

Early Go in Western Europe – Part 2

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Some new information about weiqi activity in Great Britain was recorded in the fourth diary of Zhang De-Yi; we have already encountered him in a previous article in the BGJ as the interpreter for the diplomatic mission sent to England in 1876 by the Qing government.

Zhang Meets Falkener

We have kept our account of this diary, separate from the first article, because it contains useful documents on Edward Falkener.

In the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography we read: “In 1892, at the age of 78, Falkener published ‘*Games Ancient and Oriental and How to Play Them*’, a pioneering (and somewhat misleading) study of board games with suggested reconstructions, four of which were manufactured and advertised for sale in the book” This is the only information available to us about Falkener as a writer on board games. It is fortunate that this rare book has been reprinted by Dover several times since 1961, allowing its spread among interested players.

As far as weiqi or Go is concerned, a useful detail can be read in Falkener’s book on games. After listing the literary sources for his chapter on ‘The Game of Enclosing’ (see page 26), and in particular directly after the references to Hyde and Giles, he adds: “Playing with Chinese and Japanese gentlemen 1865, 1872, 1889.” We have yet to find any new details on these three occurrences, but Zhang De-Yi describes a fourth one, occurring in 1877, by the way, the same year of the pioneering article published by Giles in Temple Bar.

Further information about Falkener can be found rather easily, because he was a renowned architect and archaeologist. He was born in London in 1814; as an architect, he became a member of the architectural institutes of Berlin and Rome and in 1895 was elected honorary fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects.

On the other hand, his archaeological activity is mainly connected with a long tour through most countries of Europe and the Middle-East

that he performed from 1842 to 1849. Everywhere he made careful studies of the architectural remains and even excavated a house at Pompeii in 1847. He also had the opportunity to build a rich collection of Arab metalwork, pottery, and arms, which unfortunately was destroyed in a fire in 1858. In 1877, the year of interest here, he had lived for two years with his family at Glan-y-mor, St Clears, Carmarthenshire, Wales, where he died in 1896.



In the same year, 1877, the Chinese Embassy in UK started its activity in London, with Sir Samuel Halliday Macartney (1833-1906) working as Secretary, and thus in a leading position there. On the occasion of the visit of Chinese diplomats that we have seen in the previous article, Falkener wrote to Halliday Macartney inviting anyone in the Embassy who knew how to play weiqi to attend a dinner banquet at 5 pm on July 4, 1877. As a consequence, Zhang and Falkener met there, and on two further occasions in the following weeks, as recorded in the diary. In particular, Zhang wrote the following comment on these visits in his diary: “He was good at all kind of board games but had little knowledge about weiqi, thus he made such a plan.”

On July 4, 1877 they first met at Clothworkers Hall in Mincing Lane, in the old town. Of course, Mincing Lane was somewhat different at the time compared to nowadays as most old buildings were destroyed in the Blitz of 1940-41, including Clothworkers Hall. In 1958 it was rebuilt in the same place in the City of London and can still be found to be among

the most popular livery companies. “Today the Clothworkers are more involved with charitable work. The Clothworkers Hall is available for hire and can cater for up to 224 people dining, and receptions for up to 300 people.”¹



Zhang – together with another Chinese, Li Xiang-Pu – arrived there two hours late because earlier he had to attend a tea party; however, in the morning he had sent Falkener a message to inform him of this delay. There were 26 people at the banquet, and the food was delicious. After dinner they had some cherry drink (mixed with liquor) from a foot-tall silver container called a ‘loving cup’: starting from the first seat, everyone had to directly drink from it, then to pass it to the next one to drink, to denote friendship. Falkener showed all the rooms to Zhang and Li, and they smoked, and drank tea and coffee. It was later than 11 pm when the two Chinese came back to the Embassy.

Falkener invited Zhang and Li again to the Clothworkers Hall on July 25, 1877. On that day there was the handover ceremony of the committee of an association in which Falkener was an influential member. Overall, 186 people took part in the celebration dinner, including 14 foreign guests. Zhang was invited to give a speech as a representative of the foreign guests.

¹ <http://www.allinlondon.co.uk/directory/1339/565.php>

A week later, on August 1, 1877, Falkener visited Zhang at the Chinese Embassy, at 11 am. He brought a complete Go set with him. The set apparently came from Japan: the stones, less than 200 pieces, were small; the board was about 7 cm thick and provided with the traditional four legs. Notwithstanding the presence of the four legs, it was a more ordinary model than the two prestigious game sets described in Falkener's book, see below.

Zhang wrote a useful additional comment: "He knew a little about the opening stage of the game, and he said that he had learned it from books." In the same diary, there is one further small piece of information related to weiqi. Zhang visited the British Museum to check their collection of more than 10,000 Chinese books and he found books of "Qin, Qi, Shu, and Hua", namely of the four performing arts: playing musical instruments, weiqi, calligraphy, and brush painting, respectively.

That is all the information about Falkener and weiqi in the fourth Zhang diary, but it allows some important deductions. If nowhere else, Falkener had the opportunity to read some Chinese weiqi books in the British museum. He apparently had Japanese connections too, since he owned (or borrowed from somewhere) a Japanese Go set.



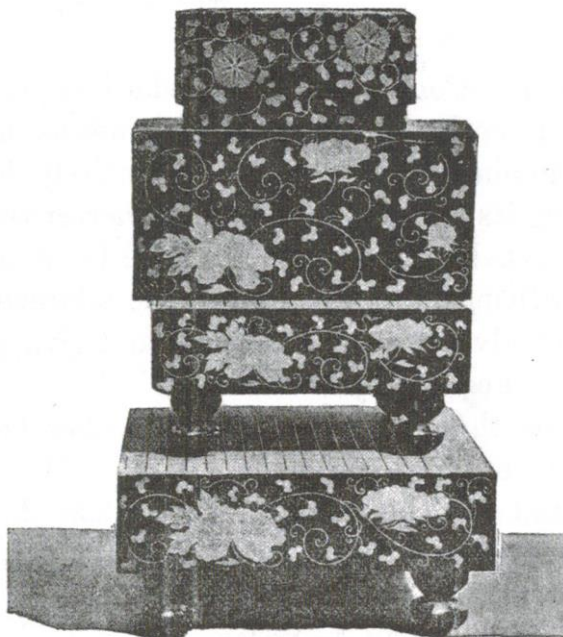
When Falkener published his book on board games, some fifteen years later, he wrote that "the Japanese pile their games one upon another as ornaments in their rooms. I have two piles of these games, the ornamentation of which is very similar. The lower board is that of Go, the Game of Enclosing;...". Thus, not only did he own a couple of complete series of Japanese board games, but he knew how much these sets were treasured in their native country.

It is regrettable that Falkener never met the second Chinese ambassador, Zeng Ji-Ze, and did not further put into practice his knowledge of weiqi with expert Chinese players in England. He thus missed the

opportunity to learn the game well enough, something that he apparently intended to achieve. He could have introduced the game to European players before the known pioneering contribution of Oskar Korschelt in Japan, 1880-81.

APPENDIX II.

Unlike the Chinese who use paper chess-boards, the Turks who carry their chess-men and chess-cloth in a bag, so as to be always ready, and Europeans who deposit them in closets till wanted; the Japanese pile their games one upon another as ornaments in their rooms. I have two piles of these games the ornamentation of which is very similar. The lower board is that of *Go*, the game of Enclosing; the next is the Chess-board; the next is a game which I have not been able to ascertain, but I believe it is played with a dozen men on each side, black and white, and with diminutive dice only $\frac{3}{16}$ of an inch square, the fritillus, or dice box for which is japanned to correspond with the board, and is $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches high, with an internal diameter of only $\frac{5}{16}$ of an inch. The board itself has twelve oblong divisions on each side, with a space between the two sides. Above this game is a box to hold the pieces.



In any case, he may have played an essential role within the unknown fellowship of native players, from which Horace Cheshire emerged later on. Another comment may be useful, concerning his dependence on Giles. It is true that his book depends on Giles' article too, which was certainly published fifteen years earlier, precisely at the time of the events described here; however, Falkener's research on weiqi was already active in Great Britain before the publication of Giles' text.

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—Relatione 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.

The manuscripts of Zhang's diaries were beautifully written. In 1951, Zhang's descendants donated these manuscripts to the Beijing Library, and they were photo-lithographically reprinted in the late

1990s. Thanks to an unknown contributor, the Chinese text is now accessible to everyone as a PDF file on the Internet.