

*Games Ancient and Oriental,
and how to Play Them*

Edward Falkener

J. S. M. T. 1892

GAMES ANCIENT AND ORIENTAL

AND

22 June '92

HOW TO PLAY THEM.

—
BEING

THE GAMES OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS
THE HIERA GRAMME OF THE GREEKS,
THE LUDUS LATRUNCULORUM OF THE ROMANS

AND THE

ORIENTAL GAMES OF

CHESS, DRAUGHTS, BACKGAMMON

AND

MAGIC SQUARES.

BY

EDWARD FALKENER.



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XXIII.

THE GAME OF ENCLOSING.

<i>Chinese</i>	<i>Japanese</i>
WEI-KI.	GO.

T'ao hua ch'üan ("The book of Peach flower"), in 8 vols.	}	Quoted by
Hsien chi wu k'u	-	Mr. Giles.
Trigantius—De Christiana Expeditione apud Sinas	-	1616
Semedo—Relazione della Grande Monachia della China	-	1643
Hyde—De Ludis Orientalibus	-	1694
Giles (Herbert A.)—Wei-ch'i, or the Chinese game of war ¹	-	1877
Playing with Chinese and Japanese gentlemen	-	1865, 1872, 1889


Mr. Giles, our Consul in China, who is a proficient player, and an enthusiast in the game, informs us that "several voluminous works have been entirely devoted to elucidating its principles, and many shorter treatises on the subject have appeared in collections of miscellaneous writings. Most of these are adorned with cuts showing advantageous positions, and giving problems to be worked out by the student."



He tells us that the game, like all other Oriental games, boasts of great antiquity. It is said to have been invented by the great and excellent Emperor Yao,² 2300 B.C., but the earliest record of the game is in 300 B.C.

¹ Published in "Temple Bar," Vol. xlix, No. 194.

² K'ang Hsi's Dictionary.

Like all other games, it is said to be, as Mr. Giles describes it in his title, a game of war. Here we have not merely typical representatives of the various arms, but the armies themselves, some 200 men on each side: they form encampments, and furnish them with defences; and they slay not merely a single man, as in other games, but frequently hosts of men. The eye of the general is supposed to be all over the field at the same moment, watching not only the points of attack against the enemy, but the weak places of his own defence.

The game is played on a board of eighteen squares each way, forming 361 points: for the pieces are placed on the points, not in the squares. The pieces are not moved when once placed down, but they are supposed to move, and therefore have their connection one with another along the lines, but not diagonally. The pieces are called *Tze* in Chinese, and *Ishi* in Japanese. They are rounded at top, and flat at bottom , and are made of glass, marble, or composition, and generally are of *black* and *white* colours. Each player has about 200 of these pips, though perhaps not 150 are played, but the others are used to assist in counting, as we shall presently see. Being so many, the pips are placed in bowls of wood or china, which are always seen in paintings representing this game. When a player is in doubt as to playing a piece, or he wishes to show why he played in a certain manner, he reverses any of the pips he transposes, to show that they have been moved and must be replaced in their proper position.

The Chinese board has the central points 63, 75, 
189, 303 and 315 marked out with four angles, 

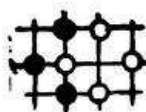
and the four side points, 9, 180, 198 and 369 with two such angles. The Japanese board has the points 63, 69, 75, 183, 189, 195, 303, 309 and 315 distinguished by dots. Such boards are, in China, printed on paper, with the printer's name attached, so as to be ready either for playing the game, or for scoring a game: and there is a margin at the top for writing remarks, such as noting a point from which a pip of one colour has been taken up, and into which a pip of the other colour has subsequently been played, as 94 and 283 in the accompanying game, in each of which a *black* pip was played first, and a *white* pip afterwards.

The game is begun by placing two pips of one colour on the points 63 and 315, and two pips of the opposite colour on 75 and 303. But should the players not be of equal skill, all these, or even the whole of the marked points may be given to the weaker player. The players then place pieces alternately, one by one, placing some few pieces on intermediate points all round the board: after which the fight begins.

A player now endeavours to fence off or enclose a field or camp, *Kwei* in Chinese, *Shini-ishi* in Japanese, in any portion of the board, but while so doing he finds his opponent is surrounding him on the outside. He must therefore take care to preserve some open space behind him, called an *eye*, into which the enemy cannot enter, such as we see in No. IV in the accompanying game. This camp may be regarded as a fortress having a court-yard for the exercise of the troops. By entering a fresh piece at 78 or 98 he could make two *eyes* or court-yards. No. III has two *eyes*, 378, and the other a very large one.¹ No. II has two small *eyes*, one

¹ 336, 337 and 357 are not an *eye*, but were occupied by the enemy.

of one point, and one of two points. No. V has three small *eyes* of only one point, 11, 30 and 69, and No. I has one small *eye* and one larger one. Now if the enemy were to fill in this larger one he would take off sixteen of *Black's* men, for they would be penned in all round, but *Black* would not allow him to do so; but when *White* had filled in five of the points, *Black* would fill in the sixth and then take off *White's* five pieces. Suppose that this attempt were repeated by *White* four more times, *Black* entering a fresh piece every time, there would at length be only one vacant point remaining; and then *Black* would have two small *eyes*, 0 and 2, into neither of which could *White* enter. But if *Black* were inadvertently to enter a piece at 2, he would then leave only one up, 0, and *White* would enter there and take off all *Black's* men in that camp. For it will be understood that though a piece cannot enter a single *eye* (where he cannot immediately take any of his opponent's pieces) without being taken: yet if by voluntarily entering into such *eye* he can surround his enemy, his own piece, instead of being dead, captures all the enemy's pieces which he has thus surrounded. *Black* however would not wait for *White's* attempt to fill in this large *eye*, but would place one piece at 22 and another at 41, and he would thus form five small *eyes* of one point each, 0, 2, 40, 42 and 61. We see then that unless the *eye* is a large one, there must be two small *eyes* to render a camp secure. But these small *eyes* should be in the rear of the camp where the enemy cannot reach them:



for if on the outside, the enemy might plant three men outside *White's* *eye*, and then boldly putting a man inside the *eye* he would destroy

the *eye* by taking off one of the pieces, and at the same time would gain an *eye* for himself: and this would lead to a see-saw.¹

From this it will appear that—

A piece is lost which enters an enemy's single *eye*, if he cannot by so doing take any of his opponent's pieces; but if by so doing he takes any of his opponent's pieces, his own is not lost;

Any number of pieces when surrounded and entirely shut in by the enemy, as *Black's* 94, 193 and 283, and *White's* 2, 22, 40, 41, 42 and 61; and 336, 337, and 357 are taken off immediately they are closed in;

Pieces enclosed, but not entirely shut in, and which have no *eyes*, as *Black's* 113, 132 and 133, and *White's* 251 and 274 are taken off immediately before counting;

Pieces enclosed, but having two small *eyes*, or one large one, are perfectly safe.

It must be remembered that 94, 193 and 283 were originally covered with *Black's* men, and that 94 and 283 were afterwards covered with *White's* men.

When each player has completed his operations, and the further playing in of more pieces will not affect the game, it is said—*Huan leao*, It is finished.

¹ Mr. Giles's Essay on *Wei-Chi's* gives an exhaustive account of these *eyes*, their modes of attack, and their defence.

THE GAME.

<i>Black.</i>	<i>White.</i>	<i>Black.</i>	<i>White.</i>
{ 63	{ 75	73	93
{ 315	{ 303	94	92
53	45	52	71
49	85	70	51
122	136	31	74
176	162	50	114 (94)
262	326	229	308
328	276	309	289
275	255	310	290
296	277	311	307
254	274	231	103
295	235	102	123
253	297	83	143
317	336	24	282
316	234	281	301
233	213	283	302
212	192	202	25
193	214	44	61
191	172	81	48
211	171	28	27
116	115	68	47
96	95	33	242
137	185	241	263
97	251	261	243
273	189	222	181
170	190	204	201
150	175	221	228
156	131	164	145
151	152	245	284 (283)
132	112	165	146
133	173	187	249
113	155	250	209
130	111	230	207
110	72	188	208

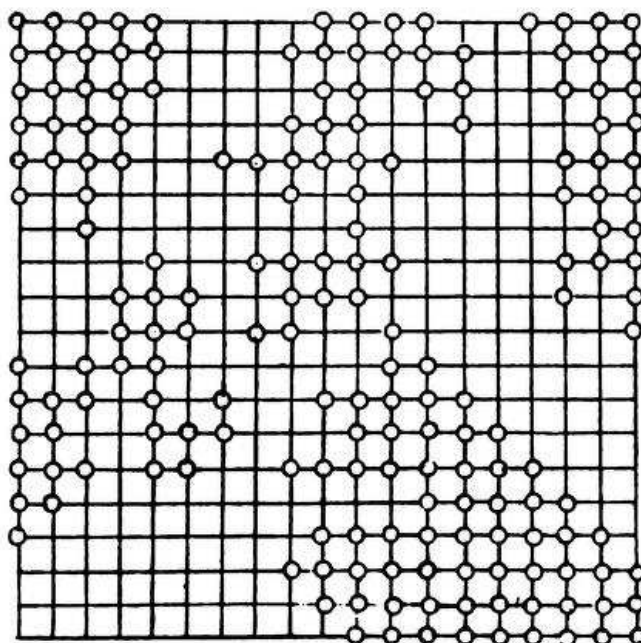
<i>Black.</i>	<i>White.</i>	<i>Black.</i>	<i>White.</i>
147	127	3	41
148	337	216	236
335	318	358	84
356	357	43	266
355	197	246	267
196	217	169	167
56	76	168	107
77	55	86	106
36	205	89	64
224	225	23	182
163	142	183	223
244	166	203	5
185	186	62	66
226	206	178	67
280	42	88	298
21	22	338 (336, 837, 129	
1	121	357)	
60	177	265	285
157	291	264	283
292	348	268	247
349	827	195	194 (193)
329	35	198	238
300	341	144	124
377	128	100	140
15	14	200	210
16	34	158	180
10	8	220	120
29	347	20 (2, 22, 40, 109	
269	248	41,42,61)	
271	288	90	94
270	369	32	7
370	368	9	215
350	13	108	218
12	320	149	227
87	40	91	54
80	101	4	
82	2		

STATE OF THE GAME WHEN FINISHED.

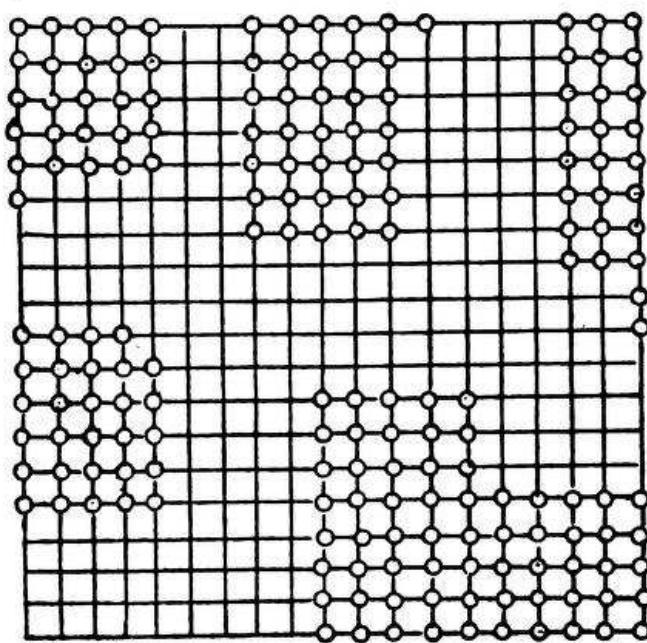
Each player now declares how many camps he has made. *Black* claims five, and *White* two: so *White* takes off three of *Black's* men, say 195, 196 and 216. They then take off the pieces enclosed by the opposite side, as *Black's* 113, 132 and 133, and *White's* 251 and 274.

The game is now ready for counting.

The vacant points of each camp of one of the players, say *Black's*, are now filled in with spare pips of the same colour, and the following is the result.



As it is not necessary to count both sides, the *Whites* are now pushed aside where in the way, so as to arrange the *Blacks* in a solid mass in each camp, which is done, where possible, in rows of five, to facilitate counting; and we then have this form.



By this we see that

<i>Black's camp</i>	I has	$5 \times 5 + 1 =$	26		
"	" II	$5 \times 5 + 4 =$	29		
"	" III	8×5	}	= 65	
"	" IV	5×5			
"	" IV	$8 \times 3 + 2 =$	26		
"	" V	$7 \times 5 + 1 =$	36	Total number	361
					182
Therefore <i>White</i> has					179

The difference between the two being 5, the *Whites* are said to lose $2\frac{1}{2}$, and the *Blacks* to win $2\frac{1}{2}$.

We have thus given a game by the study of which anyone may be able to play Wei-Ki. But "the very look of the game will be enough to frighten" some: for who would not suppose that if the game consists in surrounding the enemy, the *Whites* have the best of it, and indeed that they have surrounded, and therefore taken every one of the *Blacks*. But the *Blacks* equally surround the *Whites*. This however is not the game: but, as we have seen, each camp or group of pieces may be considered as a fortress, which must have court-yards, however small, called *eyes*, for the forces to move about in. Then it is impregnable, and hostile forces around it are powerless to take it; but if it has no court-yards, then the garrison is considered to be so crowded together with men, women and children, that they cannot move, and the enemy takes the fortress and all within it.

In the game we have given as an example the *Whites* have two camps or fortresses, the left one of which has five *eyes*, 6, 26, 46; 65; 104, 105, 125, 126; 141, 160, 161; and a larger one at the bottom; and

the right one three *eyes*,¹ 75; 134, 153, 154, 174; and 237, 256, 257, 258, 278; and, as we have seen, the *Whites* are only five fewer than the *Blacks*. It is therefore a very even game and well fought.

The game however is so intricate that it requires great practice to play it well, and accordingly it is not a game for idle play; it must be made a study; and thus Mr. Giles, who as Consul has long dwelt in China, and is a practised player, assures us—"None but the educated play at Wei-ch'i. A knowledge of this difficult game stamps a man in China as somewhat more than an ordinary person. Its subtleties are beyond the reach of the lazy; its triumphs too refined for the man of gross material tastes. Skill in Wei-ch'i implies the astuteness and versatility so prized amongst the Chinese. They could hardly believe a man to play Wei-ch'i well, and yet be possessed of only indifferent abilities as a practical man of the world. It would amount to a contradiction of terms. All the more so, as nearly all those who enter upon a literary career make a point of attempting to learn the game; but many faint by the way. To a beginner a mere knowledge of the rules for a long time seems hopeless: and subsequent application of them more hopeless still. The persevering ones play on day by day, until at last—suddenly as it were—the great scheme of Wei-ch'i dawns upon them in all its fullness and beauty; and from that day they are ardent enthusiasts in support of its unquestionable merits."

The photograph at the beginning of this article represents a diminutive board and men in my posses-

¹ 113, 132 and 133 were occupied, and 193 and 195, 196, 216 are not *eyes*, but were occupied by the enemy.

sion, the board being only $7\frac{3}{4}$ inches square, and the pieces $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch in diameter. It stands $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches high, and is japanned with the same design as that of the Japanese chess-board. It is however generally played by the natives on large wooden folding boards about 20 inches square, with pieces of about the size of a shilling, which are kept in japanned bowls. Ladies, however, sometimes appear to play on small japanned boards with china cups.

The photograph at the end is from the dossier of a Chinese draught and backgammon table in my possession, representing a Chinese gentleman and lady playing the game, with another lady looking on. The gentleman has evidently got the best of the game, at which his wife sitting behind him is greatly pleased ; while the lady consoles herself with her delicate pipe of tobacco.