian*, 403.

⁴⁹ Chenxing, "Qiuping Chicheng Wushiqiu," 2.

⁵⁰ Chenxing, "Qiuping Chicheng Wushiqiu," 2.

⁵¹ Liu Luosheng, *Zhongguo Weiqi Wushinian Fengyun 中国围棋五十年风云* (Beijing: Renmin tiyu chubanshe, 1998), 2.

⁵² Liu Luosheng, *Zhongguo Weiqi Wushinian Fengyun*, 2–3.

⁵³ Zhang Shuguang and Wu Baole, "'Beiping Weiqishe Tekan' Qisheng Nie Weiping de Qimenglaoshi Guo Xuchu Yizhu," 68.

⁵⁴ Su Jie, "Weiqi Yuanlao Guo Tisheng," 78.

brothers' tenure at Wuhan short.⁵⁵ In the 1930s, they resorted to Weiqi gambling to make a living. Tisheng went to Shanghai in 1933 and rejoined his old friend Gu Shuiru, playing Weiqi for stakes at Xiangyang Park.⁵⁶ In 1935, Xuchu moved to Beijing and ran a Weiqi teahouse owned by one of his fellow countryman.⁵⁷ Tisheng also relocated to Beijing in the ensuing year and joined a circle of top Beijing players.⁵⁸ Tisheng started to run a Weiqi teahouse previously managed by Cui, and, different from Cui, he adopted the ticket method.⁵⁹ After the full-scale Japanese invasion in 1937, the Guo brothers left Beijing and stayed home in Shexian county except for serving a brief interim in Jiangxi under the patronage of Nationalist general Hu Jiazhao 胡嘉詔 (1887-1962).⁶⁰ After the end of the war in 1945, Guo brothers went back to Shanghai and lived on Weiqi.⁶¹

In conclusion, Weiqi in the Republican era did not receive any attention or support from the state, and the livelihood of Weiqi professionals resembled that of the Qing dynasty, relying on wealthy and influential patrons and playing for stakes at teahouses. However, with the arrival of the socialist regime, significant changes were in store. Over the course of a decade, Weiqi gamblers transformed into socialist athletes and began receiving state subsidies. Also, the identity of Weiqi would transform from an art form into a sport. Yet, prior to these changes, Chinese players would first transform the

⁵⁵ Zhang Shuguang and Wu Baole, “‘Beiping Weiqishe Tekan’ Qisheng Nie Weiping de Qimenglaoshi Guo Xuchu Yizhu,” 68.

⁵⁶ Su Jie, “Weiqi Yuanlao Guo Tisheng,” 78.

⁵⁷ Zhang Shuguang and Wu Baole, “‘Beiping Weiqishe Tekan’ Qisheng Nie Weiping de Qimenglaoshi Guo Xuchu Yizhu,” 68.

⁵⁸ Su Jie, “Weiqi Yuanlao Guo Tisheng,” 78.

⁵⁹ Luo Jingsheng, *Dangdai Beijing Weiqi Shihua*, 26; He Yunbo, ed., *Shijie Weiqi Tongshi Disanjuan 世界围棋通史 第三卷* (Xiangtan: Xiangtan daxue chubanshe, 2019), 79–80.

⁶⁰ Su Jie, “Weiqi Yuanlao Guo Tisheng,” 78; Zhang Shuguang and Wu Baole, “‘Beiping Weiqishe Tekan’ Qisheng Nie Weiping de Qimenglaoshi Guo Xuchu Yizhu,” 68.

⁶¹ Zhou Peijin, *Shexian Nianjian*, 402; Su Jie, “Weiqi Yuanlao Guo Tisheng,” 79.

game under Japanese influence, resulting from unprecedented Sino-Japanese Weiqi interactions.

Sino-Japanese Weiqi Interactions in the Early Twentieth Century

In 1909, a young Japanese Weiqi player named Takabe Dōhei 高部道平 (1882-1951) embarked on a historic trip to Qing China. The Chinese and Japanese Weiqi worlds had been isolated from each other for three centuries, and Takabe's visit marked the beginning of an era of frequent Sino-Japanese Weiqi interactions. At only twenty-seven years old, Takabe was early in his career and his rank was not advanced – he possessed only 4 *dan* 段 out of 9. Hardly anyone in China and Japan anticipated a landslide Takabe victory, but this was exactly what happened. Takabe emerged so dominant that he could even offer a two-stone handicap to his Chinese opponents.⁶²

Takabe stayed in China for 17 years, and more than 30 other Japanese professional players followed in his footsteps between the 1910s and 1940s.⁶³ For example, in the year of 1919 alone, China hosted Hon'inbō Shūsai 本因坊秀哉 (1874-1940), Segoe Kensaku 瀬越憲作 (1889-1972), Hirose Heijirō 広瀬平治郎 (1865-1940), and Iwamoto Kaoru 岩本薫 (1902-1999), all of them already had an illustrious career in Japan with the exception of then 17-year-old Iwamoto.⁶⁴ Iwamoto would later win the highest title of Hon'inbō 本因坊 in 1945. Although some of the players went to China for tourist purpose or received invitations from the Japanese diaspora in China, the majority of them were sponsored by Chinese Weiqi patrons such as Duan Qirui and

⁶² Takabe Dōhei, *Igo Seiten* 囲碁聖典 (Tokyo: Kinryūdō Shoten, 1942), 2, <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/1037311>.

⁶³ Liu Shancheng, *Zhongguo weiqi shi*, 239–40; Takabe Dōhei, *Igo Seiten*, 2.

⁶⁴ Liu Shancheng, *Zhongguo weiqi shi*, 239.

Zhang Danru.⁶⁵ Segoe Kensaku's experience, which is recorded in detail in his autobiography, serves as a prime example.⁶⁶ Akiyama Masanosuke 秋山雅之介 (1866-1937), Chief Civil Administrator of the then Japanese-occupied Qingdao, invited him to Qingdao to play with him and Ōshima Ken'ichi 大島健一 (1858-1947), the Military Commander of the Japanese force there, for two months in 1919. Ōshima then wrote a letter of recommendation for Segoe to Duan Qirui and paid for Segoe's trip to Beijing. Duan asked Segoe to stay in Beijing for two months and promised him generous rewards, and Segoe agreed. During the two-month stint, Segoe mostly entertained Duan, but he also played other Weiqi players sponsored by Duan. During his stay, Segoe cultivated a friendship with Gu Shuiru, a top Chinese player and Duan's guest, and he even lived in Gu's house for a week. In 1926, Segoe visited China again, but his destination was Shanghai instead of Beijing. This time, his host was none other than Zhang Danru. Segoe stayed for ten days and played some of the most famous Chinese players in Southern China.

Through interactions with Japanese top professionals, elite Chinese players found that they were far behind their opponents. In 1919, Gu, whom Segoe considered to be the best player in China, had to play Segoe, then at mere 5 *dan* out of 9, on a two-stone handicap to offset the skill difference.⁶⁷ In the same year, Gu had the chance to play

⁶⁵ Liu Shancheng, *Zhongguo weiqi shi*, 239.

⁶⁶ Segoe Kensaku, *Igo Ichirō 囲碁一路* (Tokyo: Sangyōkeizai Shinbunsha, 1956).

⁶⁷ Segoe Kensaku, *Igo Ichirō*, 49.

Hon'inbō Shūsai, the best player at the time. Shūsai offered Gu a three-stone handicap, but he still managed to force Gu to surrender at midgame.⁶⁸

Chinese reactions to the repeated losses to the Japanese were two-fold. On the one hand, the Chinese regretted that they had fallen behind the Japanese in a game that their own ancestors had invented. On the other hand, they sought to learn advanced skills from the Japanese. An advertisement by a Weiqi Research Club, created by Gu Shuiru and other top players in 1924, exemplifies these two responses. In the first half, it argued that Weiqi was “an exquisite attainment of our nation” and blamed the literati for addicting in gambling on Weiqi so as to let the Japanese take over this ancient art and rob China of its “national glory.”⁶⁹ The second part laid out the aim of the Club. The advertisement suggested that the Club was modeled on the Japanese Hōensha 方円社, and its goal was to “rescue the atmosphere of Weiqi” in China.⁷⁰ Curiously, the players selected Hōensha as their model, against other possible models such as the traditional Hon'inbō school. It was probably because several old Japanese friends of these Chinese players, including Segoe and Hirose, were key members of Hōensha.⁷¹ Moreover, the Chinese players perhaps wanted to revolutionize Chinese Weiqi as Hōensha had done for Japanese Weiqi. Hōensha had transformed Japanese Weiqi communities by developing a new ranking system, publishing the first Weiqi journal, and modernizing the financial basis by raising funds and using the interest to pay for

⁶⁸ “Nisshi Kisen Hon'inbō Man'yū (Dai 3-Kai) (Tsuitachi) Hon'inbōshūsai Kō Shikō 日支棋戦 本因坊漫遊 (第3回) (一日) 本因坊秀哉 顧思浩,” *Asahi Shinbun*, November 24, 1919; “Nisshi Kisen Hon'inbō Man'yū (Dai 3-Kai) (Tōka) Hon'inbōshūsai Kō Shikō 日支棋戦 本因坊漫遊 (第3回) (十日) 本因坊秀哉 顧思浩,” *Asahi Shinbun*, December 4, 1919.

⁶⁹ “Youxianshe Weiqi Yanjiuhui Qishi 猶賢社圍棋研究會啓事,” *Shehui Ribao*, December 22, 1924.

⁷⁰ “Youxianshe Weiqi Yanjiuhui Qishi.”

⁷¹ Nakayama Noriyuki, *Shōwa Igo Fūunroku (Jyō) 昭和囲碁風雲錄(上)*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2003), 13.

daily operations.⁷² Although the Chinese attempt to imitate the Japanese example went to no fruition, the very existence of such an effort suggests that the Republican era elite Chinese players were determined to study the Japanese from every levels.

The Chinese even transformed the rules of Weiqi based on the Japanese model. Although Chinese and Japanese Weiqi were the same in essence, there were several subtle differences in rules, which resulted from the fact that the Japanese had simplified the imported Tang dynasty rule, while the Chinese overhauled Weiqi rules in the Ming dynasty according to Chen Zuyuan.⁷³ One major rule difference was that Chinese Weiqi carried over the ancient rule of *zuozi* 座子.⁷⁴ Literally meaning “sitting stones,” this ancient rule required players to place a stone on each corner of the board before starting the game (Figure 1). In contrast, Japanese players began with an empty board. The presence of *zuozi* limited the number of possible opening variations, making Chinese players less experienced at opening than their Japanese counterparts when playing on an empty board. As a result, the Chinese were at a disadvantage when playing under Japanese rules. To overcome this, Chinese players decided to abandon the *zuozi* rule. After Takabe’s 1909-10 visit shocked the Chinese, his Chinese opponents started to attempt to play without *zuozi* in their own games.⁷⁵ By the 1910s, *zuozi* gradually disappeared from elite Chinese players’ game records.⁷⁶ Ordinary players

⁷² Masukawa Kōichi, *Go 碁* (Tokyo: Hōsei Daigaku Shuppankyoku, 1987), 294–95.

⁷³ Chen Zuyuan, *Weiqi Guize Yanbianshi 围棋规则演变史* (Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chubanshe, 2007), 100–101, 121.

⁷⁴ Yasunaga Hajime, *Zhongguo de Weiqi 中国的围棋*, trans. Matsutani Gyōmei (Changchun: Changchun chubanshe, 2012), 104–6.

⁷⁵ Liu Shancheng, *Zhongguo weiqi shi*, 231.

⁷⁶ Liu Shancheng, *Zhongguo weiqi shi*, 232.

kept it longer, but they too gradually abolished *zuozhi* by the 1950s.⁷⁷

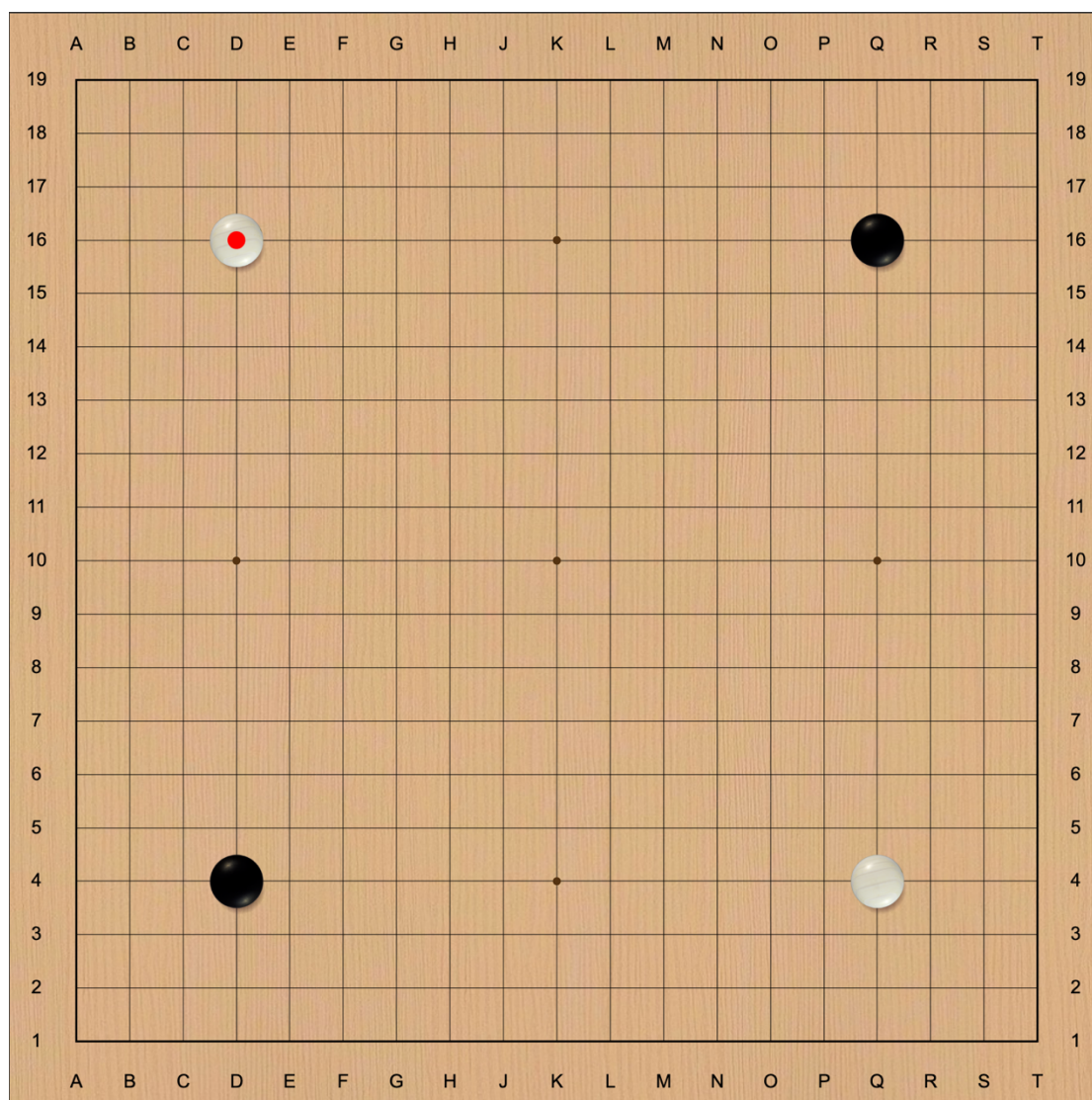


Figure 1. *Zuozhi*

The Chinese Weiqi players also chose to abolish the Chinese rule of *huanqitou* 還棋頭, which regulated that while counting points, if a player has more groups of stones than his opponent, he must return a point for every additional group of living stones. For example, in Figure 2, black has all the living stones connected, whereas white has four groups of surviving stones. White needs to deduct three points while counting. This rule made Chinese players hesitant to play in the corners as it could increase the

⁷⁷ Chen Zuyuan, *Weiqi Guize Yanbianshi*, 17.

number of living groups and lead to deductions in points. In contrast, Japanese players did not have this concern and could take advantage of the corners. Furthermore, the Japanese rule allowed black to play first, while Ming-Qing-era Chinese rule dictated white to go first.⁷⁸ It would hardly affect the game, but Republican-era Chinese players decided to follow the Japanese rule regardless.

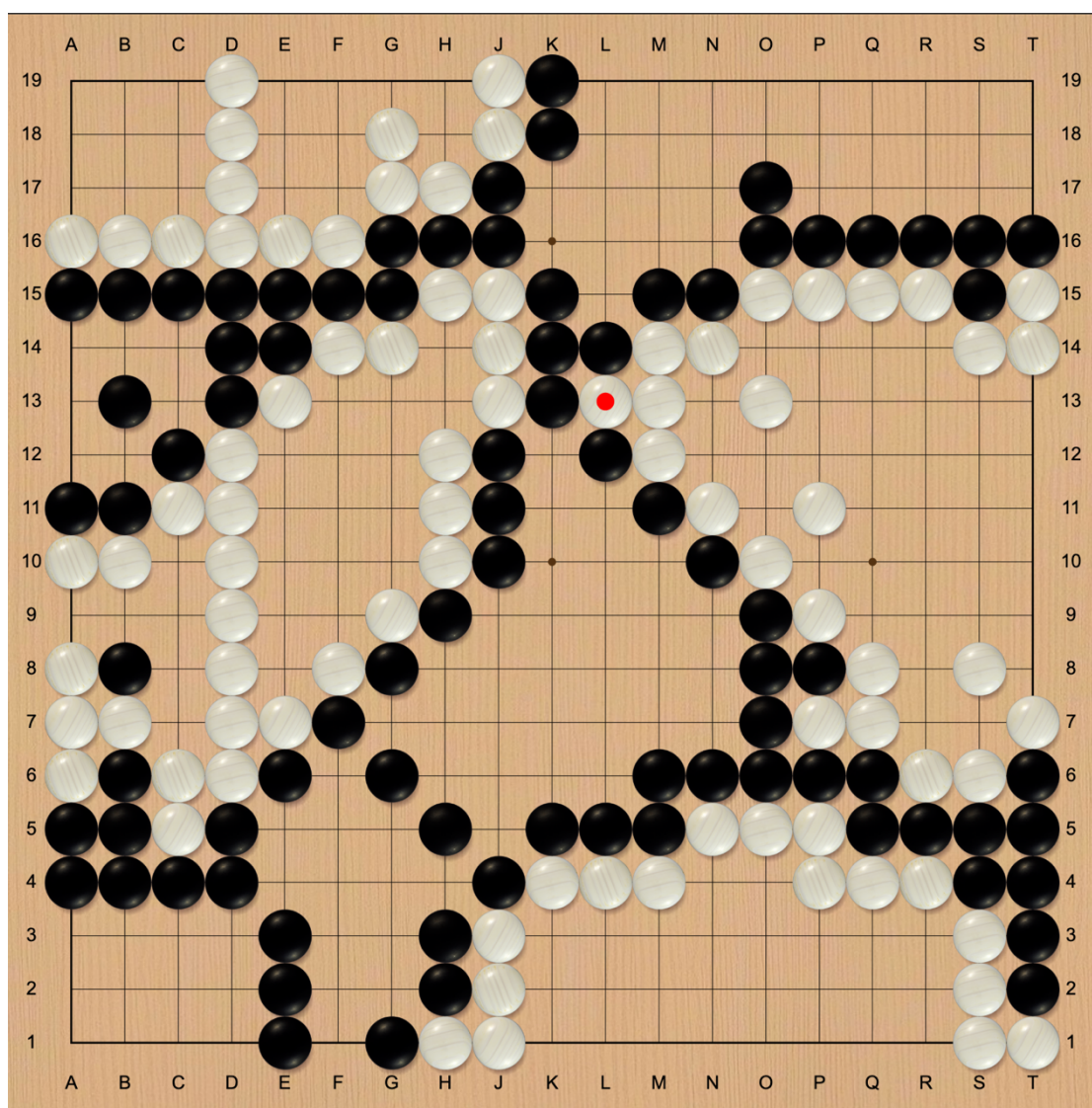


Figure 2. *Huanqitou*

Besides, Republican era elite Chinese players started to study game records of Japanese masters and learned their skills. They translated and published a number of

⁷⁸ Chen Zuyuan, *Weiqi Guize Yanbianshi*, 100–101.

Japanese Weiqi manuals as well as game records.⁷⁹ One of the most significant works was *Dongying Weiqi Jinghua* 東瀛圍棋精華 (“The Essences of Japanese Weiqi”), edited by Tao Shen’an 陶審安 (1894-1926).⁸⁰ This book included thirty-six games played by top Japanese masters, with the earliest game dating back to 1835 and the latest from 1923. In addition to the game records, the book included reviews of these records by either one of the players or later masters. Moreover, the book featured short biographies of Japanese players who were featured in the games, thereby introducing Japanese legends to the Chinese audience. Through such efforts, Chinese players made strides in studying the Japanese methods. By his second visit to China in 1926, Segoe clearly felt that Chinese Weiqi “received Japanese influence” and claimed that his Chinese opponents “began to play exactly” the Japanese ways of openings.⁸¹

The best Chinese talents even attempted to study Weiqi in Japan. The first notably player to do so was Gu Shuiru, sponsored by Duan Qirui to study in Japan in 1917.⁸² Though Gu was not successful in Japan and returned to China in less than two years, his short stint in Japan left a lasting impression on him.⁸³ Segoe remarked that Gu was already playing in “Japanese style Weiqi” by 1919.⁸⁴ Gu continued to play in this style throughout his career. His student, Chen Zude 陳祖德 (1944-2012), seconded Segoe’s opinion and suggested that Gu played in “classical modern Japanese style,” and his

⁷⁹ Liu Shancheng, *Zhongguo weiqi shi*, 259.

⁸⁰ Tao Shen’an, ed., *Dongying Weiqi Jinghua* 東瀛圍棋精華, 2nd ed. (Taipei: Zhengzhong shuju, 1954).

⁸¹ Segoe Kensaku, *Igo Ichirō*, 79.

⁸² Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo* 超越自我 (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 1986), 11; Liu Shancheng, *Zhongguo weiqi shi*, 250; Yasunaga mentioned an anecdote of a certain Gu’s match against Hon’inbo Shūsai. Although Yasunaga was uncertain whether the said Gu was Gu Shuiru, the time of the incident matches Gu’s tenure in Japan. Yasunaga Hajime, *Go Kichi Gyōjōki* 碁キチ行状記 (Tokyo: Jijitsu-shinsha, 1980), 11–12.

⁸³ Kiriyama Keiichi, *Go Seigen to Sono Kyōdai*, 65.

⁸⁴ Segoe Kensaku, *Igo Ichirō*, 49.

game “differed clearly from other Chinese players’ games” in the 1950s.⁸⁵ Gu’s another student, Wu Qingyuan, had a more successful career in Japan. Wu emerged as a Weiqi prodigy when he was only eleven years old in 1925, and he performed well enough against visiting Japanese professionals to attract serious Japanese interests.⁸⁶ Segoe Kensaku recognized Wu’s exceptional talent and sought to bring him to Japan. After securing former Prime Minister Inukai Tsuyoshi’s 犬養毅 (1855-1932) political support and Ōkura Kishichirō’s 大倉喜七郎 (1882-1963) financial sponsorship, Segoe succeeded in bringing Wu to Japan to become his disciple in 1928.⁸⁷ Wu later became arguably the best player in Japan from the 1940s to 1950s.

In sum, Chinese and Japanese Weiqi had been in close contact since the historical trip of Takebe Dōhei in 1909. Through interactions with high-ranking Japanese professionals, Chinese players realized they had fallen behind their Japanese counterparts in this traditional Chinese game. In order to regain their lead in Weiqi, Chinese players made significant efforts to learn not only the Japanese styles but also their organizational skills and even rules. These changes anticipated those brought by the Communist sports programs in the 1950s. Moreover, the transnational Weiqi interactions prepared the Weiqi, Chinese and Japanese alike, for Weiqi delegations in the 1960s.

⁸⁵ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 11.

⁸⁶ Kiriya Keiichi, *Go Seigen to Sono Kyōdai*, 66–68; Liu Shancheng, *Zhongguo weiqi shi*, 248–49.

⁸⁷ Kiriya Keiichi, *Go Seigen to Sono Kyōdai*, 69–77.

Weiqi for the Empire: Weiqi in the Second Sino-Japanese War, 1931-1945

Although Sino-Japanese Weiqi interactions continued during wartime, Japanese invasion in China fundamentally changed the nature of these activities. Instead of fostering Sino-Japanese friendship, they served the interests of Japan's Empire.

Despite Weiqi's indisputable Chinese origin, it was widely conceived as Japan's "national game" 国技. For example, the leader of Japanese Weiqi world in the early twentieth century, Hon'inbō Shūsai, held such an opinion. He argued that the Japanese had been developing the game for 350 years in the Edo period, and "it has clearly been transformed into Japan's national game." He added that Weiqi and the "Way of Weiqi" 棋道 were only finished after the game spread to Japan and, therefore, their "original ancestor" 原祖 was Japan, not China.⁸⁸

As such, Weiqi was an Empire-approved leisure activity even during wartime, while other activities suffered from wartime control. For example, another Japan's national game, baseball, struggled during the war years. As Sayuri Guthrie-Shimizu shows, despite the Japanese National Baseball Association's desperate efforts to cope with the Imperialist state, such as making donations to the Imperial Army, getting rid of English terminologies and nicknames, and purging players of inappropriate thoughts, Japanese professional baseball shrank in size from 1942 to 1944 and had to discontinue by the end of the 1944 season.⁸⁹ In contrast, professional Weiqi continued until Nihon

⁸⁸ Hon'inbō Shūsai, "Hon'inbō Jiden 本因坊自伝," *Chūō Kōron* 54, no. 3 (1939): 191.

⁸⁹ Sayuri Guthrie-Shimizu, *Transpacific Field of Dreams: How Baseball Linked the United States and Japan in Peace and War* (Univ of North Carolina Press, 2012), 177–80.

Ki-in 日本棋院 (Japanese Go Association) was destroyed in the bombing of Tokyo in May 25, 1945.⁹⁰ Even after the burning down of Nihon Ki-in, Hon'inbō title match persisted, and a game even took place in the suburb of Hiroshima on the very day of the nuclear bomb.⁹¹

Weiqi enjoyed a special status in the colonies as well. As Wen-sung Chen shows, during World War II, while some leisure activities such as Mahjong were viewed as “improper for Imperial subjects” and banned in Taiwan, Weiqi was not affected.⁹² It was even encouraged to some extent. For example, a Japanese employee of the colonial Taiwan Monopoly Bureau argued that “playing Weiqi is the most suitable hobby during the wartime because it can cultivate one’s spirit.”⁹³ Some powerful figures from other parts of the Empire seem to agree with this argument. Indeed, Segoe remembered that after telling Zhang Jinghui 張景惠 (1871-1859), the Prime Minister of the Japanese puppet state of Manchukuo, his aim to spread Weiqi there during his 1943 trip, Zhang expressed his full support to this enterprise, suggesting that Weiqi “is beneficial to the development of healthy thought.”⁹⁴

The Empire even directly mobilized Weiqi for its war effort. As Masukawa Kōichi shows, the Empire summoned the players during the war, sending them to the frontline to comfort the army and the navy and making them raise funds for the war through

⁹⁰ Nakayama Noriyuki, *Shōwa Igo Fūunroku*, 1:225.

⁹¹ Nakayama Noriyuki, *Shōwa Igo Fūunroku*, 1:230–33; Andō Toyoji and Watanabe Hideo, *Shinpen Zōho Zain Dansō: Igo Zenshi 新編増補 坐隠談叢・囲碁全史* (Tokyo: Shinjusha, 1955), 288–89.

⁹² Wen-sung Chen, “Seeking Refuge from Air Raids and Politics: Go-Playing of Wu Xinrong 從躲空襲到避政治: 日治後期到戰後初期吳新榮的圍棋戲,” *Taiwan Historical Research* 23, no. 1 (March 2016): 123.

⁹³ Aoki Sanjin, “Ennouka Igotaikai Senki 鹽腦科囲碁大会戦記,” *Taiwan No Senbai* 19, no. 2 (February 1940): 57.

⁹⁴ Segoe Kensaku, *Igo Ichirō*, 91–92.

Weiqi tournaments.⁹⁵ For example, in 1939, a “troop” of ten Weiqi and Shōgi (将棋, Japanese chess) players was assembled and sent to the frontline hospital to comfort injured soldiers.⁹⁶

Such was the context of the 1942 tour of several high-ranking Japanese players to China. Aoki Kazuo 青木一男 (1889-1982), the Japanese special envoy to the collaborationist government in Nanjing, invited Segoe Kensaku, the *de facto* leader of the Japanese Weiqi community, to serve as “Weiqi diplomats” to Nanjing. Segoe accepted the invitation and brought his disciples, including Wu Qingyuan, who had already acquired Japanese nationality, with him.⁹⁷ The players had several performative games, and these matches attracted the spectatorship of powerful figures of Japanese military and the Nanjing government.⁹⁸ Moreover, Segoe awarded 4 *dan* diploma to Gu Shuiru, Zhang Danru, Wei Haihong 魏海鴻 (1900-1970), Wang Ziyuan 王子晏 (1892-1951), and Lei Puhua 雷溥華 (?-1968), five elite Chinese players.⁹⁹ Other less excellent players got lower *dan* rankings.¹⁰⁰ Segoe later explained in his autobiography that he did so “to serve as a kind of private diplomacy.”¹⁰¹ Clearly, therefore, both Aoki and the visiting Japanese players sought to legitimize the Wang collaborationist government through the Weiqi delegation. It is reminiscent of a previous attempt. In 1934, Nihon Ki-in and *Tokyo Nichinichi Shinbun* 東京日日新聞 jointly organized a Japan-China-Manchukuo Friendly Weiqi Mission 日滿華囲碁親

⁹⁵ Masukawa Kōichi, *Go*, 318.

⁹⁶ “Go Shōgi Butai No Seizoroi 碁将棋部隊の勢揃い,” *Yomiuri Shinbun*, February 17, 1939.

⁹⁷ Segoe Kensaku, *Igo Ichirō*, 84.

⁹⁸ Segoe Kensaku, *Igo Ichirō*, 86.

⁹⁹ Segoe Kensaku, *Igo Ichirō*, 87.

¹⁰⁰ Liu Shancheng, *Zhongguo weiqi shi*, 238.

¹⁰¹ Segoe Kensaku, *Igo Ichirō*, 87.

善使節團, and Wu Qingyuan and Kitani Minoru 木谷実 (1909-1975) had had a match before the Manchukuo puppet emperor Puyi 溥儀 (1906-1967).¹⁰² The title of the delegation put Manchukuo as equal to Japan and China with the clear intention to legitimize this Japanese puppet state. The 1942 delegation served similar purposes. Moreover, by awarding Japanese rankings to Chinese players, the Japanese subjected Chinese Weiqi to the Japanese system. The standard was the Japanese, and everything had to be measured against the standard.

To be sure, not every elite Chinese player complied with the Japanese. As mentioned above, the Guo brothers were unwilling to serve the Japanese and fled home. Another example is Liu Dihuai 劉棣懷 (1897-1979). Segoe initially planned to award him a 4 *dan* diploma as well, but Liu had gone west with the Nationalist government.¹⁰³ In Chongqing, Liu organized a China Weiqi Association that aimed to “promote the national essence [referring to Weiqi]” in order to save the nation.¹⁰⁴

In summary, Weiqi, a seemingly innocuous form of art, was politicized, and it was Imperialist Japan, rather than socialist China, that first did so. While other forms of leisure activities found it hard to continue during wartime, Weiqi tournaments persisted as it was thought to have a positive effect cultivating the mind of Imperial subjects. The Empire even dispatched Weiqi delegations to comfort Japanese soldiers and legitimize its puppet states. These delegations foreshadowed the diplomatic use of Weiqi between

¹⁰² Wu Qingyuan and Kiriyama Keiichi, *Zhong de Jingshen: Wu Qingyuan Zizhuan 中的精神: 吴清源自传*, trans. Wang Yiqing (Beijing: Zhongxin chubanshe, 2010), 68–71.

¹⁰³ Segoe Kensaku, *Igo Ichirō*, 87.

¹⁰⁴ Liu Shancheng, *Zhongguo weiqi shi*, 254.

China and Japan in the 1960s, although the intentions and outcomes of both sides were significantly different.

Let the Flower of Weiqi Bloom: Early Plans for Weiqi under Socialism, 1949-1956

The establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 brought significant changes to many aspects of social life in China, but Weiqi felt little impact initially. The state paid little attention to Weiqi, and elite Weiqi players' lives in the early 1950s were not much different from the Republican era. For example, in the early 1950s, Weiqi players in Shanghai, including elite players, Liu Dihuai, Gu Shuiru, and Wang Youchen 王幼宸 (1892-1984), gathered in places like Pinfang teahouse 品芳茶樓, Xiangyang Park 襄陽公園, and Yan'an Weiqi Room 延安棋室.¹⁰⁵ These elite Weiqi players, much like in the Republic period, sought to live on Weiqi, though their methods differed. Gu sold vouchers, which allowed holders to exchange them for instructional games with him, while others such as Wang adopted similar methods.¹⁰⁶ Others mainly played Weiqi for stakes, and even Gu and Wang occasionally did so.¹⁰⁷

Nonetheless, Weiqi players sought to take advantage of the regime change and plan for Weiqi under state socialism. Beijing Weiqi fans and elite players were among the first to act. Guo Tisheng headed to Beijing in 1950 with the initiative of reviving Weiqi in the new capital.¹⁰⁸ Guo visited Li Jishen 李濟深 (1885-1959), the Vice-Chairman of China and a famous Weiqi enthusiast, to discuss the idea of establishing a Weiqi club in Beijing.¹⁰⁹ Li sponsored Guo's plan with eager and formally reported to the Premier,

¹⁰⁵ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 14; Zhao Zhiyun, *Weiqi Chunqiu* 圍棋春秋 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 1994), 68; Zhu Wei, *Shanghaiitan Qiren Qishi* 上海灘棋人棋事 (Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chubanshe, 2016), 71.

¹⁰⁶ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 15; Zhu Wei, *Shanghaiitan Qiren Qishi*, 72, 74.

¹⁰⁷ Zhu Wei, *Shanghaiitan Qiren Qishi*, 76.

¹⁰⁸ He Yunbo, *Shijie Weiqi Tongshi Disanjuan*, 150.

¹⁰⁹ Liu Shancheng, *Zhongguo weiqi shi*, 277; He Yunbo, *Shijie Weiqi Tongshi Disanjuan*, 150.

Zhou Enlai 周恩來 (1898-1976).¹¹⁰ However, the newly-founded state let the players wait due to the lack of funds. Good news came in the summer of 1951, as Li's report was finally approved.¹¹¹ Moreover, in the winter of the same year, Chen Yi, upon visiting Beijing, endorsed Guo's plan, suggesting that "I am an advocator of playing Weiqi. This is not just my personal opinion. I have asked Chairman Mao and Premier Zhou, and they approved."¹¹² Viewing it as a positive sign, the Weiqi fans moved forward with their plan, and Li, Huang Shaohong 黃紹竑 (1895-1966), and Zhou Shiguan 周士觀 (1892-1984) paid out of their own pockets. They found Beijing Weiqi-Art Research Society 北京棋藝研究社 on April 1952.¹¹³ Starting in March 1953, the Society received an annual grant of 7,000 *yuan* from the Ministry of Culture under Zhou Enlai's instruction.¹¹⁴

Although the socialist state provided financial support for the Society, the Communists were not the driving force within this Weiqi club. Sun Dechang has surveyed the Society's members.¹¹⁵ Notably, none of its directors were Communists; instead, they tended to be leaders of minor political parties under the Chinese Communist Party's United Front. The Society's honorary chairman Li Jishen, managing directors Huang Shaohong and Li Zhonggong 李仲公 (1890-1978), and secretary Zheng Zhuoren 鄭卓人 (1905-1984) were members of the Revolutionary Committee of the Chinese Kuomintang; managing director Zhou Shiguan was from the China

¹¹⁰ Liu Shancheng, *Zhongguo weiqi shi*, 277.

¹¹¹ Luo Jingsheng, *Dangdai Beijing Weiqi Shihua*, 31.

¹¹² Liu Shancheng, *Zhongguo weiqi shi*, 278; Sun Dechang, "Xinzhongguo Chengli Chuqi Weiqi Chengui Ziliao de Zhengli Yu Yanjiu -- Yi Beijing Qiyianjieshe Weili 新中国成立初期围棋珍贵资料的整理与研究——以北京棋艺研究社为例," *Zhongguo Weiqi Luncong* 6 (October 16, 2021): 106.

¹¹³ Liu Shancheng, *Zhongguo weiqi shi*, 278; He Yunbo, *Shijie Weiqi Tongshi Disanjuan*, 150.

¹¹⁴ Liu Shancheng, *Zhongguo weiqi shi*, 279; He Yunbo, *Shijie Weiqi Tongshi Disanjuan*, 150.

¹¹⁵ Sun Dechang, "Xinzhongguo Chengli Chuqi Weiqi Chengui Ziliao de Zhengli Yu Yanjiu," 122–38.

National Democratic Construction Association; honorary director Luo Renyi 羅任一 (1897-1965) belonged to the Chinese Peasants' and Workers' Democratic Party; and Juzan 巨贊 (1908-1984) was a Buddhist leader.¹¹⁶ This fact is hardly surprising. After all, Weiqi was traditionally an game of the intellectuals and was far less popular than Xiangqi among the ordinary masses. The leaders of minor political parties were often from elite backgrounds and well-versed in Weiqi. It is possible that Juzan learned the game in Buddhist temples, where it was also popular among monks. The decision to fund the Society was in alignment with the Communist Party's United Front policy. The socialist state likely aimed to cultivate the support of these minor political party leaders by providing them with financial backing for their hobby. Additionally, the state aimed to ensure that their attention was directed towards non-threatening activities, such as playing Weiqi, rather than engaging in actions that could pose a challenge to the state's authority.

The Society was in many ways a significant departure from the past. To begin with, it transformed the status of several elite players. They were no longer Weiqi gamblers; instead, they became instructors with regular salaries. The list of instructors featured famous elite players such as the Guo brothers, Cui Yunzhi, and Lei Puhua.¹¹⁷ Regular instructors received a monthly salary of 70 *yuan*, and they got a raise in 1964 to 99 *yuan*.¹¹⁸ Tisheng got paid more for his leading role. After the raise, he got 120 *yuan* every month.¹¹⁹ The relatively high salaries allowed the players to focus on cultivating

¹¹⁶ Sun Dechang, "Xinzhongguo Chengli Chuqi Weiqi Chengui Ziliao de Zhengli Yu Yanjiu," 124–26, 129–30, 134.

¹¹⁷ Sun Dechang, "Xinzhongguo Chengli Chuqi Weiqi Chengui Ziliao de Zhengli Yu Yanjiu," 126–29, 134.

¹¹⁸ Luo Jingsheng, *Dangdai Beijing Weiqi Shihua*, 32.

¹¹⁹ Luo Jingsheng, *Dangdai Beijing Weiqi Shihua*, 32.

their Weiqi skills as well as spreading the game. Playing Weiqi for wages itself was not new for these elite players. Most of them had the experience of getting paid under Duan Qirui or Zhang Danru. Yet the fact that the funds now came directly from the state made a huge difference. Weiqi players enjoyed state-level support for the first time since the end of the Song dynasty.

More importantly, the Society had ambitious goals for Weiqi under the socialist state, which were declared in a pamphlet published in 1953 entitled “A New Understanding of the Art of Weiqi.”¹²⁰ The pamphlet was divided into three sections. The first section presented a brief history of Weiqi, and the authors framed Weiqi’s story within the context of socialist discourse. They incorporated Marxist theory of historical social formation while discussing the origin of Weiqi, hypothesizing that “Weiqi took form sometime between Shang and Zhou dynasties, namely the end of slave society or the beginning of feudal society.”¹²¹ In the second part, the authors sought to justify Weiqi under the new society. They quoted Mao’s *On New Democracy* that “It is imperative to separate the fine old culture of the people which had a more or less democratic and revolutionary character from all the decadence of the old feudal ruling class.”¹²² The authors argued for the “democratic and revolutionary character” inherit in Weiqi. They pointed out that every Weiqi piece was “fully equal” and truly represented the “spirit of collectivism” since Weiqi stones needed to form into groups

¹²⁰ Beijing qiyi yanjiushe lishihui, *Weiqi Yishu de Xinrenshi - Beijing Qiyi Yanjiushe Chuangli Yuanqi Jiqi Fangzhen He Renwu de Shuoming* 圍棋藝術的新認識 —— 北京棋藝研究社創立緣起及其方針和任務的說明 (Beijing: Beijing qiyi yanjiushe, 1953).

¹²¹ Beijing qiyi yanjiushe lishihui, *Weiqi Yishu de Xinrenshi*, 2.

¹²² Mao Zedong, “On New Democracy,” Marxists.org, accessed July 19, 2022, https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-2/mswv2_26.htm; Beijing qiyi yanjiushe lishihui, *Weiqi Yishu de Xinrenshi*, 12.

in order to survive.¹²³ In contrast, Xiangqi pieces were not equal, and, therefore, “represented feudal ideology and served the feudal system.”¹²⁴ Citing the scheme of sacrifice in Weiqi, the authors added that “minority obeys majority and parts obey the whole” are essential principles of Weiqi.¹²⁵ Therefore, they concluded that “although Weiqi grew and developed in Chinese feudal society for a long time, it was not polluted by feudal poison nor superstition; instead, it had democratic and scientific qualities.”¹²⁶

The last section was the arguably most important, as the authors chartered the four main goals of the Society. The first goal was to “scientificize” Weiqi, meaning to divorce it from its traditional association with the transcendentals and to systemize the terminology and game records of Weiqi in order to make it more accessible to the masses.¹²⁷ The second aim was to improve Chinese players’ overall skills. To this end, the pamphlet proposed to provide for Chinese players “certain material conditions,” including gathering the best talents, providing for their lives, educating them politically, and holding tournaments.¹²⁸ Additionally, the authors advocated for learning from the Japanese way of playing by either inviting the Chinese-Japanese Weiqi master Wu Qingyuan back or sending Chinese delegations to visit Japan.¹²⁹ The Society’s third goal was to popularize Weiqi. Although they believed that Weiqi would eventually become popular among the masses, the authors acknowledged that due to Weiqi’s complexity, it would likely find a more sympathetic audience among “mental laborers”

¹²³ Beijing qi yi yanjiushe lishihui, *Weiqi Yishu de Xinrenshi*, 13.

¹²⁴ Beijing qi yi yanjiushe lishihui, *Weiqi Yishu de Xinrenshi*, 12–13.

¹²⁵ Beijing qi yi yanjiushe lishihui, *Weiqi Yishu de Xinrenshi*, 13.

¹²⁶ Beijing qi yi yanjiushe lishihui, *Weiqi Yishu de Xinrenshi*, 14.

¹²⁷ Beijing qi yi yanjiushe lishihui, *Weiqi Yishu de Xinrenshi*, 15–18.

¹²⁸ Beijing qi yi yanjiushe lishihui, *Weiqi Yishu de Xinrenshi*, 19.

¹²⁹ Beijing qi yi yanjiushe lishihui, *Weiqi Yishu de Xinrenshi*, 19–20.

rather than “general physical laboring masses.” Thus, they proposed to limit their work focus to “government institutions, civilian societies, and clubs of factories and schools” for the moment.¹³⁰ Lastly, it aimed at the internationalization of the Weiqi. Unlike the Japanese Weiqi spreaders, who mostly targeted Germany and the United States, the Society intended to introduce Weiqi to the Soviet Union to cultivate Sino-Soviet friendship.¹³¹

Shanghai was another major Weiqi center, and Shanghai players initiated their own projects for reviving Weiqi in the socialist state. Fortunately for them, the Mayor, Chen Yi, was supportive, as Weiqi had been Chen’s lifelong hobby. Chen Zude, a native of Shanghai and three-time national champion, held Chen Yi in high regard and referred to him as “a great benefactor of Chinese Weiqi,” claiming that he made the “greatest contribution in the history of Chinese Weiqi.”¹³² Chen Yi not only supported the Beijing-based Weiqi Society but also took great care of Weiqi in Shanghai. He recognized that providing for the livelihoods of elite players was necessary for them to cultivate their skills. Upon learning that Liu Dihuai, a top player in the country, was living in poverty, Chen Yi sent him 100 *yuan* in 1951. However, providing direct financial aid to players was not a sustainable solution. Therefore, Chen Yi set his sights on the Shanghai Research Institute of Culture and History 上海文史研究館, which was established in 1953 as a part of Mao’s United Front policy.¹³³ Chen hired elite Weiqi players in Shanghai, including Gu Shuiru and Liu Dihuai mentioned above,

¹³⁰ Beijing qiyi yanjiushe lishihui, *Weiqi Yishu de Xinrenshi*, 22.

¹³¹ Beijing qiyi yanjiushe lishihui, *Weiqi Yishu de Xinrenshi*, 22–23, 28.

¹³² Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwu*, 237.

¹³³ “Jigou Gaikuang 机构概况,” Shanghai wenshi yanjiuguan, accessed July 18, 2022, <https://wsyjg.sh.gov.cn/s/40.html>.

thereby providing a regular income for these players.¹³⁴ The Institute regulated that its members must be over sixty years old, but Chen made special exceptions for Liu and other elite players, letting them become official members despite being younger than sixty.¹³⁵ Besides paying the players, the Institute held a city-level Weiqi tournament in Shanghai in 1955, which attracted not only its members but also players all over Shanghai.¹³⁶ Chen did not only care about old generation players in their fifties and sixties. He also gave personal care to Weiqi prodigies. Both Chen Zude and Nie Weiping 聶衛平 (1952-) fondly remembered their experiences of being Chen Yi's Weiqi-mates in their teens and receiving special treatment from the Marshal.¹³⁷ Moreover, Chen wished to introduce Weiqi classes to elementary school education, although he did not live to realize his vision.¹³⁸

With such a supportive mayor, Shanghai players voiced their schemes for Weiqi. Yi Dunbai 易敦白, a former Republican education official and by then a Shanghai Institute member, introduced his opinions in January 1956.¹³⁹ Yi began by justifying Weiqi under socialism using language not unlike that of the Beijing Society.¹⁴⁰ Contrasting Weiqi with Xiangqi, Yi argued that while both games addressed war, Xiangqi “had feudalist characteristics” while Weiqi was “the greatest gift from prehistoric proto-communist society.” Thus, he felt that “in a communist society where

¹³⁴ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 25; Zhao Zhiyun, *Weiqi Chunqiu*, 44, 70; He Yunbo, *Shijie Weiqi Tongshi Disanjuan*, 154–55.

¹³⁵ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 25–26; Zhao Zhiyun, *Weiqi Chunqiu*, 70.

¹³⁶ He Yunbo, *Shijie Weiqi Tongshi Disanjuan*, 155; Zhao Zhiyun, *Weiqi Chunqiu*, 70–71.

¹³⁷ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 21–24; Nie Weiping, “Wo He Chen Laozong 我和陈老总,” *Zhongguo Weiqi Nianjian* 2003 (June 2003): 401–5.

¹³⁸ Nie Weiping, “Huainian Chen Yi Tongzhi 怀念陈毅同志,” *Zhongguo Weiqi Nianjian* 1993 (May 1993): 368.

¹³⁹ Li Li, *Huxiang Zhuanke 湖湘篆刻* (Changsha: Hunan meishu chubanshe, 2009), 120–21.

¹⁴⁰ “B126-1-176-32: Yi Dunbai Guanyu Tuiguang Weiqi Huodong de Yijian 易敦白關於推廣圍棋活動的意見,” January 12, 1956, Shanghai Municipal Archive.

classes are eliminated, Weiqi will have a much better prospect [than Xiangqi] to flourish and to be more popular among the people.” Moreover, Yi claimed that Weiqi was “an art that would be beneficial to the development of science,” as the game could cultivate minds. He added that Weiqi had the prospect of developing into international competitions between not only East Asian countries but also the United States, Italy, and Germany.

Since Weiqi “has not been grasped by the masses,” and there were few professional players, the most pressing objective for Yi was to build an organization for Weiqi. Yi emphasized that the Communist Party must assume leadership and envisioned a national Weiqi organization directly led by the Ministry of Culture. According to Yi, the organization’s mission should be twofold. On the one hand, it would train professional Weiqi players by holding national tournaments, setting up the ranking system, and scouting talents. On the other hand, it should spread Weiqi among the masses, and it was the most important aim for Yi. As Yi put it, Weiqi “has to become one of the arts to satisfy the entertainment of the masses, and only then it is really something that the masses need and are benefited by.” To accomplish the two goals, Yi suggested setting up a department that would collect Weiqi books, publish Weiqi journals, translate Japanese classics, and compose Weiqi history. In many ways, Yi’s scheme was similar to the Beijing Society. What he wanted was a national organization based on the Beijing model that was directly led by the Party.

Yi’s fellow at the Shanghai Institute, Gu Shuiru, had a different plan for Weiqi. Gu was formerly arguably the best player in the nation and was invited to the Shanghai

Municipal Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in 1956.¹⁴¹ Spreading Weiqi to the masses was Gu's preoccupation. He declared in a speech that he "often think about how to introduce Weiqi as a recreational activity to people across the country."¹⁴² In another meeting, Gu presented his project for Weiqi in more detail. Yet, unlike the Beijing Society and Yi's urban focus, Gu eyed the vast countryside for the future of Weiqi, especially after the literacy campaign.¹⁴³ Literacy was not the only impediment, however. Weiqi was too complicated, and there were not enough Weiqi teachers in countryside. To address these issues, Gu asserted that Weiqi must be simplified in order to reach a larger audience and proposed to change the nineteenth-line Weiqi board into nine-line.¹⁴⁴ Gu also suggested to organize Weiqi clubs and send Weiqi players down to countryside to spread the game.¹⁴⁵ Ironically, his plan was only partly realized during the Cultural Revolution, when Weiqi was attacked, and the players were sent down as intellectuals.

In short, with the establishment of the People's Republic, Weiqi players sought to find a place for Weiqi under socialist state. In particular, players in Beijing and Shanghai, which were major centers of Weiqi activities, proposed various Weiqi reforms, such as those led by the Beijing Society, Yi Dunbai, and Gu Shuiru. These

¹⁴¹ "Shanghai Renmin Zhengxie Zhi 上海人民政协志," accessed December 14, 2022,

<https://www.shtong.gov.cn/difangzhi-front/book/detailNew?oneId=1&bookId=4481&parentNodeId=54402&nodeId=36833&type=-1>.

¹⁴² "L1-1-86-49: Gu Shuiru Zai Shanghai-Shi Zhengxie Diyijie Weiyuanhui Di'erci Quanti Huiyi Shang de Fayangao 顧水如在上海市政協第一屆委員會第二次全體會議上的發言稿," April 1956, Shanghai Municipal Archive.

¹⁴³ "L1-1-93-147: Gu Shuiru Zai Shanghai-Shi Zhengxie Changwu Weiyuanhui Diliuci Kuoda Huiyi Shang de Fayangao 顧水如在上海市政協常務委員會第六次擴大會議上的發言稿," 1956, Shanghai Municipal Archive.

¹⁴⁴ "L1-1-93-147: Gu Shuiru Zai Shanghai-Shi Zhengxie Changwu Weiyuanhui Diliuci Kuoda Huiyi Shang de Fayangao."

¹⁴⁵ "L1-1-93-147: Gu Shuiru Zai Shanghai-Shi Zhengxie Changwu Weiyuanhui Diliuci Kuoda Huiyi Shang de Fayangao."

initiatives sought to justify Weiqi's place in socialism by emphasizing its inherent democratic quality and popularize it, though their target differed. Meanwhile, the state viewed Weiqi as a cultural matter and relegated it to the United Front policy rather than managing it directly. However, in 1956, when the state began to pay more attention to Weiqi, it became clear that it had a different plan for the game.

The Making of Weiqi as a Sport, 1956-1959

The year of 1956 saw a new departure for Chinese Weiqi, as the socialist state started to address Weiqi. The “Provisional Regulations of the People’s Republic of China Sports Competition System,” issued by the National Sports Committee on 1956 April 4, officially included Weiqi-like 棋类 (Weiqi, Xiangqi, and chess) among the 43 official sport programs in China.¹⁴⁶ In this way, the state officially awarded Weiqi the status as a sport.

By that time, sports already had a history of around half a century in China. Never before was Weiqi considered within the category of sports in the eyes of Chinese sport propagators. Indeed, as Andrew D. Morris demonstrates, modern Chinese sports originated from “the German-Swedish-Japanese drill programs that sought to inculcate physical discipline and constant mental awareness.”¹⁴⁷ Although military drill gradually lost favor in the 1910s, its alternatives were Anglo-American sports.¹⁴⁸ Weiqi could not stand further apart from these two modes of sports. Starting from the 1930s onward, the impending crisis of Japanese invasion and civil war demanded both the Nationalists and the Communists to take up sports as a vital part of their respective programs to strengthen the nation.¹⁴⁹ To this end, they opted for militarized sports.¹⁵⁰ Weiqi did not belong to this category, either. Instead, in Communist-controlled areas, Weiqi belonged to another program of educating the population in during the Yan’an

¹⁴⁶ *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Tiyuyundong Wenjian Huibian (2)* 中华人民共和国体育运动文件汇编(2) (Beijing: Renmin tiyu chubanshe, 1957), 18–19.

¹⁴⁷ Morris, *Marrow of the Nation*, 240.

¹⁴⁸ Morris, *Marrow of the Nation*, 37–41, 47–76.

¹⁴⁹ Morris, *Marrow of the Nation*, 100–140.

¹⁵⁰ Zeng Biao, *Zhongyang Suqu Tiyushi*, 152–56; Morris, *Marrow of the Nation*, 134–35.

years.¹⁵¹ The Communists prepared sets of Weiqi, along with Ping-pong, Xiangqi and several other boardgames, at the so-called Civilian Education Hall 民众教育馆 to “increase their [the people’s] interest in cultural recreation and sport.”¹⁵² Moreover, there existed a number of clubs in the Communist base areas. A 1934 document declared that the purposes of these clubs were “to carry out collective recreation, study, exchange of experience and knowledge in order to foster revolutionary sentiment, promote the Soviet revolutionary war, and engage in cultural revolution.”¹⁵³ Weiqi was a part of the club activities.¹⁵⁴

Weiqi players themselves did not believe Weiqi was a sport, as well. They tended to hold that Weiqi was an art 藝術. After all, Weiqi was one of the traditional “Four Arts” 四藝. The term “art” appeared in both the Beijing Society’s full name and the title of the pamphlet they published. Yi Dunbai and Gu Shuiru also used “art” repeatedly in their speeches.¹⁵⁵

Thus, why the state gave Weiqi the status of sport in 1956 is an important question. Previous scholarship suggests that China learned from the Soviet experiences, which considered chess a sport, and treated Weiqi and Xiang as sports accordingly.¹⁵⁶ Indeed, as Amanda G. Shuman shows, the Chinese Communists relied heavily on the Soviet example when building their new sports system.¹⁵⁷ Moreover, chess indeed had been

¹⁵¹ Dang Ting, “Yan’an Tiyu Zhi Yanjiu 延安体育之研究” (PhD diss., Shanghai, Shanghai University of Sport, 2009), 48.

¹⁵² Quoted in Dang Ting, “Yan’an Tiyu Zhi Yanjiu,” 49.

¹⁵³ Quoted in Zeng Biao, *Zhongyang Suqu Tiyushi*, 32–33.

¹⁵⁴ Zeng Biao, *Zhongyang Suqu Tiyushi*, 34; Dang Ting, “Yan’an Tiyu Zhi Yanjiu,” 44, 50, 168.

¹⁵⁵ “L1-1-86-49: Gu Shuiru Zai Shanghai-Shi Zhengxie Diyijie Weiyuanhui Di’erci Quanti Huiyi Shang de Fayangao”; “L1-1-93-147: Gu Shuiru Zai Shanghai-Shi Zhengxie Changwu Weiyuanhui Diliuci Kuoda Huiyi Shang de Fayangao”; “B126-1-176-32: Yi Dunbai Guanyu Tuiguang Weiqi Huodong de Yijian 易敦白關於推廣圍棋活動的意見,” January 12, 1956, Shanghai Municipal Archive.

¹⁵⁶ Liu Shancheng, *Zhongguo weiqi shi*, 280; He Yunbo, *Shijie Weiqi Tongshi Disanjuan*, 155.

¹⁵⁷ Shuman, “The Politics of Socialist Athletes in the People’s Republic of China, 1949-1966,” 48–51, 59–63.

associated with physical culture in the Soviet Union. As Michael Andrew Hudson demonstrates, as early as 1920, Aleksandr Fedorovich Il'in-Zhenevskii, the Commissar of the Directorate of Vsevobuch (“Universal Military Training”) and a chess master, included chess in the military training programs at Vsevobuch, thereby starting the association between chess and Soviet physical culture.¹⁵⁸ His rationale was that chess “has much in common with the art of war” since it could cultivate the necessary qualities of a commander, such as “self-control, composure, calculation,” and the calculation in the game “is almost the same as that in war.”¹⁵⁹ In this vein, Weiqi might be similarly rationalized as a part of the physical culture. Indeed, like chess, Weiqi had always been associated with war. As Zu-yan Chen shows, many Tang and Song dynasties Chinese literati exploited the connections between Weiqi and war in their poems.¹⁶⁰ This powerful analogy endured through the ages. Even Mao Zedong adopted this metaphor in his famous work, *On Protracted War*.¹⁶¹ While discussing Encirclement and counter-encirclement, Mao concluded that “there are two forms of encirclement by the enemy forces and two forms of encirclement by our own--rather like a game of *weichi* [sic.]”¹⁶²

If the Chinese Communist Party had given Weiqi sport status earlier, the Soviet influence explanation would be adequate. However, the fact that they waited until 1956 is puzzling. It might be argued that the scarcity of Weiqi players in the Soviet area made

¹⁵⁸ Michael Andrew Hudson, “Storming Fortresses: A Political History Of Chess In The Soviet Union, 1917-1948” (PhD diss., University of California Santa Cruz, 2013), 92–94.

¹⁵⁹ Quoted in Hudson, “Storming Fortresses,” 97.

¹⁶⁰ Chen, “The Art of Black and White: Wei-Ch’i in Chinese Poetry,” 645–48.

¹⁶¹ Mao Zedong, “On Protracted War,” Marxists.org, accessed June 15, 2022, https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-2/mswv2_09.htm.

¹⁶² Mao Zedong, “On Protracted War.”

it unnecessary to regulate Weiqi earlier. However, if the number of players was the sole determinant, Xiangqi, which had a solid foundation among the masses in the red area, should have received attention from the Communist sports leadership. Nonetheless, Xiangqi was only designated as a sport in 1956, along with Weiqi and chess. Furthermore, it should be noted that the relationship between Chinese and the Soviet leaderships deteriorated in early 1956. Mao disapproved Khrushchev's de-Stalinization policy as it posed a threat to Mao's domestic position.¹⁶³ It is difficult to comprehend why the Chinese would learn from the Soviet Union only after their relationship became strained.

A more likely explanation is that in designating Weiqi, Xiangqi, and chess as sports, the Chinese did not simply follow the Soviet example but had their own agenda. In fact, the state sought to broaden the definition of sports in 1956, including into this category not only Weiqi, Xiangqi, and chess but also folk dancing, martial arts, and radio broadcast exercises.¹⁶⁴ This attempt was a departure from the Soviet model, emphasizing the incorporation of indigenous forms of physical culture as sport. Weiqi and Xiangqi, as Chinese traditions, were included under the similar logic as folk dancing and martial arts. Indeed, Hua Yigang 華以剛 (1949-), a member of the national team in the 1960s and future chairman of the Chinese Weiqi Association, recalled that Weiqi, Xiangqi, and chess were under the jurisdiction of the Martial Arts Division 武術處 of the NSC.¹⁶⁵ In fact, it was none other than Li Menghua 李夢華

¹⁶³ Lorenz M. Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 46.

¹⁶⁴ Shuman, "The Politics of Socialist Athletes in the People's Republic of China, 1949-1966," 154.

¹⁶⁵ Hua Yigang, *Qisai Yuan 棋赛缘* (Hangzhou: Hangzhou chubanshe, 2019), 4.

(1922-2010), chairman of the Chinese Wushu (Martial Arts) Association 中國武術協會, who led the Chinese Weiqi delegation to Japan in 1962.¹⁶⁶ In addition to cultural reasons, diplomatic concerns may have played a role in the decision to designate these three board games as sports. Weiqi could help diplomatic relations with Japan, while chess provided a way to connect with the Soviet Union.¹⁶⁷ Xiangqi had the least diplomatic utility, but it was popular at least among diaspora Chinese.

Whatever the reason was, Weiqi was officially recognized as a sport on paper, but it required more than just recognition to become a true sport. Chinese sport administrators took several steps to transform it into one. The first step involved organizing national competitions. The NSC held the first national tournaments for Weiqi, Xiangqi, and chess on December 15 to 27, 1956. Since Weiqi and chess lacked a strong basis among the masses, they were demonstration sports, while Xiangqi entered the official program.¹⁶⁸ Although the tournament was supposed to be national, only a few players from Beijing, Shanghai, and Nanjing participated in the Weiqi event.¹⁶⁹ This fact further testifies Weiqi's limited popularity as the urban elites' game. Guo Tisheng ended up winning the championship.¹⁷⁰

In the following year, the NSC worked to standardize the rules of Weiqi. It was another step to transform Weiqi into a sport. After all, sports competitions could not take place without articulated regulations. Although Weiqi had been in existence for

¹⁶⁶ “Chūgoku Igo Daihyō-Dan Ga rāinichi Nanoka Nihon-Gawa to Teai 中国囲碁代表团が来日 七日 日本側と手合,” *Asahi Shinbun*, July 6, 1962.

¹⁶⁷ guojia tiyu wenshi gongzuo weiyuanhui and zhongguo guojixiangqi xiehui, *Zhongguo Guojixiangqi Shi 中国国际象棋史* (Wuhan: Wuhan chubanshe, 1997), 31–34.

¹⁶⁸ guojia tiyu wenshi gongzuo weiyuanhui and zhongguo guojixiangqi xiehui, *Zhongguo Guojixiangqi Shi*, 23.

¹⁶⁹ Liu Luosheng, *Zhongguo Weiqi Wushinian Fengyun*, 7.

¹⁷⁰ Liu Shancheng, *Zhongguo weiqi shi*, 285; Liu Luosheng, *Zhongguo Weiqi Wushinian Fengyun*, 7.

thousands of years, and its rules had evolved through time, never did there exist a set of unified rules on paper. The 1957 Rule aimed to fill this gap.

The 1957 Rule was a significant document for both what it included and left out.¹⁷¹ The 1957 Rule revealed clear Japanese influence. As discussed in a previous section, earlier Sino-Japanese Weiqi interactions resulted in the abolishment of the traditional Chinese rules of *zuozhi* and *huanqitou* among elite Chinese players, though other players might still play with them. The 1957 Rule officialized this change by not writing *zuozhi* or *huanqitou* into it. Moreover, the handicap system regulated by Article Six is identical to the Japanese model. Chapter Ten of Article Six discussed how to count the points under handicaps. It stated that a game would worth 120 points, and the winner and loser would divide these points up based on specific handicaps.¹⁷² This system was obviously based on the model of the Japanese *Ōteai* 大手合, a tournament organized by Nihon Ki-in since 1924, as the points distribution was exactly the same.¹⁷³ Yet the 1957 Rule was more than a simple copy of the Japanese example. It kept the essence of traditional Chinese rules by regulating that after the game ends, the referee counts the number of points one surrounds plus the number of the player's own surviving stones. If the result is larger than 180.5, he wins.¹⁷⁴ This counting method differed from the Japanese way, which further highlighted the unique Chinese approach to Weiqi.

More importantly, the rules took efforts to make Weiqi suitable for sport competition. Traditionally, there was not strict rules about playing time in China.

¹⁷¹ I am unable to secure a copy of the 1957 rule but manage to get hold of the 1958 rule, which was exactly the same as the 1957 version. *1958 Weiqi Guize 1958 围棋規則* (Beijing: Renmin tiyu chubanshe, 1958).

¹⁷² *1958 Weiqi Guize*, 23.

¹⁷³ For the details of the Japanese point system, see Nakayama Noriyuki, *Shōwa Igo Fūunroku*, 1:62.

¹⁷⁴ *1958 Weiqi Guize*, 15–20.

Theoretically, the players could think as long as they please before making a move, and a Weiqi match could last days. The 1957 Rule changed prevented the games to be overly by introducing a playing-time limit of four hours per player. It also allowed for further reduction of playing-time if all parties agreed.¹⁷⁵ With these changes, the duration of Weiqi games became manageable, and tournaments became feasible. Indeed, the playoff stage of the 1957 national tournaments lasted only ten days.¹⁷⁶

After the standardization of rules, Weiqi tournaments became possible, and in October 1957, the NSC held the second national championship, elevating Weiqi from a demonstration sport to a regular event.¹⁷⁷ Thirty-six cities participated in the competition, with each selecting a representative. The participants were divided into four groups based on geographical location, with the Shenyang, Xi'an, and Wuhan groups each having eight members, and the Shanghai group having twelve, perhaps due to the game's popularity in Eastern China.¹⁷⁸ The top one-fourth of each group advanced to the playoff stage, where each player competed against every other player once. Wins earned two points, and draws earned one point.¹⁷⁹ The reigning champion, Guo Tisheng, continued his dominance and topped the competition by fourteen points.¹⁸⁰

Notably, the organizers of the 1957 national championship made an important decision that further solidified Weiqi as a sport. Instead of following the handicap

¹⁷⁵ 1958 *Weiqi Guize*, 20.

¹⁷⁶ 1957nian *Quanguo Qilei Jinbiaosai Weiqi Duiju Xuanzhu* 1957 年全国棋类锦标赛围棋对局选注 (Beijing: Renmin tiyu chubanshe, 1958), 1.

¹⁷⁷ 1957nian *Quanguo Qilei Jinbiaosai Weiqi Duiju Xuanzhu*, 1.

¹⁷⁸ 1957nian *Quanguo Qilei Jinbiaosai Weiqi Duiju Xuanzhu*, 1.

¹⁷⁹ 1957nian *Quanguo Qilei Jinbiaosai Weiqi Duiju Xuanzhu*, 2.

¹⁸⁰ 1957nian *Quanguo Qilei Jinbiaosai Weiqi Duiju Xuanzhu*, 2.

regulations in the 1957 Rule, they chose a chapter in the Appendix that allowed players to play without handicap, with the black returning 2.5 points to offset the advantage of playing first.¹⁸¹ This decision effectively abolished the system of handicap in Chinese competitions, which had been instrumental in Japan. The reasoning behind was perhaps that handicaps should not exist in sports. By doing away with handicaps, Weiqi was further standardized as a sport, and the focus was shifted towards skill and strategy rather than giving advantages to weaker players.

Despite the progress made in establishing Weiqi as a sport, the transformation was not complete by the end of 1957. Weiqi was still primarily an urban leisure activity rather than a popular sport. An 1958 article argued that “[the fact that] the players came from different workplaces such as factories, government agencies, schools, etc. suggested that the sport of Weiqi was widely played.”¹⁸² However, the results reveal that top players still tended to be from several big cities, particularly Shanghai, Beijing, and Nanjing. The national champion represented Beijing. The national champion was from Beijing, and the Shanghai group, covering Eastern China, was the strongest, with three of its players finishing in the top five.¹⁸³ In contrast, players from Kaifeng and Baoding (both in the Xi’an group) were unable to secure a single victory against others.¹⁸⁴ The top two players were both from Shanghai, followed by the previous year's champion, Guo Tisheng.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸¹ *1958 Weiqi Guize*, 26.

¹⁸² *1957nian Quanguo Qilei Jinbiaosai Weiqi Duiju Xuanzhu*, 2.

¹⁸³ *1957nian Quanguo Qilei Jinbiaosai Weiqi Duiju Xuanzhu*, 2.

¹⁸⁴ *1957nian Quanguo Qilei Jinbiaosai Weiqi Duiju Xuanzhu*, 2.

¹⁸⁵ He Yunbo, *Shijie Weiqi Tongshi Disanjuan*, 162.

Moreover, by 1957, Weiqi had not yet gained much attention from local sport committees. Anhui was among the first to organize a Weiqi team since many provincial officials had learned to enjoy Weiqi as former subalterns of Marshal Chen Yi.¹⁸⁶ Anhui Sports Committee took charge of Weiqi in 1957 and organized a team around the star player, Huang Yongji.¹⁸⁷ Other places, including Nanjing and Beijing, two major centers of Weiqi, waited. In Nanjing, it was only after player Chen Jiamou 陳嘉謀 (around 1911-1993) finished second in the 1957 national tournament that the authorities began to build a Weiqi team.¹⁸⁸ In Beijing, it was the Culture Department that led the Beijing Society, and the Beijing Sports Committee did not organize a team until the 1960s.¹⁸⁹

The First National Games played a crucial role in the redefinition of Weiqi as a sport. It was scheduled for 1959 to celebrate the first ten years of the People's Republic, and the Communist leadership instructed that since the 1959 National Games was "the first [National Games] after the liberation, it must be carried out well and wonderfully."¹⁹⁰ According to a NSC report, the First National Games scheduled to hold 36 sports events, including Weiqi, Xiangqi, and chess.¹⁹¹ Although the NSC later decided to hold chess as a demonstrative sport, they kept Weiqi and Xiangqi as official programs of the National Games, which prompted many provincial sport committees

¹⁸⁶ Zhu Baoxun, "Jianghuai Weiqi Shujiu (Xia) 江淮围棋述旧 (下)," *Jianghuai Wenshi* 2006, no. 2 (n.d.): 121.

¹⁸⁷ Zhu Baoxun, "Jianghuai Weiqi Shujiu (Xia)," 121.

¹⁸⁸ Wang Senlin, Yang Ding, and Wang Hongchang, "Nanjing Weiqi Laoyidai Yeyu Qianghao 南京围棋老一代业余强豪," 亦苏围棋社区, accessed January 23, 2023, <http://ysgo.91em.com/bbs/viewthread.php?tid=2001&extra=&ordertype=2>.

¹⁸⁹ Luo Jingsheng, *Dangdai Beijing Weiqi Shihua*, 55–59.

¹⁹⁰ Guojia tiwei zhengce yanjiushi, ed., *Tiyuyundong Wenjian Xuanbian, 1949-1981 体育运动文件选编, 1949-1981* (Beijing: Renmin tiyu chubanshe, 1982), 34.

¹⁹¹ Guojia tiwei zhengce yanjiushi, *Tiyuyundong Wenjian Xuanbian*, 881.

to take Weiqi more seriously.¹⁹² Shanghai is a case in point. Despite boasting some of the best players in the country, the Shanghai Sports Committee only took control of Weiqi shortly before the 1959 National Games. It organized a training camp to prepare for the event, featuring veterans like Liu Dihuai and Wang Youchen, as well as prodigies like Chen Zude and Wu Songsheng 吴淞笙 (1945-2007).¹⁹³ For Liu and Wang, whose lives were taken care of by the Shanghai Institute, the reclassification of Weiqi as a sport meant little. However, for Chen and Wu, who were too young to be eligible for the Institute, this change made Weiqi a viable career, and they became professional athletes from then on.

To be sure, even by 1959, the reconceptualization of Weiqi encountered difficulties, and the idea of Weiqi as a cultural activity rather than a sport proved to be resilient. In 1960, Chen Yi even felt necessary to instruct the players that if the visiting Japanese players asked which department they belonged to, they should answer the sport department.¹⁹⁴ The ambiguous status of Weiqi could lead to practical troubles. After the Cultural Revolution, Beijing sports and cultural departments even fought over the claim over the Beijing Society's properties. Beijing Sport Committee insisted that since Weiqi was a sport, it should have authority over the Beijing Society. The Cultural Department countered that it led the Society and paid the Society's members' wages; therefore, the Society's properties should belong to the it.¹⁹⁵ To be sure, sport and culture are not necessarily a dichotomy. In 1984, when proposing the site for the

¹⁹² Guojia tiwei zhengce yanjiushi, *Tiyuyundong Wenjian Xuanbian*, 38.

¹⁹³ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 1, 34.

¹⁹⁴ Luo Jingsheng, *Dangdai Beijing Weiqi Shihua*, 50.

¹⁹⁵ Luo Jingsheng, *Dangdai Beijing Weiqi Shihua*, 50.

planned Hangzhou Weiqi Association, Hangzhou Sports Committee argued that, since Weiqi “is both a sport and a part of cultural activities,” building the new Weiqi Association within a cultural park or near the city’s cultural center was “completely reasonable.”¹⁹⁶

In summary, the socialist state redefined Weiqi from a traditional art into a sport in 1956, thereby exerting direct control over the game. The decision may have been influenced by the Soviet Union, but it was also driven by China’s desire to differentiate its sports program from the Soviet model. To fully establish Weiqi as a sport, Chinese sports administrators standardized its rules and organized national tournaments. However, provincial sports committees were initially confused and hesitant to take leadership over Weiqi. It was not until the First National Games in 1959, where Weiqi was included as an official program, that local sports committees began to organize Weiqi teams.

¹⁹⁶ “J023-043-0010-015: Yang Zhaodi, Gu Weiliang Tongzhi Dui Tiwei ‘Guangyu Yaoqiu Chengli Hangzhou Qiyuan de Qingshi’ de Pishi 杨招棣、顾维良同志对体委‘关于要求成立杭州棋院的请示’的批示,” May 2, 1984, Hangzhou Municipal Archive.

Becoming Weiqi Athletes: Weiqi Players in the 1950s

In the 1950s, Weiqi underwent a significant transformation, shifting from a traditional art form to a recognized sport by the end of the decade. However, this shift impacted players differently based on their age and geographic location. This section explores the experiences of Liu Dihuai, Huang Yongji, and Chen Zude, three national champions from different generations, to illustrate the varying effects of the art-to-sport conversion on players.

Liu Dihuai was born in Nanjing, where he learned and mastered the game, in 1897.¹⁹⁷ During the war, Liu moved West. With the help of his powerful Weiqi friends, Liu served as clerks at several government institutions.¹⁹⁸ After Japan's defeat, Liu moved to Shanghai to work for the Shanghai Railroad Bureau in 1947.¹⁹⁹ Although he managed to keep this well-paid job after 1949, the Bureau decided to transfer him out of Shanghai in 1951. In order to continue to play Weiqi, he resigned and played Weiqi for a living at Pinfang teahouse.²⁰⁰ Fortunately for Liu, the Mayor of Shanghai at the time, Chen Yi, was a renowned Weiqi enthusiast who personally sent money to support him.²⁰¹ After the establishment of the Shanghai Research Institute of Culture and History, Chen Yi made an exception for Liu, who was below the required age of 60.²⁰²

For Liu, the year of 1956 was not a significant transition point, as the Shanghai Sports Committee (henceforth SSC) had not paid any attention to Weiqi. The only

¹⁹⁷ Zhao Zhiyun, *Weiqi Chunqiu*, 53.

¹⁹⁸ Zhao Zhiyun, *Weiqi Chunqiu*, 66.

¹⁹⁹ Zhao Zhiyun, *Weiqi Chunqiu*, 67.

²⁰⁰ Zhao Zhiyun, *Weiqi Chunqiu*, 69–71.

²⁰¹ Zhao Zhiyun, *Weiqi Chunqiu*, 69.

²⁰² Zhao Zhiyun, *Weiqi Chunqiu*, 70.

difference was that, from 1956 on, the state started to organize annual Weiqi tournaments. Liu's performance in the first two years was underwhelming by his standards, but he secured the national title in 1958.²⁰³ Nor was 1958, the year in which the SSC finally took care of Weiqi, so much a meaningful turning point for Liu. After all, he already got paid by the Shanghai Institute and did not need to worry about his livelihood. Yet the training camp probably had a positive effect on Liu's skills, as he ended up winning the Weiqi championship in the First National Games of 1959.

Besides attending Weiqi competitions, Liu dedicated himself to the spread of Weiqi. In 1956, he collaborated with Lin Mian 林勉 (1921-2014) to author an introductory manual entitled "How to Play Weiqi."²⁰⁴ The book was divided into four main parts, with Part I covering the basics, including the rules and fundamental skills, and Part II listing common terminologies not covered in the previous section. Part III provided fifty problems with answers to help readers review their knowledge, while the final section discussed more advanced skills and the general strategies of the game. From then on, Liu and others authored, in total, five books that covered all major aspects of the game.²⁰⁵ This contribution greatly aided in the spread of Weiqi knowledge, allowing anyone interested in the game to systematically study it through these works. A Weiqi journalist recalled that he studied Weiqi by himself in 1959 thanks to Liu's works.²⁰⁶

²⁰³ Zhao Zhiyun, *Weiqi Chunqiu*, 72.

²⁰⁴ Liu Dihuai and Lin Mian, *Zenyang Xia Weiqi 怎样下围棋* (Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chubanshe, 1956).

²⁰⁵ Liu Dihuai et al., *Weiqi Dingshi de Jiben Zhishi 围棋定式的基本知识* (Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chubanshe, 1958); Liu Dihuai et al., *Weiqi Buju Chubu 围棋布局初步* (Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chubanshe, 1958); Liu Dihuai, Lin Mian, and Wang Zhenxiong, *Weiqi Zhongpan Zhanshu 围棋中盘战术* (Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chubanshe, 1964); Liu Dihuai, Lin Mian, and Wang Zhenxiong, *Weiqi Guanzi Changshi 围棋官子常识* (Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chubanshe, 1965).

²⁰⁶ Zhu Wei, *Shanghaitan Qiren Qishi*, 3.

Furthermore, Liu Dihuai was dedicated to sharing his knowledge with younger players, without placing importance on the traditional master-disciple relationship that was prevalent at the time. He treated all young players equally and was always willing to teach them without any hesitation.²⁰⁷ Zhao Zhiyun 趙之雲 (1941-1996), who often attended Pinfang teahouse with his brother, recalled that Liu Dihuai would play instructional games whenever he was free, not caring that the Zhao brothers already had a master other than him.²⁰⁸ Even in the case of Chen Zude, who was the disciple of Liu's rival, Gu Shuiru, Liu instructed him warm-heartedly during the 1959 training camp.²⁰⁹

Huang Yongji's experience of the 1950s differed significantly from that of Liu. Born in 1928 in Dangtu county, Anhui province, Huang Yongji was the grandson of a major landlord and the son of a Peking University graduate who was a fan of Weiqi.²¹⁰ He learned the game by watching his father's guests play and exhibited natural talent. He went to college in Nanjing, where he honed his skills by playing against top players like Liu Dihuai and Chen Jiamou. After college, he returned to Dangtu and became a Chinese teacher. He continued to play Weiqi occasionally and made several powerful friends in the game, but it remained a hobby since he had a stable career.²¹¹

In contrast to Liu Dihuai, Huang Yongji's life took a significant turn in 1956 when Weiqi became a sport and the Anhui leadership quickly thought of him. Due to the need for preparation, Huang stayed first at the Anhui Association for Science and Technology

²⁰⁷ Zhao Zhiyun, *Weiqi Chunqiu*, 71.

²⁰⁸ Zhao Zhiyun, *Weiqi Chunqiu*, 71.

²⁰⁹ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 37–38.

²¹⁰ Interview with Huang Liping.

²¹¹ Zhu Baoxun, "Jianghuai Weiqi Shujiu (Xia)," 120–21.

before officially joining the sports committee in 1957, which marked the beginning of his career as a professional Weiqi athlete.²¹² He represented Hefei in the 1957 and 1958 national Weiqi tournaments and managed to finish in top six in each time.²¹³ In the First National Games, he won a bronze medal for Anhui.²¹⁴ His prime, however, was 1960. In this year, he secured the national championship and got a draw against Segoe Kensaku, the head of the visiting Japanese team.²¹⁵

On the eve of the First National Games, the Anhui sport committee paid more attention to Weiqi and decided to build a team instead of relying on only one star player like Huang Yongji.²¹⁶ Huang took on the responsibility of scouting players for the Anhui team and found an old Weiqi friend, 37-year-old Zhu Jinzhao 朱金兆 (1921-2004), who had given up on Weiqi to become an accountant at a bus station in Huoshan county, Anhui province. Despite not having played Weiqi for almost ten years, Zhu became a Weiqi athlete thanks to Huang's effort.²¹⁷

Chen Zude represented the first generation of Weiqi players grown up in the PRC. Chen was born in 1944 in Shanghai.²¹⁸ Chen first learned Weiqi from his father at age 7.²¹⁹ After receiving instructions from several amateur players, Chen became the disciple of elite player, Gu Shuiru, in 1951.²²⁰ At that time, the Shanghai Institute was not founded, so Gu did not receive any income from the state; instead, he played Weiqi

²¹² Zhu Baoxun, "Jianghuai Weiqi Shujiu (Xia)," 121.

²¹³ *1957nian Quanguo Qilei Jinbiaosai Weiqi Duiju Xuanzhu*, 2.

²¹⁴ Liu Shancheng, *Zhongguo weiqi shi*, 288.

²¹⁵ Liu Shancheng, *Zhongguo weiqi shi*, 290, 297.

²¹⁶ Zhu Baoxun, "Jianghuai Weiqi Shujiu (Xia)," 122.

²¹⁷ Zhu Baoxun, "Jianghuai Weiqi Shujiu (Xia)," 127; Interview with Huang Liping.

²¹⁸ Liu Shancheng, *Zhongguo weiqi shi*, 309.

²¹⁹ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 3, 7–8.

²²⁰ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 6–7, 9–12.

at Xiangyang park and sold tickets to whoever wanted to play against him.²²¹ Despite this, Gu refused to take any money from Chen and occasionally gave the young boy special treats.²²² Under Gu's tutelage, Chen established himself as a Weiqi prodigy. He became friends with two prominent Communist Weiqi enthusiasts, Chen Yi and Li Lisan 李立三 (1899-1967).²²³ Chen was even offered the opportunity to study Weiqi in Japan with Wu Qingyuan, but due to strained Sino-Japanese relations, the plan did not fall through.²²⁴

Despite his progress in Weiqi, Chen gave up on Weiqi since it was not a legitimate career in the early 1950s. Li Jishen from the Beijing Society invited Chen to study Weiqi in Beijing, but Chen refused as he did not want to be away from his family.²²⁵ In the end, Chen chose to focus on his school work and gave up on Weiqi.²²⁶ His dream was to become a painter worker in a shipyard. In 1958, he had been apprenticing in a shipyard for five months before receiving the life-changing notice from the SSC.²²⁷

In late 1958, Chen learned that he had been selected for the training camp organized by the SSC in preparation for the First National Games.²²⁸ From the point he accepted the invitation, he had been turned from a student-apprentice into a full-fledged Weiqi athlete. This new status was privileged. As Chen himself recalled in his memoir, "the state arranged everything for us: food, clothes, cultural classes, and Weiqi lessons with

²²¹ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 14–15.

²²² Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 15.

²²³ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 21–30.

²²⁴ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 16; "Xiju Dashi Yu Weiqi Jujiang -- Ji Mei Lanfang Yu Wu Qingyuan de Jiaowang 戏剧大师与围棋巨匠 ——记梅兰芳与吴清源的交往," *Renmin Ribao*, October 28, 1987.

²²⁵ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 4.

²²⁶ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 4.

²²⁷ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 1.

²²⁸ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 1, 34.

famous players.”²²⁹ This new status allowed Chen to focus entirely on cultivating his skills, without the need to worry about making a living from Weiqi. Chen would become a three-time national champion (1964, 1966, and 1974).²³⁰

Overall, the redefinition of Weiqi as a sport had a significant impact on the livelihood of Weiqi players. However, the effects of this transition varied depending on players’ ages and locations. For older players like Liu Dihuai, who had already established themselves as top players in the nation, the 1956 transition was not as significant as they already received subsidies through the state’s previous United Front policy. In contrast, for younger players, the art-to-sport transition was of enormous importance as it made Weiqi a viable career. As a result, Huang Yongji and Chen Zude, who had previously given up on playing Weiqi professionally, were able to become Weiqi athletes.

²²⁹ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 38.

²³⁰ Liu Shancheng, *Zhongguo weiqi shi*, 310–11.

Diplomacy of Weiqi before “Weiqi Diplomacy,” 1946-1957

Meanwhile, as socialist China transformed Weiqi, the reestablishment of Sino-Japanese Weiqi connections was put on the agenda in Japan. Especially, the Chinese-Japanese master, Wu Qingyuan, played an important role.²³¹ Only a year after the war, Wu Qingyuan proposed to bring top Chinese players such as Gu Shuiru and Liu Dihuai to Japan for friendly matches.²³² Although this plan did not come to fruition, Wu made another move by visiting Taiwan in 1952, with two aims in mind. For one thing, he intended to “endeavor to promote goodwill between China and Japan through this art of the East (referring to Weiqi).”²³³ His second and more practical aim was to bring his mother, who was in Taiwan along with Wu’s brother and sisters, to Japan.²³⁴ In the end, however, his brought from Taiwan not only his mother but also the honorary title of the “grand hand of the nation” 大國手 and a 10-year-old Weiqi prodigy, Lin Haifeng 林海峰 (1942-).²³⁵ Notably, Wu chose to go to Taiwan under Chiang Kai-shek rather than the mainland. Nevertheless, it was due to the fact that his family was there rather than his political leaning. He also met with the mainland’s delegates to Japan in the 1955.²³⁶

²³¹ Wu had joined Japanese nationality in the 1930s but lost it in 1946. He recovered the nationality of the Republic of China in 1949. Wu Qingyuan and Kiriya Keiichi, *Zhong de Jingshen*, 124–25.

²³² “Chūgoku No Kikyaku Mōra Nihon de Shinzen Teawase Go-Shi No Hanashi 中国の棋客網羅 日本で親善手合せ 呉氏の話,” *Yomiuri Shinbun*, August 8, 1946.

²³³ “Go Seigen Sakuya Taiwan e: Nikka Shinzen to Bodō Hikitori Ni 呉清源昨夜台湾へ / 日華親善と母堂引取りに,” *Yomiuri Shinbun*, August 3, 1952.

²³⁴ “Go Seigen Taiwan e Shinzen No Tabi 呉清源台湾へ親善の旅,” *Yomiuri Shinbun*, July 24, 1952; “Go Seigen Sakuya Taiwan e.”

²³⁵ “Go 9-Danra Kesa Kaeru 呉 9 段らけさ帰る,” *Yomiuri Shinbun*, July 24, 1952.

²³⁶ Muramatsu Shōfu, “Kaku Matsujyaku Imamukashi Monogatari 郭沫若今昔物語,” *Yomiuri Shinbun*, December 6, 1955.

One of the earliest efforts to establish Weiqi connections between the PRC and Japan was initiated, surprisingly, by the famed opera master, Mei Lanfang 梅蘭芳 (1894-1961), who headed a delegation to Japan in 1956. During Mei's stay in Japan, he met with Wu Qingyuan and asked him how to improve Chinese Weiqi. Wu replied that the Chinese should seek out young talents and send them to study in Japan.²³⁷ After returning to China, Mei wrote to Wu, informing him that he had identified two prodigies, Chen Zude and Chen Ximing, and began making arrangements for them to travel to Japan.²³⁸ However, due to deteriorating Sino-Japanese relations after the Nagasaki National Flag Incident in 1958, the two Chens were unable to make the trip.²³⁹

If Wu's actions were personal and non-political, Nihon Ki-in revealed its political inclination in March 1957 by sending a delegation to Taiwan. The delegation was comprised of four high-ranking professional players and three non-player directors of Nihon Ki-in, Karasawa Toshiki 唐沢俊樹 (1891-1967), Yamamoto Kumekichi 山本 桑吉 (1893-1974), and Nagano Mamoru 永野護 (1890-1970); its head was Segoe Kensaku, Wu Qingyuan's teacher and the *de facto* leader of Japanese Weiqi.²⁴⁰ Before sending the delegation to Taiwan, Nihon Ki-in had received an invitation from mainland China via Japan-China Friendship Association 日中友好協会 (henceforth, JCFA).²⁴¹ However, the director board of Nihon Ki-in rejected it, citing that "it is too early."²⁴² Yet, the same board decided to send a delegation to Taiwan immediately after this

²³⁷ Wu Qingyuan and Kiriyama Keiichi, *Zhong de Jingshen*, 140.

²³⁸ "Xiju Dashi Yu Weiqi Jujiang"; Wu Qingyuan and Kiriyama Keiichi, *Zhong de Jingshen*, 140.

²³⁹ Wu Qingyuan and Kiriyama Keiichi, *Zhong de Jingshen*, 140.

²⁴⁰ "Igo Shisetsudan Taiwan e 囲碁使節団台湾へ," *Yomiuri Shinbun*, March 6, 1957.

²⁴¹ Yasunaga Hajime, *Kaiteishinban Igo Hyaku-Nen 改定新版 囲碁百年* (Tokyo: Jiji Tsūshinsha, 1976), 303.

²⁴² Yasunaga Hajime, *Kaiteishinban Igo Hyaku-Nen*, 303.

decision. Thus, more than a pure cultural activity, this delegation was a demonstration of Nihon Ki-in's political standing. It echoed the leaning of the Kishi administration, which refused to recognize the PRC but opted for Taiwan. This Weiqi delegation may even be viewed as a diplomatic move by the Japanese state. Indeed, a closer look at the three Nihon Ki-in directors reveals that they were all politicians close to Prime Minister Kishi Nobusuke 岸信介 (1896-1987). Karasawa and Yamamoto were previously in Ōasa Tadao's 大麻唯男 (1889-1957) faction, and they joined Kishi's clique after Ōasa's death in February 1957.²⁴³ Karasawa would join Kishi's cabinet as Minister of Justice later in 1957. Kishi's connection with Nagano was not only political but also economical. After Kishi's release from Sugamo Prison, Kishi and Nagano founded a paper-making company together.²⁴⁴ Nagano would also become a cabinet member in the second Kishi administration. Even Segoe was close to Kishi, serving as a statutory auditor at Kishi and Nagano's paper factory.²⁴⁵ What these political figures accomplished in Taiwan can only be surmised. Yamamoto revealed in his autobiography that they met Chiang Kai-shek, but he did not record the details of their meeting.²⁴⁶ They might have paved the way for Kishi, as Kishi would visit Taiwan himself in three months.

In terms of Weiqi, the delegation's result was more obvious. On March 19, the delegation went back after a week's stay in Taiwan and brought along another 11-year-

²⁴³ "Jimintō No Habatsu 自民党の派閥," *Asahi Shinbun*, October 11, 1956.

²⁴⁴ Kishi Nobusuke, *Guanchang Zhengjie Liushinian -- An Xinjie Huiyilu 官场政界六十年——岸信介回忆录*, trans. Zhou Bin (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1981), 60.

²⁴⁵ Kishi Nobusuke, *Guanchang Zhengjie Liushinian -- An Xinjie Huiyilu*, 61.

²⁴⁶ Yamamoto Kumekichi, *Waga Shōgai No Kaiko わが生涯の回顧* (Tokyo: Yamamoto kumekichi jimusho, 1966), 199.

old Weiqi prodigy, Wang Xuechuan 王學傳 (1945-2013).²⁴⁷ Wang was not a new discovery of the Nihon Ki-in delegation. In December 1956, Aoki Kazuo, who had organized the Japanese Weiqi delegation to Wang Jingwei's collaborationist regime in 1942, led a team of six amateur players to Taiwan.²⁴⁸ Wang impressed Aoki.²⁴⁹ Aoki brought Wang back home and treated him as a member of the family after Wang's move to Japan.²⁵⁰

Kishi used Weiqi in other diplomatic occasions with Chiang's regime. On 1957 April 6, Kishi had a Weiqi game with Chen Xueping 陳雪屏 (1901-1999), who formerly headed the Department of Education in Taiwan and was on a mission to Japan.²⁵¹ Nagano and Segoe attended and commented on the game.²⁵² Chen ended up winning, and he dubbed the victory as "the best gift for Taiwan."²⁵³ Later in November, a Weiqi delegation from Taiwan featured Wu Qingyuan's elder brother, Wu Disheng 吳滌生 (1910-1994), visited Japan; Kishi played them on November 11.²⁵⁴

In summary, Weiqi was used as a diplomatic tool in the years following World War II, and it was the Japanese Kishi administration that was the first to utilize it. The Nihon Ki-in sent Weiqi delegations to Taiwan instead of mainland China, likely due to Kishi's political leaning towards Taiwan. Kishi himself even played Weiqi on diplomatic occasions with delegates from Taiwan.

²⁴⁷ "Igo Shinzen Shisetsu Kaeru 囲碁親善使節帰る," *Yomiuri Shinbun*, March 20, 1957.

²⁴⁸ "Tokō: Chūgoku Shinzen No Igo Daihyō 渡航: 中国親善の囲碁代表," *Mainichi Shinbun*, December 30, 1956.

²⁴⁹ "'Dai 2 No Go Seigen' Rainichi Taiwan Kara Go No Tensai Shōnen '第2の呉清源'来日 台湾から碁の天才少年," *Yomiuri Shinbun*, July 10, 1957, 2.

²⁵⁰ "'Dai 2 No Go Seigen' Rainichi Taiwan Kara Go No Tensai Shōnen."

²⁵¹ "Kishi-San, Go No Ōteai 岸さん、碁の大手合," *Yomiuri Shinbun*, April 7, 1957.

²⁵² "Kishi-San, Go No Ōteai."

²⁵³ "Kishi-San, Go No Ōteai."

²⁵⁴ "Taiwan Kara Igo Shinzen Shisetsu 台湾から囲碁親善使節," *Mainichi Shinbun*, November 10, 1957.

The Start of Weiqi Diplomacy, 1958-1960

As the Kishi administration sided with the United States and the Chiang regime in Taiwan, Japan refused to recognize the PRC. In 1958, moreover, two incidents further worsened the Sino-Japanese relationship. The first was the discovery of Liu Lianren 劉連仁 (1913-2000), a Chinese farmer who had been kidnapped to Japan during the war and forced to work at a coal mine in Hokkaido.²⁵⁵ After escaping from his inhumane treatment, he hid in the mountains for 13 years until he was discovered by local authorities on February 9, 1958.²⁵⁶ Instead of fairly compensating Liu, however, the Hokkaido government labeled Liu an illegal alien.²⁵⁷ Prime Minister Kishi promised to repatriate Liu but failed to acknowledge any responsibility, further infuriating the Chinese public.²⁵⁸ A Tianjin reader wrote to *Renmin Ribao* that he “strongly protest[s] the indifferent attitude of the Japanese government towards our compatriot Liu Lianren.”²⁵⁹ Even a Japanese student studying at Peking University expressed his outrage at “the atrocities committed by the Japanese militarists” and demanded the Japanese government to take responsibility and compensate Liu before sending him back.²⁶⁰ However, since there was no official diplomatic relationship between China and Japan, Chinese protest failed to yield any tangible results.

²⁵⁵ “Guanyu Liu Lianren Shijian de Yizu Wenjian 关于刘连仁事件的一组文件,” in *Zhanhou Zhongri Guanxi Wenxianji, 1945-1970*, by Tian Huan (Beijing: Shehuikexue wenxian chubanshe, 1996), 342.

²⁵⁶ “Guanyu Liu Lianren Shijian de Yizu Wenjian,” 342.

²⁵⁷ “Guanyu Liu Lianren Shijian de Yizu Wenjian,” 342–43.

²⁵⁸ “Guanyu Liu Lianren Shijian de Yizu Wenjian,” 343.

²⁵⁹ Bao Chonghan, “Rang Nanbao Liu Lianren Zhenzheng Chongjiantianri 让难胞刘连仁真正重见天日,” *Renmin Ribao*, March 7, 1958.

²⁶⁰ Shutō Seiji, “Yige Zai Zhongguo de Riben Xuesheng Yaoqiu Riben Dangju Song Liu Lianren Huiguo 一个在中国的日本学生 要求日本当局送刘连仁回国,” *Renmin Ribao*, March 7, 1958.

A more lethal blow to the Sino-Japanese relationship, however, was the so-called Nagasaki National Flag incident. The Fourth Sino-Japanese Trade Agreement, which was signed on March 5, 1958, clearly stated that “commercial representative agencies have the right to fly the flag of their country in their buildings.”²⁶¹ Nevertheless, the Kishi administration refused to honor this article. Aichi Kiichi 愛知揆一 (1907-1973), the Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary, declared that since Japan did not recognize the PRC, “it is only natural that the so-called national flag of the Chinese Communist Party cannot be recognized as a right to be hoisted by a private trade representative.”²⁶²

Later in his life, Kishi admitted that he did not anticipate that the flag issue would be a major problem.²⁶³ However, events unfolded differently than he had anticipated. Starting from April 30, the Nagasaki branch of the Japan-China Friendship Association held an exhibition of Chinese stamps and papercuttings and flew a PRC flag.²⁶⁴ The KMT protested about the flag and pressured the Mayor of Nagasaki, but the JCFA Nagasaki refused back down.²⁶⁵ On May 2, two individuals tore the flag down, which enraged the Chinese. The Japanese response, however, was even more infuriating to the Chinese. Nagasaki police arrested the two but released them later in the same day.²⁶⁶ Worse still, Japanese Foreign Ministry asserted that they would not be punished as

²⁶¹ “Disici Zhongri Maoyi Xieding 第四次中日贸易协定,” in *Zhanhou Zhongri Guanxi Wenxianji, 1945-1970*, by Tian Huan (Beijing: Shehuikexue wenxian chubanshe, 1996), 347.

²⁶² Aichi Kiichi, “Dai Shi-Ji Nitchū Minkan Bōeki Kyōtei Ni Kansuru Naikaku Kanbō Chōkan No Danwa 第四次日中民間貿易協定に関する内閣官房長官の談話,” April 9, 1958, <https://worldjpn.grips.ac.jp/documents/texts/JPCH/19580409.S1J.html>.

²⁶³ Kishi Nobusuke, *Guanchang Zhengjie Liushinian -- An Xinjie Huiyilu*, 137.

²⁶⁴ “Rizhong Youxie Changqi Zhibu Guanyu Zhongguo Guoqi Shijian de Shengming 日中友协长崎支部关于中国国旗事件的声明,” in *Zhanhou Zhongri Guanxi Wenxianji, 1945-1970*, by Tian Huan (Beijing: Shehuikexue wenxian chubanshe, 1996), 366.

²⁶⁵ “Rizhong Youxie Changqi Zhibu Guanyu Zhongguo Guoqi Shijian de Shengming,” 366.

²⁶⁶ “Xinhuashe Guanyu Zhongguo Guoqi Shijian de Baodao 新华社关于中国国旗事件的报道,” in *Zhanhou Zhongri Guanxi Wenxianji, 1945-1970*, by Tian Huan (Beijing: Shehuikexue wenxian chubanshe, 1996), 367.

damaging a national flag since Japan did not recognize the PRC.²⁶⁷ The Chinese placed the ultimate blame on Prime Minister Kishi. A Chinese state organ report argued that “the Kishi administration had already deliberately and openly connived in carrying out the destruction of the Chinese flag at that time, and this flag destruction incident was the product of the Kishi administration’s collusion with Chiang Kai-shek’s clique in planning this conspiracy of hostility against the Chinese people.”²⁶⁸ Chen Yi, Chinese Vice-Premier cum Foreign Minister, adopted a similar stance as this article. On May 9, Chen told reporters that the Nagasaki incident was “manufactured with the direct connivance and cover-up of the Kishi administration;” he warned that “the Kishi administration must be held fully responsible for all consequences arising from this incident.”²⁶⁹

The consequences Chen meant were the complete end of economic and cultural interactions between China and Japan. China halted its steel trade negotiation with Japan and recalled the delegation on the next day after Chen’s talk.²⁷⁰ On the same day, China suspended the issuance of import and export licenses to Japan.²⁷¹ Cultural interactions could not stay unaffected. A *Renmin Ribao* editorial argued that if cultural interactions were to continue, the Kishi administration would “put the blame on the Chinese people (for the deterioration of Sino-Japanese relations) and use it to provoke

²⁶⁷ “Xinhuashe Guanyu Zhongguo Guoqi Shijian de Baodao,” 367.

²⁶⁸ “Xinhuashe Guanyu Zhongguo Guoqi Shijian de Baodao,” 368.

²⁶⁹ “Chen Yi Fuzongli Jian Waijiaobuzhang Jiu Zuijin Zhongri Guanxi Dui Xinhuashe Jizhe Fabiao de Jianghua 陈毅副总理兼外交部长就最近中日关系对新华社记者发表的讲话,” in *Zhanhou Zhongri Guanxi Wenxianji, 1945-1970*, by Tian Huan (Beijing: Shehuikexue wenxian chubanshe, 1996), 371.

²⁷⁰ “Zhongri Gangtie Maoyi Tanpan Tingzhi, Wo Daibiaotuan Jijiang Huiguo 中日钢铁易货谈判停止，我代表团即将回国,” *Renmin Ribao*, May 11, 1958.

²⁷¹ “Zai Woguo Renmin Yaoqiu Xia, Wo Zhengfu Tingzhi Jianfa Duijin Jinchukou Xukezheng 在我国人民要求下，我政府停止签发对日进出口许可证,” *Renmin Ribao*, May 11, 1958.

the Japanese people's discontent with China."²⁷² Thus, if Kishi's China policy were to stay unchanged, China could not continue the cultural relations with Japan. Indeed, Chinese official recalled that after the 1958 break, Sino-Japanese relations were "very cold, so cold that even the Chinese and Japanese communists did not interact."²⁷³

The Kishi administration did not try to repair Sino-Japanese relations. The cabinet meeting on May 13 resolved that the Chinese only took the strong attitude in order to influence the 1959 Japanese election in favor of the Socialist Party. Thus, the Kishi administration took a "wait-and-see" stance.²⁷⁴ However, Kishi's government miscalculated the Chinese's stance and underestimated their determination. Sino-Japanese relations did not improve after the general election. Nevertheless, Kishi did not change his policy. While Japanese Communist Party and Socialist Party made moves to reapproach China, the LDP waited until September 1959, when former Prime Minister Ishibashi Tanzan 石橋湛山 (1884-1973) visited China. While Ishibashi made some progress in repairing Sino-Japanese relations, he was no longer a central figure within the LDP. A more decisive move had to wait.

In October 1959, Matsumura Kenzō 松村謙三 (1883-1971) visited China in an effort to reconcile with the Chinese communists. Matsumura appeared to be on the opposition to Kishi within the LDP. Indeed, he previously ran against Kishi for the presidency of the LDP and lost to Kishi earlier in 1959. Matsumura's position within the party thus made him the suitable for the task of reconciling with China.

²⁷² "Zhongri Wenhua Wanglai Buneng Bushou Yingxiang 中日文化往来不能不受影响," *Renmin Ribao*, June 25, 1958.

²⁷³ Quoted in Liu Jianping, *Zhanhou Zhongri Guanxi: "Buzhengchang" Lishi de Guocheng Yu Jiegou 战后中日关系: "不正常"历史的过程与结构* (Beijing: Shehuikexue wenxian chubanshe, 2010), 141.

²⁷⁴ "Seifu, Seikan Wo Kankunin 政府、静観を確認," *Asahi Shinbun*, May 13, 1958.

Weiqi entered Sino-Japanese diplomatic stage during Matsumura's visit. On October 23, 1959, Matsumura brought up the topic of Weiqi during his meeting with Chen Yi.²⁷⁵ Matsumura appears to have known that Weiqi was the Chinese Foreign Minister's favorite game. Indeed, Chen's penchant for Weiqi was no secret to the Japanese. When Chen Yi assumed the position of the Foreign Minister in early 1958, a *Yomiuri Shinbun* article already noted that Chen was a Weiqi enthusiast.²⁷⁶ Matsumura mentioned that Segoe Kensaku had said that he would like to "bury his bones in China in order to promote Weiqi."²⁷⁷ Matsumura's words raised Chen's interest. He smiled and responded that he hoped Segoe would come.²⁷⁸

Matsumura and Chen were both serious about possible Weiqi interactions. After returning to Japan in December, Matsumura contacted Nihon Ki-in director Nagano Mamoru and secured consent from Nihon Ki-in leadership.²⁷⁹ Then Matsumura arranged the details of the visit with Liao Chengzhi 廖承志 (1908-1983), a Japanese-born Chinese politician and advocate for Sino-Japanese People's diplomacy, on the Chinese side.²⁸⁰ In 1960, under Chen and Liao's auspices, the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries 中国人民对外友好协会 (henceforth, CPAFFC) sent an official invitation to Nihon Ki-in, requesting it to delegate high-ranking players to visit the mainland.²⁸¹ After getting the invitation,

²⁷⁵ "Nitchū Hanashiai, Mazu 'Go' Kara 日中話し合い、まず「碁」から," *Yomiuri Shinbun*, October 24, 1959.

²⁷⁶ "Chūkyō Gaishō Ni Natta Chien Ii 中共外相になった・陳毅," *Yomiuri Shinbun*, February 14, 1958.

²⁷⁷ "Nitchū Hanashiai, Mazu 'Go' Kara."

²⁷⁸ "Nitchū Hanashiai, Mazu 'Go' Kara."

²⁷⁹ "Chūkyō e Igo Shisetsu 中共へ囲碁使節," *Asahi Shinbun*, February 23, 1960.

²⁸⁰ "Chūkyō e Igo Shisetsu."

²⁸¹ "Shushō, Kishi No Chūkyō Haken Ni OK 首相、棋士の中共和遣にOK," *Yomiuri Shinbun*, February 23, 1960.

Nagano reported to Kishi on 1960 February 22, and Kishi “immediately expressed his approval.”²⁸²

That Kishi easily agreed with sending a Weiqi delegation was at the first sight surprising. After all, he had often been blamed for destroying Sino-Japanese relations by the Chinese, especially Chen Yi. Even a *Yomiuri Shinbun* report expressed surprise when suggesting that Kishi so easily agreed the Weiqi delegation.²⁸³

There were several reasons behind Kishi’s decision. Firstly, Kishi was himself a noted Weiqi enthusiast, and Nihon Ki-in had awarded him the diploma of amateur 5 *dan*.²⁸⁴ Wu Qingyuan remembered that he had had games with Kishi both before and after the war.²⁸⁵ Secondly and more importantly, Weiqi interaction with China was consistent with Kishi’s China policy. As Kishi had reiterated, he was not particularly hostile to China.²⁸⁶ He insisted separating politics from economics and culture. On the one hand, he had to follow the United States and maintain relations with the Chiang regime in Taiwan. Thus, he took a wait-and-see attitude towards the PRC and did not attempt to restore the political relations between the two countries. On the other hand, Kishi supported Sino-Japanese economic and cultural interactions. Indeed, as a 1958 Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs internal report revealed, “At this point, the government has taken the basic position that it cannot recognize Communist China, but it has taken all possible measures within the scope of this position, including trade and

²⁸² “Shushō, Kishi No Chūkyō Haken Ni OK.”

²⁸³ “Shushō, Kishi No Chūkyō Haken Ni OK.”

²⁸⁴ “Kishi-San, Go No Ōteai.”

²⁸⁵ Wu Qingyuan and Kiriyama Keiichi, *Zhong de Jingshen*, 134.

²⁸⁶ Kishi Nobusuke, *Guanchang Zhengjie Liushinian -- An Xinjie Huiyilu*, 137.

cultural exchanges with Communist China.”²⁸⁷ Thus, the Kishi administration would welcome Weiqi interactions with China as a form of cultural exchanges.

Inviting Japanese players to China made sense for the Chinese side as well. By 1959, the Chinese leadership had softened its stance. While still insisting that politics and economics were inseparable, Chinese communists reinterpreted this principle as so long as Japanese politicians showed their goodwill, Sino-Japanese trade could resume.²⁸⁸ The Chinese construed Ishibashi and Matsumura’s visits as expressing such goodwill from the LDP. Thus, the Chinese had little reason to oppose the Weiqi delegation. Moreover, Chinese players had always wanted to study from high-ranking Japanese professionals. As mentioned above, China had just sent an invitation to Nihon Ki-in in 1957, but Nihon Ki-in rejected the mainland in favor of Taiwan. Now that the Japanese offered a Weiqi delegation, Chen Yi, as the most prominent Weiqi patron in China, would not let this chance slip.

After agreeing on the delegation on both sides, Nihon Ki-in had to decide on the roster. The obvious choice for the head of the delegation was Segoe Kensaku, who had been the *de facto* leader of the Japanese Weiqi world since the 1940s after the death of Hon’inbō Shūsai. Segoe’s close relationship with Kishi and connections to the Japanese upper echelon also made him an ideal candidate for this position. Furthermore, Segoe had special connections with China, having been the teacher of Wu Qingyuan and

²⁸⁷ “A’.1.2.1.8: Chien Ii Danwa Ni Taisuru Gaimushō No Hikōshiki Kenkai 陳毅談話に対する外務省の非公式見解,” May 10, 1958, Japan Center for Asian Historical Records, https://www.jacar.archives.go.jp/aj/meta/result?DB_ID=G0000101EXTERNAL&DEF_XSL=default&ON_LYD=on&IS_INTERNAL=false&IS_STYLE=default&IS_KIND=detail&IS_START=1&IS_NUMBER=1&IS_TAG_S18=eaid&IS_KEY_S18=M2019100316392439697.

²⁸⁸ Liu Jianping, *Zhanhou Zhongri Guanxi*, 174–75.

visited China numerous times before. He had even once lived in Gu Shuiru's house for a week.²⁸⁹ In addition, Segoe dedicated himself to the spread of Weiqi internationally. He once declared, "That [Spreading Weiqi] is what I would like to devote my later years to. Everything I do from now on will be along those lines."²⁹⁰ Segoe proved to be true to his words. As early as 1950, he visited Hawaii and bestowed *dan* rankings to American players.²⁹¹ He always had an eye on China. He mentioned in his autobiography the plan of building a Sino-Japanese Weiqi club centered on Wu Qingyuan after Sino-Japanese diplomatic normalization.²⁹² Although he never fulfilled this dream, Segoe opted to head the first Weiqi delegation to China instead.

Japanese Weiqi leaders were cautious while filling up the roster. In the end, the team featured five high-rankings players. Two other 9 *dan* players, Hashimoto Utarō 橋本宇太郎 (1907-1994) and Sakata Eio 坂田栄男 (1920-2010), went with Segoe; Segawa Yoshio 瀬川良雄 (1913-2002), 7 *dan*, and Suzuki Gorō 鈴木五良 (1917-1995), 6 *dan*, filled up the rest two spots.²⁹³ Sakata made the delegation since he was arguably the best Japanese player at the time. By 1960, Sakata was well in his prime. He had just won four championships in 1959, and he would claim four of the seven main titles in the 1960s and 70s. Suzuki was another solid player. He would eventually become a director of Nihon Ki-in and would be promoted to 9 *dan* posthumously.²⁹⁴

²⁸⁹ Segoe Kensaku, *Igo Ichirō*, 53–54.

²⁹⁰ Segoe Kensaku, *Igo Ichirō*, 138.

²⁹¹ Segoe Kensaku, "Hawai Tayori ハワイ便り," *Yomiuri Shinbun*, July 30, 1950.

²⁹² Segoe Kensaku, *Igo Ichirō*, 139.

²⁹³ "Chūgoku e Igo Shisetsu Segoe Meiyo 9-Dan-Ra 5-Shi Kongetsu Gejun Ni Shuppatsu 中国へ囲碁使節 瀬越名誉9段ら5氏 今月下旬に出発," *Yomiuri Shinbun*, May 10, 1960.

²⁹⁴ "Suzuki Tsuna 鈴木津奈," 日本棋院, accessed December 17, 2022, <https://www.nihonkiin.or.jp/player/htm/ki001032.html>; "Suzuki Goro at Sensei's Library," accessed January 24, 2023, <https://senseis.xmp.net/?SuzukiGoro>.

Hashimoto and Segawa were more subtle choices. Hashimoto was Segoe's elder disciple. Indeed, before adopting Wu's as a disciple, Segoe sent none other than Hashimoto to China to test the prodigy's Weiqi skills.²⁹⁵ Hashimoto was also a member of the 1942 Japanese Weiqi delegation to the Wang Jingwei collaborationist regime.²⁹⁶ Being many times in China, Hashimoto had several friends there.²⁹⁷ More importantly, Hashimoto was the leader of Kansei Ki-in 関西棋院. Kansei Ki-in was originally Nihon Ki-in's branch in the Kansei (関西, West Japan) region, but under Hashimoto's leadership, it gained independence from Nihon Ki-in and became the Tokyo organization's main rival.²⁹⁸ Including Hashimoto in the 1960 delegation was partly in order to get Kansei Ki-in represented. Similarly, Segawa Yoshio represented the Nagoya branch of Nihon Ki-in.²⁹⁹

The Weiqi delegation left Japan on May 30, 1960.³⁰⁰ This time coincided with the apex of the Anpo struggle, a series of protests and demonstrations against the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan (often referred to as the Anpo Treaty). On May 19, Kishi forcibly passed the revised Anpo Treaty, which allowed for the rearmament of Japan, in the Lower House of the Diet by calling the police and ousting the opposition party members. Kishi's undemocratic moves triggered large protests, pushing the Anpo struggle to a new height. Indeed, on the same

²⁹⁵ Kiriya Keiichi, *Go Seigen to Sono Kyōdai*, 69–77.

²⁹⁶ Segoe Kensaku, *Igo Ichirō*, 84.

²⁹⁷ “Igo Shisetsu to Shite Chūkyō Ni Iku Hashimoto Utarō 囲碁使節として中共に行く 橋本宇太郎,” *Asahi Shinbun*, May 10, 1960.

²⁹⁸ “Igo Shisetsu to Shite Chūkyō Ni Iku Hashimoto Utarō.”

²⁹⁹ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwu*, 48.

³⁰⁰ “Bungaku Daihyōdan Chūgoku e Shuppatsu Igo No Nana-Nin Mo 文学代表団中国へ出発 囲碁の七人も,” *Mainichi Shinbun*, May 31, 1960; “Bungaku Daihyōdan Chūgoku e Shuppatsu Igo No Nana-Nin Mo”; “Hōchū Bungakumono to Igo Daihyō Shuppatsu 訪中文学者と囲碁代表出発,” *Asahi Shinbun*, May 31, 1960.

flight with the Weiqi players were five famed Japanese writers, who came to China precisely for the Anpo protest.³⁰¹ Noma Hiroshi 野間宏 (1915-1991), a Japanese communist and the head of the writer delegation, declared their aim in visiting was “to protest against the revised Anpo Treaty and promote Sino-Japanese normalization.”³⁰² Ōe Kenzaburō 大江健三郎 (1935-2023), a delegation member, further explained why they chose to leave at this time. According to him, he “thought it would be a good idea to share [their] views and see what they [the Chinese] think” as the treaty would seriously affect Sino-Japanese relations.³⁰³ After arriving in China, these Japanese writers met warm welcome from the Chinese side. Mao even personally addressed them, claiming that “American Imperialism is the common enemy of Chinese and Japanese people.”³⁰⁴

In contrast to these writers, the players were politically conservative and had close personally relationships with the Kishi administration. Although the players decided to continue the trip as scheduled, they chose to keep a low profile by distancing themselves from the Anpo issue and only talking about the game and skills. Segoe merely told the reporters that “I go there [China] for the sake of goodwill as a pioneer of Weiqi exchange.”³⁰⁵ The Chinese did not push them to make a stance either. Since the Weiqi delegation showed the goodwill of the LDP, the Chinese did not want to

³⁰¹ “Bungaku Daihyōdan Chūgoku e Shuppatsu Igo No Nana-Nin Mo”; “Bungaku Daihyōdan Chūgoku e Shuppatsu Igo No Nana-Nin Mo”; “Hōchū Bungakumono to Igo Daihyō Shuppatsu.”

³⁰² “Bungaku Daihyōdan Chūgoku e Shuppatsu Igo No Nana-Nin Mo.”

³⁰³ “2tsu No Hōchū Shisetsu-Dan Igo, Bungaku No 14-Shi Shuppatsu 2つの訪中使節団 囲碁、文学の14氏出発,” *Yomiuri Shinbun*, May 31, 1960.

³⁰⁴ Mao Zedong, “Meidiguozhuyi Shi Zhongri Liangguo Renmin de Gongtong Diren 美帝国主义是中日两国人民的共同敌人,” in *Zhanhou Zhongri Guanxi Wenxianji, 1945-1970*, by Tian Huan (Beijing: Shehuikexue wenxian chubanshe, 1996), 492–95.

³⁰⁵ “2tsu No Hōchū Shisetsu-Dan Igo, Bungaku No 14-Shi Shuppatsu.”

jeopardize it by confronting them with the Anpo struggle. The primary goal of the Chinese side remained to learn Weiqi skills from the Japanese, with Chen Yi and Zhou Enlai making “talking no politics and only friendship” the basic policy in treating the Japanese delegation.³⁰⁶

The differing treatment of the two delegations sent to China from Japan reveals the pragmatic approach of the PRC towards its Japan policy. When engaging with the Japanese Left, the Chinese provided full support for their anti-American struggles, as seen in their warm welcome of the Japanese writers protesting the revised Anpo Treaty. On the other hand, the Chinese exercised caution and flexibility when dealing with the Japanese Right, including the Weiqi delegation who had close relationships with the Kishi administration. The Chinese were careful not to jeopardize the goodwill from the conservative government, and thus refrained from bringing up sensitive political issues that could sour relations. This approach highlights the complex and strategic nature of China’s foreign policy towards Japan at the time. By adapting to the differing political ideologies and interests of their Japanese counterparts, the Chinese sought to maintain positive relationships while advancing their own goals and objectives.

Directly responsible for receiving the Japanese players was the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries. As the Segoe delegation entered Shenzhen via Hong Kong, CPAFFC officials picked them up and sent them to Guangzhou.³⁰⁷ In Beijing, the CPAFFC leadership, including President Chu Tu’nan

³⁰⁶ Quoted in Hua Yigang, *Qisai Yuan*, 144.

³⁰⁷ Segoe Kensaku, “Fangwen Zhongguo 訪問中國,” trans. Wu Qingyi, *Tiyu Bao*, November 17, 1960.

楚圖南 (1899-1994), Vice-President Yang Hansheng 陽翰笙 (1902-1993), and Vice-Secretary Lin Lin 林林 (1910-2011), greeted the Japanese players.³⁰⁸

To be sure, Weiqi's most important patron in China, Chen Yi, did not miss the occasion. On June 6, Chen greeted the Segoe delegation for about forty minutes.³⁰⁹ The Japanese guests were impressed by Chen's passion for Weiqi, as he asked several technical questions about the game, which were properly addressed by Hashimoto.³¹⁰ During the meeting, Chen also revealed his scheme for Weiqi to the Japanese players. Like other Weiqi proponents, Chen sought to spread Weiqi, and his main targets were the military and the laboring masses.³¹¹ His aim was to let the number of Weiqi fans reach ten million in ten years.³¹² Another aspect was to improve the skills of Chinese players. According to Chen, in ten years, even if Chinese Weiqi could not surpass the Japanese, Chinese players should catch up to the highest level in Japan.³¹³ Finally, Chen sought to spread Weiqi in the world together with Japan.³¹⁴

Sports officials were also highly involved, especially in Shanghai. As Chen Zude recalled, Yang Ming 楊明 (1922-2022) of the Shanghai Sports Committee delivered a mobilization speech before the games.³¹⁵ Moreover, SSC officials organized people to press the timers for the players so that they could better concentrate on the games.³¹⁶ However, in Beijing, it was the Beijing Society that played a more prominent role. The

³⁰⁸ Segoe Kensaku, "Fangwen Zhongguo."

³⁰⁹ Segoe Kensaku, "Fangwen Zhongguo"; "Sakata Ku-Dan No Chūgoku Mikiki 坂田九段の中国見聞記," *Mainichi Shinbun*, June 30, 1960.

³¹⁰ Segoe Kensaku, "Fangwen Zhongguo."

³¹¹ "Hōchū Igo Shisetsu No Tayori 訪中囲碁使節の便り," *Asahi Shinbun*, June 19, 1960.

³¹² "Hōchū Igo Shisetsu No Tayori"; Segoe Kensaku, "Yūbōna Chūgoku No Go-Kai Yūkō No Shimei o Hatashite 有望な中国の碁界 友好の使命を果たして," *Yomiuri Shinbun*, June 28, 1960.

³¹³ Segoe Kensaku, "Yūbōna Chūgoku No Go-Kai Yūkō No Shimei o Hatashite."

³¹⁴ "Hōchū Igo Shisetsu No Tayori."

³¹⁵ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 50–51.

³¹⁶ Segoe Kensaku, "Fangwen Zhongguo."

Beijing Society first sent its vice-president, Wang Youyong 王又庸 (1891-1963), who was a graduate from Hosei University in Japan, to welcome the Japanese guests.³¹⁷ The president, Zhou Shiguan, also accompanied the Japanese in Beijing.³¹⁸ This difference reflected the sport-ization of Weiqi was by then still an ongoing project, and Shanghai was ahead of Beijing in the process. In Beijing, Weiqi was still under the control of the Beijing Society as a branch organization of the Ministry of Culture. In contrast, the SSC had already placed Weiqi under its jurisdiction in Shanghai. The places where the games were played exemplified the differences between Beijing and Shanghai. In Beijing, per traditional way, the players played at a pavilion in Beihai Park, a former imperial garden.³¹⁹ Presumably, there were not many spectators. However, in Shanghai, the setting was completely different. In Shanghai, the games took place in the basketball court on the second floor of the Shanghai Sports Club, with spectators filling the grandstand and watching the games with telescopes.³²⁰ Now Weiqi was played like other sports in Shanghai.

The successful sport-ization of Weiqi in Shanghai, however, caused troubles. As mentioned before, in the process of establishing Weiqi as a sport, handicaps were abolished in Chinese Weiqi competitions. In Shanghai, a Chinese sports official requested to let the Chinese and Japanese players play on equal terms. The Japanese were displeased because handicap for the Japanese was not only a way to offset skill difference but also a matter of respect for the better player. Allowing weaker Chinese

³¹⁷ Zhongyang wenshi yanjiuguan, ed., *Zhongyang Wenshi Yanjiuguan Guanyuan Zhuanlue* 中央文史研究馆馆员传略, zengdingban (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 190; Segoe Kensaku, "Fangwen Zhongguo."

³¹⁸ Segoe Kensaku, "Fangwen Zhongguo."

³¹⁹ Segoe Kensaku, "Fangwen Zhongguo."

³²⁰ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwu*, 52.

players to play against top Japanese professionals was considered an insult to the Japanese players. Hashimoto insisted that the Chinese should at least play first throughout.³²¹ In fact, Hashimoto had already taken a step back. After all, Japan sent a top squad of three 9 *dan* players (there were only five at the time) while the Chinese players' skill levels were only equivalent to Japanese 4 to 5 *dan*.³²² In Japan, each *dan* difference meant a 1/3 stone handicap. Even the Chinese prodigy Chen Zude admitted that by that time, Japanese high *dan* players were "at least 2 stones better than Chinese Weiqi players."³²³ Hashimoto wanted more than saving the faces of top Japanese professionals. Instead, as he later explained, he intended to offer more handicaps to the Chinese so that the Chinese could win more games, and therefore, they could earn confidence, and Weiqi would develop better in China.³²⁴ Eventually, Chinese players did not insist and accepted Hashimoto's offer.

The fact that the handicap became an issue at all revealed the success of making Weiqi a sport. Even Segoe Kensaku acknowledged it, as he explained to the Japanese audience that the Chinese must have thought that "because [Weiqi is] a sport, of course, there should be no handicap."³²⁵ Segoe added that Chinese players refusing to surrender in midgame despite falling behind by a huge margin, which "might be considered impolite" in Japan, was a reflection of their commitment to "the sporting spirit of not giving up."³²⁶

³²¹ Segoe Kensaku, "Yūbōna Chūgoku No Go-Kai Yūkō No Shimei o Hatashite."

³²² Segoe Kensaku, "Fangwen Zhongguo."

³²³ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 49.

³²⁴ Quoted in "Dai 8-Kyoku Hashimoto Utarō Kō Eikichi Nicchū Kisen Chūgokudaihyō-Dan Tokusen Fu 第8局 橋本宇太郎 黄永吉_日中棋戦 中国代表団特選譜," *Asahi Shinbun*, September 27, 1962.

³²⁵ Segoe Kensaku, "Yūbōna Chūgoku No Go-Kai Yūkō No Shimei o Hatashite."

³²⁶ Segoe Kensaku, "Yūbōna Chūgoku No Go-Kai Yūkō No Shimei o Hatashite."

In total, the Japanese players played 35 matches at Beijing, Shanghai, and Hangzhou.³²⁷ To no one's surprise, the Japanese team ended up with a landslide victory. In Beijing, the Chinese side fielded a team of Beijing Society instructors and Huang Yongji, who joined the squad from Anhui. The players played two rounds, and the Japanese won all but one in the ten matches. Only Huang was able to secure a draw from Segoe.³²⁸ Despite the humbling results overall, Huang's draw did not go unappreciated. According to Huang's daughter, he received a certificate of achievement signed by Chairman Mao for this feat.³²⁹ In Shanghai, the Chinese players had more success. Wang Youchen beat Segoe by 2 points, and Liu Dihuai forced Segawa to surrender at midgame.³³⁰ In Hangzhou, older Chinese players left the chance for the youth. For example, the 15-year-old Wu Songsheng, who did not get to play in Shanghai, played in Hangzhou.³³¹ Moreover, Hashimoto and Sakata played instructional games with teenagers Luo Jianwen 羅建文 (1943-2017) and Shen Guosun 沈果蓀 (1942-).³³² In the end, in the total of 35 games, the Chinese only managed to win two and draw one. Nonetheless, their performance impressed the visitors. Sakata praised the Chinese for studying hard and being good at midgame battles; he especially plauded the skills of Liu Dihuai, considering him comparable the best amateur player in Japan.³³³

³²⁷ Segoe Kensaku, "Yūbōna Chūgoku No Go-Kai Yūkō No Shimei o Hatashite."

³²⁸ Segoe Kensaku, "Fangwen Zhongguo."

³²⁹ Interview with Huang Liping.

³³⁰ Segoe Kensaku, "Yūbōna Chūgoku No Go-Kai Yūkō No Shimei o Hatashite."

³³¹ Liu Shancheng, ed., *Zhongguo Weiqi 中國圍棋* (Shurong qiyi chubanshe, n.d.), 1038.

³³² Segoe Kensaku, "Yūbōna Chūgoku No Go-Kai Yūkō No Shimei o Hatashite."

³³³ "Sakata Ku-Dan No Chūgoku Mikiki."

Sightseeing was also an important part of the Japanese delegation's schedule. In this way, the Chinese hosts sought to showcase the achievements of socialist constructions. For example, on June 5, the Japanese players were led to visit the National Agricultural Exhibition Center. As one of the "ten constructions" approved by State Council, the National Agricultural Exhibition Center was the brainchild of Premier Zhou Enlai and a part of the commemoration of the 10th Anniversary of the People's Republic in 1959.³³⁴ Such a grandiose building was the prime example of the achievements in socialist China. Nevertheless, the Japanese players, politically conservative, appeared to lack interest, as they mentioned nothing about their feelings upon visiting it. They seemed to be more interested in the games. The Chinese would later develop more subtle manners in treating the guests.

In summary, the game of Weiqi played a significant role in the diplomatic relations between China and Japan during a crucial moment. The Liu Lianren Incident and the Nagasaki National Flag Incident resulted in a halt in Sino-Japanese interactions in 1958. To improve relations, Matsumura Kenzō proposed sending a delegation of top Weiqi players to China as a gesture of goodwill from the LDP in 1959. The Chinese accepted the offer. When the delegation came in 1960, the Chinese proved to be flexible and refrained from discussing sensitive political issues that could jeopardize the goodwill, given the connections between the Japanese players and the Kishi administration. Although the Chinese did not fare well against the Japanese masters, they impressed

³³⁴ "National Agricultural Exhibition Center (China Agricultural Museum) - 全国农业展览馆 (中国农业博物馆) - 全国农业展览馆," accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.ciae.com.cn/page/en/14535.html>.

the visitors. These interactions also revealed that Weiqi had developed differently in China than in Japan, with the former progressing more towards a sport.

Regularizing Weiqi Diplomacy, 1961-1962

After the first delegation, Chen Yi confirmed Weiqi's utility on the diplomatic stage. Moreover, he sought to showcase the achievement of the socialist state through Weiqi. After the Japanese left, Chen and He Long 賀龍 (1896-1969), the Marshal who headed the National Sports Committee, summoned NSC officials Huang Zhong 黃中 (1895-1996) and Li Menghua 李夢華 (1922-2010). Chen instructed that developing Weiqi-like games was a "political issue."³³⁵ Evoking the common belief that the fortune of Weiqi goes with the fortune of the nation, Chen regretted that Chinese Weiqi could not yet "reflect the prosperous fortune of our nation after the Great Leap Forward."³³⁶ Although Chen made instructions about all three Weiqi-like games (Weiqi, Xiangqi, and chess), he put extra emphasis on Weiqi as it had special diplomatic utilities. He stressed that playing Weiqi well is "instrumental for winning over 5 million Japanese players as well as fellow Chinese players in Hong Kong and Macao."³³⁷

As for practical measures, Chen demanded each province to establish their own teams and clubs. Moreover, he instructed to transfer top players at the Institute and other places all to local sports committees and raise their treatment "to the level of university professors."³³⁸ He additionally ordered the training of new generation of players and the researching of game records and history.

³³⁵ "A23-1-300-88: Zhonggong Shanghaishi Tiyuyundongweiyuanhui Guanyu Shanghai Qishe Bianzhi Fang'an Ji Sanqi Renyuan Mingdan de Baogao 中共上海市体育运动委员会关于上海棋社编制方案及三棋人员名单的报告," September 22, 1960, Shanghai Municipal Archive.

³³⁶ "A23-1-300-88: Zhonggong Shanghaishi Tiyuyundongweiyuanhui Guanyu Shanghai Qishe Bianzhi Fang'an Ji Sanqi Renyuan Mingdan de Baogao."

³³⁷ "A23-1-300-88: Zhonggong Shanghaishi Tiyuyundongweiyuanhui Guanyu Shanghai Qishe Bianzhi Fang'an Ji Sanqi Renyuan Mingdan de Baogao."

³³⁸ "A23-1-300-88: Zhonggong Shanghaishi Tiyuyundongweiyuanhui Guanyu Shanghai Qishe Bianzhi Fang'an Ji Sanqi Renyuan Mingdan de Baogao."

Responding to Chen's call, Shanghai established the Shanghai Weiqi-like Games Society 上海棋社 in September 1960, which was affiliated with the SSC. The club implemented Chen's directive to treat players as professors, categorizing them into three main groups: researchers, vice researchers, and students, in a manner akin to an academic research institute. The researchers tended to be established Weiqi players, the vice researchers were mostly Weiqi journalists, and the students were promising young players. Liu Dihuai and Gu Shuiru as researchers of the highest rank enjoyed a monthly salary of 163.5 *yuan*, while even the lowest-ranking researcher earned as much as 104 *yuan* per month. Vice researchers entitled 74 *yuan* per month, with the exception of Lin Mian, who got 82.5 *yuan*. Students received significantly less, with Chen Zude receiving 40 *yuan* per month, and others receiving only 40 *yuan*.³³⁹ While the Shanghai Society covered all three Weiqi-like games, it gave the most emphasis to Weiqi, as the number of Weiqi players equaled the sum of chess and Xiangqi players.³⁴⁰

To realizing Chen's goal was to increase the number of Weiqi players in China to 10 million and let Chinese Weiqi catch up to Japan in three years and surpass Japan in five, continuing to learn from the Japanese was necessary.³⁴¹ Japan warmly responded the Chinese's invitation, and the second Weiqi delegation headed to China in 1961. Knowing the Chinese players' skill levels through the experience from the last year, Nihon Ki-in sent a less powerful squad in 1961. The highest ranked player was Nihon

³³⁹ "A23-1-300-88: Zhonggong Shanghaishi Tiuyundongweiyuanhui Guanyu Shanghai Qishe Bianzhi Fang'an Ji Sanqi Renyuan Mingdan de Baogao."

³⁴⁰ "A23-1-300-88: Zhonggong Shanghaishi Tiuyundongweiyuanhui Guanyu Shanghai Qishe Bianzhi Fang'an Ji Sanqi Renyuan Mingdan de Baogao."

³⁴¹ "A23-1-300-88: Zhonggong Shanghaishi Tiuyundongweiyuanhui Guanyu Shanghai Qishe Bianzhi Fang'an Ji Sanqi Renyuan Mingdan de Baogao."

Ki-in's Magari Reiki 曲励起 (1924-), 8 *dan*. The Kansei representative was Koyama Yasuo 小山靖男 (1937-2000), 7 *dan*. Different from last year, a woman player, Itō Tomoe 伊藤友恵 (1907-1987), 5 *dan*, and two amateurs, Andō Hideo 安藤英雄 (1943-?) and Kikuchi Yasurō 菊池康郎 (1929-2021), joined the delegation.³⁴²

Nonetheless, the Japanese did not take this visit lightly, as the delegation was headed by none other than Nihon Ki-in president, Arimitsu Jirō 有光次郎 (1903-1995). As Arimitsu revealed to a journalist, he had two main aims.³⁴³ Firstly, he “would like to promote goodwill between Japan and China.” Assessing the ongoing diplomatic tension, he concluded that “at this moment, the only two things that the only things that Japan and China could be really fraternized about are Weiqi and Ping Pong.” Secondly, he intended to promote Weiqi abroad. While the United States and West Germany were other potential options, Arimitsu weighed in that Weiqi were “still shallow-rooted” there. In order to find a true “Weiqi rival,” it had to be China. Moreover, Arimitsu did not intend to promote Weiqi as a form of entertainment. Rather, he asserted that “I think Weiqi is a sports...It is a game that challenges the limits of human ability.” Thus, he concurred with the Chinese who treated Weiqi as a sport. This factor also partly explains why Arimitsu eyed China.

China did not disappoint Arimitsu, as they made significant efforts to establish Weiqi as a sport. In the spring of 1961, the NSC summoned elite Weiqi players across the nation to attend a training camp in Beijing for almost half a year.³⁴⁴ The roster not

³⁴² “Hōchū Igo Daihyō Kimaru 訪中囲碁代表きまる,” *Asahi Shinbun*, September 2, 1961.

³⁴³ “Arimitsu Jirō 有光次郎,” *Asahi Shinbun*, September 3, 1961.

³⁴⁴ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 72–76.

only featured players from traditional Weiqi centers such as Beijing and Shanghai but also included those from Guangxi, Fujian, and Heilongjiang.³⁴⁵ The ages of the players ranged from seventies to teens.³⁴⁶ The NSC made sure the Weiqi players were treated as athletes in every aspect. Even though playing Weiqi was not physically exhausting as other sports, sport officials let the players enjoy the athletes' diet. Chen Zude recalled as a camp member that, although the camp took place during the Great Leap famine, the players were entitled to meat in their meals; the NSC even had people hunt Mongolian gazelle in Inner Mongolia to treat the players in the Beijing camp.³⁴⁷ Moreover, the NSC held the training sessions at Beijing Gymnasium, just as other sports.³⁴⁸ Organizing the Weiqi national team was a significant event, and from then on, the NSC would shoulder the responsibility of the Weiqi interactions with Japan.

Despite the heavy training, the results greatly dismayed the Chinese. Even though Japan did not send its best squad, and the Japanese agreed to not only use Chinese rules but also let the two amateur representatives play on equal terms with the Chinese, the visiting players overwhelmed the Chinese.³⁴⁹ Both Magari and Itō made a clean sweep in the seven matches. Koyama was the only professional player to have lost a game to the Chinese. Even the two amateur players had an upper hand over the Chinese. Kikuchi ended up with a 6-1 record, while Andō finished with 4-3.³⁵⁰ Chen Zude wrote in his autobiography that the Chinese failed to secure a single victory from Itō, a woman, was

³⁴⁵ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 73–74.

³⁴⁶ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 72.

³⁴⁷ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 72.

³⁴⁸ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 74–75.

³⁴⁹ “Seika Ageta Hōchū Igo Daihyō-Dan 成果あげた訪中囲碁代表団,” *Asahi Shinbun*, September 30, 1961.

³⁵⁰ “Seika Ageta Hōchū Igo Daihyō-Dan.”

a “national humiliation.”³⁵¹ Chinese Weiqi still had a long way to go in order to catch up with Japan.

In July 1962, China sent its first Weiqi delegation to Japan. A NSC official, Li Menghua, served as the head. Liu Dihuai, a former national champion who had retired from active competition, was appointed as the vice leader. The Chinese team consisted of a young squad, with Guo Tisheng being the oldest at fifty-five years old. Three players were in their twenties and thirties, while the youngest member was Chen Zude, who was only eighteen years old.³⁵²

The issue of handicap remained. Chinese players proposed to play without handicap, and they changed their logic from last time. They longer insisted that handicap should not exist in sports; instead, they claimed that they wanted to learn how to play on both black and white.³⁵³ Arimitsu and Maeda Nobuaki 前田陳爾 (1907-1975), 8 *dan*, countered that it was “a common sense in Japan” that “the real study is to play at a reasonable handicap that allows both parties to fully demonstrate their abilities.”³⁵⁴ Nevertheless, the Japanese compromised, agreeing to play without handicap in the official matches.³⁵⁵ In friendly games and instructional games, Japanese professionals would still offer handicap to the Chinese.

³⁵¹ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 83.

³⁵² “Chūgoku Igo Daihyō-Dan Ga rāinichi Nanoka Nihon-Gawa to Teai.”

³⁵³ The player who receives a handicap would always play on black. “Kōshiki-Sen Wa Tagaisen de Kyō Kara Nitchū Igo 公式戦は互先で きょうから日中囲碁,” *Asahi Shinbun*, July 11, 1962.

³⁵⁴ “Kōshiki-Sen Wa Tagaisen de Kyō Kara Nitchū Igo.”

³⁵⁵ “Kōshiki-Sen Wa Tagaisen de Kyō Kara Nitchū Igo.”

The result was still unflattering for the Chinese. In the total thirty-five games, the Chinese team won only twelve.³⁵⁶ Even this result included the friendlies matches against Japanese amateurs and instructional games with Japanese professionals on handicap. In the three rounds of official matches, the Chinese only managed to beat the Japanese once in the fifteen total games, and the opponent was an amateur player.³⁵⁷ Despite the overall humbling results, the Chinese team, especially Chen Zedu, showed potential. Although Chen lost all three official matches, he won out in the four unofficial ones, including beating Hashimoto Shōji 橋本昌二 (1935-2009), 9 *dan*, and Maeda on two-stone handicap. Even the Japanese commentators agreed that he was truly a “boy wonder” and “will be a terrific player when he is polished up.”³⁵⁸

The 1962 delegation meant more than playing Weiqi. After all, it was not only the first Chinese Weiqi delegation aboard but also the first ever sport delegation from the People’s Republic to its erstwhile enemy, Japan.³⁵⁹ As such, its diplomatic utility cannot be overemphasized. Indeed, Sun Pinghua 孫平化 (1917-1997), vice-secretary of the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, came along with the delegation.³⁶⁰ Since Sun was ignorant of Weiqi, Chen Zedu observed that “apparently he used the delegation to do [diplomatic] work in Japan.”³⁶¹ The Weiqi delegation provided Sun a perfect occasion. Since Sino-Japanese relations had not been

³⁵⁶ “Chūgoku, 12-Shō 23-Pai to Naru Kōdan Kishi to Saigo No Teawase 中国、1 2勝 2 3敗となる 高段棋士と最後の手合せ,” *Asahi Shinbun*, July 27, 1962.

³⁵⁷ “Chūgoku,-Hatsu No Ichi-Shō Nitchū Dai San-Kai Kōshiki Go-Sen 中国、初の一勝 日中第三回公式棋戦,” *Asahi Shinbun*, July 20, 1962.

³⁵⁸ “Shinzen No Fuseki Nokoshite Nihon o Saru Chūgoku Igo Daihyō-Dan 親善の布石残して 日本を去る中国囲碁代表团,” *Asahi Shinbun*, July 27, 1962.

³⁵⁹ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwu*, 84.

³⁶⁰ “Chūgoku Igo Daihyō-Dan Ga rāinichi Nanoka Nihon-Gawa to Teai”; Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwu*, 84.

³⁶¹ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwu*, 84.

normalized, getting a Japanese visa was a major impediment. As Chen Zedu recalled, the Weiqi team encountered another Chinese delegation at the Japanese consulate in Hong Kong. That delegation was rejected while the Weiqi players were warmly received by the Japanese consul and got their visas with ease.³⁶² Thus, Sun was able to go to Japan. Aside of showing goodwill to the Japanese, Sun and the Weiqi players had another major mission. They were specially instructed by Chen Yi to “do the work on Wu Qingyuan” so as to let him visit the People’s Republic.³⁶³ What at stake was more than the chance of learning from the best player in the world. As mentioned before, Wu possessed a passport issued by the KMT and had visited Taiwan in 1952. The mainland tried to win him over from Taiwan. However, this effort failed, as Wu refused to meet with the mainland delegation due to pressure from Taiwan. The 1964 Chinese Weiqi delegation got to see Wu, but Wu declined the invitation.³⁶⁴ Sun would attempt another time in 1973 but only to fail again.³⁶⁵ Wu himself was willing to come back, but people around him prevented him from going.³⁶⁶ Wu would eventually visit China only in 1985, after having regained Japanese nationality.³⁶⁷

From 1962 on, Sino-Japanese Weiqi interactions became a fixture. China and Japan exchanged Weiqi delegations almost on a yearly basis. Japan sent delegations to China in 1963, 1965, and 1966, while China dispatch its teams in 1964, 1965, and 1966.

³⁶² Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 85.

³⁶³ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 85.

³⁶⁴ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 102.

³⁶⁵ Sun Pinghua, *Zhongri Youhao Suixianglu 中日友好随想录* (Shenyang: Liaoning renmin chubanshe, 2009), 13–14.

³⁶⁶ Sun Pinghua, *Zhongri Youhao Suixianglu*, 14.

³⁶⁷ Sun Pinghua, *Zhongri Youhao Suixianglu*, 13–14.

Unfortunately, however, the Cultural Revolution put the burgeoning Weiqi interactions to a pause. Sino-Japanese Weiqi exchanges would only recover in 1973.

In conclusion, following the historic 1960 Weiqi delegation, both China and Japan took Weiqi interactions seriously and made efforts to maintain regular exchanges. To show goodwill, Nihon Ki-in President Arimitsu led the 1961 Japanese delegation to China, and China reciprocated by sending a team in 1962. This marked the beginning of a yearly exchange of Weiqi delegations between the two countries until 1966. With regard to the game itself, despite continued domination by Japanese players, Chinese players showed progress. More importantly, the NSC began organizing a Weiqi national team, promoting the sport-ization of Weiqi. More reforms for Chinese Weiqi were on the horizon.

Reforming Chinese Weiqi, 1962-1964

In order to realize Chen Yi's goal of catching up with Japan, Chinese Weiqi leaders felt the necessity to thoroughly reform Chinese Weiqi. They got inspiration from Sino-Japanese Weiqi exchanges. During his stay in Japan in 1962, Li Menghua, representing Chinese sports leadership, revealed first the three-folded plan. Chinese sport leaders sought to (a) create a national organization of Weiqi, (b) build a professional system in China, and (c) introduce the player-ranking system.³⁶⁸

The NSC was quick to realize its promises. Only a few months after Li's return, on November 11, 1962, the Chinese Weiqi Association, along with the Chinese Xiangqi Association, held its inaugural meeting at Hefei, Anhui, in the midst of the 1962 national championship.³⁶⁹ While Chen Yi was named as the honorary president, in practice, the Association was run by sports officials. Indeed, Li Menghua, an NSC official and chairman of the Chinese Wushu Association, became the inaugural president, and three of the seven vice-presidents and the secretary were sports officials.³⁷⁰ Liu Dihuai was the only player among the seven vice-presidents.³⁷¹ Weiqi players were most represented in the fourteen regular members of the Association, as

³⁶⁸ "Shinzen No Fuseki Nokoshite Nihon o Saru Chūgoku Igo Daihyō-Dan."

³⁶⁹ "Zhongguo Weiqi Xiehui, Zhongguo Xiangqi Xiehui Chengli Chen Yi Fuzongli Reng Weiqi Xiehui Mingyu Zhuxi 中國圍棋協會、中國象棋協會成立 陳毅副總理任圍棋協會名譽主席," *Tiyu Bao*, December 20, 1962.

³⁷⁰ "Zhongguo Weiqi Xiehui, Zhongguo Xiangqi Xiehui Chengli Chen Yi Fuzongli Reng Weiqi Xiehui Mingyu Zhuxi"; The identities of the Association's members were listed in the appendix of this document. "J023-031-0026-022: Guanyu Chen Lijie Dangxuan Wei Weiqi Yundong Xiehui Weiyuan de Tongzhi 关于陈礼节当选为围棋运动协会委员的通知," April 3, 1964, Hangzhou Municipal Archive.

³⁷¹ "Zhongguo Weiqi Xiehui, Zhongguo Xiangqi Xiehui Chengli Chen Yi Fuzongli Reng Weiqi Xiehui Mingyu Zhuxi."

Guo Tisheng, Huang Yongji, and Gu Shuiru made to the list; three leaders of the Beijing Society were also official members.³⁷²

The Chinese arrangement thus posted a stark contrast with Nihon Ki-in. Nihon Ki-in's leadership was also comprised of player directors as well as non-player directors. Yet it was the elected player directors that were responsible for the daily operation of Nihon Ki-in. In comparison, the NSC led the Chinese Weiqi Association, with the players exerted only auxiliary function. It was evident that Weiqi was subject to state regulation in China.

With the Weiqi Association in place, Chinese sports leaders sought to rank the players, leading them to explore the Japanese *dan* ranking system. In fact, it was not the first attempt to bring the *dan* system in China. As early as 1950, Chinese Weiqi players sought to set up their own rankings in Shanghai.³⁷³ Because Liu Dihuai was recognized by the Japanese as 4 *dan* in 1942, the players agreed to set him as the standard; each player played against Liu on different handicaps, and the ranking was determined by the results. For example, Guo Tisheng requested to be tested for 3 *dan* in 1951. Guo and Liu devised a scheme where Guo would obtain the ranking if he won three games out of six, which he did.³⁷⁴ Wang Ziyang, another a Japanese 4 *dan* diploma holder, also set up ranking matches and bestowed recognitions in Shanghai.³⁷⁵

Nonetheless, the NSC declined to officialize the results from these previous attempts; instead, it created a new set of standards, which was also modeled on the

³⁷² “Zhongguo Weiqi Xiehui, Zhongguo Xiangqi Xiehui Chengli Chen Yi Fuzongli Reng Weiqi Xiehui Mingyu Zhuxi.”

³⁷³ Liu Shancheng, *Zhongguo weiqi shi*, 274.

³⁷⁴ Liu Shancheng, *Zhongguo weiqi shi*, 274.

³⁷⁵ Liu Shancheng, *Zhongguo weiqi shi*, 274.

Japanese example. It announced the “The Chinese Weiqi Players’ Ranking System Regulations (Draft)” in early 1964.³⁷⁶ Following the Japanese example, it set up 1 to 9 *duan* 段 (the same character as the Japanese *dan*) ranks, with 9 *duan* being the highest and 1 *duan* being the lowest. Additionally, there were 1 to 9 *ji* 級 (imitating the Japanese *kyū* 級) ranks below 1 *duan*, where 1 *ji* was the highest and 9 *ji* was the lowest, contrary to the *duan* ranks.

Yet the *duan* system was not a mere copy of the Japanese *dan*. Several notable differences existed. For example, while a Japanese 9 *dan* should be 3-stone stronger than a 1 *dan*, the NSC regulated that the strength difference between a Chinese 1 *duan* should play a 9 *duan* on a 4-stone handicap.³⁷⁷ Perhaps the NSC intended a Chinese 9 *duan* to be stronger than a Japanese 9 *dan*. Another significant difference was the authority responsible for issuing diplomas. In Japan, Nihon Ki-in and Kansei Ki-in could award rankings. In contrast, the sports authorities controlled Weiqi ranking recognitions in China. The NSC was responsible for *duan* rankings, while local sports committees had the power to issue *ji* rankings. They should organize tournaments that would award or raise the rankings.³⁷⁸

The NSC first introduced the *duan* ranking in February 1964, awarding 43 players 1 to 5 *duan* diplomas.³⁷⁹ Notably, the NSC set the limit to 5 *duan*. In this way, the NSC implicitly recognized the players’ strength based on Japanese standards. After all, as

³⁷⁶ I did not find the original document, so the following part is based on the summary in Liu Shancheng’s edited volume, see Liu Shancheng, *Zhongguo weiqi shi*, 283.

³⁷⁷ Liu Shancheng, *Zhongguo weiqi shi*, 283.

³⁷⁸ Liu Shancheng, *Zhongguo weiqi shi*, 283.

³⁷⁹ “Guojia Tiwei Shouyu Sishisan-Ming Weiqi-Shou Duanwei Chenghao 國家體委授予四十三名圍棋手段位稱號,” *Tiyu Bao*, February 10, 1964.

mentioned before, Japanese high-ranking professional players such as Segoe considered the best Chinese players to be around 4 to 5 Japanese *dan*. The initial *duan* rankings were based on the players' performance in the 1962 national tournament. The three medalists, Guo Tisheng, Chen Zude, and Wu Songsheng, got 5 *duan*. The players who made it to the championship group in the playoff stage were awarded 4 *duan*.³⁸⁰ Others got 1 to 3 *duan* based on their respective results.

Nonetheless, *duan* rankings meant more than Weiqi skill levels. The NSC also sought to discipline the players as it took morals into consideration while bestowing the ranks. For example, although Liu Dihuai's records would only win him a 4 *duan*, the NSC decided to award him a 5 *duan* diploma considering his longtime contribution to Chinese Weiqi.³⁸¹ Wei Haihong was also a senior player. He abstained in the middle of the competition due to old age, but the NSC, considering his reputation and the fact that "he is unlike to compete in the future," bestowed him a 4 *duan* to "show encouragement."³⁸² While these older players got ranks better than their results indicated thanks to their past contributions, bad performance would deprive one of the ranking diploma. Dong Wenyuan 董文淵 (1919-1996) was a case in point. Dong was a nationally ranked player in both Weiqi and Xiangqi, and he claimed that he was also good at chess.³⁸³ He even gave up his career as a bench worker to player Weiqi and

³⁸⁰ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 116.

³⁸¹ "4017-002-0290: Guojia Tiwei Guanyu Po Quanguo Sheji (Shijie) Jilv Shenqing Yundong Jianjiang de Guiding He Shouyu Weiqi Xuanshou Duanwei Chenghao de Tongzhi Ji Wowe Shenqing Yundong Jianjiang de Mingdan 國家體委關於破全國射擊（世界）紀錄申請運動健將的規定和授予圍棋選手段位稱號的通知及我委申請運動健將的名單," n.d., Jiangsu Provincial Archive; Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 116.

³⁸² "4017-002-0290: Guojia Tiwei Guanyu Po Quanguo Sheji (Shijie) Jilv Shenqing Yundong Jianjiang de Guiding He Shouyu Weiqi Xuanshou Duanwei Chenghao de Tongzhi Ji Wowe Shenqing Yundong Jianjiang de Mingdan."

³⁸³ "J023-028-0085-014: Qing Zhun Pinqing Mingqishou Dong Wenyuan Wei Shi Qilei Xiehui Yeyu Jiaolianyuan de Baogao 請准聘請名棋手董文淵為市棋類協會業餘教練員的報告," July 7, 1962, Hangzhou Municipal Archive; Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 104.

Xiangqi for stakes in Shanghai for a living.³⁸⁴ He was widely faulted for playing dirty. He used various ways to interfere with his opponents, such as intentionally coughing loudly and puffing cigarette smoke on his opponent's face.³⁸⁵ Moreover, he was "arrogant in the game and damaged the authority of the referees."³⁸⁶ Furthermore, he was once arrested for hooliganism and continued to "perform badly after reeducation through labor."³⁸⁷ For all these reasons, although Dong finished fourth in the 1962 tournament, the NSC refused to award him a *duan* ranking.³⁸⁸

Unfortunately, the time was not ripe for the ranking system. Later in 1964, China abolished military ranks, and this trend extended to the realm of *sport*.³⁸⁹ *Sport* officials had to abolish the Weiqi ranking system less than a year after its introduction. The 1964 draft regulation also had major setbacks itself. Most importantly, it failed to make a viable way for the players to raise their ranks.³⁹⁰ Consequently, the 1964 Weiqi ranks did not survive. It would take another 17 years for the ranking system to be fully implemented in China.³⁹¹

In summary, being inspired by Japanese Weiqi through direct interactions, Chinese sports authorities further reformed Weiqi in China, leading to the establishment of the

³⁸⁴ Zhou Yunzhong, "Hunji Shanghai de Qitan Guaicai 混迹上海滩的棋坛怪才," *Wenshi Bolan* 2016, no. 5 (n.d.): 34.

³⁸⁵ Zhou Yunzhong, "Hunji Shanghai de Qitan Guaicai," 35; Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 113.

³⁸⁶ "4017-002-0290: Guojia Tiwei Guanyu Po Quanguo Sheji (Shijie) Jilv Shenqing Yundong Jianjiang de Guiding He Shouyu Weiqi Xuanshou Duanwei Chenghao de Tongzhi Ji Wowe Shenqing Yundong Jianjiang de Mingdan."

³⁸⁷ Zhou Yunzhong, "Hunji Shanghai de Qitan Guaicai," 35; "4017-002-0290: Guojia Tiwei Guanyu Po Quanguo Sheji (Shijie) Jilv Shenqing Yundong Jianjiang de Guiding He Shouyu Weiqi Xuanshou Duanwei Chenghao de Tongzhi Ji Wowe Shenqing Yundong Jianjiang de Mingdan."

³⁸⁸ "4017-002-0290: Guojia Tiwei Guanyu Po Quanguo Sheji (Shijie) Jilv Shenqing Yundong Jianjiang de Guiding He Shouyu Weiqi Xuanshou Duanwei Chenghao de Tongzhi Ji Wowe Shenqing Yundong Jianjiang de Mingdan."

³⁸⁹ Liu Shancheng, *Zhongguo weiqi shi*, 284.

³⁹⁰ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 116.

³⁹¹ Liu Shancheng, *Zhongguo weiqi shi*, 352–54.

Chinese Weiqi Association in 1962 as well as the introduction of the *duan* ranking system in 1964. The reforms also helped to consolidate Chinese sports officials' control over Weiqi, as the Weiqi Association was under the leadership of NSC, and the players were disciplined by the ranking system.

Weiqi Diplomacy: Three Cases

While hosting Japanese players, Chinese officials had political goals in mind beyond just learning Weiqi skills and the professional system from the Japanese. The most significant goal was to promote Sino-Japanese relations. The most salient goal was to promote Sino-Japanese relations. Although the Japanese Weiqi delegations were purportedly nonpolitical, the Chinese knew all too well that the players had close ties with the Japanese ruling elites. A NSC document clearly pointed out that “The Japanese Weiqi community is very close to the imperial family, bureaucrats, zaibatsu, warlords, and the upper echelons of the ruling conservative Party [the LDP].”³⁹² An internal report from Shanghai thus concluded that Sino-Japanese Weiqi interactions “are very beneficial to strengthening Sino-Japanese friendship, promoting cultural exchanges between the two countries, and winning over the Japanese upper class.”³⁹³

The Chinese assessments were not ungrounded. On the one hand, Weiqi players enjoyed a high social status in Japan, and some like Segoe Kensauku even became the guest of several Japanese Prime Ministers. On the other hand, Japanese business and political elites served as directors of Nihon Ki-in. Indeed, a survey of the list of Nihon Ki-in Non-player Directors in 1975 reveals that it includes not only prominent political figures like former Prime Minister Kishi Nobusuke, incumbent LDP House of Councilors Secretary-General Shiomi Junji 塩見俊二 (1907-1980), and Deputy

³⁹² “B126-1-895-5: Guojia Tiwei Guanyu Jiedai Riben Laiyue Weiqi Daibiaotuan de Tongzhi 国家体委关于接待日本瀨越围棋代表团的通告,” March 18, 1965, Shanghai Municipal Archive.

³⁹³ “B126-1-894-92: Shanghai-Shi Tiyu Yundong Weiyuanhui Guanyu Jiedai Riben Weiqi Daibiaotuan de Gongzuojihuai 上海市体育运动委员会关于接待日本围棋代表团的工作计划,” October 19, 1965, Shanghai Municipal Archive.

Prime Minister Fukuda Takeo 福田赳夫 (1905–1995); business elites like former President of Toshiba, Iwashita Fumio 岩下文雄 (1891-1979), and Director of Sanyo securities, Takahashi Kaname 高橋要 (1900-1989).³⁹⁴ Thus, through Weiqi the Chinese in reality appealed the Japanese rightist elites rather than the Left. The Chinese were likely to intend to align themselves with those Japanese conservatives who were dissatisfied with the United States' political domination over Japan.

It was not an easy task, however. Nihon Ki-in delegations tended to be politically indifferent and hard to deal with. The players tended to view themselves as practitioners of a traditional art and were uninterested in anything other than the game. While professing goodwill for fostering Sino-Japanese friendship, they generally avoided political issues and refused to talk about the Anti-American and Anti-Imperialist struggles. They probably agreed to promote Sino-Japanese relations only because they deemed it beneficial for the spread of Weiqi. Take the 1965 Iwata mission, which was headed by Iwata Tatsuaki 岩田達明 (1926-2022), 9 *dan*, as an example. During their visit, the Japanese were greatly displeased when a Chinese official brought up the issue of the differences in social systems between the two countries.³⁹⁵ The Japanese secretary protested twice to the Chinese side, suggesting that they came “for Sino-Japanese Weiqi interactions” and wished to “only talk about Weiqi rather than other complicated issues from then on.”³⁹⁶

³⁹⁴ “Nihonkiin No Shin Yakuin o Senshutsu 日本棋院の新役員を選出,” *Yomiuri Shinbun*, July 29, 1975.

³⁹⁵ “B126-1-894-85: Jiedai Riben Weiqidui Zonghe Jianbao 接待日本围棋队综合简报,” n.d., Shanghai Municipal Archive, accessed September 16, 2022.

³⁹⁶ “B126-1-894-85: Jiedai Riben Weiqidui Zonghe Jianbao.”

In order to effectively influence the Japanese guests, the Chinese devised a subtle strategy. They refrained from propagandizing the Japanese guests through words. Indeed, the Chinese were instructed to avoid political issues and only reiterate the official stance on the Sino-Soviet divide and the Satō administration if the guests asked.³⁹⁷ The hosts instead emphasized “the friendship between Chinese and Japanese people and athletes” and expressed “support for the [Japanese] people’s patriotic and just struggle against the United States.”³⁹⁸ The Chinese mainly counted on sightseeing to impress the Japanese visitors. A 1965 internal document instructed that the hosts must “actively publicize our policy of self-reliance and our achievements in socialist construction and sport” through sightseeing.³⁹⁹ The same document insisted that the tour “must be based on the spirit of seeking truth from facts, speaking of achievements, but also speak of shortcomings, look at the good, but also look at the bad.”⁴⁰⁰ The Chinese also refrained from imposing any values on the Japanese. Instead, they merely let the visitors see the Chinese reality and answer the questions that arose, leaving the visitors to draw up their own conclusions.⁴⁰¹ Certainly, this “reality” was meticulously curated and presented. Therefore, even though the Japanese visitors had the freedom to draw their own conclusions, they were already subconsciously influenced, and their responses were likely to be in favor of the Chinese.

³⁹⁷ “B126-1-894-92: Shanghai-Shi Tiyu Yundong Weiyuanhui Guanyu Jiedai Riben Weiqi Daibiaotuan de Gongzuojihuai.”

³⁹⁸ “B126-1-894-92: Shanghai-Shi Tiyu Yundong Weiyuanhui Guanyu Jiedai Riben Weiqi Daibiaotuan de Gongzuojihuai.”

³⁹⁹ “B126-1-894-92: Shanghai-Shi Tiyu Yundong Weiyuanhui Guanyu Jiedai Riben Weiqi Daibiaotuan de Gongzuojihuai.”

⁴⁰⁰ “B126-1-894-92: Shanghai-Shi Tiyu Yundong Weiyuanhui Guanyu Jiedai Riben Weiqi Daibiaotuan de Gongzuojihuai.”

⁴⁰¹ “B126-1-894-85: Jiedai Riben Weiqidui Zonghe Jianbao.”

In the case of the Iwata delegation, the Chinese arranged for the guests to visit not only the great monuments of socialist construction, such as the Great Hall of the People, the 10,000-ton hydraulic press machine, and the Beijing Station, but also less tangible achievements, as reflected by worker houses, kindergartens, elementary schools, and People's communes.⁴⁰² The Japanese were more impressed with the latter than the former. The hosts also sought to appeal to the guests' specific interests. For example, a Japanese player expressed interest in the Chinese labor insurance policy, while another was curious about the relations between working couples and between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. The Chinese, therefore, arranged for them to visit a worker recovering from illness at home. Through conversing with him, the Japanese players got to know what they were interested in and were greatly pleased.⁴⁰³ Overall, the Chinese strategy worked. A Chinese internal report suggested that the Iwata delegation was greatly moved, and their doubts about China were cleared.⁴⁰⁴ This document is clearly biased, assuming that China represents the correct way and that any negative impressions are simply misunderstandings that can and should be "cleared." Nevertheless, its veracity should not all be dismissed. The Japanese players' attitude towards China indeed improved that they even promised the Chinese that they would "strive for the Sino-Japanese diplomatic normalization" after returning to Japan.⁴⁰⁵

Weiqi was never the monopoly of conservatives, however. While Nihon Ki-in players tended to be politically conservative and claimed to be uninterested in politics,

⁴⁰² "B126-1-894-85: Jiedai Riben Weiqidui Zonghe Jianbao."

⁴⁰³ "B126-1-894-85: Jiedai Riben Weiqidui Zonghe Jianbao."

⁴⁰⁴ "B126-1-894-85: Jiedai Riben Weiqidui Zonghe Jianbao."

⁴⁰⁵ "B126-1-894-85: Jiedai Riben Weiqidui Zonghe Jianbao."

some other players were avowed socialists or communists and openly pro-China. The most vocal one was Yasunaga Hajime 安永一 (1901-1994). Yasunaga used to be a player in Nihon Ki-in, but in the 1960s, he had already parted ways with them. He gave up his professional rank and devoted his career to lead the Japanese amateur Weiqi community, establishing the third major force of Japan Weiqi world.⁴⁰⁶ Yasunaga never hid his appreciation for China, and he stayed so close to the visiting Chinese team in 1962 that “he almost became a member of the delegation.”⁴⁰⁷ He would root for Chinese players during their matches against Japanese professionals. As Chen Zude recalled, one time the Chinese team did not perform well, Yasunaga was worried and urged the players that “[China] is a socialist country. You should play well. If you do not play well you cannot show the superiority of socialism!”⁴⁰⁸ Moreover, Yasunaga had no reservations about teaching his skills to Chinese players. He introduced to the Chinese 1962 delegation a new opening style that he had been devising together with other top amateur players. In a few years, the Chinese almost uniformly adopted this new opening strategy while playing against the visiting Japanese players, and Japanese Weiqi journalists dubbed it, somewhat unfairly to Yasunaga, the “Chinese style.”⁴⁰⁹ Besides helping Chinese players on and off the board, Yasunaga was active in promoting Sino-Japanese relations and served as a standing board member of the Japan-China Friendship Association.⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁶ The other two are Nihon Ki-in and Kansei Ki-in

⁴⁰⁷ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 100.

⁴⁰⁸ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 101.

⁴⁰⁹ Yasunaga Hajime, *Zhongguo de Weiqi*, 185–86.

⁴¹⁰ Nie Weiping, “Zhide Zunjing de Laopengyou 值得尊敬的老朋友,” in *Zhongguo de Weiqi*, by Yasunaga Hajime (Changchun: Changchun chubanshe, 2012), 198.

Yasunaga's attitude did not go unnoticed by the Chinese. A Chinese NSC internal document acknowledged Yasunaga's stance, noting that he "is warm and friendly to us...and is particularly enthusiastic about Sino-Japanese friendship activities."⁴¹¹ Noting that Yasunaga had a conflict with Nihon Ki-in, the NSC specially extended an invitation to Yasunaga in 1963.⁴¹² Yasunaga promptly accepted, and he came to China in November 1963 together with Ishige Kakuo 石毛嘉久夫 (1925-2003), the editor of the Weiqi column of the Japanese Communist Party's organ.⁴¹³

The Chinese remained conscious about politics despite knowing Yasunaga was a friend. This attitude is reflected in the NSC's instruction on how to receive the Japanese guests.⁴¹⁴ The document noted the schedule should be a "combination of playing, teaching, and sightseeing." Interestingly, it specifically instructed that the Chinese officials "do not have to bring up political issues but should emphasize Sino-Japanese friendship and concentrate on the game." Yet they should "express support to the Japanese people's patriotic anti-American struggles." Moreover, since Ishige was a communist, the document demanded responsible officials "cooperate with him and work on [influencing Yasunaga] together." It was also conscious of the Japanese Weiqi world's internal issues. Perhaps worrying about jeopardizing China's relationship with

⁴¹¹ "4017-001-0075: Zhonghuarenmingongheguo Tiyuyundong Weiyuanhui Jiedai Riben Anyong Yi He Shimao Jiajiufu Fanghua Tongzhi 中華人民共和國體育運動委員會接待日本安永一和石毛嘉久夫訪華通知," n.d., Jiangsu Provincial Archive.

⁴¹² "4017-001-0075: Zhonghuarenmingongheguo Tiyuyundong Weiyuanhui Jiedai Riben Anyong Yi He Shimao Jiajiufu Fanghua Tongzhi."

⁴¹³ "4017-001-0075: Zhonghuarenmingongheguo Tiyuyundong Weiyuanhui Jiedai Riben Anyong Yi He Shimao Jiajiufu Fanghua Tongzhi."

⁴¹⁴ "4017-001-0075: Zhonghuarenmingongheguo Tiyuyundong Weiyuanhui Jiedai Riben Anyong Yi He Shimao Jiajiufu Fanghua Tongzhi."

Nihon Ki-in, the document required that should Yasunaga bring about the conflicts in Japanese Weiqi, “we should learn [the situation] but never make a comment.”

As in previous times, the Chinese carefully planned Yasunaga’s schedule and attempted to influence Yasunaga through sightseeing. Yasunaga’s trip to Wuxi perhaps best exemplified the Chinese strategy. Originally, Chinese sport officials did not plan for Yasunaga to visit Wuxi. However, since Yasunaga brought about his experience in Wuxi thirty years ago during his conversation with Chen Yi, Chen promptly invited him to visit Wuxi again.⁴¹⁵ The Chinese designed the tour as a combination of natural landscapes and socialist constructions. Yasunaga and Ishige visited attractions such as Xihui park 錫惠公園, Li garden 蠡園, and Taihu lake 太湖, where they enjoyed the beauty of the nature.⁴¹⁶ Especially since Yasunaga mentioned that he had played a game in a boat in Taihu lake with Liu Dihuai, Chinese officials let Liu to company Yasunaga and play another game in Taihu lake.⁴¹⁷ Yet Yasunaga and Ishige did not simply enjoy the nature. Visiting sites of socialist achievements was crucial for the Chinese strategy of reception. Yasunaga and Ishige visited Huishan Clay Figurine Factory (near Xihui park), Taihu Workers’ Sanatorium, and Wuxi Diesel Engine Factory.⁴¹⁸ The Chinese strategy worked. Yasunaga marveled at China’s transformation in thirty years.⁴¹⁹ Among the sites, the Workers’ Sanatorium left the

⁴¹⁵ “4017-001-0075: Jiedai Riben Weiqishou Anyong Yi Deng Erren Jianbao (Disanqi) 接待日本圍棋手安永一等二人簡報（第三期）,” November 25, 1963, Jiangsu Provincial Archive.

⁴¹⁶ “4017-001-0075: Jiedai Riben Weiqishou Jianbao 接待日本圍棋手簡報,” December 3, 1963, Jiangsu Provincial Archive.

⁴¹⁷ “4017-001-0075: Jiedai Riben Weiqishou Jianbao.”

⁴¹⁸ “4017-001-0075: Jiedai Riben Weiqishou Jianbao.”

⁴¹⁹ “4017-001-0075: Jiedai Riben Weiqishou Jianbao.”

greatest impression on the guests. Seeing the benefits for Chinese workers, Ishige complained that the “Japanese medical insurance is not good enough.”⁴²⁰

Yet the Chinese did not simply have Yasunaga to praise their achievements. Rather, they had a larger goal of countering Nihon Ki-in. In October 1963, Nihon Ki-in held the first world Weiqi tournament, which attracted participants from Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, West Germany, the United States, the United Kingdom, Yugoslavia, Austria, and the Netherlands.⁴²¹ Mainland China was conspicuously missing, likely not being invited under Taiwan’s pressure. Cooperating with Yasunaga and Ishige was thus China’s countermove. In China, Yasunaga presented his blueprint for an international amateur Weiqi association, but he also acknowledged two major issues. The first was the rule difference, and Yasunaga came partly to study Chinese rules.⁴²² The more important problem was the Taiwan issue. Chen endorsed Yasunaga’s scheme and suggested that Japan should lead it, but he stressed that Taiwan must not be invited.⁴²³ Ishige was less interested in a global organization of Weiqi. Instead, he proposed that Yasunaga and JFCA could establish “the Japan-China Weiqi Interaction Association.”⁴²⁴ Ishige schemed to use the internal conflict in the Japanese Weiqi world. He suggested that the organization invite Kansei Ki-in, which also had problems with Nihon Ki-in, thereby making Nihon Ki-in envious and forcing it to make a compromise, either joining the organization or banning Taiwan.⁴²⁵ Despite being a

⁴²⁰ “4017-001-0075: Jiedai Riben Weiqishou Jianbao.”

⁴²¹ “Dai 1-Kai Kokusai Igo Taikai Hiraku Nishidoitsu Nado 9-Kakoku Ga Sanka 第1回国際囲碁大会開く 西ドイツなど9か国が参加,” *Yomiuri Shinbun*, October 2, 1963.

⁴²² “4017-001-0075: Jiedai Riben Weiqishou Anyong Yi Deng Erren Jianbao (Disanqi).”

⁴²³ “4017-001-0075: Jiedai Riben Weiqishou Anyong Yi Deng Erren Jianbao (Disanqi).”

⁴²⁴ “4017-001-0075: Jiedai Riben Weiqishou Anyong Yi Deng Erren Jianbao (Diwuqi) 接待日本圍棋手安永一等二人簡報（第五期）,” December 3, 1963, Jiangsu Provincial Archive.

⁴²⁵ “4017-001-0075: Jiedai Riben Weiqishou Anyong Yi Deng Erren Jianbao (Diwuqi).”

communist, Ishige envisioned former LDP Prime Minister Ishibashi Tanzan or LDP senior Matsumura Kenzō to serve as the honorary president to win support from the LDP.⁴²⁶ Unfortunately, neither scheme came to fruition, though the reasons were unclear. The world amateur Weiqi championship that Yasunaga envisioned would come out only in 1979, and the organizer was Nihon Ki-in.⁴²⁷ By then Japan had recognized the PRC diplomatically, so Taiwan was not invited. Yasunaga would later compete in the tournament, and he finished third at the second tournament in 1980 at the age of 79. Perhaps to his relief, Chinese players would dominate the world amateur championship, winning 23 titles out of 41 by 2021.

Although the plan for an international amateur Weiqi organization failed, the 1963 Yasunaga mission was very successful for the Chinese. Yasunaga was more friendly than the Chinese ever anticipated, and, unlike Nihon Ki-in players, he was outspoken about politics. Upon arriving in China, Yasunaga expressed his discontent with the current situation in Japan. He complained that “the Japanese system constrains people and will become more and more corrupt.”⁴²⁸ He also criticized the Japanese ruling class for “siphon[ing] off the wealth of the people.”⁴²⁹ In contrast, he considered China as “a country of a new social system, and therefore every enterprise will flourish.”⁴³⁰ Seeing China’s changes, Yasunaga was “excited to the point of tears,” though the document might have exaggerated Yasunaga’s reaction.⁴³¹ He especially applauded

⁴²⁶ “4017-001-0075: Jiedai Riben Weiqishou Anyong Yi Deng Erren Jianbao (Diwuqi).”

⁴²⁷ Liu Shancheng, *Zhongguo weiqi shi*, 348.

⁴²⁸ “4017-001-0075: Jiedai Riben Weiqishou Anyong Yi Deng Erren Jianbao (Diyiqi) 接待日本圍棋手安永一等二人簡報（第一期）,” November 22, 1963, Jiangsu Provincial Archive.

⁴²⁹ “4017-001-0075: Jiedai Riben Weiqishou Anyong Yi Deng Erren Jianbao (Diwuqi).”

⁴³⁰ “4017-001-0075: Jiedai Riben Weiqishou Anyong Yi Deng Erren Jianbao (Diyiqi).”

⁴³¹ “4017-001-0075: Jiedai Riben Weiqishou Anyong Yi Deng Erren Jianbao (Diyiqi).”

Chinese achievements in sports, art, and construction.⁴³² Moreover, when it comes to the Sino-Soviet divide, Yasunaga stood firmly with the Chinese and attacked the so-called Soviet revisionism.⁴³³ The Chinese strategy of building a common ground with the Japanese through anti-American Imperialism also worked. During his meeting with Chen Yi, Yasunaga specially thanked the Chinese support for the Japanese Anpo struggle.⁴³⁴

The Weiqi Diplomacy changed its color in 1966 after the Cultural Revolution broke out in China. As mentioned in the introduction, Weiqi was under attack during the Cultural Revolution. Chen Zude recalled that before the Japanese delegation came in November, Chinese players had already stayed away from the game for half a year due to the mounting political pressure.⁴³⁵ This trend is reflected in *Weiqi*, the only Weiqi monthly journal in China. While it had occasionally included political content, Weiqi made up for the bulk of the journal. Take the 1966 April issue as an example. It had a politicalized editorial and two articles on studying the martyr Jiao Yulu 焦裕禄 (1922-1964). Taken together, these politicalized contents take fewer than ten pages, in contrast to the fifty pages of Weiqi. However, as the Cultural Revolution broke out in the following month, *Weiqi* changed significantly in response to the increasing political pressure. The May issue was comprised of fifty-odd pages of politics, starting with a few quotations from Chairman Mao, versus twenty or so pages of Weiqi content. It even

⁴³² “4017-001-0075: Jiedai Riben Weiqishou Anyong Yi Deng Erren Jianbao (Diwuqi).”

⁴³³ “4017-001-0075: Jiedai Riben Weiqishou Anyong Yi Deng Erren Jianbao (Diyiqi)”；“4017-001-0075: Jiedai Riben Weiqishou Anyong Yi Deng Erren Jianbao (Diwuqi).”

⁴³⁴ “4017-001-0075: Jiedai Riben Weiqishou Anyong Yi Deng Erren Jianbao (Disanqi).”

⁴³⁵ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 157–58.

published the Weiqi players' attack on the so-called "Anti-Party and Anti-Socialism crimes" of the clique of Deng Tuo 鄧拓 (1912-1966), former editor-in-chief of the *People's Daily*.⁴³⁶ This effort did not save the journal, however. As Weiqi itself was under attack, *Weiqi* had to end its publication in October 1966.

Although the scheduled Japanese Weiqi delegation was able to go through, the Chinese had to change their strategy under the circumstance of the Cultural Revolution. Sightseeing remained an integral part of the plan to influence the Japanese. However, the official guidelines had changed significantly. In past visits, Chinese authorities demanded the personnel involved not bring up politics. In contrast, in 1966, the officials were instructed to "highlight politics."⁴³⁷ More importantly, propaganda work emerged as a major component of the visit. An internal document from the SSC recorded the details. It instructed the responsible officials to "emphasize the glorious victories achieved since the start of the Cultural Revolution and the great feats of the Red Guards, as well as the tremendous successes of the workers and peasants armed with Mao Zedong Thought in socialist construction since liberation."⁴³⁸ Furthermore, Chinese players were required to read *Quotations from Chairman Mao* during the matches.⁴³⁹

However, the result was less than ideal. As usual, the Japanese players were politically indifferent, and the head of the delegation, Shimamura Toshihiro 島村俊広 (later renamed 島村俊廣, 1912-1991), was a devout Buddhist. The propaganda work

⁴³⁶ "Canjia Quanguo Qiyi Jinbiaosai de Weiqi Gongzuozhe, Yundongyuan Fennu Shengtao Deng Tuo Heibang Fandang Fanshehuizhuyi Zuixing 參加全國棋藝錦標賽的圍棋工作者、運動員憤怒聲討鄧拓黑幫反黨反社會主義罪行," *Weiqi* 1966, no. 5 (May 1966): 50–53.

⁴³⁷ "B126-1-959-48: Shanghai-Shi Yundong Weiyuanhui Jiedai Riben Weiqi Daibiaotuan Gongzuo Jihua 上海市運動委員會接待日本圍棋代表團工作計畫," November 24, 1966, Shanghai Municipal Archive.

⁴³⁸ "B126-1-959-48: Shanghai-Shi Yundong Weiyuanhui Jiedai Riben Weiqi Daibiaotuan Gongzuo Jihua."

⁴³⁹ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwu*, 163.

failed to influence them. One report noted that Shimamura once said that “the Chinese Communist Party is a god for being able to mobilize 700 million Chinese people. I admire Chairman Mao and praise him for being sincere in serving with the people.”⁴⁴⁰ Nevertheless, the same document admitted that other than admiring Chairman Mao, the Japanese delegation was “not interested in politics,” and the players “rarely had a reflection after visiting and refuse to take a stand on the Cultural Revolution in our country.”⁴⁴¹ That the Chinese players read *Quotations from Chairman Mao* while playing intrigued several Japanese players, and they started to read it as well.⁴⁴² However, they appeared to be unmoved by the contents.⁴⁴³

The Shimamura delegation marked the end of the so-called Weiqi diplomacy. To what extent the diplomatic work of Weiqi was successful is debatable. Although the Chinese archival materials generally recorded positive feedbacks from the Japanese, saving perhaps the Shimamura delegation in 1966, they may have been doctored to present with the officials wanted these visits to be. Indeed, as Zachary Scarlett cautions us, these archival narratives were “exaggerated, manipulated, or even imagined” in order to “show that Mao Zedong and the CCP enjoyed broad support in the world.”⁴⁴⁴ Nevertheless, these documents should not be dismissed altogether. After all, they were sincere enough to record when the Japanese appeared indifferent, even after the Cultural

⁴⁴⁰ “B126-1-959-54: Shanghai-Shi Yundong Weiyuanhui Guanyu Jiedai Riben Weiqi Daibiaotuan Qingkuang Jianbao 上海市運動委員會關於接待日本圍棋代表團情況簡報,” November 24, 1966, Shanghai Municipal Archive.

⁴⁴¹ “B126-1-959-54: Shanghai-Shi Yundong Weiyuanhui Guanyu Jiedai Riben Weiqi Daibiaotuan Qingkuang Jianbao.”

⁴⁴² Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 163.

⁴⁴³ “B126-1-959-41: Guojia Tiwei Guojisi Guanyu Riben Weiqi Daibiaotuan Fanghua Richeng Jihua 國家體委國際司關於日本圍棋代表團訪華日程計畫,” November 1966, Shanghai Municipal Archive.

⁴⁴⁴ Zachary A Scarlett, “China after the Sino-Soviet Split: Maoist Politics, Global Narratives, and the Imagination of the World” (PhD diss., Northeastern University, 2013), 15–16.

Revolution broke out. Moreover, the China tour indeed changed the opinions of many Japanese players, and they strived for Sino-Japanese diplomatic normalization. In December 1964, 29 Japanese players joined JFCA's "30 Million Signatures Campaign for Sino-Japanese Diplomatic Normalization" and appealed to the millions of Japanese Weiqi enthusiasts to support to movement; among the leaders were Segoe Kensaku, Hashimoto Utarō, and Sakata Eio of the 1960 delegation, and Sugiuchi Masao 杉内雅男 (1920-2017) of the 1963 delegation.⁴⁴⁵

Moreover, Chinese sport officials gained valuable experience from hosting the Japanese Weiqi delegations, and they applied it to other occasions. For example, the NSC invited a Japanese volleyball delegation headed by Daimatsu Hirofumi 大松博文 (1921-1978) in 1964 following the Japanese women's volleyball team's gold medal run at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, a case that Amanda Shuman studies.⁴⁴⁶ As Shuman demonstrates, aside from learning the skills from the world champion, the Chinese sought to promote Sino-Japanese friendship as well as impress them with Chinese achievements in socialist construction.⁴⁴⁷ To this end, Chinese sport officials arranged for the guests to visit places like the Shanghai Children's Palace and factories.⁴⁴⁸ This strategy worked, as the guests were especially moved by the Chinese progresses in building a good social order as well as promoting gender equality.⁴⁴⁹ Clearly, Chinese

⁴⁴⁵ "Ribei Weiqi Mingshou Fabiao Huyushu Haozhao Quanguo Weiqishou Canjia Yaoqiu Huifu Zhongri Bangjiao Qianming Yundong 日本圍棋名手發表呼籲書 號召全國圍棋手參加要求恢復中日邦交簽名運動," *Weiqi* 1965, no. 1 (January 16, 1965): 8; "B126-1-894-92: Shanghai-Shi Tiyu Yundong Weiyuanhui Guanyu Jiedai Ribei Weiqi Daibiaotuan de Gongzuojiuhui."

⁴⁴⁶ Shuman, "The Politics of Socialist Athletes in the People's Republic of China, 1949-1966," 333-34.

⁴⁴⁷ Shuman, "The Politics of Socialist Athletes in the People's Republic of China, 1949-1966," 358.

⁴⁴⁸ Shuman, "The Politics of Socialist Athletes in the People's Republic of China, 1949-1966," 353-55.

⁴⁴⁹ Shuman, "The Politics of Socialist Athletes in the People's Republic of China, 1949-1966," 353-55.

sport officials draw inspiration from their experience of hosting the Japanese Weiqi players.

In conclusion, the Chinese strategy in Weiqi diplomacy during the 1960s was reflected in the visits of the Iwata delegation in 1965, the Yasunaga delegation in 1963, and the Shimamura delegation in 1966. The Iwata delegation was a typical Japanese Weiqi delegation that was politically indifferent and hard to influence, so the Chinese used a more subtle strategy of showcasing Chinese socialism through carefully presented sightseeing rather than propagandizing. The Yasunaga delegation was different because of Yasunaga's status as an amateur player and his pro-China leaning, but the Chinese used a similar strategy. However, after the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, the Chinese had to add more weight to propagandizing to the Japanese due to domestic political pressure, but sightseeing remained an important part of the schedule. The overall effect of Weiqi diplomacy is difficult to assess. Admittedly, it did not lead to Sino-Japanese normalization, but it offered a channel to show goodwill from both sides. Moreover, some Japanese players were indeed impressed by their visits and strived for promoting Sino-Japanese normalization upon returning to Japan. Additionally, through hosting the Japanese Weiqi delegations, Chinese officials gained invaluable experience that they employed in other occasions.

Conclusion

After Chen Yi fell from power in February 1967, Chinese Weiqi lost its most powerful patron, and Weiqi eventually lost its *sport* status in 1969. Fortunately for Weiqi, however, its diplomatic utility saved it. After Sino-Japanese normalization in 1972, China decided to send a delegation to Japan, headed by Liao Chengzhi, to show goodwill. Premier Zhou Enlai instructed that a Weiqi player must be included in this delegation. Thus, under Zhou's auspices, the NSC organized a national team in the spring of 1973, and Chen Zude was eventually selected as the delegate to Japan.⁴⁵⁰ Soon after his arrival, Chen received an invitation from Nihon Ki-in. When Chen stepped into the big hall of Nihon Ki-in, he saw hundreds of people, not only Weiqi players but also “many leading figures in the political and financial worlds,” already waiting for him. It turned out that they were not there simply to welcome Chen Zude. At the start of the reception party, Arimitsu Jirō, the director of Nihon Ki-in, took the stage and made an announcement. He revealed that Chen Yi, who had passed away in January 1972, would be posthumously awarded the highest honorary rank ever issued by Nihon Ki-in: honorary 8 *dan*. This recognition was bestowed upon Chen Yi in appreciation of his support for Weiqi.⁴⁵¹ The date signed on the diploma was not the date of the event but rather September 29, 1972 – the signing date of the Japan–China Joint Communiqué.⁴⁵² There could hardly be a better commemoration of the Weiqi diplomacy.

⁴⁵⁰ Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 192–93.

⁴⁵¹ Chen previously received an honorary 7 *dan* from Nihon Ki-in in 1963.

⁴⁵² Chen Zude, *Chaoyue Ziwo*, 198–99.

Weiqi thus served important diplomatic functions in 1973, and this quality saved the game and led to its reinstatement as a sport. It was a continuation of the 1950s and 60s state Weiqi policy, despite the break caused by the Cultural Revolution. Ever since the establishment of the People's Republic, Chinese Weiqi players and enthusiasts had been thinking about how to revive the game under socialism. Although they devised several plans, it turned out that the state had different ideas about the game, as it officially recognized Weiqi as a sport. From then on, the NSC started the process of transforming the game into a sport through steps such as standardizing its rules and organizing tournaments. Under this new policy, Weiqi players no longer had to play the game for stakes but became athletes supported by the state. The year of 1959 marked a crucial turning point in the history of Chinese Weiqi for two reasons. Firstly, on the eve of the First National Games, several local sport committees started to take Weiqi seriously and organized their own Weiqi teams. In this way, Weiqi as a sport was not only established in the capital but also the local. Secondly, Matsumura Kenzō and Chen Yi agreed upon the first Japanese Weiqi delegation, marking the start of the Weiqi diplomacy. Nihon Ki-in kept the promise and sent the players in 1960. From then on, China and Japan maintained a yearly exchange of Weiqi delegations until 1966, as the Cultural Revolution interrupted it. Through these interactions, the Chinese wanted to learn from the Japanese and eventually reclaim the lead in the game that their ancestors invented. Being strong at Weiqi was important because it was believed that the fortune of the nation correlates with the fortune of Weiqi. In order to show the success of Chinese socialism, Chinese Weiqi must improve. Moreover, by carefully designed

sightseeing, the Chinese attempted to impress the Japanese visitors with not only the great monuments of socialist construction but also some less tangible achievements. In this way, the Chinese hoped to influence the Japanese ruling elites who tended to have a good relationship with the Weiqi players. The domestic and diplomatic sides of Weiqi were inextricably linked. On the one hand, as the sport officials were more experienced in international interactions, they shouldered most of the work in Weiqi diplomacy. On the other hand, learning from the Japanese helped the sport-ization of Chinese Weiqi.

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