

The art of black and white: wei-ch'i in Chinese poetry.

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Wei-ch'i is the oldest and one of the most popular board games in China and other East Asian countries. Although the time of its origin cannot be set with certainty,(1) reliable anecdotes about the game date back to 548 n.c.(2) The game spread from China to Korea and Japan before the Tang dynasty (A.D. 618-907),(3) and in fact it is as go, the Japanese pronunciation of the character ch'i, that the game is commonly known in the West. Wei-ch'i is played with black and white pieces, or stones,(4) on a square wooden board crossed by 19 vertical lines and 19 horizontal lines which form 361 intersections, or "points." Players try to conquer territory by enclosing vacant points with boundaries made of their own stones, and by attacking and capturing hostile stones. The stones and board together account for both the simplicity and the complexity of the game: the two kinds of stones, black and white only, and the plainness of the rules of their movement, make the fundamentals easy to grasp; yet the large size of the board, with a wealth of combinations and an infinite variety of moves, demands extraordinary skill. The game requires years of practice and study for a player to become good even at the amateur level.(5)

The ingenuity and skill required made wei-ch'i not merely a pastime popular among nobilities and intellectuals, but elevated it to a princely art form. Wei-ch'i, calligraphy, painting, and the ch'in, a seven-string plucked instrument similar to the zither, were regarded as the "four arts"; attainment in all four was a sign of high cultivation and social finesse.(6) With its fusion of the intellectual and imaginative faculties, wei-ch'i offered particular inspiration and solace to poets. For instance, when Wang Yu-ch'eng (954-1001) was demoted to Huang-chou in 999, he built a bamboo tower and was consoled by its acoustic excellence: "I thus built a small bamboo tower with two rooms. It is a good place to play the ch'in, for the musical melodies are harmonious and smooth; it is a good place to chant poems, for the poetic tones ring pure and far; it is a good place to play wei-ch'i, for the stones sound out click-click."(7) When a stone is grasped between the nail of the second finger and the tip of the third - the traditional method - and placed on the board with confidence, a cheerful ringing note results. This sound was even more pleasant when mellowed and amplified by the bamboo tubes in Wang Yu-ch'eng's simple, elegant tower.

The association of wei-ch'i with poetry is due not only to the game's sophistication and the elegant environment in which it is often played. At a deeper level, both arts share a style based on abstraction and spontaneity. For novices or enthusiasts of modest attainments in either activity, mechanics are the primary concern. Masters, however, are occupied with the art of self-expression. It is no wonder that Fan Hsi-

p'ing (b. 1709) and Shih Ting-an (1710-70), the two "national experts" (kuo-shou) of the Ch'ing dynasty (1644-1911), were likened stylistically to two great T'ang poets: "Hsi-p'ing is wonderful and lofty, like the divine dragon shifting shape - its head and tail are indistinguishable. Ting-an is accurate and strict, as an old steed galloping without a misstep. The commentators liken them to the poets Li Po and Tu Fu, which is most fitting."(8) The comparison of wei-ch'i players with poets satisfies both the intellectual and the aesthetic senses, for the arts are similar in their creative demands, the temperament of their practitioners, and the processes through which they unfold.

No game has surpassed wei-ch'i in the interest it has evoked among major Chinese poets, especially since the T'ang dynasty, when both poetry and wei-ch'i enjoyed a golden age.(9) Wei-ch'i poems often provide a vivid picture of a poet's daily activities, enhancing our understanding of his life and writing. On his poetic canvas, Tu Fu (712-70) often portrayed the suffering of the people in times of war and chaos. Yet once in a while he would draw a more pastoral scene: "My old wife draws a weich'i board on aper, / My little son pounds a needle into a fishing hook."(10) Even though he might not be able to afford a good wei-ch'i set, a game on a makeshift board could offer him peace and fun. Fan Ch'eng-ta (1126-93) chided his friends in poetry and wei-ch'i circles with gentle humor: Willow branch frowning and plum blossom smiling each troubles me; / Poetry creditors and wei-ch'i enemies all come to haunt me."(11) Po Chu-I (772-846), too, was an ardent player and his wei-ch'i skills matched his poetic accomplishment: "The wei-ch'i game is done, I resent that I had no worthy opponent; / The poem is finished, I feel ashamed that I was first."(12) The juxtaposition of wei-ch'i and poetry here and in many other poems indicates the high favor these two arts shared among the literati.(13) This unique cultural phenomenon will be explored in this study through close analysis of a small but representative sampling of wei ch'i poems. Decoding these seemingly frivolous poems reveals the richness of wei-ch'i as a source of artistic inspiration. China's great poets drew from wei-ch'i's patterns of opposition three broad metaphors: wei-ch'i approximates war, offers paradigms for social order, and teaches lessons about humankind's moral stake in the cosmic game.

AN APPROXIMATION TO WAR

Wei-ch'i is, in the first place, intrinsically an antagonistic or warlike game, governed primarily by skills developed in handling strategic operations and tactical encounters; the game thus explores tension and complication and attempts to resolve them triumphantly.(14) For this reason alone, wei-ch'i was popular not only among the military but also in literary circles, for many courtiers, not satisfied by mere literary distinctions, hungered for the military glory that could be won on the frontier. "To be a general outside the court and a premier within the court" (ch'u-chiang ju-hsiang) was a pursuit of ambitious men throughout Chinese history. Among those summoned from the frontier to serve as chief minister in the 720s were Chang Chia-chen (665-729), Wang Chun (c. 662-732), Chang Yueh (667-731), and Hsiao Sung (d. 749). Chang Yueh, a leading literary figure of the day, enjoyed fame as chief minister three times, and three times led troops against the Turks on the northern frontier, eventually winning victories over them. He expressed his longing for the perfect unity

of literary and military merit in a couplet praising Ts'ao Ts'ao's (155-220) heroic spirit: "By day he would lead his strong knights and smash the impregnable phalanx, / By night he would invite literary men to write of the splendid chamber."(15)

This image of a master of both pen and sword, although hardly achievable, involved many literary men in a simulacrum of strategic reasoning and deduction. Tu Mu (803-53), who held official posts at court and in the provinces but never in the army, liked to discuss military affairs and strategy, as evidenced in his "Discourse on War" ("Chan-lun") and "Discourse on Defense" ("Shou-lun") in addition to his annotations of The Art of War of Sun-tzu (Sun-tzu ping-fa).(17) In 843, when Li Te-yu (787-850), then chief minister, was conducting a punitive military action against the rebellious military governor Liu Chen (d. 844), Tu Mu presented a letter to Li, in which he proposed detailed strategies and tactics for the operation.(18)

The fact that both Tu Mu and Chang Yueh were poets, strategists, and wei-ch'i lovers--they both played against national experts--is telling:(19) for men of all ranks, weich'i combined and stimulated their literary and military interests. The structure of the game, and in particular its abstract quality, made possible a depth of poetic analogy which no other pastime offered. This is clearly illustrated in Liu Yti-hsi's (772-842) "Song of Watching a Wei-ch'i Game, as a Send-off for Master Hsuan's Journey West".(20) Two couplets in the middle of the poem describe the wei-ch'i skills of Master Hsuan, a Buddhist monk, from the poet's point of view as spectator:

First, I perceived dotted stars in the dawn sky;(21) Then, I saw soldiers fighting in late autumn. Your deployment was as wild geese in flight - nobody understood it, Until the cub was caught in the tiger's den, and all were shocked.(22)

The metaphor in the first line refers to the beginning of the wei-ch'i game, when stones are placed upon the board one by one, in a star-like pattern that appears random to unschooled observers. This trope underscores the similarity of wei-ch'i and war, which rest upon the deployment of troops and stones in endless combination. The second line demonstrates that battle is the heart of the game and that those who play it engage in war vicariously. In the third line, the strategic patterns and potentialities of Master Hsuan's wei-ch'i position are scarcely apparent to the spectators. They are puzzled by the complex, seemingly discontinuous patterns in which his forces are ingeniously deployed. Only when Master Hsuan finally thrashes his opponent do the meanings of his moves reveal themselves. Liu Yu-hsi's poem demonstrates his deep understanding of the coordinated placement of many stones, grouped strategically in widely separated areas of the board.(23)

The approximation of wei-ch'i both to individual combat and to a panoramic campaign motivated poets to draw inspiration from historic battles. Fan Chung-yen (989-1052), another "general outside the court and premier within the court" and wei-ch'i lover,(24) wrote "To a Wei-ch'i Player",(25) in which he combined both wei-ch'i spirit and military celebration for the reader's delight:

Where did you encounter the gods Who passed on these wei-ch'i tenets? Silently, you hold power over life and death, Imperceptibly, you grasp the laws of safety and danger. Your victories follow upon each other like banks of clouds; You resist enemies with the fortitude of a mountain.(26) Breaking out of the encirclement - the

Ch'in army is shaken; And all the vassal lords are toppled.(27) Entering into peril, the Hah general is in danger - Unexpectedly, his soldiers fight back from the riverbank.(28) The position should be unassailable, As the passes and the river are closely connected.(29) Spring days are long in the southern chamber, National experts enjoy playing together. Mount T'ai cannot cut off one's view; Thunderbolts cannot invade the ears. One wei-ch'i stone is precious as a thousand ounces of gold; One line on the board as crucial as a thousand miles. Deep thought infuses the spirit; How can the vicissitudes of the scene ever be replicated? Success and failure depend on character; I should compose a wei-ch'i history.

Fan Chung-yen begins the poem by inquiring about the wonderful art of the player to whom the poem is addressed, thus involving the reader in the poet's curiosity and awe. The second couplet develops the player/commander motif by likening the wei-ch'i master's manner to the composure of a general in battle. Fan advances the analogy further by describing the viability and vulnerability of the stones as matters of life and death - i.e., the stones are soldiers. In the third couplet, the poet deepens his figure through juxtaposition of the basic maneuvers of a wei-ch'i game and those of a battlefield: offense and defense. The similes here for military motion and stillness summarize Fan Chung-yen's own three-year experience on the frontier of Shensi, where he effectively halted the fierce attacks of the Hsi-hsia kingdom.

The following three couplets are historical allegories, unfolding a series of metaphorical commentaries. Hsiang Yu's valor and Han Hsin's resourcefulness are presented as necessary attributes for military commanders and wei-ch'i players alike, but there is more to Fan's poem than simple strategic prescription: underlying both stories is a common resolve to fight until victory or death. Before Hsiang Yu attacked the Ch'in army, he ordered the troops to "break the cooking cauldrons and sink the boats [after crossing]" (p'o-fu ch'en-chou), thus cutting off all means of retreat. For the same purpose, Han Hsin, repudiating traditional strategic wisdom, deployed his forces along a riverbank so that his men had to "fight with their back to the river" (pei-shui i-chan). These examples of Hsiang Yu and Han Hsin may well inspire a courageous wei-ch'i player, who may be defeated tactically in one part of the board, yet manages ultimately to out-manuever his opponent.(30) Another important quality of military commanders and wei-ch'i players, as Fan Chung-yen points out in the next couplet, is the ability to establish and maintain advantageous "positions" (shih). The shih is based on the invisible network of interactions between stones dispersed across a board, which should be viewed as an intricate and integrated theater of war.

In the second part of the poem, the reader's attention shifts from the "battlefield" to a warm chamber with a southern exposure, where players delight in the complexity and uncertainty of wei-ch'i. Here, the first three couplets describe how a player must concentrate, weighing the ramifications of each maneuver, like a general assessing a strategic decision. In the last couplet, Fan Chung-yen affirms that in this highly intellectual game, in which chance plays no part, victory or defeat depends on human cunning and courage; he closes by expressing interest in writing a wei-ch'i history, thus referring back to his admiration for the master player.

PARADIGMS FOR SOCIETY

While Wei-ch'i devotees were well aware of the game's amusing facets, they often went beyond the direct consequences of the game's strategy and envisioned its relations in a fuller metaphorical context. Wei-ch'i provided a poetic means for reflecting essential patterns of human history and society. This was pointed out by Li Tungyang (1447-1516), the reputed "[wei-ch'i] champion of the scholar-officials":(31) "People who are good at making analogies about the world must make reference to wei-ch'i; observing the world from a wei-ch'i viewpoint, there is rarely anything that doesn't match up."(32) The basic correspondence between wei-ch'i and the world of human action is that they are both complete conflict systems. Wei-ch'i becomes a metaphor for confrontation, and the changes resulting from it can be found in long poetic accounts as well as single generalizing lines.(33) Tu Fu's line, "I heard that Ch'ang-an is like a wei-ch'i game," from the "Eight Poems of Autumn Meditations" ("Ch'iu-hsing pa-shou"), written in 767 in K'uei-chou (modern Feng-chieh area, Szechwan),(34) is a well-known example of the one-line quote. There are three interpretations of this line: one group of commentators believes that it refers to the loss of capital Ch'ang-an to An Lu-shan's (d. 757) rebels in 756 and, again, to Tibetan troops in 763; others maintain that it refers to swift personnel changes in the courts of Sutsung (r. 756-62) and Tai-tsung (r. 762-79); a third school claims that Tu Fu's line is a comment on the court's indecision, citing as proof the metaphor's earliest use in Tso-chuan.(35) Tu Fu's intended meaning - one among or all three of the interpretations - remains debatable, but what is not in dispute is that the connections between wei-ch'i and Ch'ang-an relate to changes in military possession or political position.

The spectrum of subtle resemblances between the game and various aspects of human society implied by Tu Fu's line has influenced many poets, including Ch'ien Ch'ien-i (1582-1664), a leading poet of his day and an important annotator of Tu Fu's works. Ch'ien Ch'ien-i had served in the Ming (1368-1644) court since 1610. After Ch'ing troops took over Peking, he was appointed minister of rites (li-pu shang-shu) in the short-lived Southern Ming court, located in Nanking. When Ch'ing troops attacked Nanking, however, Ch'ien led Ming officials in surrendering to the Ch'ing and then accepted the position of vice-minister of rites (li-pu shihlang) in the Ch'ing court. Although he served the new dynasty for only five months, his betrayal of the Ming has long been criticized. In what was perhaps an effort to escape public opprobrium and to console himself, Ch'ien, in his later years, became addicted to wei-ch'i. He knew the best players of the day, including Fang Wei-chin and Wang Yu-ch'ing (d. 1662). It seems that Ch'ien himself didn't play much, but loved to watch others play. He claimed to "like to observe the games of national experts" and to be able to "watch games all through the day and night."(36) He may have avoided competition because he could not match the skill of the champions with whom he kept company, but the manner of his involvement with the game also betrayed his attitude toward life - he would rather be a spectator than a player. Ch'ien wrote five poetic cycles entitled "Observing Wei-ch'i Games" ("Kuan-ch'i"),(37) with six poems in each cycle. These compositions gave him a means of meditating on events he had experienced and of expressing his deep feelings about them.

The game's aesthetic and political implications are foremost, as Ch'ien Ch'ien-i wrote in Nanking:

The lonely, dry board sounds out in the vast, clear sky. The Ch'in-huai River chokes on cold tides in late autumn. White head in the shadows of lanterns on a cool night - In the wei-ch'i end game, we see the Six Dynasties.(38)

The poem begins with the crisp sound of wei-ch'i stones pounding on a "dry board" - everything, the poet implies, has withered with the autumn, even the wei-ch'i board.(39) The second line is more specific regarding the place of the contest and time, and provides emotional color. The third line describes the scene of the wei-ch'i contest in three juxtaposed images, which share an emotional thread. "White head" tells the reader that the poet - who was over sixty at the time - is an old man. "The shadows of lanterns" make clear that the sun has set and provides an obscure, gloomy atmosphere. "Cool night" reminds us that it is the season of decline and sorrow. These three images are imbued with and unified by the concept of last things - the game is played in the waning hours of a day, late in the year, and in the last stage of one's life. This mood prepares the reader for the concluding line, the metaphorical meaning of which is unmistakable. Ts'an-ch'i (or ts'an-chu), literally, means the end game, but is often used to suggest the aftermath of chaos or a condition of failure and disorder.(40) The Southern Ming in Nanking, the poet suggests, is really an "end game," and the city's easy conquest by the Ch'ing reminds one of the rapid succession of dynasties that held Nanking during the Six Dynasties period. It is not clear whether this metaphor emerges from an aged poet's fantasy awakened by the geometrical patterns on the board, or from rational reflection. Either way, the message conveyed is deep regret for the Ming's destruction.

Ch'ien Ch'ien-i's style of wei-ch'i poetry was shared by his contemporary, Wu Wei-yeh (1609-72), who like Ch'ien was a leading poet of the time, and an official who enjoyed the dubious distinction of serving two dynasties. Wu Wei-yeh was vice-supervisor of the Household of the Heir Apparent (shao chan-shih) during the time of the Southern Ming in Nanking. After the fall of the Southern Ming, Wu retired to Su-chou for nine years, until he was summoned by the Ch'ing court to Peking in 1653 to serve as chancellor of the Directorate of Education (kuo-tzu-chien chi-chiu). He resigned this post after only three years, but the service earned him severe criticism in intellectual circles and gave him a strong sense of regret. His anguish is palpable in his poetry: "The ruin of an entire life is owing to a single office."(41) Continued loyalty to the Ming could not be directly expressed, but it found a veiled outlet in his poems. Before his death, Wu said: "My poems don't deserve to be passed on to the far future, but I labored hard to give them an inner depth. If later generations can know my heart by reading my poems, I shall not have perished."(42) Wu's "heart" can be discerned in his "Six Poems on Watching Wei-ch'i Games" ("Kuan-ch'i liu-shou"), which he claimed were a thematic companion to the work of Ch'ien Ch'ien-i. The third poem of this set reads:(43)

In leisure, my window facing pines, I study old wei-ch'i manuals; National experts were not altogether lacking in those years. Do you know that the south wind was not strong?(44) The gouged-out eyes on Xu Gate see the troops entering Wu.(45) All four lines make subtle use of analogy. In the first line, the study of old manuals, an important practice of wei-ch'i players, suggests the review of old political and military records. "National experts" in the second line signifies both master wei-ch'i players

and the national heroes of "those years" - namely, the last years of the Ming. The author retrospectively presents a unique viewpoint, which serves as the thesis of the poem: although the Southern Ming was destroyed quickly by the Ch'ing, loyal and capable members of the Ming court were not lacking. They failed not because they were individually unworthy, but because of the innate weakness of the Southern Ming court, as implied in the third line.

The last line again reminds the reader of the existence of "national experts" and the poem concludes with a powerful image. In wei-ch'i, an "eye" (yen) refers to a vacant intersection on the board. Any group of stones must enclose at least two "eyes" to be secure. "Gougedout eyes," then, can be read at three levels. On the first level, the image refers to attempts to counter the formation of eyes in actual wei-ch'i playing. This image is intensified on the second level, by meanings it gathers from the legend of Wu Tzu-hsu and his gouged-out eyes. The real significance of the image, however, lies in the insinuated comparison of Wu Tzu-hsu to the loyalist courtiers and generals of the Southern Ming, to whom Wu Wei-yeh frequently alluded in different ways. For example, in "Second Song on the Thatched Hall of Tungkao", Wu recalls Ch'u Shih-ssu (1590-1650), a general killed while resisting the Ch'ing, by describing Ch'u's deserted house.(46) In poem four of "Miscellaneous Poems on Reading History", Wu sings of Chai I (d. 7 A.D.), who led a military action against Wang Mang's (45 B.C.-23 A.D.) usurpation of the Han throne, suggesting an analogy with the officials who were loyal to the Ming.(47) Equipped with this historical and literary background, the reader can decode the multiple meanings of Wu's wei-ch'i poems and indeed gain access to the poet's "heart."

PHILOSOPHIZING ABOUT THE COSMIC GAME

Besides offering metaphorical commentary on martial and political matters, a wei-ch'i board is a theater of possibilities. A virtually infinite variety of positions and moves during play, every blunder haunted by neglected alternatives, and the return of all pieces to wooden boxes at the end of the game - such things have inspired rich metaphor over the centuries. Wei-ch'i mimics human life in its preoccupation with contradiction and confrontation, as described in Cha Shen-hsing's (1651-1728) "Inscription on Chang Ch'i-chi's 'Painting of Men Watching a Wei-ch'i Game'".(48) The first four lines of this poem read:

The cosmos is a wei-ch'i board, The battlefield of Black and White - Trivial as worms and ants,(49) Great as marquises and kings.

These lines compare the wei-ch'i board to a battlefield, where straggles may be as petty as those between insects, or as great as those of nobles and kings. The human desire for competitive triumph is captured precisely in the action of a wei-ch'i contest.

This thirst for victory is an essential subject of Chinese poets' philosophical ponderings, often colored by Buddhist and Taoist pacifist ideas - the notion that man should strive not for glory, but for a state of peace, particularly when faced with failure in one's career. This tension informs Wang An-shih's (1011-86) quatrain, "Wei-ch'i":(50)

Don't disturb true emotion with a mere game, Just let me follow the course and claim victory. Yet after the fighting, two boxes take back the Black and White, On the board then, where are the losses and gains?(51)

The tone of self-consolation suggests that the poem may have been written after Wang An-shih lost a game. The lines reveal that Wang An-shih played wei-ch'i merely for entertainment, as is vividly confirmed in an anecdote: "Wang An-shih's wei-ch'i style was extremely low. When playing with other people, he rarely thought seriously and responded to rivals' moves quickly and casually. When he felt he would lose, he would put his stones back in the box, saying: 'I wanted only to soothe my disposition and forget my cares. Now, however, I cudgel my brains and labor my spirit. It would be better to stop here'."(52) It seems that Wang An-shih played only in lulls between his more important political activities.

But the poem above is not frivolous; it must be read as a punning commentary on Wang's attitude toward life. The political and economic reforms Wang An-shih had proposed brought severe criticism from conservative courtiers, which twice led to his resigning as chief minister. His final ten years were spent in isolated retirement in suburban Chiang-ning (modern Nanking area), where few of his friends visited him for fear of political reprisals from the anti-Wang faction. Possibly because of these frustrations, Wang An-shih, a strict Confucian scholar in his earlier years, became a devout Buddhist. He studied Buddhist texts, annotated the Surahgama sutra, and wrote many poems in a Buddhist vein. "Following the course" (sui-yuan) in the second line of the poem is a Buddhist expression for passivity, accepting one's karma. Lines three and four, although not containing any obvious Buddhist wording, reminds one of Zen koans, short verses for intuitive enlightenment. The image of stones returning to wooden boxes underscores the meaninglessness of fighting, the futility of victory, and the emptiness of life.

Wang An-shih's use of wei-ch'i to embody philosophical ideas was responded to by his contemporaries. For example, Su Shih's (1037-1101) poem in tetrasyllabic lines, "Watching Wei-ch'i Games" is rife with Taoist notions.(53) In the foreword Su says: "I have never understood wei-ch'i. Once when I went alone to the White Crane Monastery in Mount Lu, people in the monastery were all resting and I heard only the sound of weich'i stones among the flowing water and ancient pines. I was pleased and enjoyed the sound. This made me wish to learn wei-ch'i, but I still do not understand it. My son Kuo has a rough idea of how to play, and Chang Chung, the prefect of Tan-chou, plays with him daily. I sit to the side and the day passes without my feeling bored." The poem itself reads:

In front of Five-Old-Men Peak, Was a place left by the White Crane. Tall pines shaded the courtyard; The breeze and sunshine were pure and lovely. I was visiting alone, And hadn't met a single gentleman. Who was it playing wei-ch'i? Outside the door, two pairs of shoes. No human voice was heard, But occasionally I heard stones being put down. Sitting across from each other over the lined board - Who understands the flavor of the scene? Fishing with an unbaited hook - Are the wishes for bream and carp?(54) My little son is close to the Way, He puts down stones casually. Victory is surely pleasant, But defeat can also be enjoyed. Leisurely and unhurriedly - This is the way for the moment.

This poem was written during Su Shih's last and most remote banishment, to Tan-chou (modern Tan-hsien, in Hainan), following his involvement in a factional struggle at court. Tan-chou was hardly civilized and Su Shih, then over sixty years old, suffered from a lack of food and medicine, poor housing, and the hot, humid weather. Wei-ch'i consoled him in his loneliness. He often watched games between his youngest son Su Kuo (1072-1123), who joined him in his exile, and Chang Chung the local prefect. Su Shih's statement in the foreword that "I have never understood wei-ch'i" is too modest, for if it were true, he couldn't have enjoyed watching the game and would not "sit to the side" all day long.

The poem starts with a flashback to an event that occurred some fourteen years earlier, when Su visited Mount Lu. The first four couplets provide a succession of images in an almost cinematic mode: from a panorama of the famous Five-Old-Men Peak, the camera zooms in to the courtyard of a monastery, to a lonely poet, and finally to a close-up of two pairs of shoes outside a door. Next, the poet evokes the sound of the wei-ch'i stones in the quiet monastery. The clicking is syncopated with the sighing of pines in the background.

The following couplet moves the action of the poem from the past to the present by raising a question: "Sitting across from each other over the lined board - / Who understands the flavor of the scene?" The answer, which goes, apparently, beyond the pleasure taken in the game, is found in the next two couplets. The immediate allusion to Lu Shang, while paralleling the wei-ch'i image, intensifies the question in this direction. Then, Su Kuo's being described as "close to the Way" (chin-tao) refers to the Book of Rites (Li-chi): "If one knows what is first and second, he approaches the Way."⁽⁵⁵⁾ Here Su Shih ingeniously puns on the word hsien (first), suggesting the term hsien-shou (first hand). In wei-ch'i jargon, hsien-shou has a connotation similar to that of the word "initiative," upon the possession of which victory usually depends.⁽⁵⁶⁾ In this sense, the couplet asserts that Su Kuo is good at taking the initiative and thus plays with confidence. But the word "Way" has a double meaning: it is both the method of playing wei-ch'i and, more fundamentally, the origin and the general principle of the cosmos as elaborated in Taoism. This association of wei-ch'i method and cosmic order is picked up in the next couplet and leads to the answer to Su Shih's question.

"Victory is surely pleasant, / But defeat can also be enjoyed" is Su Shih's answer to the "flavor" question and is the thesis of the poem. Most players are elated upon winning and frustrated by a loss, but Su Shih says he is equally composed in victory and defeat. This appears to express his Taoist attitude.⁽⁵⁷⁾ Su presents wei-ch'i as a microcosm of the human condition. Man occupies a universe in which he is moved by mysterious forces whose directions he cannot understand. When Su wrote this poem, he was defeated in the political arena. Banishment to Hainan Island meant humiliation and hardship, which was difficult for him to bear at first.⁽⁵⁸⁾ But he was soon able to revive his spirits; as he put it: "I - an old man now - and my son Kuo, sitting face to face, are like two ascetic monks. But I feel transcendent and content in mind, and don't change my demeanor."⁽⁵⁹⁾ This attitude allowed Su not only to survive the extreme hardships of the island but also to turn the three years he spent there into a productive period of creative and scholarly writings.⁽⁶⁰⁾

Su Shih's wei-ch'i poem was applauded by later generations,(61) but there are always discrepancies between one's philosophy and practice. Chi Yun (1724-1805) commented: "Su Shih's poem says: 'Victory is surely pleasant, / But defeat can also be enjoyed.' Wang Anshih's poem says: 'Yet after the fighting, two boxes take back the Black and White, / On the board then, where are the losses and gains?' These two masters both desired victory. Looking over their careers, they could not put these words into practice. Still, their words are worthy of deep reflection."(62) This observation inspired Chi Yun to write his own wei-ch'i poems: "In the winter of hsinmao [1771], someone came to me with the 'Painting of the Eight Immortals Playing Wei-ch'i' and asked me to write an inscription for it. The painting showed Han Hsiang-tzu and Ho Hsien-ku playing wei-ch'i, five immortals looking on, and Li T'ieh-kuai sleeping, resting his head on a gourd."(63) The second of the two poems that Chi Yun inscribed on the painting reads:

On the board and beyond it, both men ponder - Still the concern for profit and loss of the human world. How can they compare with the "silly immortal" - stupid and senseless, With spring breezes and butterflies, deep he is in dreamland.(64)

Chi Yun equates the desires of wei-ch'i players and spectators for victory and defeat. Even the immortals are subject to it, cannot escape it. Only Li T'ieh-kuai, here nicknamed the "silly immortal," sleeps soundly, not unduly concerned with worldly affairs. This aloofness shows that Chi Yun's approach to life is even more philosophical than that of Wang An-shih or Su Shih. Yet Chi Yun is as critical of himself as he is of others: "I am old now; reviewing my own life, I could not put the words into practice either. Talk is cheap after all." To what extent these poets practiced what they preached cannot be considered here. What is certain is that the vagaries of life and death and the triviality of victory and defeat are vividly portrayed in wei-ch'i poems. The intellectual subtlety and intrinsic beauty of creative conception and execution in wei-ch'i has attracted generations of Chinese literati, providing a framework for poetic articulation of the human spirit.

1 The Shih-pen, a pre-Ch'in (221-206 B.C.) history book, assigns the invention of wei-ch'i to the legendary sage-king Yao: "Yao invented wei-ch'i; [his son] Tan-chu was good at playing"; see the reconstructed version of the text by Chang Shu-ts'ui, in Shih-pen pa-chung (Shanghai: Shang-wu, 1957), 22. This account has been adopted by many books and references. For example, H. J. R. Murray's *A History of Board-Games Other than Chess* (New York: Hacker, 1978) asserts (p. 35) that "all agree in saying that wei-k'i [wei-ch'i] was invented between 2357 and 2254 B.C.," and the *Encyclopedia Americana*, 1988 edition, remarks (s.v. "Go") that wei-ch'i "originated in China about 2300 B.C." These dates, however, are not reliable.

2 An account in Tso-chuan, of an event taking place in 548 B.C., describes an irresolute king as "holding a [wei-ch'i] stone and not being able to decide [where to place it]"; see K'ung Ying-ta (A.D. 574-648), *Ch'un-ch'iu Tso-chuan cheng-i*, ch. 36, in *Shih-san-ching chu-shu*, ed. Juan Yuan (1764-1849), 2 vols. (Peking: Chung-hua, 1980), 2: 1983. As wei-ch'i is used metaphorically here, it may be assumed that the game was already popular at that time.

3 Some books and references affirm that wei-ch'i was introduced to Korea and Japan during the T'ang period. For instance, Edward Laske asserts (p. xv), in his popular book *Go and Go-Moku: The Oriental Board Games* (New York: Dover, 1960), that "Go was not introduced into Japan until the year 754 of our era, when the Japanese Ambassador Kibidaijin brought it with him from China. This was under the reign of the Japanese Emperor Koken Tenno, when China was ruled by Hsuan Tsung." Similarly, the *Encyclopedia Americana*, 1988 edition, claims that wei-ch'i "was taken up in Japan about 735 AD" (s.v. "Go"). However, historical records show that wei-ch'i was already popular in both Korea and Japan during the Six Dynasties period (222-589). For a study on the subject, see Liu Shan-ch'eng, ed., *Chung-kuo wei-ch'i* (Ch'eng-tu: Shu-jung, 1985), 32-33.

4 The stones are disk-shaped and generally convex on both surfaces. They can be made of hard glass, but the best are made of shell, slate, jade or other expensive substances. For example, when the Ming chief grand-minister Yen Sung's (1480-1567) property was confiscated, his wealth included several hundred wei-ch'i sets of green and white jade; see Shen Te-fu (1578-1642), *Wan-li yeh-huo pien*, 5 vols. (Taipei: Wei-wen, 1976), 2:8.551.

5 The game's complexity makes it hard to program a computer to play wei-ch'i. Whereas computer chess programs already play at the grand-master level, the top wei-ch'i programs can barely compete with a skilled amateur. The game's combinational possibilities can overwhelm the capacity of even the world's most powerful super-computers. For a detailed discussion, see Robert Dells, "Computerized 'Go' and Artificial Intelligence: Beyond 'Brute Force'," *Far Eastern Economic Review* (January 17, 1991): 36-37.

6 The earliest record of the grouping of these four arts is found in the "Lan-t'ing chi", by Ho Yen-chih of the T'ang: "Of the ch'in, wei-ch'i, calligraphy, and painting, all have attained excellence"; see Chang Yen-yuan (815?75?), *Fa-shu yao-lu*, 3.35a (SKCS). Competence in these four arts was required for well-educated women, as well as men, according to Li Yu (1611-ca. 1679): "None of the four arts - calligraphy, painting, ch'in, and wei-ch'i - can be neglected by one who considers herself a well-cultivated lady." He goes on to assert that, of the four, wei-ch'i is the most important and thus should be insisted upon. See his *Hsien-ch'ing ou-chi*, ch. 3, in *Li Yu ch'un-chi*, 8 vols. (Hang-chou: Chekiang ku-chi, 1990), 3: 146.

7 "Huang-chou hsin-chien hsiao-chu-lou chi," in *Hsiao-hsu chi*, 17.17a (SKCS).

8 *Teng Yuan-sui, I-ch'ien-chai chi-p'u* (1881), 3.

9 Wei-ch'i gained widespread popularity during the T'ang dynasty. Emperors such as T'ai-tsung (r. 626-49) and Hsuan-tsung (r. 712-56) and chief ministers such as Chang Yueh (667-731) and Yuan Chen (779-831) were all wei-ch'i lovers. A special post was created in the T'ang court as "wei-ch'i expectant" (ch'i tai-chao). Among those who were appointed to this position were Wang Chi-hsin in Hsuan-tsung's court, a distinguished wei-ch'i player, and Wang Shu-wen (753-806) in Te-tsung's (r. 779-805) court, who later gained power during the short-lived reign of Shun-tsung (r. 805-6).

10 "Chiang-ts'un," Ch'uan T'ang shih (Peking: Chung-hua, 1979; hereafter CTS), 226.2433.

11 "Ch'un-huai," Shih-hu shih-chi, 20.19b (SKCS).

12 "Su Chang Yun-chu yuan," CTS, 462.5260.

13 I cite a few more examples of the juxtaposition of wei-ch'i and poetry. Ch'i-chi (863-943?): "In wei-ch'i, you scoff even at national experts – I know I cannot compete with you; / Your poetry is a heaven-sent talent – why stoop to write to me?" ("Chi Ouyang shih-lang," CTS, 844.9541); Lin P'u (967-1028): "Wei-ch'i is not bad when played at the water's edge; / Poetic topics are better to be distributed with monks" ("Shan-chung chi-chao Yeh hsiu-ts'ai," Lin Ho-ching chi 3.6b [SKCS]); and Lu Yu (1125-1210): "From my noon-time pillow, I chant old lines for my son; / Beside the evening windows, I detain my guest to count the remaining wei-ch'i stones" ("Hsien-chung shu-shih," Lu Yu chi, 4 vols. [Peking: Chung-hua, 1976], 2:848 [Chien-nan shih-kao ch. 32]). There are even stories about people enjoying these two pastimes simultaneously. For example, T'u Lung (1542-1605) composed poems while playing wei-ch'i (see Ming-shih [Peking: Chung-hua, 1974], 288.7389), and Wang Po (650-76) could complete a poem in the time it took to put down four wei-ch'i stones (see Feng Chih [ft. 902], Yun-hsien tsa-chi, 2.8a [SKCS]).

14 Wei-ch'i playing was long considered good practice for war. Huan T'an (d. 56) mentioned: "The people have a game called wei-ch'i, which is said to be a kind of 'art of war'"; see his "Hsien-lun", in Ch'uan Shang-ku San-tai Ch'in Han San-kuo Liu-ch'ao wen ed. Yen K'o-chun (1762-1843), 4 vols. (Peking: Chung-hua, 1965), 1: 540. This identification is further evidenced in the bibliographic monograph of Sui-shu, which includes wei-ch'i books in the section on war strategy; see Sui-shu (Peking: Chung-hua, 1973), 34.1016-17. In modern times, two books have been devoted to the military strategies found in wei-ch'i: Ma Hsiao-ch'un's San-shih-liu chi yu weich'i (Ch'eng-tu: Shu-jung, 1990) describes the correspondence between wei-ch'i strategy and the "Thirty-Six Stratagems" in ancient China; Scott A. Boorman's The Protracted Game: A Wei-ch'i Interpretation of Maoist Revolutionary Strategy (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1969) ingeniously uses wei-ch'i as a model to evaluate the theory and practice of Chinese Communist strategy as applied from 1927 to 1949.

15 "Yeh-tu yin," CTS, 86.939-40. Translation adapted from Stephen Owen, Poetry of the Early T'ang (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1977), 404.

16 These two articles are in Fan-ch'uan wen-chi, ed. Ch'en Yun-chi (Shanghai: Ku-chi, 1978), 91-93 and 93-97, respectively.

17 Tu mu's annotations and commentary are included in Kuo Hua-jo, ed., Shih-i-chia chu Sun-tzu (Hong Kong: Chung-hua, 1988).

18 See his "Shang Li ssu-t'u hsiang-kung yung-ping shu," Fan-ch'uan wen-chi, 164-68. Some historians regarded Tu Mu's letter highly, attributing Li Te-yu's victory over Liu Chen to the adoption of Tu Mu's strategies; see Hsin T'ang-shu (Peking: Chung-hua, 1975), 166.5097, and Tzu-chih t'ung-chien (Peking: Chung-hua, 1963), 247.7983. However, Fu Hsuan-ts'ung's study proves that Tu Mu's role was

exaggerated because the main strategies had been decided upon before Tu Mu's letter was received; see Fu's Li Te-yu nien-p'u (Chi-nan: Ch'i-Lu, 1984), 486-88.

19 Chang Yueh played wei-ch'i with Wang Chi-hsin; see Tuan Ch'eng-shih (c. 803-63), Yu-yang tsa-tsu (Peking: Chung-hua, 1981), 115. Tu Mu wrote to his friend, the wei-ch'i master Wang Feng: "If I live to be seventy, then I have over ten thousand days remaining, / I expect to spend them with you over the wei-ch'i board"; see his poem "Sung kuo-ch'i Wang Feng," CTS, 521.5956. 20 CTS, 356.4005.

21 This metaphor alludes to Ts'ai Hung's (fl. 292) "Wei-ch'i fu": "Dotted stars spread." See 1-wen lei-chu (Peking: Chung-hua, 1982), 74.1271.

22 This expression, established by a saying of Pan Ch'ao (32-102): "Without going into the tiger's den, one cannot catch the tiger's whelp," refers to winning a victory in a dangerous situation. See Hou Han-shu (Peking: Chung-hua, 1965), 47.1572.

23 Hu Tzu (fl. 1148-67) infers Liu Yu-hsi's wei-ch'i skills from these lines: "I have always loved these words. As he could describe the interest of wei-ch'i playing, Liu Yu-hsi must be superior in the game." See Hu's T'iao-hsi yu-yin ts'ung-hua hou-chi (Peking: Jen-min wen-hueh, 1981), 91 (ch. 12).

24 Fan Chung-yen was appointed vice military commissioner in Shensi (Shensi ching-lueh an-fu fu-shih) in 1040 to defend against the Hsi-hsia's invasion. He earned military merit in the following three years, after which he was selected as a participant in determining government matters (ts'an-chih cheng-shih), or chief minister, in 1043. Fan Chung-yen's addiction to wei-ch'i is seen in his exhilarating lines: "Forcefully urging wine on people, I want to be drunk together; / Having a big victory in a wei-ch'i game, how can I let my adversary off?" See his "I-yun ch'ou Pin-chou t'ung-p'an Wang Chi t'ai-fu," Fan Weng-cheng chi, 4.12b (SKCS).

25 Fan Wen-cheng chi, 1.18b.

26 The similes in this couplet originated in Sun-tzu ping-fa: "Thus it [the army] is swift as the wind, slow as the woods, aggressive as fire, firm as a mountain, imperceptible as shade, and mobile as a thunderbolt." See Shih-i-chia chu Sun-tzu, 114-15.

27 This couplet alludes to Hsiang Yu (232-202 B.C.), who, in order to rescue the Chao troops in the besieged city of Chu-lu (in today's Hopei province), broke the encirclement of the Ch'in army in a fierce battle. Afterwards, the vassal lords of other states were afraid and all submitted to him. See Shih-chi (Peking: Chung-hua, 1972), 7.307.

28 The allusion in this couplet is to the story of Hah Hsin (d. 196 B.C.). In 204 B.C., Hah Hsin led a few thousand Hah troops to attack the much bigger Chao army, which reportedly had two hundred thousand men. Violating all military doctrines, Hah Hsin deployed his soldiers along a river-bank, so they couldn't retreat. In their peril the Hah soldiers fought desperately. At the same time, Han Hsin sent a group of cavalymen to make a surprise attack on the Chao barracks and, planting Hah flags there, demoralized the Chao troops. Hah Hsin thereby won a brilliant victory; see Shih-chi, 96.2616.

29 This line alludes to Su Ch'in's speech to Duke Hsiao of Ch'in, in which he describes Ch'in's advantageous terrain. Su pointed out that the passes along the Yellow River, including Han-ku, P'u-chin, and Lung-men, provided a natural defense against the eastern states; see Shih-chi, 69.2242.

30 This characteristic shared by wei-ch'i and warfare was pointed out early, in Ma Jung's (79-166) "Wei-ch'i fu": "Looking roughly at wei-ch'i, it simulates the art of war. . . . The timid have no merit and the greedy die first." See I-wen lei-chu, 74.1271. A similar comment was made by Wang Yuch'eng: "I therefore know that the art of wei-ch'i is the same as war: / Greed is admonished, while timidity is scorned." See his poem, "Yen-shang k'uang-ko sung shih-ch'i i-ao t'ien-shih," Hsiao-hsu chi, 13.7b.

31 See Feng Yuan-chung, I tan-p'ing, in Shuo-fu hsu, ch. 38, in Shuo-fu san-chung (Shanghai: Ku-chi, 1988), 1778.

32 "I-shuo," Li Tung-yang chi (Ch'ang-sha: Yueh-lu, 1983), 238.

33 An example of a long account is Shao Yung's (1011-77) "Kuan-ch'i ta-yin". With 720 lines, it is one of China's longest poems. Shao uses most of the lines to review Chinese history, from Yao's time to the beginning of the Sung (960-1279). See his Chi-jang chi, 1.1a-6b (SKCS).

34 This line is from the fourth poem of the cycle; see CTS, 230.2510. For discussion of the date, see Yeh Chia-ying, Tu Fu Ch'iu-hsing pa-shou chi-lun (Shanghai: Ku-chi, 1988), 21-23.

35 For further discussion of these three theories, see Yeh Chia-ying, 227-36.

36 See his preface to Wang Yu-ch'ing's Ch'i-p'u hsin-chu, in Ch'ien's Yu-hsueh chi, 15.23a (SPTK).

37 Since the T'ang, many poems have appeared under "Kuan-ch'i" or similar titles. In addition to works of Liu Yu-hsi, Shao Yung, Su Shih, Ch'ien Ch'ien-i, and Wu Wei-yeh, all mentioned in this article, important poems in this subgenre include Wen Ting-yun's (8127-707) "Kuan-ch'i" (CTS, 583.6765), Tu Hsun-ho's (846-904) "Kuan-ch'i" (CTS, 691.7947), Shih Chieh's (1005-45) "Kuan-ch'i" (Tsu-lai Shih hsien-sheng wen-chi, 2.14b-15a [SKCS]), Cheng Hsia's (1041-1119) "Kuan-ch'i wu-yen p'ai-lu" (Hsi-t'ang chi 9.41a [SKCS]), Lu Yu's "Kuan-ch'i" (Lu Yu chi, 2:836 [Chien-nan shih-kao, ch. 31]), Wu K'uan's (1435-1504) "Kuan-i" (Chia-ts'ang chi, 9.16b [SKCS]), Chao Chih-hsin's (1662-1744) "Kuan-i ko" (I-shah t'ang chi 2.3-4, [SPPY]), Yuan Mei's (1716-97) "Kuan-i san-shou" (Hsiao-ts'ang shah-fang shih-wen chi [Shanghai: Ku-chi, 1988], 22.529), and Wang Hsien-ch'ien's (1842-1917) "Kuan-i t'zu Tzu-ts'ui yun" (Hsu-shou-t'ang shih-ts'un in K'ui-yuan ssu-chung [Ch'ang-sha: Yueh-lu, 1986], 620).

38 This is the third poem in the cycle named "Hou kuan-ch'i chueh-chu liu-shou"; see Ch'iu-huai shih-chi, in Yu-hsueh chi, 1.9a. According to a note under the book-title, the poems in Ch'iu-huai shih-chi were written between 1645 and 1648.

39 The term "dry board" (k'u-p'ing) is derived from Wei Yao's (d. 273) term "k'u-ch'i" (dry wei-ch'i pieces) in his "Po-i lun": "How can three hundred dry wei-ch'i pieces compare with a general who commands ten thousand soldiers?" See San-kuo chih, (Peking: Chung-hua, 1973), 65.1461. While Wei Yao, a denigrator of the game, uses

the term k'u-ch'i in a derogatory sense, Ch'ien Ch'ien-i uses the term k'u-p'ing only to express seasonal melancholy.

40 The phrases ts'an-ch'i or ts'an-chu frequently appear in Ch'ien Ch'ien-i's wei-ch'i poems. This cycle of six heptasyllabic quatrains uses ts'an-ch'i twice and ts'an-chu once. Ch'ien's other wei-ch'i poems use similar language and imagery.

41 "Tzu-t'an," Mei-ts'un chia-ts'ang kao (Taipei: Hsueh-sheng, 1975), 6.167.

42 See Ch'en T'ing-ching (1639-1710), "Wu Mei-ts'un hsien-sheng mu-piao," quoted from Feng Ch'i-yung and Yeh Chun-yuan, *Wu Mei-ts'un nien-p'u* (Yang-chou: Kiangsu ku-chi, 1990), 550. Chao I (1727-1814) commented on this approach of Wu Wei-yeh: "Since he personally experienced the dynastic change, what he wrote about is mostly related to the important events of the time. . . . All his work can be read as history in a poetic form." See Chao's *Ou-pei shih-hua*, ch. 9, in Kuo Shao-yu and Fu Shou-sun, ed., *Ch'ing shih-hua hsa-pien* (Shanghai: Ku-chi, 1983), 1283. For further discussion of Wu Wei-yeh's indirect expression of his secret sorrow over the fall of the Ming, see Kang-i Sun Chang, "The Idea of the Mask in Wu Wei-yeh (1609-1671)," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 48 (1988): 289-320.

43 In Mei-ts'un chia-ts'ang kao, 1.8.188.

44 "The south wind is not strong" (lit., "cannot contend") was first used metaphorically by Shih K'uang of Chin in 555 B.C. to predict that the southern state of Ch'u would not realize its military ambitions; see Tso-chuan, ch. 33, in *Shih-san-ching chu-shu*, 2: 1966.

45 This line refers to the story of Wu Tzu-hsu (d. 484 B.C.). After the kingdom of Wu defeated the kingdom of Yueh in 494 B.C., Fu-ch'ai, king of Wu, was pleased by the obedience shown and tribute paid by Kou-chien, king of Yueh. Wu Tzu-hsu, Fu-ch'ai's loyal assistant, insisted on preventing Yueh's eventual revenge and finally provoked Fu-ch'ai enough that the latter ordered Wu Tzu-hsu's suicide. At his suicide, Wu Tzu-hsu asked his followers to gouge out his eyes after his death and place them on the city gate, so that he might in future see the Yueh troops entering the capital of Wu. Ten years later, Yueh indeed destroyed Wu. See *Shih-chi*, 31.1465-75.

46 The poem is in Mei-ts'un chia-ts'ang kao, 1.3.101-2. Ch'u Shih-ssu, grand coordinator of Kwangsi (Kwangsi hsun-fu) of the Southern Ming, resisted the Ch'ing till his death during the fall of Kuei-lin. His biography appears in *Ming-shih*, 280.7179-84.

47 The poem is in Mei-ts'un chia-ts'ang kao, 1.1.56. Chai I's biography is attached to that of his father, Chai Fang-chin (d. 7), in *Han-shu* (Peking: Chung-hua, 1962), 84.3424-39.

48 Ching-yeh-t'ang shih-chi 43.26a/b (SKCS).

49 This line alludes to Li Kung-tso's (fl. 797-848) story, "Nan-k'o t'ai-shou" see Wang P'i-chiang, ed., *T'ang-jen hsiao-shuo* (Shanghai: Ku-chi, 1978), 8592. In the story, a knight-errant dreams of the vicissitudes of a political career in a strange kingdom. Upon waking, he is surprised to find that the physical structure of the dream-kingdom coincides with that of an ant-hill in the hollow of an ash tree in his backyard.

50 In Wang Ching-kung shih-wen chien-chu, ed. Li Pi (1159-1222) (Shanghai:Chung-hua, 1958), 529 (ch. 41).

51 This line alludes to a passage in the "Ch'i-wu lun" chapter of Chuang-tzu: "Are there gains and losses in fact? Are there no gains and losses in fact?" See Chuang-tzu chi-shih (Peking: Chung-hua, 1961), 2.74.

52 In his Shih-lin kuang-chi hou-chi (2.10b [SKCS]), Ts'ai Cheng-sun (fl. 1289) quotes this anecdote from Tun-chai hsien-lan written by Fan Chengrain of the Sung dynasty. However, this anecdote is not found in the present Tun-chai hsien-lan, collected in Shuo-fu san-chung.

53 In Su Shih shih-chi (Peking: Chung-hua, 1982), 42.2310.

54 This couplet alludes to Lu Shang also known as Chiang Tzu-ya who met King Wen of Chou while fishing with an unbaited hook and later became the King's mentor. See Shih-chi, 32.1477-78.

55 Li-chi, ch. 60, in Shih-san-ching chu-shu, 2: 1673.

56 For further discussion of the term, see *The Protracted Game*, 31-33.

57 Su Shih was a staunch Confucianist in his early years, but embraced all three major philosophical schools, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, in his later period. It was natural for him to incline more toward the later two systems in times of adversity. For further discussion of Su Shih's philosophical approach, see Liu Nai-ch'ang's "Lun Fo Lao ssu-hsiang tui Su Shih wen-hsueh te ying-hsiang," in his *Su Shih wen-hsueh lun-chi* (Chi-nan: Chi-nan, Ch'i-Lu 1982), 188-201.

58 Su Shih was greatly depressed when he first arrived in Hainan. He described the emotional pain of his separation from his family in a memorial to the emperor: "My sons and grandsons cried bitterly on the riverside, for it was a farewell to life." See "Ch'ang-hua-chun hsieh-piao," *Su Tung-p'o chi* (Shanghai: Ku-chi, 1958), 8.86.

59 "Yu Yuan-lao chi-sun shu," *Su Tung-p'o chi*, 12.20.

60 According to Chu Ching-hua's study (*Su Shih hsin-lun* [Chi-nan: Ch'i-Lu, 1983], 219), Su Shih wrote 174 poems and 129 prose works in Tan-chou, an average of about one piece every two days. In addition, Su wrote many scholarly works there, such as the *Shu-chuan* and *I-chuan*.

61 For example, Wang Hsien-ch'ien praises Wang Fu-chih (1619-92) by comparing him with Su Shih: "Whether in victory or defeat, he was always content, / Somewhat like Su Shih during a wei-ch'i match"; see "T'i Wang Ch'uan-shan hsien-sheng shu-chuan," *Hsu-shou-t'ang shih-ts'un*, in *K'ui-yuan ssu-chung*, 619.

62 In *Yueh-wei ts'ao-t'ang pi-chi* 2 vols. (Shanghai: Ku-chi, 1980), 1:279 (ch. 12).

63 *Ibid.* The "Eight Immortals" are figures of popular Taoism. Some of them seem to be verifiable historical figures dating from the T'ang. Their names are: Lu Tung-pin Li T'ieh-kuai Chang Kuo-lao Ts'ao Kuo-chiu Han Hsiang-tzu Chung-li ch'uan Lan Ts'ai-ho and Ho Hsien-ku.

64 The butterflies allude to Chuang-tzu's famous dream; *Chuang-tzu*, 2.112.