

Appendix V

To Be of Good Heart: A Re-dating and Re-Interpretation of How *Wei Qi* was Used by the Confucian Writers of the *Zuo Zhuan*, the *Analects*, and the *Mencius*

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*Note: This rather long article is summed up in the Update Section of my first book, *Go! More Than a Game*, which has been revised in other areas, also, and is due to be published later in 2010.*

A recent re-dating of early Chinese literature has made it possible to speculate with some hope of accuracy about the meaning of the game of go for the early Confucians who commented on it. Because these passages were taken out of context and their age was undetermined by go historians, the general attitude has been that, 'The early Confucians thought little of go.'

However, upon closer examination of the contexts of the quotes and taking advantage of a re-dating of the early Confucian books by E. Bruce Brooks and his wife Taeko in *The Original Analects* and on their Warring States Project website (<http://www.umass.edu/wsp/index.html#reference>), a perhaps not-so-negative view emerges—that the Confucians were using the 'cultural artifact' of go to express their evolving thinking about filial piety and human nature.

The Brooks, (who generously reviewed this article), achieved their results by demonstrating changes in the thinking and the portrayed characters of Confucius and Mencius over the years, then compared the dialogues carried on between the writers of the surviving texts of the 'One Hundred School' and matched everything up with verifiable social, political and historical events.

Given their proofs, these dates seem quite reasonable and they come long after what go historians have generally attributed to

‘Confucius and Mencius or the writers who followed them.’ As for their content and meaning, both prior to and since the Brooks dating, the commentaries of every Confucian scholar that I could find (including the Brooks) have skipped over the go passages

In the new time-order, the oldest important passage dates from the *Zuo Zhuan*, a 4th century BC Confucian work written in the state of Qi in northeast China on the Shandong peninsula. It recalls the dire situation of a high-ranking minister who was caught between the conflicting demands of filial piety and trying to stay alive in 547-8 BC. His dilemma was compared to that of a go player who does not have a plan.

The next three passages were written by Confucians from the state of Lu, a less-powerful neighbor to the south of Qi. It is surprising that the earliest one in the new re-ordering of dates is from the writers of the Mencius, Confucius’s follower, and not from the writers of the Analects of Confucius. This first Mencian quote appeared c. 280 BC, about one or two decades after its purported author’s death. The ‘Confucius’ quote appeared in c. 270 BC, more than two hundred years after its supposed writer’s death, and the second ‘Mencius’ comment followed in c. 260 BC, shortly before the closing of the Lu schools.

This is significant because of the recent discovery of the oldest go board—a scratched out tile with different sized boards on each side and dated 141 BC at the latest. This is only 120 years, (much of it during heavy warfare) after the last Confucian quote (which mentions a master player) and is contemporary with the next quote which extols the game. This leads to a theory of early go development that also includes an examination of how *bo* and *yi*, the two game characters in the early texts, were used. Not all agree they refer to *liu bo*, an early dice game and *wei qi*.

Table of Contents

Background: The Spring and Autumn,
and the Warring States Periods

The Brooks Chronology

The *Zuo Zhuan*
The Story of Ning He

'Confucius'
Background
'Confucius' and the Mohists
Analects Chapter XX
Analects Chapter XXI
Go and Gambling
'Confucius' and the Primitive Daoists
Analects Chapter I

'Mencius'
Background
Mencius Book IV.II.xxx
Mencius Book VI.I.ix
Mencius Book VI.I.ix

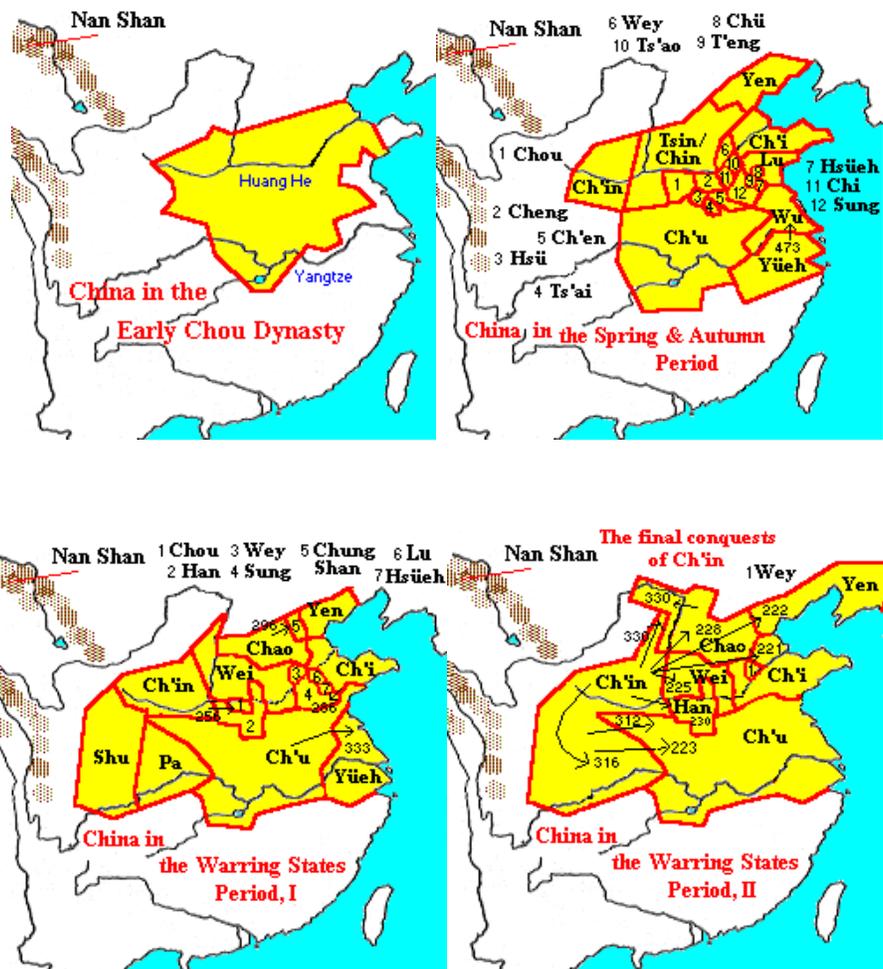
Some Conclusions About Early Go

A Review

Some Developments in Confucian Thinking
After the Closing of the Schools

Coda: A Short Discussion of the Use of *Yi* and *Bo*

Background: The Spring and Autumn, and the Warring States Periods



From <http://www.friesian.com/sangoku.htm#chou>

The history of the state of Lu and its surrounding area from the years 722 to 481 BC were written down in the *Chun Qiu*—the *Annals of the Spring and Autumn Period*. Purportedly assembled by Confucius, this was a laconic account of what was believed to have been a stirring era of romanticized feudal battles between chariot armies of the many independent states that sprang up following the breakup of the Western Zhou Empire (1046 or 1027-771 BC).

In those years, chariots were not produced in great quantities and participation in the battles was limited to the hereditary ruling elites, a small proportion of the population. Those times had largely vanished by the time Confucius lived (551-479 BC), and he

bemoaned the loss of loyalty, honor, ceremony and *ren* (compassion, humanity, politeness)—the supposed values of the Golden Age Emperors, Sages and Zhou empire kings that he thought had held early society together.

The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy (<http://www.iep.utm.edu>), (which I use because of its clarity, conciseness and general usefulness for the general reader), sums up these thoughts.

These [principles] are primarily ethical, rather than analytical-logical or metaphysical in nature, and include Confucius' claim that Tian ('Heaven') is aligned with moral order but dependent upon human agents to actualize its will; his concern for li (ritual propriety) as the instrument through which the family, the state, and the world may be aligned with Tian's moral order; and his belief in the 'contagious' nature of moral force (de), by which moral rulers diffuse morality to their subjects, moral parents raise moral children, and so forth.

Increasingly, however, government positions in the expanding apparatuses of the states were being distributed on the more efficient basis of merit and influence, which encouraged a more open, but also, a more self-serving disregard of traditional behavior.

Unfortunately, these new developments corresponded with 'progress' in other directions, too. Great advances in military technology, such as casting iron weapons and producing compound bows allowed the arming of masses of peasant foot soldiers, making the absorption of smaller states into larger units inevitable. Various dates from 481 to 403 BC have been assigned for when the 'Spring and Autumn' period ended, and the 'Warring States' period began, but this era of all-out mass warfare came to a bitter end only in 221 BC, when the state of Qin imposed the first empire onto the peoples of China. This, in turn, only lasted fifteen years which was followed by another period of war before the peace of the Han dynasty (206 BC-220 AD) was firmly established.

The Brooks Chronology

<http://www.umass.edu/wsp/project/introductions/chronology2.html>

The Brooks use the Common Alphabetic system so that non-specialists can approximate the Chinese sounds. The *pinyin* equivalents are given below.

Warring States Project Chronology #2

This table is a more realistic version of the simple [Chronology #1](#) overview. It moves a step closer to Warring States reality. Here, the Mwodz [Mo Zi] is represented by two of its four strands: the ethical chapters (MZ 1-39) and the Lu anecdotal chapters (MZ 46-50). The Mencius is also separated into its two strands: the older southern school (MC 1-3), which emphasized statecraft, and the more theoretical northern school (MC 4-7), which is the one that modern philosophers like. Some additional texts or parts of texts are shown in the Miscellaneous column. They are: the Bamboo Annals (BA), Dzwo Jwan (DJ) [Zuo Zhuan], Gwo Yw (GY) [Guo Yu], Gwandz (GZ) [Guan Zi], Han Feidz (HFZ) [Han Fei Zi], Jwangdz (JZ) [Zhuang Zi], Lw-shr Chun/Chyou (LSCC) [Lu Annals of Spring and Fall—Chun Qiu], and Sywndz (SZ) [Xun Zi]. Some events which left traces in one or more of the texts are shown as cutting across all the text formation columns.

Year	Analects	Mwodz	Lu Mwodz	Miscellaneous	Dau/Dv Jing	N Mencius	S Mencius
0479	<i>Death of Confucius</i>						
0479	LY 4						
0470	LY 5						
0460	LY 6						
0455	<i>Dzvngdz becomes head of Confucian school in Lu; gives it markedly different character</i>						

0450	LY 7						
0436	<i>Death of Dzvngdz</i>						
0436	LY 8						
0435	<i>Dzvngdz's son Dzvng Ywaen assumes leadership of Confucian school in Lu; politically successful</i>						
0420							
0410	LY 9						
0400	<i>Dz-sz and Kung family take over leadership of Confucian school in Lu; character of Analects changes</i>						
0390		MZ 17					
0380	LY 10	MZ 14, 20					
0370		MZ 11					
0360	<i>New and vigorous ruler begins reign in Chi</i>						
0360	LY 11	MZ 21		GZ 1D, 7D (Chi)			
0350		MZ 15, 18		DJ core (Lu)			
0342	<i>Chi ruler assumes title of King following victory over Ngwei in 0343</i>						
0340	LY 2	MZ 26		GZ 1C, 2D, 3D, 7C	DDJ 14-16		
0330	LY 12	MZ 25, 19		DJ 2nd layer (Lu)	DDJ 17, 13		
0321	<i>Mencius leaves Confucian school of Lu for independent career as advisor of rulers; goes to Ngwei</i>						

0320	LY 13	MZ 32, 9	MZ 46	GZ 1B, 2B, 3E, 7B	DDJ 19-20, 12		MC 1A1
0319							MC 1A6
0318							MC 1B1
0317	LY 2						MC 1B16
0314							MC 1B9
0313	<i>Yen Incident ends with expulsion of Chi; Mencius, who had supported intervention, leaves Chi</i>						
0312				DJ final (Chi)	DDJ 23-37		
0311							
0310	LY 14	MZ 12, 16	MZ 47		DDJ 10-11		
0309							
0305	LY 15	MZ 27	MZ 47:8-9	Gwo Yw (Jin)			
0303			MZ 47:15				MC 2A2
0300		MZ 37				MC 4A	
0299				BA (Ngwei)			
0296	<i>Ngwei Syang-wang buried; his tomb contains Bamboo Annals, Mu Tyendz Jwan, Shr Chun</i>						
0295		MZ 31					
0294	LY 1						
0290		MZ 28			DDJ 66		
0288						MC 4B	
0288	<i>Approximate date of Gwodyen Tomb 1; implies a truncated DDJ, consisting of only DDJ 1-66)</i>						
0286	<i>Chi conquers Sung; it is later expelled by several other states.</i>						
0285	LY 16	MZ 38	MZ				

			48:1				
0282		MZ 10	MZ 48:4-5				
0280		MZ 38?	MZ 48:6-7			MC 5	
0275		MZ 13	MZ 48:8				
0274					DDJ 70		
0272					DDJ 73		
0270	LY 17	MZ 39	MZ 48:12	SZ 23		MC 6A	MC 2B
0265		MZ 7	MZ 48:22				
0262	LY 18			JZ 4:4-7		MC 6B	
0260		MZ 6	MZ 49:2-5	JZ 4:1-3, 9, 12, 25			
0255		MZ 5					
0254	<i>Chu conquers part of Lu; Sywndz comes to southern Lu as governor of newly conquered territory</i>						
0253	LY 19		MZ 49:13		DDJ 80	MC 7A	MC 3A
0250	LY 20	MZ 4	MZ 50		DDJ 81	MC 7B	MC 3B
0249	<i>Chu completes conquest of Lu; Confucian and Dauist texts in Lu and nearby cease operation</i>						
0245		MZ 3					
0240		MZ 2		LSCC 1-12 (Chin)			
0235		MZ 1					
0230				HFZ 3 (Chin)			
0221	<i>Chin unifies other states into Chinese Empire</i>						

0220				LSCC 13-20			
0210	<i>First Emperor dies; is succeeded by Chin Second Emperor</i>						
0209				LSCC 21-26			
0206	<i>Chin empire breaks up; several years of war lead to founding of Han dynasty</i>						
0200				HFZ 4-7			

To take some examples mentioned in the [Summary](#) page, it should now be clear:

- . . . why Dzvngdz (whose death, in 0436, is described in LY 8) is mentioned by the respectful term Dzvngdz '**Master Dzvng**' (but only in later chapters). He was one of the heads of the school after Confucius, and is remembered as such by still later members of the school. This does make the whole Analects a late text; parts of it are older than Dzvngdz, and probably go back to Confucius.
- . . . why the middle Analects and the early Gwandz **share whole sentences**, and discuss the same issues. They are 04c contemporaries, engaged in a debate on the nature of society. Confucius never heard of those issues, but they were important to his later school.
- . . . how the Analects (LY 17) and the Mwodz (MZ 48) can be in a seeming **two-way dialogue**; those strata too were contemporary, and each text recorded its half of the exchange. We can recover the whole exchange only by putting all the modules together in a single inclusive structure.
- . . . how the Analects (LY 18) and the Jwangdz (JZ 4) **can share material**. The Analects is copying an anti-Confucian story from the Jwangdz, but with a twist which makes Confucius the winner. The later passages in JZ 4 actually accept the Analects verdict, by agreeing that public service is important (even if dangerous), and by making Confucius their teacher in that dangerous situation.
- . . . where the Gwodyen tomb (c0288) containing the Chu DDJ text comes, in the large chronological scheme of things, and why that text contains **nothing higher than DDJ 66**.

To say what else becomes clear would outrun the desirable length of this page. **Everything** becomes clear. The accretion pattern for each text is reasonable (addition at either the head or tail of the previous manuscript, or both), any dialogue relations come in on schedule, and

the text picture gives a developmentally plausible historical picture.
The tests for a successful chronological construct are met.

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The *Zuo Zhuan*

Background

Unlike the brevity of the accounts of the *Chun Qiu*, which was principally composed from c. 350-330 BC, the *Zuo Zhuan*, was a loquacious and entertaining work that was written in the more powerful state of Qi, which bordered Lu to the southeast. It was begun c. 330 BC and was completed in 312 BC. As described by the Brooks, the *Zuo Zhuan* was both ‘a prediction and a blueprint for the projected future domination of Qi.’ They say it was started as a simple technical commentary on ritual practices, which grew to become a Confucian-oriented commentary on the events chronicled in the *Chun Qiu*, and it ended as a political philosophy not far from that of Mencius.

Much of the factual matter of the *Zuo Zhuan* is accurate, but many of the embellished, dramatic stories were a romantic imagining of the earlier centuries, suffused with the writers’ own late-4th century interests and assumptions. The Brooks summed it up by saying that, ‘They give a misleading picture of the age that was classic for Classical China, but they do reflect the concerns of Classical China itself.’

Thus, it would not be expected to see such a small thing as a game in the *Annals*, which are a collection of one- or two-sentence summaries of events, but there certainly is a problem with saying that the earliest literary reference to go belongs to 547 BC because of its presence in the *Zuo Zhuan*—although, as discussed in Appendix IV, I think that go as a primitive game might have been played then. And who knows? Existing before the burning of the books by the Qin emperor, the writers of the *Zuo Zhuan* had access to many more records than we do.

In any case, the *Zuo Zhuan*’s go analogy proved to be such an apt vehicle for conveying the complexities of Confucian filial piety and what made the proper man in the late 4th century BC, that it became a proverb that is still used today in China. Thus, with the new dating, it seems safe to say, as we will see, that it probably inspired the nearby 3rd century BC Lu writers of the *Analects* and the *Mencius* to create their own versions and linkages of go, filial piety and ultimately, human nature, signifying that go was an increasingly important

‘cultural artifact.’ This thought will be discussed further in the Conclusions at the end of this article.

The Story of Ning He

The mid-6th century BC tale of Ning He (or the honorific Ning-tsze) winds its way through Book IX of the *Zuo Zhuan*, during the reign of Duke Seang. It is a dramatic example of the strictures of loyalty and piety that, if not exactly corresponding to the reality of the 6th century BC, at least conformed to the Confucian ideals of the 4th century BC.

The odes (II.v.ode III.8 and III.ii.ode VI.4) referred to in Ning He’s uncle’s speech are from the *Shi Jing*, *The Classic of Poetry*. This was a collection of poems that had survived since c.1000 BC, which were also supposed to have been collected and organized by Confucius. Still a fountain of wisdom, they have been sung and referred to throughout Chinese history for many reasons—as emphasis, warnings, predictions, exemplars, and etc.

This account is adapted from James Legge’s 19th century translation of *The Ch’un Ts’ew with the Tso Chuen*. For the sake of familiarity, I have not changed Legge’s spellings (which are slightly different from Wade-Giles) or his system of ranks (which the Brooks and others have improved on). Also, Legge translates *yi* as chess but it is obvious that go is the real meaning.

Under the influence of the Marquis of Lu, K’an (Duke Heen, also known as the ‘Marquis of Wei’), was ruling the small, neighboring state of Wei with a heavy hand in the late 5th century BC. It became apparent, through a series of elaborately-staged insults, that he was going to murder his two chief ministers, Ning He’s father, Ning Chih, and Sun Lin-foo, the heads of two ancestrally powerful families. Striking first, however, they managed to dispatch several of the Duke’s emissaries, who most likely were sent to kill them.

Upon hearing this news, the Duke and his brother fled for bordering state of T’se with their chariot army. A small incident during the chase provides an idea of the value systems of the *Zuo Zhuan*. As they neared the border, a famous archer was driving one of the Duke’s chariots, with two rebels hot in pursuit. One of them, who had been the archer’s disciple in Lu, wavered. ‘If I shoot, I [will] do violence to my instructor, and if I do not shoot, I shall be killed—had I not better shoot in ceremony only?’

So he shot twice, harmlessly hitting only the harness of the horses, but his companion berated him—‘He was your master, but I am further removed from him,’ and continued the pursuit. Then the Master shot an arrow into the former student’s upper-arm (presumably so as not to kill him?)

In any case, the Duke managed his escape and sent back his son back to declare that he was ‘not guilty’ of any crime. As another example of expected Confucian behavior, the ‘proper wife’ of Ning He’s father answered: ‘If there are no Spirits, what is the use of such an announcement? If there be, they are not to be imposed upon—guilty as he is, how can he announce that he is free from guilt?’ In other words, guilt is not something one can decide upon by oneself—there are standards such as those set by the Confucians.

Meanwhile, a new king in Wei was installed by Ning Chih’s partner, Sun Lin-foo, and the two became co-ministers.

However, while they were waiting for recognition by the neighboring states, the Marquis of Lu predicted that the Duke, who still had powerful associates remaining in Wei, would eventually return.

But then some years went by, and Ning Chih presumably fell ill and began to die. On his deathbed, he seemed to have a change-of-heart. (It was also implied later in the *Zuo Zhuan* that the new ruler, who was controlled by Sun Lin-foo, was not liked by the people and that therefore, the Duke was going to be able to return in vengeance). He laid a heavy charge on his son Taou-tsze:

‘I trespassed against my ruler and subsequent repentance was of no avail. My name is in the tablets of the States to the effect that ‘Sun Lin-foo and Ning Chih drove out their ruler.’ If the ruler re-enter, that may hide my crime; and if you can so hide it, you are my son. If you cannot do so, and I continue to exist as a Spirit, I will starve in that condition, and will not come to partake of your sacrifices.’ (1)

Twelve years and many intrigues later, the Duke finally made his move by opening up negotiations with Taou-tsze’s brother, Ning He. Although his emissaries had said that the Duke and his son had not changed, Ning was promised by the man who had tried to kill his father that he would have complete control of the government, while the Duke and his son would be in charge of sacrifices in order to win back the Favor of Heaven.

But when the brothers' uncle, T'ae-shuh Wan-tsze, heard of this arrangement, he remonstrated:

'Ah! As it is said in the ode

*My person is rejected;
Of what use is it to think of subsequent things?*

Ning-tsze may be said not to think of the future. Is what he is contemplating to be done? It cannot be done. The superior man, when he does anything, thinks of what will be the end of it, and whether it can be repeated. It is said in the Shoo [V.xvii.6], 'Be careful of the beginning and reverent of the end; then, in the end you will have no distress.' The ode says,

*Never idle, day nor night
In the service of the one man*

Ning-tsze is dealing with his ruler not carefully, as he would at go. How is it possible for him to escape disaster? If a go player lifts his stone without definite object, he will not conquer his opponent. How much more must this be the case when one tries to take a king without a definite object? He is sure not to escape ruin. Alas that by one movement a family whose heads have been ministers for nine generations should be extinguished! (1)

Outwardly, the advice of the first ode seems to be that by Confucian principles, Ning Chih should have retired and fled after being rejected by his ruler, whether or not he was evil. The second ode is a long praise of a minister who let nothing get in the way of being loyal to his ruler—who, for Ning He, was presumably the new ruler.

But Ning He's brother said that their father had given them a charge and they had no choice but to follow it. Thus, filial piety seems to have complicated the issue for the Confucian writers—who was to be obeyed and not betrayed, one's ruler or one's parent? And which ruler was it who should have been betrayed or obeyed?

To complicate the matter further, as we shall see again in a passage that accompanies 'Mencius's' first mention of go, it can even

be said that, if the father is unwilling, the filial son should accept the punishment for the misdeeds. Like a Shakespearean tragedy, these unfolding conundrums were perfectly captured in the image of the befuddled go player who is caught up in the confusion of local tactics and as a result has no plan for the future.

Ning He approached several of his comrades about the matter, but the first fled after saying that if he could say nothing about the expulsion of the Duke, how could he say anything about his return? Another, named Kuh, said 'You (Nings) would be criminal in the case of two rulers. Who under heaven will bear you?'

However, Kuh offered to visit the Duke for Ning He, but he came back repeating what the earlier emissaries had said: 'The ruler has been long in sorrow abroad, even for twelve years; but there is no sadness in his looks, nor generosity in his speech. He is the same man that he was. If you do not abandon the enterprise, the day of your death is not distant.'

Nevertheless, the following spring, in the twenty-sixth year of Duke Seang, Ning He and Kuh launched an attack on the new king who was ensconced in the palace of Sun. However, they only managed to wound him and were preparing to flee, but then they learned that he had died from his injuries. 'The people' then urged the rebels on to make another attack. This time it was successful, but the man behind the scenes, Sun Lin-foo, managed to escape their armies and gain the protection of a powerful neighboring state.

As promised, the Duke performed the sacrifices and Ning He began to organize the government, despite a brief setback in which they were arrested after a conference between the warring states of the region. However, after they gained their freedom, it took only a little time before the arrangement began to irritate the Duke so one of his minions offered to kill the minister and his accomplice. At first, the Duke was reluctant—he said it might look bad if it appeared he knew anything. But later, after a secret attack by two of the Duke's friends failed, in 545 BC, two years after the coup, a second attack succeeded and the bodies of Ning and Kuh were exposed naked in the court.

The *Zuo Zhuan* gave a short denouement:

[A friend,] *Shih Goh* was about to go to take part in the covenant at Sung [the historic, successful conclusion of the

conference mentioned above]. *He had received his commission, and was coming out of the court. He threw a garment over [Ning He's] body, pillowed it on his thigh and wept. It occurred to him that he would put it in a coffin, and then flee into exile, but he was afraid he should not escape. He said also to himself that he had received [the State's] commission, and so went on his way.*

. . . [Later,] the people of Wei were punishing the partisans of the Ning, and Shih Goh fled in consequence to Tain. In Wei, they appointed his nephew, Foo, to take charge of the sacrifices of the Shih family—which was according to rule. (1)

In the sections below, we will see how *go* continued to be used to address the complex questions of filial piety and what the proper behavior and nature of men should be.

'Confucius'

Background

It has long been thought that the works of Confucius and his disciple Mencius (the Latinized spellings of Kong Fu Zi and Meng Zi—'Master Kong' and 'Master Meng') were largely written by their followers. Thus, the Brooks demonstrated that probably only *Analects IV* and *Mencius I* contain the actual words and thoughts of the Masters.

Because the writers of the *Mencius* built on the ideas of the writers of the *Analects*, the go passage from *Analects XVII* is presented first, despite the fact that it appeared in c. 270 BC, ten years after the first one appeared in the *Mencius*.

From *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*:

For more than three hundred years after the alleged year of Confucius' birth, the Chinese would fight each other for mastery of the empire lost by the Zhou. In the process, life became difficult, especially for the shi ('retainer' or 'knight') class, from which Confucius himself arose. As feudal lords were defeated and disenfranchised in battle and the kings of the various warring states began to rely on appointed administrators rather than vassals to govern their territories, these shi became lordless anachronisms and fell into genteel poverty and itinerancy. Their knowledge of aristocratic traditions, however, helped them remain valuable to competing kings, who wished to learn how to regain the unity imposed by the Zhou and who sought to emulate the Zhou by patterning court rituals and other institutions after those of the fallen dynasty.

*Thus, a new role for shi as itinerant antiquarians emerged. In such roles, shi found themselves in and out of office as the fortunes of various patron states ebbed and flowed. Confucius is said to have held office for only a short time before withdrawing into scholarly retirement. While out of office, veteran shi might gather small circles of disciples—young men from shi backgrounds who wished to succeed in public life. It is precisely such master-and-disciple exchanges between Confucius and his students that the [early] *Analects* claims to record.*

From that point on, as the Brooks demonstrate, the further *Analects* written by the Confucian school in the state of Lu show a development (and an insertion into the beginning of *Analects I-III*) that illustrates changes in Chinese society up to and just beyond the conquest of Lu by the state of Chu in 249 BC. (The last two *Analects* were written shortly after that event).

To elaborate on what was mentioned before, these changes included a development of 'statehood' that changed the warrior ideal which Confucius tried to counter with an emphasis on *ren*—which has many definitions, but, in a simplified way, can be conceived as 'humanity' and 'compassion' that arises from filial piety and develops within from proper nourishment of the 'mind-heart.' One outward form of nourishment was the observance of proper ceremonies (*li*) patterned after those of the Zhou court. If properly done, with *ren* in mind, they created order and eliminated internal strife in families and government, which, as mentioned, had in former times been hereditary hierarchies.

However, this concept was already considered antiquated in Confucius's time and the Brooks show a distinct change of emphasis in the Lu Confucian School, particularly after Confucius's descendents, the Kong family, assumed leadership in the latter part of the 4th century BC, when *Analects XII* was written. The concept of *ren* was banished and later re-installed as an element of *li*—but *li* had changed, too. By the time of Mencius in the 4th century BC, *li* had largely become an internal, personal affair and its outward trappings were abandoned in light of the new styles of government.

Along with these changes, the School evolved from an informal gathering of pupils to a three-year, tuition-based course on the 'heritage of antiquity,' as the Brooks term it. Not only had the teachings changed, but so did the character of Confucius. Originally, he was portrayed as holding office for only a brief period, and his 'career' consisted of merely recommending office candidates. By the end of the *Analects*, however, 'he' had become a virtual minister living in a palatial mansion, and had traveled to, and influenced many more states and princes than he ever did in real life.

The structure of the *Analects*, however, did not change. Organized in paired A-B forms, they were usually thematically connected in some way and discrepancies in their order signal that some were later interpolations.

Thus, in the Brooks translation, the go passage in *Analects* XVII is a B section and numbered Chapter XX. In Legge, it was numbered Chapter XXII, because the Brooks removed Chapters V and VII and placed them back in *Analects* XVIX and XX, for which they were originally written.

‘Confucius’ and the Mohists

In the A section of the pair, Confucius is arguing with a renegade disciple who espouses the then-current, more ‘practical’ philosophy of the Mohists (the Brooks use ‘Micians’), who were bitter opponents of the Confucians. They opposed the idea of serving incompetent rulers—which ‘Confucius,’ after sixteen *Analects* of unwavering resistance, finally is persuaded to do at the beginning of *Analects* XVII. (This corresponded with the rule of a puppet lord in Lu who was under the control of Qi—which helps date its writing).

The Mohists, who had more than several strands of thought and followers, were also famous for their logic (‘a white horse is not a horse’—and a commentary on the nature of whiteness appears also in this *Analect*). They seem to have been allied with the rising mercantile class, and were famous for devising strategies and techniques for defending cities from the rapacious feudal lords whom the Confucians sought employment from.

They also despised elaborate ceremonies and musical presentations common at the time. As for the three years required in the Confucian doctrine for parental mourning, the Mohists compared it to a baby who cries unceasingly because he cannot get his parents back. They asked, ‘How is the wisdom of the Confucians worth more than that of a baby?’

The Brook’s translation of the AB pair follows. As mentioned, in their endeavor to make Chinese pronunciation more accessible to non-specialists, they use the system of Common Alphabetic Chinese spellings.

***Analects* Chapter XX**

Dza Wo [Zai Wo] asked, Is the three-year mourning period not too long? If gentlemen do not do ceremonies for three years, then the ceremonies will be lost. If gentlemen for three years do not do music, then the music is sure to vanish. When the old grain is gone and the

new grain is piled high; when once bow and tinder have changed the fire—that period [one-year] should suffice. The Master said, If you were to eat your rice and wear your brocades, would you feel comfortable with yourself? He said, I would feel comfortable. (The Master said), If you feel comfortable, then do it. But as to the gentleman's way of being in mourning; if he ate dainties he would not find them sweet; if he heard music he would not find it enjoyable; if he abode in his usual place he would not be comfortable; therefore he does not do them. But if now you would be comfortable, then do them. Dza Wo went out and the Master said, Such is Yu's lack of ren [ren]. Only when Yu had been alive for three years did he finally leave the bosom of his father and mother. Now a three-year mourning is the mourning custom of the world. Did Yu receive three years of love from his father and mother?

Analects Chapter XXI

The Master said, 'There are problems ahead for those who spend their whole day filling their stomachs without exercising their heart-and-mind. Are there not diversions such as the board games [liu] bo and wei-qi? Even playing these games would be better than nothing. (2)

Go and Gambling

First a note on gambling: In his 19th century translation, the great James Legge rendered the dice game *liu bo* as 'gamesters' and others have rendered it as 'gamblers,' but actually little meaning is lost, since *liu bo* was known as a ferocious gambling dice game. (Men could even challenge the gods, who sometimes bet their immortality by playing their right hands against their left hands).

Most Chinese researchers familiar with these games and their role in Chinese history say that gambling and addiction at both is implied. There are many other elements in this equation of go with early gambling that I reviewed in the main text of my *Origins* article.

For example, there is a discussion of how gambling is still widespread in Asian amateur go circles, but not so much talked about, and how this relates to deep sacred qualities of ecstatic gambling rites in traditional cultures. Professional go is also gambling in the sense that the stakes are put up by a third party. Thin evidence

is also presented in that essay's 39th footnote of the possible early association of go and gambling. More thin evidence may also lie in the original Chinese use of Japanese counting, because captured pieces are kept.

'Confucius' and the Primitive Daoists

As for those who are interested only in 'stuffing themselves,' as it is often translated, Legge (and others) suggest that Confucius might have been alluding to the Primitive Daoists, with whom the Confucians were also feuding. This topic needs an explanation . . .

The early doctrine of the Confucians, which was somewhat modified by the time of *Analects* XVII, was that it was useless to teach the traditional ideals to anyone except those whose duty was to be a Custodian of the Way—the 'meat eaters'—'those who were fed'—as opposed to the 'little people'—those whose sole duty was to produce the food.

Within that framework, and considering that the Confucian (and Mencian) writers were thinking of what they thought were the customs of the Zhou empire which had expired five hundred years before, they wrote that all was well if there was a proper relationship between the Sages and Rulers. Thus, Rulers had to follow certain protocol when they wanted to employ a Sage. This is the first Chapter of *Analects* XVII in the Legge translation:

***Analects* XVII Chapter I**

1. Yang Ho wished to see Confucius, but Confucius would not go to see him. On this, he sent a present of a pig to Confucius, who, having chosen a time when Ho was not at home, went to pay his respects for the gift. He met him, however, on the way.

2. Ho said to Confucius, 'Come, let me speak with you.' He then asked, 'Can he be called benevolent who keeps his jewel in his bosom? And leaves his country to confusion?' Confucius replied, 'No.' 'Can he be called wise, who is anxious to be engaged in public employment, and yet is constantly losing the opportunity of being so?' Confucius again said, 'No.' 'The days and months are passing away; the years do not wait for us.' Confucius said, 'Right; I will go into office.'

The Primitive Daoists, however, had much different ideas. The following lyrical description is from Lin Yutang's translation of *Chuang Tzu* (the *Zhuangzi*) which can be read at <http://www.vl-site.org/taoism/cz-list.html>.

. . . So in the days of perfect nature, men were quiet in their movements and serene in their looks. At that time, there were no paths over mountains, no boats or bridges over waters. All things were produced each in its natural district. Birds and beasts multiplied; trees and shrubs thrived. Thus it was that birds and beasts could be led by the hand, and one could climb up and peep into the magpie's nest. For in the days of perfect nature, man lived together with birds and beasts, and there was no distinction of their kind. Who could know of the distinctions between gentlemen and common people? Being all equally without knowledge, their virtue could not go astray. Being all equally without desires, they were in a state of natural integrity. In this state of natural integrity, the people did not lose their (original) nature.

And then when the Sages appeared, crawling for charity and limping with duty, doubt and confusion entered men's minds. They said they must make merry by means of music and enforce distinctions by means of ceremony, and the empire became divided against itself. Were the uncarved wood not cut up, who could make sacrificial vessels? Were white jade left uncut, who could make the regalia of courts? Were Tao and virtue not destroyed, what use would there be for charity and duty? Were men's natural instincts not lost, what need would there be for music and ceremonies? Were the five colors not confused, who would need decorations? Were the five notes not confused, who would adopt the six pitch-pipes? Destruction of the natural integrity of things for the production of articles of various kinds—this is the fault of the artisan. Destruction of Tao and virtue in order to introduce charity and duty—this is the error of the Sages. . . .

[In the early days,] the people did nothing in particular at their homes and went nowhere in particular in their walks. Having food, they rejoiced; tapping their bellies, they wandered about. Thus far the natural capacities of the people carried them.

What seems to link the AB pair is that doing ‘something’ is better than doing ‘nothing.’ Governing in an imperfect world is doing something, at least. One year of mourning is better than no mourning, though not as good as three years. Playing go is better than not performing the rites if the parents are dead; or if they are alive, better than only responding to one’s desires like an animal.

But the Primitive Daoists did not think that doing ‘something’—like serving a bad ruler—was always better than doing ‘nothing.’

Therefore, when a gentleman is unavoidably compelled to take charge of the government of the empire, there is nothing better than inaction (letting alone). . . .

. . . In consequence, virtuous men sought refuge in mountain caves, while rulers of great states sat trembling in their ancestral halls. Then, when dead men lay about pillowed on each other’s corpses, when cangued prisoners jostled each other in crowds and condemned criminals were seen everywhere, then the Confucianists and the Motseanists bustled about and rolled up their sleeves in the midst of gyves and fetters! Alas, they know not shame, nor what it is to blush!

Does this add a new twist to the go passage? Being a competitive activity, go-playing probably would have been discouraged in those days of perfect nature. But to turn the coin, in the less-than-perfect world of the Confucians, if one’s parents are dead, one is not supposed to enjoy anything during the three-year mourning period, then is go-playing allowed, if it is not excessive and does not involve gambling?

These thoughts about the idea of moderate go-playing as opposed to frenzied go playing will be commented on in the Conclusions.

'Mencius'

Background

From *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*:

The two best known early interpreters of Confucius' thought—besides the compilers of the Analects themselves, who worked gradually from the time of Confucius . . . are the Warring States philosophers 'Mencius' or Mengzi (Meng-tzu, 372-289 BC) [although the Brooks prefer 303 BC] and Xunzi (Hsun-tzu, 310-220 BC). Neither knew Confucius personally, nor did they know one another, except retrospectively, as in the case of Xunzi commenting on Mencius. The two usually are cast as being opposed to one another because of their disagreement over human nature—a subject on which Confucius was notably silent (Analects 5.13).

Mencius illustrates a pattern typical of Confucius' interpreters in that he claims to be doing nothing more than 'transmitting' Confucius' thought while introducing new ideas of his own. For Mencius, renxing (human nature) is congenitally disposed toward ren, but requires cultivation through li as well as yogic disciplines related to one's qi (vital energy), and may be stunted (although never destroyed) through neglect or negative environmental influence. Confucius does not use the term renxing in the Analects, nor does he describe qi in Mencius' sense, and nowhere does he provide an account of the basic goodness of human beings. Nonetheless, it is Mencius' interpretation of Confucius' thought—especially after the ascendancy of Zhuxi's brand of Confucianism in the twelfth century AD—that became regarded as orthodox by most Chinese thinkers.

Like Mencius, Xunzi claims to interpret Confucius' thought authentically, but leavens it with his own contributions. Whereas Mencius claims that human beings are originally good but argues for the necessity of self-cultivation, Xunzi claims that human beings are originally bad but argues that they can be reformed, even perfected, through self-cultivation. Also like Mencius, Xunzi sees li as the key to the cultivation of renxing. Although Xunzi condemns Mencius' arguments in no uncertain terms, when one has risen above the smoke and din of the fray, one may see that the two thinkers share many assumptions, including one that links each to Confucius: the

assumption that human beings can be transformed by participation in traditional aesthetic, moral, and social disciplines.

The two Mencian go passages illustrate these thoughts precisely and it seems more than just possible that the first stimulated the 'Confucian' writers to come up with their own.

As mentioned, the first Mencian go passage appeared c. 280 BC in *Book IV Part II Chapter xxx*, the Confucian one appeared c. 270 BC, and the second Mencius passage in VI.I.ix.iii appeared in c. 260 BC. This was eleven years before the conquest of Lu by Chu in 249 BC that ended all production of the Mencian School.

This is the Brooks's description on their website of the books of the Mencian School that followed MC I, which is the only one that they think contained his actual words:

. . . linguistic and extratextual arguments are introduced to suggest that [the Mencius forms] two series, MC 2-3 and MC 4-7. These in turn are found to differ in content and emphasis [that suggest] they are the texts of two separate successor schools. One of these we call the northern one [MC 4-7], and assume was located in Mencius's native town of Dzou [Zou]; its text shows a pronounced theoretical or philosophical emphasis. The other we call the southern one, and assume that it had remained in the state of Tvng [Teng], which was the location of Mencius's last official position, and where his successors may still have occupied the house given him as a perquisite of that position; its text shows an ongoing concern with the difficulties of addressing a ruler, and has overall a pronounced political as well as ethical interest. There is some commonality of ideas between the two groups, implying some degree of ongoing contact, but they develop in different directions. It is the northern school, especially in its later chapters MC 6-7, which develops a theory of allowable revolution against a bad ruler; the southern school remains much closer to the decorum which was probably necessary between a ruler and his most critical advisors. [Note: If a ruler did not live up to the demands of what a ruler should be do, this made him a commoner and hence killing him would not be regicide.]

. . . In brief, the northern or philosophical school winds up with an emphasis on inner rather than outer morality, and the southern or political school increasingly abandons its initial optimism about the

possibility of a government centered on the people, of the people's economic prospects under the existing government, and of the possibility of making meaningful contribution by advising a ruler who has other things in mind.

. . . The chief figures in the two posthumous schools were probably Gungsun Chou [Gongsun Chou] (MC 1-3) and Wan Jang [Wan Zhang] (MC 4-7), and they are the likeliest authors of the respective school text material. They come in time to be themselves mentioned or cited in the third person, evidently by some different school head after their deaths.

. . . Both Tvng and Dzou were on the border of Lu, and were affected by the Chi [Qi] conquest of Sung [Song] in 0286 [286 BC]. Both schools were apparently silenced by the final Chu conquest of the Lu area in 0249, which imposed the philosophical dictatorship of the school's arch-enemy Sywndz [Xun Zi]. (Sywndz had been the Chu governor at Lan-ling, in . . . [the south] . . . since the preliminary conquest of the Lu area in 0255/54). (2)

Over the centuries, the *Mencius* writers were often ridiculed because they seemed to haphazardly pile up of analogies instead of a logical progression of ideas.

But John Makeham comments at <http://www.nzasia.org.nz/journal/NZJAS-back-issues/NZJAS-June01/Mencius.pdf>

. . . More than sixty years ago, Arthur Waley (in)famously dismissed . . . [Mencius's] arguments as 'nugatory'. In a 1963 essay on Mencius' use of the method of analogy in argument, D.C. Lau (author of the standard Penguin translation of Mencius) observed that it 'is not unusual for a reader of the Mencius to be left with the impression that in argument with his opponents Mencius was a sophist with little respect for logic.' [Thoughts which my original Origins article also seem to have mistakenly expressed.]

. . . This [simplistic view] could be expressed as 'The incipient moral tendencies are there in human nature originally.'

A.C. Graham's principal interpretative innovation is his thesis that early Chinese thinkers did not conceive of human nature as some essential quality that is fixed at birth . . . [something Roger] Ames has been developing for some years in fruitful collaboration

with David L. Hall. He and [Henry] Rosemont propose that 'English (and other Indo-European languages) are basically substantive and essentialistic, whereas classical Chinese should be seen to be more as an eventful language.'

. . . Early Chinese thinkers who discuss [xing—'human nature'] seldom seem to be thinking of fixed qualities going back to a thing's origin . . . rather they are concerned with developments which are spontaneous but realize their full potentials only if uninjured and adequately nourished . . . This accords with one's general impression when groping towards an understanding of early Chinese concepts, that often tend to be more dynamic than their nearest Western equivalents, and that English translation freezes them into immobility [as modern scholarship has shown]. . . [thus in] early texts such as Zuo Zhuan and Guo Yu, xing has a dynamic quality associated with growth rather than fixed innate qualities.

With these thoughts in the background, the go passage is not quite as simple-minded as it might seem at first. This is the Legge translation. He used the word 'chess,' but there is no question that go was what was meant. As before, in my commentary, I have retained Legge's romanized names.

Mencius Book IV.II.xxx

1. The disciple Kung-tu said, 'Throughout the whole kingdom, everybody pronounces K'wang Chang unfilial. But you, Master, keep company with him, and moreover treat him with politeness. I venture to ask why you do so.'

2. Mencius replied, 'There are five things which are pronounced in the common usage of the age to be unfilial. The first is laziness in the use of one's four limbs, without attending to the nourishment of his parents. The second is gambling and [go]-playing, and being fond of wine, without attending to the nourishment of his parents. The third is being fond of goods and money, and selfishly attached to his wife and children, without attending to the nourishment of his parents. The fourth is following the desires of one's ears and eyes, so as to bring his parents to disgrace. The fifth is being fond of bravery, fighting and quarrelling so as to endanger his parents. Is Chang guilty of any one of these things?'

3. *Now between Chang and his father there arose disagreement, he, the son, reproving his father, to urge him to what was good.*

4. *To urge one another to what is good by reproofs is the way of friends. But such urging between father and son is the greatest injury to the kindness, which should prevail between them.*

About this time, in the *Zhan Guo Ce (Records of the Warring States)*, a man named Chang Tzu murdered his wife and buried her under the house, so historians have theorized that this may be the same man. But even if it was, the Confucians argue that the heavy duty K'wang Chang owed his father should have stopped him from making any criticism and thereby disrupting the family's unity. Thus, the story continues that the father was 'offended' and did not permit his son to approach him. Therefore, Chang sent away his wife and drove his son out of the house, because, under the circumstances, he felt he should not enjoy a home life because of his inappropriate behavior.

In some commentaries, which remind one of the predicament of Ning He and may suggest a reason for the Mencian continuation of the association between go and filial piety, it has been suggested that the son was expected to bear the punishment the father should have received. (However, nothing was said about what kind of a moral situation this would put the children into).

Moreover, K'wang Chang, who appears elsewhere in the *Mencius*, was an influential official from Qi who may have been owed favors. Thus, this narrowing of proper Confucian behavior, which also occurs elsewhere, has drawn charges of casuistry. But this will raise more questions later.

Mencius Book VI.I.ix

Twenty years later, in the chapter that I.A. Richards has called, 'the most developed and explicit piece of discussion that early Confucianism provides,' there is suddenly real meat to chew on the bones of go. Unfortunately, no one has taken the time to digest it. The most influential analyses that have changed the way we think about Mencius and his analogical arguments by writers such as A.C.

Graham and Kwong-loi Shun carefully pick apart this book, passage by passage, but they both skip over VI.I.ix.

Book VI opens with Mencius arguing with a Kao-tzu, whom later Confucians, perhaps anachronistically, classified as a Daoist. Kao-tzu seems to think that human nature is neither good nor bad, and that external influences mold it either way. Mencius defends his position that human nature is naturally good, but can be persuaded to do bad things.

It is important to note that Mencius does not try to ‘define’ human nature as an entity—rather, by using analogies, he circles around the idea to define what he means as a living force—something continually emerging over the course of a well-lived life. Part of the argument was over the aforementioned 3rd century BC uses of *xing*. For *xing*, there is no exact equivalent English word, but A.C. Graham suggests that does not mean we should not use the words, ‘human nature’ to define it.

To elucidate on what he means, Mencius is fond of plant analogies. VI.I.i begins in the Legge translation:

1. *The philosopher Kao said, ‘Man’s nature is like the ch’i-willow, and righteousness is like a cup or bowl. The fashioning benevolence and righteousness out of man’s nature is like the making of cups and bowls from the ch’i-willow.*

The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy comments:

[Chapter Six] offers multiple hypotheses about human nature, each of which Mencius refutes in Socratic fashion. Gaozi first argues that human nature is neither bad nor good, and presents two organic metaphors for its moral neutrality: wood (which can be carved into any object) and water (which can be made to flow east or west).

Challenging the carved wood metaphor, Mencius points out that in carving wood into a cup or bowl, one violates the wood’s nature, which is to become a tree. Does one then violate a human being’s nature by training him to be good? No, he says, it is possible to violate a human being’s nature by making him bad, but his nature is to become good. As for the water metaphor, Mencius rejects it by remarking that human nature flows to the good, just as water’s nature flows down. It is possible to make people bad, just as it is possible to make water flow up [by splashing]—but neither is a natural process or

end. *'Although man can be made to become bad, his nature remains as it was.'*

Kao-tsze then argues that no matter whether the inner nature is good or bad, outside goodness can be molded as part of the social process between father and son, elder and younger, ruler and ruled.

But the Mencian writer replies in the Legge translation of VI.I.vii:

1. In good years the children are most of them good, while in bad years the most of them abandon themselves to evil. It is not owing to any difference of their natural powers conferred by Heaven that they are thus different. The abandonment is owing to the circumstances through which they allow their minds to be ensnared and drowned in evil.

Next, in VI.I.viii, just before the go passage, comes a powerful series of analogies that expand on the external/internal differences theme that have been carefully developed in Book VI.

1. Mencius said, 'The trees of the Niu mountain were once beautiful. Being situated in the borders of a large State, they were hewn down with axes and bill—and could they retain their beauty? Still, though, the activity of the vegetative life day and night, and the nourishing influence of the rain and dew, they were not without buds and sprouts springing forth, but then came the cattle and goats and browsed on them. To these things is owing the bare and stripped appearance of the mountain, and when people now see it, they think it was never finely wooded. But is this the nature of the mountain?

2. 'And so also of what properly belongs to man—shall it be said that the mind of any man was without benevolence and righteousness? The way in which a man loses his proper goodness of mind is like the way in which the trees are denuded by axes and bills. Hewn down day after day, can it—the mind—retain its beauty? But there is a development of its life day and night, and in the calm air of the morning, just between day and night, the mind feels in a degree those desires and aversions which are proper to humanity, but the feeling is not strong, and it is fettered and destroyed by what takes place during the day. This fettering taking place again and again, the

restorative influence of the night is not sufficient to preserve the proper goodness of the mind; and when this proves insufficient for that purpose, the nature becomes not much different from that of the irrational animals, and when people now see it, they think that it never had those powers which I assert. But does this condition represent the feelings proper to humanity?

3. *'Therefore, if it receive its proper nourishment, there is nothing which will not grow. If it lose its proper nourishment, there is nothing which will not decay away.'*

4. *Confucius said, 'Hold it fast and it remains with you. Let it go and you will lose it. Its outgoing and incoming cannot be defined as to time or place. It is the mind of which this is said!'*

Mencius Book VI.I.ix

1. *Mencius said, 'It is not to be wondered at that the king is not wise!'*

2. *Suppose the case of the most easily growing thing in the world—if you let have one day's genial heat, and then expose it for ten days to cold, it will not be able to grow. It is but seldom that I have an audience of the king, and when I retire, there come all those who act upon him like the cold. Though I succeed in bringing out some buds of goodness, of what avail is it?*

3. *Now go playing is but a small art, but without his whole mind being given and his will bent to it, a man cannot succeed at it. Go Ch'iu is the best go player in all the kingdom. Suppose that he is teaching two men to play. The one gives to the subject his whole mind and bends to it all his will, doing nothing but listening to Go Ch'iu. The other, though he seems to be listening to him, has his whole mind running on a swan which he thinks is approaching, and wishes to bend his bow, adjust the string to the arrow, and shoot it. Although he is learning along with the other, he does not come up to him. Why? (3)*

Outwardly, 'Mencius' would seem to be simply referring to the idea that the king was poorer for not listening to him, but there seems

to be much more that is implied, which goes to the heart of contemporaneous discussions about human nature. And, like the Ning He passage, Mencius' two short mentions of go show no contempt for the game. The first echoes the Confucius quote, that go lies somewhere between idleness and purity of thought about one's parents, nature and mankind, the second even shows some respect for the game and its ability to be used in 'his' writings.

Some Conclusions About Early Go

Note: Appendix IV was written before my complete thoughts had developed so there is some overlap with this section.

Rather than being a case for the traditional, superficial view that ‘the early Confucians thought little of go,’ the casual use of the go analogy in the *Zuo Zhuan* to illustrate the multi-layered filial piety problems of Ning He would indicate that the game was something that its readers would understand as a matter of course. This, in turn, would indicate that go-playing had been going on for a long time, although, as mentioned, the go specifics in Ning He’s case were another illustration of its 4th century Confucian writers’ ideals, and not necessarily an event of the 6th century BC. We can even find a little respect for the game by the time the second Mencius quote appeared in c. 260 BC.

So why wasn’t the game (which was known as *yi*) mentioned in earlier literature? Actually it might have been—the Brooks date *Mozi* 15 to c. 350 BC (‘No soldier . . . must dare to sound musical instruments or play *yi*, otherwise he will be punished with having his ear pierced with an arrow’), although the use of *yi* could mean any game if the often misleading *Shuo Wen*, a 2nd century AD dictionary, is interpreted ambiguously. Paraphrased, the passage on *yi* reads, ‘*Wei qi* is from the seal character two-hands radical with a certain sound and the *Analects* has “are there not *bo* and *yi*?”’



In other words, the two hands at the bottom could be playing a board game that was not specifically go. (Further questions about the use of *bo* and *yi* and whether they mean *liu bo* and *wei qi* will be discussed in a coda at the end of this article).

Two other allegedly ancient mentions are in *Guanzi* (*The Book of Master Yin*): ‘In the 3rd month of autumn in the day of *gengzin*, there are five prohibitions. The first is not to play go (*yi*); it is prohibited . . .’ and ‘Take the accomplishments of archery, chariot-driving, playing the zither, and go (*yi*): in none of these is it possible to stop learning.’ However, this purportedly late Zhou text (Master Yin

was a companion of 6th century BC Lao Zi) was actually written much later during the Han period.

As to why the game was not mentioned in more detail in the Confucian passages, it was probably not very developed—we can even theorize it was played on 9x9 or 13x13 boards—and so its elements lay outside the major concerns of earlier writers of the historical period—*except when there was a use for it*. This was especially so, considering the changes in Confucianism and the heavy warfare that surrounded and succeeded the Confucian go writers as the Qin empire formed, dissolved and was replaced by the Han.

Thus, at the time the early Confucians wrote, the tone of the passages indicates that the game would have been regarded as perhaps we regard checkers—every child learns to play, but who talks of strategies and deep meanings? There are good checker players and bad ones, but philosophers certainly don't write much about it or try to explain the rules. Moreover, outside of the four uses as an exemplar, it would have been irrelevant to other Confucian writers interested only in improving 'real' mental and moral development. But this also means that the game was not held as a moral corrupter as it was by some later Confucians in the Han (see below).

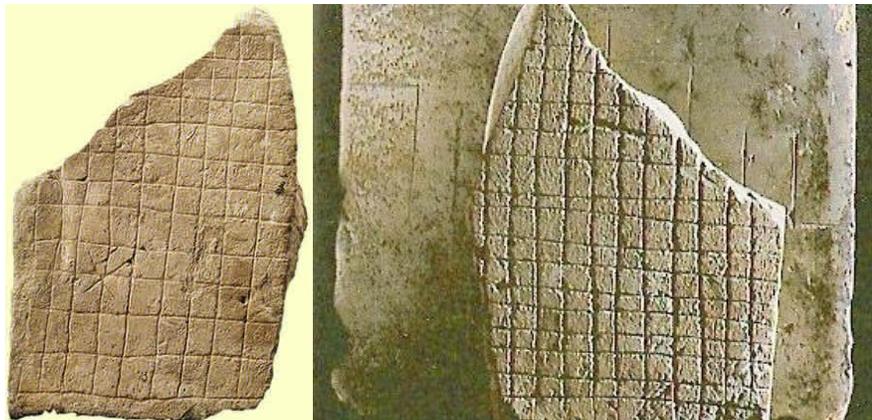
As for the early Mohists, the same thoughts would apply—had go been a training ground for strategy or had it been thought that there was significant moral value in playing, there would have been more statements made.

Later, in the Han, the game's Daoist elements were written about (see below), so why didn't it appear in the School of Strategy philosopher/warrior tracts such as the *Art of War* that appeared from c. 500-300 BC? Again, perhaps this was because of the lack of skill and the recognition that grand strategies were possible. How much of large-scale strategies does one see in beginners' play if it is untutored?

In my own case, I learned from someone who had just learned so we chased each other around—great fun, but since this was before the Internet and I was internationally traveling, I was not in contact with anyone who could really play, so only small tactics limited to a few moves were ever involved. Simple truths emerged but never grand strategies. For example, I never dreamed that stones in one corner could be affected by stones in the other corners by

something called *joseki* and *fuseki* until I was shown this by a strong Japanese player. This overall situation would be especially so if go was being played on small boards. As my book *Go Basics* showed, profound games can be played on 9x9 boards, but it takes modern professionals to play them and even these bear little likeness to a philosophy of war strategies for war that we are accustomed to see on large boards.

So the first board turns up in 141 BC, as do the first comments about the game, many of which were highly favorable. This is only 120 largely war-torn years after the last *Mencius* passage, and perhaps indicates there was a silent continuum of go playing with an increase in skill and respect by the *literati*. For example, in the same year, Liu An's *Huai Nan Zi* (*Book of the Prince of Huai Nan*) states that 'To play but one game of go [*qi*] is insufficient to know wisdom.'



Two sides of the oldest board. The tile fragment is a little over 11 ½ inches at its longest point and about 1 ½ inches thick. Note what is perhaps a hoshi point on the left. The other side, pictured in the October 2001 issue of National Geographic, has about 17 lines, however, this is only a small piece of the board.

Another argument for questioning the age of go has been the fact that many *liu bo* boards were buried in pre-Han tombs while the earliest go 'tombstone' board was not interred until 182 AD, and the second hundreds of years later. This is perhaps because *liu bo* was a divine game that was also used for divination, while this never happened with go, as Appendix III to the Internet Origins article demonstrates. Thus, an uncomplicated game like small board go,

perhaps played on perishable and disposable wooden boards or on the dirt with pebbles (or beans) would likely not have survived. (5)

Yet this paucity seems to suggest a parallel with something that might have occurred in ancient Egypt. The remains of the sacred *senet* game sets played by royalty was intricately involved with the gods and divination and found in many tombs. This contrasts with the absence of *seega* boards (that is, if *seega* existed in ancient Egypt, which is unproven) which is still played by peasants and doesn't appear in any tombs, ancient or modern. In any case, it would seem to be the same situation with *liu bo* and *go* in China—*liu bo* was played by the gods and occasionally against humans, the playing board was used for divination, while its sacred TLV pattern appeared on the backs of mirrors in the Han. *Go*, on the other hand, had no sacred qualities until after it began to be eulogized in poetry around 600 AD—and even then, it didn't involve the gods or the afterlife, so why would anyone put their stones and boards into tombs?

A Review

To review, the *Zuo Zhuan* was completed in 312 BC in Qi and then suddenly, in neighboring Lu between c. 280 and c.260 BC, three other Confucian comments appear. Because of their content, we can postulate that they were inspired by the *Zuo Zhuan*'s association of go with filial piety and, as the Brooks suggest, Mencius, in his travels, could have worked on the *Zuo Zhuan*. Over this period of time, there are some hints about the growth of go as a 'cultural artifact.' That is, can we observe how it was moving from being that pastime to becoming the beginnings of a Path, at least in that area of Northeast China?

First of all, there is the language of the first *Mencius* passage of c. 280 BC to consider—'The second [unfilial behavior] is gambling, go playing and being fond of wine, without attending to the nourishment of his parents.'

Is this a negative attitude about go, as has often been assumed? We all know that there is a difference between simply being a go player as someone who just plays some, and being a 'go player' to the exclusion of much of the rest of life. Thus, it would seem that the writers of the *Mencius* were denigrating excessive go-playing, fueled by gambling away parents' fortunes, which, as the list of 'do-not-does' indicates, is *absolutely* un-filial. (See the go story in *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio* by Pu Songling [Penguin; 2006] and also the novel *First Kyu* by Sung-Hwa Hong [Samarkand; 1999] for later examples of the fanaticism that go can create in the East).

Perhaps that is the reason why the K'wang Chang story appears so incongruously after the list of unfilial behaviors. K'wang Chang offended his father by reproving him (perhaps for his mother's murder), but he also atoned for his disrespect and so did not cease to have filial piety, which, at least for early Confucius, was the sole source from which *ren* could emanate.

By concentrating on the 'without' and turning the sentence around, it would come to mean that as long as parents were being looked after, the result would be *moderate* go playing, gambling and drinking and the main lesson of that chapter seems to be that the only thing to be immoderate about is filial piety.

The same is true of the 'Confucius' quote ten years later—go is somewhere between idleness and perfect behavior. Contrasted with the attitude of the Primitive Daoists, the human race and its societies

have to survive, so there is some give-and-take even with filial piety. 'Confucius,' after all, at the start of 'his' chapter containing the mention of go, has been persuaded to take on a job with a bad ruler. One year of mourning is better than no mourning, but not as good as three years. Playing go is better than throwing your dead parents into a ditch, as 'Confucius' suggested the first peoples did (until they saw the bodies being eaten by animals, and the *ren* rose in them so they started burial rites).

And, obviously, fathers both good and bad were continuing to teach their sons how to play go. As discussed in the main *Origins* text, for the game to survive so well and so long, it was probably being taught as not only fun, but something *good* for the hearts and minds of children.

Y. Edmund Lien in his 'Wei Yao's Disquisition on *boyi*' also accepts a non-pejorative view of go by the Confucian writers. Wei Yao (204?-273? AD) was commissioned by the heir-designate Sun He to write a 'rant' against excessive go playing because he thought the game was useless. However, Lien notes:

Wei Yao's overall plan of attack is to establish a sharp contrast between what a junzi (the Confucian 'gentleman' or moral exemplar) would do against what a yi-addict would do. Since the moral high ground that Wei Yao takes is what is expected of a junzi, it should be noted that for both Confucius and Mencius, boyi was not condemned outright: it is better than idling all day. On the other hand, if one indulges in it without restraint, it can disrupt normal family life. The masters of the Confucian school are neutral to the game itself. They preach moderation. It is the degree of one's involvement in the game that needs to be evaluated to pass a final judgment. (4)

It was during this period, as the Brooks suggested, there was increasing prosperity, at least in areas such as Lu where there wasn't active fighting. Therefore, there was more leisure time for games probable improvement in the level of play. The presence of a Master in the last *Mencius* quote indicates that the game was rising above not only its negative association with gambling and addiction, but also its association with imperfect wisdom. A 'small art' is still an art in the Great Scheme of Things (and incidentally, the character for 'small art'

was usually used for ‘numbers’ perhaps indicating a game scoring analogy).

The vision of that Scheme was changing, however, for the Confucians, and go seems to be becoming something respected enough to illustrate the higher principles of their thought-processes, as they began to promote the idea of man as a rational being, capable of becoming independent from the gods and Heaven.

As mentioned, the commentaries on *Mencius*, particularly the most famous in the West—those of A.C. Graham and Kwong-loi Shun—skip over the second mention of go in VI.I.ix.iii and proceed to the next chapter, which continues on the theme of choices and differences—in that case between eating fish and bear paws; and choosing between length of life and righteousness.

This is curious, because the discussions of ‘external vs. internal’ and ‘what-appears-to-be vs. what-really-is’ of Book VI have been amplified by the ideas of study, students and a teacher.

At first glance, the Student-Who-Has-His-Mind-On-Other-Things might seem to be an oblique reference to the Primitive Daoists of *Analects* XVII who want to live in a state of nature and do ‘nothing’ but pat their bellies. But there also seems to be a reference to those who have not properly studied the Way because they have not listened to their teacher. Outwardly, they may look as if they have been following the Path, but inwardly, they are as lost to the rest of us as the image of the mountain that once had its forests in the passage that directly precedes the go Master passage.

Some Developments in Confucian Thinking After the Closing of the Schools

As in other Lu area Confucian and Mencian passages in the 3rd century BC, the usual culprit of misdirected thought is the rival Qi philosopher Xun Zi (310-218 BC) (or Sywndz in the Brooks spelling). As discussed, he thought that the explanation for the way things were in society was that humans are born bad and had to be molded to the good, which involved the *learning* of correct behavior under the bleak skies of an indifferent Heaven. And it was also he who closed the Confucian Schools in Lu after he assumed governorship and the Chu conquered all of Lu in 249 BC.

However, in both the *Analects* and the books of the *Mencius* that were written in this period, (and as reflected in the changing curriculum of the Lu Confucian School), there is also an increased emphasis on *study*—in other words, an increased emphasis on understanding the importance of external influences. In the *Analects* and the *Mencius* sections that have the go passages, we can see the writers leading up to these new developments in Confucian thought.

For example, in *Mencius* VI.I.xv.i, the disciple Kung-tu returns and asks,

‘All are equally men, but some are great men and some are little men—how is this? Mencius replied, ‘Those who follow that part of themselves which is great are great men; those who follow that part which is little are little men.’

Analects XVII.ii suggests:

By nature, all men are nearly alike; by practice they get to be wide apart.’

More to the point is *Analects* XVII.vii. The Brooks say it was written after the Chu conquest of Lu. In other words, this seems to have been an underground rebel document that must have reflected the true thoughts of its composer. Yet it does seem close to Xun Zi’s system, and this was the direction Confucianism was certainly headed for in the period that followed, before the Qin domination of China in 221 BC.

In the Brooks translation:

The Master said, You, have you heard the Six Maxims and the Six Distortions? He replied, 'I have not.' (He said), 'Be at ease, I will tell you. To love rvn [ren] but not love study; its distortion is stupidity. To love wisdom but not love study; its distortion is difuseness. To love fidelity but not to love study; its distortion is banditry. To love uprightness but not to love study; its distortion is censoriousness. To love courage but not love study; its distortion is riotousness. To love firmness but not love study; its distortion is wildness.

Remembering that the Chinese considered thought as emanating from the heart, the Lau translation of *Mencius* Book VI.I.vii.vii, just before the forested mountain metaphor, says:

All palates have the same preferences in taste; all ears in sound; all eyes in beauty. Should hearts prove to be an exception by possessing nothing in common? What is it, then that is common to all hearts? Reason (yi) and rightness (li). Thus, reason and rightness please my heart in the same way as meat pleases my palate.

The Confucians of this period thought that the heart (rather than the brain) guides this type of thinking. This differs greatly from the older view of Legge, and even more so if Kim-chong Chong's suggestion is followed. In *Mencius: Contexts and Interpretations*; (Univ. of Hawaii Press; 2002), he points out that 'reason' could also be translated as good 'Patterns' or 'Principles' that are to the heart/mind 'like what good food is to the palate.'

The go passage of VI.I.ix.iii also shows a Xun Zi-like dichotomy of desires. The bad student wants to hunt a swan in nature; the good student wants to learn go in a civilized setting. This extends far beyond the simple contrast of 'nothing' and 'something' in the *Analects*, and seems to lead straight into the philosophy of Xun Zi.

From *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*:

[Xun Zi] notes that people desire the good, and on the principle that one desires what one doesn't already have, this shows that people are not good. . . . Their desires bring them into conflict because they don't know any better, not because they enjoy conflict. In fact, Xunzi believes people do not enjoy it at all, which is why they

desire the kind of life that results from good order brought about through the rituals of the sages.

. . . The original nature of Yao [a mythical god-sage-king] and Jie [a mythical tyrant] was the same. The difference was in how they cultivated themselves.

[Thus,] Yao reformed his original nature, Jie did not. In this way, Xunzi emphasizes the essential perfectibility of everyone. Human nature is bad, but it is not incorrigible, and in fact Xunzi was rather optimistic about the possibility of overcoming the demands of desires that result in the state of nature. Though Confucius suggests that some people are better off by nature than others, Mencius and Xunzi seem to agree that everyone starts out the same, though they differ on the content of that original state. Though Xunzi believes that it is always possible to reform oneself, he recognizes that in reality this will not always happen. In most cases, the individual himself has to make the first step in attempting to reform, and Xunzi is rather pessimistic about people actually doing this. They cannot be forced to do so, and they may in practice be unable to make the choice to improve . . .

. . . [Thus,] Because human nature is bad, Xunzi emphasizes the importance of study to learn the Way. He compares the process of reforming one's nature to making a pot out of clay or straightening wood with a press-frame. Without the potter, the clay would never become a pot on its own. Similarly, people will not be able to reform their nature without a teacher showing them what to do.

. . . The teacher plays an extremely important role in the course of study. A good teacher does not simply know the rituals, he embodies them and practices them in his own life. Just as one would not learn piano from someone who had just read a book on piano pedagogy but never touched an actual instrument, one should not study from someone who has only learned texts.

This new stage of Confucianism was fully reached in Xun Zi's *Dispelling Blindness*. This takes us briefly back to the dilemma of Ning He and what his uncle tried to tell him—that the *Shoo* said, 'Be careful of the beginning and reverent of the end; then, in the end you will have no distress.'

The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy comments:

. . . Xunzi discusses the right way to develop the heart to avoid falling into error. For study, the heart needs to be trained to be receptive, focused, and calm. These qualities of the heart allow it to know the Way, and knowing the Way, the heart can realize the benefits of the Way and practice it. This receptivity Xunzi calls emptiness, meaning the ability of the heart to continually store new information without becoming full. Focus is called unity, by which Xunzi means the ability to be aware of two aspects of a thing or situation without allowing them to interfere with each other. 'Being of two hearts' was a common problem in Chinese philosophical writings: it could mean being confused or perplexed about something, as well as what we would call being two-faced. Xunzi addresses the first aspect with his discussion of unity, a focus that keeps the heart directed and free from perplexity. The final quality the heart needs is stillness, the quality of moving freely from task to task without disorder, remaining unperturbed while processing new information. A heart that has the qualities of emptiness, unity, and stillness can understand the Way. Without these qualities, the heart is liable to fall into various kinds of 'blindness' or obsessions that Xunzi attributes to his philosophical rivals. Their hearts focus too much on just one aspect of the Way, so they are unable to see the big picture. They become obsessed with this one part and mistake it for the entirety of the Way. Only with the proper attitudes and control of one's heart can one perceive and grasp the Way as a whole.

These are matters that Master Qiu and any student of go will recognize as crucial for success.

In a process outlined in detail in the Origins article, after these modest beginnings and after the confusion of the times leading up to the establishment of the Han Empire in 206 BC, there were favorable comments, but also some that reflected the anti-Daoist sentiments of the Han writers. These were sometimes sincere, but also perhaps because Confucian thought was being promoted by the emperors. (Most tellingly, as outlined in the main Origins article, as the Yao myth was changed by hacks in the pay of the government, the politically correct conclusion became that go was bad because it did no good for Yao's rebellious son Dan Zhu. He was 'the best,' player because he learned Daoist strategic tricks and wasted all his time playing.

However, discussed in the main article and in Appendix IV, Ban Gu (32-92 AD) and Ma Rong (?-166 AD) identified the *dao* in go which anticipated the synthesis of go with Daoist, Confucian and Buddhist thought a thousand years later in the Song period. They also presaged the heavy increase in playing and skill in the Three Kingdoms period that followed the fall of the Han in 221 AD.

Coda: A Short Discussion of the Use of *Bo* and *Yi*

For a long time, a question has hung over any discussion of the early Confucian passages about go as to whether *bo* referred to *liu bo*, a dice game and *yi* referred to go. Some authors, such as Lien, writing in 2006, (after the Brooks published), even tried to demonstrate that the phrase *bo yi* referred only to *liu bo* and that *yi* as go was only used in the Han, along with *qi*. (Strangely, this seems to contradict his remarks about Confucian feelings towards go).

However, the Han writer Yang Xiong (53 B.C.-18 AD) wrote that, '*wei qi* was called *yi* to the east of the Han Gu Pass' and that *qi* was used elsewhere. This is the area between Qi and Lu and it seems significant that it was here that the only four mentions of the game in that period were written.

Also, the *Zuo Zhuan* and second *Mencius* passage use *yi* both in the beginning and in Master Qiu's name, while the first *Mencius* and the *Analects* passages use *bo yi*. In bound-paired-character words, the grammar is usually verb-verb or noun-noun and, although *yi* sometimes means 'playing,' if it is noun-verb, then the two characters would not appear together. Thus, *bo yi* as two games makes sense where it was used, but would have made no sense if used in the other two or used for Master Qiu's name. Also, in the extensive literature about *liu bo*, (whose rules are still unknown), there is no mention of someone picking up a piece like Ning He did, and pondering over strategies. And that passage is still the source of a go-related proverb in modern China.

Moreover, it seems unlikely that these writers would use a game the Confucians condemned for the wild drinking, quarreling and gambling that it inspired. This aspect is vividly illustrated in the Wikipedia description of famous players and games and the mid-3rd century BC *Songs of Chu* poem, *Summons of the Soul (Zhao Hun)*. The party has already started . . .

Hatstrings and fastening come untied: the revel turns to wild disorder

The singing-girls of Cheng and Wei come to take their places among the guests;

But the dancers of the Whirling Ch'u find favour over all the others

Then with bamboo dice and ivory pieces the game of liu bo is begun;

Sides are taken; they advance together; keenly they threaten each other.

Pieces are kinged and the scoring doubled. Shouts of 'five white!' arise.

Day and night are swallowed up in continuous merriment of wine. . . .

In wine they attain the heights of pleasure, and give delight to the dear departed. (6)



Two Immortals caught up in a frantic game of liu bo

If the writers of the *Mencius* disliked gambling, or at least excessive gambling so much, why would they use *liu bo* as an exemplar in the second passage? It would certainly confuse readers!

Thus, it seems that the only reason for calling *yi* anything but *wei qi* is the lack of written descriptions and archeological evidence, the reasons for which were discussed above.

Footnotes

1. Adapted from James Legge *The Chinese Classics Vol 5*. As with Vol. 2, there are many versions, both in print and as e-downloads. Page numbers vary.
2. E.B and T. Brooks *The Original Analects* (Columbia Univ. Press 1998)
3. James Legge *The Chinese Classics Vol. 2*
4. *Journal of the American Oriental Society* Vol. 126, No. 4 (Oct. - Dec., 2006 p. 567. Available through Jstor.
5. Regarding the comments on its utter dislike of *liu bo* by the Confucians, its methods of play and its role in divination, see Y. Zheng 'Preliminary Remarks on the Games of Liubo and Saixi' and 'Divining from the Game Liubo: An Explanation of A Han Wooden Slip,' both in the *China Archaeology and Art Digest* issue on Fortune, Games and Gaming, Vol. 4, No. 4, October-December 1999. Available in .pdf from the Chess and Games Library at <http://history.chess.free.fr/library.htm> .
6. D. Hawkes *The Songs of the South: An Anthology of Ancient Chinese Poems by Qu Yuan and Other Poets* 1985 Penguin Books. p. 229

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