

**FROM ENTERTAINMENT TO ENLIGHTENMENT:  
A STUDY ON A CROSS-CULTURAL RELIGIOUS BOARD GAME  
WITH AN EMPHASIS ON THE TABLE OF BUDDHA SELECTION  
DESIGNED BY OUYI ZHIXU OF THE LATE MING DYNASTY**

by

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## ABSTRACT

Based on textual sources and folk art works, this dissertation is an interdisciplinary investigation of three primary subject matters: the Chinese Buddhist device called the *Xuanfo tu* 選佛圖 (Table of Buddha Selection), its designer, Ouyi Zhixu 藕益智旭 (1599-1655), who was a prominent patriarch of the Pure Land School, and a variety of similar religious devices found outside China. Since a religious device of this nature is rarely mentioned in any literature of Chinese Buddhism, one chapter is devoted to reconstructing the history of this device, including those embedded with terms of Buddhism as well as of other Chinese religions. For the same reason of lack of academic study, a historical survey of the game's secular prototypes, the *Shengguan tu* 陞官圖 (Table of Bureaucratic Promotion), is also included. These surveys also contain cultural and political conditions under which this gambling-oriented prototype and its religious counterparts were created. Against these backgrounds, *Xuanfo tu*'s game board and its manual, the *Xuanfo pu* 選佛譜 (Manual of Buddha Selection), are analyzed contextually to help comprehend their contents and Zhixu's intentions in creation and preaching. The later chapters continue to trace the cultural journey of the device to other Asian countries — Korea and Japan to the east of China and Tibet, Nepal, India, and Bhutan to the west. Similar religious devices are found to have been circulating in these areas for centuries. A comparative study of them yields fascinating insights that enrich our knowledge of the content and audiences of these games, how the game's layouts help propagandize religious beliefs, and how these teachings relate to the religious practice of the times. This dissertation 1) demonstrates the roles of the device in spreading Zhixu's teachings and reputation and generalizing Pure Land teachings during the Ming-Qing dynasties as an example of the Buddhist idea of *upāya* or expedient means, and 2) attempts to redraw attention to its basic function as a didactical tool and rediscover the otherwise unknown cross-border cultural phenomenon about the adoption of the game that have long been neglected by historians.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

Based primarily on textual sources and folk art works, this dissertation is an interdisciplinary investigation of three primary subject matters: the Chinese Buddhist device called the *Xuanfo tu* 選佛圖 (Table of Buddha Selection), its designer who was a prominent patriarch of the Pure Land School, and a variety of similar religious devices found outside China. Since a religious device of this nature is rarely mentioned in any literature of Chinese Buddhism, one chapter of this study is devoted to bringing it out of oblivion by reconstructing its history and that of other similar religious products. In order to give a holistic picture of the prevalence and the variety of these board games, the materials gathered for analysis will focus not only on those games that were embedded with ideas and terms of Buddhism but also on those of other Chinese religions. In addition, this study aims to fill another gap through providing a historical survey of the game's secular prototypes, the *Shengguan tu* 陞官圖 (Table of Bureaucratic Promotion). This survey attempts to rewrite and supplement the history of this bureaucratic prototype and intends to give a more comprehensive understanding of the cultural and political conditions under which this gambling-oriented prototype and its religious counterparts were created. Moreover, to complete our understanding of extant Buddhist games in regard to their characteristics and impacts on promoting Buddhist teachings among the players as well as how the players comprehended religion through playing the game, discussions include a general review of the game board of the *Xuanfo tu* and the personal opinions and experiences of Zhixu 智旭 (1599-1655; zi Ouyi 藕益, hao Babu daoren 八不道人), the creator of the only surviving version of this kind of Buddhist game in China. All these topics constitute the first three main chapters

of the dissertation while the rest of the dissertation, that is, the last three main chapters, trace the cultural journey of the device to other Asian countries, Korea and Japan to the east of China, and Tibet, Nepal, India, and Bhutan to the west. Similar religious devices are found to have been circulating in these areas for centuries. Their diversity in design and persistence and extensiveness in circulation can only be described as astonishing. An examination of the materials I have managed to gather alone demonstrates how wide the range and coverage of the influences of the devices were, which suggests nothing but an otherwise unknown cross-cultural similarity in religious propaganda and communication within these areas. As the devices in China are the focus of this dissertation and the periods for their emergence are the earliest among all these countries based on sources available to me, the histories and findings of the subjects in China will be taken as the criterion for comparison and analysis in my study.

Since the subject matters discussed in this dissertation are comparatively new to many, a considerable effort has been made to analyze primary and secondary sources in different languages to trace the origin and establish the development and influence of the devices in the countries in question. The cross-referencing of these materials opens new insights into different aspects of the research areas. For instance, the original name for the secular prototype turns out to be a very helpful clue in dating the introduction of the board games into Korea and Japan. Cross-referencing also uncovers a Korean source that has not been mentioned in any works by Chinese historians and folklorists but is valuable in representing the popularity of the board games in the late Ming period (1368-1644). Other noteworthy and interesting findings are yielded by reexamining some frequently cited yet underappreciated materials. In the case of China, for example, such new findings can enrich

the details of or even rewrite the early development of the secular board game during the Tang dynasty (618-907).

The primary sources for both the bureaucratic and religious promotion games in China are comparatively scarce and scattered, so there are only a few research papers on these subjects. Other than brief mentions of the Daoist variants in some books, there has been almost no detailed study of the religious board games, particularly the Buddhist version designed by Zhixu, except for a brief discussion by Takahashi Junji 高橋順二 in his book, Nihon esugoroku shūsei 日本繪双六集成 (Collection of Japanese Pictorial Double Sixes), published in 1994<sup>1</sup> and a 2009 presentation paper named “Playing with Karma: A Chinese Buddhist Board Game” by Beverly Foulks,<sup>2</sup> who discusses the game based on Zhixu’s own foreword to the game manual. In regard to those studies of the bureaucratic prototypes, many of them are short essays based on different combinations of information selected from the same group of materials and coming up with similar findings and opinions.<sup>3</sup> Most of these works emphasize a few prominent historical figures who had showed interest in the games and outline the same history for the games, considering the bureaucratic prototypes to be the folk products of the Tang-Song era (618-1279) that lasted through the downfall of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), and that some Daoist and gambling versions were popular in the

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<sup>1</sup> Takahashi Junji 高橋順二, Nihon esugoroku shūsei 日本繪双六集成 [Collection of Japanese Pictorial Double Sixes] (Tokyo: Kashiwa bijutsu shuppan 柏美術出版, 1994) 147-148.

<sup>2</sup> This paper was presented at the North American Graduate Student Conference in Buddhist Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, April 18, 2009.

<sup>3</sup> In fact, according to Lai Jianming 賴建銘, early around 1929, a Cantonese called Xie Baoqiao 謝保樵 (fl. 1920s-1930s) had already earned his doctoral degree at Columbia University by analyzing the development of the bureaucratic systems of the Ming and Qing dynasties based on his favourite plaything, the *Shengguan tu*. He was said to have taught and amused his classmates and even professors with this game; after graduation, he served as a diplomatic officer for a period of time. Unfortunately, since Lai’s article is in Chinese, I have difficulty locating this dissertation, the probable first ever academic research work on the *Shengguan tu*, for my study here. For details, see Lai Jianming, “Shengguan tu za hua 陞官圖雜話 [Trivial Talks about the Table of Bureaucratic Promotion],” Wenshi huikan 文史薈刊 1 (June, 1959) 71.

Qing and even had been played by members of the imperial family. Papers published early in the 1930s have already demonstrated such approaches; the “Tan shengguan tu 談陞官圖 (On the Table of Bureaucratic Promotion)” by Li Zhenggong 李正躬 in 1934 and the “Shoukanzu o kataru 陞官圖を語る (On the Table of Bureaucratic Promotion)” by Wu Shouli 吳守禮 in 1935 are two examples.<sup>4</sup> After their attempts, the subjects fell into oblivion for several decades until recently when they began to attract attention once again. However, a large portion of these later publications prefers summarizing information to working more on the new details of the history or the content. The tendency is particularly obvious in those books with a general overview of a larger topic. Examples can be seen in the 1990 book, Zhonghua chuantong youxi daquan 中華傳統遊戲大全 (Complete Collection of Chinese Traditional Games) by Ma Guojun 麻國鈞 and Ma Shuyun 麻淑雲; the 1993 book, Caiquan, boxi, duiwu: Zhongguo minjian youxi dubo huodong 猜拳・博戲・對舞: 中國民間遊戲賭博活動 (Finger-Guessing Games, Gambling Games, Pair Dances: Chinese Folk Games and Gambling Activities) by Wang Dingzhang 王定璋; and the 1994 work entitled Zhongguo gudai dubo xisu 中國古代賭博習俗 (Gambling Customs in Ancient China) by Luo Xinben 羅新本 and Xu Rongsheng 許蓉生.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, a handful of them still manage to discuss

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<sup>4</sup> See Li Zhenggong 李正躬, “Tan shengguan tu 談陞官圖 [On the Table of Bureaucratic Promotion],” Taibai 太白半月刊 1: 8 (1934) 414-415; and Wu Shouli 吳守禮, “Shoukanzu o kataru 陞官圖を語る [On the Table of Bureaucratic Promotion],” Nanpo dozoku: the Ethnographical Journal of South-East Asia and Formosa 南方土俗 3: 3 (March, 1935) 37-46.

<sup>5</sup> Ma Guojun 麻國鈞 and Ma Shuyun 麻淑雲, Zhonghua chuantong youxi daquan 中華傳統遊戲大全 [Complete Collection of Chinese Traditional Games] (Beijing: Nongcun duwu chubanshe 農村讀物出版社, 1990); Wang Dingzhang 王定璋, Caiquan, boxi, duiwu: Zhongguo minjian youxi dubo huodong 猜拳・博戲・對舞: 中國民間遊戲賭博活動 [Finger-Guessing Games, Gambling Games, Pair Dances: Chinese Folk Games and Gambling Activities] (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe 四川人民出版社, 1993); and Luo Xinben 羅新本 and Xu Rongsheng 許蓉生, Zhongguo gudai dubo xisu 中國古代賭博習俗 [Gambling Customs in Ancient China] (Shanxi Province: Shanxi renmin chubanshe 陝西人民出版社, 1994).

the subjects with different approaches or to provide some new information by describing or analyzing the contents of various versions that were available to the authors, such as “Wei bei shidai taotai de shengguan tu 未被時代淘汰的陞官圖 (The Table of Bureaucratic Promotion that Has Not Been Eliminated by the Times)” by Lu Yan 魯言 in 1978, “‘Lidai Zhiguan biao’ yu ‘Shengguan tu’ 《歷代職官表》與《陞官圖》 (‘Table of the Government Official of Past Dynasties’ and ‘Table of Bureaucratic Promotion’)” by Zhou Shao 周劭 in 1995, and “The Chinese Game of Shengguan tu” by Carole Morgan in 2004.<sup>6</sup> Among all these studies, the most informative and comprehensive research has been done by Song Bingren 宋秉仁 in 2005 in “Shengguan tu youxi yange kao 陞官圖遊戲沿革考 (On the History and Development of the Game of the Table of Bureaucratic Promotion),” in which the author succeeds in tracing the history of the bureaucratic games in great detail and in collecting a considerable quantity of game boards with varied pattern designs and official systems.<sup>7</sup>

Similar to the general views of Chinese historians toward the games, the approach of many primary sources and modern research papers on the devices circulated in other Asian countries mentioned above is basically to present them artistically and ethnologically as a form of gambling game or folk art with religious, bureaucratic, or scenic spot themes.

Sources of this type that are cited in this dissertation include a nineteenth-century text,

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<sup>6</sup> See Lu Yan 魯言, “Wei bei shidai taotai de shengguan tu 未被時代淘汰的陞官圖 [The Table of Bureaucratic Promotion that Has Not Been Eliminated by the Times],” *Xianggang dubo shi* 香港賭博史 [History of Gambling in Hong Kong] (Hong Kong: Guangjiaojing chubanshe 廣角鏡出版社, 1978) 216-284; Zhou Shao 周劭, “‘Lidai Zhiguan biao’ yu ‘Shengguan tu’ 《歷代職官表》與《陞官圖》 [‘Table of the Government Official of Past Dynasties’ and ‘Table of Bureaucratic Promotion’],” *Huanghun xiaopin* 黃昏小品 [Dusk’s Sketches] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, 1995) 120-130; and Carole Morgan, “The Chinese Game of Shengguan tu,” *The Journal of the American Oriental Society* 124: 3 (July 2004) 517-532.

<sup>7</sup> Song Bingren 宋秉仁, “Shengguan tu youxi yange kao 陞官圖遊戲沿革考 [On the History and Development of the Game of the Table of Bureaucratic Promotion],” *Bulletin of Historical Research of Taiwan Normal University* 台灣師大歷史學報 33 (2005) 27-78.

“Huigu byeonjeung seol 戲具辨證說 (Investigation of Games and Toys),” by a Korean intellectual named Yi Gyugyeong 李圭景 (b. 1788-ca. 1850); a field research report, Chōsen no kyōdo goraku 朝鮮の郷土娯樂 (Chōsen Local Entertainments), conducted by the Chōsen Sōtokufu 朝鮮總督府 (Government-General of Chōsen) that was published in 1941; a chapter, “The ‘Spectacle’ of Womanhood: New Types in Texts and Pictures on Pictorial *Sugoroku* Games of the Late Edo Period,” in a 2005 book by Susanne Formanek; and a 2006 book, The Art of Play: Board and Card Games in India, edited by Andrew Topsfield.<sup>8</sup> These works provide considerable information about the game boards circulating in their countries, such as their contents, pattern designs, and distributions. In addition to these aspects, a few cited sources also emphasize the analysis of the beliefs or systems embedded in the game boards, which are crucial to the study of the subject in understanding how the arrangements of different game designs present the teachings to the player in a limited space. Fine examples can be seen in the 1977 Rebirth: The Tibetan Game of Liberation by Mark Tatz and Jody Kent, and the 1994 article “Jieshao yifu Xizang tangka sengren youxitu ‘Salang langxia’ 介紹一幅西藏唐卡僧人遊戲圖《薩朗朗廈》 (An Introduction of the ‘Salam Namshak,’ a Tibetan Thangka of Game Board for Monks)” by Tsedan Geleh 次旦格列.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> See Chōsen Sōtokufu 朝鮮總督府 [Government-General of Chōsen, 1910-1945], Chōsen no kyōdo goraku 朝鮮の郷土娯樂 [Chōsen Local Entertainments] (Keijō: Chōsen Sōtokufu, 1941); Yi Gyugyeong 李圭景 (b. 1788-ca. 1850), “Huigu byeonjeung seol 戲具辨證說 [Investigation of Games and Toys],” Ohju yeonmun jangjeon sango 五洲衍文長箋散稿 [Uncollected Draft of Exegesis and Redundancy by Ohju] (Seoul: Dongguk munhwasa 東國文化社, 1959) 834-838; Susanne Formanek, “The ‘Spectacle’ of Womanhood: New Types in Texts and Pictures on Pictorial *Sugoroku* Games of the Late Edo Period,” Written Texts – Visual Texts: Woodblock-Printed Media in Early Modern Japan, eds. Susanne Formanek and Sepp Linhart (Amsterdam: Hotei Publishing, 2005) 73-108; and Andrew Topsfield, ed., The Art of Play: Board and Card Games in India (Mumbai, India: Marg Publications, 2006).

<sup>9</sup> Mark Tatz, and Jody Kent, Rebirth: The Tibetan Game of Liberation (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press, 1977) and Tsedan Geleh 次旦格列, “Jieshao yifu Xizang tangka sengren youxitu ‘Salang langxia’ 介紹一幅西藏唐卡僧人遊戲圖《薩朗朗廈》 [An Introduction of the ‘Salam Namshak,’ a Tibetan Thangka of Game Board for Monks],” Tibetan Art Studies 西藏藝術研究 3 (1994) 25-26.

With the help of the descriptions and the analytical information of all these primary and secondary sources, and the cross-referencing and the reexamination of these materials, this dissertation attempts to draw new attention to the basic function of the devices as a didactic tool for preaching religious beliefs and to rediscover the cross-border phenomenon of the adoption of the game for spreading religions in various countries that has long been neglected by historians.

As repeatedly mentioned, since the subject in this study is fairly new to many researchers, this opening chapter intends to provide more background details on them before introducing the structure or general framework of this dissertation. Hence, the subsequent section focuses on briefly describing the regular components of both the secular and religious devices found in China, and then the missionary life and contributions of Zhixu on which his reputation as a successful teacher of various Buddhist traditions is based.

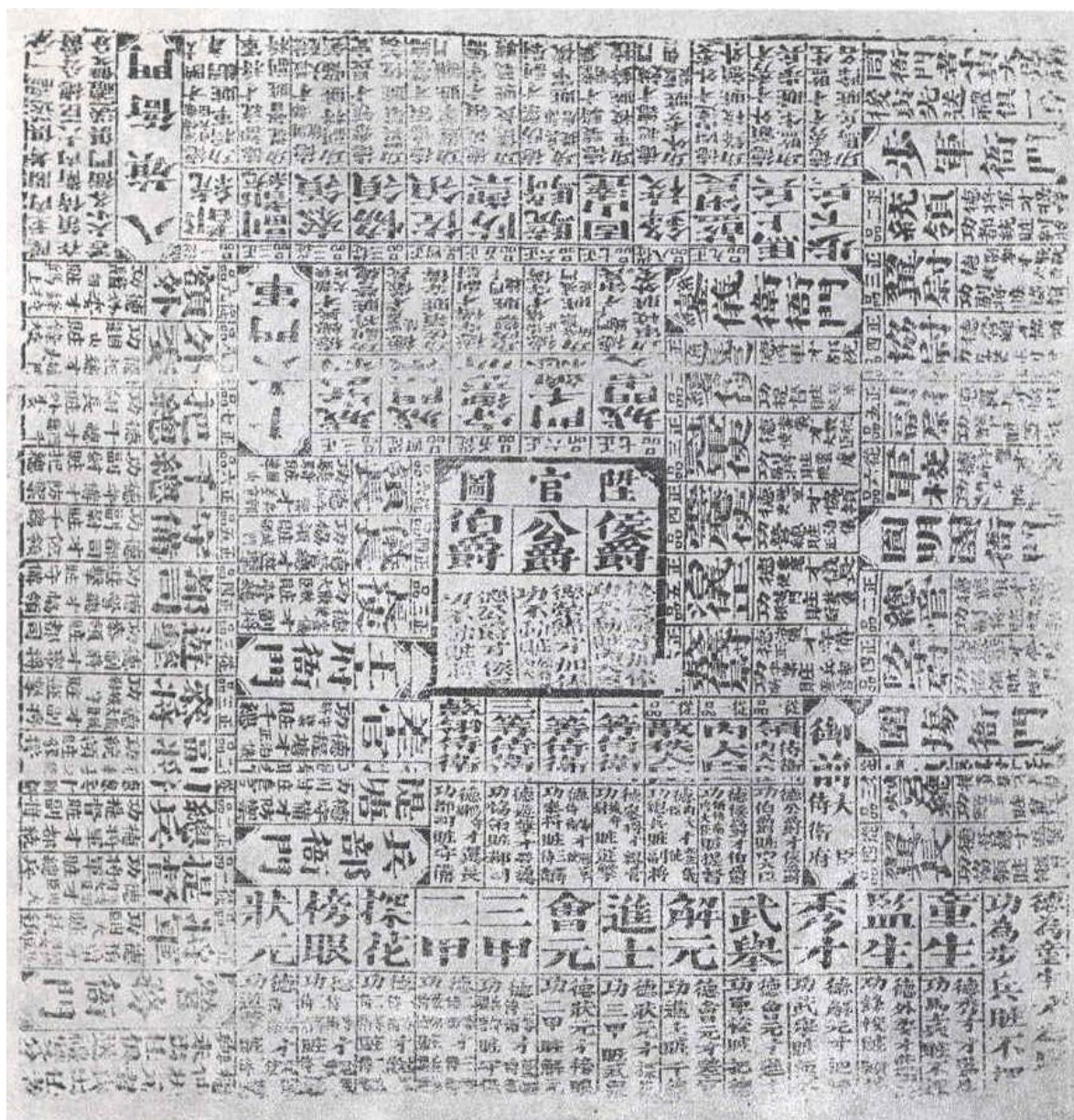
## 1.1 Game Components

### 1.1.1 Game board

At first glance, the board games look like a hybrid of western backgammon and Monopoly. Printed on a piece of paper or paper board, both the *Shengguan tu* and the *Xuanfo tu* contained a number of spaces with captions followed by brief additional information or instructions printed inside (Figures 1.1, 1.2, 3.5 and 3.8). There were several patterns of spatial arrangement. The most common pattern was the type arranged by several layers of concentric quadrates with the most important positions located at the centre, with the lowest positions on the furthest outer quadrate. In later periods, however, versions that

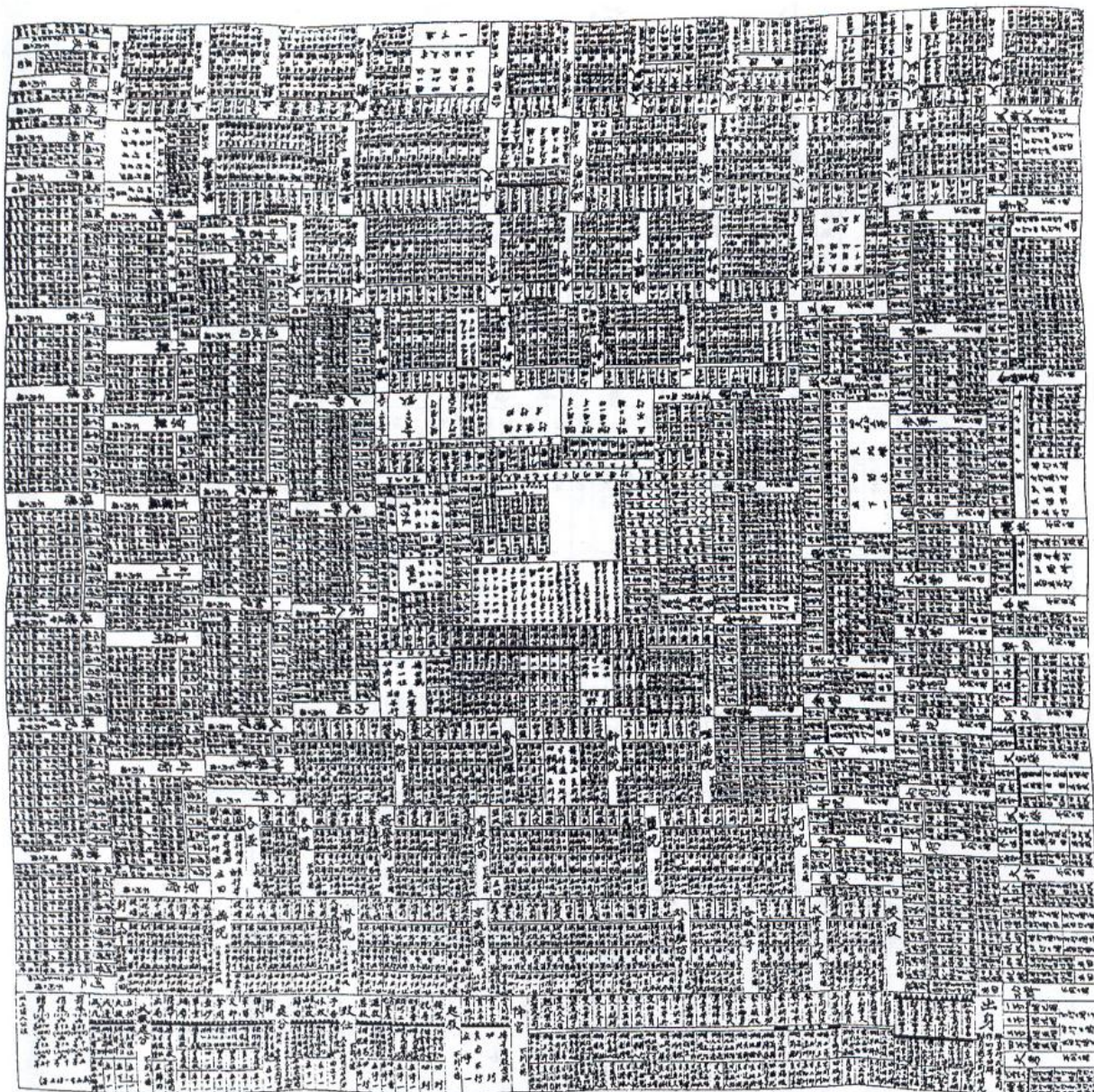
were arranged in simpler spiral patterns could also be found. The spaces of the *Shengguan tu* were filled with titles of government officials, under which there were a few lines of instructions about all possible moves in accordance with the outcomes from throwing the dice, denoting bureaucratic rewards, punishments, and special assignments. The instructions also included sets of complex rules for the distribution of the counters for the purpose of gambling. A player won the game when he was “promoted” to any of the high-ranking official posts at the centre. For gamblers, bamboo slips were used as counters and the winner was the one who profited the most by calculating the counters after any one of the players reached the centre position. In the case of the *Xuanfo tu* designed by Zhixu, the spaces were printed with Buddhist terms and statuses of different levels of enlightenment but the rules of the game were recorded in great detail in a supplementary manual that came with the game. Like the *Shengguan tu*, the winner of this religious version was the one who first “ascended” to the status of Buddha or perfect enlightenment, a position usually located at the centre of the arrangement patterns.



Figure 1.1 *Shengguan tu*.

55 x 55 cm. This is a Qing-dynasty black and white wood-block print. It was reproduced in Yangliuqing 楊柳青, Tianjin, Hebei, a printing centre of Chinese New Year prints in North China during the late imperial era (Wang, 1991, vol. 2, p. 550).



Figure 1.2 *Shengguan tu*.

90 x 80 cm. This is a 1978 reproduction of a Qing-version *Shengguan tu* printed in Taipei, Taiwan. This print demonstrates the complexity of the game (Song, 2005, p. 72).

The zest enjoyed by the players of both categories of the games was the excitement in experiencing life events. The secular *Shengguan tu* seemed to be a miniature of Chinese officialdom that embodied the life goal of Confucian students and scholar-officials, offering them different courses of bureaucratic experiences that they had either anticipated or not

expected. It even could offer such experiences and knowledge of officialdom to those gamblers who by no means could enter the government. Likewise, the religious *Xuanfo tu* could provide its players nominal spiritual journeys with different levels of pseudo-temporal meditative attainment throughout the two-dimensional structure of the ten Dharma realms displayed on the game board. If the *Gongguo ge* 功過格 (Ledgers of Merit and Demerit) could be regarded as the account book of karma,<sup>10</sup> the *Xuanfo tu* should be deemed the cosmography of the spiritual universes expounded in Buddhist sūtras.

Before embarking on their “virtual” careers and spiritual journeys, the players of both games had to cast the dice to determine their starting statuses first, with the career origin for the bureaucratic versions and the initial condition of the mind for the *Xuanfo tu*. This feature is also what made the games so unique in their layouts, which differentiates them from other board games. In the case of the *Xuanfo tu*, the starting point was indicated as the “*fashi yindi* 發始因地 (fundamental cause of the initial functioning [of mind]; Figure 1.3),” the state of performing Buddhist practices that leads to the “*guodi* 果地 (resulting Buddhahood).” It consists of twenty-one groups of beings in different stages of mind, which, from the most deluded to the least deluded within the six paths of reincarnation, including the “*shangpin shie* 上品十惡 (ten vices, or *daśākuśala*, of the high level),” “*zhongpin shie* 中品十惡 (ten vices of the middle level),” “*xiapin shie* 下品十惡 (ten vices of the low level),” “*jianqu* 見取 (clinging to heterodox views),” “*manxin xingshi* 慢心行施 (perform charity activities in arrogance),” “*shijian fu* 世間福 (worldly blessedness),” “*jiequ* 戒取 (clinging to the precepts of heterodox teachers),” “*xiapin shishan* 下品十善 (ten good [deeds] of the low level),”

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<sup>10</sup> For details, see the work by Cynthia J. Brokaw, *The Ledgers of Merit and Demerit: Social Change and Moral Order in Late Imperial China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).



“*zhongpin shishan* 中品十善 (ten good [deeds] of the middle level),” “*shangpin shishan* 上品十善 (ten good [deeds] of the high level),” “*xieding* 邪定 (heterodox meditative mind, or *samādhi*),” “*weichan* 味禪 (taste of meditation, or *dhyāna*),” “*genben sichan* 根本四禪 (four fundamental meditations),” “*si wuliangxin* 四無量心 (four infinite minds),” “*si wuseding* 四無色定 (four formless meditations),” “*yijian canchan* 意見參禪 (meditation with thoughts),” “*liming xijiao* 利名習教 (studying Buddhism for fame and gain),” “*chushi fuye* 出世福業 (non-worldly karma of blessedness),” “*chushi jiexue* 出世戒學 (non-worldly learning by the precepts),” “*chushi dingxue* 出世定學 (non-worldly learning by meditation),” and “*chushi huixue* 出世慧學 (non-worldly learning by wisdom).” These reveal the many possible mind conditions, from the polar extremities of worldly mentalities and behaviours, such as wickedness and benevolence, to the various kinds of meditative level as a result of religious practices. Simply based on the variety listed in this “fundamental cause of the initial functioning [of mind],” one can imagine how complicated the game is and how seriously Zhixu took the creation of his game.

**Figure 1.3**

**The section of the “Fundamental cause of the initial functioning (of mind)” of the *Xuanfo tu*.**



(<http://www.ouyi.mymailer.com.tw/ouyihtm/019/019-3.htm>;  
see Figure 3.5 for the full image of the game board.)

The *Shengguan tu* starts with determining a player's "*chushen* 出身 (career origin)," an exclusive procedure that corresponds to a factual socio-political phenomenon developed alongside the civil service examination and the bureaucratic system (Figures 1.4 and 1.5).<sup>11</sup> All players were assumed to be "*baiding* 白丁 (commoner)" and, after the first throw of the dice that determined their *chushen*, they proceeded to the appropriate positions in turn, either promoted or demoted, in accordance with instructions and restrictions. When referring to the *chushen* of an official during the time between the Tang and the Qing (1644-1911) dynasties, it referred to his beginning a career in government service. For example, a person indicated as "*Juren chushen* 舉人出身" meant that he entered government service via status as a provincial graduate of the civil service examinations. This system was generally divided into the "*zhengtutu chushen* 正途出身 (career origin based on regular paths)" and "*yitutu chushen* 異途出身 (career origin based on irregular paths)." The "regular paths" included those who entered into officialdom via regular recruitment examinations, such as the *Jinshi* 進士 (metropolitan graduate) or *Juren* 舉人 (provincial graduate), as well as those who graduated from the hierarchy of state schools and relied on inheritance privileges, such as the five classes of *gongsheng* 貢生 (tribute student [for the provincial level examination]), the *engong* 恩貢 (tribute [student] by grace), *bagong* 拔貢 (tribute [student] for preeminence), *fugong* 副貢 (second class tribute [student]), *suigong* 歲貢 (annual tribute [student]), and *yougong* 優貢 (tribute [student] for excellence). The "irregular paths" consisted of those who entered into government service via paths that were considered less esteemed and less promising, like officials who were promoted from subofficial functionaries and who obtained

<sup>11</sup> Wang Shouan 王壽南, *Sui Tang shi* 隋唐史 [Histories of the Sui and Tang Dynasties] (Taipei: Sanmin shuju 三民書局, 2002) 565.

their status by purchase. Those who entered the service by irregular paths could subsequently be reclassified into the regular path if they could be recommended (*baoju* 保舉) by government officials yet they were forever prohibited from appointment to some sensitive high official positions such as Academician in the Hanlin Academy and officials in the Departments of Rites and Revenue. Such restrictions had been implemented for centuries; however, during the Qing dynasty, Manchus were free of such restrictions.

Figure 1.4 An example of the *chushen* section of the *Shengguan tu*.



(See Figure 2.4 for the full image of the game board; Song, 2005, p. 70)

Figure 1.5 An example of the *chushen* section of the *Shengguan tu*.

白丁	童生	案首	監生	秀才	廩生	貢生	舉人	解元	進士	會元	傳臚	探花	榜眼	狀元
功德	功德	功德	功德	功德	功德	功德	功德	功德	功德	功德	功德	功德	功德	功德
童生	童生	案首	監生	貢生	廩生	貢生	舉人	進士	會元	探花	傳臚	榜眼	狀元	狀元
庶才	庶才	庶才	庶才	庶才	庶才	庶才	庶才	庶才	庶才	庶才	庶才	庶才	庶才	庶才
不動	不動	不動	不動	不動	不動	不動	不動	不動	不動	不動	不動	不動	不動	不動

(Song, 2005, p. 69)

As many existing *Shengguan tu* are based on Ming and Qing systems, their designs in the *chushen* sections adequately reflect the contemporary political situation and its influence on students who prepared to enter officialdom (Figures 1.4 and 1.5). In most versions, the numbers of the *chushen* statuses vary roughly from ten to fifteen but the number can go up to

thirty-four when the content of the *Shengguan tu* is rich in details about government hierarchy. Here follows details of one produced in the Qing dynasty with thirty-four different *chushen*: they are “*Taiji* 臺吉 (Taiji [Mongolian noble status]),” “*neishiwei* 內侍衛 (palace guard),” “*Shengyi fengsisheng* 聖裔奉祀生 (student sacrificer who descended from the Sage [Confucius]),” “*Xianyi fengsisheng* 賢裔奉祀生 (student sacrificer who descended from worthy men),” “*huangdaizi* 黃帶子 (imperial clansmen),” “*hongdaizi* 紅帶子 (imperial in-law),” “*Ewai zhongshu* 額外中書 (supernumerary secretary),” “*Ewai qiyuan* 額外旗員 (supernumerary bannerman),” “*kuli* 庫吏 (storehouse subofficial functionary),” “*zhiyuan* 職員 (functioning official),” “*Hongbo* 鴻博 (erudite literatus),” “*yinsheng* 蔭生 (student by inheritance),” “*enshang* 恩賞 (student by grace),” “*baoju* 保舉 (guaranteed recommendation),” “*cike* 詞科 (examination of *ci* poetry),” “*jungong* 軍功 (military accomplishment),” “*yixu* 議敘 (by censorial recommendation),” “*xiangyong* 鄉勇 (township braves),” “*bitieshi* 筆帖式 (clerk),” “*fanyisheng* 繙譯生 (apprentice translator/foreign language student),” “*guanxuesheng* 官學生 (official student [under the Directorate of Education]),” “*yuewusheng* 樂舞生 (ceremonial music and dance performer),” “*gongshi* 供士 (hired employee),” “*shoubing* 守兵 (guard),” “*shengyuan* 生員 (government student),” “*wusheng* 武生 (cadet),” “*jiansheng* 監生 (national university students),” “*xiaoqi* 驍騎 (courageous guard),” “*liyuan* 吏員 (clerical official),” “*tongsheng* 童生 (Confucian apprentice),” “*qiding* 旗丁 (grain transport soldier),” “*tianwensheng* 天文生 (student in astronomy),” “*yisheng* 醫生 (student of general medicine),” and “*tusi* 土司 (aboriginal

official).”<sup>12</sup> This list of official posts in the beginning squares of the game demonstrates how complicated the game could be because the variety of these posts needed a considerable number of corresponding advanced positions in officialdom to develop their routes of promotion on the game board. At the same time, such a long list of official posts of varied bureaucratic departments also reveals the meticulousness and seriousness of the game designer, who must surely have been a scholar-official very familiar with the bureaucratic system.

### 1.1.2 Dice

In addition to a game board, the games came with some pieces or figurines to represent the players and one to six dice to determine their moves; for gamblers, bamboo slips were used as counters. In the *Xuanfo tu*, a player’s movement was determined by two dice, on which six Chinese characters, “*nan* 南,” “*mo* 無,” “*a* 阿,” “*mi* 彌,” “*tuo* 陀,” and “*fo* 佛,” were written, which, in combination, mean “taking refuge in Buddha Amitābha” (Figure 1.6). Zhixu’s adoption of the name of Amitābha Buddha clearly demonstrated the popularity of Pure Land Buddhism at the time and his support of this tradition. For the secular models, the dice were originally engraved with six Chinese characters, which were “*de* 德 (virtue),” “*cai* 才 (capability),” “*gong* 功 (accomplishment),” “*liang* 良 (decency),” “*rou* 柔 (timidity),” and “*zang* 贓 (corruption).” When playing the game, the combinations of any pair or pairs of “*de*,” “*cai*,” “*gong*,” and “*liang*” almost guaranteed a promotion, while the outcomes of “*rou*” and “*zang*” in pairs ensure demotion. The most complicated results were

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<sup>12</sup> Song Bingren, “Shengguan tu youxi yange kao,” pp. 57-58. The translations of Chinese official titles in this dissertation are based on those found in, Charles O. Hucker, A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985).



mixtures of these two groups. In some simplified versions of the game, the dice were replaced by a top with four flat sides, on which the Chinese characters of “*de*,” “*cai*,” “*gong*,” and “*zang*” were written. As the game became popular for gambling, gamblers preferred dice with a series of number from one to six indicated by red and black dots like those still used today. Simply based on the meanings of the characters on the archaic dice and their rules, it is not difficult to see that the creator of the *Shengguan tu* intended to remind people about basic Confucian principles such as that a responsible government official should highly value virtue, develop his capabilities, render great service to the country, and be a good man, neither timid nor corrupt.

**Figure 1.6 A die for Buddhist board game.**



Although this illustration is of the die for a Buddhist game adopted in Korea, it resembles that used for the *Xuanfo tu*, on which the six Chinese characters of the name of “Amitābha” are carved. The one used for the *Shengguan tu* is also engraved with six Chinese characters (Culin, 1920, p. 226).

## **1.2 Missionary Life and Contributions of Ouyi Zhixu**

### **1.2.1 The Ninth Patriarch of the Pure Land School**

Zhixu, a late Ming Buddhist monk and an essential creator of the subject of my research, was born Zhong Jiming 鍾際明 in Mudu 木瀆, a town situated to the west of Suzhou 蘇州 lying at the foot of Mount Lingyan 靈岩山 on the banks of Lake Tai 太湖. His

parents, Zhong Zhifeng 鍾之鳳 and Jin Dalian 金大蓮, were pious Buddhists. They were said to have been married for years with no children. Finally they decided to pray to Guanyin for offspring and in a dream the wife was given a son by the Bodhisattva, after which she soon gave birth to the Master. Like other children, Zhixu received regular education in Confucian literature, because of which he gradually felt repelled by Daoism and Buddhism and at one time even put himself to the trouble of writing an essay “Pi fo lun 闢佛論 (On Exposing Buddhism)” to refute it. This essay was later destroyed as his attitude towards Buddhism began to change at sixteen when he happened to come across two works by the remarkable Buddhist master Zhuhong 祿宏 (1535-1615; *zi* Fohui 佛慧, *hao* Lianchi 蓮池; the Eighth Patriarch of the Pure Land School), the Zizhi lu 自知錄 (Record of Self-Knowledge) and the Zhuchuang suibi 竹窗隨筆 (Jottings under a Bamboo Window). After the death of his father in 1618, Zhixu developed the idea of entering the clergy while studying the Dizangputa benyuan jing 地藏菩薩本願經 (The Sūtra of Bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha’s Fundamental Vows; Skt. Kṣitigarbha Pūrvaprañidhana-sūtra). This experience turned out to be significant, as the ideas from this sūtra had a great impact on him throughout his life, in addition to those of Pure Land Buddhism. To a certain degree, his worship of Bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha or Dizang also played a significant role in inspiring the Buddhist promotion game. He also showed interest in other sūtras such as the Dafoding rulai miyin xiuzheng liaoyi zhupusawanhang shoulengyan jing 大佛頂如來密因修證了義諸菩薩萬行首楞嚴經 (Skt. Śūraṅgama-sūtra), a sūtra that is generally studied by Chan practitioners.

Three years later, in 1621, he eventually decided to become a monk by taking Amitābha Buddha’s forty-eight vows in front of a statue of Amitābha and assuming the name

of Upāsaka Dalang 大朗優婆塞. This vow-taking explicitly reveals that he was strongly influenced by the Pure Land beliefs advocated by Zhuhong. In the following year, Zhixu went to a disciple of Deqing 德清 (1546-1623; *zi* Chengyin 澄印, *hao* Hanshan 憨山), Xueling 雪嶺, to receive his ordination; he mentioned in his later works that he had dreamed three times of Deqing, the master he admired and wanted to follow, but, at the time of his ordination, Deqing was in Shaozhou 韶州, Guangdong 廣東. Zhixu then studied, though only for a while, at the Yunqi 雲棲 Monastery near Hangzhou 杭州, the then centre of the Pure Land School associated with Zhuhong, and later retired for some time to the nearby Jingshan 徑山 Monastery to participate the practice of meditation. In 1625, he started to study texts on *vinaya*, or monastic discipline, and thereafter regarded them highly as the cure for the lack of discipline among the clergy caused by the misinterpretation of some Chan ideas. The results of his study on these writings can be represented by a treatise he composed in 1629 titled “Pini jiyao 毘尼集要 (Essentials of Discipline),” which was highly regarded by the clergy of his time and later generations.

In 1631, he went to the Lingfeng 靈峰 Monastery, a place and a name so closely associated with him that he is also known by this name. He appears to have traveled extensively; places where he briefly stayed include Mount Jiuhua 九華山, Anhui, in 1636, Quanzhou 泉州, in 1639, Zhangzhou 漳州, Fujian, in 1640, Huzhou 湖州, Zhejiang, in 1642, and Nanjing, in 1645. There are two records of him returning to the Lingfeng Monastery from other places in 1644 and 1649. In 1653, he decided to participate in the summer retreat in the Tianma yuan 天馬院, Huizhou 徽州, and, after the retreat, he spent the autumn making journeys to scenic mountains in the vicinity. He returned to Lingfeng the following

year for the last time, where he fell ill and eventually passed away in 1655. He was revered with the posthumous name of Shiri dashi 始日大師 (Great Master Shiri). His traveling itineraries are clearly recorded in his autobiography, which provide clues to the divisions of his life and his sphere of influence among different groups of disciples.

Zhixu is respected as the Ninth Patriarch of the Pure Land School for his efforts in preaching Pure Land teachings. It is known that the succession of the patriarchy of the Pure Land School is not of an immediate teacher-disciple relationship but, instead, is established by the collective nomination of later generations. Hence, Zhixu's being considered to be a patriarch of the School was not established right after his death but had to wait for almost two hundred years. For the same reason of later nomination, the list and the sequence of the Pure Land patriarchs have been a minor controversy among some researchers on the School.<sup>13</sup> According to the most recent study by Chen Jianhuang 陳劍鎧, Zhixu's being appointed as the Ninth Patriarch of the Pure Land School was only made by the nationally known Pure Land master Lingyan Yinguang 靈巖印光 (1861-1940) late in the 1930s.<sup>14</sup> Based on the primary sources I have gathered, this study also attempts to provide a new suggestion for the first nominator of Zhixu, who could be a late Qing Buddhist master, Gukun 古崑 (fl. 1855-d. 1892), who is known to have devoted himself to propagandizing Pure Land beliefs. A list of eleven Pure Land patriarchs was included in a repentance ritual

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<sup>13</sup> For examples, see Chen Jianhuang 陳劍鎧, "Jindai queli lianzong shisan wei zushi de jingguo ji qi shiyi 近代確立蓮宗十三位祖師的經過及其釋疑 [The Course of the Establishment of the Thirteen Patriarchs of the Lotus School in Modern Times and the Explanation of Questions about It]," *Lunheng* 論衡 (2003) 5-1; and Shengyan 聖嚴, *Minmatsu Chūgoku Bukkyō no kenkyū* 明末中國佛教の研究 [Study of Buddhism in China during the Late Ming Dynasty] (Taipei: Fagu wenhua shiye gufen youxian gongsi, 1999) 140-142.

<sup>14</sup> Chen Jianhuang, "Jindai queli lianzong shisan wei zushi de jingguo ji qi shiyi," p. 1.

composed by Gukun in 1876, in which Zhixu was placed as the Ninth Patriarch.<sup>15</sup> This should be the earliest traceable record of such a placement, if Gukun was not the initiator for the sequence. In Gukun's own account, his ardent promotion of Zhixu's writings began with his rediscovery of Zhixu's works in Mount Putuo 普陀山 Island where he fled from the mainland in 1861 because of the Taiping Rebellion (1851-1864).<sup>16</sup> Gukun was touched by Zhixu's teachings and, after he found out that the woodblocks for some of Zhixu's writings were either missing or destroyed during the rebellion, he decided to carve new woodblocks to disseminate the teachings with new reprints.<sup>17</sup> Gukun's efforts in promulgating Zhixu's teachings and patriarchate obviously paid off and were continued by Yinguang. Among all his writings, Zhixu's commentary on the Fo shuo Amituo jing 佛說阿彌陀經 (Amitābha Sūtra; Skt. [shorter] Sukhāvatī-vyūha-sūtra) has been considered to be the best commentary on the Sūtra and his *magnum opus* by many Pure Land advocates and reformers, including Yinguang and Jingkong 淨空 (1927-), the current leader of the School.<sup>18</sup> All these recognitions have also earned him a reputation as one of the “four great eminent monks of the late Ming period 明末四大高僧” or the “four great masters of the Ming Era 明代四大

<sup>15</sup> The ritual is also included in a work by his disciple; see Zhaoying 照瑩 (fl. 1875), Jingye tongce 淨業痛策 [Sincere Urge on Pure Karma], Xu zangjing, vol. 62, no. 1199: 629. However, the year indicated in Gukun's own work is 1883. Since this repentance ritual had been observed for many years, the year difference could be a result of different editions. See also Gukun 古崑 (fl. 1855-d. 1892), Xi gui xingyi 西歸行儀 [Liturgy of Returning to the West], Xu zangjing, vol. 74, no. 1468: 131.

<sup>16</sup> Gukun, Jingtu sui xue 淨土隨學 [Learning Pure Land Buddhism According to (One's Sincerity)], Xu zangjing, vol. 62, no. 1187: 438.

<sup>17</sup> Gukun, Jingtu sui xue, p. 438.

<sup>18</sup> Jingkong 淨空 (1927-), Ouyi dashi Mituo yaojie xuanyi jiangji deng wu hekan 藕益大師彌陀要解玄義講記等五合刊 [A Combined Publication of Five (Transcribed Lectures) Including the Lecture Note of the Profound Meanings of the Essential Points of the Amitābha Sūtra by Great Master Ouyi], transcribed by Liu Chengfu 劉承符 (Tainan: Tainan shi jingzong xuehui 台南市淨宗學會, 2002) 52-53.

師,”<sup>19</sup> an honour that he shares with three other late Ming Buddhist masters, Yunqi Zhuhong 雲棲祿宏 (1535-1615), Zibo Zhenke 紫柏真可 (1544-1604), and Hanshan Deqing 憨山德清 (1546-1623), who are better known for their influence on lay Buddhists, their promotion of the synthesis of Chan and Pure Land practices, and their trans-provincial or national influences on the gentry and the intellectuals.<sup>20</sup>

Judging from Zhixu’s extant writings, he was quite a prolific and versatile writer. In the twenty-two-volume complete collection of his works, it is not difficult to discover that, in addition to providing remarks and commentaries on the sūtras associated with Pure Land Buddhism, he also annotated a number of sūtras that relate more to other Buddhist traditions, particularly those of the Tiantai 天台 and *Vinaya* Schools as well as the worship of Bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha, or Dizang 地藏. Also contained in this collection are several volumes of Zhixu’s correspondence with monks and lay Buddhists, and a considerable number of prefaces and postscripts he composed in answer to the requests from this same group of acquaintances.

It is based on these sources that, since the 1970s, scholars have attempted to delineate and analyze almost every aspect of his religious opinions and experiences. The first academic work on Zhixu is a dissertation, “Minmatsu Chūgoku Bukkyō no kenkyū 明末中國佛教の研究 (Study of Buddhism in China during the Late Ming Dynasty),” by a Taiwanese Buddhist master, Shi Shengyan 釋聖嚴 (1931-2009), and written in 1975 at a university in

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<sup>19</sup> Liu Guozong 劉果宗, *Zhongguo Fo jiao ge zong shi lue* 中國佛教各宗史略 [Brief History of Various Schools of Buddhism in China] (Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe 文津出版社, 2001) 559.

<sup>20</sup> For a detail discussion of the efforts made by the Pure Land masters in the late Ming period, see Shengyan 聖嚴, “Mingmo Zhongguo de Jingtujiao ji qi sixiang 明末中國的淨土教及其思想 [Pure Land Buddhism and Its Teachings in Late Ming China],” *Hwakang Buddhist Journal* 華岡佛學學報 8 (Oct., 1985): 1-76.

Japan.<sup>21</sup> As a pioneer on the subject, Shengyan endeavoured to introduce Zhixu to his readers by discussing extensively and generally the teachings, publications, and circles of clerical friendship of Zhixu, with a glimpse of the social, religious, and philosophical developments of the time. Within that same decade and the next, three dissertations on the other three late Ming Buddhist masters were written in the United States; they are “The Life and Thought of Han-shan Te-ch’ing [Hanshan Deqing], 1546-1623” by Hsu Sung-peng in 1970, “The Renewal of Buddhism in China: Chu-hung [Zhuhong] and the Late Ming Synthesis” by Yü Chün-fang in 1973, and “Zibo Zhenke: A Buddhist Leader in Late Ming China” by Jonathan Christopher Cleary in 1985.<sup>22</sup> Before long, studies specifically on these monks and Buddhist activities in their times have prospered in Taiwan and China. As for the study of Zhixu in English, it was only recently that a dissertation entitled “Living Karma: The Religious Practices of Ouyi Zhixu (1599-1655)” composed in 2009 by Beverley Foulks appeared, focusing on Zhixu’s engagement in a variety of religious practices like repentance rituals with an attempt to change karma. In Chinese language studies, after Shengyan’s work, most Chinese scholars preferred to select passages from his huge collection and go into details of one or two particular dimensions of his teachings that they considered, to a certain degree, to represent his accomplishments. Contrary to expectations, Pure Land teachings were not the centre of their attention, for many of these scholars actually showed more interest in Zhixu’s opinions on clerical precepts, Tiantai practices, repentance rituals, Dizang beliefs, and Weishi 唯識 (Consciousness-only) theories, as well as his Buddhist

<sup>21</sup> The dissertation was later published as a monograph. See Shi Shengyan’s above-quoted, Minmatsu Chūgoku Bukkyō no kenkyū.

<sup>22</sup> The dissertations by Hsu Sung-peng and Yü Chün-fang have been published under the titles A Buddhist Leader in Ming China: the Life and Thought of Han-shan Te-ch’ing and The Renewal of Buddhism in China: Chu-hung and the Late Ming Synthesis. The former is published by Pennsylvania State University Press in 1979 and the latter by Columbia University Press in 1981.

interpretations of the Confucian Four Books and Book of Changes against the complicated background of the popular thought of the “Amalgamation of the Three Teachings.”

Nevertheless, on the whole, Zhixu’s ideology has received relatively much more attention in academic circles, whose studies suggest that his major contribution to the history of Chinese Buddhism and Chinese religions is his further integration of ideas of different religious origins with Pure Land principles.

### 1.2.2 An influential teacher of intellectual leaders and government officials

Accordingly, in other words, there are only a handful of papers devoted to topics other than philosophical analyses, such as the life story of Zhixu as seen in a 2003 thesis, “Zhixu nianpu 智旭年譜 (Chronicle of Zhixu’s Life),” by an MA student Luo Zheng 羅琿 of Fudan University, Shanghai, and an article, “Mingmo gaoseng Ouyi Zhixu shengping shishi kaobian 明末高僧蕩益智旭生平事實考辨 (An Examination of the Life of Eminent Monk Ouyi Zhixu),” published in a Chinese academic journal, Religious Studies, by Xie Jinliang 謝金良 in 2006.<sup>23</sup> This imbalance in the study of Zhixu can be attributed to the fact that Zhixu had already composed a brief autobiography Babu daoren zhuan 八不道人傳 (Biography of the Monk of the Eight Negations [of the Middle Way])<sup>24</sup> three years before his death, and that his attendant-disciple, Chengshi 成時 (1618-1678), had supplemented it with biographic

<sup>23</sup> Xie Jinliang, “Mingmo gaoseng Ouyi Zhixu shengping shishi kaobian,” Zongjiao xue yanjiu 宗教學研究 [Religious Studies] 1 (2006): 63-67.

<sup>24</sup> The *babu* is referred to the Buddhist idea of *Babu zhongdao* 八不中道 (Eight Negations of the Middle Way) that describes the truth with four sets of opposite terms, “*busheng* 不生 (non-origination)” versus “*bumie* 不滅 (non-extinction),” “*buchang* 不常 (non-permanence)” versus “*buduan* 不斷 (non-destruction),” “*buyi* 不一 (non-identity)” versus “*buyi* 不異 (non-differentiation),” and “*bulai* 不來 (non-coming [into being])” versus “*buqu* 不去 (non-going [out of being]).” Zhixu clearly named himself with this title to indicate his understanding of the importance of non-duality in Buddhist practices.



notes about what the Master had gone through during his last three years of life.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, during the Republican period (1911-1949), the scholarly Buddhist master Hongyi 弘一 (1880-1942) re-edited his autobiography and the supplement, putting them together with some of Zhixu's own biographical accounts scattered in his works and letters. The outcome of this time-consuming task is the Ouyi dashi nianpu 藕益大師年譜 (Chronicle of the Life of Great Master Ouyi).<sup>26</sup>

However, this kind of biographical writing is limited because it contains mainly summaries of life activities and achievements. In the aforementioned works that are written in traditional *nianpu* (chronicle of life) format, the compilers, after recording Zhixu's family and education background, focus only on what he experienced or performed. Therefore, what we are told is in fact a one-sided description of him in chronological order, such as the itineraries of his travels, the summer retreats and Buddhist rituals he participated in at different monasteries, the reconstructions of monastic buildings he assisted in, and the changes in his health. We have no idea how his disciples responded to his sermons, religious practices and ritual participations, nor the reasons why they considered them enlightening. If we want to understand Zhixu's role as a successful missionary, we need to know more. A number of factors, such as the extent and development of his sphere of influence, and how he interacted with a variety of his circles of disciples, have yet to be discussed. Although this study does not intend to reveal these relatively lesser known facts, the following discussion

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<sup>25</sup> There is a combined biography of these two works called Ouyi dashi luezhuan 藕益大師略傳 [A Brief Biography of the Great Master Ouyi] included in the Ouyi dashi ji 藕益大師集 [Collected (Writings) of Great Master Ouyi]. See Ouyi dashi ji, ed. Sengchan 僧懺 (Taipei: Taiwan yin jing chu 臺灣印經處, 1960s) 1-7.

<sup>26</sup> Hongyi 弘一 (1880-1942), Hongyi dashi faji 弘一大師法集 [Dharma Collection of Great Master Hongyi], vol. 2, ed. Cai Niansheng 蔡念生 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng chuban gongsi 新文豐出版公司, 1976) 1083-1111.

attempts to paint a general picture of his lay acquaintances to better our understanding concerning the profile of the Master.

The study of the circles of his disciples and their relationships with him also helps to correct some long time misunderstandings of Zhixu. His personality and popularity among people of different social statuses are inconsistently described in some recent secondary sources compiled by historians of Buddhism. From their descriptions, we get an impression that Zhixu was a monk of extreme personality who lived a solitary existence his entire life. However, the sources I gathered have revealed that this is not true. Examples of such a misunderstanding can be seen in the comment by Herbert Franke on Zhixu, in which he states “[h]is later monastic life shows no marked dramatic events; it is rather a story of unceasing spiritual effort;”<sup>27</sup> and in the thesis by Luo Zheng, in which Luo realizes that Zhixu traveled a lot and had many friends but emphasizes that the Master preferred to make friends with people of common origins.<sup>28</sup> On the contrary, according to some fragmentary passages and biographical accounts gathered from primary sources like local gazetteers and miscellaneous writings, a considerable number of his followers were local gentry, wealthy merchants, and government officials; types of people who have been regarded as very influential and powerful in directing social and cultural transformations in late imperial China. Apparently, Zhixu’s influence on lay Buddhism was greater than recent research has suggested.

Accordingly, an in-depth study of the disciples or acquaintances of Zhixu is helpful in understanding the circumstances in which the Master carried out his missionary task and

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<sup>27</sup> Carrington Goodrich and Fang Chao-ying, eds., *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368-1644* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976) 245.

<sup>28</sup> Luo Zheng 羅琿, “Zhixu nianpu 智旭年譜 [Chronicle of Zhixu’s Life],” MA thesis, Fudan University, Shanghai 上海復旦大學, 2003.

interacted with his followers. We can have a real picture of the extent and the depth of his impact on different social and religious communities by tracing his footsteps and cross-referencing these records with the formation of his friendship circles. There are over a hundred names of lay Buddhists that can be collected in the letters, prefaces, and postscripts in the complete collection of Zhixu's writings. About thirty of these can be identified in a variety of primary sources listed in reference books, like the Bashijiu zhong Mingdai zhuanji zonghe yinde 八十九種明代傳記綜合引得 (Combined Indexes to Eighty-Nine Ming Dynasty Biographical Collections), Mingren shiming biecheng zihao suoyin 明人室名別稱字號索引 (Indexes to Ming Studio Names, Nicknames, Courtesy Names, and Poetic Names), and Qingdai zhuanji congkan 清代傳記叢刊 (Biographical Collections of the Qing Dynasty). Even though it is not possible to identify all of these people because some of the listings are of Dharma names and poetic names, which in most cases are not recorded in biographies by historians at the time, the information in hand is detailed and representational enough to demonstrate that Zhixu had close relationships with people of influence in the Jiangnan area, then the cultural centre of the Ming and Qing dynasties.

The best examples of this group of disciples are many who received their provincial *juren* and national *jinshi* degrees and had served the bureaucracy during the late Ming dynasty. This group of scholar-officials include Wang Jizu 王繼祖 (a native of Xianning 咸寧, Shanxi 陝西; 1568 *jinshi*; had served in Shandong), Zhu Zhifan 朱之蕃 (a native of Jinling 金陵; 1595 *jinshi* and ranked first class; had served in the Ministry of Personnel and been appointed ambassador to Joseon 朝鮮), Cai Pingzou 蔡屏周 (a native of Yingtian 應天 [renamed as Jiangning 江寧 in the Qing; present-day Nanjing]; 1615 *juren*; had served in

Fuliang 浮梁 in Jiangxi, Datong 大同, Shanxi, Shandong 山東, and the Ministry of War; entered the monkhood in his later days), Ding Mingdeng 丁明登 (a native of Yingtian 應天; 1616 *jinshi*; had served in Quanzhou 泉州, Quzhou 衢州, Zhejiang 浙江, Yunnan 雲南, the Ministry of Revenue, and the Imperial College), Li Ruoling 李若璉 (a native of Shuntian 順天 [present-day Beijing]; 1628 military *jinshi*; had served in different military positions), Ling Shishao 凌世韶 (d. 1653; a native of Xiuning 休寧, Anhui; 1634 *jinshi*; had served in Fujian, Jiangxi, Zhejiang, and the Ministry of Revenue), Chen Danzhong 陳丹衷 (Jiangning native; 1643 *jinshi*; had served in Henan; also a famous painter and calligrapher; entered the monkhood in his later days), and Liu Sijing 劉思敬 (Jiangsu native; 1647 *jinshi*; had served in the Ministry of Punishments).<sup>29</sup> Most of them were culturally and politically influential and thus, with the help of their political statuses and personal interests, Zhixu's teachings must have had been transmitted throughout their circles of friends.

In addition to these intellectuals and government officials, another type of acquaintances that was helpful in propagandizing Zhixu and his teachings was also well-educated and culturally-active. Many of them are poets, painters, publishers, bibliophiles, and calligraphers from the Jiangnan area. Poets in this group of acquaintances include Han Yizu 韓繹祖 (fl. 1645), Zhang Shuhan 張叔韓 (a native of Xiushui 秀水 [present-day Jiaxing 嘉興, Zhejiang]), and Zhang Qi 張琪 (Jiangning native). Painters like Tang Shi 唐時 (a native of Shangyuan 上元 [present-day Nanjing]), Zhao Bi 趙璧 (Houguan 侯官 native), Zheng Zhong 鄭重 (lived in Jinling), and Zheng Wan 鄭完 (lived in Jinling), Zheng Zhong's

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<sup>29</sup> These names can be found in different genres of writings collected in the Lingfeng zonglun 靈峰宗論 [Lingfeng's Discourse on the Principles]. 18 June 2009. <<http://www.ouyi.mymailer.com.tw/ouyihm/016-018/All.htm>>.

son, as well as calligraphers like Liu Xiangxian 劉象先 (fl. 1640; Shangyuan native), Gao Nianzu 高念祖 (Xiushui native), and Xu Huchen 徐虎臣 were among this cultural group.<sup>30</sup> Actually, many of them, like the aforementioned Zhang Qi, Zhao Bi, Chen Danzhong, and Zhu Zhifan were versatile: Zhang Qi was also known as a lecturer who commented on texts with Buddhist ideas, Zhao Bi was also recognized as a poet, and both Chen and Zhu were also skilled in painting and calligraphy. Other versatile members of Zhixu's circles include Wang Qi 王淇 (or 王祺; fl. 1642) and Wang Jie 王節 (1599-1660); the former was a historian, painter, and calligrapher while the latter was a poet, painter, calligrapher, and county teacher.<sup>31</sup> In addition to artistic talents, cultural activities at the time also included involvement in the book industry and book collecting, with contact with collectors such as Qian Qianyi 錢謙益 (1582-1664; a native of Changshou 常熟, Jiangsu; 1610 *jinshi*; a prominent poet, scholar, and historian) and Gao Chengyan 高承埏 (1602-1647; a native of Xiushui; 1640 *jinshi*; father of Gao Nianzu; had served as the Minister of the Ministry of Labour), a publisher and bibliophile.<sup>32</sup>

Obviously, each of these members of the cultural elite acted as a centre of influence within his own circle of acquaintances and Zhixu's teachings and reputation could be widespread through these channels. Moreover, some of these intellectual disciples were in someway interconnected in their relationship with one another. Thereby the networks formed within Zhixu's disciples and their influences should be much more extensive than originally posited. Through the study of their friendships, some seemingly unconnected individuals or small groups of Zhixu's disciples can be associated to form meaningful,

<sup>30</sup> See <http://www.ouyi.mymailer.com.tw/ouyihm/016-018/All.htm>.

<sup>31</sup> See <http://www.ouyi.mymailer.com.tw/ouyihm/016-018/All.htm>.

<sup>32</sup> For more details, see Miao Yongke 繆詠禾, *Mingdai chubanshi gao* 明代出版史稿 [Draft History of Publication in the Ming Period] (Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe 江蘇人民出版社, 2000) 518-519.

structured relations and reveal some unknown stories. Examples of these kinds of connections among different individual disciples can be demonstrated by those of Qian Qianyi, Tao Shiling 陶奭齡 (d. 1640; Kuaiji 會稽 native [present-day Shaoxing 紹興]; *juren*; had served in Zhaoqing 肇慶 of Guangdong), and Gao Nianzu.

Qian Qianyi served in both the late-Ming and early-Qing governments, which made him famous yet morally controversial because of the old taboo on serving two dynasties. He retired after serving the Qing government for merely a few years to enjoy his life as a bibliophile and literary leader. A pivot of some of Zhixu's circles of discipleship, he had a large network of acquaintances. An example of such established relationships can be represented by the one between Qian Qianyi, Qu Ruji 瞿汝稷 (1548-1610), and Lu Huachun 陸化淳 (1592 *jinshi*; Changshou native; had served in Zhejiang, Qianzhou 虔州 of Jiangxi). Qu Ruji, a mentor of Qian and a famed lay Buddhist, was known for compiling a biographical work of 650 Chan masters up until 1163, and being one of the advocates and fund-raisers for the reprinting of the Tripitaka, which is now identified by historians as the Jingshan- 徑山, or Jiaying- 嘉興, edition.<sup>33</sup> He was also the author of the epitaph of Lu Huachun, a longtime friend of Qu and a follower of Zhixu who was a famous calligrapher of the time. By further cross-referencing their biographies with information in hand, Qian Qianyi and Lu Huachun can be linked together with the assumption that they knew each other; likewise, the same can be applied to Qu Ruji and Zhixu. This latter connection is particularly interesting as far as the Jiaying Tripitaka is concerned as it suggests that, in addition to Zibo Zhenke and Hanshan Deqing (two of the “four great masters of the Ming

<sup>33</sup> Miao Yongke, Mingdai chubanshi gao, pp. 185-186. For more primary materials about this Buddhist Canon, see Song Kuiguang 宋奎光 (16th/17th cent.), Jingshan zhi 徑山志 [Gazetteer of Mount Jing] (Ji'nan 濟南: Qi Lu shushe 齊魯書社, 1997).

Era”), Zhixu might have also involved in some aspects of this project that we previously may not realize.

As for Tao Shiling, he was the younger brother of Tao Wangling 陶望齡 (1562-1609), a remarkable Ming scholar-official; they were both considered celebrated literary leaders in the late Ming. Through the efforts of Tao Shiling, who was also recognized as a distinguished instructor at private schools, their theories were widespread among intellectuals. The noticeable point here is that Zhixu’s teachings were probably spread out through this same channel. In fact, there are two more instructors, Zhang Qi and Wang Jie, within the group of Zhixu’s identified disciples. The religious preference of the three of them must have exerted great influence on their students.

Gao Nianzu was a calligrapher, a disciple of Zhixu, and the eldest son of Gao Chengyan, who was recognized as both a publisher and bibliophile. Gao Chengyan had reedited and reprinted a Buddhist work initiated by Hanshan Deqing and Ding Yunpeng 丁雲鵬 (fl. 1547-1628), a famed professional painter who specialized in figure and Buddhist painting, and entitled Bashibazu daoying zhuan zan 八十八祖道影傳贊 (Eulogies of the Dharma Images and Biographies of the Eighty-Eight Patriarchs).<sup>34</sup> As a bibliophile, Gao Chengyan could be an acquaintance of Qian Qianyi because both their activities were centred around the Jiangnan area. Gao Nianzu’s best friend, Zhu Yizun 朱彝尊 (1629-1709; Xiushui native; had served in the Hanlin Academy), a prominent poet and scholar in the early Qing dynasty, was also a famous editor and a publisher at that time.<sup>35</sup> Hence, Zhixu would have

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<sup>34</sup> Deqing 德清 (1546-1623), Bashibazu daoying zhuan zan 八十八祖道影傳贊 [Eulogies of the Dharma Images and Biographies of the Eighty-Eight Patriarchs], supplemented by Gao Chengyan 高承埏 (1602-1647), Xu zangjing 續藏經, vol. 86, no. 1608: 614-626.

<sup>35</sup> Wei Li 韋力, Pi jiao ben 批校本 [Corrected and Proofread Edition] (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 2003) 70-71.

had a close relationship with the publishing industry, which must have facilitated the publication and circulation of his writings, including the game board of the *Xuanfo tu* and its manual *Xuanfo pu* 選佛譜 (Manual of the Table of Buddha Selection).

Other socio-economic networks like this one, such as those linking traders, artisans, local gentry, and wealthy merchants, can also be seen among this same group of identified disciples. These groupings reflect not only the actual social and economic conditions of the time but also the intimacy existing between Zhixu and this contemporary social-cultural situation. While the printing industry made the publication and circulation of his writings easy, some of his elite disciples helped circulate them as widely as possible on their ways of trading and preserved as many of them as possible during the downfall of the Ming dynasty. This social situation was largely the determining factor, other than political influence, for the development of Buddhism and Buddhist related products like the *Xuanfo tu* in Zhixu's time.

### 1.3 Outline of the Dissertation

Since the creation and pattern design of the Buddhist device *Xuanfo tu* were modeled on the secular gambling prototypes inspired by the Chinese bureaucratic system, Chapter Two is devoted to a historical survey of the emergence and the development of bureaucratic games in China from the Tang dynasty to the present. The attitudes of intellectuals and scholar-officials toward the devices are a major focus of discussion, through which the didactic role of the games recognized by the then educated class is revealed. This is the role that has long been neglected by historians as well as scholars of folk art and customs. Through the survey, this chapter attempts to clarify and rewrite the history, particularly of the early period, of the bureaucratic prototypes by reexamining those primary texts that have



been widely used by many Chinese historians who had worked on this subject. The examination hopes to establish an earlier date for the emergence of the devices and to reveal how extensive the popularity of them was at the time. For this reason, this chapter will include a valuable Korean text to help describe the circulation situation of the game in the Jiangnan area during the late Ming dynasty. As this text has long been overlooked by Chinese scholars and there is no detailed source in Chinese available on the development of the devices in the Ming, it is worthy of a serious look. Also discussed are the change and the variety of the game's names over time; it is noted that the original name of the device can assist the studies on the development of the games in both Korea and Japan. Besides, since all the secular and religious board games mentioned in this dissertation are graphic-oriented and new to many, all discussions will be illustrated with diagrams and pictures.

After the survey of the secular prototype, Chapter Three continues to survey the history of different religious devices circulated in China. Gathering materials for the study here are even more difficult than those for the bureaucratic versions, as the primary sources about the religious variants are extremely scarce and fragmentary and, of these limited sources, most of them are related to the beliefs of Daoism and popular religions in the Qing dynasty. As the only detailed source for the Buddhist version is the foreword written by Zhixu for his Xuanfo pu, the manual of his *Xuanfo tu*, the only extant version of its kind, this chapter will conduct an analysis of this preface to provide more information about the subject. Social and cultural characteristics of the time will also be considered to better our understanding of the circumstance in which the game was created and circulated. The historical survey of the religious variants and their influences conducted in this chapter is intended to be as comprehensive as possible, not only to serve as the background for the

study of the *Xuanfo tu* but also to portray a clearer picture on the generalization of them among people of different social classes during imperial China.

As Zhixu's *Xuanfo tu* is the only extant version of the Buddhist promotion game in China, Chapter Four turns to an exploration of the content of this game board to demonstrate how it worked didactically to spread the Buddhist teachings embedded in the game. In fact, in the game boards of almost all secular and religious versions, there were a few lines of instructions about all rewards, punishments, special assignments, and possible moves inside each square. For gambling, the instructions included sets of complex rules for the distribution of the counters. In the case of the *Xuanfo tu*, Zhixu supplemented the game with a detailed manual on the rules of the game. Therefore, the content of the *Xuanfo tu* will be analyzed with corresponding details about the directions of next moves and the definitions of Buddhist terms quoted from Zhixu's manual. As discussions progress, the manual will also be summarized.

The true value and impact of this Buddhist device on transmitting Buddhist teachings will not be completely presented if the focus of this study is only confined to China. Even just a cursory and general search of the countries near China has already demonstrated that there were a variety of similar devices in circulation and that their emergence in these countries was more than a coincidence. In order to find out whether or not these devices were culturally and religiously related and, if so, in what ways they were connected with each other or in what circumstances they interacted with each other, the second major part of this dissertation intends to trace the histories of the devices in these different areas and compare their developments and characteristics with each other to show an otherwise unknown cross-cultural tendency and phenomenon in a more holistic perspective. In regard

to the relationships between this device and other games of similar layout and purpose developed outside China, two lines of transmission will be emphasized according to geographical locations and the religious ideas expressed by the games. The first line went through Korea and Japan and the second line through Tibet, India, Bhutan, and Nepal. The core of my analysis will be the mutual influences and interrelationships of the games found in these areas as well as the types of Buddhism and religions that adopted and modified the devices.

As both Korea and Japan have strong cultural affiliations with China, two chapters are devoted separately to investigating relevant secular and religious games in these two countries, Chapter Five on Korea and Chapter Six on Japan. Both bureaucratic and Buddhist games were believed to have been brought to Korea and Japan from China after Buddhism and the Chinese political system and ideology were introduced into these two countries. In premodern Korea, they were generally known as the *Seongbuldo* 成佛圖 (Table of Attaining Buddhahood) and the *Jongjeongdo* 從政圖 (Table of Joining the Government), and the adoption of the latter is ascribed to a fourteenth-century Joseon 朝鮮 (1392-1910) official named Ha Ryun 河崙 (1347-1416) according to a sixteenth-century Korean work by Seong Hyeon 成俔 (1439-1504). In Japan, the games were adopted under a different category, the *e-sugoroku* 絵双六 (Pictorial Double Sixes), in which the religious version was subdivided into the groups of the *Buppō-sugoroku* 仏法双六 (Double Sixes of Buddhist Dharma) and the *Jōdo-sugoroku* 浄土双六 (Double Sixes of Pure Land). This kind of the *e-sugoroku* game is largely characterized by their animated pictorial layouts of a number of secular themes. Actually, the first *e-sugoroku* games were considered to be of religious origin and

contained only written words, which were designed to help one memorize the Sino-Japanese Buddhist terminology. As Korea and Japan assimilated these importations, they modified them to contextualize them within their social and political settings in ways similar to those circumstances in which they faced the influx of literatures, social customs, and political and philosophical theories from China. Like the variety of Chinese cultural elements that had long been experiencing the process of Koreanization and Japanization, the developments of the games in these two countries were no exception and were entirely different from each other. Hence, the study of the modifications made to the games in these chapters can show us two sets of factors that affected the reception of the games and the Chinese influences that came with them. Based on primary textual sources and extant game boards, these two chapters will introduce the games and survey their history from the time of their formation or first appearance to the twentieth century, demonstrating the two faces of the games as a gambling tool and a didactic device. In respect of the didactic aspect, the discussion also attempts to cover all factors contributing to the adoption of these gambling games as propaganda media.

While the fifth and sixth chapters focus on the Korean and Japanese game boards in question, Chapter Seven turns to some countries or areas located west of China, consisting of Tibet, India, Bhutan, and Nepal. To Master Zhixu's knowledge, the earliest Buddhist adoption of the game was attributed to lama monks. Even though no lama monk's version is left in China, a number of *thangka* paintings of a similar purpose can be found in Tibet. Known as the Game of Rebirth (*Sa-lam Nam-sha*), they are designed to teach young lama monks about Buddhist principles. On each side of the die a letter of the six syllables, “a 阿,”

“*sha* 莎,” “*ka* 卡,” “*ta* 塔,” “*re* 熱,” and “*ya* 亞,” was marked.<sup>36</sup> One example has sixty-four checkers and ovals painted with portrayals of the enlightened ones and Buddhist cosmic geography. In India, the game was generally known as the Game of Knowledge (one version is called *gyān caupad* in Hindi). A special feature of “the ladders and snakes” that could cause rapid promotion or demotion was added to this game, from which the late Victorian British children’s game of “Snakes and Ladders” is said to be derived. In Bhutan, the composition of existing Bhutanese games reveals strong influence from Tibetan cosmology but with a new Tantric element. The six syllables of the dice equate to the mantra of Avalokiteśvara, who is the attendant Bodhisattva of Amitābha Buddha, and stand for the six realms of reincarnation in the Tantric tradition.<sup>37</sup> In Nepal, the device was known as *Nāgapāśa* (snake-dice) or *Vaikuntha khel* (the game of *Vaikuntha*), said to be of Hindu origin, which promised the realm of one of three Hindu gods. This chapter intends to cover as many surviving examples and sources as possible to represent a kind of cultural interaction that had been active among practitioners of different religions across diverse cultural regions for at least several hundred years. One point that will be emphasized in this study is that, although each version of the games is unmistakably distinct, bearing religious or regional characteristic of its own, their purpose is identical.

Upon the completion of my dissertation, I hope that the results of my study will provide new insight into how Buddhist activities interacted with some specific socio-cultural and commercial factors of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in China, which has symbolic significance for the study of Buddhist developments during this particular period of

<sup>36</sup> Huang Ti 黃逖, *Xizang tangka* 西藏唐卡 [Tibetan Thangka] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe 文物出版社, 1985) 195.

<sup>37</sup> Mark Tatz and Jody Kent, *Rebirth: The Tibetan Game of Liberation* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press, 1977) 12.

time. By examining extant secular and religious versions and accounts of game designers, scholar-officials, and local gentries from a holistic perspective, my work will justify Zhixu's reputation and religious accomplishments with substantial evidence about his religious modification of gambling board games, about which many scholars of Buddhism have little knowledge. The results can supplement recent researches that mainly focus on the master's Buddhist and philosophical ideas with a new facet of his versatility in designing a teaching medium that went beyond traditional means in spreading Buddhist beliefs. Simultaneously, this will give us a clear picture of how he understood and implemented *upāya*, or expedient means, a Buddhist idea that played prominent roles in facilitating the popularization of Pure Land Buddhism and in the study of this topic. My study also aims to rediscover the range and coverage of the influence of the *Xuanfo tu*, placing the study of it in an intercultural context. This aim will be achieved with efforts to follow the traces of the board games from one country to another, from Korea to Japan to other Asian countries. In fact, simply the display of the pictures of the existing game boards in this dissertation is enough to show that the subjects discussed here were a culturally flexible product welcomed by people of various social statuses and religious traditions. With the support of textual materials, this study will introduce this cross-cultural trend and its universality to the world, which will be verified and illustrated with rich details. Moreover, in addition to enriching our knowledge of the content and audiences of the games in these regions, this attempt to explore the involvement of other Asian traditions, with highlights on showing how the game's layout provides an understanding of religious teachings and how these teachings relate to the religious practices of the times, actually can demonstrate how followers of different religions in various cultural environments were edified through playing in the past.

## **2 HISTORICAL SURVEY OF THE TABLE OF BUREAUCRATIC PROMOTION IN CHINA**

This chapter aims to discuss the emergence of the secular bureaucratic prototype and outline the important stages of its development, with special focuses on revealing the identities of the creators and how their ideologies contributed to the formation of the games that determined their nature and characteristics. Among all these features, “educational” seems to be the best term to characterize the game and its history; according to the aforementioned descriptions of the contents and their embedded ideas presented on the dice and the game boards, the inventors’ educational intentions are clearly more than superficial. To understand more about this, the purposes and social statuses of these inventors are to be identified and investigated, with the help of the comments and records made about the games by their contemporaries and later generations. In fact, those designers whose names are mentioned in primary sources in connection with the *Shengguan tu* were Confucian students, scholars and government officials; such a close association with the elite class suggests that the popularity of the games was by no means occasional. Similarly, the same high levels of social status and respectability can also be used to describe those who adopted the secular gambling game to religious themes. These facts already justify that this type of Chinese board game was not merely recognized as a folk work of popular culture with an entertainment function. They were deliberately produced and seen as missionary, initiatory, and innovative in nature. To support these arguments, evidence collected from textual sources and real objects are to be evaluated through the following historical surveys. The outcomes also attempt to explain some phenomena that occurred during the development of

these board games, including the lack of records about them in the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368) and how the secular device developed into a religious one.

## 2.1 Tang Dynasty (618-907)

According to three early Northern Song (960-1127) and one early Southern Song (1127-1279) sources, Chinese historians and ethnologists have unanimously considered that the earliest known precedent of the *Shengguan tu* was called the *Touzi xuan ge* 骰子選格 (or *Shaizi xuan ge*;<sup>38</sup> Checkers Selection of Dice),<sup>39</sup> or the *Touzi xuan* (or *Shaizi xuan*; Selection of Dice), or the *Caixuan ge* 彩選格 (Checkers Selection of Dice<sup>40</sup> or Checkers of Auspicious Selection).<sup>41</sup> It was a creation of Li He 李郃 (808-873; *zi* Zixuan 子玄, *hao* Xizhen 西貞), who was the *Cishi* 刺史 (Prefect) of Hezhou 賀州 (present-day Hezhou City, Guangxi) between 830 and 832 during the Tang dynasty after he came out first in the 828 national civil

<sup>38</sup> This is a different pronunciation of the term “骰子.”

<sup>39</sup> Li Fang 李昉 (925-996), *Taiping guang ji* 太平廣記 [Extensive Records of the Taiping (Reign Period [976-984])] (Shanghai: Saoye shanfang 掃葉山房, 1926) vol. 136: 15; Qian Yi 錢易 (968-1026), *Nanbu xinshu* 南部新書 [New Book of Southern District], in *Baibu congshu jicheng* 百部叢書集成 [A Hundred Collectanea], series 46, ed. Yan Yiping 嚴一萍 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan 臺灣藝文印書館, 1965) vol. 93: 2: 7 (of the *Geng* 庚 volume); Gao Cheng 高承 (ca. 1078-1086), *Shiwu ji yuan* 事物紀原 [Records of the Origins of Affairs and Things], in *Siku quanshu zhenben* 四庫全書珍本 [Selected Titles of the Complete Collection in Four Treasuries], series 12, ed. Wang Yunwu 王雲五 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1982) vol. 145: 9: 39 (entry “Caixuan 彩選”); and Zheng Qiao 鄭樵 (1104-1162), *Tongzhi ershi lue* 通志二十略 [The Twenty Records of the Comprehensive Treatise] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1995) vol. 2: 1712.

<sup>40</sup> The word “彩 *cai*,” felicity or colour, here can be referred to the word “采 *cai*,” which also bears the meaning of “dice.” As the term “擲采 *zhicai*” is the synonym of the term “擲骰子 *zhi shaizi*” and according to the meaning of the other titles of Li’s game, such as *Touzi xuan ge*, “彩 *cai*” should be understood as “采 *cai*” here. Hence, the *Caixuan ge* 彩選格 is more appropriate to be translated as “Checkers Selection of Dice.”

<sup>41</sup> Examples can be seen in Li Zhenggong, “Tan shengguan tu,” p. 414; Wu Shouli, “Shoukanzu o kataru,” pp. 38-39; Lu Yan 魯言, “Wei bei shidai taotai de shengguan tu 未被時代淘汰的陞官圖 [The Table of Bureaucratic Promotion that Has Not Been Eliminated by the Times],” *Xianggang dubo shi* 香港賭博史 [History of Gambling in Hong Kong] (Hong Kong: Guangjiaojing chubanshe 廣角鏡出版社, 1978) 216-219; Ma Guojun 麻國鈞 and Ma Shuyun 麻淑雲, *Zhonghua chuantong youxi daquan* 中華傳統遊戲大全 [Complete Collection of Chinese Traditional Games] (Beijing: Nongcun duwu chubanshe 農村讀物出版社, 1990) 230; Wang Dingzhang, *Caiquan, boxi, duiwu: Zhongguo minjian youxi dubo huodong*, pp. 105-106; Luo Xinben and Xu Rongsheng, *Zhongguo gudai dubo xisu*, p. 67; Zhou Shao, “‘Lidai Zhiguan biao’ yu ‘Shengguan tu’,” p. 121; and Song Bingren, “Shengguan tu youxi yange kao,” pp. 28-30.



service recruitment examination.<sup>42</sup> These Song texts also attempt to explain why Li He created the game. One of them believes that, for personal purposes, Li made it after he was appointed to administer Hezhou so that he could familiarize himself with the Tang governmental hierarchy.<sup>43</sup> Whether this comment was true or not, it is doubtless that the Song people had already realized that the game could help learning and memorization. The other one portrays Li with a tinge of cynicism by describing that his intention was to satirize the then corrupt bureaucracy with regard to its unfair promotion practices that were based on bribery and chance rather than merit.<sup>44</sup> Unfortunately, Li's work is no longer extant.

In less than a decade, in 838, the second earliest traceable game of this kind was created. Bearing the same title of "*Touzi xuan ge* (or *Shaizi xuan ge*)," this version was a work of Fang Qianli 房千里 (ca. 827-840; *zi* Huju 鵠舉), a contemporary of Li He.<sup>45</sup> Although this dice game's game board does not survive, its manual, the *Touzi xuan ge* (or *Shaizi xuan ge*), does. The main body of it is specified as the "Zhi li 秩例 [Official Ranking Order]," focusing on detailing the ranking of sixty-eight government officials of the Tang dynasty. In his preface to this manual, Fang recalls how he came to learn about a game characterized by its imitation of the system by which officials were promoted and demoted:

開成三年春，予自海上北徙，舟行次洞庭之陽，有風甚急，繫舡野浦下三日。  
遇二三子號進士者，以穴骰雙雙為戲，更投局上，以數多少為進身職官之差

<sup>42</sup> Yu Xianhao 郁賢皓, *Tang cishi kao* 唐刺史考 [Research on District Magistrates of the Tang] (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe 江蘇古籍出版社, 1987) 2794; and Song Bingren, "Shengguan tu youxi yange kao," p. 29.

<sup>43</sup> Qian Yi, *Nanbu xinshu*, vol. 93: 1: 6 (of the Yi 乙 volume).

<sup>44</sup> Gao Cheng, *Shiwu ji yuan*, vol. 145: 9: 39; Song Bingren further suggests that Li's creation was inspired by the incident happened to Liu Fen 劉蕡 (ca. 826-842; *zi* Quhua 去華), who was not appointed to any government position as he sharply criticized in his court examination paper the faults and corruption of the government caused by eunuchs; for details, see Song Bingren, "Shengguan tu youxi yange kao," pp. 29-30.

<sup>45</sup> Yu Xianhao, *Tang cishi kao*, pp. 2809-2810.

數，豐貴而約賤。卒局，座客有為尉掾而止者，有貴為相臣、將臣者，有連得美名而後不振者，有始甚微而飆升於上位者。大凡得失酷似前所謂不繫賢不肖，但卜其偶不偶耳。...因條所置進身職官遷黜之目為《選格》。

In the spring of the third year of the Kaicheng [reign period (836-840); 838], I moved northward by sea. When the boat sailed to the north side of [Lake] Dongting, there was such a strong wind that the small boat had to be tied to the rural river bank for three days. [I] met a few people who claimed to be presented scholars [of the Tang civil service examination] using bone dice in pairs as a game, throwing [them] in turn on the board and, according to the sum of pips, starting [their] careers as different government officials. The higher [the number], the higher the ranking while the lower [the number], the lower the ranking. At the end of the game, there were some among these guests who ended up [either] as a guardsman or a clerk while there were others who honourably became prime ministers and generals; there were some who had successively gained good reputations but then were unable to rise again while there were others who began in humble positions but [soon] were promoted swiftly to high positions. Generally, [their] successes and failures very much resembled those [games I] previously mentioned in that [the outcomes were] unrelated to being wise or foolish but were merely based their divinations on odd and even [numbers]. ... [Thus, I] arranged and listed the beginning posts and government officials item-by-item in terms of promotion and demotion to create the Checkers Selection.<sup>46</sup>

Fang Qianli's description is clear and precise enough to convince us that this is a game of official promotion. Like many board games, it was played with a game board and dice that determined the movements of the players, and the winner won the game simply by chance, not by skill. The players were officials-to-be who apparently had already passed the recruitment examinations. Its bureaucratic layout and content differentiate it from other

<sup>46</sup> Fang Qianli 房千里 (ca. 827-840), Touzi xuange 骰子選格 [Checkers Selection of Dice], in Shuo fu 說郭 [Theories of All Classics], ed. Tao Zongyi 陶宗儀 (1316-1403) (China: Li Jiqi 李際期, 1646) vol. 102: 1 (in UBC's Puban Collection 蒲坂書樓 (Rare Book 善本)).

games seen at the time of writing. At the end of the game, the results were compared by official rank; somehow, the game's rapid process of promotion and demotion in officialdom stirred up his personal feeling, as Fang also writes a few lines to lament the game's similarity to the real life bureaucratic experience, for which he decided to compose his Checkers Selection, probably to mock the then bureaucratic phenomenon. However, it is noticeable that this sentence does not explicitly say that Fang created a new game himself, but implies that he only wanted to arrange and record the content of the game he saw during his trip. If so, the assumption upheld by many modern Chinese historians that the game board was created by Fang along with its manual may not be accurate. Nevertheless, this manual is still recognized as an invaluable record of the game in its early stages of development in southern China. It also suggests that the nation's inland waterway system was one of the most convenient means of transportation not only for travellers but also for the spread of the game.

This argument can also be discussed from a different angle. Fang Qianli passed the national civil examination in the early Taihe 太和 reign period (Mar. 827-Jan. 836)<sup>47</sup> while Li He was the top graduate in 828, which suggests that both of them might have been living in the capital at around the same time. They could have been graduates of the same class in the civil examination, and probably knew each other, although they may not have been friends. As for his career, Fang served first as *Guozi boshi* 國子博士 (Erudite of the National University) and last as the Prefect of Gaozhou 高州 (present-day Gaozhou City, Guangdong).<sup>48</sup> Gaozhou is located in southwestern Guangdong province, which is a neighboring province of Guangxi. In the northeast of Guangxi lay the prefecture of Hezhou,

<sup>47</sup> Yu Xianhao, Tang cishi kao, p. 2809.

<sup>48</sup> Peng Dingqiu 彭定求 (1645-1719), Quan Tang shi 全唐詩 [Complete Tang Poems] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1960) vol. 2: 1477.

where Li He had been in office for a year or so and where he was believed to have created his game between 830 and 831.<sup>49</sup> In 838, Fang created his after being inspired by the dice game played by other travelers during the trip mentioned above. According to Fang, his boat was northbound; although he does not mention from where his boat departed for the north, based on the location his boat was anchored – Lake Dongting in northeastern Hunan province – the boat possibly departed from Gaozhou. Given that Hezhou and Gaozhou were not far away from each other, it is possible that the unnamed game played by the travelers on the boat was Li's design. If so, Li's game must have become very popular within only a few years because it had already spread from Guangxi to Guangdong. However, as mentioned, Li He and Fang Qianli obtained the *jinsi* degree in the same year and were appointed to areas close by around the same period of time, so Fang might have heard about Li's device then. From the fact that Fang did not recognize the unnamed game he saw on the boat, we have reason to believe that this game was another version made before or after Li's. Besides, at their time, the *keju* examination system had already been in place for over two hundred years since its establishment in 605, and gambling board games played with dice like *liubo* 六博 (Gambling of Six) and *shuanglu* 雙陸 (Double Sixes; Figure 2.1) had been popular ever since the Han dynasty (206 BC-220), so it is not impossible that certain early models of the promotion game had already been created and in circulation by the ninth century, such as the unnamed game seen on Fang's boat. If such is the case, Li He might only be a symbol credited for the creation of the game by later Confucians to highlight the faults of the corrupted government. He was chosen probably because of his righteousness and his open sympathy with Liu Fen

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<sup>49</sup> Song Bingren, "Shengguan tu youxi yange kao," 29-30.

劉蕡 (ca. 826-842; *zi* Quhua 去華), who was not appointed to any important government posts because of his uprightness and fierce criticism of eunuchs' interference in state affairs.

**Figure 2.1** *Shuanglu*.



This is an illustration cited from Hong Zun's 洪遵 (1120-1174) *Pu shuang* 譜雙 (Manual of [the Dice Game of] Double [Sixes], page 5; Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan 藝文印書館, reprint 1966), in which he introduces a variety of *Shuanglu* played in and outside China at the time, including their names and rules as well as the look and form of their game boards.

The content of the official promotion game was based on the actual Chinese bureaucratic system, which can be traced back to as early as the Qin dynasty (221 BC-206); however, although the game was viewed as a side product of the bureaucratic system, it did not emerge immediately with it. Its first appearance had to wait until the institution of the *keju* civil service recruitment examination, a relatively fair system for selecting the most capable individuals for governance through competitive examinations. Thereafter, the ruling power was no longer in the hands of a small group of established aristocracy. When any

commoner, in theory, could enter officialdom through education and examination, the idea and the content of the game were able to attract the attention of a larger group of Confucian students who were anxious to become government officials and thus were eager about familiarizing themselves with the bureaucratic system through playing the game despite its complexity. Hence, the first game of the kind must have been made during the time when the *keju* system had developed into a more mature stage, which was not until the mid-Tang, exactly the same time frame given by the Song scholars in the aforementioned texts about the first appearance of the official promotion game. In other words, the game's appearance and prevalence were a result of a particular social condition in which education was generalized and social mobility increased on a relatively large scale by means of education.

## **2.2 Song (960-1279) and Yuan (1271-1368) Dynasties**

As the *keju* examination system had been proved to be effective in recruiting officials for the Tang government, it was adopted by all subsequent dynasties. During the Song era, the civil service system became the major way for drafting officials into the government and thus the *keju* examination became more important and better established. The attitude and background of scholar-officials finally became less aristocratic and more bureaucratic. Simultaneously, the growth of private schools and the printing industry facilitated the spread of Confucian teachings so that more eligible candidates could be educated for the civil examinations. This resulted in a growing number of examinees for the annual examination at the prefectural level from the thirty thousands in the early eleventh century to the four-

hundred thousands by the late thirteenth century.<sup>50</sup> Most importantly, in regard to this study, such a growth in the literate population also indicates that they were the potential players and supporters of the official promotion game at the time. Once the game was established among the literati, it became a miniature not only of the dual systems of bureaucracy and *keju* examination but also of the career and life goal that had long been pursued by students of Confucianism.

Based on the official promotion game's characteristics, its development corresponds to those of the *keju* examination and bureaucratic systems. Historical records suggest that this game reached its first peak in the Song era during which many new versions were made by the intelligentsia and scholar-officials based on different emphases or dynastic official systems. The section of the "Yiwen lue 藝文略 (Bibliographic Records)" of the Tongzhi 通志 (Comprehensive Treatise; 1161) has fourteen records of the manual of the promotion game,<sup>51</sup> of which seven that were circulated or created at the time were based on different bureaucratic systems, namely, the Chunqiu caixuan 春秋彩選 (Dice Selection of the Spring and Autumn [Period (770 BC-476 BC)]), the Han guanyi caixuan 漢官儀彩選 (Dice Selection of the Official System of the Han Dynasty [(206 BC-220)]), the Yuanfeng guan zhi caixuan 元豐官制彩選 (Dice Selection of the Official System in the Yuanfeng [Reign Period (1078-1085)]), the Qingli caixuan tu 慶曆彩選圖 (Dice Selection Table [of the Official System] in the Qingli [Reign Period (1041-1049)]), the Wenban caixuan ge 文班彩選格 (Dice Selection Checkers of Civilian Officials) by Yang Yi 楊億 (974-1020; *zi* Danian 大年), the Songchao wenwu caixuan 宋朝文武彩選 (Dice Selection of the Civilian and Military

<sup>50</sup> John W. Chaffee, The Thorny Gates of Learning in Sung China: A Social History of Examinations (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1995) 30-35 and 226 note 63.

<sup>51</sup> Zheng Qiao, Tongzhi ershi lue, vol. 2: 1712-1713.

officials of the Song Dynasty) by Yin Zhu 尹洙 (1001-1047; *zi* Shilu), and another version with the same title by Zhang Fang 張訪. Among these works, only three are listed with the authors' names, Yang Yi, Yin Zhu, and Zhang Fang. In fact, two more authors, Liu Mengsou 劉蒙叟 (ca. 967-998; *zi* Daomin 道民) and Zhao Mingyuan 趙明遠, of two manuals with unspecific titles, Xinxiu caixuan 新修彩選 (Newly Revised Dice Selection) and Xinding caixuan 新定彩選 (Newly Edited Dice Selection), respectively, are also recorded in the same text. The rest are the Touzi xuan ge by Li He, the Shanfan caixuan 刪繁彩選 (Abridged Dice Selection), the Xuanfo tu, the Xun xian caixuan 尋仙彩選 (Dice Selection of Pursuing the Immortals), and the Xuanxian ge 選仙格 (Checkers of Immortal Selection) by Hongmeng zi 洪濛子, or Master Hongmeng, a disciple of the legendary Daoist master Chen Tuan 陳搏 (871-989; *zi* Tunan 圖南, *hao* Fuyao zi 扶搖子, or Master Fuyao; also known as Chen Xiyi 陳希夷).

Some of these names and manual titles were repeatedly mentioned by authors of later generations in regard to the early development of the game during the Tang and Song dynasties. In the section of the “Yiwen zhi 藝文志 (Bibliographic Records)” of the Song shi 宋史 (History of Song; 1345), there are records of the titles of five game manuals based on different dynastic official systems;<sup>52</sup> in addition to the one by Li He, these manuals are the Huang Song jinshi caixuan 皇宋進士彩選 (Dice Selection of Royal Song's Metropolitan Graduates) by Zhao Mingyuan, the Caixuan ge by Liu Mengsou, the Xuanhe caixuan 宣和彩選 (Dice Selection [of the Official System] in the Xuanhe [Reign Period (1119-1125)]) by

<sup>52</sup> See Tuotuo 脫脫 (1313-1355), Song shi 宋史 [History of Song] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1977) vol. 15: 5290 and 5292.



Wang Shengxiu 王慎修, and the Han guanyi 漢官儀 (Official System of the Han Dynasty) by Liu Ban 劉攽 (1022-1088; *zi* Gongfu 貢夫),<sup>53</sup> who was in charge of the compilation of the Han history for Sima Guang's 司馬光 (1019-1086) Zi zhi tongjian 資治通鑑 (Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Governing).<sup>54</sup>

Little is known about Zhao Mingyuan, whose work is known as the Xinding caixuan in the 1161 Tongzhi, but as the Huang Song jinshi caixuan in the 1345 Song shi. If both titles refer to the same manual, according to the latter title, Zhao Mingyuan must have created his version in the 1060s after the *jinshi* examination was made to be the only one esteemed in the *keju* system. It was because of such a change that obtaining a *jinshi* degree became the only means for *keju* candidates to attain high office. Before the change in the 1060s, during the Sui, Tang, and early Song, the *jinshi* examinations were used solely to test the candidates' talent in literary composition, and the *jinshi* degree was merely one of several "doctoral" degrees conferred by the *keju* examinations. Thus, the title of Zhao Mingyuan's design offers a clue to the dating of his work.

However, other than the titles, the Song shi does not provide much detail. Thus, a few brief notes found in various personal publications become the only way to understanding

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<sup>53</sup> In the Song shi, and in some later works, the game was attributed to Liu Ban's elder brother, Liu Chong 劉敞 (1019-1068; *zi* Yuanfu 原父). However, in his own postscript to the Han guanyi, Liu Ban reveals that it was actually his creation when he was a youngster; after his brother Chong saw it, he immediately fell for it and published it in his name. See Tuotuo, Song shi, vol. 15: 5290; Liu Ban 劉攽 (1022-1088), Han guanyi 漢官儀 [Official System of the Han Dynasty], in Baibu congshu jicheng 百部叢書集成 [A Hundred Collectanea], series 76, ed. Yan Yiping 嚴一萍 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan 臺灣藝文印書館, 1968) vol. 26: postscript; and Xu Du 徐度 (ca. 1138-1156), Quesao bian 却掃編 [Collected Works (Composed when) Living in Complete Seclusion], in Baibu congshu jicheng 百部叢書集成 [A Hundred Collectanea], series 46, ed. Yan Yiping 嚴一萍 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan 臺灣藝文印書館, 1965) vol. 74: 2: 23-24 (of the latter volume).

<sup>54</sup> Song Bingren, "Shengguan tu youxi yange kao," pp. 28-43; for Liu Ban's biography, see Tuotuo, Song shi, vol. 30: 10387-10388.

the games and their relations to the official systems. Gao Cheng 高承 (ca. 1078-1086) in his Shiwu ji yuan 事物紀原 (Record of the Origins of Things) relates that:

本朝劉蒙叟、陳堯佐雖各有損益，而大低取法。及趙明遠削唐雜任之門，盡以今制，專以進士為目，時慶曆<sup>55</sup>中也。元豐末，官制行，朱昌國又以《寄祿》新格為名。

Although Liu Mengsou and Chen Yaozuo of our dynasty respectively simplified and added in [items to the games they designed], [they] generally modeled after [those that had been established]. By the time Zhao Mingyuan cut back [the section of] the path of miscellaneous employments [that had been carried out] in the Tang, replacing [them] with [those of] the current system itemized specifically by [the degree of] metropolitan graduate, it was in the mid-Qingli [reign period (1041-1049)]. At the end of the Yuanfeng [reign period (1078-1086)], a [new] bureaucratic system was put into effect, for which Zhu Changguo [made a version of his own and] named it after the title of the new Checkered-Chart of Assigned Salaries [issued for the new bureaucratic system].<sup>56</sup>

Although only a few lines, here the connection between the Chinese bureaucratic system and the official promotion game is explicit. According to this passage, those newly designed games by Liu Mengsou, whose work is called the Xinxiu caixuan in the 1161 Tongzhi and the Caixuan ge in the 1345 Song shi, and Chen Yaozuo 陳堯佐 (963-1044; *zi* Xiyuan 希元) that circulated at the beginning of the Song were still strongly influenced by their Tang precedents. It looks like a breakthrough was not made until the mid-eleventh century by Zhao Mingyuan, who revised an old game with a specific focus on the *jinshi* degree holders.

<sup>55</sup> In the original text, the reign period of “Qingli” is misprinted as “慶曆.”

<sup>56</sup> Gao Cheng, Shiwu ji yuan, vol. 145: 9: 39.

Several decades later, based on the reform of the official system at the time, Zhu Changguo created another new bureaucratic version.

In the Tang, the *keju* examinations covered a variety of subjects for people with different specialties, including *xiucai* 秀才 (cultivated talent), *mingjing* 明經 (classicist), *jinshi* 進士 (presented scholar), *mingfa* 明法 (law graduate), *mingshu* 明書 (calligraphy graduate), *mingsuan* 明算 (mathematics graduate), *sanzhuan* 三傳 (three commentaries [of the Spring and Autumn]), *sanshi* 三史 (three histories), *daoju* 道舉 (Daoist selection), and *wuju* 武舉 (military selection).<sup>57</sup> Most of them were based on literary study. However, examinations were also held for specialists in minor fields like medicine, divination, astrology, physiognomy, music, chess, calligraphy, and painting. These are what Gao Cheng refers to as the *zaren zhi men* 雜任之門 (path of miscellaneous employments). Over time, the Tang elite gradually came to consider the examinations for the *mingjing* and *jinshi* the most important of all, particularly the latter, because of the open advocacy by emperors like Taizong 太宗 (599-649; r. 626-649) and Empress Wu Zetian 武則天 (624-705; r. 690-705) and the resulting prestige gained by the licentiate examinees for the subjects' extremely high competitiveness.<sup>58</sup> Their attitude influenced Song intellectuals, who also regarded highly the *jinshi* examination;<sup>59</sup> as a result, even before the change of the system in the 1060s, the majority of the Song examinees graduated with the degree *jinshi*. This socio-political tendency may have been faithfully mirrored in Zhao Mingyuan's lost version. It is also necessary to note that, in the Tang, classifications like the *xiucai*, *juren* 舉人 (recommendée),

<sup>57</sup> Wang Shouan, *Sui Tang shi*, pp. 558-559; and Chaffee, *The Thorny Gates of Learning in Sung China*, p. 15.

<sup>58</sup> Wang Shouan, *Sui Tang shi*, pp. 562-563.

<sup>59</sup> Lo Winston Wan, *An Introduction to the Civil Service of Sung China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987) 86-87.

and *jinshi* merely indicated the fields in which people earned their qualifications to enter the bureaucracy, which were entirely different from their usage in the Ming and Qing dynasties to differentiate the grades of the results in the civil service examinations.

The Jilu ge 寄祿格 (Checkered-Chart of Assigned Salaries) of the Yuanfeng reign period mentioned above originated from the system related to the *jilu guan* 寄祿官 (officials of assigned salaries). The former can be understood as the table listed with salary ranks for Northern Song (960-1127) government officials on the basis of their titular posts, in disregard of their actual assigned functions. Accordingly, the *jilu guan* refers to this salary system. This establishment was unique to the Song and was named as such to differentiate from its counterpart, the *zhishi guan* 職事官 (officials with duties). At the beginning of the Song dynasty, the civil service system was unsystematic and disordered, and the actual duties of many officials were not in accord with their titles and posts. Salaries based on bureaucratic titles were no longer valid. Thus, certain measures, namely, the *zhishi guan* and the *jilu guan*, were developed to “standardize” their duties and salary levels. An official title with the term *zhishi guan* referred to a man’s actual governing responsibility while an official title named specifically with the term *jilu guan* indicated his pay. Finally, in the third year of the Yuanfeng reign period (1080), the government reorganized the official system in an attempt to deal with this confusion. The attempt was finalized in the Jilu ge but this so-called solution seems not to have been that promising. Under the new system, the bureaucratic titles listed with the *jilu guan* took over those with the *zhishi guan* to become titles for those who were appointed with actual duties, and the titles for the salary level were substituted by another set of titles of minor posts, in combination with the classifications of *xing* 行, *shou*

守, and *shi* 試.<sup>60</sup> Such an extensive change in the bureaucratic system undoubtedly gave game players a very good reason to revise their games, irrespective as to whether it was effective or not.

In regard to Zhao Mingyuan's game, Chen Zhensun 陳振孫 (ca. 1190-1249; *zi* Boyu 伯玉) has a description of its manual in his Zhizhai shulu jieti 直齋書錄解題 (Explanation on the Subject Headings in the Book Catalogue of the Zhizhai [Studio]), in which the manual is recorded as the Jinshi caixuan 進士采選 (Dice Selection of Metropolitan Graduate):

趙明遠景昭撰；此元豐末改官制時遷轉格例也。

[This work was] by Zhao Mingyuan, [whose *zi* was] Jingzhao; this is an example of the change of the checker's layout [of the official promotion game] at the time when the bureaucratic system was reformed at the end of the Yuanfeng [reign period].

The point that should be noted here was not only the content of Zhao's game but also the importance of the bureaucratic system to the development of the game. Simply according to the two bibliographical sources, it is not difficult to find out that the bureaucratic systems adopted in the game are varied, extensively covering a wide range of periods like the Spring and Autumn period (770 BC-476 BC), the Han dynasty (206 BC-220), and the Qingli (1041-1049), Yuanfeng (1078-1085), and Xuanhe (1119-1125) reign periods of the Song dynasty.

As to the number of the game's creators, Xu Du 徐度 (ca. 1138-1156) reveals one more of them in his Quesao bian 却掃編 (Collected Works [Composed when] Living in Complete Seclusion):

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<sup>60</sup> For more information about the systems, see Lo, An Introduction to the Civil Service of Sung China, pp. 115-171.

「彩選格」起於唐李邵，本朝踵之者有趙明遠、尹師魯。元豐官制行，有宋保國。皆取一時官制為之。

The “Checkers Selection of Dice” originated with Li He of the Tang and those of our dynasty who succeed his were [made by] Zhao Mingyuan and Yin Shilu. When the Yuanfeng bureaucratic system was put into effect, there was [one by] Song Baoguo. All of them made their [games] based on the bureaucratic systems of their times.<sup>61</sup>

The new creator is Song Baoguo, who was only known to have been a Supervisory Official of the Jinan Garrison (Jinan *Jianzhen* 濟南監鎮) and happened to be an acquaintance of the famous poet Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101).<sup>62</sup> Although this passage does not provide the name of Song’s design, it could have likely been the one called the Yuanfeng caixuan 元豐彩選 (Dice Selection [of the Official System] in the Yuanfeng [Reign Period (1078-1085)]) included in the Tongzhi, which was apparently another official promotion game inspired by the establishment of the new Yuanfeng bureaucratic system. Other than Song Baoguo, another new name is Yin Shilu, which is in fact the courtesy name of Yin Zhu, whose work, the Songchao wenwu caixuan (Dice Selection of the Civilian and Military officials of the Song Dynasty), can also be found in the Tongzhi. This title clearly tells us that Yin intended to call equal attention to both the civil and military official systems.

The same passage can also be found in another Song source by Chao Gongwu 晁公武 (1105-1180; *zi* Zizhi 子止) in his Junzhai dushu zhi 郡齋讀書志 (Reading Notes of the

<sup>61</sup> Xu Du, Quesao bian, vol. 74: 2: 23-24 (of the latter volume).

<sup>62</sup> Liu Yuanqing 劉元卿 (1544-1609), Xian yi bian 賢弈編 [Collected Works of Refined Chess Games], in Baibu congshu jicheng 百部叢書集成 [A Hundred Collectanea], series 18, ed. Yan Yiping 嚴一萍 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan 臺灣藝文印書館, 1965) vol. 27: 3: 6-7.

Junzhai [Studio]) regarding one of his collected works, the Caixuan ji 采選集 (Collection of Dice Selection):

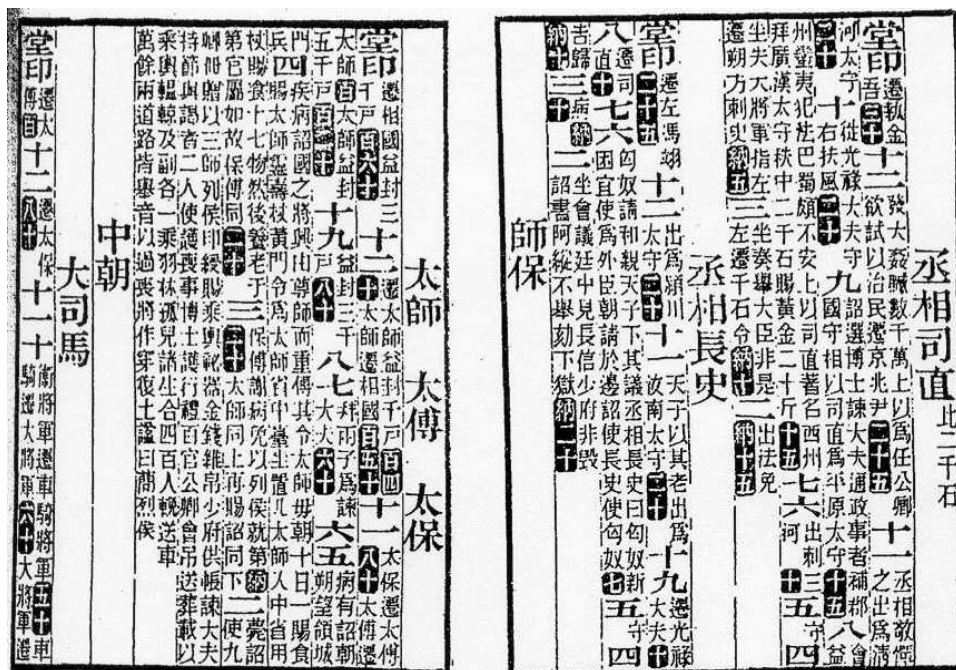
莫詳誰氏作。初「彩選格」起於唐李邵，本朝踵之者有趙明遠、尹師魯。元豐官制行，有宋保國，皆取一時官制為之。至劉貢父獨因其法，取西漢官制陞黜次第為之，又取本傳所以陞黜之語注其下，局終遂可類次其語為一傳，博戲中最為雅馴。此集尤詳且悉，曰階官，曰職名，曰科目，曰賞格，曰服色，曰俸給，曰爵邑謚法之類，無一不備。

It is not know which person made it. Initially, the “Checkers Selection of Dice” originated with Li He of the Tang and those of our dynasty who succeeded his were [made by] Zhao Mingyuan and Yin Shilu. When the Yuanfeng bureaucratic system was put into effect, there was [one by] Song Baoguo. All of them made their [games] based on the bureaucratic systems of their times. It is not until Liu Gongfu, [whose game] became the most elegant and refined [design] among all gambling games. It was chiefly because his way of making the game was based on the Western Han’s (206 BC-8) bureaucratic system in promoting, demoting, and ranking [officials] and, under each entry of which, providing comments that were the opinions adopted from the biographies in the original [Official System of the Han Dynasty] about the reasons for promotion and demotion, and allowing [each player], according to his movements, to [compose all corresponding] opinions as a biography at the end of the game. This collection is particularly detailed and complete; all such divisions as those called Official Hierarchy, Duty Title, Subject of Civil Examination, Legal Reward or Promotion for Service, Dress Code, Salary and Subsidies, Titular Honor and Fief, and Posthumous Title are included.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Chao Gongwu 晁公武 (1105-1180), Junzhai dushu zhi 郡齋讀書志 [Reading Notes of the Junzhai (Studio)] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, 1990) vol. 5: 50-51. A passage of similar content can also be found in Xu Du’s, see Xu Du, Quesao bian, vol. 74: 2: 23-24 (of the latter volume).

In this passage, Chao Gongwu explicitly extols two official promotion games created by an unknown person and by Liu Ban (Liu Gongfu). The game manual by the former was given a very unspecific name, the *Caixuan ji* (Collection of Dice Selection), yet it was an attempt to comprehend every aspect of the bureaucratic system that could be adopted to perfect the design. Judging by the divisions mentioned by Chao, the content, the complexity, and, probably, the layout of this twelfth-century game were already close to those that survive today. As for Liu Ban's *Han guanyi* (Official System of the Han Dynasty), its unique supplementary statements clearly increased the game's attraction to the elite, for which Chao compliments it as "most elegant and refined (Figure 2.2)."<sup>64</sup>

Figure 2.2 A page from the manual of the game *Han guanyi*.



This game clearly uses dotted dice to determine the movement as suggested by the numbers inside the black squares, followed by supplementary statements of political and historical events provided as the reasons for the move. The character “*na* 納,” or “to pay,” refers to the rule about counter calculation.

<sup>64</sup> In the latter part of the manual, Liu Ban even provides an example of the biography of a game player made up by combining all the supplementary statements. See Liu Ban, *Han guanyi*, pp. 7-11 (of the latter volume).



A contemporary of Chao, Shen Zuozhe 沈作喆 (ca. 1135-1174; *zi* Mingyuan 明遠), came to the same conclusion that the Han guanyi was more than merely a game. In an unnamed entry of the Yujian 寓簡 (Bamboo Slips of Implication), Shen discusses writing books on miscellaneous subjects and comments that:

世有非要而著書者 ... 又如房千里《葉子格》、趙明遠《彩選》，雖戲事，亦可以廣見聞。劉原父以《漢官儀》為《彩選》，可以溫故，使後生識漢家憲令，有益學者。

The world has those who compose books for [things that are] not important ... also, although [books] like Fang Qianli's Checkers of Leaves<sup>65</sup> and Zhao Mingyuan's Selection of Dice are written for amusement, they can broaden our knowledge. Liu Yuanfu (1019-1068)<sup>66</sup> composed the Selection of Dice according to the Official System of the Han Dynasty, which can help the player to review what he has learned [from the book], allowing the younger generation to know about the laws of the Han dynasty. That is beneficial to students.

Undoubtedly, to Shen Zuozhe, the official promotion games were characterized by their educational function. The games based on the bureaucratic systems of the Tang and Song dynasties could broaden players' knowledge while the game Han guanyi could help the students to become familiar with what they had learned from the historical text Han guanyi.

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<sup>65</sup> The term *yezi* here was referred to the pattern of the game, which was said to be similar to the format of one type of book binding method. However, many scholars of late imperial China generally deemed that the term *yezi xi* was the origin of Chinese card games. In response to their statements, a recent Taiwan historian argues that the *yezi xi* was in fact another name of the *Shengguan tu* during the Tang dynasty. See Song Bingren, "Shengguan tu youxi yange kao," 32-36.

<sup>66</sup> As mentioned in footnote 15, this work was believed to be composed by Liu Yuanfu (Liu Chong 劉敞), who was the elder brother of Liu Ban or Liu Gongfu, until, years later, Liu Ban finally revealed his authorship and the reason for the wrong attribution in his own postscript to the Han guanyi.

The Song intellectuals' passion for the official promotion game can also be demonstrated by Xie Zhaozhe's 謝肇淛 (1567-1624; *zi* Zaihang 在杭) well-known work, the Wu za zu 五雜俎 (The Five Random Notes):

唐李邵有《骰子選格》，宋劉蒙叟、楊億等有《彩選格》，即今「陞官圖」也。諸戲之中最為俚俗。不知尹洙、張訪諸公，何以為之？不一而足。至又有「選仙圖」、「選佛圖」，不足觀矣！

There is the Checkers Selection of Dice by Li He of the Tang and the Checkers of Dice Selection by Liu Mengsuo, Yang Yi (974-1020; *zi* Danian 大年), etc. of the Song, which are the present-day “Table of Bureaucratic Promotion,” the most vulgar games among all the others. Nothing is known about how those Elders Yin Zhu and Zhang Fang made theirs; [examples like these are] too many to enumerate. Then, there are the “Table of Immortal Selection” and the “Table of Buddha Selection” too, but [they are] not worth looking at.<sup>67</sup>

By the time of Xie Zhaozhe, the sixteenth century during the late Ming period, his record aptly captures the changes in the development of the official promotion games and the elite's attitude towards them over four centuries. The most “elegant and refined” game seems to have changed into the most “vulgar” one, probably, as a result of its extensive interactions with the public after the encouragement by Song scholar-officials. Besides, Xie reminds his readers of two more game creators, who were Yang Yi and Zhang Fang. Both of them and their works are first mentioned in the 1161 Tongzhi. As a category for the official promotion games, the term *Caixuan ge* that had been commonly used during the Tang and the Northern

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<sup>67</sup> Xie Zhaozhi 謝肇淛 (1567-1624), Wu za zu 五雜俎 [The Five Random Notes] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1959) vol. 1: 176.

Song dynasties was gradually replaced in the Southern Song (1127-1279) by a newer term called the “*Xuan guan tu* 選官圖 (Table of Bureaucratic Selection),”<sup>68</sup> which can be treated as the precedent term equivalent to the meaning of the “*Shengguan tu*” that was adopted to refer to the game ever since the Ming dynasty. Another point Xie provided here is his suggestion of the connection between the Table of Bureaucratic Promotion and its religious counterparts, the Table of Immortal Selection and the Table of Buddha Selection.

It is fortunate that the above sources manage to leave traces of altogether ten creators of the official promotion games during the Song dynasty. They are Zhao Mingyuan, Liu Mengsou, Chen Yaozuo, Wang Shengxiu, Zhu Changguo, Liu Ban, Yin Zhu, Song Baoguo, Yang Yi, and Zhang Fang. It is certain that five of them, that is, Liu Mengsou, Chen Yaozuo, Liu Ban, Yin Zhu, and Yang Yi, were all *jinshi* graduates, who then became influential literati and scholar-officials of high ranks. Liu Mengsou and Yang Yi even stood first in the *keju* examination in 967 and 992, respectively. Besides, the two of them, together with Liu Ban and Yin Zhu, were also prominent historians and litterateurs. As for their careers in the civil service, Liu Mengsou had been the Prefect of four different Prefectures and retired in the position of Vice Minister of the Court of Imperial Sacrifices (*Taichang shaoqing* 太常少卿); Chen Yaozuo had been a Participant in Determining Governmental Matters (*Canzhizhengshi* 參知政事), Jointly Manager of Affairs with the Secretariat-Chancellery (*Tong zhongshu menxia pingzhangshi* 同中書門下平章事), and Grand Academician of the Academy of Scholarly Worthies (*Jixiandian daxueshi* 集賢殿大學士); Liu Ban had been the Secretariat Drafter (*Zhongshu sheren* 中書舍人), Grand Academician of the Academy of Scholarly Worthies, and administrator of different counties and prefectures for two decades;

<sup>68</sup> Song Bingren, “Shengguan tu youxi yange kao,” pp. 42-43.

Yin Zhu had been the Prefect, Proofreader in the Academies (*Guange jiaokan* 館閣校勘), and Companion of the Heir Apparent (*Taizi zhongyun* 太子中允); and Yang Yi had been the Proofreader in the Palace Library (*Mishusheng zhengzi* 秘書省正字), Senior Compiler in the Historiography Institute (*Shiguan xiuzhuan* 史館修撰), Hanlin Academician, and Vice Director of the Ministry of Works (*Gongbu shilang* 工部侍郎). Among the rest of the game creators: although Song Baoguo was only a Supervisory Official of the Jinan Garrison, his acquaintance with Su Shi still suggests that he associated with those who were influential at the time; little is known about Zhang Fang yet his being addressed with the respectful title “Elder” by Xie Zhaozhe means that his status or achievement was somehow respectable; but the identity and political activity of Zhao Mingyuan, Wang Shengxiu, and Zhu Changguo remain unknown because of the lack of information. All in all, based on their socio-political status, these creators’ involvement and advocacy must have had great impact on the popularization of the device among the circles of intellectuals. The games they developed or played would keep reminding them of the ideology and the system in which they competed and lived for. Hence, the first peak development of the games that occurred in the Song is fairly understandable.

However, in contrast with the growing popularity of the games during the Song, there is almost no record of any game of this kind left to help investigate its progress in the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368). The game seemed to have suffered a huge setback at the hands of Mongols which can be explained by what we know about their administration. Based on the argument that the development of the official promotion game corresponded to those of the *keju* examination and bureaucratic system, the Mongols’ emphasis on military power and racial control must have played important roles in the decline of the device. Dominated by

racial discrimination, the new rulers established an unprecedented social hierarchy in China, dividing the people into four castes and ten subgroups. The population of the Yuan dynasty was divided partly by race and partly by territorial domain. The four castes, Mongol, *Semu ren* 色目人 (People of Various Categories, which refers to Turpan Uyghurs, Tanguts, Tibetans, Assyrians, Arabs, Persian, Turks, and other people of Central Asia origin), *Han ren* 漢人 (Han People, refers to the inhabitants of north China conquered in 1234) and *Nan ren* 南人 (Southerners, which refers to the Han-Chinese who lived in the territory of the Southern Song), were further subdivided by occupation into the so-called *shi liu* 十流 (ten groups), which were *guan* 官 (government officials), *li* 吏 (minor officials), *seng* 僧 (Buddhist monks), *dao* 道 (Daoist priests), *yi* 醫 (physicians), *gong* 工 (workmen), *jiang* 匠 (artisans), *chang* 娼 (prostitutes), *ru* 儒 (Confucian scholars), and *gai* 丐 (beggars). The social status of Confucians was suddenly degraded to a lower class just above beggars, which also indicates that they were at the same time deprived of their social privilege and reputation. Then, the worst came when their career, life goal, and financial resources were completely cut off after the Mongols further disconnected them from the administrative body by abolishing the *keju* examination. The *keju* examination was eventually reinstituted in 1315, though with some changes. However, during the several decades before this reinstitution, the incentive of the majority of Chinese intellectuals to study for entering government service had already been destroyed, not to mention creating and playing the kind of games that could only remind them of their old glorious days. In short, the games had lost their purpose for existence in this suppressive period.

### 2.3 Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) Dynasties

As the Han Chinese regained their legitimacy and sovereignty over the empire, the restoration of the *keju* examination and the civil service system should have resurrected the games accordingly. Both textual sources and surviving game boards prove this to have been so but not without a drastic change—the century-long silence had somehow diverted the development of the game away from the privilege of the elite into the hands of gamblers and people from all walks of life who could read. This was in part the effect of the growing literate population at the time that brought in new groups of patrons for the games. The spread of the games apparently gave rise to modified and simplified versions for the expanding market to meet the needs of local customs. Hence, the official promotion games were no longer regarded as “elegant and refined” after their reemergence in the Ming dynasty, they became, in Xie Zhaozhe’s words, “the most vulgar games.” Such a remark was quite different from those made by the Song scholars. With the decrease in quality and the detachment from the life circle of scholar-officials, these vulgar games failed to re-attract the attention of the intelligentsia and thus they left only very few traces in Ming and Qing written sources.

Nevertheless, there are five Ming people credited with being creators of the official promotion game with the intention to renew the game with the current bureaucratic systems, and four of them were certainly of scholar-official status. Two of them are indicated in different Ming and Qing sources; they were Xie Jin 解縉 (1369-1415; *zi* Dashen 大紳, *hao* Chunyu 春雨), a noted litterateur and calligrapher who was appointed to be the chief editor of the Yongle dadian 永樂大典 (Encyclopedia of the Yongle [Reign Period (1403-1424)]), and Ni Yuanlu 倪元璐 (1593-1644; *zi* Ruyu 汝玉, or Yuru 玉汝; *hao* Hongbao 鴻寶), the

Prime Minister of the Ministries of Revenue and Rites (*Hubu libu shangshu* 戶部、禮部尚書) during the Chongzhen 崇禎 reign period (1628-1644), who was better known for his achievement in painting and calligraphy and his patriotic suicide committed under the invasion by the Manchus. The other three creators are revealed in a Joseon source, the *Paegwan japgi* 稗官雜記 (The Storyteller's Miscellany), by Eo Sukgwon 魚叔權 (ca. 1515-1554), which has apparently never been noticed by earlier Chinese scholars and folklorists who work on the subject. In his passage about the *Jongjeongdo* 從政圖 (Table of Joining the Government), the Korean adaptation of the *Shengguan tu*, Eo tells that he had a Chinese official promotion game titled the *Lizhi tu* 礪志圖 (Table of Whetting Ambition) in his possession. He acquired it in 1533 during the time when he accompanied Joseon's diplomatic envoys to China. It is fortunate that he also includes the preface-style statement that was printed on the game board, in which three individuals and their versions with the titles of "*Huangliang* 黃梁 (Yellow Millet)"<sup>69</sup> and "*Lizhi tu*" are found. These Ming creators are to be discussed below in a chronological sequence, first on Xie Jin, then the three creators mentioned in the Korean source, and then Ni Yuanlu.

Although the *Shengguan tu* had already been popular by the time when Xie Zhaozhe composed his *Wu za zu* during the last decades of the sixteenth century, he seems to be unaware of any particular Ming creator before his time. The only source that mentions Xie Jin being the creator of the *Shengguan tu* during the early Ming dynasty is Zhixu 智旭 (1599-

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<sup>69</sup> Obviously, this title is named as such after the story, novel, or drama called *Huangliang meng* 黃梁夢 (Yellow Millet Dream), in which a whole official career passes in a dream and on awakening the dreamer is enlightened. The title was selected very likely as a reminder to those Confucian students and government officials who were overenthusiastic over pursuing their careers in government of the transient nature of life as well as the highly competitive and, sometimes, corrupted bureaucratic system.

1655),<sup>70</sup> the seventeenth-century Buddhist monk who was respected as a Pure Land patriarch by later Buddhist generations and the creator of the game *Xuanfo tu* to be discussed in the following two chapters. However, he provided no other details.

Likewise, the condition of the game during the early Ming period is indistinct largely due to the lack of information found in Chinese texts. Fortunately, the aforementioned Korean source gives a glimpse of the development of the game during the first half of the sixteenth century, about three quarters of a century before the vulgarization of the game that Xie Zhaozhe witnessed. Quite opposite to what Xie observed, according to the printed statement, the game retained its refinement and was in great popularity among high scholar-officials who lived in the Jiangnan area:

嘉靖癸巳，余隨賀節使赴燕，得「礪志圖」一本，文武各異其班，凡陞降賞罰，一依中朝見行之制。當寫標題曰：「嘉靖戊寅年，翰林著舊本；嘉靖壬辰歲，杏村校新圖。」蓋當讚詹溫之所著，又作說曰：「前輩作此圖，名曰『黃梁』。以其陞遷極品，率然可到，似乎一夢。此則近於戲矣；雖近於戲，而實寓乎賞罰，勃然其中。正德戊寅，得翰林改本于合肥韓上舍家，當時尤無定名，傳之江南，名公巨卿俊秀子弟，日相戲嬉。...。」<sup>71</sup>

In the *guisi* year of the Jiajing [reign period (1522-1566); 1533], I accompanied [our] Diplomatic Envoys for Offering Congratulations to Yanjing (present-day Beijing) [to

<sup>70</sup> Zhixu 智旭 (1599-1655), *Xuanfo pu* 選佛譜 [Manual of Buddha Selection], preface <http://www.ouyi.mymailer.com.tw/ouyihtm/019/019-3.htm>.

<sup>71</sup> Eo Sukgwon 魚叔權 (ca. 1515-1554), *Paegwan japgi* 稗官雜記 [The Storyteller's Miscellany], in *Hanguo Hanji minsu congshu* 韓國漢籍民俗叢書 [Collected Korean Folklore Texts in Chinese Characters], vol. 8, eds. Lim Donggwon 任東權, Lee Wonsik 李元植, and Lou Zikuang 婁子匡 (Taipei: Dongfang wenhua shuju 東方文化書局, 1971) 88-89. The following translation of this passage is made with the reference to that of Peter Lee. See Peter H. Lee, *A Korean Storyteller's Miscellany: The P'aegwan chapki of Ŏ Sukkwŏn* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1989) 181.



greet the emperor on the birth of his Crown Prince].<sup>72</sup> [There I] obtained a copy of the “Table of Whetting Ambition,” on which the civil and military bureaucracies are [listed] separately and all their promotion and demotion as well as rewards and punishments follow the contemporary systems of the Chinese dynasty. The written title reads, “In the *wuyin* year of the Jiajing [reign period; 1518],<sup>73</sup> [an academician of] the Hanlin [Academy] made the old edition; in the *renchen* year of the Jiajing [reign period; 1532], Xingcun revised [this] new table.” This was done by Zhan Wenzhi of Dangzan.<sup>74</sup> [He] also made a statement that says, “[Our] senior composed this table and named it ‘Yellow Millet’ for [the players in this game] can be abruptly promoted to the highest rank like a dream. This [table] resembles a game. Although it resembles a game, it actually vigorously suggests [certain principles] through reward and punishment. In the *wuyin* year of the Zhengde [reign period (1506-1521); 1518], [I] obtained [this] Hanlin revised edition in Hefei at the home of Han, a student in the imperial college.<sup>75</sup> At that time [this table] still bore no title, but it had already spread to the Jiangnan area, where noted elderly, distinguished officials, and talented younger generations amused themselves daily with the game. ... .”

This passage reveals three more Ming creators of the game, Zhan Wenzhi (otherwise unknown) and two unknown intellectuals. According to the “written title,” it is clear that Xingcun could be the *zi* or courtesy name of Zhan Wenzhi and the edition he revised was an old Hanlin version. Then, according to the statement, we know that this Hanlin table was in

<sup>72</sup> In Lee’s translation, he writes that the mission for the envoys is “to greet the emperor on his birthday.” However, my translation decides to change according to the information available to me, in which, in the same year of 1533, a group of envoys, headed by So Seyang 蘇世讓 (1486-1562), is recorded to have been sent to Yanjing, but the purpose was to greet the birth of the Crown Prince of the Ming dynasty. For details, see Liu Shunli 劉順利, *Bandao Tang feng: Chao Han zuojia yu Zhongguo wenhua* 半島唐風: 朝鮮作家與中國文化 [Tang Influence on the Peninsula: Joseon and Korean Writers and Chinese Culture] (Yinchuan 銀川: Ningxia renmin chubanshe 寧夏人民出版社, 2004) 332-334.

<sup>73</sup> The reign period here seems to be a misprint because there was no *wuyin* year during the Jiajing reign period. Judging from the context of this statement, it should be the Zhengde reign period instead.

<sup>74</sup> The meaning of the words “dangzan 當讚” here is not clear. Since, according to Chinese tradition, it was very common to address the name of an intellectual together with the title of his native place or government post, I speculated that these words are the misprint of a place or a government post.

<sup>75</sup> The term “*shangshe* 上舍” was usually used in the Ming and Qing to refer to the “*jiansheng* 監生,” students in the imperial college (*Guozijian* 國子監).

fact a revised edition, which means that there had been an older version, if not an original creation. Hence, in addition to Zhan, there were two more anonymous creators. It is noticeable that this brief passage also describes the flourishing and development of the game at the time among scholar-officials and their younger generations who lived in the vicinity of the southern cultural centre. The impact of this gambling game on the Ming elite and its didactic function on their descendants must have been greater than our estimate; otherwise, those “noted elderly, distinguished officials, and talented younger generations” would not have been so addicted to playing it. Moreover, the fact that, by the time of Zhan’s revision, the official promotion game had no single acknowledged title suggests that the game creation activities remained in a dynamic state.

In distinct contrast to the lack of information on Xie Jin as a game creator, a number of Qing texts associate Ni Yuanlu with a renewed version that had been circulated since the late Ming period. This attribution is first seen in Wang Shizhen’s 王士禎 (1634-1711; *zi* Zizhen 子真; also known as Yuyang shanren 漁洋山人) Xiangzu biji 香祖筆記 (Notes of Orchid [Studio]), in which he traces back the history of the game to the one by Li He in the Tang and discusses several Song and Ming versions he knew of in his time:

古《彩選》始唐李邵，宋尹師魯踵而為之。元豐官制行，宋保國者又更定之。劉貢父則取西漢官秩陞黜次第為之，又取本傳所以陞黜之語注其下。其兄原父見之喜，因序之而以為己作。明倪文正公鴻寶，亦以明官制為圖。予少時偶病臥旬日，無所用心，戲作「三國志圖」，以季漢為主，而魏、吳分兩路遞遷，中頗參用陳壽書，頗謂馴雅有義例也。

The ancient Dice Selection originated from Li He of the Tang. Yin Shilu of the Song followed to make a [new] one. Then, when the bureaucratic system of the Yuanfeng [reign period] was put into effect, a person [named] Song Baoguo revised it to make [another new] one. Liu Gongfu made his [version] by adopting the Western Han bureaucratic system in promoting, demoting, and ranking [officials] and, under each entry of which, providing comments that were the opinions adopted from the biographies in the original [Official System of the Han Dynasty] about the reasons for promotion and demotion. Liu's elder brother, Yuanfu, saw and liked it, so [he] wrote a preface for it to ascribe it to himself. Ni Hongbao the Honoured Elder Wenzheng also created a table with the bureaucratic system of the Ming. When I was young, once [I] lay sick [in bed] for ten days; [as I] had nothing to do with concentrated effort, in a playful manner, [I] made the "Table of the Records of Three Kingdoms," in which [I] had the Han regime as the main plot and the Wei and Wu [regimes] as two subplots being progressed in succession. The content was mostly based on Chen Shou's (233-297) book [the Records of Three Kingdoms] which [made it] quite refined and elegant and [provided it] with rules that governed its form and arrangement.<sup>76</sup>

In regard to the history of the game, what Wang Shizhen mentions here is not so different from what has been discussed above. Like his predecessors, Wang acknowledged that Li He was the originator of the game, that the reform of the bureaucratic system in the Yuanfeng period was an important stimulating phase in the development of the game, and that Liu Ban was the real designer of the game *Han guanyi*. Luckily, he also includes other helpful details. The newly revealed information are the identity of the Ming creator, and Wang's own design that was likely inspired by the format of the *Han guanyi*, which was made with reference of historical writing. Here, Ni Yuanlu is ascribed to be the first Ming scholar-official who

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<sup>76</sup> Wang Shizhen 王士禎 (1634-1711), Xiangzu biji 香祖筆記 [Notes of Orchid (Studio)] (Shangwu yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1920s) 61.

attempted to re-instate the lost refinement in the already vulgarized game. It is noticeable that Wang Shizhen himself should also be reckoned as a creator of scholar-official status; although it is not known whether he had his game produced and circulated, his attempt alone is enough to demonstrate the close association between the game and elite intellectuals.

Other Qing sources like the Tanshu lu 談書錄 (Records of Discussion on Books) and the Gaiyu congkao 該餘叢考 (Collected Critical Notes Taken during Leisure Time While Caring for My Parents) also have entries that relate Ni Yuanlu to the game designed according to the Ming official system. The former was written by Wang Shihan 汪師韓 (1707-ca. 1771-1773; *zi* Shuhuai 抒懷), who was a celebrated poet and litterateur at the time. In the entry of “*Xuan guan tu*,” he mentions that:

「陞官圖」，前人謂之「選格」，今謂之「百官鐸」，相傳此圖乃倪鴻寶所作，其官制皆明之官制也。

The “Table of Bureaucratic Promotion” was called the “Checkers of Selection” by the people of the past and is now called the “Admonition of Officialdom.” It is believed that this table was made by Ni Hongbao and its bureaucratic system is of the Ming’s bureaucratic system.<sup>77</sup>

The latter was by Zhao Yi 趙翼 (1727-1814; *zi* Yunsong 耘松, *hao* Oubei 甌北), who was a contemporary of Wang Shihan and a great poet and historian in the Qing. The entry “*Shengguan tu*” reads as follows:

<sup>77</sup> Wang Shihan 汪師韓 (1707-ca. 1771-1773), Tanshu lu 談書錄 [Records of Discussions on Books], in Congmu Wang shi yishu 叢睦汪氏遺書 [Collection of the Deceased Mr. Wang of Congmu] (Changsha 長沙: Qiantang Wang shi 錢唐汪氏, 1886) vol. 17: 36-37 (entry “*Xuanguan tu* 選官圖”) (in UBC’s Puban Collection 蒲坂書樓 (Rare Book 善本)).

世俗局戲有「陞官圖」，開列大小官位於紙上，以明瓊擲之，計點數之多寡，以定升降 ... 今「陞官圖」一名「百官鐸」<sup>78</sup>，有明一代官制略備，以明瓊擲之定遷擢，有賊則降罰，相傳為倪鴻寶所造。

Among the folk board games, there is [one called] the “Table of Bureaucratic Promotion.” On the paper [board of which] official posts of high and low ranks are listed, [the movements about] their promotion and demotion are determined by throwing dice and adding up the number of their pips. ... Now, another name of the “Table of Bureaucratic Promotion” is called the “Admonition of Officialdom,” in which the bureaucratic system of the Ming era is roughly complete. Transfer and promotion are determined by the throw of dice; having [the outcome of] “corruption” [in the form of Chinese character or dot on the dice] is punished by demotion. It is said that it was made by Ni Hongbao.<sup>79</sup>

It looks like as if the idea that the official promotion game with the Ming’s bureaucratic system was created by Ni Yuanlu became an accepted opinion in the circle of the literati by the mid-eighteenth century. Whether the *Baiguan duo* was the creation of Ni Yuanlu is not known but the attribution reminds us that the refiners of the game must have been those who were well-educated and familiar with the civil service system. According to this passage, by that time, the *Shengguan tu* had already become part of folk tradition relating more to the general public. Distinguishing it with a newly given name “*Baiguan duo*,” which emphasizes on the educational responsibility that had been traditionally expected from local

<sup>78</sup> “*Duo* 鐸” was a kind of big bell used in ancient China by local government officials when issuing public proclamations, political decrees, and moral teachings to the masses. Hence, those officials who were in charge of these didactic activities were called “*bingduo* 秉鐸,” or “*siduo* 司鐸.” “*Duo*” here refers to the meaning of teaching, transformation, or admonition.

<sup>79</sup> Zhao Yi 趙翼 (1727-1814), *Gaiyu congkao* 陔餘叢考 [Collected Critical Notes Taken during Leisure Time While Caring for My parents] (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1957) vol. 33: 711-712 (entry “*Shengguan tu*”).

civil officials, must have been deemed a hopeful, or probably the only, attempt to recapture the spirit of the game for the educated.

There is no official promotion game titled as the *Baiguan duo* in existence but, included in a seventeenth-century source, there is an entry regarding an authorless game manual, the Caixuan baiguan duo 彩選百官鐸 (Dice Selection of the Admonition of Officialdom), that can shed some light on the subject. This source is called the Shuo fu xu 說郭續 (Continuation of Theories of All Classics), a work by Tao Ting 陶珽 (1573-ca. 1638; *zi* Gelang 葛蘭). The manual can be found under the bibliographical entry Caixuan baiguan duo, in which the rules of the game are elaborated with examples in fifteen aspects, such as the calculation method of the counter.<sup>80</sup> This manual is believed to have been written between 1620 and 1644 during the late Ming period.<sup>81</sup> What followed the explanation is a brief postscript, showing the writer's expectation from the circulation of the game:

傳曰：國家之敗，繇官邪也，官之失德，寵賂章也。神聖秉剛，極勵天下，意至力殫而其轍不易，何哉？... 夫使兒童習之可以嬉，君相察之可以治，在其斯乎！

In Zuo's Commentary on Spring and Autumn Annals, it says that “the decline of a family and a country is due to the immorality of government officials, who became wicked after gaining trust from superiors as a result of being bribed.” The Sages sustain their endeavour making great effort to encourage the world [to do good and go forward to the extent that] all of their ideas and strength are exhausted yet their principles have never changed, why? ... If letting children learn it, they can [have a

<sup>80</sup> Tao Ting 陶珽 (1573-ca. 1638), Shuo fu xu 說郭續 [Continuation of Theories of All Classics] (Taipei: Xinxing shuju 新興書局, 1972) vol. 3: 1713-1719.

<sup>81</sup> Song Bingren, “Shengguan tu youxi yange kao,” p. 45.

game] to play, while [letting] the ruler and prime minister examine it, they can [have an admonition] for governance, is it like this!<sup>82</sup>

Surprisingly, the *Baiguan duo* was considered by the creator or the postscript writer as a game for both ignorant children and well-educated administrators. This passage explicitly points out that the connection between these two extreme social groups was learning. Through playing the game, the players would be constantly reminded that virtue and self-cultivation were of utmost importance to government officials.

The reference to the *Shengguan tu* as a learning tool can also be seen in another seventeenth-century source. In his *Guangyang zaji* 廣陽雜記 (Miscellaneous Notes of Guangyang), Liu Xianting 劉獻廷 (1648-1695; *zi* Junxian 君賢, *hao* Guangyang zi 廣陽子, or Master Guangyang), a prominent geographer and linguist in the early Qing, comments on seeing people celebrating the Lunar New Year at the magistrate's office in Hengyang 衡陽, Hunan:

予在衡署中度歲，日聞堂中競擲「陞官圖」喧笑，不知此中有何意味，而諸公耽之至此。予欲取兩漢、魏晉南北朝、隋、唐、宋、元之選舉職官，各為「陞官圖」一紙、《陞官圖說》一冊，置學舍中，節日暇時，病餘課畢，以此消遣。久之而歷朝選舉職官考課銓選之法，皆了了矣，亦讀史之一助也，賢於博奕遠矣。

When I spent the Lunar New Year at the magistrate's office in Hengyang, every day I heard [people] at the main hall shouting and laughing while competing in throwing dice for the "Table of Bureaucratic Promotion." [I] did not know what interest it had

<sup>82</sup> Tao Ting, *Shuo fu xu*, vol. 3: 1719.

to have those officers<sup>83</sup> indulging in it to such an extent. [For this reason,] I intend to adopt the selection systems of civil officers of the two Han, the Wei, the Jin, the Northern and Southern dynasties, the Sui, the Tang, the Song, and the Yuan to create for each of [these systems] a paper board of the “Table of Bureaucratic Promotion” and a volume of On the Table of Bureaucratic Promotion, placing them in school and [letting students] pass their time in pleasure with them after study, at festivals, in leisure time, and when recovering from illness. After a considerable time, [the students] would understand at heart all dynasties’ policies about the selection systems of civil officers and the examinations and evaluations for grading their qualifications, which is also an aid to studying history and much wiser than playing [other] gambling board games.<sup>84</sup>

The first point that deserves our attention here is the connection between the official promotion game and the Lunar New Year, which suggests that the game had deviated into a gambling tool and source of entertainment. As sources that are dated before the Qing dynasty do not relate any specific season or festival to playing the official promotion game, this New Year connection may have just begun in the Qing dynasty and possibly after the extensive generalization of the game. An 1815 anecdote about the three prominent Qing government officials, Liang Zhangju 梁章鉅 (1775-1849), Pan Xien 潘錫恩 (1785-1866), and Lin Zexu 林則徐 (1785-1850), playing a *Shengguan tu* at the latter’s studio in the capital during the New Year season can serve as evidence.<sup>85</sup> It was not until the publication of the Qing jia lu 清嘉錄 (Records of Auspicious [Seasons] in the Qing), a work by Gu Lu 顧祿 (active 1830s) on the monthly seasonal folk customs and local products in the Suzhou area,

<sup>83</sup> The author addresses the gamblers as “*gong* 公” in an ironical tone; thus, I decided not to translate the term here as “Elder.”

<sup>84</sup> Liu Xianting 劉獻廷 (1648-1695), Guangyang zaji 廣陽雜記 [Miscellaneous Notes of Guangyang], in Baibu congshu jicheng 百部叢書集成 [A Hundred Collectanea], series 69, ed. Yan Yiping 嚴一萍 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan 臺灣藝文印書館, 1967) vol. 12: 4: 4.

<sup>85</sup> Song Bingren, “Shengguan tu youxi yange kao,” p. 48.



that the game finally was formally recognized as a “statutory” folk custom practiced during the first lunar month in the city.<sup>86</sup> Hence, based on these records, playing the *Shengguan tu* as a New Year custom was practiced at least in cities like Suzhou, Hengyang, and Beijing. This seasonal custom also finds its expression in some simplified *Shengguan tu* produced in the late Qing period. Slogans and verses with New Year themes can be found printed on their corners; examples are “Universal rejoicing and world peace (普天同慶，天下太平)” (Figure 2.3a) and “[In order to] joyfully spend the Spring Festival, [we] need good, refined amusements and [in order to] be familiar with history, [we] invite you to celebrate [the festival with] the Table of Bureaucratic Promotion (歡度春節，須要高尚娛樂好；熟悉歷史，請君同賀陞官圖)” (Figure 2.3b).<sup>87</sup>

**Figure 2.3a** An example of the poetic couplets seen in some Qing dynasty *Shengguan tu*.



“Universal rejoicing and world peace (Song, 2005, p. 69).”

<sup>86</sup> Gu Lu 顧祿 (ca. 1830), *Qing jia lu* 清嘉錄 [Records of Auspicious (Seasons) in the Qing] (Shanghai: Dada tushu gongying she 大達圖書供應社, 1935) 8-9.

<sup>87</sup> Song Bingren, “Shengguan tu youxi yange kao,” p. 53.

Figure 2.3b

Another example of the poetic couplets seen in some Qing dynasty *Shengguan tu*.

中				判				經			
功	德	功	德	功	德	功	德	功	德	功	德
參	議	治	中	知	理	知	理	知	理	知	理
使	使	使	使	使	使	使	使	使	使	使	使
才	才	才	才	才	才	才	才	才	才	才	才
知	府	評	知	州	同	州	同	州	同	州	同
事	事	事	事	事	事	事	事	事	事	事	事
九	從	八	正	七	從	六	正	五	從	四	正
吏	目	學	正	州	判	判	判	判	判	判	判
功	德	功	德	功	德	功	德	功	德	功	德
司	照	京	知	京	知	京	知	京	知	京	知
冊	磨	經	縣	縣	縣	縣	縣	縣	縣	縣	縣
正	才	正	才	正	才	正	才	正	才	正	才
典	主	照	檢	訓	導	訓	導	訓	導	訓	導
史	簿	磨	討	磨	討	磨	討	磨	討	磨	討

“(In order to) joyfully spend the Spring Festival, (we) need good, refined amusements and (in order to) be familiar with history, (we) invite you to celebrate (the festival with) the Table of Bureaucratic Promotion (Song, 2005, p. 69).”

The latter verse accurately describes people’s impressions of the *Shengguan tu* during the late Qing period; other than being an amusement for New Year celebration, it was a learning aid to study history. Although this teaching function had been repeatedly highlighted by Chinese scholars in their writings as an essential of the game that differentiate it from the rest, their comments were too fragmentary to draw enough and appropriate attentions from modern historians and educationists. As this function was neglected, the awareness of its influence on the literate became minimal. Nevertheless, some traces of it were left by the producers of the games, who seriously documented this once-commonly-acknowledged function and managed to deliver these messages along with the circulation of the games. Such statements, written in a preface style, can commonly be seen printed in the centre section of some existing late Qing paper game boards. The layout of these versions is usually detailed and complex (Figure 2.4).



Figure 2.4

An example of the preface-like statements in some Qing dynasty *Shengguan tu*.

(Song, 2005, p. 70).

An example of this kind of statement is as follows:

粵稽唐虞建官惟百，而有三考黜陟之條；《周官》三百六十，而有六計弊吏之典。我國家陳綱立紀，官制秩然，是誠萬古不易之經。有志之士所當考核也。今遵《會典》，制為品級全圖，備滿員、漢員之制，別正途、異途之分，非遊

戲也。誠使稽官階、識資格，展圖了然，良有裨益。至於知己偶來，晴窗暇逸，出是圖遣興，亦足繼雅歌投壺之韻事耳。若官名間有遺漏遷轉，容有未週，所望大雅君子起而訂正之，實為厚幸也夫。

According to study, the official system established by [Ruler Yao 堯 (2357-2258 BC) of] the Tang [clan] and [Ruler Shun 舜 (2255-2208 BC) of] the Yu [clan] had only one hundred [officials] as well as three rules to examine their promotion and demotion; the Offices of the Zhou [records] three hundred and sixty [official titles] and has the law about the six guidelines to evaluate the officials. Our state outlines the law and establishes the order to rank in orderly fashion the bureaucratic system, which is truly the basic principle that has never been changed since ancient days and should be investigated by those who have a deep interest [in this]. Now, based on the Collected Statutes [of the Qing], [I have] made the whole table of all official ranks, completed it with the systems of the Manchu official and the Han official, and differentiated between the regular paths and the irregular paths; thus, [I did] not [make it] for fun. If [you want] to study the ranks of officials and to discern their qualifications, [you just] spread out the table and everything is clear [to your mind], which is of great service to [you]. As to [the occasions] when bosom friends drop by, on a fine day, beside a window, [you can] take out this table to help celebrate a moment of leisure, which is also good enough to be [treated as] the continuation of scholar's gatherings for singing polished poetry and playing the *Tou hu* game [by throwing arrows into a vase]. If there happen to be misses and changes in the titles of the official, please forgive the lack of comprehensiveness, and for which [I] hope that those respectable gentlemen would come to revise and correct it, which would indeed be a great fortune [to me].<sup>88</sup>

Such seriousness is the exact attitude expressed by Liu Xianting in the previous passage.

Like his contemporary Wang Shizhen, Liu Xianting also attempted to make a version of his

<sup>88</sup> Lu Yan, Xianggang dubo shi, p. 222.

based on historical documents. The difference is that Liu did not make it in Wang's playful manner but with an awareness of its original educational function, treating it as a practical learning tool for students. He planned to make a series of *Shengguan tu* in accordance with a sequential historical bureaucratic system, stating clearly that all these games should consist of game boards and manuals. Although he does not describe the game that he saw at the magistrate's office, based on the content, it is not hard to figure out that it probably was a simplified or vulgarized version with the main purpose of being used for gambling. In Liu's plan, the games were not meant for public circulation, which could be an effective way to prevent them from being vulgarized. However, like Wang Shizhen's "Table of the Records of Three Kingdoms," it is not known whether Liu's series of versions was actually designed and published. Otherwise, both Liu and Wang can be credited as two seventeenth-century contributors during the early Qing period in the development of the official promotion game.

Their stories further verify my opinion that, ever since the emergence of the official promotion game in the Tang, it was closely related to scholar-officials. These scholars seemed to have had a great interest in inventing new games for amusement and improving older games into their own versions. To a certain extent, other than writing, designing a bureaucratic game was a causal alternative for them to put their knowledge about the complicated official systems into a graphical database ready-made for easy reference. Hence, even as late as the latter half of the nineteenth century when the game had long been degraded as a gambling game for the public, the celebrated poet and scholar Li Ciming 李慈銘 (1830-1894; *zi* Aibo 愛伯) still had the desire to make one. On the twenty-second day of the first lunar month in the twelfth year (19<sup>th</sup> February 1873) of the Tongzhi 同治 reign period (1862-1874), Li wrote in his diary that since he was not able to proofread books and

read sūtras because of chilblains in his fingers and a feeling of absent-mindedness, he decided to spend his time doing something different. He says that:

... 欲仿劉貢夫「漢官采選格」為唐「升官圖」，以消遣閑寂，為讀史者之助。而案頭無唐代一書，乃先取「國朝升官圖」，校其遷降，別其清濁，正俗刻之誤，今日遂至盡晷。此真飽食之博弈、群居之小慧，不特玩物喪志而已。嗣當切戒，勿再為之。

In order to pass free time and loneliness, I desired to model after Liu Gongfu's "Dice Selection Checkers of the Han Bureaucracy" to make a Tang[-style] "Table of Bureaucratic Promotion," which can be an aid to those who study history. However, as [I] do not have that book of the Tang era on my table, [I] first obtained a "Table of Bureaucratic Promotion of Our Dynasty" and checked on the [rules for] transfer and demotion [listed on] it, differentiating the [morally] clean and corrupt and correcting the mistakes [found in] folk prints; hence, today, [I] ended up [doing this] till daybreak. This [kind of games] is truly the gambling board game for the idle as well as the petty cleverness of the crowd, not merely [a game] for those who play through life losing serious ambition. [Nevertheless, I] should be extremely cautious henceforth, so that [I] should not do this again.<sup>89</sup>

In the end, it looks like that Li did not actually create a game based on the Tang bureaucratic system as he initially planned. This entry, however, is still useful. Like many scholar-creators, Li considers that a game of this kind is instructive in studying history and that the problem of vulgarization is due to the rapid circulation of the game for the market consisting of gamblers and plebeians other than scholars. Based on the first part of this passage, Li's attitude towards the game remains positive, despite his own regret in proofreading games

<sup>89</sup> Li Ciming 李慈銘 (1830-1894), *Yueman tang riji* 越縕堂日記 [Diary of Yueman Studio] (Beijing: Zhejiang gonghui 浙江公會, 1920) vol. 18: 18.

overnight, which led to his ambivalent remarks that the *Shengguan tu* was “truly the gambling board game for the idle,” representing “the petty cleverness of the crowd,” but that it offered more than an addictive game notorious for weakening players’ *zhi* 志, or ambition. Comments like Li’s and his confession of his overnight indulgence in examining the games, probably cross referenced to relevant historical texts, must have had an impact on the industry. In order to refute the accusation of gambling addiction, some producers turned to underline the didactic function that the game could help students to establish ambition and went so far as to promote this idea along with the circulation of the game in the form of doggerel printed on the game board. The following is a good example of the kind of propaganda that identifies the game with socio-political expectations:

功有賞，過必罰。國與家，法不越。爾小生，宜立志。雖守兵，十三陞，至總兵。若生員，遇四德，中狀元。彼好運，眾稱奇。你起手，當倣之。有為者，亦若是。遍國制，全在茲。載陞降，知黜陟。閱圖者，考《實錄》。通官階，若親目。

To reward those who have accomplishments and surely punish those who make mistakes. Do not transgress the law of the country and the domestic discipline of the family. You the juniors are better to establish ambition. Although [at the beginning one is merely] a guard soldier, [after] thirteen promotions, [one will] be a Regional Commander. If [one is] a government student, when [one gets] the four-pip virtue by chance, [one] will be designated as a Principal Graduate. [Whenever] one is fortunate, all others praise his rare [luck]. [When] you begin, [you] should model after them. Those who can accomplish great things should also be in such a way. The complete national system is all in here, which includes the promotion and demotion, making sense of [the rules] about promotion and downgrading. Those who study the table



[can] refer to the Journal of Emperors' Lives and Activities. [Then, one can] master the official hierarchy as if [one] sees [it with one's] own eyes.<sup>90</sup>

The game producer urged young players to “establish ambition,” either in civil or military life, and asserted that being familiar with the content of the game was beneficial to the educated in studying historical documents and official systems. Here, the Confucian characteristic of establishing ambition or aspiration is remarkable. Undoubtedly, whether a promotion game was deemed to be helpful in establishing ambition depended on the quality, seriousness, and meticulousity of the game design. Serious and complex designs were extolled to be helpful in establishing players' ambitions while vulgarized versions often invited accusations of corrupting people's mind. This “ambition establishment” is exactly the same value that was appreciated and emphasized by those Korean scholars who introduced the *Shengguan tu* into their country, which will be discussed in the chapter investigating the development of the gambling games in Korea.

As I have said, ever since the history of the official promotion game began in the Tang dynasty, scholar-officials had been deeply involved in all activities that shaped its development. The inclusion of the game's manuals in the bibliographical chapter of the government sponsored Song shi has explicitly showed the attitudes of the compilers and of the ruling class toward the game and its creation. The situation remained unchanged in the Manchu dynasty, as quite a few bibliographical records of game's manuals can still be found in many Qing writings. The aforementioned Shuo fu xu by Tao Ting is an excellent example. Tao Ting includes more than a dozen manuals by intellectuals on a variety of games for both gambling and banqueting events, including the Xuanhe paipu 宣和牌譜 (Xuanhe Card

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<sup>90</sup> Wu Shouli, “Shoukanzu o kataru,” p. 45.



Manual) by Qu You 瞿祐 (1341-1427; *zi* Zongji 宗吉), the Jiabin xin ling 嘉賓心令 (Highly Welcome Guests' Mind Command) by Chao Yu'an 巢玉庵 (ca. 1526), the Yezi pu 葉子譜 (Leaf Manual) by Pan Zhiheng 潘之恒 (1556-1621; *zi* Jingsheng 景升), and the Madio pai jing 馬吊牌經 (Madio Card Manual) by Long Ziyong 龍子猶<sup>91</sup> (i.e. Feng Menglong 馮夢龍; 1574-1646; *zi* Youlong 猶龍, also *zi* Ziyong 子猶; *hao* Long Ziyong 龍子猶). The proliferation of writings on entertaining activities reflects a part of the social life enjoyed by the elite that began in the Song had finally re-emerged in mid-fifteenth-century China when Ming commercialization commenced, resulting in the acceleration of urbanization and the growth of a commodity economy. It is the growing prosperity of cities that could enable them to financially support a variety of sporting, recreational, and entertainment activities including the operations of and spending on theatres, brothels, and gambling houses. Such a prosperous style of life was soon resumed in the early Qing and the number of publications of these writings quickly increased. The writings on games and other entertainment activities also indicate that this was the second peak development of the game, beginning roughly from the late Ming to the late Qing, with only a brief interruption during the period of dynastic change.

This was the second and, in fact, the last peak development of the official promotion game before the abolition of the *keju* examination and the downfall of monarchy. The development of the *Shengguan tu* during this period of time can be characterized by the addition of historical events that complicates the design and layout of the games, even though the growing popularity of such offshoots also suggests the decrease in importance of the role played by the bureaucratic system in the development of the games. The complication of the

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<sup>91</sup> Tao Ting, Shuo fu xu, vol. 3: 1702-1710, 1741-1750, and 1759-1762.

games is understandable, as the Qing authority adopted the most of the Ming bureaucratic system, so that only a few changes could be made to create new games for customers. As seen in those existing *Shengguan tu* that were based on the Qing official system, politico-historical events and military achievements that led to the granting of noble titles and military ranks were the most popular additions due to their direct associations with governmental promotion. Nevertheless, the continuity of the official titles and the basic structures of the Ming and Qing bureaucracies permitted the continuing circulation of older versions. One example can be seen in a record that Luo Zhenyu 羅振玉 (1866-1940; *zi* Shuyun 叔蘊), the prominent philologist, epigrapher, antiquarian, and bibliophile during the first half of the twentieth century, had a version of the *Shengguan tu* dating from the Hongguang 弘光 (1644-1645) period in his collection, and, after the well-known scholar Wang Guowei 王國維 (1877-1927; *zi* Jingan 靜安 or Baiyu 伯隅) saw it, Wang concluded that the layout and content of this over two-hundred-year-old version were almost the same as those of his time.<sup>92</sup> Besides, there were versions complicated by adding in fine details according to different specific themes, probably dating from the eighteenth century during the Qianlong 乾隆 reign period (1736-1795). When Jin Xueshi 金學詩 (ca. 1762-1783) discusses the *Shengguan tu* in his *Muzhu xianhua* 牧豬閒話 (Idle Talk of a Swineherd), he mentions this feature:

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<sup>92</sup> Wang Guowei 王國維 (1877-1927), *Dongshan zaji* 東山雜記 [Miscellaneous Records of Mount East], in *Wang Guowei xueshu suibi* 王國維學術隨筆 [Wang Guowei's Random Notes on Academic Studies] (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe 社會科學文獻出版社, 2000) 75 (entry “Shengguan tu shi yu Tang 升官圖始於唐”).

今俗所傳「陞官圖」，以文武出身分仕途，以人品忠佞分勝負。... 其他形製大小，例類不一。

In the “Table of Bureaucratic Promotion” circulated by the general public nowadays, the official careers [of the players] were determined by their civilian and military career origins while the winners and losers were [respectively] determined by their loyal and sycophant moral characters. ... The rule and classification of the size and pattern of other [versions] are not the same.<sup>93</sup>

Almost a decade later, Xu Ke 徐珂 (1869-1929; *zi* Zhongke 仲可) also talks about the same feature in the entry of “*Shengguan tu*” in his encyclopaedic work, the Qing bai lei chao 清稗類鈔 (Classified Jottings on Qing Dynasty Unofficial History):

「陞官圖」，博具也。列京外文武大小官位於紙；有專載文官者。

The “Table of Bureaucratic Promotion” is a gambling tool. It lists on paper all ranks of the civilian and military officials [of the districts] inside and out of Beijing and there are those [games] that exclusively list the [titles of] civilian officials.<sup>94</sup>

Juxtaposing both the civilian and military officials in the game seems to have been a very common arrangement, which can be verified by many existing examples. However, around Jin Xueshi’s time, that is, around the late eighteenth century, it seemed that those with content that emphasized the personal quality and the difference of career origins were the

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<sup>93</sup> Jin Xueshi 金學詩 (ca. 1762-1783), Muzhu xianhua 牧豬閒話 [Idle Talk of a Swineherd], p. 16a (entry of “Judao 局道 (Path area)”).

<sup>94</sup> Xu Ke 徐珂 (1869-1929), Qing bai lei chao 清稗類鈔 [Classified Jottings on Qing Dynasty Unofficial History] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1986) vol. 10: 4895-4896 (entry “Zhi shengguan tu 擲陞官圖”).

most popular ones. Until even the early nineteenth century, a few elite-creators were still interested in itemizing their games with fine details such as career origins.<sup>95</sup>

In regard to the version that valued morality, a record of the game called the “*Zhong ning shengguan tu* 忠佞陞官圖 (Table of Bureaucratic Promotion of the Loyal and the Sycophant)” can verify Jin’s statement.<sup>96</sup> In this table, some historical personalities of late Ming are said to have combined with the plots of the game to emphasize the idea that “the winners and losers were [respectively] determined by their loyal and sycophant moral characters.” It is interesting that this kind of *Shengguan tu* just happened to become popular during the time when Emperor Qianlong (1711-1799) called for attention to “loyalty” by commissioning the compilation of the *Erchen zhuan* 貳臣傳 (Biographies of Twice-Serving Officials) in 1776.<sup>97</sup> This compilation is divided into two main sections, including over one hundred and twenty officials who served in the early Qing period. Whether these surrendered Ming officials were loyal to the Qing regime was judged by whether they had achieved any accomplishments that were beneficial to the new dynasty. This movement undoubtedly had a direct impact on the descendants of those who had served both the Ming and the Qing dynasties but the sequential reconsideration of the definition and the identity of the loyalists had an even greater, lasting impact on the society. Hence, it is safe to say that in this case the modifications made to the *Shengguan tu* were not only in accord with the change of bureaucratic system but also with the contemporaneous political atmosphere.

After the downfall of the Qing dynasty, the *Shengguan tu* began to decline as the traditional bureaucratic system and the *keju* examination system ended. Under the influence

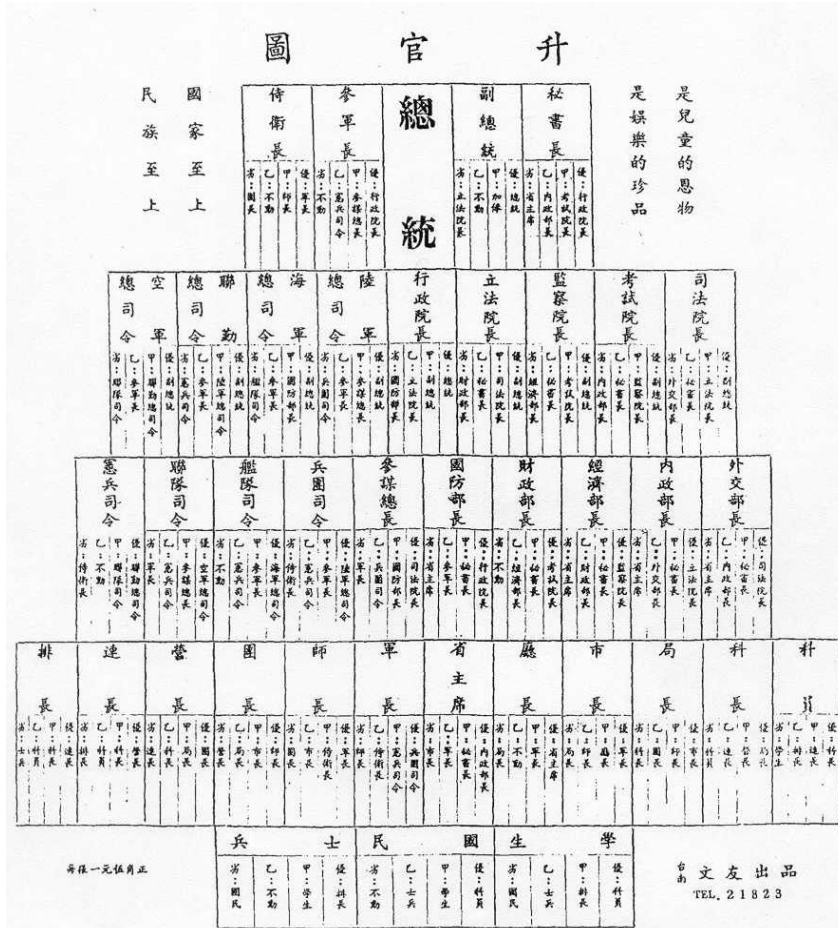
<sup>95</sup> Song Bingren, “Shengguan tu youxi yange kao,” p. 48.

<sup>96</sup> See Luo Xinben and Xu Rongsheng, *Zhongguo gudai dubo xisu*, p. 68; and Zhao Yi, *Gaiyu congkao*, p. 712.

<sup>97</sup> Pamela Kyle Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999) 55-56.

of the political revolution, the *Shengguan tu* lost its attraction to students, and playing games with the Qing official system would easily be regarded as “feudalistic” and “corrupted” by post-imperial intellectuals and reformers at that time. The market of the *Shengguan tu* must have shrunk to the extent that new products had to be released in order to prevent losing regular and potential customers. The so-called “*Minguo shengguan tu* 民國陞官圖 (Table of Bureaucratic Promotion in the Republic)” was such an attempt to test the response of the market (Figure 2.5). As seen in two existing examples circulated in Taiwan, the content of the new games is based on the new official system during the establishment of the Republic of China (1911-1949). The two games’ layouts are, however, different. One of them is circular in shape and the other one is close to a pyramid pattern. Both of them have the title of “President” placed respectively in the center and the top middle position as the winning destination. Since the new republican civilian and military systems were not as complex as the imperial ones, the content of the games had to be simplified and thus lessened the excitement caused by the complexity and the unpredictability that had long intrigued players and gamblers. Apparently, the attempt was a total failure because the simplicity turned the *Shengguan tu* into a children’s game. Hence, on some of these game boards, such as the one called the “Table of Bureaucratic Promotion (升官圖),” phrases like “the favourite thing for children [and] a valuable object for entertainment (是兒童的恩物、是娛樂的珍品)” (Figure 2.5) are commonly seen. In addition, there are political slogans like “the country comes first; the nation comes first (國家至上、民族至上)” (Figure 2.5) and “the Three Principles of the People; the Five-Power Constitution (三民主義、五權憲法)” (Figure 2.6) printed on such game boards. In a minimal sense, the game became more overtly propagandistic in function.

Figure 2.5 A post-imperial *Minguo shengguan tu*.



This *Shengguan tu* was printed and circulated in Taiwan after the retreat of the Kuomintang to Taiwan. The slogans are printed on the left and right top corners of the game board (Song, 2005, p. 73).

Figure 2.6

An example of the *Minguo shengguan tu* with circular game board printed in colours.



It was circulated in Taiwan after Kuomintang's retreat (Zhongguo tong wan, 1979, p. 198).

As the intellectuals were deprived of their socio-political privileges since the republican era, they lost their interest in playing or creating the traditional *Shengguan tu*, not to mention their interest in the childish versions. The *Shengguan tu* finally lost its important patrons who had always sustained and revived it with new elements whenever obstacles and difficulties arose during its development. The selling and playing of the traditional Qing version as entertainment in the 1970s Hong Kong, where the game only became popular late around 1850,<sup>98</sup> seems to have been its last struggle before fading away into history. Thereafter, the term *Shengguan tu* can only be heard from sporadic individual accounts of their past experiences with the games, becoming more associated with the fields of folk-custom and game history.

## 2.4 Concluding Remarks

As a whole, the history of the *Shengguan tu* was one of frequent change. Being modified along with the changes of the *keju* national examination and the traditional official system and, in the Qing, the contemporaneous political events, it had been regarded as a miniature of the bureaucracy by some scholar-officials and intellectual groups who had endeavoured to promote the game by perfecting it in their own ways. They considered it a helpful tool for students to use to familiarize themselves with the official hierarchies of different dynasties as well as the embedded virtues that all officials should possess. Hence, scholar-creators had repeatedly redesigned the *Shengguan tu*, ameliorating it to increase its influence. Based on their statements published in their writings and printed on the game boards, it is obvious that they created their games with the same serious manner as they did

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<sup>98</sup> Lu Yan, *Xianggang dubo shi*, p. 216.

in their literary publications so the role of the bureaucratic game in the life of Confucians in the premodern China is self-evident. This was the main reason why the game was so pervasive nationally and internationally, as reflected in the religious adoption of the device in China and the acceptance of the games by other countries subject to Chinese influence. The promotion game was the messenger of Confucian China with a sheet of database full of socio-histo-political messages; it was not a mere gambling game for entertainment and should not be despised as a folk toy. However, as a result of popularization, some more vulgar and simple versions came into being for the bigger market for gamblers and people with limited education. The didactic function was thus downplayed.

Somehow, perhaps because of the growing emphasis on the entertainment aspect, the circulation of the game became seasonally related to the Lunar New Year celebration, while more motifs of joyful elements were adopted and added to the layout and design of the game. The addition of these joyful, more entertaining elements was well demonstrated in the ramifications of the bureaucratic *Shengguan tu* circulated concurrently during the late imperial era, which can roughly be categorized into the religious and sight-seeing versions. With the historical survey discussed in this chapter as the background and reference, the study of these religious versions can become as deep, thorough, and comprehensive as possible and the outcomes definitely can better our understanding of the role of such gambling device in the life of late imperial Chinese with a glimpse of their spiritual aspect. Thus, the following chapter will turn to examining this specific focus.



### 3 HISTORICAL SURVEY OF RELIGIOUS GAMBLING GAMES IN CHINA

The last chapter's historical survey introduces the secular game *Shengguan tu* and traces its history, with the intention of providing essential background information that helps in comprehending the emergence and characteristics of its religious counterparts to be discussed in this chapter. In a simple sense, the religious tables only replaced the titles of officials with those of divine deities or reverend figures in the format of a bureaucratic layout. In fact, the religious themes adopted for the device were diversified and extensive; based on primary texts and existing game boards, the themes that researchers hitherto knew of came from all kinds of religious traditions including Daoism, Buddhism, popular beliefs, and the Amalgamation of the Three Teachings.<sup>99</sup> As Daoism and Buddhism are the two major institutionalized religions in China, many extant religious games originated through them and thus this chapter will give these games more attention. Available sources show that Daoist-related themes largely dominated the sale within the continent but the Buddhist versions were more popular in foreign markets thanks to the religion's universality and adaptability. The discussion will also attempt to formulate an overview of the motives behind the creation and production of these games, along with the study of their social background and historical development that can be traced back to the Song dynasty. In the section on Daoist devices, a version deploying a form of sight-seeing game board will also be explored.

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<sup>99</sup> See Zhao Yi, *Gaiyu congkao*, p. 712; and Zhixu, *Xuanfo pu*, preface.

### 3.1 Historical Survey of the Table of Immortal Selection

The connection between Daoism and gambling was never incidental. Ever since the Han dynasty (206 BC-220), a strong link between gambling games and Daoist immortals had already been established. An excellent example is the six-die gambling game called the *Liubo* 六博 (Gambling of Sixes), which was always associated with the immortals in early Chinese literature. The theme of “*xianren liubo* 仙人六博 (the immortals who played the Gambling of Sixes)” can be found in Yuefu 樂府 poetry and decorative reliefs carved on unearthed tomb bricks, two important sources of Han social history and religious beliefs.<sup>100</sup> The theme was so popular that it was adopted by poets from the third century to the sixth century in the genre of *Youxian shi* 遊仙詩 (Poetry of Wandering Immortals).<sup>101</sup> For instances, Cao Zhi 曹植 (192-232) has described the gambling scene in his “Xianren pian 仙人篇 (Poem of Immortals)” as “the immortals grip the six dice to gamble with each other in a corner of Mount Tai (仙人攬六著，對博太山隅);”<sup>102</sup> and, being inspired by Cao’s poem, Lu Yu 陸瑜 (ca. 5<sup>th</sup> century) of the Qi 齊 dynasty (478-501) titled his poem on a similar theme, “Xianren lan liuchu pian 仙人覽六著篇 (Poem of Immortals Who Grip the Six Dice),” in which he also narrates that “the nine immortals happily gather to enjoy as the six dice entertain the deities (九仙會歡賞，六著且娛神).”<sup>103</sup> Likewise, Zhang Zhengjian 張正

<sup>100</sup> Luo Xinben and Xu Rongsheng, *Zhongguo gudai dubo xisu*, pp. 24 and 241.

<sup>101</sup> Luo Xinben and Xu Rongsheng, *Zhongguo gudai dubo xisu*, p. 24.

<sup>102</sup> Cao Cao 曹操 (155-220), Cao Pi 曹丕 (187-226), and Cao Zhi 曹植 (192-232), *Cao Wei fuzi shi xuan* 曹魏父子詩選 [Selected Poems by the Father and Sons of the Cao (Family) of the Wei (Dynasty)], selected and annot. Zhao Futan 趙福壇 (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian 三聯書店, 1982) 193.

<sup>103</sup> Guo Maoqian 郭茂倩 (ca. 1264-1269), *Yuefu shiji* 樂府詩集 [Anthology of Yuefu Poetry] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1979) vol. 2.

見 (ca. 540-569) of the Chen 陳 dynasty (557-589) has a similar portrayal in his “Shengxian pian 神仙篇 (Poem of Immortals)” as “[I] have already seen that the jade girls laughingly [played] the *Tou hu* [game] and then saw that the immortal boys delightedly [played] the Gambling of Sixes (已見玉女笑投壺，復睹仙童欣六博).”<sup>104</sup> Some writers of the early periods even imagined scenes of immortal gambling that involved mortal men. Such stories can be found in a variety of literature like the *Fengsu tongyi* 風俗通義 (Comprehensive Meanings of Mores and Customs) by Ying Shao 應劭 (ca. 140-204) of the Eastern Han (25-220), the *Shenxian zhuan* 神仙傳 (Biographies of Immortals) by Ge Hong 葛洪 (283-343) of the Eastern Jin 東晉 (317-420), the *Yiyuan* 異苑 (Garden of Marvels) by Liu Jingshu 劉敬叔 (d. 468?) of the Liu Song 劉宋 (420-479), and the *Yunxian zaji* 雲仙雜記 (Miscellaneous Records of the Immortals Who Live on the Clouds) by Feng Zhi 馮贇 (d. 904?) of the Tang.<sup>105</sup> Obviously, as a tool of entertainment, gambling was believed to be part of the life of immortals; such a long-established link between immortals and gambling suggests that the emergence of the gambling game with Daoist motifs in the form of *Shengguan tu* was only a matter of time.

In addition to this long-established tie, the bureaucratic characteristic shared by both the *Shengguan tu* and Daoism also plays an important role in connecting the two. As early as the end of the Han period, the *Wudoumi dao* 五斗米道 (Way of the Five Bushels of Rice) or the *Tianshi dao* 天師道 (Way of the Celestial Masters) had already demonstrated a simple hierarchical administrative structure. This Sect was founded by Zhang Daoling 張道陵 (34-

<sup>104</sup> Lu Qinli 遼欽立, ed., *XianQin Han Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi* 先秦漢魏晉南北朝詩 [Poems of the Pre-Qin, Han, Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern dynasties] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983) vol. 3: 2482.

<sup>105</sup> For details, see Luo Xinben and Xu Rongsheng, *Zhongguo gudai dubo xisu*, pp. 240-241.

156; *zi* Fuhan 輔漢) and then moved to Sichuan by his grandson Zhang Lu 張魯 (d. 216; *zi* Gongqi 公祺), who divided the territory into twenty-four *zhi* 治 (commanderies or parishes), with administrative posts including the *guizu* 鬼卒 (ghost or demon soldiers), the *jijiu* 祭酒 (libationers), and the Celestial Masters:

Celestial Masters followers were ranked hierarchically on the basis of ritual attainment. At the top were the so-called libationers (*jijiu*). They served as leaders of twenty-four districts established by Zhang Daoling and reported directly to the Celestial Master himself. Beneath them were the demon soldiers (*guizu*), meritorious leaders of households who represented smaller units in the organization. Members came from all walks of life and included many non-Chinese ... . At the bottom were the common followers, organized and counted according to households. Ranks were attained through ritual initiations at which followers received lists of spirit generals for protection against demons ... .<sup>106</sup>

With strong local support and geographic advantage, the Celestial Masters successfully ran the territory as an independent theocratic state for almost three decades. Since the Celestial Masters were established as a theocracy in the very beginning, even after it surrendered to Cao Cao 曹操 (155-220; *zi* Mengde 孟德) in 215, the bureaucratic characteristic of Daoism remained, but was only manifested by the realm of deities and immortals in the form of hierarchy.

A similar hierarchic structure can also be found in Daoist scriptures compiled as early as the Han period. For instance, in the Taiping jing 太平經 (Scripture on Great Peace), a valuable source of the beliefs of early Daoism and of Eastern Han society, there are records

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<sup>106</sup> Livia Kohn, Monastic Life in Medieval Daoism: A Cross-Cultural Perspective (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2003) 32.

of immortals classified by functions in a simple hierarchy. In one case, there is a five-level functional ranking of the *Shenren* 神人 (Divine Being), *Dashenren* 大神人 (Great Divine Being), *Zhenren* 真人 (Perfect Being), *Xianren* 仙人, *Dadaoren* 大道人 (Great Being of the Way), who are said to be in charge of natural phenomena as the *yuanqi* 元氣 (primordial energy), *tian* 天 (heaven), *di* 地 (earth), *sishi* 四時 (four seasons), and *wuxing* 五行 (five phases), respectively.<sup>107</sup> As Daoism developed over time, with new sects appearing and new scriptures being revealed, more local deities were assimilated to the pantheon of the religion. When the pantheon grew larger and the lineages of deities became more diversified, Daoist reformists were compelled by this relatively chaotic circumstance to systemize the pantheon. The earliest attempt was made by the Daoist priest Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456-536) in his work called the *Zhenling wei ye tu* 真靈位業圖 (Table of the Ranks and Functions of Realized Ones). Tao divided the pantheon of nearly seven hundred divine beings into seven levels consisting of historical figures, ghosts, immortals, and celestial and terrestrial deities. Each level was believed to be presided over by a triad that contained a major deity and two assistant deities. Through Tao's efforts, the huge hierarchical divine organization of Daoism was fundamentally instituted.

Given that both the pantheon and organizations of Daoism shared bureaucratic characteristics, and the immortals were believed to be related to gambling, it was only a matter of time before the Daoist hierarchy was adopted to the design of the *Shengguan tu*. A tenth-century source suggests that such a connection might have already been established in 816 as in that year the thirty-three licentiate *jinshi* were complimented by their

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<sup>107</sup> Wang Ming 王明, ed. *Taiping jing hejiao* 太平經合校 [Combined Revision of the Scripture on Great Peace] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1960) 88.

contemporaries to be comparable to attaining immortality.<sup>108</sup> It is not known when the first religious counterpart was produced but it must have been circulating by the mid-twelfth century at the latest, based on the bibliographical record in the *Tongzhi*, in which two manuals with Daoist titles are listed among other game manuals. One of them, by an unknown author, is a seven-fascicle work called the *Xun xian caixuan* 尋仙彩選 (Dice Selection of Pursuing the Immortals). Judging by its length, it must have been a very comprehensive work, and, its being selected by the compiler was almost a proof of its refinement and popularity. Probably for the same reasons, it was still in circulation over two centuries later as the same work is also listed in the *Song shi*.<sup>109</sup> The other one is a one-fascicle *Xuanxian ge* by Hong Mengzi, a Song Daoist practitioner who learned from Chen Xiyi. Unfortunately, both works are no longer in existence.

On the other hand, not much detail can be found in most primary texts that could have mentioned this kind of dice games under the title *caixuan* or, its better-known name, the *Xuanxian tu* 選仙圖 (Table of Immortal Selection). However, thanks to Yu Zhaolong 虞兆澹 (ca. 17<sup>th</sup> cent.; *zi* Hongsheng 虹升) and Zhao Yi 趙翼 (1727-1814; *zi* Yunsong 耘松, *hao* Oubei 甌北), a prominent Qing scholar-official, we know a few details regarding a Song Daoist version of the game. According to their descriptions, the Song *Xuanxian tu* was also played with dice, competing from the beginning position of *sanxian* 散仙 (immortal without given a post in any Daoist heaven), passing through different statuses of celestial and terrestrial immortals who lived in a variety of grotto heavens and blissful lands such as the heavens of the *Sandong* 三洞 (Three Grottoes) and the legendary Penglai 蓬萊 Island, to

<sup>108</sup> Wang Shounan, *Sui Tang shi*, p. 563.

<sup>109</sup> Tuotuo, *Song shi*, vol. 15: 5292.

reach the highest level of Daluo 大羅 heaven. Whenever a player made a mistake, his piece would be demoted to the place called “*sifan* 思凡 (thinking of worldly affairs),” which indicated an immortal being punished for having worldly thoughts. The player then had to stay at this “prison” until he made a good throw.<sup>110</sup>

As for the prevalence of the *Xuanxian tu* in the Song dynasty, many scholars, past and present, cite the poem titled the “Gongci 宮詞 (Palace Verse)” to show how popular the Daoist variation was at the time.<sup>111</sup> This poem was composed by Wang Gui 王珪 (1019-1085; *zi* Yuyu 禹玉), who actually had written a total of one hundred and one poems under this single title “Gongci.”<sup>112</sup> This title was traditionally used to name those poems that versify the trivial round of daily life at court; their content can be viewed as a glimpse of the Song aristocratic life. It is understandable that the aristocracy would prefer playing the game about becoming an immortal, a kind of religious attainment that they might have been longing for, rather than the one emphasizing bureaucratic accomplishment that they have no incentive to play. Since the royal lifestyle had considerable influences on people of other classes, especially on the affluent, the content of the poems, to some extent, can still be of reference value to the daily life of the general public:

<sup>110</sup> Yu Zhaolong 虞兆瀟 (ca. 17<sup>th</sup> cent.), *Tianxianglou oude* 天香樓偶得 [Random Notes of the Tianxiang Tower], in the *Zi* section 子部, *Siku quanshu cunmu congshu* 四庫全書存目叢書 [Collectanea of All Works in the Annotated Bibliography but not Included in the Complete Collection in Four Treasuries] (Jinan 濟南: Qi Lu shushe 齊魯書社, 1995) vol. 98: 284 (entry “Xuanxian tu 選仙圖”); Zhao Yi, *Gaiyu congkao*, p. 712; and Ma Guojun and Ma Shuyun, *Zhonghua chuantong youxi daquan*, p. 235. In fact, the gambling games about official promotion still enjoyed popularity in the first half of the twentieth century.

<sup>111</sup> For examples, see Yu Zhaolong, *Tianxianglou oude*, p. 284; Zhao Yi, *Gaiyu congkao*, p. 712; and Song Bingren, “Shengguan tu youxi yange kao,” p. 60.

<sup>112</sup> Wang Gui 王珪 (1019-1085), *Huayang ji* 華陽集 [Collection of Huayang], in *Siku quanshu zhenben* 四庫全書珍本 [Selected Titles of the Complete Collection in Four Treasuries], series 4, ed. Wang Yunwu 王雲五 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1973) vol. 946: 5: 1-13.

盡日閒窗賭選仙，[People] Gambled on the [Table of] Immortal Selection by the window leisurely all day long;

小娃爭覓倒盆錢； Little children competed to seek after the coins that fell outside the basin.

上籌得占蓬萊島， [The winner who] obtained the highest counters must make a

一擲乘鸞出洞天。 good throw to leave for the Penglai Island from the Grotto-Heaven by riding a *luan*-phoenix.<sup>113</sup>

However, similar to the development of the *Shengguan tu*, there is no record regarding the circulation of the Daoist version in the Yuan dynasty. The absence is probably the result of the Buddhist-Daoist rivalry that occurred at about the same period of time, triggered by the contentions over property and, particularly, the distributions of the Laozi huahu jing 老子化胡經 (Scripture of Laozi's Conversion of the Barbarians) and the Laojun bashiyihua tushuo 老君八十一化圖說 (Illustrated Explanations of Lord Lao's Eighty-One Transformations). Daoist literatures based on these works claimed that Laozi went to India where he transformed into Buddha to convert the barbarians; in other words, Buddhism was merely a form of Daoism. These contentions finally grew so bitter that a mediator of a higher order was needed:

Consequently, the emperor decided to resolve the issue by staging a debate between the Taoists [Daoists] and Buddhists in 1256. The Taoists [Daoists], to his dismay, declined to participate. Debates eventually were held in 1258 and 1281. On each occasion, the Taoists [Daoists] were defeated and punished severely. In 1258, forty-

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<sup>113</sup> Wang Gui, Huayang ji, vol. 946: 5: 11.



five “false scriptures” were condemned to fire. In 1281, alas, the entire Taoist [Daoist] canon—excluding the *Daode jing*—saw the same fate.<sup>114</sup>

The setbacks suffered by the religion could also well explain the disappearance of the *Xuanxian tu*. Similar to the condition that the spread of the bureaucratic *Shengguan tu* was hindered by Yuan authorities’ policies on the *keju* examination and social status of Confucians, such a deep stain on the reputation and efficacy of Daoism must have shrunk the market of the religious *Xuanxian tu* and even retarded or halted the production of the game.

Nonetheless, based on the chapter on gambling in Xu Ke’s *Qing bai lei chao*, we know that it was fortunate that the *Xuanxian tu* did not completely die out after the Song but even found its way to the Qing court.<sup>115</sup> In Xu Ke’s account, Emperor Qianlong 乾隆 (r. 1736-1795), for amusement during a Lunar New Year, had personally created a game entitled *Qun xian qingshou tu* 群仙慶壽圖 (Table of a Crowd of Immortals Celebrating a Birthday) based on the protagonists in a Daoist work called the *Lie xian zhuan* 列仙傳 (Biographies of Exemplary Immortals). About a century later, this version was revised at the order of the Empress Dowager Cixi 慈禧 (1835-1908), who had bestowed the revised game along with some ivory dice and a silver dice bowl on government officials. Apparently, the immortal motif maintained its popularity at court.

Another story Xu Ke tells of designing new games is also about the Empress Dowager and Emperor Qianlong, who entitled a new Daoist game the “*Baxian guohai tu* 八仙過海圖 (Table of the Eight Immortals Crossing the Sea). Judging by the name, this new

<sup>114</sup> Stephen Eskildsen, *The Teachings and Practices of the Early Quanzhen Taoist Masters* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2004) 17-18.

<sup>115</sup> Xu Ke, *Qing bai lei chao*, vol. 10: 4895 (entry “*Qun xian qingshou tu* 群仙慶壽圖”).

dice game is undoubtedly associated with a Daoist mythological iconography that had been very popular during the late imperial era. In Xu's description, the game board was actually a provincial map of the Qing empire; the players used pieces marked with the names of the Eight Immortals to compete; the first one who came back to the palace after finishing "traveling across" the country was the winner:

擲骰圖名「八仙過海」，乃各省地圖。有呂仙、張仙、李仙、韓仙等，皆男仙也；女仙惟何仙一人。擲時，有牙籌八根，...上刻八仙名。八人各執一籌；若僅四人，則每人執二根。...何人遊畢各省先回大內者，即贏家也。

The dice game's board is named "Eight immortals Crossing the Sea," which is [actually] the map of all provinces. There are [pieces that represent] Immortal Lü, Immortal Zhang, Immortal Li, Immortal Han, etc.; they are all male immortals. The only female immortal is Immortal He. At play, there are eight pieces of ivory counters, ... on which are carved the names of the Eight Immortals. Each one of eight persons takes a counter; if [there are] only four people, then each person takes two pieces [of counters]. ... The one who finishes first after traveling across all provinces and returning to the imperial palace is the winner.<sup>116</sup>

A similar yet far more detailed description of this new game can also be found in the memoir of a female official who had served Cixi.<sup>117</sup> Besides, this game also witnesses the merging of the two ramifications of the *Shengguan tu*, that is, the *Xuanxian tu* and the *Lansheng tu* 攬勝圖 (Table of Enjoying Famous Scenic Spots). The pioneer versions of the sight-seeing board were called the *Xiaoye tu* 消夜圖 or *Xiaoye tu* 宵夜圖 (Table of Night Outing on the 15th

<sup>116</sup> Xu Ke, *Qing bai lei chao*, vol. 10: 4908 (entry "Xiaoqinhou zhi zhi shai tu 孝欽后製擲骰圖 (Queen Xiaojin made the Dice Throwing Table)"); Ma Guojun and Ma Shuyun, *Zhonghua chuantong youxi daquan*, p. 236.

<sup>117</sup> Song Bingren, "Shengguan tu youxi yange kao," pp. 61-62.

Day of the First Lunar Month)<sup>118</sup> while, in the Qing dynasty, it was known by the name of *Lansheng tu*. In order to increase the enjoyment factor, a few sight-seeing boards were integrated with some popular Daoist motifs that had been employed in the Daoist games. The best known of such modified *Lansheng tu* seems to be the one by Gao Zhao 高兆, a contemporary of Jin Xueshi (ca. 1762-1783). The uniqueness of Gao's game was that there were six different winning destinations for six pieces that represented the characters of poet, Daoist priest, swordsman, belle, fisherman, and Buddhist monk.<sup>119</sup> Some *Lansheng tu* were even integrated with a wine drinking game (*jiuling* 酒令), forming a new subcategory under the titles of *Lansheng tu* or *Xihu tu* 西湖圖 (Table of West Lake).<sup>120</sup>

**Figure 3.1** *Hulu wen* (Gourd Inquiry).



This print shows the game's typical swirling pattern with figures of the Eight Immortals, plants, symbolic objects, and astrological and auspicious animals. It was produced and had been circulating in Lugang 鹿港, Taiwan (Song, 2005, p. 77).

<sup>118</sup> Ma Guojun and Ma Shuyun, *Zhonghua chuantong youxi daquan*, p. 237.

<sup>119</sup> Jin Xueshi, *Muzhu xianhua*, p. 18a (entry of "Judao").

<sup>120</sup> Ma Guojun and Ma Shuyun, *Zhonghua chuantong youxi daquan*, pp. 237-242.

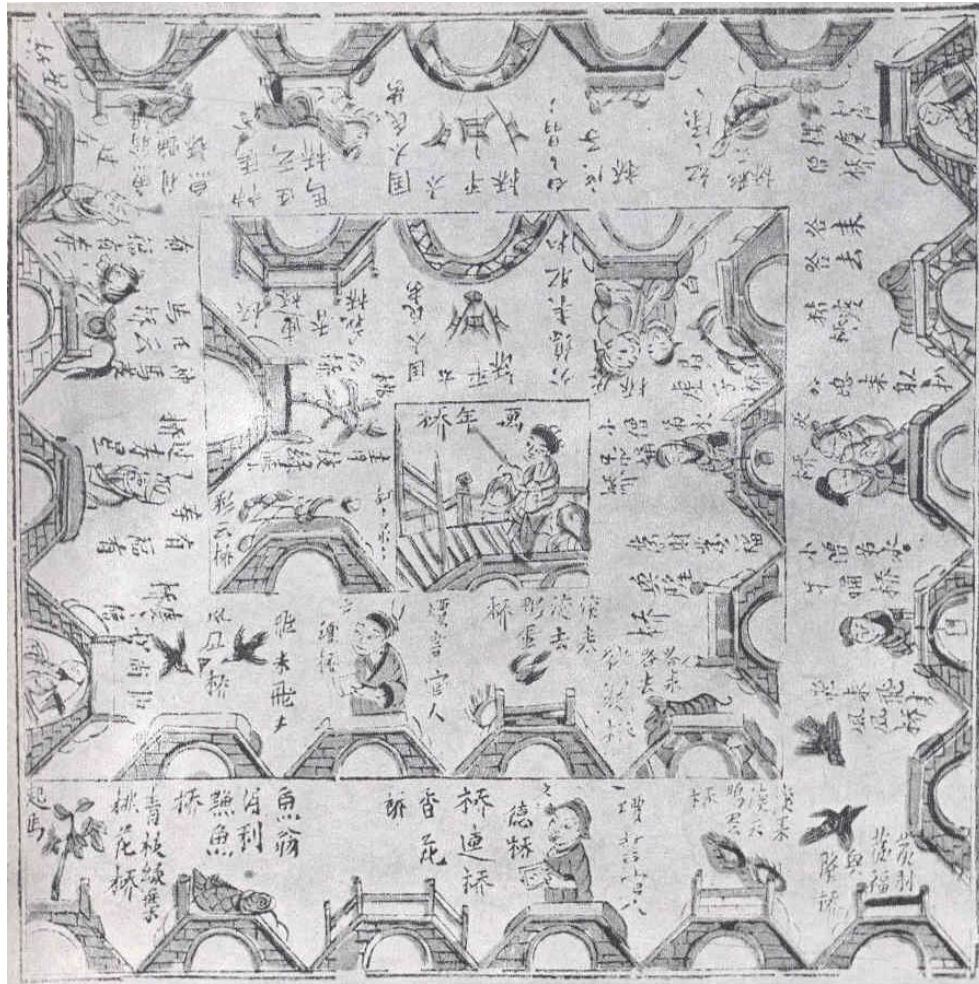
Although no actual examples of Daoist games of refined quality still exist, a few early Qing *nianhua* 年畫 (Chinese New Year prints) with similar purposes can shed some light on the subject. These surviving prints were arranged in various simple spiral patterns and were produced in Sichuan, Suzhou, Yangzhou, Fujian, Hebei, and Shandong.<sup>121</sup> Many of them were printed in colour and had the figures and their names printed side by side inside the same space. Prints of this kind were also called the *Xiaoyao tu* 逍遙圖 (Carefree Table) in Suzhou and Yangzhou, the *Fenghuang qi* 鳳凰棋 (Phoenix Chess) in Shandong, and the *Hulu wen* 葫蘆問 (Gourd Inquiry) in Fujian.<sup>122</sup> The Fujian versions were sold to places as far as Taiwan and some Southeast Asian countries; they were characterized by figures of the Eight Immortals, intermingled with drawings of animals, plants, objects, and insects (Figure 3.1).<sup>123</sup>

<sup>121</sup> Wang Shucun 王樹村, ed., *Zhongguo minjian nianhua shi tulu* 中國民間年畫史圖錄 [Chronological Catalogue of Chinese Folk New Year Prints], vol. 1-2 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe 上海人民美術出版社, 1991) 51, 350-351, 408, 550, and 755.

<sup>122</sup> Wang Shucun, *Zhongguo minjian nianhua shi tulu*, pp. 36, 242, 390, and 755.

<sup>123</sup> Wang Shucun, *Zhongguo minjian nianhua shi tulu*, p. 390; and Song Bingren, “Shengguan tu youxi yange kao,” pp. 60-61.

Figure 3.2 *Qiaoming xiaoyao tu* (Carefree Table of Bridge Names).



This was produced in Suzhou during the Qing dynasty. The original is coloured.  
27.5 x 33 cm (Wang, 1991, vol. 1, p. 350).

There is a Suzhou print called the *Qiaoming xiaoyao tu* 橋名逍遙圖 (Carefree Table of Bridge Names) reminiscent of the *Lansheng tu* (Figure 3.2). It comprises seventeen well-known bridges inside and outside the city of Suzhou; beside each drawing of the bridge, its name and a phrase are printed.<sup>124</sup> Another print, entitled the *Shuihu xuanxian tu* 水滸選仙圖 (Table of Immortal Selection of the Water Margin), distributed in Chengdu, Sichuan, is filled

<sup>124</sup> Wang Shucun, *Zhongguo minjian nianhua shi tulu*, p. 350.

with simple human figures, who are described as the heroes reincarnated from Daoist constellational deities in the novel Shuihu zhuan 水滸傳 (Water Margin) attributed to Shi Naian 施耐庵 (ca. 1296-1372) (Figure 3.3).<sup>125</sup> Other records about the adoption of literature into the game include the *Danao longgong hulu wen* 大鬧龍宮葫蘆問 (Gourd Inquiry of Creating a Big Scene in the Dragon Palace), based on an episode of the Xi you ji 西遊記 (Journey to the West) (Figure 3.4), as well as the *You Daguan yuan tu* 遊大觀園圖 (Table of Strolling the Grand View Garden)<sup>126</sup> and the *Honglou meng shengguan tu* 紅樓夢陞官圖 (Table of Bureaucratic Promotion in the Dream of the Red Chamber),<sup>127</sup> based on Cao Zhan's 曹霑 (1715-1763; *zi* Xueqin 雪芹) well-known novel Honglou meng 紅樓夢 (Dream of the Red Chamber). The "Grand View Garden" was designed after the magnificent garden of the Cao family, while the "Dream of the Red Chamber" refers to protagonists from this novel. The combinations of the activities of sight-seeing, wine drinking, life-prolonging practices, and novel-reading are indeed very representative of what Qing townsmen actually did at leisure. Hence, these variations also reflect a part of the city life that was enjoyed by the educated, and a part of the popular religious belief that was diffused throughout the Qing society.

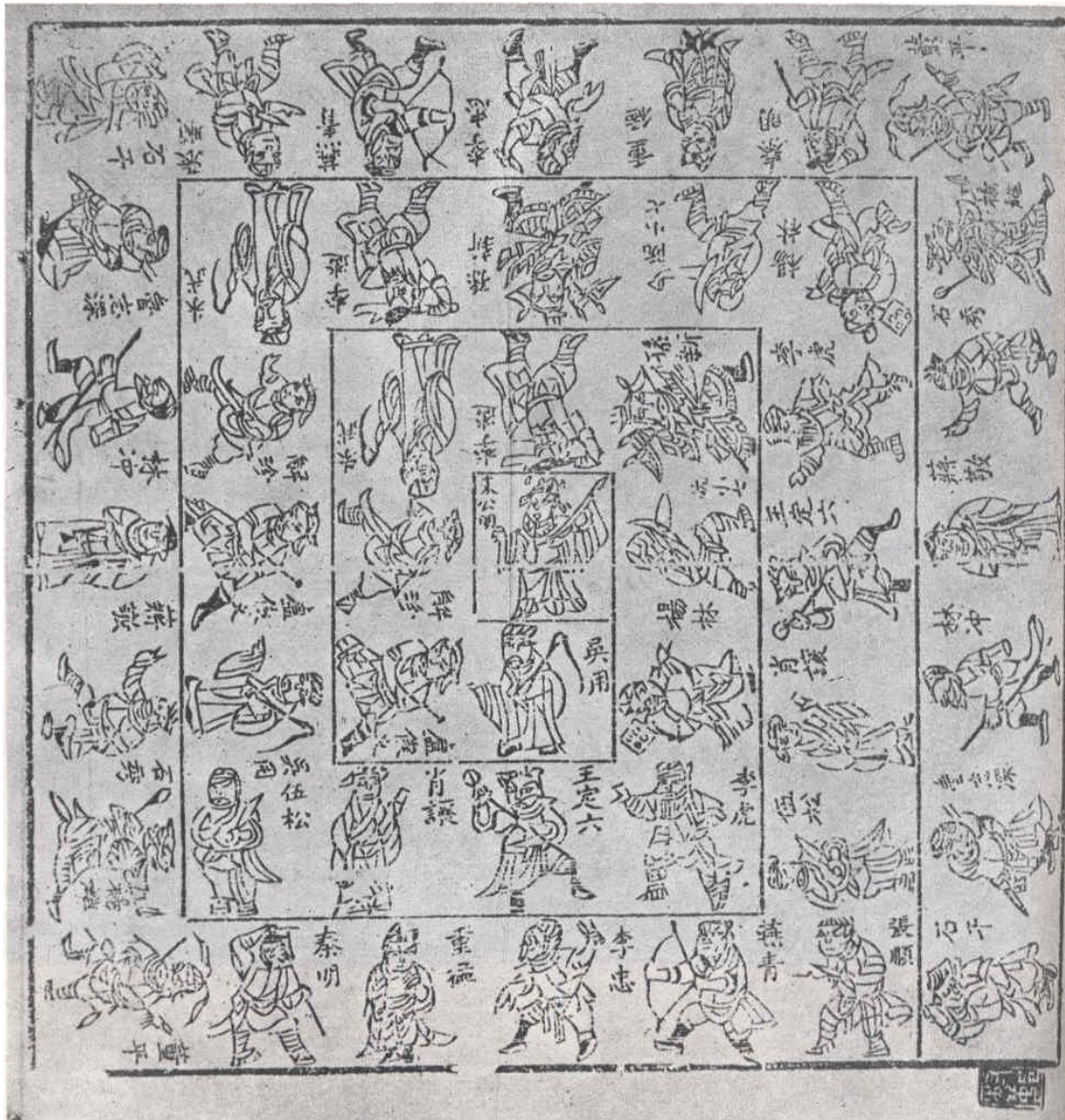
<sup>125</sup> Ma Guojun and Ma Shuyun, Zhonghua chuantong youxi daquan, p. 236; and Wang Dingzhang, Caiquan boxi, duiwu: Zhongguo minjian youxi dubo huodong, p. 108.

<sup>126</sup> Ma Guojun and Ma Shuyun, Zhonghua chuantong youxi daquan, p. 237.

<sup>127</sup> Deng Yunxiang 鄧雲鄉, "Shengguan tu 陞官圖 [The Table of Bureaucratic Promotion]," Zengbu Yanjing xiangtu ji 增補燕京鄉土記 [Supplement to Accounts of Beijing's Social Life and Customs], vol. 1. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1998) 201.



Figure 3.3 *Shuihu xuanxian tu* (Table of Immortal Selection of the Water Margin).



This is a black and white New Year print produced in Chengdu 成都, Sichuan.  
26 x 27.5 cm (Wang, 1991, vol. 1, p. 51).

**Figure 3.4** *Danao longgong hulu wen* (Gourd Inquiry of Creating a Big Scene in the Dragon Palace).



This is a black and white New Year print that was produced in Zhangzhou 漳州, Fujian, during the Qing dynasty. 40 x 43 cm (Wang, 1991, vol. 1, p. 408).

It is also noticeable that these prints are important because they show that the game can be presented pictorially, which verifies the description in a Qing source of a simple pictorial game board design found in Jin Xueshi's Muzhu xianhua:

今有小「陞官圖」，擲骰二枚，計點若干，視所行以為升降。字數無多，而有繪畫人形，兒童喜為之。是其遺意。



Today there is a small [version] of the “Table of Bureaucratic Promotion,” [which is played by] throwing two dice and moving [the pieces] forward and backward according to the calculation of the number of the pips. [On the game board, there are] not many written words but there are drawings of figures, so that children love to play with it. This is the custom handed down from [the *caixuan* tradition of the Tang].<sup>128</sup>

As Jin Xueshi lived in the second half of the eighteenth century and the aforementioned prints are considered works of the early Qing, such simplified versions probably emerged after the mid-eighteenth century. Printed with simple and delightful layouts, this kind of pictorial game apparently chose children as the target market and served an educational function, as suggested by Li Guangting 李光庭 (1812-1880) in his *Xiangyan jieyi* 鄉言解頤 (Country Sayings to Smile At).<sup>129</sup> Nevertheless, the most important point here is that these graphic versions can prove that there was a pictorial tradition within the promotion gambling games developed in China. The verification of this tradition helps to connect the religious version of Buddhism with other religious devices of a similar purpose found in the neighbouring areas of Japan, Tibet, Nepal, and Bhutan.

### 3.2 Historical Survey of the Table of Buddha Selection

Quite different from the case of Daoism discussed previously, other than the mere mention of the term *Xuanfo tu*, there is not much detail in early textual sources on the adoption of Buddhism into the official promotion game. As discussed, the bureaucratic structures of Daoism allowed it to be adopted into the game as early as the Song dynasty;

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<sup>128</sup> Jin Xueshi, *Muzhu xianhua*, p. 17a (entry of “Judao”).

<sup>129</sup> Wang Shucun, *Zhongguo minjian nianhua shi tulu*, p. 16.

when playing the *Shengguan tu* began to be associated with the Lunar New Year in the early Qing period, the Daoist Eight Immortals who symbolized playfulness and delightfulness shortly became the merry symbolic celebrants of the season. With regard to the Buddhist *Xuanfo tu*, the earliest appearance of it can also be traced back to the mid-twelfth century as suggested by the bibliographical record of the Tongzhi. However, after this debut, the game seemed to have disappeared from view, being unknown or unattractive to most writers for centuries until the end of the sixteenth century during the late Ming period. The resurfacing of such Buddhist versions or, to be exact, the term *Xuanfo tu* was indicated in the Wu za zu when Xie Zhaozhe commented on the bureaucratic games as quoted above; however, he considers it “not worth looking at” and thus gives no further details. Hence, the brief account of Master Zhixu in the preface of the manual of his *Xuanfo tu* becomes more valuable. Moreover, we should also keep in mind that Zhixu’s game, the *Xuanfo tu*, and its manual, the Xuanfo pu 選佛譜 (Manual of Buddha Selection), are important not only because of this preface but also for the fact that this set of works is the only extant Chinese version of its kind.

**Figure 3.5** *Xuanfo tu*.

[illegible]

(<http://www.ouyi.mymailer.com.tw/ouyihm/019/019-3.htm>; 18 June 2009)

According to the preface, to Zhixu's knowledge, the earliest Buddhist adoption of the game was attributed to lama monks (*nama seng* 捺麻僧), who, he believed, had designed some *Xuanfo tu* by imitating an early Ming *Shengguan tu* created by the celebrated genius litterateur and scholar-official Xie Jin 解縉 (1369-1415) (Figure 3.5). However, these lama monks' designs were already lost in Zhixu's time. Zhixu came up with the idea to design this game during the Wanli 萬曆 reign period (1573-1620) when he found out that some lay Buddhists he knew were fond of playing and gambling with the *Shengguan tu*. He also

mentioned that he had seen several versions of the *Xuanfo tu* in his youth but only appreciated the one made by Chuandeng 傳燈 (ca. 1582-1597; *hao* Wujing 無盡 and Youxi 幽溪), a well-known Tiantai master of the late Ming period whose writings he left behind include those expounding the teachings of Pure Land Buddhism.<sup>130</sup> As he could not find any Chuandeng version to reprint, he created his own.

As a means of publicizing Buddhist concepts, Zhixu first created his game in 1629 when he was thirty, revised it again in 1641 and 1651, and finalized it sometime before his death in 1655, along with the publication of the *Xuanfo pu*, a six-fascicle manual on the game written in answer to the requests of his disciples. According to Zhixu, merely two years after its first appearance in 1629, his *Xuanfo tu* was already widely distributed in the Suzhou area. It was because of such popularity that he anticipated that, while playing this religious game, all players could realize the fatigue and pain people could suffer from reincarnation within the six realms, and understand the difference in salvation for the three vehicles of Śrāvaka, Pratyeka-buddha, and Bodhisattva.

The preface was written in the summer of 1653 at the Huilong Monastery 迴龍精舍 in Shepu 歙浦 (present-day She County 歙縣), Anhui. The content of this preface actually is a brief report on the subject of *Xuanfo tu* as it covers topics related to different aspects of the subject, including the origin of the game, his comments on some early versions, and the contents and editions of his own didactic designs. For the convenience of discussion, the preface is divided into eleven short paragraphs as follows:

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<sup>130</sup> See Chuandeng, *Jingtu sheng wusheng lun* 淨土生無生論 [Discourse on Being Reborn and not Being Reborn of the Pure Land (School)], *Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經, vol. 47, no. 1975: 381-383; and Chuandeng, *Tiantai chuan foxinyin ji zhu* 天台傳佛心印記註 [Commentary on the Record of the Tiantai (School's) Transmission of Buddha's Mind-Seal], *Xu zangjing*, vol. 57, no. 969: 351-373.

1) 「選佛」之語，始於禪客點悟丹霞；而「選佛圖」傳聞創自捺麻僧也。學士解縉作「升官圖」，故捺麻僧作「選佛圖」，必應博諳教乘，深知禪律，未有不達法門中事，輒敢師心自創立者。惜其失傳，無從得見。

The term “selecting Buddha” originated from the story about Danxia being enlightened by a Chan practitioner, while the “Table of Buddha Selection” was said to be invented by lama monks. As the “Table of Bureaucratic Promotion” was made by Xie Jin, who was an Academician, those lama monks who invented the “Table of Buddha Selection” certainly must have been extensively and thoroughly familiar with [the teachings of] the exoteric schools and truly knew [those of] the Chan and Discipline schools, none did not comprehend the matters of the way of Dharma and dare to invent by their own thoughts. It is a pity that these [tables] were lost through the generations and thus cannot be seen.

In regard to the topic of the Buddhist game, this is the only source that identifies the derivation of the term *xuanfo* in Buddhist literature and associates the device with lama monks. The latter is also the only evidence that can help to connect the Chinese devices with those found in Tibet and the nearby countries that had been influenced by Buddhist teachings, which will be discussed in a later chapter. In this paragraph, Zhixu asserts that the term *xuanfo* was first seen in the story related to Danxia. Danxia was the honorific title of a Tang Buddhist monk named Tianran 天然 (739-824),<sup>131</sup> who was known to have been convinced by a Chan practitioner to pursue Buddhist enlightenment instead of official accomplishment (選官何如選佛) on his way to take the national civil service examination in Changan.<sup>132</sup>

<sup>131</sup> Tianran’s honorific title was named after the place he finally settled in, Mount Danxia 丹霞山, Nanyang 南陽 County, Henan. He preached among the monasteries on Mount Danxia during his last years.

<sup>132</sup> This episode of Tianran can be found in two Chan publications. For details, see Daoyuan 道原 (1004±), *Jingde chuandeng lu* 景德傳燈錄 [Record of the Transmission of the Lamp Compiled during the Jingde Reign

The compatibility of the time of this encounter with the emergence of the *Shengguan tu* is revealing as it demonstrates that the idea of “*xuanguan* 選官 (selecting officials)” had already prevailed among Confucian students by the end of the eighth century due to the spread of the official promotion game. Actually, this information also strengthens my argument that there could have been some prior versions existed before the alleged prototype discussed in the last chapter. On the other hand, as early as the Tianbao 天寶 reign period (742-755), Confucian students who enthused over entering government service had already likened the roster of licentiate *jinshi* to the term “*qian foming jing* 千佛名經 (sūtra on the names of the thousand Buddhas),” a term that can also specify a group of sūtras bore the same or similar title that chiefly contain the names and titles of a number of Buddhas.<sup>133</sup> To these students, the success in acquiring the *jinshi* status was no different from the attainment of Buddhahood. According to these ties, the Buddhist adoption of the secular game was thus understandable.

2) 萬曆己未，余年二十一歲；曾於留都坊間，購得一「升佛圖」，絕無倫次，甚為可嗤。

In the *jiwei* [1619] year of the Wanli reign period, I was twenty-one *sui*<sup>134</sup> and had bought a “Table of Buddha Promotion” in the street of the old capital [Nanjing]; it was absolutely inconsistent, illogical and laughable.

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Period (1004-1008)], *Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō*, vol. 51, no. 2076: 310; and Puji 普濟 (1179-1253), *Wudeng huiyuan* 五燈會元 [Compilation of the Five Lamps], *Xu zangjing*, vol. 80, no. 1565: 110.

<sup>133</sup> Wang Chuan 汪娟, “*Qian foming jing* yansheng zhi dengke diangu xilun 《千佛名經》衍生之登科典故析論 [The Literary Stories Developed from the Sūtra on the Names of the Thousand Buddhas],” *Xuanzang foxue yanjiu* 玄奘佛學研究 [Buddhist Studies on Xuanzang] 6 (January, 2007) 52-59.

<sup>134</sup> The word “*sui* 歲,” or “years of age,” refers to a traditional age counting method in China. According to this system, newborns are counted as one *sui*, not zero, and, their ages are not incremented on a birthday but on a

3) 歲在癸亥，偶於武林蓮居，隨喜一「選佛圖」；乃幽溪無盡大師所作，具顯十法界升沈之致，足稱盡美。

In the *guihai* [1623] year [of the Tianqi 天啟 reign period (1621-1628)], [I] happened to buy a “Table of Buddha Selection” in the Lotus House [Chapel] in Wulin [i.e. Hangzhou].<sup>135</sup> Made by the Great Master Youxi Wujing [ca. 1582-1597; i.e. Chuandeng], [it] completely manifested the rules of the rise and fall within the Ten Dharma Realms, [for which it] was worthy to be praised as perfect.

4) 逮乙丑年，復於松陵獲覩一圖；雖統收三教，而理致不清，亦無足取。

Then, in the *yichou* [1625] year [of the Tianqi reign period], [I] had seen a table in Songling [County of Wujiang 吳江, Suzhou]. Although [it] included the Three Teachings, [its] order and logic were not clear, so nothing good could be said about it.

5) 己巳，幻寓靈谷，見諸法友耽嗜博奕，思易之以幽溪之圖，苦無覓處。

In the *jisi* [1629] year [of the Chongzhen 崇禎 reign period (1628-1644)], [I] took residence in the Linggu Monastery [in Nanjing], where [I] saw all the Dharma friends indulged in the gambling board games, and [thus] thought of replacing them with Youxi’s table but unfortunately [it was] nowhere to be found.

6) 有別以一圖相示者，云是捺麻作，而文理尤為不通，恐決非舊物，特愚妄者之托名耳。

There was someone who showed me a different table and said that [it was] made by a lama monk. However, [its] order and organization of composition were not particularly logical and understandable, [for which I was] afraid that it definitely was

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Lunar New Year. That is, after passing each Lunar New Year, instead of the birthday, a person’s age is added one more *sui*.

<sup>135</sup> Wulin was an alternative name of Hangzhou and the full Chinese characters of the chapel are “蓮居菴.”

not the ancient version [but the product of] the ignorant and the conceited who took a lama's name.

These five paragraphs record Zhixu's discoveries of different games with Buddhist themes in the Jiangnan area between 1619 and 1629. In a decade, the Master had seen four versions of the religious game. Aside from the *Xuanfo tu* by the prominent Buddhist master Chuandeng, Zhixu criticized the other three versions as being illogical and incomprehensible in terms of layout and content. Based on the second paragraph, these tables probably were plebeianized versions that could be bought in streets of big cities. The fifth paragraph reveals his reason in searching for Chuandeng's device, which became a motivation for his future design:

7) 事不獲已，仿幽溪之意，自製一圖。兼增聖凡因行，及種性差別，以彰不一之機。設「無根信位」，及「大權護法」，以開圓轉之路；逆惡猛心，準《觀經》而許歸淨土；阿鼻極苦，依《華嚴》而徑登兜率。諸天有降德貶墜之苦；無色有窮空輪轉之殃。皆本教乘，非出臆見。又幽溪僅用佛殿一輪，故升沈迴隔。此圖每用四輪齊擲，故轉變無方。

As [Youxi's design] could not be found, [I] followed Youxi's intention, and made a table myself. Additionally, [I] added in the causal actions of the Sages and unenlightened beings as well as the differences of their inherited natures to display the dissimilarity of the fundamental qualities. [Moreover, I also] set up the "position of rootless faith"<sup>136</sup> and [that of "Buddhas and Bodhisattvas who had] the great power [of manifesting] to safeguard the Dharma" to open up the way of perfect transformation. [Accordingly, the groups of] the rebellious and the wicked [and of those who have] determined minds are acknowledged to return to the Pure Land

<sup>136</sup> The "*wugen xin*" is referred to the faith of those who have faith in Buddha but not in themselves.



based on the Visualization Sūtra,<sup>137</sup> and [those who suffer extreme hardship in the Avīci [Purgatory]<sup>138</sup> are able to ascend, as a shortcut, to the Tuṣita [Heaven]<sup>139</sup> according to the Flower Adornment [Sūtra].<sup>140</sup> All celestial beings have the sufferings of decline in virtue and status, while [the beings of the Realm of] the Immateriality have the disaster of reincarnation after exhausting [the stability of the fixed concentration on] the emptiness. [These arrangements on the game board] are all based on [the teachings of] the exoteric schools, not out of [my] conjectural opinions. [Moreover, the version of] Youxi used only one die [that was engraved with the name] of a Buddha and thus the rise and fall [of the players] was [easily] quite different. This table, each time, used altogether four dice to throw and thus [the number of pips can be] changed with no limit.

8) 至辛未年，梓行吳地，流通已廣。次於古杭西山，別見二圖，亦未全美，故皆不傳。

By [the time of] the *xinwei* [1631] year, it was printed in the Suzhou area, [and ever since] it has already been widely circulated. Then, on Mount West of Guhang [i.e. Suzhou], [I] separately saw two tables, which were also not entirely perfect, and thus they were not put into circulation.

9) 辛巳，幻寓漳南。每思吳門所刻，猶有未允當處；復改一圖。擲用六輪，方得一界還造十界，一擲備顯升沈。

<sup>137</sup> The full title of this sūtra is Foshuo guan Wuliangshoufo jing 佛說觀無量壽佛經 [The Visualization of the Buddha of Infinite Life Sūtra; the Amitayur-dhyana-sūtra], one of the sūtras particularly revered by the practitioners of the Pure Land School in China (Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō, vol. 12, no. 365: 340c-346b).

<sup>138</sup> Of all the levels of purgatory in Buddhism, suffering in Avīci is the longest, for which it is also known as the *wujian dao* 無間道 (Realm of Uninterrupted [Suffering]).

<sup>139</sup> The Tuṣita is the fourth of the six heavens in the *yujie* 欲界 (Realm of Desire) and is known to be associated with the rebirth of Buddha Maitreya, and related beliefs.

<sup>140</sup> The full title of this sūtra is Dafangguang fo huayan jing 大方廣佛華嚴經 [Avatamsaka-sūtra], on which the founding of the Huayan School in Chinese Buddhism was based. It is characterized by its cosmological theory of interpenetration and its expiation on the fifty-two-stage course of practices experienced by the Bodhisattvas.

In the *xinsi* [1641] year, [I] took residence in south Zhangzhou [漳州, Fujian,] where whenever [I] thought of [the wood block for the printing of the table] that was carved in Suzhou,<sup>141</sup> there are points that were still not properly [managed]. [Hence, I] revised [it] to become another table. The throw had to use six [dice] so that any realm can be transformed into the Ten Realms and any throw can completely manifest [all probabilities of] rise and fall.

10) 癸未春初，刻之樵李。然六輪一擲，六字紛陳，準折詳明，方堪行動；麤心浮氣之人，每以為苦。

In the early spring of the *guiwei* [1643] year, [I] had it carved in Zuili [present-day Jiaxing 嘉興 County, Zhejiang]. However, with the throw of six [dice] that displayed as many as six characters, [a piece] could only be moved after a clear, explicit, and accurate analysis, which was regarded as a hardship to those people who were careless and flighty.

11) 辛卯年冬，歸臥靈峰；深念此圖利益，能使人即遊戲間，頓知六道往還之疲苦，三乘出要之差別，誠為不可思議。而幽溪一圖，則失之簡；予向二圖，並失之繁。展轉反側，竟夕不寐。爰思但用二輪，以為擲行方便，既易於行，仍多轉變。手書一圖，徧與緇素擲之，咸稱盡美盡善。復啟予曰：「此圖一行，真足令人通達一切佛法。請更著譜以申明之，庶俾愚者亦藉此了知世出世間道理，雖有智者亦不敢妄加增損於其間也。」予聽其說，遂述為譜如左。

In the winter of the *xinmao* [1651] year, [I] returned to stay at the Lingfeng Monastery [Zhejiang], where [I] deeply thought about the advantages of the table which enabled people, in game playing, to suddenly realize the exhaustion suffered from going back and forth within the six paths [of reincarnation] and the essential differences in salvation for the three vehicles [of Śrāvaka, Pratyeka-buddha, and Bodhisattva], which were truly unimaginable. While the table of Youxi was

<sup>141</sup> It was named as Wumen because Suzhou had been the capital city of the ancient kingdom of Wu 吳.

disadvantageous [because of its] simplicity, my two former tables are both disadvantageous [because of their] complexity. [Hence, I] tossed about [in bed] and could not sleep all night. Then, [I] thought about using only two [dice] for the convenience in throwing and playing, which was easy for playing yet [the pips] remained highly changeable. [I] drew by hand one [such] table and gave it to all monks and lay Buddhists to play, who all praised it as the best [version]. Then, [they] told me, “Once this table is circulated, it is truly [good] enough to enable people to entirely comprehend all Buddhist Dharma. Please also write a manual to elaborate [the content of] it so that the ignorant can also understand the law of this world and the truth that leads to salvation from this world by [playing] this [table], and that even though a wise man dare not to conceitedly increase and reduce its content.” I agreed with what they said and thus composed a manual, as on the left.

The last five paragraphs, from the seventh to the eleventh, reveal more about Zhixu’s designs.

The seventh paragraph is a relatively detailed description of his first *Xuanfo tu* and the paragraph that follows talks about the publication and circulation of it in the Suzhou area.

After the first table had been circulated for ten years, he revised it in Fujian, and then had it printed in Zhejiang two years later. As another decade passed, Zhixu decided to make a new table again based on his two former designs. He explains how the number of dice can influence the zest of the game as well as, in particular, the revelation of those teachings embodied in the table. Besides, he also mentions about his discovery of two more versions that were of moderate quality, which make the total of the versions he saw add up to six. It is noted that Zhixu and all his acquaintances with Buddhist backgrounds seemed to value the *Xuanfo tu* mainly for its didactic significance, with an anticipation that all players, especially gamblers and ignorant people, would be able to assimilate the principles and practices of Buddhism into their lives, world views, and ways of thinking while playing the game.

Moreover, there are statements written by Lingcheng 靈晟 (ca. 1594-1653), a disciple of Zhixu, on the game board of the final edition made by Zhixu, which, as mentioned above, is the only version that we still can see today (see also Figure 3.8). The few lines printed inside the right cartouche of the game board are the general information regarding this edition, and those inside the left cartouche are the essential points that the players need to be aware of. They are as follows, with the passage inside the right cartouche listed first:

靈峰第四重定「選佛圖」略式，亦名「十法界圖」。前三刻并「三人六種圖」俱不用。

[This is] the outline format of Lingfeng's fourth revision of the "Table of Buddha Selection," which is also called the "Table of the Ten Dharma Realms." All the previous three carved [versions] and the "Table of Three People and Six Fundamental [Natures]" are no longer used.

是圖乃為引入佛法而述，故凡縑素隨喜者，莫作遊戲想，應生恭敬心，先當禮佛，然後選之，庶幾不負靈峰老人述圖之苦心也。

This table is composed for introducing Buddhism to [people] and thus all those monks and lay Buddhists who join in the fun to play [the game] should not regard it as a [mere] game. [You] should raise [your] respectful mind, with which you first worship Buddha and then play the game, so that [you] will not fail Elder Lingfeng for his patience and endurance in composing the table.

According to Lingcheng, Master Zhixu turned out to have revised his game again sometime after the third revision made in 1651 and before the publication of the manual in 1653. He also reveals the title of an otherwise-unknown religious version called the "Table

of Three People and Six Fundamental [Natures].” Thus, during the first half of the seventeenth century, there were at least eleven different Buddhist versions of the game circulating in the Jiangnan area. Apparently, Zhixu and the Buddhist circles he associated with in the vicinities of Suzhou, Zhejiang, and Fujian unanimously considered the device beneficial, and were well aware that the influence of such religious games could extend beyond traditional monastic settings. The actual popularity of Zhixu’s *Xuanfo tu* might have been more enduring and widespread than these sources implied. As Zhixu regarded this device so highly, he must have recommended it to Buddhists wherever he visited and stayed. Taking his biography as a reference, after the publication of the first device in 1631, he lived in many places including Nanjing, Zhejiang (Mount Lingfeng, Changshui 長水 County, and Huzhou 湖州), Hunan (Wushui 武水 County), Anhui (Mount Jiuhua 九華, Xinan 新安 County, and Shepu County), Fujian (Wenling 溫陵 County and Zhangzhou), Jiangxi (Shicheng 石城), and Yunnan (Chengxi 晟谿 County). His itinerary demonstrates a network that covers the areas along the Changjiang River stretching loosely from southeastern China to southwestern China. Hence, it is reasonable to believe that, by the time of Zhixu’s death, his *Xuanfo tu* must have already been in use in such an extensive area, for over two decades in some areas, for the purposes of entertainment and religious education.

Besides, to Lingcheng’s knowledge, the *Xuanfo tu* was also called the *Shi fajie tu* 十法界圖 (Table of the Ten Dharma Realms), as the game board comprised of the ten Dharma realms, that is, the *sisheng* 四聖 (Four Sages: Buddha, Bodhisattva, Pratyeka-buddha, and Śrāvaka) and the *liufan* 六凡 (Six Mortals: Celestial Being, Human, Asura, Hungry Spirit, Animal, and Purgatory-Dweller). It was probably called this because the game board

outlines the causations between all sentient beings and the ten Dharma realms, consisting of a number of possible combinations of the paths of reincarnation and salvation. In fact, in the history of Buddhism in China, there are a few works with the term *Shi fajie tu* in their titles that include graphic designs. The “*Guanxin shi fajie tu* 觀心十法界圖 (Table of the Ten Dharma Realms [Resulting from] the Visualization of the Mind)” by Pudu 普度 (1255-1330),<sup>142</sup> a Buddhist master of the Pure Land School in the Yuan dynasty, is a representative of these works. However, the graphs and the pictures of Buddhas seen in these works are actually schematic illustrations, only enough to help clarify the teachings. These works have no connection with the gambling device in question. Pudu has other graphic aids of this kind but with different titles, such as the “*Yuanrong situ zongxian zhi tu* 圓融四土總相之圖 (Table of the General Phenomena of the Perfect Completeness of the Four [Pure] Lands) (Figure 3.6)” and the “*Guanxin situ tu* 觀心四土圖 (Table of the Four [Pure] Lands [Resulting from] the Visualization of the Mind) (Figure 3.7).”<sup>143</sup> They have no relation to the gambling game. Zhixu’s version is hitherto the only one bearing the title of *Shi fajie tu*.

There was no new version after Zhixu’s, probably because its final version had been regarded as the best Buddhist game ever since its publication onwards. In Qing publications, only a few writers mentioned the term *Xuanfo tu* but what they referred to were the vulgarized versions printed with simple figures and captions related to Buddhism that mainly circulated among ordinary people.

<sup>142</sup> See Zhipan 志磐 (ca. 1258-1269), *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀 [Chronicle of the Lineage of the Buddhas and Patriarchs], *Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō*, vol. 49, no. 2035: 448.

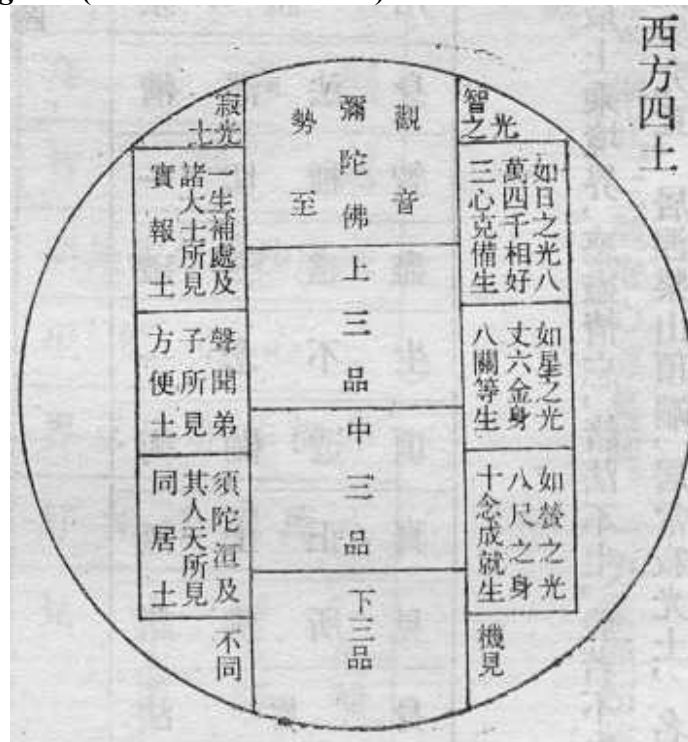
<sup>143</sup> See Pudu, *Lushan lianzong baojian* 廬山蓮宗寶鑑 [Precious Exemplars of the Lotus School on Mount Lu], *Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō*, vol. 47, no. 1973: 313 and 315.

Figure 3.6 *Yuanrong situ zongxian zhi tu* (Table of the General Phenomena of the Perfect Completeness of the Four [Pure] Lands).



(TT47, no. 1973: 313)

Figure 3.7 *Xifang situ* (Four Western Lands).



This is one of the tables related to the topic on the visualization of the mind (TT47, no. 1973: 315).

In Zhixu's own words, the direct motivation for his creations was to solve the gambling problem among Buddhist communities at that time as he "saw all Dharma friends indulging in the gambling board games" yet he could find no Buddhist games that were handy or appropriate. Zhixu lived in a highly commercialized society in which social customs, cultural diffusion, and economic growth were heavily shaped by the booming printing industry, the rise of scholar-merchants, and the formation and expansion of the *shangbang* 商幫 (business benefit societies) from Huizhou 徽州 and Shanxi 山西.<sup>144</sup> These large-scale business activities were largely the result of the changes in government policies on the trading of salt and military provisions. In this commercialization process, many major cities enjoyed economic prosperity but in exchange they had to tackle the social problems that came along with it. Gambling was one such socio-economical problem that involved and affected people from all walks of life.<sup>145</sup>

The causes for the prevalence of gambling activities during the late Ming dynasty are many but the extravagant lifestyle that associated closely with the new value of *xia* 俠 (chivalry / chivalrous man) is worth noticing. The ideas of *xia*, or *youxia* 游俠 (roaming chivalrous man), can be traced back to the Han Dynasty. Many Han sources refer to a *youxia* as a swordsman who fights for the poor and the oppressed rather than submit to injustice, even to the extent of becoming an outlaw. This kind of persona soon became an ideal symbol of honour and courage portrayed in many Chinese novels. However, the definition of this idea was gradually modified along with urbanization and commercialization in Ming

<sup>144</sup> Chen Baoliang 陳寶良, *Mingdai shehui shenghuo shi* 明代社會生活史 [The History of Social Life in the Ming Times] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe 中國社會科學出版社, 2004) 110-117; and Miao Yongke, *Mingdai chubanshi gao*, pp. 9-16.

<sup>145</sup> Chen Baoliang, *Mingdai shehui shenghuo shi*, pp. 571-576.



society. Based on Wang Hongtai's 王鴻泰 study,<sup>146</sup> during the late Ming, the idea of *xia* became attached more closely to another term called *xiayou* 俠游 (to make friends by spending generously), which was a kind of life attitude that favours self-indulgent and luxurious activities including drinking, gambling, singing, horseback riding, shooting arrows, playing polo, kicking *cuju* 蹴鞠 balls, and visiting brothels. The idea of indulgence extended to cover other studies, like astrology and opera, that were excluded from the category of “*zhengye* 正業 (proper affairs),” which traditionally referred to the study of Confucian classics. Brothels became the rendezvous of these spenders to compete in their poetry, wealth, and luxury.<sup>147</sup>

Consequently, under the influence of the ideology of *xiayou*, a large number of young people gave up their study for the *keju* examinations and turned to pursue a carefree lifestyle as an alternative social achievement. In Wang's view, the force behind the spread of this idea was largely due to the prosperity of cities and the pressure of the *keju* examination upon students.<sup>148</sup> His view is well reflected in many Ming-Qing writings from a wide category of biographies, novels, dramas, miscellaneous notes, and personal correspondences, as these works witness the trend and have descriptions of the general picture of the phenomenon. The following three passages cited here are to present the relevant lifestyles and their underlying philosophies. The first one is quoted from the letter, dated September 13<sup>th</sup>, 1584, written by Matteo Ricci (1552-1610; in Chinese Li Madou 利瑪竇; *zi* Xitai 西泰), the great Jesuit missionary, at Zhaoqing 肇慶, Guangdong, to Juan-Baptista Roman, the then Royal Factor or

<sup>146</sup> See Wang Hongtai 王鴻泰, “Xiashao zhi you: Ming Qing shiren de chengshi jiaoyou yu shang xia fengqi 俠少之游 -- 明清士人的城市交游與尚俠風氣 [Chivalrous Youth's Circle of Friends: Ming-Qing scholars' Trends of Valuing Chivalry and Making Friends in Cities],” *Zhongguo de chengshi shenghuo* 中國的城市生活 [City Life in China], ed. Li Xiaodi 李孝悌 (Taipei: Lianjing 聯經, 2005) 101-147.

<sup>147</sup> See also Chen Baoliang, *Mingdai shehui shenghuo shi*, pp. 88-89, 172-175, and 279-281.

<sup>148</sup> Wang Hongtai, “Xiashao zhi you,” pp. 101-147.

Treasurer of the King of Spain in the Philippines. My English translation is based on a Chinese translated version:

也有些人可能整天企圖在浪費金錢，彼此拜訪，相互宴請，飲酒作樂，這為士子都是平常的事，人們都很愛好吃喝聲色之樂，且有專門書籍，記載彈琴的姿勢與季節的舉行，整年有舞蹈和音樂、還有作樂的處所、釣魚的池塘、和其他消遣的處所等等。

Also, there could be some people who attempt to waste money all day by paying respects to each other, holding banquets to treat each other, and amusing themselves by drinking wine, all of which are students' and scholars' common practices. People are very fond of the pleasures of eating [food], drinking [wine], [singing and listening to] songs, and [enjoying women's] beauty, and [they even] have books of specialities that record the postures for playing stringed instruments and the seasonal gatherings of dancing and music for the whole year, as well as amusement places, fishing ponds, other recreation places, etc.<sup>149</sup>

Wasting money to hold banquets and drink wine turned out to be the “common practices” of the intellectuals in the late-sixteenth-century Zhaoqing, a prefecture that consisted of one subprefecture and eight counties at the time. Undoubtedly, in the eyes of Ricci, a great number of people in Zhaoqing were sensualists. Both classes of the elite and the common people had been enjoying so much the carnal pleasures that they even had their entertaining activities classified, discussed, and published as different topics. As Ricci had only been there for a year, he may not have learned about the idea of *xiayou* at the time of writing but

<sup>149</sup> Matteo Ricci (1552-1610), Li Madou shuxin ji 利瑪竇書信集 [Collected Correspondence of Matteo Ricci], trans. Liu Junyu 劉俊餘, Wang Yuchuan 王玉川, and Luo Yu 羅漁, Li Madou quanji 利瑪竇全集 [Complete Works of Matteo Ricci], vol.3 (Taipei: Guangqi chubanshe 光啟出版社, 1986) 50. For more details in English on Ricci's missionary journey to China, see Jonathan D. Spence, The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci (New York: Viking Penguin, 1984).

his description is certainly an honest portrayal of how far these forms of social behavior had been adopted even in the cities that were located far south from the Jiangnan area, the then cultural centre of the nation.

Another description of such a lavish gathering of friends that Ricci experienced took place in Nanjing several months after he arrived there in 1595. According to the letter he wrote to his acquaintance, Ricci was invited to a dinner one day, where he engaged in serious philosophical discussions with other guests who were of elite status:

When all the guests had arrived, they were invited into the banqueting hall, a long room furnished with pictures, vases of flowers and antique cabinets. Some twenty-five tables, four feet long and three wide, were set in a line. The uncovered tops gleamed with glossy varnish, the sides were hung with silk to the floor. At each stood a chair, carved and varnished and decorated with gold figures. ... they raised their bowls, small as nutshells, in both hands and sipped wine together. ... When the goblets were emptied, the first course of food was carried in, each guest being provided with a separate dish. ... Meat and fish were served in no apparent order, mixed with herbs and bamboo shoots and cooked in sesame oil without rice, all cut up so as to be daintily eaten. ... Until the early hours of the morning the talk continued, growing more excited and less to the point as goblets were filled and refilled. Dish after dish was brought in and, since none was removed, they stood piled up on each table like miniature castles. ... Though the rice wine was mild, so long did the banquet last that when the party broke up, servants had to assist some of the guests as they staggered to waiting sedans.<sup>150</sup>

After a decade, Ricci had moved further northward to inland Nanjing and his description of the elite's lifestyle in this city is exactly a mirror image of his previous episode. Living

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<sup>150</sup> Vincent Cronin, The Wise Man from the West (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1955) 145-148.

extravagantly seemed to be relatively comprehensive and deeply rooted in the social life of the educated class.

Like the first passage, the third quotation is also cited from a letter but is divided into five short passages here for the convenience of clarity and translation:

1) 目極世間之色，耳極世間之聲，身極世間之鮮，口極世間之譚，一快活也。

[Seeing] exhaustedly all beauties in the world [with] eyes, [listening] exhaustedly [to] all melodies in the world [with] ears, [trying] exhaustedly all novelties in the world [with] the body, and [exchanging] exhaustedly all conversations in the world [with] the mouth are the first [kind] of pleasure.

2) 堂前列鼎，堂後度曲，賓客滿席，男女交舄，燭氣薰天，珠翠委地，金錢不足，繼以田地，二快活也。

Having ancient cooking vessels arranged in order at the dining hall, a tableful of guests sing and play melodies at the back of the hall, with men's and women's shoes interlace, candle smoke darkens the sky, and pearls and jades lying abandoned on the floor; [when] money is not sufficient, sell farmlands to continue. [These are] the second [kind] of pleasure.

3) 篋中藏萬卷書，書皆珍異，宅畔置一館，館中約真正同心友十餘人，人中立一識見極高，如司馬遷、羅貫中、關漢卿者為主，分曹部署，各成一書，遠文唐宋酸儒之陋，近完一代未竟之篇，三快活也。

[One has] tens of thousands of fascicles of books treasured in the bookcases, which are all rare and precious, and [has] a house set up beside the residence, where over ten true friends of one heart are invited to it. Among them choose a person whose insight and knowledge are as extremely superior as Sima Qian (ca. 145-87 BC), Luo

Guanzhong (ca. 1330-1400), and Guan Hanqing (ca. 1240-1300)<sup>151</sup> to be the chairman, who divides shifts of duties [among the group of friends] to prepare everything so as to respectively finish a book that glosses over the shallowness [expressed in the] ancient [writings] by the Tang-Song superficial Confucians and that completes the present unfinished masterwork of this generation. [These are] the third [kind] of pleasure.

4) 千金買一舟，舟中置鼓吹一部、妓妾數人、遊閑數人，泛家浮宅，不知老之將至，四快活也。

[One] uses a thousand taels of gold to buy a boat, in which one organizes a group of orchestra musicians, several singsong girls and concubines, and several loiterers and travellers, [and then] lives [and travels with them] on this boat, being unaware of the coming of old age. [These are] the fourth [kind] of pleasure.

5) 然人生受用至此，不及十年，家資田地蕩盡矣。然後一身狼狽，朝不謀夕，托鉢歌妓之院，分餐孤老之盤，往來鄉親，恬不知恥，五快活也。

However, to enjoy such a life till this [stage], in less than ten years, all family assets and farmlands will be whittled away thoroughly, after which [one] will be distressingly and helplessly dependent, unable to make a living in the morning to live through the night, begging among houses of prostitutes and singsong girls, and sharing meals from the plates of their paramours and protectors<sup>152</sup> but still paying visits to relatives and fellow natives with no sense of shame. [These are] the fifth [kind] of pleasure.

<sup>151</sup> Sima was regarded as the one of the greatest historians in ancient China, Luo was the attributed writer of the novel Romance of the Three Kingdoms, and Guan was considered as one of the Four Great Yuan Playwrights.

<sup>152</sup> The term “*gula* 孤老” can be understood as an old man without children, a protector of a singsong artist, or a paramour of woman, as seen in the eighty-ninth fascicle of the Jinshu 晉書 (History of Jin [Dynasty]), the fourth chapter of the Shuihu zhuan 水滸傳 (Water Margin), and the fifty-third chapter of the Rulin waishi 儒林外史 (Unofficial History of the Scholars), respectively. Based on the context here, the second meaning is adopted.

This citation is quoted from the letter by Yuan Hongdao 袁宏道 (1568-1610; *zi Zhonglang* 中郎) to his uncle Gong Weichang 龔惟長 (ca. 16<sup>th</sup> century).<sup>153</sup> Yuan and his two brothers were known as the Three Yuan brothers by contemporary literati for their literary brilliance. Their poetry and writings that emphasized one's *xingling* 性靈 (innate sensibility), originality, and sincerity resulting from genuine emotions and personal experiences rather than formal attributes were regarded as the exemplars by the literary Gong'an School 公安派, whose literary significance can best be characterized by its maxim "*Du shu xingling, buju getao* 獨抒性靈，不拘格套 (Uniquely express [one's] personality and innate sensibility without being restrained by convention or form)."<sup>154</sup> Since Yuan Hongdao was already an eminent scholar at the time, the impact of all these concepts on his contemporaries, especially on young students, cannot be underestimated. It is also noticeable that Yuan's suggestions exclude conventional individual hobbies and cultural learning activities that require long process of internalization like painting and inscription study, but stress collective enjoyments. Given that these five types of pleasures had already been established along with the urbanization and commercialization that sped up after the mid-Ming era, Yuan's opinion should not be read as his unique outcry but a particular philosophy echoing the dominating *xiaoyou* lifestyle among townsmen who rejected the traditions that defined their roles, interpreted their personal achievements, and restricted their behaviours, sex lives and social activities.

The widespread nature of this style of life and attitude inevitably invited attacks from the larger conventional circles of intellectuals. In the case of Yuan's passage, for instance,

<sup>153</sup> In regard to Yuan's five types of pleasures, also see Chen Baoliang, *Mingdai shehui shenghuo shi*, pp. 83-85.

<sup>154</sup> Susan Daruvala, *Zhou Zuoren and an Alternative Chinese Response to Modernity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center: Distributed by Harvard University Press, 2000) 134.

many Confucians came forth to defend the traditional views and customs, arguing against the five pleasures and their resulting styles of life. Among them there was a patriotic calligrapher, Huang Chunyao 黃淳耀 (1605-1645; *zi* Yunsheng 蘊生; *hao* Taoan 陶庵), who criticized the shortcomings of the assemblies frequented by students and the elite. In his argument, Huang deprecated five categories of assembly, which were the *wenhui* 文會 (literary assembly), *jiuhui* 酒會 (drinking assembly), *youhui* 遊會 (hiking assembly), *tanhui* 談會 (chitchat assembly), and *jiaohui* 交會 (friendship making assembly). Although the literary assembly seemed to belong to the category of proper affairs, such a gathering is, according to him, by no means beneficial to people's education in improving their ethical behavior and cultivating their career advancement (*jinde xiuye* 進德修業).<sup>155</sup> It is not known whether Huang's defensive approach was successful but his admonition is apparently a good example indicating how detrimental such improper behaviors were to young students in the eyes of traditional Confucians.

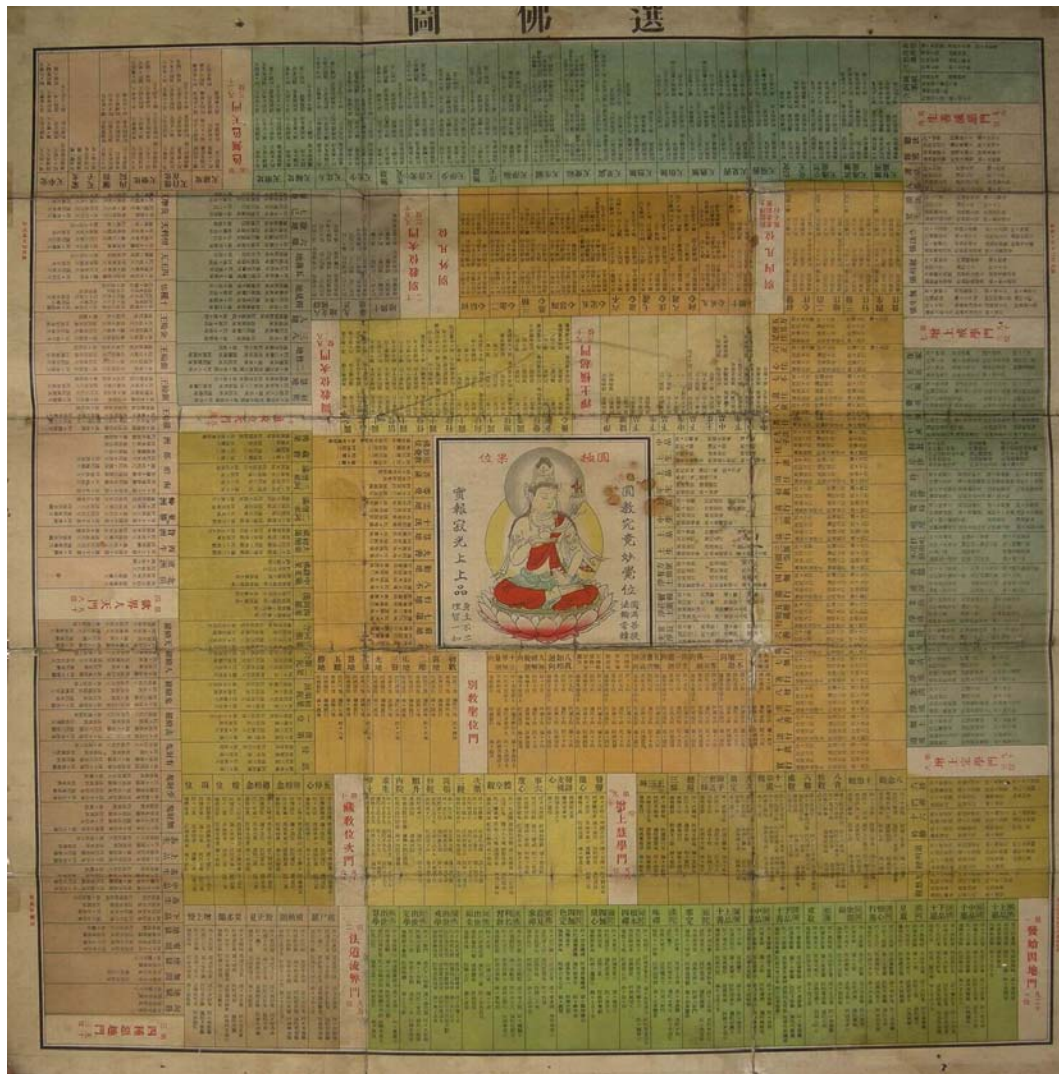
This style of indulgent life can actually remind us of two circumstances regarding the religious board games. As immortals had the image of being free of worries and responsibilities, Daoist followers were no stranger to the carefree *xiayou* concept and the extravagant activities developed from it. Thus, the social ethos obviously helped foster the growth of the immortal-oriented *Xuanxian tu*, which explains clearly why the popularity of Daoist versions surpassed that of other religious board games. Under such a social ethos, and as gambling had long been intermingled with Daoist and popular religious beliefs, there must have been a considerable number of gamblers and game players who were very fond of these

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<sup>155</sup> Huang Chunyao 黃淳耀 (1605-1645), *Taoan ji* 陶庵集 [Collection of Taoan], in *Qiankun zhengqi ji* 乾坤正氣集 [Collection of the Moral Sense between Heaven and Earth], vol. 31 (Taipei: Huanqiu shuju 環球書局, 1966) 17559.

religious games. The second circumstance is that these lifestyles might have also been adopted by many Buddhists under such overwhelming circumstances, as suggested by the fact that some of them had gambled on the *Shengguan tu* mentioned by Zhixu in his preface. Since Zhixu was inspired by this personal contact under this socio-economic backdrop to create his *Xuanfo tu*, it is reasonable to believe that he designed his device for those students and scholars who, for self-indulgent enjoyment, strayed away from the religious path laid by the enlightened.

Figure 3.8 *Xuanfo tu*.



([http://www.zgsd.net/channel2-p\\_81102.shtml](http://www.zgsd.net/channel2-p_81102.shtml); 18 June 2009)



Figure 3.8 is a coloured print produced in the tenth year (1943) of the reign period of Kangde 康德 (1934-1945) of the Japanese-controlled state of Manchukuo 滿洲國 (Nation of Manchuria) by the Buddhist Sūtras Circulation Office of the Branch of the Association of Buddhism in Binjiang Province (Fojiao zonghui Binjiang sheng zhibu fojing liutong chu 佛教總會濱江省支部佛經流通處). The content of this print was identical with that of Zhixu, only with a more elegant layout and an addition of recapitulated details cited from Zhixu's manual. The remake of Zhixu's version clearly suggests that the game sustained its popularity at least sometime before the founding of Communist China. In recent years, Zhixu's *Xuanfo tu* has regained attention from Buddhist circles in Taiwan. A Taichung-based (Taizhong-based) Pure Land organization called the Taizhong nianshe 臺中蓮社 (Taizhong Lotus Society) has reprinted and circulated the game among its members and even programmed an online version of it for this digitalized world. In order to understand how good Zhixu's device is as in the eyes of Buddhist communities for centuries, an examination of the content elaborated in the game manual is necessary, which is the focus of the following chapter.

#### 4 XUANFO PU – THE GAME MANUAL BY OUYI ZHIXU

Based on the examination of the extant game boards and related primary sources, the previous chapter, as will the following two chapters, repeatedly emphasizes that the Buddhist promotion game was created for the purpose of proselytization. In order to substantiate this argument, the present chapter turns contextually to discuss and analyze Zhixu's Xuanfo pu, the only surviving game manual of its kind in China. Based on this text, it is here intended to answer some functional questions like “How can the mechanism work didactically?” and “How exactly were the Buddhist principles arranged to demonstrate the Buddhist cosmological structure and system that were meant to be understood by the game players?” Hence, the emphases here are on the terminological definitions, the stages of enlightenment and realms of existence, and the overall arrangement of these components. As the chapter progresses, what Zhixu expected to propagate through the circulation of his design will be revealed piece by piece. Nevertheless, this chapter does not attempt to translate the whole manual, as it is a voluminous work and some of its content, such as the explanation of his design on the dice and the directions for the next movements of the game pieces, fall beyond the issues in question here.

Divided into six fascicles, this manual contains two major parts under the sectional titles of “Lunxiang biao fa di yi 輪相表法第一 ([Section] One [on] the Dharma Represented by the Divination of the Dice)” and “Weici shengjiang di er 位次升降第二 ([Section] Two [on] the Promotion and Demotion of Positions).” Section One is comparatively brief and only occupies one-twelfth of the first fascicle but is nonetheless informative: it first defines the term “*lunxiang*,” then explains the reason for the use of *nan-mo-a-mi-tuo-fo* on the dice,

details the Buddhist notions represented by each of these syllables as well as by their combinations, and finally answers interrogative questions on Zhixu's arrangements raised by anonymous interlocutors. The rest of the manual, that is, Section Two, is all about the terms listed in the squares and the directions of the movements for the players as one would expect from a game manual. In this enormous section are the fifteen different *men* 門 (paths) of categories of all Buddhist terms seen on the game board that are grouped according to their meanings, affiliations, and interconnections. These groupings are given headings as the “Fashi yindi men 發始因地門 (Path to the Initial States and Fundamental Causes),” “Fadao liubi men 法道流弊門 (Path to the Abuses in Buddhist Saṃgha),” “Sizhong equ men 四種惡趣門 (Path to the Four Evil Reincarnations),” “Yujie ren tian men 欲界人天門 (Path to [the States of] Human and Heavens in the Realm of Desire),” “Sewusetian men 色無色天門 (Path to the Heavens in [the Realms of] Form and Formlessness),” “Shengshan miee men 生善滅惡門 (Path to Bringing about Good [Deeds] and Extinguishing Evil [Deeds]),” “Zengshangjie xue men 增上戒學門 (Path to the Learning of Strengthened Precepts),” “Zengshangding xue men 增上定學門 (Path to the Learning of Strengthened Meditation),” “Zengshanghui xue men 增上慧學門 (Path to the Learning of Strengthened Wisdom),” “Zangjiao weici men 藏教位次門 (Path to the Stages [of Enlightenment] in the Doctrine of Hīnayāna),” “Tongjiao weici men 通教位次門 (Path to the Stages [of Enlightenment] in the Doctrine of Mahāyāna-cum-Hīnayāna),” “Biejiao weici men 別教位次門 (Path to the Stages [of Enlightenment] in the Doctrine of Mahāyāna),” “Yuanjiao weici men 圓教位次門 (Path to the Stages [of Enlightenment] in the Doctrine of Perfection),” “Jingtu hengchao men 淨土

橫超門 (Path to the Pure Land [of Buddha Amitābha], the Crosscut [to Liberation]),” and “Yuanji guowei men 圓極果位門 (Path to the Stage of the Resultant [Attainment] of the Utmost Perfection).” It is these fifteen subdivided topics that occupy the whole space of the game board. Each of these topics contains a list of terms, which Zhixu defines and annotates, along with detailed directions for their routes in the game playing. Both the first and second sections are to be discussed below one by one.

#### 4.1 Section One: On the Dharma Represented by the Divination of the Dice

The most important information revealed in the first section, the “Divination of the Dice,” is not how the dice were used to represent the Buddhist teachings but the clue to the inspiration for Master Zhixu’s creation of the promotion game that is not mentioned in his preface to the Xuanfo pu. The clue can be found right at the beginning of Section One, in which Zhixu cites a quotation to explain the naming of the dice as the *lun* 輪 (literally, wheel):<sup>156</sup>

《占察》云：「此相能壞邪見疑網，轉向正道到安隱處，是故名『輪』」。<sup>157</sup>

The [Sūtra on] the Divination and Examination says that this divination can destroy perverted views and the net of doubt to turn [the mind] towards the correct path that

<sup>156</sup> See Zhixu, Xuanfo pu, the first fascicle, Section One, <http://www.ouyi.mymailer.com.tw/ouyihtm/019/019-3.htm>; 18 June 2009.

<sup>157</sup> The original quotation reads slightly differently: “又依此相，能破壞眾生邪見疑網，轉向正道到安隱處，是故名「輪」。” (Besides, by using this divination, the perverted views and the net of doubt of sentient beings can be destroyed, through which [their minds] can be turned towards the correct path that leads to where the body and the mind are at rest, for which [it is] called the “wheel.”) Putideng 菩提燈 (Sui dynasty; 581-618), Zhancha shane yebao jing 占察善惡業報經 [Sūtra on the Divination and Examination of the Retribution of Good and Evil Deeds], Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō 大正新修大藏經, vol. 17, no. 0839: 902.

leads to where the body and the mind can be at rest, for which [it is] called the “wheel.”

Clearly, symbolically, the *lun* dice are called as such because they indicate the idea of “turning,” like the turning of a wheel, that suggests a change or conversion in ethical attitude or religious beliefs. The full name of the *lun* dice is *mulun* 木輪 (literally, wooden wheel), which refers to the kind of stick dice that originated from the Zhancha shane yebao jing 占察善惡業報經 (Sūtra on the Divination and Examination of the Retribution of Good and Evil Deeds) translated by Putideng 菩提燈 into Chinese during the Sui dynasty (581-618),<sup>158</sup> one of the “*Dizang san jing* 地藏三經 (Three Sūtras of Kṣitigarbha [Bodhisattva]),” along with the more well-known Dizangpusa benyuan jing 地藏菩薩本願經 (Sūtra of the Great Vows of Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva) translated by Shichanantuo 實叉難陀 (Skt. Śikṣānanda; 652-710)<sup>159</sup> and the Dasheng daji Dizang shilun jing 大乘大集地藏十輪經 (Sūtra of Mahāyāna Great Collection on the Ten Wheels of Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva) translated by Xuanzang 玄奘 (600 or 602-664).<sup>160</sup> These three sūtras have long been regarded as the foundation of the worship of Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva but the Zhancha shane yebao jing seems to be less well known outside the Buddhist communities of the Dizang cult.<sup>161</sup>

<sup>158</sup> The issue of the earliest appearance of this sūtra has been controversial; Whalen Lai has discussed it in detail in his study on the sūtra. See Whalen Lai, “The *Chan-ch’a ching*: Religion and Magic in Medieval China,” *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, ed. Robert E. Buswell, Jr. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990) 176-178.

<sup>159</sup> *Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō*, vol. 13, no. 0412: 777-789.

<sup>160</sup> *Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō*, vol. 13, no. 0411: 721-777.

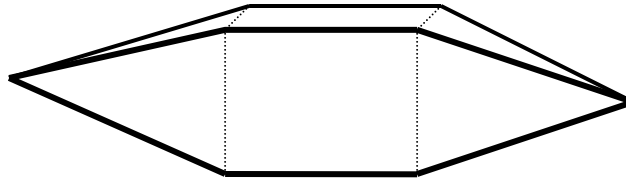
<sup>161</sup> Ng Zhiru has studied the formation of Dizang cult in China; see Ng Zhizu, The Making of a Savior Bodhisattva: Dizang in Medieval China (Honolulu: Hawaii University Press, 2007).

In regard to the *lun* dice, this sūtra even has an instruction on how to make a *mulun* and Figure 4.1 is a drawing of the *lun* dice based on this instruction.<sup>162</sup>

欲學「木輪相」者，先當刻木如小指許，使長短減於一寸；正中令其四面方平，自餘向兩頭斜漸去之。仰手傍擲令使易轉，因是義故，說名為「輪」。

Those who want to learn the wooden-wheel divination should first cut wood into small sticks as large as a little finger shorter than one inch in length, flatten the centre [of each stick] into four square sides, and gradually bevel both ends of the stick from the edges of the squares. Raise up the hands to throw them sideways so as to make them roll easily and, for this purpose, [they are] named the “wheel.”

**Figure 4.1 The *mulun* or wooden wheel.**



In the sūtra, this instruction was delivered by Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva who regarded the wooden wheels as ritual objects for divinatory functions; this is almost certainly the reason why Zhixu adopted the stick dice for use in his Buddhist promotion game. Likewise, this could be the same reason why the stick dice were used in the Korean versions as well. The use of the stick dice must have been known to Korean Buddhists ever since the mid-eighth century as the *Zhancha shane yebao jing* had already been introduced into Korea in 740.<sup>163</sup>

<sup>162</sup> Putideng, *Zhancha shane yebao jing*, T839, 17: 1.902 b24-27.

<sup>163</sup> Whalen Lai, “The *Chan-ch’a ching*: Religion and Magic in Medieval China,” p. 196.

Besides, in addition to the aforementioned symbolic implication, this passage also provides another reason for the naming of these gadgets, which is simply based on their shape. So, how did Zhixu apply the dice to his game? He explains in the manual that:<sup>164</sup>

輪如《占察》「輪相」，而作六面。以「那」、「謨」、「阿」、「彌」、「陀」、「佛」六字，順次右旋，刻於六面。置輪掌心，仰手旁擲。表從凡入聖，轉惡成善，十法界無不會歸究竟也。

Make the wheel [dice] like [those made for] the wheel divination in the [Sūtra on] the Divination and Examination but into six faces. Rotate the dice rightward and inscribe in succession the six characters of “*na*,” “*mo*,” “*a*,” “*mi*,” “*tuo*,” and “*fo*” on these six faces. Put the wheel [dice] on the palm and raise up the hand to throw [them] sideways. [Such a design is] to represent [the process of] entering into sainthood from the mortal state and turning the evil into the good, and that [the sentient beings of] the Ten Dharma Realms, all without exception, return to unite with the ultimate [enlightenment].

The representation of these six characters is in fact more complicated as each of them has several sets of Dharma implications assigned by the Master. The following are three examples of those sets:

阿，表施善；彌，表戒善；陀，表定善；佛，表善慧（或阿彌陀，表有漏善；佛，表無漏善）。又阿，表生滅門；彌，表無生滅門；陀，表次第門；佛，表圓頓門。

<sup>164</sup> Zhixu, Xuanfo pu, the first fascicle, Section One, <http://www.ouyi.mymailer.com.tw/ouyihtm/019/019-3.htm>; 18 June 2009.

“*A*” represents the good deed of alms, “*mi*” represents the good deed of precepts, “*tuo*” represents the good deed of meditation, and “*fo*” represents good wisdom (or [the combination of] “*a*,” “*mi*,” and “*tuo*” represents impure good deeds [that cannot avoid reincarnation] while “*fo*” represents pure good deeds [that lead to Nirvāṇa]). Also, “*a*” represents the path of birth-and-death, “*mi*” represents the path of no-more-birth-and-death, “*tuo*” represents the path of stages and sequences, and “*fo*” represents the path of completeness and immediacy.<sup>165</sup>

This short passage is simple and precise, and is explicit enough to demonstrate how didactic and pious this game was intended to be. It is not so hard to imagine that Zhixu would take the trouble to connect a mere four characters with different sets and levels of Buddhist ideas because these characters are the name of Amitābha Buddha, the chant that has been largely practiced by the followers among various Buddhist sects in addition to the Pure Land School. As a prominent Pure Land teacher of his time, Zhixu would not miss this opportunity to highlight the importance of the Pure Land beliefs in this manual by matching each character of the name with different sets of Buddhist theories. In fact, simultaneously, such connections became a process that deepened the implications of the name, through which the profundity on which the chanting practice was based could be elaborately revealed. Such terminological matchings and complications run through the whole manual.

As mentioned, in Section One, the Master also discusses in more detail specific topics by way of dialogues with unknown inquirers to reinforce the understanding of the topics for the player and the reader. The topic of inscribing the name of Amitābha Buddha on the dice is also elaborated through such an inquiry. Taking this as an example, the passage of this

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<sup>165</sup> Zhixu, Xuanfo pu, the first fascicle, Section One, <http://www.ouyi.mymailer.com.tw/ouyihtm/019/019-3.htm>; 18 June 2009.



dice issue is quoted here to demonstrate how these questions and answers work to fulfill the purpose of preaching and this is only part of the debate:

問：「何意不用『幺二三四五六』，乃用『那謨阿彌陀佛』六字耶？」答：  
「『幺二三四五六』，不過世間數目，是『無記法』，不能生善滅惡。『那謨阿彌陀佛』六字，乃是『萬德洪名』。一聞佛名，皆得不退轉於無上正等正覺；一稱佛名，能滅八十億劫生死重罪。一念相應一念佛，念念相應念念佛，故用此六字為『輪相』也。」

Someone asks, “Why do you not use ‘one, two, three, four, five, and six’ but use the six words of ‘*na-mo-a-mi-tuo-fo*’?” [I] answer, “ ‘One, two, three, four, five, and six’ are merely the numbers of the secular world, which are the ‘Unrecordable [, or indeterminate,] Dharma’<sup>166</sup> that cannot give birth to good deeds and eliminate evil deeds yet the six words of ‘*na-mo-a-mi-tuo-fo*’ are the ‘Great Name of Myriad Virtues.’ Once hearing the Buddha’s name, all will not withdraw and turn back from the Unsurpassed Perfect Universal Wisdom [of a Buddha (in Sanskrit, *Samyaksambuddha*)] while chanting [only] once the Buddha’s name can eliminate eight-billion-*kalpa* serious sins of birth and death. When one thought responds to [the power of Amitābha Buddha’s vow], one thought is enlightened; when every thought responds to [Amitābha Buddha’s vow power], every thought is enlightened; hence, [I] use these six characters as the ‘wheel divination.’ ”

Again, Zhixu does not limit himself to giving reasons for his choice of inscription on the dice but, through his argument, also lectures the players on the theory underlying the practice of

<sup>166</sup> The Sanskrit for *wuji* 無記 is *Avyākhyāta*, which means “[u]nrecordable (either as good or bad); neutral, neither good nor bad” or “things that are innocent or cannot be classified under moral categories.” William Edward Soothill, and Lewis Hodous, A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms: with Sanskrit and English Equivalents, a Chinese Index, and a Sanskrit-Pali Index (Taipei: Hsin wen feng Pub. Co., 1982) 382.

chanting the name of Amitābha Buddha. More examples of this same style of lectures can be found in Section Two.

On the other hand, from the fact that Zhixu adopted the *lun* dice from the Zhancha shane yebao jing, it is clear that this sūtra must have helped to inspire Zhixu one way or another in his design of the game. Based on the quotation cited in the beginning of Section One, we know that he had read the sūtra and was not simply familiar with the *lun* dice by chance. Then how well exactly did the Master know the sūtra? Fortunately, Zhixu's writings give us enough evidence to demonstrate that he not only paid great attention to this sūtra but also had studied it intensively. The results of his study on the sūtra are reflected partly in his two-fascicle essay, Zhancha shane yebao jing xuanyi 占察善惡業報經玄義 (Profound Meanings of the Sūtra on the Divination and Examination of the Retribution of Good and Evil Deeds)<sup>167</sup> and three-fascicle commentary for the sūtra, the Zhancha shane yebao jing yishu 占察善惡業報經義疏 (Commentary on the Sūtra on the Divination and Examination of the Retribution of Good and Evil Deeds),<sup>168</sup> and partly in the liturgy of repentance he compiled in light of the practice suggested by Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva in the sūtra, the Zhancha shane yebao jing xingfa 占察善惡業報經行法 ([Repentance] Practice of the Sūtra on the Divination and Examination of the Retribution of Good and Evil Deeds).<sup>169</sup> Moreover, a foreword composed by Zhixu for one of his lay followers who endeavored to raise funds to publish this repentance liturgy further verifies that the Master had put in a lot

<sup>167</sup> Xu zangjing, vol. 21, no. 370: 406-421.

<sup>168</sup> Xu zangjing, vol. 21, no. 371: 422-455. Shinoda Masayoshi 篠田昌宜 has a paper on this commentary; for details, see “Chigyoku Senzatsu kyō gisho ni okeru Genzen ichi nenshin ni tsuite 智旭『占察經義疏』に於ける「現前一念心」について [On the “Present Mind” in Zhixu's Commentary on the Sūtra on the Divination and Examination (of the Retribution of Good and Evil Deeds)],” Komazawa daigaku bukkyō gakubu ronshū 駒沢大学仏教学部論集 34: 279-290.

<sup>169</sup> Xu zangjing, vol. 74, no. 1485: 578-584.

of effort into promulgating the sūtra. His discussion also emphasizes that the divination is an expedient method to present the basics of causal retribution and thus this sūtra was crucial for Buddhist practitioners and worthy of promotion.<sup>170</sup> These are only a few pieces of evidence that reveal how ardent Zhixu was as an advocate of this sūtra.

Actually, Zhixu's enthusiastic promotion of the Zhancha shane yebao jing was only part of his advocacy of the cult of Kṣitigarbha or Dizang Bodhisattva. The Master's strong commitment to the teachings of Dizang began early in 1619 when his father died that winter. It was during this ordeal that he came across the Dizangpusa benyuan jing 地藏菩薩本願經 (Sūtra of the Great Vows of Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva) and thereby vowed to enter the saṃgha.<sup>171</sup> He was twenty at the time. Although during his monkhood he was credited with promoting the teachings and practices of the Pure Land School as well as the doctrinal divisions of the Tiantai 天台 School, his effort in facilitating the Dizang beliefs had not been overshadowed, which can be testified by some monastic materials. In the Jiuhuashan zhi 九華山志 (Gazetteer of Mount Jiuhua),<sup>172</sup> for example, Zhixu was specifically recognized as one of the eminent Buddhist masters who had strived to spread the teachings of Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva.<sup>173</sup> In addition to his biography, this gazetteer also includes as many as eleven of his writings in the section of the *Fashi* 法施 (Preaching), in which the total number of the

<sup>170</sup> Desen 德森, Jiuhuashan zhi 九華山志 [Gazetteer of Mount Jiuhua], in Zhongguo fozizhi congkan 中國佛寺志叢刊 [Collection of Gazetteers of Buddhist Monasteries in China], vol. 13, eds. Bai Huawen 白化文 and Zhang Zhi 張智 (Yangzhou 揚州: Guangling shushe 廣陵書社, 2006) 224-225.

<sup>171</sup> Desen, Jiuhuashan zhi, p. 182.

<sup>172</sup> Mount Jiuhua has been regarded as the sacred mountain of Dizang Bodhisattva by Buddhists in China; this sanctification occurred after the death of a Korean (Silla 新羅 57BC-935) prince-turned-monk named Dizang (630-729; Jijang in Korean romanization; was born Kim Kiaokak, in Chinese, Jin Qiaojue 金喬覺), who travelled around Tang China as a pilgrim and finally decided to settle in Mount Jiuhua to practice asceticism and meditation. Shortly after his death, he was recognized as the manifestation of Dizang Bodhisattva and thereby Mount Jiuhua became the centre of Dizang beliefs. For details, see Desen, Jiuhuashan zhi, pp. 82-85.

<sup>173</sup> For details, see Desen, Jiuhuashan zhi, pp. 182-187.

writings are only twelve. Eleven out of twelve!—the Master’s reputation in preaching the teachings of Dizang Bodhisattva is obvious. Covering a wide range of topics that are pertinent to the worship and the ritual practices of Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva, his writings are:<sup>174</sup>

1. Bu zongchi “Mie dingye zhenyan” shu 補總持「滅定業真言」疏 (Supplementary Announcement on the Collective Recitation of the “True Word [or Mantra] of Eliminating Immutable Karma”);
2. Jiashen qiyue sanshiri yuanwen 甲申七月三十日願文 (Vow Text [Composed] on the Thirtieth Day of the Seventh Month in the Year of Jiashen [1644]);
3. Hua chi Dizangpusa minghao yuanqi 化持地藏菩薩名號緣起 (Reason for Convincing [People] to Recite the Name of Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva);
4. Zan li Dizangpusa chanyuanyi hou zixu 《讚禮地藏菩薩懺願儀》後自序 ([Zhixu’s own] Preface at the end of the Liturgy of Complimenting and Worshipping Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva by Making Vow and Repentance);
5. Wei Jingxinjushi chi Dizang benyuan jing jian quan ren xu 為警心居士持《地藏本願經》兼勸人序 (Preface [Written] for Lay Buddhist Jingxin Who Recites the Sūtra of the Great Vows of Kṣitigarbha [Bodhisattva] and persuades other people [to do so]);
6. Hua chi “Mie dingye zhenyan” yi shijie shu zhuangyan Dizang shengxiang shu 化持「滅定業真言」一世界數莊嚴地藏聖像疏 (Announcement on Raising Funds To Cast the Sacred Statue of Kṣitigarbha [Bodhisattva] and Convincing [People] to Recite the “True Word [or Mantra] of Eliminating Immutable Karma” to [Transform the World into] a [Buddha’s] World with Infinite Perfect Contents [as a Means] to Dignify [It]);
7. Hua tie Dizang shu 化鐵地藏疏 (Announcement on Raising Funds [to Cast an] Iron Statue of Kṣitigarbha [Bodhisattva]);

<sup>174</sup> Desen, Jiuhuashan zhi, pp. 216-228.

8. Ke Zhancha xingfa zhuyuan shu 刻《占察行法》助緣疏 (Announcement on Raising Funds to Carve the [Repentance] Practice [of the Sūtra] on the Divination and Examination [of the Retribution of Good and Evil Deeds] onto Woodblocks for Printing));
9. Jiuhua furongge jian huayanqi shu 九華芙蓉閣建華嚴期疏 (Announcement on the Retreat [Based on the] Flower Adornment [Sūtra] Held at the Furong Pavilion on [Mount] Jiuhua);
10. Jiuhuashan yingjian zhongseng ta shu 九華山營建眾僧塔疏 (Announcement on Constructing Pagodas for the Saṃgha on Mount Jiuhua); and
11. Fu Jiuhua cangzhu shu 復九華常住書 (Reply Letter to the Residents of [Mount] Jiuhua).

Mount Jiuhua in Anhui province has long been known to be the sacred mountain of the Dizang Bodhisattva and, as a result, most of the numerous Buddhist monasteries on it are dedicated to the Bodhisattva. Hence, the gazetteer's inclusions of the biography and the writings of Zhixu explicitly demonstrate how distinguished the master was in the eyes of the practitioners of the Dizang tradition. Above all, his contributions made to the worship of Kṣitigarbha were concurrently revealed.

In fact, the relevance of Zhixu's Xuanfo pu to the Zhancha shane yebao jing is not only about the adoption of the *lun* dice but also the revelatory and didactic natures of both texts. In the process of playing a Buddhist promotion game, the players would perceive themselves as if going through the same experience from the mortal to different realms of existence and stages of meditation to the ultimate enlightenment. Upon each throw of the dice, the player awaits the revelation of his next move to another level of advancement or backsliding in Buddhist practice. Such revelatory nature is even obvious in the Zhancha shane yebao jing because its main subject matters are about how to measure and figure out

one's good and evil karma through divination by way of the *mulun* dice as well as the repentance method that can help to eliminate evil karma and increase good karma.

The divinatory procedure is not simple. In light of the sūtra, before undertaking three phases of divination, a diviner is required to perform a series of rituals including doing prostrations to Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, making offerings, and chanting one thousand times the name of Dizang Bodhisattva. The first and the second phases of divination use thirteen *lun* dice in total to reveal one's most influential good and evil karma in this life as well as the strength and magnitude of the influences of these karma on the diviner. The first phase uses ten *lun* dice; of each die, two opposite faces are left blank and the other two are inscribed with one set of terms of the Ten Good Deeds (abstaining from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, idle talk, slandering, harsh speech, greed, hatred, and improper views) and the other set of terms about the reverse behaviours. The second phase uses three dice; likewise, two opposite faces of them are left blank but, of the other two opposite faces, a long line is inscribed on one face while a short line is inscribed on the other. As a solution to deal with these divinatory results, Dizang Bodhisattva, in the latter part of the sūtra, introduces a special repentance practice to help to increase one's good karma and eliminate one's evil karma with an emphasis to tackle the causes of one's own retribution in this life.

As for the third phase of the divination, six dice are used to answer any secular or religious questions raised by the diviner. Only one face of each die is left blank and the other three are inscribed with three consecutive numbers; that is, the numbers on the first die are from one to three, on the second are from four to six, ... and on the sixth are from sixteen to eighteen. The answers of the divination come with the sūtra. Like the divinatory papers printed with Chinese poetry as the results of the commonly seen divinatory method by way

of bamboo slips used in many temples in Chinese communities,<sup>175</sup> there are altogether one hundred and eighty-nine divinatory results listed in the sūtra that can cover a remarkably wide range of religious and secular issues. The revelatory nature shared by this sūtra and the game manual is thus self-evident. Interestingly, of these divinatory results, one-third of them are more or less equivalent to those Buddhist ideas and terms that can be found in the game board designed by Zhixu, such as issues regarding an individual's former life and subsequent reincarnation (# 161-189) as well as whether or not certain Buddhist practices or meditative statuses can be achieved (# 1-45).<sup>176</sup> Hence, it is not far-fetched to assume that Zhixu was inspired by the Zhancha shane yebao jing and that to a certain degree his game *Xuanfo tu* and manual *Xuanfo pu* were meant to be a board-gaming version to pair up with this sūtra.

## 4.2 Section Two: On the Promotion and Demotion of the Positions

### 4.2.1 Contextual pattern

All Buddhist terms seen in Zhixu's game board are covered in Section Two. However, this study does not intend to explain them all because most of these terms can be found in many dictionaries of Buddhist terminology. Instead, the terms are discussed below in groups under different topics as they appear on the game board, together with a picture showing their exact arrangement, to give a general idea about the content of the game manual. A table is drawn to illustrate the connections and probabilities between two levels of transition (promotion or demotion) listed in the section of the first *men*. It serves as an

<sup>175</sup> More details on this kind of bamboo-slip divination can be seen in Richard J. Smith, Fortune-tellers and Philosophers: Divination in Traditional Chinese Society (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991) 234-245.

<sup>176</sup> The divining method described in this sūtra is also mentioned in Michel Strickmann, Chinese Poetry and Prophecy: the Written Oracle in East Asia (California: Stanford University Press, 2005) 80.

example of the similar contents mentioned in the rest of the fourteen *men*. Before turning to these terms, we shall first take a glance at a short paragraph excerpted from the manual to help better our understanding of this work by knowing more about its contextual pattern.

This paragraph is quoted from the first *men* of the original statuses to demonstrate the general writing pattern of the context that runs through the whole manual, which is simple and direct, beginning with a combination of two characters resulting from a throw of two dice and then the instructions of their corresponding squares of next moves and finally the definitions and the annotations of the terms:

(謨阿)慢心行施(那那，上品畜；那謨，畜脩羅；謨謨，有財鬼；阿阿，鬼脩羅；阿彌，人脩羅；彌彌、阿陀，皆天脩羅；彌陀，北洲；陀陀，他化天；那佛，鐵輪王；謨佛，四王天；阿佛，出世福；彌佛，出世戒；陀佛，出世定；佛佛，出世慧。)

(*mo-a*) giving alms with pride (*na-na*, upper grade animal; *na-mo*, *asura* in the [realm of] animal; *mo-mo*, wealthy ghosts; *a-a*, *asura* in the [realm of] ghost; *a-mi*, *asura* in the [realm of] human; both *mi-mi* and *a-tuo* [go to the square of] *asura* in the heavens; *mi-tuo*, Uttarakuru; *tuo-tuo*, *Paranirmita-vaśavartin* Heaven; *na-fo*, iron *cakravartī* or [wheel-]turning king; *mo-fo*, Four [Celestial] Kings Heaven; *a-fo*, other-worldly felicity; *mi-fo*, other-worldly precept; *tuo-fo*, other-worldly meditation; and *fo-fo*, other-worldly wisdom.)

譜曰：「由我慢心而行施善，一往正是阿脩羅因。然升沈逐其行業，事非一槩。此中無地獄果者，縱起見執，不至純積上品惡故。『那那』猶為上畜、『那謨』猶為畜脩、『謨謨』猶為有財鬼者，由施福故。『阿阿』鬼脩、『阿彌』人脩、『彌彌』、『阿陀』皆天脩者，正以此因得此果故。『彌陀』北洲者，施兼戒定，能伏我所計著故。『陀陀』他化天者，施兼禪定，所享果報必



自在故。『那佛』鐵輪王者，承佛神力，能御世故。『謨佛』四王天者，承佛神力，能護四天下故。『阿佛』等為出世福等者，由施福力，資助出世法故。」

The manual says, “Observing the good deeds of giving alms out of pride has all along been the causation for [being reborn as] an *asura*. However, [every sentient being’s] ascent and descent [within the six paths of reincarnation] follow his or her karmic deeds and this matter is not uniformly [substantiated]. No one among those who [give alms with pride] results in [being reborn in] a purgatory because even if one’s attachment of heterodox views arises, its [sin is not that evil] to be accumulated [to be reborn] to the upper grade evil. [Hence, the pip] *na-na* is only [used to indicate the reincarnation to an] upper grade animal, *na-mo* is only [used to indicate the reincarnation to the] *asura* in the [realm of] animals, and *mo-mo* is only [used to indicate the reincarnation to the] wealthy ghosts; [the reason for their reincarnations] is because of the felicities [they acquire from] giving alms. [The pip] *a-a* [goes to] the *asura* in the [realm of] ghost, *a-mi* [goes to] the *asura* in the [realm of] human, and both *mi-mi* and *a-tuo* [go to] the *asura* in the heavens; [the reason for the reincarnations to these *asura* realms] is because [they are] exactly the result of this cause [of giving alms with pride]. [The pip] *mi-tuo* [goes to] Uttarakuru and the reason [for such a reincarnation] is because, in addition to giving alms, one concurrently [observes] precepts and meditation that can prostrate his or her incorrect and bigoted views and attachment of ego. [The pip] *tuo-tuo* [goes to] *Paranirmita-vaśavartin* Heaven and the reason [for such a reincarnation] is because, in addition to giving alms, one concurrently attains *dhyāna* that the resultant retributive [realm] to be enjoyed must be [the one that can] free [your mind] from delusion. [The pip] *na-fo* [goes to] the iron *cakravartī* or [wheel-]turning king and, in virtue of the divine power of the Buddhas, he is thus able to rule over a world. [The pip] *mo-fo* [goes to] the Four [Celestial] Kings Heaven and, in virtue of the divine power of the Buddhas, [the reincarnated ones] are thus able to guard the four continents [surrounding Mount Sumeru]. [The pip] *a-fo* and other [pips go to] other-worldly felicity and the other

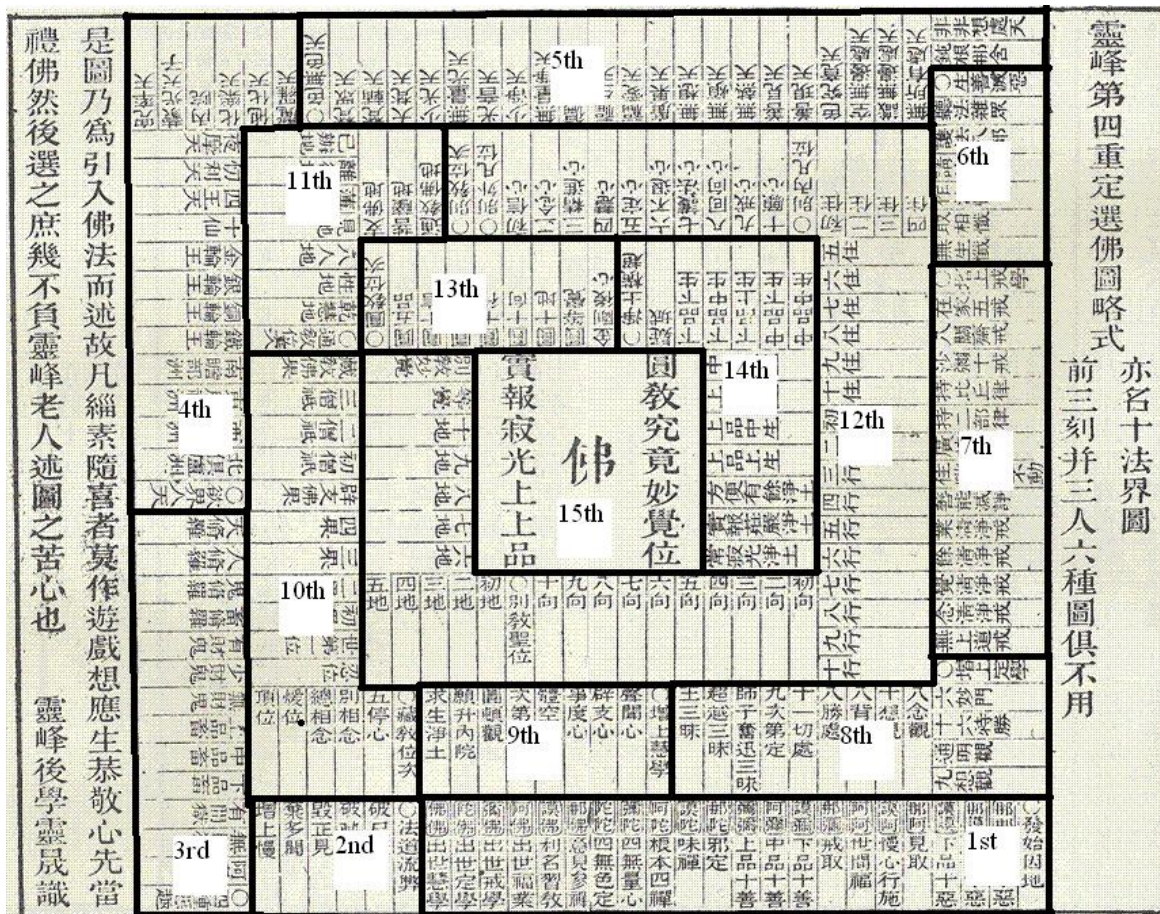
[‘other-worldly’] and the reason [for these reincarnations] is because of the felicitous power of almsgiving, which has sponsored the other-worldly Dharma.”

This is the general writing pattern or contextual arrangement for the definition and annotation of a term in this manual. This quotation is cited from the “original statuses” section of the manual; according to the content, when a player gets the pip *mo-a* after the first throw of the two dice, his or her piece shall go to the square that indicates “giving alms with pride” as his or her original status for the game. What follows the pip *mo-a* in the bracket are the fifteen possible pip combinations of the two dice marked with the six characters of *na-mo-a-mi-tuo-fo* as well as the instructions on the subsequent movements of the game pieces in accord with the combinations of the dice pip. Based on this simple example, it is clear how Zhixu combines the explanation of the matching of the pips with his interpretations and justification of the movement between two Buddhist terms. If this is merely a game manual, the content of *mo-a* can be ended here; however, as the manual of a religious-inspired device, this paragraph continues with the content that defines this creation as a religious and didactic game—where the Buddhist vocabularies and principles are found and where our attention should be focused. Many of those sections about definition and annotation, that is, “The manual says” part of many terms, are actually far lengthier and complicated than this quotation, particularly the content of those on the levels and classifications of meditation. The Buddhist teachings discussed in these long paragraphs are as serious and academically profound as Zhixu’s other writings and sūtra commentaries. His attitude towards this game is thus explicitly illuminated.

#### 4.2.2 The fifteen categories of Buddhist terms

The game board of the *Xuanfo tu* is composed of fifteen groups of squares that contain different quantities of Buddhist terms, as shown in Figure 4.2. This picture of the game board of *Xuanfo tu* is re-divided with bold lines and labeled in numerical order so that the pattern design can be easily revealed:

Figure 4.2 Zhixu's *Xuanfo tu*.



This pattern design is simple and clear: in a spiral pattern, from the lowest to the highest in terms of the level of enlightenment, realm of existence, or meditative practice, the first group of terms begins from the outskirts of the board and the last group ends at the centre. The

content of each group of terms is briefly discussed below in the same sequence and, as mentioned, illustrated with the help of the picture of its detail on the game board.

#### 4.2.2.1 Original statuses

**Figure 4.3** The detail of the *Fashi yindi men* on the game board.



The first *men* is *Fashi yindi men*, or the Path to the Initial States and Fundamental Causes, and consists of twenty-one statuses, as seen in Figure 4.3. They function as the beginning section for this Buddhist game as the *chushen* 出身 (career origin) section designed for the bureaucratic version. The terms in these squares are the causes that lead to the resultant realms of existence in the subsequent sections varying from the purgatories to the heavens. The definitions for them and the instructions for the next moves occupy the rest of the first fascicle.

These twenty-one statuses are listed in the following table, Table 4.1, according to their sequence on the game board. In addition to the two-character pips resulting from throwing two dice and their corresponding statuses, this table also includes all next possible pips and their corresponding moves to the next level of promotion or demotion in the realm of existence or the quality of mind as instructed in the manual. Listed corresponding to the columns of the statuses under the label of “② pips” are the different combinations of dice

pips resulted from the second throw of two dice, varying from ten to fifteen in number of combination for each status. They are two hundred and ninety-six in total, which lead to a hundred and twenty-seven different transitional moves that cover various Buddhist terms categorized in the other fourteen *men*. No matter how complicated these combinations sound, the basic principle here is simple—karmic causations—good karmas leading to better transitions, bad karmas to unfavourable moves, and pure karmas to enlightened paths:

**Table 4.1 Twenty-one statuses in the beginning section of *Fashi yindi men***

	① Pips	Beginning Statuses	② Pips	Next Level of Transitions
1	na-na	shangpin shie 上品十惡 (ten upper grade evil [karma])	na-na	Abi diyu 阿鼻地獄 ( <i>Avīci</i> purgatory)
			na-mo	wujian diyu 無間地獄 (purgatory of no-intermission)
			mo-mo	
			na-a	youjian diyu 有間地獄 (purgatory with intermission)
			mo-a	
			a-a	
			a-fo	shijian fu 世間福 (worldly felicity)
			mi-fo	tingfa zazhong 聽法雜眾 (mixed groups of audiences who attend Dharma lectures)
			tuo-fo	quxiangchan 取相懺 (repentance to ask for the sign of [Buddha's presence to annihilate the sin])
2	na-mo	zhongpin shie 中品十惡 (ten middle grade evil [karma])	fo-fo	xiapin xiasheng 下品下生 (lower reincarnation of the lower grade)
			na-na	xiapin chusheng 下品畜生 (lower grade animals)
			na-mo	
			mo-mo	
			a-a	zhongpin chusheng 中品畜生 (middle grade animals)
			a-mi	
			mi-mi	
			a-tuo	shangpin chusheng 上品畜生 (upper grade animals)
			mi-tuo	
			tuo-tuo	
			na-fo	chu xiuluo 畜脩羅 ( <i>asura</i> in the [realm of] animal)
			mo-fo	
			a-fo	mixed groups of audiences who attend Dharma lectures
			mi-fo	repentance to ask for the sign of [Buddha's presence to annihilate the sin]
			tuo-fo	wushengchan 無生懺 (repentance of no-birth)
			fo-fo	xiapin zhongsheng 下品中生 (middle reincarnation of the lower grade)



	① Pips	Beginning Statutes	② Pips	Next Level of Transitions
3	<i>mo-mo</i>	<i>xiapin shie</i> 下品十惡 (ten lower grade evil [karma])	<i>na-na</i>	<i>wucaigui</i> 無財鬼 (poor ghosts)
			<i>na-mo</i>	
			<i>mo-mo</i>	
			<i>a-a</i>	<i>shaocaigui</i> 少財鬼 (less wealthy ghosts)
			<i>a-mi</i>	
			<i>mi-mi</i>	
			<i>a-tuo</i>	<i>youcaigui</i> 有財鬼 (wealthy ghosts)
			<i>mi-tuo</i>	
			<i>tuo-tuo</i>	
			<i>na-fo</i>	
			<i>mo-fo</i>	
			<i>a-fo</i>	<i>zuofachan</i> 作法懺 (confession of karmic deeds)
			<i>mi-fo</i>	<i>zaijia wujie</i> 在家五戒 (five precepts of the laity)
			<i>tuo-fo</i>	<i>baguanzhaijie</i> 八關齋戒 (fasting and eight prohibitory precepts)
			<i>fo-fo</i>	<i>xiapin shangsheng</i> 下品上生 (upper reincarnation of the lower grade)
4	<i>na-a</i>	<i>jianqu</i> 見取 (clinging to [heterodox] views)	<i>na-na</i>	purgatory of no-intermission
			<i>na-mo</i>	middle grade animals
			<i>mo-mo</i>	less wealthy ghosts
			<i>a-a</i>	<i>asura</i> in the [realm of] animal
			<i>a-mi</i>	<i>gui xiuluo</i> 鬼脩羅 ( <i>asura</i> in the [realm of] ghost)
			<i>mi-mi</i>	<i>shizhong xian</i> 十種仙 (ten types of immortals)
			<i>a-tuo</i>	
			<i>mi-tuo</i>	<i>Moluo</i> tian 魔羅天 ( <i>Māra</i> Heaven)
			<i>tuo-tuo</i>	<i>Wuxiangtian</i> 無想天 ( <i>Avrha</i> Heaven)
			<i>na-fo</i>	<i>Dafantian</i> 大梵天 ( <i>Mahābrahman</i> )
			<i>mo-fo</i>	<i>Kongwubianchutian</i> 空無邊處天 ( <i>Ākāśānantyāyatana</i> Heaven)
			<i>a-fo</i>	<i>fa shengwen xin</i> 發聲聞心 (resolving to [attain the enlightened status of] <i>śrāvaka</i> )
			<i>mi-fo</i>	<i>fa pizhifo xin</i> 發辟支佛心 (resolving to [attain the enlightened status of] <i>pratyeka-buddha</i> )
			<i>tuo-fo</i>	<i>tikongguan</i> 體空觀 (visualization of the immateriality of substance)
			<i>fo-fo</i>	<i>yuandunmiaouan</i> 圓頓妙觀 (perfect and immediate miraculous visualization)
5	<i>mo-a</i>	<i>manxin</i> <i>xingshi</i> 慢心行施 (giving alms with pride)	<i>na-na</i>	upper grade animals
			<i>na-mo</i>	<i>asura</i> in the [realm of] animal
			<i>mo-mo</i>	wealthy ghosts
			<i>a-a</i>	<i>asura</i> in the [realm of] ghost
			<i>a-mi</i>	<i>ren xiuluo</i> 人脩羅 ( <i>asura</i> in the [realm of] human)
			<i>mi-mi</i>	<i>tian xiuluo</i> 天脩羅 ( <i>asura</i> in the heavens)
			<i>a-tuo</i>	
			<i>mi-tuo</i>	Beijuluzhou 北俱盧洲 ( <i>Uttarakuru</i> )
			<i>tuo-tuo</i>	<i>Tahuazizaitian</i> 他化自在天 ( <i>Paranirmita-vaśavartin</i> Heaven)
			<i>na-fo</i>	<i>tielunwang</i> 鐵輪王 (iron <i>cakravartī</i> or [wheel-]turning king)
			<i>mo-fo</i>	<i>siwangtian</i> 四王天 (Four [Celestial] Kings Heaven)
			<i>a-fo</i>	<i>chushi fuye</i> 出世福業 (other-worldly felicitic karma)
			<i>mi-fo</i>	<i>chushi jiexue</i> 出世戒學 (other-worldly learning of precept)
			<i>tuo-fo</i>	<i>chushi dingxue</i> 出世定學 (other-worldly learning of meditation)
			<i>fo-fo</i>	<i>chushi huixue</i> 出世慧學 (other-worldly learning of wisdom)

	① Pips	Beginning Statuses	② Pips	Next Level of Transitions
6	<i>a-a</i>	<i>shijian fu</i> 世間福 (worldly felicity)	<i>na-na</i>	<i>asura</i> in the [realm of] ghost
			<i>na-mo</i>	<i>asura</i> in the [realm of] human
			<i>mo-mo</i>	<i>asura</i> in the heavens
			<i>a-a</i>	Xiniuhozhou 西牛貨洲 (Aparagodānīya)
			<i>a-mi</i>	Dongshengshenzhou 東勝神洲 (Pūrvavideha)
			<i>mi-mi</i>	Uttarakuru
			<i>a-tuo</i>	Nanzhanbuzhou 南瞻部洲 (Jambudvīpa)
			<i>mi-tuo</i>	iron <i>cakravartī</i> or [wheel-]turning king
			<i>tuo-tuo</i>	<i>Mahābrahman</i>
			<i>na-fo</i>	resolving to [attain the enlightened status of] <i>śrāvaka</i>
			<i>mo-fo</i>	resolving to [attain the enlightened status of] <i>pratyeka-buddha</i>
			<i>a-fo</i>	<i>shi liudu xin</i> 事六度心 (resolving to practice the six <i>pāramitā</i> )
			<i>mi-fo</i>	visualization of the immateriality of substance
			<i>tuo-fo</i>	<i>cidisanguan</i> 次第三觀 (visualization of the three stages [of void, unreal, and <i>via media</i> ])
			<i>fo-fo</i>	perfect and immediate miraculous visualization
7	<i>na-mi</i>	<i>jiequ</i> 戒取 (clinging to [heterodox] precepts)	<i>na-na</i>	purgatory of no-intermission
			<i>na-mo</i>	middle grade animals
			<i>mo-mo</i>	upper grade animals
			<i>a-a</i>	<i>asura</i> in the [realm of] animal
			<i>a-mi</i>	wealthy ghosts
			<i>mi-mi</i>	<i>asura</i> in the [realm of] ghost
			<i>a-tuo</i>	
			<i>mi-tuo</i>	ten types of immortals
			<i>tuo-tuo</i>	<i>Avrha</i> Heaven
			<i>na-fo</i>	<i>Mahābrahman</i>
			<i>mo-fo</i>	<i>Ākāśānantyāyatana</i> Heaven
			<i>a-fo</i>	<i>wutingxin</i> 五停心 (five [meditations for] settling the mind)
			<i>mi-fo</i>	<i>chu ganhuidi</i> 初乾慧地 (initial stage of dry wisdom)
			<i>tuo-fo</i>	<i>chu xinxin</i> 初信心 (initial mind of faith)
			<i>fo-fo</i>	<i>yuan wupinwei</i> 圓五品位 (stage of the five grades in the [Doctrine of] Perfection)
8	<i>mo-mi</i>	<i>xiapin shishan</i> 下品十善 (ten lower grade good [karma])	<i>na-na</i>	<i>asura</i> in the [realm of] animal
			<i>na-mo</i>	
			<i>mo-mo</i>	
			<i>a-a</i>	<i>asura</i> in the [realm of] ghost
			<i>a-mi</i>	
			<i>mi-mi</i>	
			<i>a-tuo</i>	<i>asura</i> in the [realm of] human
			<i>mi-tuo</i>	
			<i>tuo-tuo</i>	
			<i>na-fo</i>	<i>asura</i> in the heavens
			<i>mo-fo</i>	
			<i>a-fo</i>	
			<i>mi-fo</i>	<i>yijian canchan</i> 意見參禪 (meditation with [worldly] thoughts)
			<i>tuo-fo</i>	<i>liming xijiao</i> 利名習教 (learning Buddhism with an aim of seeking [worldly] profits and reputations)
			<i>fo-fo</i>	other-worldly felicitic karma
			<i>mi-fo</i>	other-worldly learning of precept
			<i>tuo-fo</i>	other-worldly learning of meditation
			<i>fo-fo</i>	other-worldly learning of wisdom

	① Pips	Beginning Statuses	② Pips	Next Level of Transitions
9	<i>a-mi</i>	<i>zhongpin shishan</i> 中品十善 (ten middle grade good [karma])	<i>na-na</i>	<i>asura</i> in the [realm of] ghost
			<i>na-mo</i>	<i>asura</i> in the [realm of] human
			<i>mo-mo</i>	<i>asura</i> in the heavens
			<i>a-a</i>	Aparagodānīya
			<i>a-mi</i>	Pūrvavideha
			<i>mi-mi</i>	Uttarakuru
			<i>a-tuo</i>	Jambudvīpa
			<i>mi-tuo</i>	iron <i>cakravartī</i> or [wheel-]turning king
			<i>tuo-tuo</i>	<i>jinlunwang</i> 金輪王 (gold <i>cakravartī</i> or [wheel-]turning king)
			<i>na-fo</i>	resolving to [attain the enlightened status of] <i>śrāvaka</i>
			<i>mo-fo</i>	resolving to [attain the enlightened status of] <i>pratyeka-buddha</i>
			<i>a-fo</i>	resolving to practice the six <i>pāramitā</i>
			<i>mi-fo</i>	visualization of the immateriality of substance
			<i>tuo-fo</i>	visualization of the three stages [of void, unreal, and <i>via media</i> ]
			<i>fo-fo</i>	perfect and immediate miraculous visualization
10	<i>mi-mi</i>	<i>shangpin shishan</i> 上品十善 (ten upper grade good [karma])	<i>na-na</i>	ten types of immortals
			<i>na-mo</i>	Māra Heaven
			<i>mo-mo</i>	Uttarakuru
			<i>a-a</i>	Four [Celestial] Kings Heaven
			<i>a-mi</i>	<i>Daolitian</i> 忉利天 ( <i>Trayastrimśā</i> Heaven)
			<i>mi-mi</i>	<i>Yemotian</i> 夜摩天 ( <i>Yama</i> Heaven)
			<i>a-tuo</i>	<i>Doushuaitian</i> 兜率天 ( <i>Tuṣita</i> Heaven)
			<i>mi-tuo</i>	<i>Hualetian</i> 化樂天 ( <i>Nirmānarati</i> Heaven)
			<i>tuo-tuo</i>	<i>Paranirmita-vaśavartin</i> Heaven
			<i>na-fo</i>	<i>nuanwei</i> 煖位 (stage of heat)
			<i>mo-fo</i>	<i>er xingdi</i> 二性地 (second stage of the nature [of Buddha-truth])
			<i>a-fo</i>	<i>liu butuixin</i> 六不退心 (sixth mind of non-retrogression)
			<i>mi-fo</i>	stage of the five grades in the [Doctrine of] Perfection
			<i>tuo-fo</i>	<i>Mile neiyuan</i> 彌勒內院 (Maitreya's inner court of <i>Tuṣita</i> )
			<i>fo-fo</i>	<i>shangpin shangsheng</i> 上品上生 (upper reincarnation of the upper grade)
11	<i>na-tuo</i>	<i>xieding</i> 邪定 (heterodox <i>dhyāna</i> )	<i>na-na</i>	middle grade animals
			<i>na-mo</i>	less wealthy ghosts
			<i>mo-mo</i>	upper grade animals
			<i>na-tuo</i>	<i>Avrha</i> Heaven
			<i>mo-tuo</i>	
			<i>a-tuo</i>	<i>Ākāśānantyāyatana</i> Heaven
			<i>mi-tuo</i>	<i>Shiwubianchutian</i> 識無邊處天 ( <i>Viññāna-ānañca-āyatana</i> Heaven)
			<i>tuo-tuo</i>	<i>Wusuoyouchutian</i> 無所有處天 ( <i>Akiñcaññāyatana</i> Heaven)
			<i>na-fo</i>	<i>Feixiangfeifeixiangchutian</i> 非想非非想處天 ( <i>Nāivasamjñānāsamjñāyatana</i> Heaven)
			<i>mo-fo</i>	five [meditations for] settling the mind
			<i>a-fo</i>	<i>liu miaomenchan</i> 六妙門禪 (six [Tiantai] meditations of the wonderful door)
			<i>mi-fo</i>	<i>shiliu tesheng</i> 十六特勝 (sixteen extraordinary [meditative methods])
			<i>tuo-fo</i>	<i>tongmingguan</i> 通明觀 (visualization of universal power and insight)
			<i>fo-fo</i>	other-worldly learning of wisdom



	① Pip	Beginning Stat.	② Pips	Next Level of Transitions
12	<i>mo-tuo</i>	<i>weichan</i> 味禪 (sensational meditation)	<i>na-na</i>	less wealthy ghosts
			<i>na-mo</i>	upper grade animals
			<i>mo-mo</i>	<i>asura</i> in the [realm of] animal
			<i>na-tuo</i>	ten types of immortals
			<i>mo-tuo</i>	Māra Heaven
			<i>a-tuo</i>	<i>Fanzhongtian</i> 梵眾天 ( <i>Brahmakāyika</i> Heaven)
			<i>mi-tuo</i>	<i>Shaoguangtian</i> 少光天 ( <i>Parīttābhās</i> Heaven)
			<i>tuo-tuo</i>	<i>Shaojingtian</i> 少淨天 ( <i>Parīttasubha</i> Heaven)
			<i>na-fo</i>	<i>Mahābrahman</i>
			<i>mo-fo</i>	<i>Fushengtian</i> 福生天 ( <i>Punyaprasavā</i> Heaven)
			<i>a-fo</i>	six [Tiantai] meditations of the wonderful door
			<i>mi-fo</i>	sixteen extraordinary [meditative methods]
			<i>tuo-fo</i>	visualization of universal power and insight
			<i>fo-fo</i>	other-worldly learning of wisdom
13	<i>a-tuo</i>	<i>genben sichan</i> 根本四禪 (four fundamental meditations)	<i>a-a</i>	<i>Fanfutian</i> 梵輔天 ( <i>Brahma-purohitas</i> Heaven)
			<i>a-mi</i>	<i>Wuliangguangtian</i> 無量光天 ( <i>Apramānābha</i> Heaven)
			<i>mi-mi</i>	<i>Wuliangjingtian</i> 無量淨天 ( <i>Apramānasubha</i> Heaven)
			<i>a-tuo</i>	
			<i>na-tuo</i>	<i>Avrha</i> Heaven
			<i>mo-tuo</i>	
			<i>mi-tuo</i>	<i>Punyaprasavā</i> Heaven
			<i>tuo-tuo</i>	<i>Fuaitian</i> 福愛天 (Heaven of Felicity and Love)
			<i>na-fo</i>	<i>zhongxiangnian</i> 總相念 (contemplation of universal [characteristics of all] phenomena)
			<i>mo-fo</i>	stage of heat
			<i>a-fo</i>	<i>Wufantian</i> 無煩天 ( <i>Aviha</i> Heaven)
			<i>mi-fo</i>	<i>san barendi</i> 三入地 ([or 八忍地] third stage of the eight patient endurances)
			<i>tuo-fo</i>	<i>chu faxinzhu</i> 初發心住 (initial abidance of spiritual resolve or <i>śrota-āpanna</i> )
			<i>fo-fo</i>	<i>yuan shixinwei</i> 圓十信位 (stage of the ten [grades of Bodhisattva] faith in the [Doctrine of] Perfection)
14	<i>mi-tuo</i>	<i>si wuliangxin</i> 四無量心 (four infinite minds)	<i>a-a</i>	<i>Mahābrahman</i>
			<i>a-mi</i>	<i>Guangyintian</i> 光音天 ( <i>Ābhāsvara</i> Heaven)
			<i>mi-mi</i>	<i>Pianjingtian</i> 偏淨天 ( <i>Subha-kinha</i> Heaven)
			<i>a-tuo</i>	
			<i>mi-tuo</i>	<i>Guangguotian</i> 廣果天 ( <i>Vehapphala</i> Heaven)
			<i>tuo-tuo</i>	
			<i>na-fo</i>	<i>chuguo xutuohuan</i> 初果須陀洹 (initial fruition of <i>śrota-āpanna</i> )
			<i>mo-fo</i>	<i>sanguo anahan</i> 三果阿那含 (third fruition of <i>anāgāmin</i> )
			<i>a-fo</i>	<i>dasheng chu asengzhiman</i> 大乘初阿僧祇滿 ([Bodhisattvas who practice] till the first innumerable or <i>assnkhya</i> [kalpas of] Mahāyāna)
			<i>mi-fo</i>	<i>liu liyudi</i> 六離欲地 (sixth stage of freedom from the [remaining three] delusions [in practice])
			<i>tuo-fo</i>	<i>shi guandingzhu</i> 十灌頂住 (tenth abidance of baptism as the summit of attainment [as the conception of Buddhahood])
			<i>fo-fo</i>	upper reincarnation of the upper grade

	① Pips	Beginning Statuses	② Pips	Next Level of Transitions
15	tuo- tuo	si wuseding 四無色定 ([last] four [of the twelve] dhyāna of the [realm of] formlessness )	a-a	Ākāśānantyāyatana Heaven
			a-mi	
			mi-mi	Viññāna-ānañca-āyatana Heaven
			a-tuo	
			mi-tuo	Akiñcaññāyatana Heaven
			tuo-tuo	Nāivasamjñānāsamjñāyatana Heaven
			na-fo	renwei 忍位 (stage of patience)
			mo-fo	shidiyiwei 世第一位 (highest stage in the world)
			a-fo	third fruition of anāgāmin
			mi-fo	sixth stage of freedom from the [remaining three] delusions [in practice]
			tuo-fo	liu zhengxinzhu 六正心住 (sixth abidance of proper mind [to prepare for arhatship])
			fo-fo	stage of the ten [grades of Bodhisattva] faith in the [Doctrine of] Perfection
16	na- fo	yijian canchan 意見參禪 (meditation with [worldly] thoughts)	na-na	poshiluo 破尸羅 (disruption of śīla or chastity)
			na-mo	huizhengjian 毀正見 (demolition of samyagdrsti or proper views)
			mo-mo	qiduowen 棄多聞 (abandonment of bahu-śruta or being well-learned)
			na-tuo	Avrha Heaven
			mo-tuo	zengshangman 增上慢 (pride [of superior knowledge])
			mi-tuo	initial stage of dry wisdom
			tuo-tuo	second stage of the nature [of Buddha-truth]
			na-fo	initial stage of dry wisdom
			mo-fo	second stage of the nature [of Buddha-truth]
			a-fo	third stage of the eight patient endurances
			mi-fo	si jiandi 四見地 (fourth stage of [freedom from wrong] views)
			tuo-fo	stage of the five grades in the [Doctrine of] Perfection
			fo-fo	shangpin zhongsheng 上品中生 (middle reincarnation of the upper grade)
17	mo- fo	liming xijiao 利名習教 (learning Buddhism with an aim of seeking [worldly] profits and reputations)	na-na	disruption of śīla or chastity
			na-mo	poguize 破軌則 (breaking of precepts)
			mo-mo	pride [of superior knowledge]
			a-a	iron cakravartī or [wheel-]turning king
			a-mi	tonglunwang 銅輪王 (copper cakravartī or [wheel-]turning king)
			mi-mi	gold cakravartī or [wheel-]turning king
			a-tuo	Four [Celestial] Kings Heaven
			mi-tuo	Trayastrimśā Heaven
			tuo-tuo	Tuṣita Heaven
			na-fo	resolving to [attain the enlightened status of] śrāvaka
			mo-fo	resolving to [attain the enlightened status of] pratyeka-buddha
			a-fo	resolving to practice the six pāramitā
			mi-fo	visualization of the immateriality of substance
			tuo-fo	visualization of the three stages [of void, unreal, and via media]
			fo-fo	perfect and immediate miraculous visualization

	① Pips	Beginning Statutes	② Pips	Next Level of Transitions
18	<i>a-fo</i>	<i>chushi fuyue</i> 出世福業 (other- worldly felicific karma)	<i>a-a</i>	five precepts of the laity
			<i>a-mi</i>	fasting and eight prohibitory precepts
			<i>mi-mi</i>	<i>shami shijie</i> 沙彌十戒 (ten precepts of <i>śrāmanera</i> )
			<i>a-tuo</i>	<i>chi biqiulü</i> 持比丘律 (observe the precepts of <i>bhikṣu</i> )
			<i>mi-tuo</i>	<i>chi erbulü</i> 持二部律 (observe the precept of the division [of <i>bhikṣu</i> and be knowledgeable about] that [of <i>bhikṣunī</i> ])
			<i>tuo-tuo</i>	<i>guangchi pini</i> 廣持毗尼 (extensively observe <i>vinaya</i> )
			<i>na-fo</i>	<i>hufa babu</i> 護法八部 (eight classes of Dharma protectors)
			<i>mo-fo</i>	<i>qingfa fanwang</i> 請法梵王 (Brahmā who invites [a Buddha to give lectures on] Dharma)
			<i>a-fo</i>	initial fruition of <i>srota-āpanna</i>
			<i>mi-fo</i>	fourth stage of [freedom from wrong] views
			<i>tuo-fo</i>	<i>qi butuizhu</i> 七不退住 (seventh abidance of non-retrogression [to attain arhatship])
			<i>fo-fo</i>	stage of the ten [grades of Bodhisattva] faith in the [Doctrine of] Perfection
19	<i>mi-fo</i>	<i>chushi jiexue</i> 出世戒學 (other- worldly learning of precept)	<i>na-na</i>	five precepts of the laity
			<i>na-mo</i>	fasting and eight prohibitory precepts
			<i>mo-mo</i>	ten precepts of <i>śrāmanera</i>
			<i>a-a</i>	observe the precepts of <i>bhikṣu</i>
			<i>a-mi</i>	observe the precept of the division [of <i>bhikṣu</i> and be knowledgeable about] that [of <i>bhikṣunī</i> ]
			<i>mi-mi</i>	extensively observe <i>vinaya</i>
			<i>a-tuo</i>	
			<i>mi-tuo</i>	<i>zhu pini er budong</i> 住毗尼而不動 (steadfastly abide by <i>vinaya</i> )
			<i>tuo-tuo</i>	<i>shannengmie zheng</i> 善能滅諍 (specialize in eliminating contention)
			<i>na-fo</i>	<i>yeqingjingjie</i> 業清淨戒 (precepts of pure karma)
			<i>mo-fo</i>	
			<i>a-fo</i>	<i>yuqingjingjie</i> 餘清淨戒 (precepts of pure related [karma])
			<i>mi-fo</i>	<i>jueqingjingjie</i> 覺清淨戒 (precepts of pure enlightenment)
			<i>tuo-fo</i>	<i>nianqingjingjie</i> 念清淨戒 (precepts of pure thought)
			<i>fo-fo</i>	<i>wushangdaojie</i> 無上道戒 (precepts of the unsurpassed way)

	① Pips	Beginning Statuses	② Pips	Next Level of Transitions
20	<i>tuo-fo</i>	<i>chushi dingxue</i> 出世定學 (other-worldly learning of meditation)	<i>na-na</i>	six [Tiantai] meditations of the wonderful door
			<i>na-mo</i>	sixteen extraordinary [meditative methods]
			<i>mo-mo</i>	visualization of universal power and insight
			<i>a-a</i>	<i>jiuxiangguan</i> 九想觀 (visualization of the nine meditations [on a corpse]; <i>navasamjñā</i> )
			<i>a-mi</i>	<i>banianguan</i> 八念觀 (visualization of the eight [lines of] thought)
			<i>mi-mi</i>	<i>shixiangguan</i> 十想觀 (visualization of the ten perspectives)
			<i>a-tuo</i>	<i>babeisheguan</i> 八背捨觀 (visualization of the eight [forms of] liberations)
			<i>mi-tuo</i>	<i>bashengchuguan</i> 八勝處觀 (visualization of the eight victorious stages [in meditation for overcoming attachment])
			<i>tuo-tuo</i>	<i>shiyiqiechuguan</i> 十一切處觀 (visualization of the universe from ten aspects)
			<i>na-fo</i>	visualization of the ten perspectives
			<i>mo-fo</i>	visualization of the universe from ten aspects
			<i>a-fo</i>	<i>jiucididing</i> 九次第定 ( <i>samādhi</i> of the nine degrees)
			<i>mi-fo</i>	<i>shizifenxun sanmei</i> 師子奮迅三昧 ( <i>samādhi</i> of the lion aroused to anger [or the Buddha's power of arousing awe])
			<i>tuo-fo</i>	<i>chaoyue sanmei</i> 超越三昧 (supreme <i>samādhi</i> )
			<i>fo-fo</i>	<i>wang sanmei</i> 王三昧 (king [or highest degree] of <i>samādhi</i> )
21	<i>fo-fo</i>	<i>chushi huixue</i> 出世慧學 (other-worldly learning of wisdom)	<i>na-na</i>	resolving to [attain the enlightened status of] <i>śrāvaka</i>
			<i>na-mo</i>	
			<i>mo-mo</i>	resolving to [attain the enlightened status of] <i>pratyeka-buddha</i>
			<i>a-a</i>	resolving to practice the six <i>pāramitā</i>
			<i>a-mi</i>	visualization of the immateriality of substance
			<i>mi-mi</i>	visualization of the three stages [of void, unreal, and <i>via media</i> ]
			<i>a-tuo</i>	
			<i>mi-tuo</i>	perfect and immediate miraculous visualization
			<i>tuo-tuo</i>	
			<i>na-fo</i>	<i>yuan sheng neiyuan</i> 願升內院 (vowing to ascend to the inner court [of <i>Tuṣita</i> ])
			<i>mo-fo</i>	<i>qiusheng jingtu</i> 求生淨土 (seeking to be reborn into the Pure Land [of <i>Amitābha Buddha</i> ])
			<i>a-fo</i>	stage of the ten [grades of Bodhisattva] faith in the [Doctrine of] Perfection
			<i>mi-fo</i>	upper reincarnation of the upper grade
			<i>tuo-fo</i>	<i>yuan shizhuwei</i> 圓十住位 (stage of the ten [periods of] abidance [in Bodhisattva wisdom] in the [Doctrine of] Perfection)
			<i>fo-fo</i>	<i>yuan shidiwei</i> 圓十地位 (stage of the ten grounds in the [Doctrine of] Perfection)

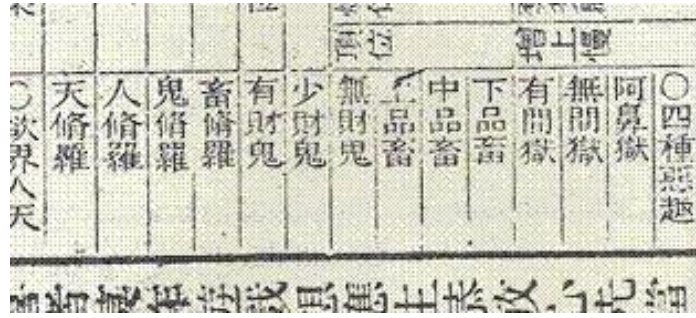
#### 4.2.2.2 *Saṃsāra*: the six paths of reincarnation

Fascicle Two covers three groups of terms for the next three *men*, including the *Fadao liubi men* 法道流弊門 (Path to the Abuses in Buddhist Saṃgha), the *Sizhong equ men* 四種惡趣門 (Path to the Four Evil Reincarnations), and the *Yujie ren tian men* 欲界人天門 (Path to [the States of] Human and Heavens in the Realm of Desire).

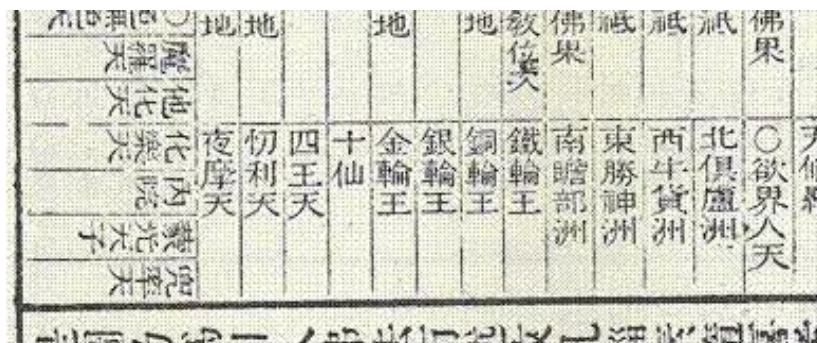
**Figure 4.4** The detail of the *Fadao liubi men* on the game board.



As seen in Figure 4.4, the *Fadao liubi men* contains five common corrupt practices among Buddhist saṃgha and laymen that destroy their progress of cultivation and proper understanding of Buddhist teachings. These corrupt practices are the *poshiluo* 破尸羅 (disruption of *śīla* or chastity), *poguize* 破軌則 (breaking of precepts), *huizhengjian* 毀正見 (demolition of *samyagdrsti* or proper views), *qiduowen* 棄多聞 (abandonment of *bahu-śruta* or being well-learned), and *zengshangman* 增上慢 (pride [of superior knowledge]). Based on the idea of karmic causation, such behaviours and mentalities of Buddhist practitioners clearly lead the players to the following resultant reincarnations listed in the *Sizhong equ men* as presented in Figure 4.5.

**Figure 4.5 The detail of the *Sizhong equ men* on the game board.**

The thirteen realms of existence mentioned in the *Sizhong equ men* are all related to the inferior four paths of the six paths of reincarnation. As a result of the negative origins and the aforementioned five abuses, the players are directed to move to one of these realms of existence: 1. the *Abi diyu* 阿鼻地獄 (*Avīci* purgatory), 2. *wujian diyu* 無間地獄 (purgatory of no-intermission), 3. *youjian diyu* 有間地獄 (purgatory with intermission), 4. *xiapin chusheng* 下品畜生 (lower grade animals), 5. *zhongpin chusheng* 中品畜生 (middle grade animals), 6. *shangpin chusheng* 上品畜生 (upper grade animals), 7. *wucaigui* 無財鬼 (poor ghosts), 8. *shaocaigui* 少財鬼 (less wealthy ghosts), 9. *youcaigui* 有財鬼 (wealthy ghosts), 10. *chu xiuluo* 畜脩羅 (*asura* in the [realm of] animal), 11. *gui xiuluo* 鬼脩羅 (*asura* in the [realm of] ghost), 12. *ren xiuluo* 人脩羅 (*asura* in the [realm of] human), and 13. *tian xiuluo* 天脩羅 (*asura* in the heavens).

**Figure 4.6 The detail of the *Yujie ren tian men* on the game board.**

The human world and the heavens in this *Yujie ren tian men* (Figure 4.6) are the two better births among the six paths of reincarnation, which contrast against the former subject of the four inferior paths. Being reborn into the Realm of Desire is the consequence of some of the favourable statuses in the beginning squares but only eighteen different reincarnate possibilities are selected here to represent the whole Realm of Desire, which are the 1. *Beijuluzhou* 北俱盧洲 (Uttarakuru), 2. *Xiniuhuo Zhou* 西牛貨洲 (Aparagadānīya), 3. *Dongshengshen Zhou* 東勝神洲 (Pūrvavideha), 4. *Nanzhanbu Zhou* 南瞻部洲 (Jambudvīpa), 5. *tielunwang* 鐵輪王 (iron *cakravartī* or [wheel-]turning king), 6. *tonglunwang* 銅輪王 (copper *cakravartī* or [wheel-]turning king), 7. *yinlunwang* 銀輪王 (silver *cakravartī* or [wheel-]turning king), 8. *jinlunwang* 金輪王 (gold *cakravartī* or [wheel-]turning king), 9. *shizhong xian* 十種仙 (ten types of immortals), 10. *siwangtian* 四王天 (Four [Celestial] Kings Heaven), 11. *Daolitian* 忉利天 (*Trayastrimśā* Heaven), 12. *Yemotian* 夜摩天 (*Yama* Heaven), 13. *Doushuaitian* 兜率天 (*Tuṣita* Heaven), 14. *Mengguangtianzi* 蒙光天子 (celestial princes who were bestowed with light), 15. *Mile neiyuan* 彌勒內院 (Maitreya's inner court of *Tuṣita*), 16. *Hualetian* 化樂天 (*Nirmānarati* Heaven), 17. *Tahuazizaitian* 他化自在天 (*Paranirmita-vaśavartin* Heaven), and 18. *Moluotian* 魔羅天 (*Māra* Heaven).

In terms of subjects, Fascicle Three contains Buddhist terms that belong to three different groups titled as *Sewusetian men* 色無色天門 (Path to the Heavens in [the Realms of] Form and Formlessness), *Shengshan miee men* 生善滅惡門 (Path to Bringing about Good [Deeds] and Extinguishing Evil [Deeds]), and *Zengshangjie xue men* 增上戒學門 (Path to the Learning of Strengthened Precepts).

**Figure 4.7 The detail of the *Sewusetian men* on the game board.**

All terms mentioned in the *Sewusetian men*, except for the last one that is called “*dungen anahan* 鈍根阿那含 (*anāgāmin* of dull capacity),” are the heavens in the Realm of Form and the Realm of Formlessness, which are twenty-two in number, as displayed in Figure 4.7. Similar to the above group of heavens in the Realm of Desire, these terms are also the resultant realms of existence of some of the favorable statuses in the beginning squares; together they are known as the Three Realms of Existence. The heavens that are selected to be listed here are the 1. *Fanzhongtian* 梵眾天 (*Brahmakāyika* Heaven), 2. *Fanfutian* 梵輔天 (*Brahma-purohitas* Heaven), 3. *Dafantian* 大梵天 (*Mahābrahman*), 4. *Shaoguangtian* 少光天 (*Parīttābhās* Heaven), 5. *Wulianguangtian* 無量光天 (*Apramānābha* Heaven), 6. *Guangyintian* 光音天 (*Ābhāsvara* Heaven), 7. *Shaojingtian* 少淨天 (*Parīttāśubha* Heaven), 8. *Wuliangjingtian* 無量淨天 (*Apramānaśubha* Heaven), 9. *Pianjingtian* 徧淨天 (*Subha-kinha* Heaven), 10. *Fushengtian* 福生天 (*Punyaśubha* Heaven), 11. *Fuaitian* 福愛天 (Heaven of Felicity and Love), 12. *Guangguotian* 廣果天 (*Vehapphala* Heaven), 13. *Wuxiangtian* 無想天 (*Avrha* Heaven), 14. *Wufantian* 無煩天 (*Aviha* Heaven), 15. *Wuretian* 無熱天 (*Anavatapta* Heaven), 16. *Shanjiantian* 善見天 (*Sudarśana* Heaven), 17. *Shanxiantian* 善現天 (*Sudrśa* Heaven), 18. *Sejiujingtian* 色究竟天 (*Akanistha* Heaven), 19. *Kongwubianchutian* 空無邊處天 (*Ākāśānāntyāyatana* Heaven), 20. *Shiwubianchutian* 識無邊處天 (*Viññāna-ānañca-āyatana* Heaven), 21. *Wusuoyouchutian* 無



所有處天 (*Akiñcaññāyatana* Heaven), and 22. *Feixiangfeifeixiangchutian* 非想非非想處天 (*Nāivasamjñānāsamjñāyatana* Heaven).

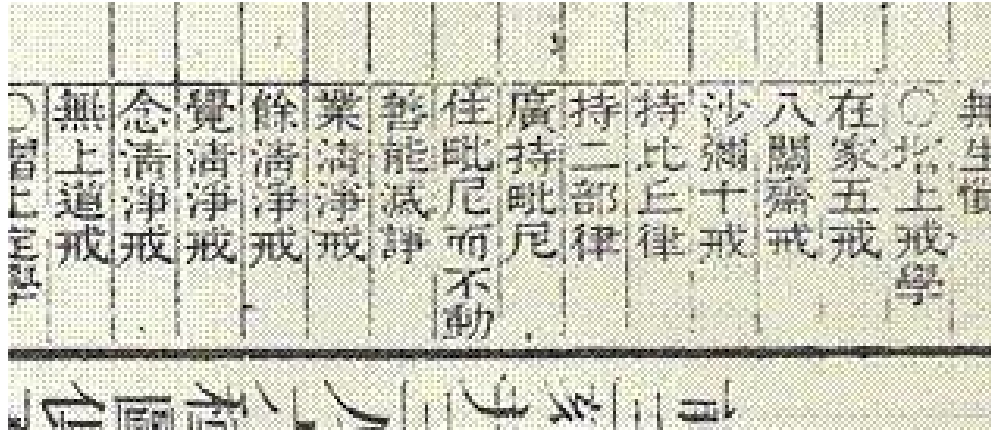
**Figure 4.8** The detail of the *Shengshan miee men* on the game board.



As the opposite to the five abuses, the six terms in the *Shengshan miee men* are the roles and the activities that should be encouraged because of the meritorious virtues that can accumulate good karma and extinguish evil karma, as demonstrated in Figure 4.8. The first three, the *tingfa zazhong* 聽法雜眾 (mixed groups of audiences who attend Dharma lectures), the *hufa babu* 護法八部 (eight classes of Dharma protectors), and the *qingfa fanwang* 請法梵王 (Brahmā who invites [a Buddha to give lectures on] Dharma), are the roles played by some lay Buddhists of various realms that can exert positive influences on the spread of Buddhism. The last three, the *zuofachan* 作法懺 (confession of karmic deeds), the *quxiangchan* 取相懺 (repentance to ask for the sign of [Buddha's presence to annihilate the sin]), and the *wushengchan* 無生懺 (repentance of no-birth), are a set of three monastic practices of confession and repentance established for the sangha to eliminate the impact of evil karma.

#### 4.2.2.3 The Strengthened Three Learnings

Figure 4.9 The detail of the *Zengshangjie xue men* on the game board.



As the continuation of the previous group to enhance the good karmic influences, the *Zengshangjie xue men* (Figure 4.9) emphasizes the importance of the precepts to Buddhist practitioners especially to the saṃgha in guarding against the evil deeds committed by the mouth, body, and mind. Almost all the thirteen types or levels of precepts in this group are monastic related, except that the first one, the *zaijia wujie* 在家五戒 (five precepts of the laity), is intended for lay Buddhists and the second one, the *baguanzhaijie* 八關齋戒 (fasting and eight prohibitory precepts), can be observed by both the lay and monastic communities. The remaining eleven descriptions of the Buddhist precepts are the 1. *shami shijie* 沙彌十戒 (ten precepts of *śrāmanera*), 2. *chi biqiulü* 持比丘律 (observe the precepts of *bhikṣu*), 3. *chi erbulü* 持二部律 (observe the precept of the division [of *bhikṣu* and be knowledgeable about] that [of *bhikṣunī*]), 4. *guangchi pini* 廣持毗尼 (extensively observe *vinaya*), 5. *zhu pini er budong* 住毗尼而不動 (steadfastly abide by *vinaya*), 6. *shannengmie zheng* 善能滅諍 (specialize in eliminating contention), 7. *yeqingjingjie* 業清淨戒 (precepts of pure karma), 8. *yuqingjingjie* 餘清淨戒 (precepts of pure related [karma]), 9. *jueqingjingjie* 覺清淨戒

(precepts of pure enlightenment), 10. *nianqingjingjie* 念清淨戒 (precepts of pure thought), and 11. *wushangdaojie* 無上道戒 (precepts of the unsurpassed way). Along with the subsequent two groups, this *men* is the first of the Strengthened Three Learnings.

**Figure 4.10** The detail of the *Zengshangding xue men* on the game board.

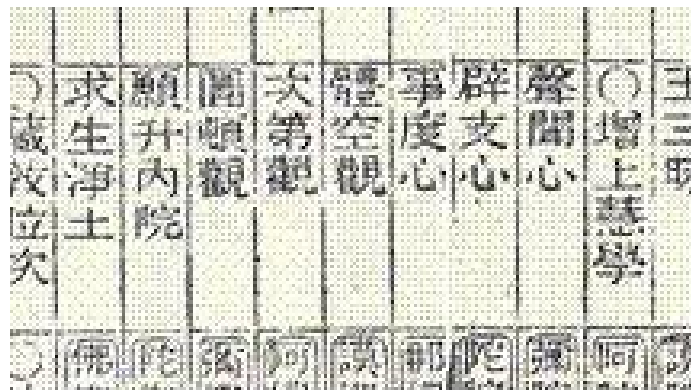


The second of the Strengthened Three Learnings is the *Zengshangding xue men* 增上定學門 (Path to the Learning of Strengthened Meditation) as indicated in Figure 4.10; its thirteen terms of meditative practices occupy the whole Fascicle Four. The detailed definitions and elaborations of these terms show that Zhixu put great effort into explaining meditative practices to the players. These complicated meditations are the 1. *liu miaomenchan* 六妙門禪 (six [Tiantai] meditations of the wonderful door), 2. *shiliu tesheng* 十六特勝 (sixteen extraordinary [meditative methods]), 3. *tongmingguan* 通明觀 (visualization of universal power and insight), 4. *jiuxiangguan* 九想觀 (visualization of the nine meditations [on a corpse]; *navasamjñā*), 5. *banianguan* 八念觀 (visualization of the eight [lines of] thought), 6. *shixiangguan* 十想觀 (visualization of the ten perspectives), 7. *babeisheguan* 八背捨觀 (visualization of the eight [forms of] liberations), 8.

*bashengchuguan* 八勝處觀 (visualization of the eight victorious stages [in meditation for overcoming attachment]), 9. *shiyiqiechuguan* 十一切處觀 (visualization of the universe from ten aspects), 10. *jiucididing* 九次第定 (*samādhi* of the nine degrees), 11. *shizifenxun sanmei* 師子奮迅三昧 (*samādhi* of the lion aroused to anger [or the Buddha's power of arousing awe]), 12. *chaoyue sanmei* 超越三昧 (supreme *samādhi*), and 13. *wang sanmei* 王三昧 (king [or highest degree] of *samādhi*). The intricate and difficult levels and classifications of the meditative practices gathered here alone already demonstrate that Zhixu had studied this subject extensively and truly considered that these practices were of extreme importance to Buddhists. If Zhixu wanted to efficiently lecture about these important yet complex and profound contents in a much more casual way to as many people as possible, his adoption of the popular gambling game seemed to be a reasonable solution.

Fascicle Five comprises the *Zengshanghui xue men* 增上慧學門 (Path to the Learning of Strengthened Wisdom), the *Zangjiao weici men* 藏教位次門 (Path to the Stages [of Enlightenment] in the Doctrine of Hīnayāna), and the *Tongjiao weici men* 通教位次門 (Path to the Stages [of Enlightenment] in the Doctrine of Mahāyāna-cum-Hīnayāna).

**Figure 4.11** The detail of the *Zengshanghui xue men* on the game board.



The last of the Strengthened Three Learnings is the *Zengshanghui xue men* as shown in Figure 4.11, which contains eight different levels or ways of higher spiritual resolution for those who want to attain enlightenment that lead to liberation from the cycle of reincarnation by practicing meditations other than those listed in the previous group. The resultant statuses of these meditative practices include those of *śrāvakahood*, *pratyeka-buddhahood*, Bodhisattvahood, and Buddhahood and the higher spiritual resolutions related to these statuses here are the first six terms listed in the manual, namely, *fa shengwen xin* 發聲聞心 (resolving to [attain the enlightened status of] *śrāvaka*), *fa pizhifo xin* 發辟支佛心 (resolving to [attain the enlightened status of] *pratyeka-buddha*), *shi liudu xin* 事六度心 (resolving to practice the six *pāramitā*), *tikongguan* 體空觀 (visualization of the immateriality of substance), *cidisanguan* 次第三觀 (visualization of the three stages [of void, unreal, and *via media*]), and *yuandunmiaouan* 圓頓妙觀 (perfect and immediate miraculous visualization). It should be noted that there are two more special ways of being liberated from the cycle of reincarnation that are also included here. One is *yuan sheng neiyuan* 願升內院 (vowing to ascend to the inner court [of *Tuṣita*]) while the other one is *qiusheng jingtu* 求生淨土 (seeking to be reborn into the Pure Land [of Amitābha Buddha]). These two options deliberately emphasize the power of making vows to be reborn into the dwelling places of Bodhisattva Maitreya and Buddha Amitābha, in addition to the regular observance of the Ten Good Deeds and the practices of meditation, visualization, or chanting the name of Buddha Amitābha.

## 4.2.2.4 The Four Doctrines

Figure 4.12 The detail of the *Zangjiao weici men* on the game board.

Beginning from this *men*, the focus turns to a wide range of terms about meditative and enlightened statuses or positions under the classification of four doctrines, Hīnayāna, Mahāyāna-cum-Hīnayāna, Mahāyāna, and Perfection, developed by the Tiantai School, the Buddhist school that Zhixu had promoted alongside with the Pure Land teachings. In the *Zangjiao weici men* seen in Figure 4.12, sixteen terms are listed, ending up with Hīnayāna's highest attainment of arhatship. These terms, from the lowest to the highest, are the 1. *wutingxin* 五停心 (five [meditations for] settling the mind), 2. *biexiangnian* 別相念 (contemplation of specific [characteristics of all] phenomena), 3. *zhongxiangnian* 總相念 (contemplation of universal [characteristics of all] phenomena), 4. *nuanwei* 煖位 (stage of heat), 5. *dingwei* 頂位 (stage of climax), 6. *renwei* 忍位 (stage of patience), 7. *shidiyiwei* 世第一位 (highest stage in the world), 8. *chuguo xutuohuan* 初果須陀洹 (initial fruition of *srota-āpanna*), 9. *erguo situohan* 二果斯陀含 (second fruition of *sakrd-āgāmin*), 10. *sanguo anahan* 三果阿那含 (third fruition of *anāgāmin*), 11. *siguo aluohan* 四果阿羅漢 (fourth fruition of *ārhat*), 12. *zhongsheng pizhifo guo* 中乘辟支佛果 (*pratyeka-buddha* of the middle vehicle), 13. *dasheng chu asengzhiman* 大乘初阿僧祇滿 ([Bodhisattvas who practice]

till the first innumerable or *assnkhya* [kalpas of] Mahāyāna), 14. *er asengzhiman* 二阿僧祇滿 ([Bodhisattvas who practice] till the second innumerable or *assnkhya* [kalpas]), 15. *san asengzhiman* 三阿僧祇滿 ([Bodhisattvas who practice] till the third innumerable or *assnkhya* [kalpas]), and 16. *zangjiao fogue* 藏教佛果 (Hīnayāna's fruition of arhatship).

**Figure 4.13** The detail of the *Tongjiao weici men* on the game board.



The path of the Doctrine of Hīnayāna is followed by the *Tongjiao weici men* (Figure 4.13), which comprises the ten stages of enlightenment that end with the attainment of Buddhahood under the Doctrine of Mahāyāna-cum-Hīnayāna. The level of spiritual progress begins with the 1. *chu ganhuidi* 初乾慧地 (initial stage of dry wisdom), which is followed in sequence by the 2. *er xingdi* 二性地 (second stage of the nature [of Buddha-truth]), 3. *san barendi* 三八人地 ([or 八忍地] third stage of the eight patient endurances), 4. *si jiandi* 四見地 (fourth stage of [freedom from wrong] views), 5. *wu bodi* 五薄地 (fifth stage of the attenuation [of the first six of the nine delusions in practice]), 6. *liu liyudi* 六離欲地 (sixth stage of freedom from the [remaining three] delusions [in practice]), 7. *qi yibandi* 七已辦地



(seventh stage of complete discrimination [in regard to wrong views and thoughts]; seventh stage of an arhat), 8. *ba pizhifodi* 八辟支佛地 (eighth stage of pratyekabuddhahood), 9. *jiu pusadi* 九菩薩地 (ninth stage of Bodhisattvahood), and 10. *shi fodi* 十佛地 (tenth stage of Buddhahood).

The last four *men*, the *Biejiao weici men* 別教位次門 (Path to the Stages [of Enlightenment] in the Doctrine of Mahāyāna), *Yuanjiao weici men* 圓教位次門 (Path to the Stages [of Enlightenment] in the Doctrine of Perfection), *Jingtu hengchao men* 淨土橫超門 (Path to the Pure Land [of Buddha Amitābha], the Crosscut [to Liberation]), and *Yuanji guowei men* 圓極果位門 (Path to the Stage of the Resultant [Attainment] of the Utmost Perfection), occupy the whole of Fascicle Six.

**Figure 4.14** The detail of the *Biejiao weici men* on the game board.

[illegible]

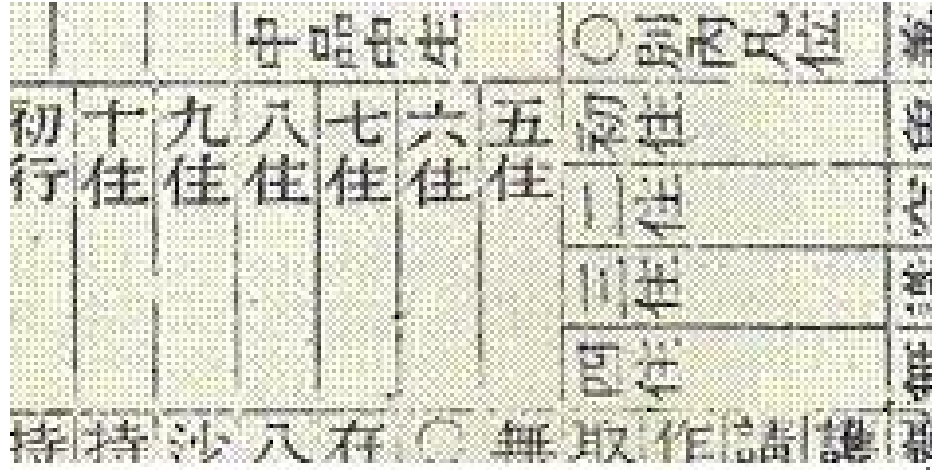


The comparatively long listing of the fifty-two stages of enlightenment in the path of the *Biejiao weici men* (Figure 4.14) is the detailed progress of the meditative achievement for Bodhisattvas towards Buddhahood in the Doctrine of Mahāyāna that can be subdivided into seven categories. The first sub-category is the *Shixin* 十信 (Ten Stages of Faith; Figure 4.15), which contains the 1. *chu xinxin* 初信心 (initial mind of faith), 2. *er nianxin* 二念心 (second mind of remembrance), 3. *san jingjinxin* 三精進心 (third mind of zealous progress), 4. *si huixin* 四慧心 (fourth mind of wisdom), 5. *wu dingxin* 五定心 (fifth mind of *samādhi*), 6. *liu butuixin* 六不退心 (sixth mind of non-retrogression), 7. *qi hufaxin* 七護法心 (seventh mind of Dharma protection), 8. *ba huixiangxin* 八迴向心 (eighth mind of merits dedication), 9. *jiu jiexin* 九戒心 (ninth mind of precept), and 10. *shi yuanxin* 十願心 (tenth mind of vow).

These stages are followed by a group of three sub-categories titled as the *Sanxian wei* 三賢位 (Three Sage Stages), also known as the *Sanshixin* 三十心 (Thirty Minds), which includes the second, third, and fourth subcategories of thirty stages in total.

**Figure 4.15** The detail of the sub-category of the *Shixin* on the game board.

○別教位次	○別外凡位	初信心	二念心	三精進心	四慧心	五定心	六不退心	七護法心	八回向心	九戒心	十願心
無量	光音	少淨	無量	徧淨	福生	福愛	廣果	無相	無相	無熱	善目

**Figure 4.16** The detail of the sub-category of the *Shizhu* on the game board.

The second sub-category of the fifty-two stages is the *Shizhu* 十住 (Ten Stages of Abidance; Figure 4.16), which is the first of the Three Sage Stages referring to the 1. *chū faxinzhu* 初發心住 (initial abidance of spiritual resolve or *śrota-āpanna*), 2. *er zhidizhu* 二治地住 (second abidance of submission to rule [to prepare for the subsequent *sakrdāgāmin* stage]), 3. *san xiuxingzhu* 三修行住 (third abidance of cultivation of virtue [to attain the *sakrdāgāmin* stage]), 4. *si shengguizhu* 四生貴住 (fourth abidance of noble birth [as a preparation for the *anāgāmin* stage]), 5. *wu fangbianjuzuzhu* 五方便具足住 (fifth abidance of all expedient means [to attain the *anāgāmin* stage]), 6. *liu zhengxinzhu* 六正心住 (sixth abidance of proper mind [to prepare for arhatship]), 7. *qi butuizhu* 七不退住 (seventh abidance of non-retrogression [to attain arhatship]), 8. *ba tongzhenzhu* 八童真住 (eighth abidance of immortal youth [i.e. pratyekabuddhahood]), 9. *jiu fawangzizhu* 九法王子住 (ninth abidance of the son of the Dharma king [as the conception of Bodhisattvahood]), and 10. *shi guandingzhu* 十灌頂住 (tenth abidance of baptism as the summit of attainment [as the conception of Buddhahood]).

**Figure 4.17** The detail of the sub-category of the *Shixing* on the game board.

The second of the Three Sage Stages is the subsequent sub-category called “*Shixing*” 十行 (Ten Stages of Practice; Figure 4.17) that consists of the 1. *chu huanxing* 初歡喜行 (initial practice of joy), 2. *er raoyixing* 二饒益行 (second practice of benefit), 3. *san wuchenhenxing* 三無瞋恨行 (third practice of no resentment), 4. *si wujinxing* 四無盡行 (fourth practice of endless [cultivations]), 5. *wu lichiluanxing* 五離癡亂行 (fifth practice of being away from delusion and confusion), 6. *liu shanxianxing* 六善現行 (sixth practice of being skillful in manifestation), 7. *qi wuzhexing* 七無著行 (seventh practice of non-attachment), 8. *ba zunzhongxing* 八尊重行 (eighth practice of respectful [*pāramitā*]), 9. *jiu shanfaxing* 九善法行 (ninth practice of virtuous Dharma), and 10. *shi zhenshixing* 十真實行 (tenth practice of true reality).

**Figure 4.18** The detail of the sub-category of the *Shihuixiang* on the game board.

The *Shihuixiang* 十迴向 (Ten Stages of Merit Dedication; Figure 4.18) is the last sub-category of the Three Sage Stages and the fourth of the fifty-two stages that comprises the 1. *chu jiuhuzhongshenglizhongshenghuixiang* 初救護眾生離眾生相迴向 (initial merit dedication of the salvation of sentient beings and the detachment from their phenomena), 2. *er buhuaihuixiang* 二不壞迴向 (second merit dedication of non-destruction), 3. *san dengyiqiefokuixiang* 三等一切佛迴向 (third merit dedication of being equal to all Buddhas), 4. *si zhiyiqiechuhuixiang* 四至一切處迴向 (fourth merit dedication of omnipresence), 5. *wu wujingongdezanghuixiang* 五無盡功德藏迴向 (fifth merit dedication of the inexhaustible treasury of meritorious virtue), 6. *liu suishunpingdengshangenhuihuixiang* 六隨順平等善根迴向 (sixth merit dedication of the good quality equally to [sentient beings]), 7. *qi suishundengguanyiqiezhongshenghuixiang* 七隨順等觀一切眾生迴向 (seventh merit dedication of equally visualizing all sentient beings), 8. *ba zhenruxianghuixiang* 八真如相迴向 (eighth merit dedication of the reality or *bhūtatathatā*), 9. *jiu wufuxietuohuixiang* 九無縛解脫迴向 (ninth merit dedication of the bondless liberation), and 10. *shi fajiewulianghuixiang* 十法界無量迴向 (tenth merit dedication of infinite Dharma realms).

**Figure 4.19** The detail of the sub-category of the *Shidi* on the game board.



The last ten stages of meditative enlightenment before perfecting Bodhisattvahood is the following sub-category titled as “*Shidi*” 十地 (Ten Grounds; Figure 4.19). These ten stages are also known as “*Shisheng*” 十聖 (Ten Saints), a term that pairs with the *Sanxian* as the *Sanxian shisheng* 三賢十聖 (Three Sages and Ten Saints). These ten characteristics of the higher spiritual statuses of a Bodhisattva are the 1. *chu huanxidi* 初歡喜地 (initial ground of joy or *pramuditā*), 2. *er ligoudi* 二離垢地 (second ground of stainlessness or *vimalā*), 3. *san faguangdi* 三發光地 (third ground of illumination or *prabhākarī*), 4. *si yanhuidi* 四燄慧地 (fourth ground of glowing wisdom or *arcismatī*), 5. *wu nanshengdi* 五難勝地 (fifth ground of overcoming utmost difficulties or *sudurjayā*), 6. *liu xianqiandi* 六現前地 (sixth ground of manifestation or *abhimukhī*), 7. *qi yuanxingdi* 七遠行地 (seventh ground of far going or *dūramgamā*), 8. *ba budongdi* 八不動地 (eighth ground of unwavering or *acalā*), 9. *jiu shanhuidi* 九善慧地 (ninth ground of virtuous wisdom or *sādhumatī*), and 10. *shi fayundi* 十法雲地 (tenth ground of Dharma cloud or *dharmamegha*).

This sub-category of the Ten Grounds is followed by the last two sub-categories and each of which only contains one stage, as also seen in Figure 4.19. The fifty-first stage is the highest level of enlightenment that can be attained by a Bodhisattva, that is, the *dengjuepusa* 等覺菩薩 (bodhisattva’s absolute universal enlightenment or *samyak-sambodhi*). The final fifty-second stage is referred to the Buddhahood called the *biejiao miaojuefowei* 別教妙覺佛位 (wonderful enlightened status of a Buddha in the Doctrine of Mahāyāna).

**Figure 4.20** The detail of the *Yuanjiao weici men* on the game board.

Although the contents of the stages shown in the *Yuanjiao weici men* (Figure 4.20) are similar to the sub-categories of the fifty-two stages mentioned above, they refer to a higher level of meditative achievement under the classification of the Doctrine of Perfection. With titles of similar wording, these stages are represented by the following eight terms, namely, the 1. *yuan wupinwei* 圓五品位 (stage of the five grades in the [Doctrine of] Perfection), 2. *yuan shixinwei* 圓十信位 (stage of the ten [grades of Bodhisattva] faith in the [Doctrine of] Perfection), 3. *yuan shizhuwei* 圓十住位 (stage of the ten [periods of] abidance [in Bodhisattva wisdom] in the [Doctrine of] Perfection), 4. *yuan shixingwei* 圓十行位 (stage of the ten [necessary practices of a Bodhisattva] in the [Doctrine of] Perfection), 5. *yuan shihuixiangwei* 圓十迴向位 (stage of the ten merit dedications in the [Doctrine of] Perfection), 6. *yuan shidiwei* 圓十地位 (stage of the ten grounds in the [Doctrine of] Perfection), 7. *yuan dengjuewei* 圓等覺位 (stage of the absolute universal enlightenment in the [Doctrine of] Perfection), and 8. *jinganghouxin* 金剛後心 (final Diamond heart). This *men* is the last of the four doctrines under the Tiantai classification of Buddhist teachings.



So far, the Ten Dharma Realms that compose the Buddhist cosmology are outlined. The first *men* is the listing of different karmic conditions on the game board as the beginning for the players. The second and the third are the five sins and the resultant inferior reincarnations. The fourth and the fifth are the rebirth in the Realms of Desire, Form, and Formlessness within the six paths of reincarnation. Then, from the sixth to the ninth are the good karmic deeds and the Strengthened Three Learnings that cover a considerable number of precepts and meditative methods while the tenth to the thirteenth are the resultant enlightened statuses of arhatship, pratyekabuddhahood, bodhisattvahood, and Buddhahood according to the classification of the four doctrines. These four classes of enlightened statuses and the six paths of reincarnation are exactly the cosmological structure of the Ten Dharma Realms, from the most deluded to the most complete enlightened. Simultaneously, the game board also contains some terms of good and evil deeds that bring about the good and bad reincarnations as well as the spiritual practices that lead to certain corresponding statuses of enlightenment. The general picture of the Buddhist cosmology is thus complete.

#### 4.2.2.5 The path to the Pure Land of Buddha Amitābha

**Figure 4.21** The detail of the *Jingtu hengchao men* on the game board.

七	六	五	四	三	二	一	初	十	九	八	七	六	五	四
常寂光淨土	實報莊嚴淨土	方便有餘淨土	上品上生	上品中生	上品下生	中品上生	中品中生	中品下生	下品上生	下品中生	下品下生	疑城	淨土橫超	金剛淨土

However, the game does not end here. As we might imagine, Zhixu, as the Patriarch of the Pure Land School, would not miss this opportunity to propagate to those who play this game the eminence of the Pure Land teachings and practices. The eminence of these teachings can be indicated by both their sequence in the manual and their location on the game board. The path of the *Jingtu hengchao men* (Figure 4.21) is deliberately placed after the stage-to-stage advancement to the ultimate enlightenment in order to highlight the shortcut nature of the Pure Land teachings, which advocate instant liberation from the *samsāra* through the chanting of Buddha Amitābha's name when dying, with an emphasis on the fact that the attainment of any levels of the meditative stage is not required. On the game board, as illustrated in Figure 4.14, this group of terms is placed adjacent to the central square side by side with Bodhisattvas' fifty-two stages in the Doctrines of Mahāyāna and Perfection to demonstrate its unique position in salvation. In short, both the Pure Land and meditative practices are equal in chance of achieving liberation and their next moves on the game board are identical, which is the winning square—"Buddhahood."

This *men* comprises a group of thirteen terms that relate to the four lands of the Western Pure Land and the nine grades of the residents who are reborn into one of the four lands that are established for the mortals. These terms, beginning from the dwelling places of the most deluded to the most enlightened, are listed in sequence from the 1. *jingtu yicheng* 淨土疑城 (palace of doubters in the Pure Land [of Buddha Amitābha]), 2. *xiapin xiasheng* 下品下生 (lower reincarnation of the lower grade), 3. *xiapin zhongsheng* 下品中生 (middle reincarnation of the lower grade), 4. *xiapin shangsheng* 下品上生 (upper reincarnation of the lower grade), 5. *zhongpin xiasheng* 中品下生 (lower reincarnation of the middle grade), 6. *zhongpin zhongsheng* 中品中生 (middle reincarnation of the middle grade), 7. *zhongpin*



*shangsheng* 中品上生 (upper reincarnation of the middle grade), 8. *shangpin xiasheng* 上品下生 (lower reincarnation of the upper grade), 9. *shangpin zhongsheng* 上品中生 (middle reincarnation of the upper grade), 10. *shangpin shangsheng* 上品上生 (upper reincarnation of the upper grade), 11. *Fangbianyouyu jingtu* 方便有餘淨土 (Pure Land of Expediency with a Remnant [of Fundamental Ignorance]), 12. *Shibaozhuangyan jingtu* 實報莊嚴淨土 (Pure Land of Magnificent True Reward), and 13. *Changjiguang jingtu* 常寂光淨土 (Pure Land of Eternal Serenity and Illumination). These last three terms are the three superior lands of the four lands in the Western Pure Land but the name of the lowest one, the *Fan sheng tongju jingtu* 凡聖同居淨土 (Pure Land where the Mortals and Saints Dwell Together), is omitted here and replaced by the nine grades of its reincarnated residents so as to highlight the specialties of this land in the teachings of Pure Land school.

#### 4.2.2.6 The destination

Figure 4.22 The detail of the *Yuanji guowei men* on the game board.



Whether through meditation or name chanting practice, the ultimate goal is to attain Buddhahood, which is the focus of the discussion in the last *men*, the *Yuanji guowei men*, as shown in Figure 4.22. Inscribed in the winning square located in the center of the game board is the character “fo 佛 (Buddha),” which is flanked by two descriptive statements that can further characterize the quality of “Buddha.” The statement on the right is read as *yuanjiao jiujingmiaojuewei* 圓教究竟妙覺位 (supreme wonderful enlightened status in the Doctrine of Perfection) while the one on the left is *shibaojiguang shangshangpin* 實報寂光上上品 (highest of the upper grade of [the Pure Land of] True Reward and [the Pure Land of] Serenity and Illumination). In the manual, a simple graph is drawn to help illuminate these two statements and each of them is juxtaposed with two more descriptive sentences. As the annotation, in the graph, the phrases “*yuanmanputi* 圓滿菩提 (perfect Bodhi)” and “*gui wusuode* 歸無所得 (return to nothing obtainable; return to the immaterial universal reality behind all phenomena)” are written behind the statement on the right while the phrases “*shentubuer* 身土不二 (body and environment are not a dualism)” and “*lizhiyiru* 理智一如 (principle and reason are one true suchness)” are written behind the statement on the left. In other words, to Zhixu’s knowledge, the perfect wisdom and the union with the immaterial reality are the characters that can accurately depict the status of ultimate enlightenment while the non-dualism and one suchness are the qualities that can well describe the two pure realms that housed Bodhisattvas and Buddhas among the four pure lands. As the winner finishes his or her pilgrimage upon reaching this winning square, he or she is simultaneously guided through a lecture on the complex yet fundamental Buddhist teachings with a highlight on the Pure Land beliefs. This final *men* ends the manual.

### 4.3 Concluding Remarks

Both the game board and the manual have clearly revealed that this Buddhist device is definitely more than a game for gambling or amusement. Although the design of the game was inspired by the lay Buddhists who gambled on the bureaucratic versions as mentioned by Zhixu in his foreword, he did not choose to secularize this device simply for generalization to compete against or replace the bureaucratic versions but attempted to reestablish the academic quality of this long-lost preaching tool. Special focus should be put on Zhixu's explanation about the move from one status, realm of existence, or meditative level to the next, through which the players could learn different series of Buddhist terms and notions in a more holistic approach every time they played the game. Apparently, to Zhixu as well as to a number of Buddhists, repeatedly playing this device could become a serious learning practice for laymen. Such a mode of learning was more flexible than the traditional reading and lecturing and, to a certain extent, this learning pattern was livelier and more effective as the teachings they learned from the manual were the integrated Buddhist notions digested by the master through his lifelong studies of the religion. Therefore, the whole pattern of this game board is carefully and systematically arranged and its embedded Buddhist teachings are discreetly selected to compromise with the limited space to construct a visual model of the cosmos in a lively way that can be more easily comprehended by the lay Buddhists about the Ten Dharma Realms that includes the *samsāra* and the four enlightened statuses as well as the spiritual conditions of their residents. Obviously, in Zhixu's mind, these integrated and effective learning effects were the expected outcomes in terms of the Buddhist didactic idea of *upāya* or expedient means. This teaching-material-like manual was the genuine focal point while the game board was merely a game-like table or graphic aid created along with

the manual; their relationship can be best described as a curriculum versus a syllabus.

According to the popularity of the game during the late Ming period immediately after the release of the *Xuanfo tu* and the *Xuanfo pu*, Zhixu's erudition and discreetness had successfully overshadowed the game's gambling use with its unique didactic characteristic.

Up to this point this study has examined the creation and the impact of the Buddhist promotion game and Zhixu's device in China. It is certain that the master's game was influential during the time of its production and circulation for several centuries as it soon became popular among Buddhists across the cultural areas shortly after the debut of its first edition and the circulation of it actually continued throughout the last century. Had this device been influential to such an extent in China, could its popularity spread even further to cross over the borders of the country? Was the use of a gambling device like a board game in religious propaganda a unique phenomenon in China? What would be the underlying cultural significance if the same trend of adoptions were found in other cultural areas? In order to explore the possibility of such a cross-cultural and cross-border development of these games outside China, the subsequent chapters turn to investigate the histories and characteristics of those similar game devices recorded in other Asian regions and countries, including Korea, Japan, Tibet, Nepal, India, and Bhutan.

## 5 GAMBLING BOARD GAMES AS CULTURAL TRANSMITTERS OF CONFUCIAN BUREAUCRACY AND BUDDHIST DOCTRINE IN PREMODERN KOREA

Given that Korea experienced centuries of Chinese cultural influence, it is not a surprise to find out that there were gambling games like the *Shengguan tu* and *Xuanfo tu* in this peninsula. As discussed above, the Chinese *Shengguan tu* was a side product of the government bureaucracy and the *keju* civil service examination, both of which were developed with Confucianism as their core socio-political criterion. In Korea, these Chinese systems were adopted and modified by the authorities to better integrate with their existing political systems. Likewise, the bureaucratic game widely known by Koreans as the *Jongjeongdo* 從政圖 (Table of Joining the Government) showed in this study that had been adopted from China must have experienced the same course of evolution, being subject to socio-political changes. With an aim to reveal that the introduction of the game to Korea and its subsequent koreanization were closely related to the establishment of these systems in the country, this section intends to first examine available primary texts and detail the highlights to support this assumption. Then the discussion focuses on the differences between the *Shengguan tu* and the *Jongjeongdo* so as to reveal and explore the role of the imported game in the political culture in Korea in the hope that social and cultural elements that were unique to Korea are also presented. In the interest of clarity, analyses on the *Jongjeongdo* are supplemented with brief histories about the implementation of the systems of bureaucracy and civil service examination as well as the impacts of these systems on the society in premodern Korea, particularly during the reign of the Joseon dynasty 朝鮮 (1392-1910), as its authority preferred Neo-Confucianism over Buddhism to be the state's ideology.

The Buddhist counterpart of the promotion game in Korea was known as the *Seongbuldo* 成佛圖 (Table of Attaining Buddhahood).<sup>177</sup> Since there are only limited sources on how and when the Koreans adopted the Chinese *Xuanfo tu*, it is far more difficult to investigate the *Seongbuldo* than the traceable popular *Jongjeongdo*. Such a difficulty can probably be ascribed to the fact that Buddhism was blamed for the social breakdown, economic decline, and increasing instability of the Goryeo 高麗 dynasty (918-1392), which designated Buddhism as a state religion, whose growing popularity subsequently gained the religion unproportionate economical privileges and political prerogatives. The circulation and development of the *Seongbuldo* must have been hampered when Buddhist communities and their activities were subject to the constant surveillance and intermittent persecution from the Confucian government of the following Joseon dynasty. Nevertheless, this study manages to discover the traces left behind by the *Seongbuldo* but more focus is put on its layout and embedded doctrines so as to explore its Chinese influences and outline those features that were indigenous to Korea.

The case of Daoist version of the game is equally disappointing because there is no record of any gambling device reminiscent of the Chinese Daoist *Xuanxian tu* in Korea. According to a Song source, Daoism set its foot in the peninsula during the Wude 武德 reign period (618-626) after the Tang court sent Daoist priests to Korea to give lectures on the Dao de jing 道德經 (Book of the Way and the Power) in answer to the request made by the envoys sent by a Korean king.<sup>178</sup> However, the earliest historical mention of Daoism can be

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<sup>177</sup> Seong Hyeon, *Yongjae chonghwa*, p. 268.

<sup>178</sup> Xu Jing 徐兢 (1091-1153), *Xuanhe fengshi Gaoli tujing* 宣和奉使高麗圖經 [Maps of the Passage to Goryeo during an Imperial Envoy of the Xuanhe (Reign Period: 1119-1125)] (Seoul: Asea Munhwasa 亞細亞文化社, 1972) 93; Peter H. Lee, and Wm. Theodore de Bary, eds., *Sources of Korean Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997) vol.1: 250.

dated back to the year of 214 by a quotation from the Laozi cited by a Baekje 百濟 (18 BC-660) general, which suggested that the philosophy had attracted the attention of the aristocracy by the time.<sup>179</sup> In regard to the lack of record on the Daoist board game, it can be attributed to the early fading of the religion shortly after it reached its peak between the mid-eleventh century and the late twelfth century, during which a Goryeo king, Yejong 睿宗 (r. 1105-1122), had even attempted, but failed, to replace Buddhism with Daoism as a state religion.<sup>180</sup> Such a blank could barely be filled in with the later introduction of the Chinese sight-seeing *Lansheng tu* 覽勝圖, which was better known during the late Joseon as the *Seungramdo* 勝覽圖 (Table of Visiting Scenic Spots), in which one of the game pieces was used to represent a player or a contestant as a Daoist priest.<sup>181</sup> As it is not a representative design, the discussion intends to be a brief overview based on available sources.

## 5.1 Historical Survey of the Promotion Games

### 5.1.1 Joseon dynasty before the late sixteenth-century

The names given to the Korean adoption of the Chinese official promotion game were consistent with the meaning of the *Shengguan tu*, which emphasized the idea of “bureaucratic promotion.” Based on some Joseon sources, the early adoptions that had been circulated

<sup>179</sup> Peter H. Lee, and Wm. Theodore de Bary, eds., Sources of Korean Tradition, vol.1: 74.

<sup>180</sup> Xu Jing, Xuanhe fengshi Gaoli tujing, p. 93; and Peter H. Lee, and Wm. Theodore de Bary, eds., Sources of Korean Tradition, vol.1: 250.

<sup>181</sup> Gukrip minsok bakmulgwan 國立民俗博物館 [National Museum of Folk Custom], Hanguk sesi pungsok sajeon: Jeongwol pyeon 韓國歲時風俗事典: 正月篇 [Dictionary of Seasonal Social Customs in Korea: Chapter of the First Lunar Month] (Seoul: Gukrip minsok bakmulgwan, 2004) 415; and Kim Gwangeon 김광언, “Ramseungdo notyi 남승도 (覽勝圖) 놀이 [The Game of the Table of Enjoying Famous Scenic Spots],” Hanguk minsok notyi 한국 의 민속 놀이 [Folk Games in South Korea] (Incheon 仁川: Inha daehakgyo chulpanbu 仁荷大學校出版部, 1982) 86-87.

before and around the mid-seventeenth century were commonly recognized as the *Jongjeongdo*.<sup>182</sup> This name was somehow slightly modified and became widely known as the *Jonggyeongdo* 從卿圖 (Table of Joining the Bureaucracy), or the *Seunggyeongdo* 陞卿圖 / 昇卿圖 (Table of Bureaucratic Promotion; Figure 5.1) by the mid-twentieth century as demonstrated in a 1941 report on a nationwide field research conducted by the Japanese government during the latter period of Japanese Occupation (1910-1945).<sup>183</sup> In a few records, it was also referred as the *Seungjeongdo* 陞政圖 (Table of Governmental Promotion),<sup>184</sup> and, rarely, the “*Sapan* 仕板 (List of Government Official; Figure 5.2).” Nevertheless, exceptions can be seen on a number of surviving game boards on which they actually either bear no title or with longer titles such as the *Dongkuk jonggyeongjido* 東國從卿之圖 (Table of Joining the Bureaucracy of the Eastern Kingdom; Figure 5.3), the *Jongjeongjido ahjogwanrok* 從政之圖 我朝官錄 (Table of Joining the Government and the Record of the Official of Our Dynasty), and the *Joseonguk gwanji seunggangchulcheok do* 朝鮮國官職陞降黜陟圖 (Table of the Promotion and Demotion of the Official Ranking of the Joseon Kingdom).

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<sup>182</sup> For examples, see Seong Hyeon, *Yongjae chonghwa*, p. 268; Eo Sukwon, *Paegwan jappi*, p. 88; and Guksa pyeonchan wiwonhoe 國史編纂委員會 [National History Compilation Committee], *Joseon wangjo silrok* 朝鮮王朝實錄 [Annals of Joseon Dynasty] (Seoul: Dongguk munhwasa 東國文化社, 1955) vol. 22: 594-596.

<sup>183</sup> Chōsen Sōtokufu 朝鮮總督府 [Government-General of Chōsen, 1910-1945], *Chōsen no kyōdo goraku* 朝鮮の郷土娯楽 [Chōsen Local Entertainments] (Keijō: Chōsen Sōtokufu, 1941) 1-367.

<sup>184</sup> An example can be seen in Yi Gyugyeong 李圭景 (b. 1788-ca. 1850), “Huigu byeonjeung seol 戲具辨證說 [Investigation of Games and Toys],” *Ohju yeonmun jangjeon sango* 五洲衍文長箋散稿 [Uncollected Draft of Exegesis and Redundancy by Ohju] (Seoul: Dongguk munhwasa 東國文化社, 1959) 836.



5. Gambling Board Games as Cultural Transmitters of Confucian Bureaucracy and Buddhist Doctrine in Premodern Korea

Figure 5.1 *Seunggyeongdo*.



56.2 x 102 cm. (Cheongju University Museum:  
<http://cyber.cju.ac.kr/~museum/so/s411.html>; 18 June 2009)

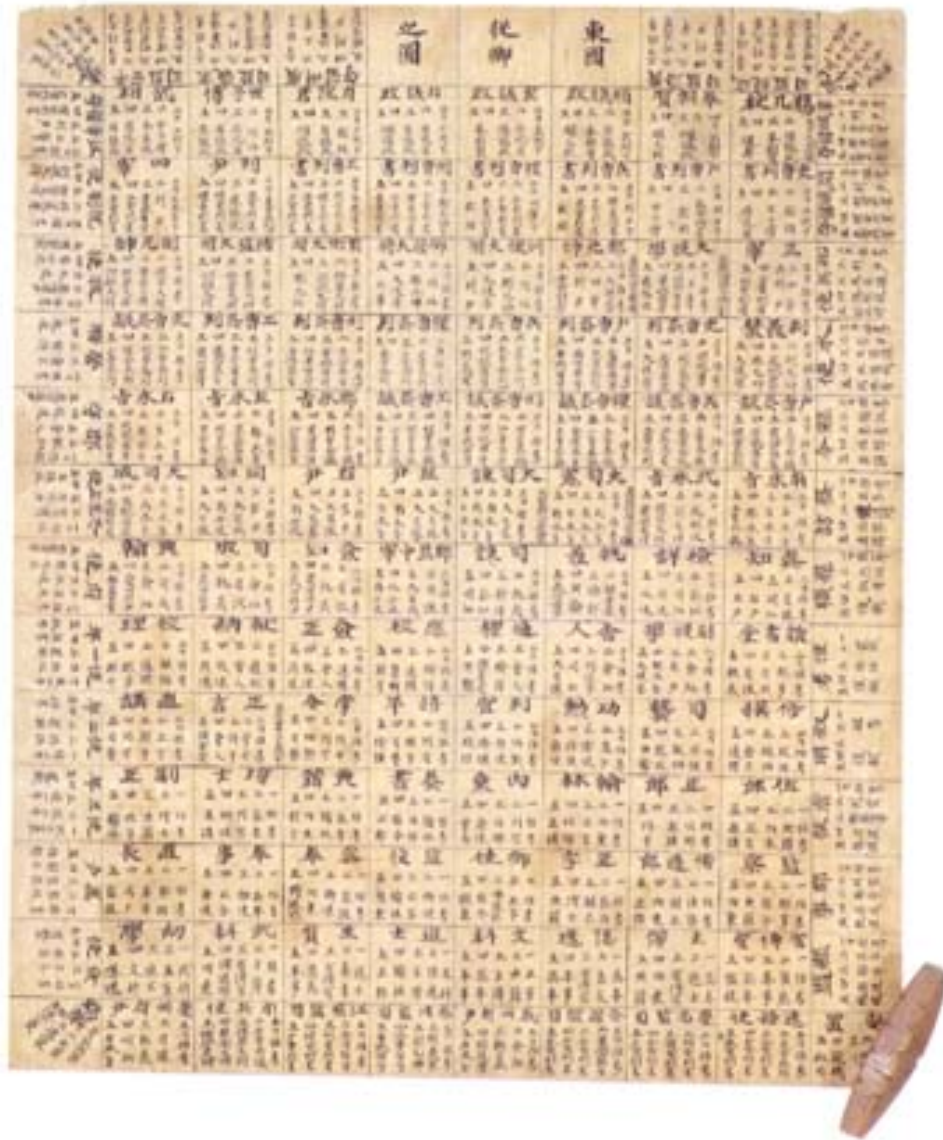
Figure 5.2 *Sapan*.



(Jeonju Historical Museum: <http://www.jeonjumuseum.org>; 18 June 2009)



Figure 5.3 *Dongkuk jonggyeongjido*.



60 x 72 cm. At the bottom right corner is the traditional Korean stick dice called *yut*. (Andong Folk Museum: [http://www.andongkwon.pe.kr/zeroboard/zboard.php?id=folk&page=5&sn1=&divpage+1&sn=off&ss=on&sc=on&select\\_arrange=subject&desc=desc&no=79](http://www.andongkwon.pe.kr/zeroboard/zboard.php?id=folk&page=5&sn1=&divpage+1&sn=off&ss=on&sc=on&select_arrange=subject&desc=desc&no=79); 18 June 2009)

There is insufficient information on when and how the game was introduced into the Korea Peninsula but the adoption of the game is generally attributed to a Joseon Prime Minister, Ha Ryun 河崙 (1347-1416), who had been dispatched to Ming China in 1402 as the

head envoy to congratulate Zhu Di 朱棣 (1360-1424; posthumous title Ming Chengzu 成祖, also known as Emperor Yongle 永樂, r. 1402-1424) with the tribute of horses.<sup>185</sup> This attribution is based on Seong Hyeon's 成僎 (1439-1504) record, in which he briefly describes the origin and the content of three board games, the *Jongjeongdo*, the *Seongbuldo*, and the rarely known *Jakseongdo* 作聖圖 (Table of Achieving Sagehood):

僧家有「成佛圖」，自地獄至大覺，其間諸天諸界，無慮數十餘處。輪木六面，書「南、無、阿、彌、陀、佛」六字。隨擲隨移，或昇或下，以占勝否。河政丞崙作「從政圖」，自九品至一品，有官爵次第。輪木六面，書「德、才、勤、堪、軟、貪」六字，「德、才」而升，「軟、貪」而罷，一如官途。權提學遇作「作聖圖」，自九分至一分，隨人之賢愚而心之清濁不同，從一分則易升，從九分則難升。輪木六面，書「誠、敬」二字，肆「偽」一字，隨擲而行，一如「成佛圖」之規。<sup>186</sup>

The Saṃgha has the “Table of Attaining Buddhahood,” [which covers realms] from purgatory to Buddhahood; in the midst of them, various heavens and realms could be as many as over several tens of places. On the six sides of the circular stick dice, the six characters of “*nam*,” “*mu*,” “*ah*,” “*mi*,” “*ta*,” and “*bul*” are written. As [the circular stick dice] are thrown, [a piece] moves [according to the shown characters], either upward or downward, to determine win or loss. Prime Minister Ha Ryun made the “Table of Joining the Government.” [It] consists of aristocrats and government officials of different ranks, from the ninth grade to the first grade. On the six sides of the circular stick dice, the six characters of “*deok*, or virtue,” “*jae*, or capability,” “*geun*, or diligence,” “*gam*, or being responsible,” “*yeon*, or timidity,” and “*tom*, or greed” are written; similar to [the situation] in bureaucratic career, “*deok*, or virtue” and “*jae*, or capability” [ensure] promotion while “*yeon*, or timidity” and “*tom*, or

<sup>185</sup> Ming shi lu vol. 14, hongwu 35, p. 264.

<sup>186</sup> Seong Hyeon, *Yongjae chonghwa*, p. 268.

greed” bring about dismissal. Academician Kwon Woo (1363-1419) made the “Table of Achieving Sagehood,” [in which the squares are written with degrees of ethical quality,] from the ninth degree to the first degree in accordance with the difference of people’s brightness and foolishness as well as the purity and the impurity of their minds. [Those pieces that reach the squares] close to the first degree are easier to move upward while [those] close to the ninth degree are harder to move upward. On the six sides of the circular stick dice, the two characters of “*seong*, or sincerely” and “*gyeong*, or reverence” and the four of the character “*wi*, or falseness” are written. [The pieces] move according to the throws of the circular stick dice, which are the same as the rules for the “Table of Attaining Buddhahood.”

Seong Hyeon’s knowledge of these games is precious as this is the earliest written record on the bureaucratic *Jongjeongdo*, and probably the earliest and only record on the Buddhist and the Confucian versions in premodern Korea.

This record is valuable also because it identifies Ha Ryun and Kwon Woo as the two pioneering creators or modifiers of the promotion games; their backgrounds help to date and justify their creations. Firstly, both of them were intellectuals of high social status, which aptly corresponds to the backgrounds of the aforementioned creators of Chinese versions. Secondly, if the record of Ha Ryun as the introducer or the first Korean modifier of the Chinese official promotion game was true, it was very possible that he came to know the game, and even possess a sample of it, during his 1402 diplomatic mission to China. Since Ha Ryun died in 1416, his *Jongjeongdo* must have been made sometime between 1402 and 1416. Hence, at the time of Seong Hyeon’s writing, the *Jongjeongdo* had been circulated among and spread from Ha Ryun’s life circles in Korea for almost a century. Lastly, since Ha Ryun and Kwon Woo were contemporaries who lived most of their lives through the late fourteenth century and the first decades of the fifteenth century, Kwon Woo’s *Jakseongdo*

could be an inspired work from Ha Ryun's. Another possibility is that Kwon Woo may be inspired from the Chinese version that is based on the content of the Three Teachings. Nevertheless, no matter which is correct, all that matters here is that it is an evidence of the scholastic and lively use of the game. The focus of this *Jakseongdo* is described to be on the moral qualities prescribed by Confucian teachings and Kwon Woo was reputed as a learned scholar of Neo-Confucianism, so it is understandable that Kwon Woo could have created a game like this one to emphasize the cultivation of morality for Confucian learners. His creation suggests that he must have considered a game of this kind a good teaching aid or propagandistic tool for the then relatively new philosophy, Neo-Confucianism. Likewise, his utilization and realization of the game's didactic function were no different from his Chinese counterparts.

The *Seongbuldo* may also be introduced to Korea through the same kind of diplomatic channel, in addition to the possibility that it was brought to Korea prior to the *Jongjeongdo* by missionaries, and even by merchants, during the Buddhist Goryeo dynasty. Unfortunately, there is not sufficient material to justify these hypotheses. Seong Hyeon's description of the Buddhist version is indeed very sketchy but retains some useful information that supports the connection between the Chinese *Xuanfo tu* and the Korean *Seongbuldo*. Based on Seong's record, it is clear that, by the late fifteenth century, the *Seongbuldo* had already been circulated among Buddhist monks and that the circular stick dice called *yunmok* (Figure 5.4) had been applied to the game. This so-called *yunmok* was later known as "yut" and became Korea's traditional stick dice that still prevails. Although the word order of the Sino-Korean "輪木" shown here is different from the Chinese characters "木輪" mentioned in Zhixu's version, the source for both terms should be the

same, which is the Sūtra on the Divination and Examination of the Retribution of Good and Evil Deeds, as the shapes of both dice are almost identical. On the *yut* dice were the six inscribed characters that continued to remind players the influence of the Pure Land School on the game. The game board consisted of a number of realms, varying from that of purgatory to Buddhahood, and, in between, tens of celestial realms. In comparing this game board with those of later periods, this early example is relatively simple in content but the general idea is similar to the one designed by the Ming Master Zhixu. The last thing that needs to be pointed out here is that Seong Hyeon's words also imply that the *Seongbuldo* was probably prevalent solely among Buddhist monks at the time.

**Figure 5.4** *Yunmok, Yut, or Korean stick dice.*



As analyzed, according to this brief note, the first *Jongjeongdo* was very likely created between 1402 and 1416 by Ha Ryun; however, this was by no means Korea's very first encounter of the bureaucratic board game from China. A late-twelfth-century source by Yi Inro 李仁老 (1152-1220) reveals that Koreans actually knew about the official promotion game long before the introduction of the *Shengguan tu* by the name “*Shaizi xuan* (Selection of Dice).”<sup>187</sup> This is understandable because the first peak development of the bureaucratic

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<sup>187</sup> Yi Inro 李仁老 (1152-1220), *Pahanjip · Pohanjip* 破閑集 · 補閑集 [Collection to Relieve Idleness. Collection to Supplement Idleness] (Seoul: Asea munhwasa 亞細亞文化社, 1972) 18.

game occurred in the Song dynasty, during which the authorities of the Song and the Goryeo dynasties had made frequent contacts with each other. Sources reveal that, between 1071 and 1136, the Song court had sent twenty-two missions to the Goryeo court while the latter had sent twenty-six to the former, and that, between 1012 and 1192, Song merchants had traded to Goryeo at least one hundred and seventeen times, of which seventy-seven entries have records on the number of the crew, which totals four thousand five hundred and forty-eight people, varying from a few to over three hundred in number each entry.<sup>188</sup> As discussed in previous sections on the history of the bureaucratic games in China, the *Shaizi xuan ge*, or the *Caixuan ge*, was the original name of the *Shengguan tu* in the Tang dynasty. In Yi Inro's work, this term is found in a six-character poem by a Goryeo Prime Minister called Gim Sinyun 金莘尹 (ca. 1171), who composed the poem to console his friend Choi Yeol 崔烈 (12<sup>th</sup> century), who was depressed over his failure to fulfill his father's wish to join officialdom. Gim's poem is as follows:

「骰子選」中得失, The gain and loss in "The Selection of Dice" [is like]

《黃粱夢》裡升沉; the rise and fall in "The Dream of Yellow Millet," during  
which

汲汲百年能幾? how many [people] in a century can restlessly [seek for but sustain  
their fame and riches]?

如何以此傷心! How could you be so sad for this!<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Park Seonseok 朴真奭, "11~12 shiji Song yu Gaoli de maoyi wanglai 11~12 世紀宋與高麗的貿易往來 [The Mutual Trading between Song (Dynasty) and Goryeo during the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries]," *Zhaoxian xue—Hanguo xue yu Zhongguo xue* 朝鮮學—韓國學與中國學 [Joseon Studies—Korean Studies and Chinese Studies], eds. Jung Panyong 鄭判龍, Ren Fansong 任范松, and Gang Maengsan 姜孟山 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe 中國社會科學出版社, 1993) 76 and 79-81.

<sup>189</sup> Yi Inro, *Pahanjip · Pohanjip*, p. 18.



Choi Yeol's father was Choi Sajeon 崔思全 (1067-1139), an imperial-physician-turned-Prime-Minister as a result of a political crisis. Choi Yeol's sorrow must have been a tremendous burden to him that Gim Sinyun, a friend of his, decided to send him this poem. In order to tell Choi that the bureaucratic life was transient, Gim compared officialdom to the bureaucratic board game and the famous Chinese story "Yellow Millet," which suggests that both Choi and Gim must have been familiar with the content and the significance of these two importations, not merely by their names. Their social background also implies that "The Selection of Dice" had entered into the circle of high social status at the time. Hence, with the help of this source, the landing time for the official promotion game in Korea can be predated by approximately two hundred and fifty years. Corresponding to the bureaucratic game's development in China, this early game was subsequently replaced by the *Shengguan tu* and its indigenized versions in later periods.

Although the *Jongjeongdo* was koreanized with the Korean official system based on the Chinese model, there were attempts to create versions of *Jongjeongdo* with the Chinese official system. It is not possible to determine whether this kind of *Jongjeongdo* was truly a Korean attempt or simply a vulgarized Chinese version as there is no existing example. Objectively, however, the emergence of such games still can reflect the extent of popularity enjoyed by the *Jongjeongdo* around that time. Versions of this type are revealed in the Paegwan japgi 稗官雜記 (The Storyteller's Miscellany) by Eo Sukwon 魚叔權 (ca. 1515-1554), an instructor who also served as an interpreter for at least seven embassies sent to Ming China. In his work, the version is titled as *Jungguk jongjeongdo* (Chinese Table of Joining the Government):

舊有好事者，取中朝官制，依本國「從政圖」，分其品級而升之，名曰「中國從政圖」。只據官品之高下，而未解中國之制，至以吏部侍郎遷都督僉事，以左都督遷宗人令，若此類者不可勝紀。<sup>190</sup>

Formerly there were meddlesome people who adopted the Chinese official system and classified its ranks in an ascending order on the model of our country's "Table of Joining the Government." [This game is] entitled the "Chinese Table of Joining the Government." [However, the classification] relied only on the grades of the official ranks and did not comprehend the system of China, for which the Vice Minister of the Ministry of Personnel can be [wrongly] promoted to [become] the Assistant Commissioner-in-Chief, and the Left Commissioner-in-Chief to the Director of the Court of the Imperial Clan. [Errors] of this sort are too many to enumerate.<sup>191</sup>

Even though what is recorded here is merely a minor episode in the game's history, it demonstrates that the author did not consider the "Table of Joining the Government" as a mere game because he was greatly concerned about the correctness of the official system exhibited in the game. In other words, his attention was on the game's didactic influence on its players who were Confucian students from the aristocratic *yangban* 兩班 (literally, two classes) class. This concern is supported by the subsequent passage about the bureaucratic game called the "Table of Whetting Ambition," which the author collected in 1533 during a trip to China on a diplomatic mission. It is fortunate that Eo Sukgwon also includes the game's preface-style statement in this passage since it preserves a paragraph of complimentary remarks that can represent the view and the expectation of a population of Ming intellectuals who played, designed, produced, and circulated the promotion games.

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<sup>190</sup> Eo Sukgwon, *Paegwan jappi*, p. 88.

<sup>191</sup> This passage is translated with reference of that of Peter Lee; see Peter H. Lee, *A Korean Storyteller's Miscellany: The P'aegwan chapki of Ŏ Sukkwŏn* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1989) 181.

These values were clearly shared by the Joseon elite since the promotion game was widely accepted by the society as familiarizing students with the Confucian-based bureaucracy. In order to maintain the integrity of this statement, the entire statement is quoted here in spite of the fact that the first half of it has been cited in the second chapter on the game's development during the Ming and Qing dynasties. The passage is as follows:

嘉靖癸巳，余隨賀節使赴燕，得「礪志圖」一本，文武各異其班，凡陞降賞罰，一依中朝見行之制。當寫標題曰：「嘉靖戊寅年，翰林著舊本；嘉靖壬辰歲，杏村校新圖。」蓋當讚詹溫之所著，又作說曰：「前輩作此圖，名曰『黃梁』。以其陞遷極品，率然可到，似乎一夢。此則近於戲矣；雖近於戲，而實寓乎賞罰，勃然其中。正德戊寅，得翰林改本于合肥韓上舍家，當時尤無定名，傳之江南，名公巨卿俊秀子弟，日相戲嬉。僉曰：『可以礪人之志也。陞一級以級賢能，降一級以戒不才。如文舉生員儒士，皆登科甲而進取，可以勵人讀書也；武舉軍士，皆自征鎮而得功，可以勵人奮勇也。若夫陰陽、醫道、承差、吏員，率由勤於職業，以取功名。駙馬一擲，雖出偶然，亦自祖功宗德，積累所致。況夫其間文武官員，公出為事，皆有賞罰，無非欲人向上求前也。』舊本教坊一擲，皆至極品，似無是理，故予改之；雖得印色不通元年通錄陞降，肯容驟遷文階，相與頡頏歟？予愧不才，改名『勵志圖』，未知可否，姑刊行，以俟明達君子再校。」<sup>192</sup>

In the *guisi* year of the Jiajing [reign period (1522-1566); 1533], I accompanied [our] Diplomatic Envoys for Offering Congratulation to Yanjing (present-day Beijing) [to greet the emperor on the birth of his Crown Prince].<sup>193</sup> [There I] obtained a copy of

<sup>192</sup> Eo Sukwon, *Paegwan jappi*, pp. 88-89.

<sup>193</sup> In Lee's translation, he writes that the mission for the envoys is "to greet the emperor on his birthday." However, my translation decides to change according to the information available to me, in which, in the same year of 1533, a group of envoys, headed by So Seyang 蘇世讓 (1486-1562), is recorded to have been sent to Yanjing, but the purpose was to greet the birth of the Crown Prince of the Ming dynasty. For details, see Liu Shunli 劉順利, *Bandao Tangfeng: Chao Han zuojia yu Zhongguo wenhua* 半島唐風: 朝韓作家與中國文化

the “Table of Whetting Ambition,” on which the civil and military bureaucracies are [listed] separately and all their promotions and demotions as well as rewards and punishments follow the contemporary systems of the Chinese dynasty. The written title reads, “In the *wuyin* year of the Jiajing [reign period; 1518],<sup>194</sup> [an academician of] the Hanlin [Academy] made the old edition; in the *renchen* year of the Jiajing [reign period; 1532], Xingcun revised [this] new table.” This was done by Zhan Wenzhi of Dangzan.<sup>195</sup> [He] also made a statement that says, “[Our] senior composed this table and named it ‘Yellow Millet’ for [the players in this game] can be abruptly promoted to the highest rank like a dream. This [table] resembles a game. Although it resembles a game, it actually vigorously suggests [certain principles] through reward and punishment. In the *wuyin* year of the Zhengde [reign period (1506-1521); 1518], [I] obtained [this] Hanlin revised edition in Hefei at the home of Han, a student in the imperial college.<sup>196</sup> At that time [this table] still bore no title, but it was already spread to the Jiangnan area, where noted elderly, distinguished officials, and talented younger generations amused themselves daily with the game. All [of them] said that ‘[playing the game] could whet their ambition. To promote [an official] one grade is to recognize [his] virtue and capability while to demote [an official] one grade is to reprove [him] for [his] incompetence. Similarly, that all civilian licentiate government students and Confucian scholars who score highest in the civil service examinations and obtain posts can encourage people to study; that all military licentiate soldiers and officers who win glory in combat and pacification campaigns can inspire others to valor. As to geomancers, physicians, servants and clerks, it is all because of their diligence in their duties that they obtain higher official positions. Although [becoming] an emperor’s son-in-law by a single toss [of the dice] is random [luck], it is also due to ancestors’ accumulated merit and virtue. Besides,

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[Tang Influence on the Peninsula: Joseon and Korean Writers and Chinese Culture] (Yinchuan 银川: Ningxia renmin chubanshe 宁夏人民出版社, 2004) 332-334.

<sup>194</sup> The reign period here seems to be a misprint because there was no *wuyin* year during the Jiajing reign period. Judging from the context of this statement, it should be the Zhengde reign period instead.

<sup>195</sup> The meaning of the words “dangzan 當讚” here is not clear. Since, according to Chinese tradition, it was very common to address the name of an intellectual together with the title of his native place or government post, I speculated that these words are the misprint of a place or a government post.

<sup>196</sup> The term “*shangshe* 上舍” was usually used by the Ming-Qing people to refer to the “*jiansheng* 監生,” students in the imperial college (Guozijian 國子監).

in the midst [of the game], literary and military officials are sent out to take posts for the country; all [their achievements and incompetencies] are rewarded and punished simply to urge people to make progress [in their careers].’ In the old edition, [positions of lower rank like those from] the school for court musicians could all advance to [become officials of] the highest ranks by a single throw [of the dice], which seems to be illogical and thus I have revised it. Even if one get the pip [that can ascend to the positions of highest rank], it does not correspond to the promotion and demotion on the occasion of a change of reigns; how can a sudden promotion to the civil ranks be comparable to [this]? [I have] retitled [the game] as the ‘Table of Whetting Ambition,’ though I am ashamed of being untalented, not knowing whether it is acceptable or not, I shall publish it and wait for some wise, noble people to revise it.”<sup>197</sup>

The purpose “to urge people to make progress [in their careers]” was obviously the core value that the reviser of the game considered essential to all players regardless of their career origins and thus decided to stress the point by renaming the game as the “Table of Whetting Ambition.” The notion of “whetting ambition” was justified among Ming people because they considered this kind of bureaucratic game didactic in nature, as has been discussed in the second chapter. Joseon intellectuals apparently were aware of the ideas mentioned in this statement.

It is not difficult to notice here that there seemed to be a long silence of Confucian scholars on the game between the late twelfth century and the early sixteenth century. Based on the sources by Yi Inro and Seong Hyeon, we know that the primary form of the dice game by the name of the *Shaizi xuan* was not strange to the late-twelfth-century aristocratic elite and that the first *Jongjeongdo* attributed to Ha Ryun could have been made sometime between 1402 and 1416. However, the earliest written record that discusses the official

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<sup>197</sup> Peter H. Lee, *A Korean Storyteller’s Miscellany: The P’aegwan chapki of Ŏ Sukkwŏn*, pp. 180-182.

promotion game and its religious ramifications can only be dated back to the early sixteenth century. Such a time gap probably was the result of a series of severe attacks made against Confucian leaders ordered by the Joseon kings during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. During these so-called literati purges that occurred in 1498, 1504, 1519, and 1545, many scholars were imprisoned, exiled, and executed, for which numerous able Confucian officials resigned from government service and moved to the countryside where they continued their study, teaching, and participation in literary activities.<sup>198</sup> In the 1504 literati purge, the Seonggyungwan 成均館 (Hall of Perfection and Equalization), or the National Confucian Academy, was even turned into a banquet hall.<sup>199</sup> The construction of it was meant to be dedicated to venerating Confucius, studying Confucian philosophy, and training young men to become exemplary leaders through diligent learning and observing Confucian precepts.<sup>200</sup> In practical terms, the learning served as a means for obtaining government appointments through the civil service examinations administrated by the scholars at the Seonggyungwan.<sup>201</sup> Hence, under these literati purges, the Confucian education and examination systems as well as Confucian students' goal of joining the bureaucracy were greatly hampered. Except for gambling purpose, the incentive for Confucian learners to play and promote the *Jongjeongdo* had completely vanished by the time, just like the case in China under the sovereign of the Yuan Mongols. Such incidents not only explain the interruption of the game's evolution before the early sixteenth century but also illuminate how such changes built on the vicissitudes of Confucian learning and bureaucratic system.

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<sup>198</sup> Spencer J. Palmer, *Confucian Rituals in Korea* (Berkeley, Calif.: Asian Humanities Press; Seoul: Po Chin Chai, 1984) 20-21; and Peter H. Lee, and Wm. Theodore de Bary, eds., *Sources of Korean Tradition*, vol.1: 267-268.

<sup>199</sup> Spencer J. Palmer, *Confucian Rituals in Korea*, p. 21.

<sup>200</sup> Spencer J. Palmer, *Confucian Rituals in Korea*, p. 19.

<sup>201</sup> Spencer J. Palmer, *Confucian Rituals in Korea*, p. 20.

### 5.1.2 Japanese invasion between 1592 and 1598

Many Joseon adults regarded the *Jongjeongdo* as more than a didactic aid for the Confucian students and the children of the aristocratic *yangban* 兩班 ruling class. Originating in the Goryeo dynasty, the term *yangban*, referring to the *munban* 文班 (literary class) and the *muban* 武班 (military class), was the resulting groups of the two examination categories of *mungwa* 文科 (literary examination) and *mugwa* 武科 (military examination) of the Korean *gwageo* 科擧 (national civil service examinations [exclusive for the *yangban* class]).<sup>202</sup> The *yangban* elite and government officials frequently gambled on the games, and, in a few rare occasions, they played with literate people from the *jungin* 中人 (literally, middle people) class of hereditary techno-commercial workers. Food and wine, instead of money, seemed to be a common bet. A few entries on playing the game were even chronicled in the annals of the Joseon dynasty. The whole event was dated in December between the ninth and the twelfth of 1595 during the reign of King Seonjo 宣祖 (r. 1567-1608),<sup>203</sup> in which the *Jongjeongdo* was mentioned several times in a series of reports on the investigation of an alleged rebellion. The accused were described to have been divided into two groups to play the game, with the losers punished by serving or buying all players a meal with wine. In one trial, a servant of the accused testified that one of the losers had even complained about being put in an unfair situation to play with the *yangban* because he was not familiar with the official system. This complainer was likely a *jungin* since he was

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<sup>202</sup> Eugene Y. Park, *Between Dreams and Reality: The Military Examination in Late Chosŏn Korea, 1600-1894* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center: Distributed by Harvard University Press, 2007) 16-17 and 25-26.

<sup>203</sup> The original text is dated in the eleventh lunar month between the *jeongchuk* 丁丑 day and the *gyeongjin* 庚辰 day in the twenty-eighth year of the reign of King Seonjo.

literate, yet had not played any bureaucratic game before as people of this class had no incentive to play the game.<sup>204</sup>

The year 1595 was in the middle of the seven-year *Imjin waeran* 壬辰倭亂 (Japanese Turmoil of the Year *Imjin*; 1592-1598) between Joseon Korea and Momoyama 桃山 Japan (1568-1603) declared by Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉 (1537-1598). According to the above record, the war apparently did not deter the *yangban* elite from amusing themselves. Examples regarding *yangban* people playing the game during this war can also be seen in some diary notes composed by Joseon intellectuals, and O Huimun's 吳希文 (1539-1613) Swaemirok 瑣尾錄 (A Record of Triviality) is one of these works.

In seven volumes, the Swaemirok covers O Huimun's encounters and life experiences between 1591 and 1601. Since O Huimun failed to pass the civil service examination, he never served the government despite the fact that he was recognized as one of the outstanding *yangban* scholars of his time. Nevertheless, his close friendship with many local magistrates still helped him greatly in collecting accurate and comprehensive information. This diary has been considered a significant historical document by historians for its wide-range coverage of the war with detailed and rarely known information. Through his extensive connections with people of different classes, O Huimun was able to collect a significant amount of information, including messages and official documents from the ruling class, the dispatch of the Ming rescue troops, the pillage and carnage by Japanese troops, the conscription and requisition for provisions, and the miserable conditions of the populace. Besides, this diary is also of great value to the socio-economic study of the period as it contains rich details about O's daily activities, his supervision of serfs, and his civilian

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<sup>204</sup> For details, see Guksa pyeonchan wiwonhoe, Joseon wangjo silrok, vol. 22: 594-596.



insight into the living conditions and the local administrative systems at the time. Therefore, the content of this diary is considerably representative of the wartime society. The following quotations, dated January the first of 1593, April the seventeenth and July the fourteenth of 1594, and February the ninth of 1595, shall give a general picture of the game in the life of the *yangban* during the war:

及洞內諸少年咸會，手擲「從政圖」，居末者以墨畫兩眼，以為戲笑之資。

When all youngsters gathered in the cave [shelter], [they] threw [dice to play] the “Table of Joining the Government” and the two eyes of those who ended up being the last [in the game] were painted with ink to provide fun.<sup>205</sup>

深源<sup>206</sup>與子昇<sup>207</sup>手擲「政圖」，以賭酒食，而終日爭之，不決而罷。消遣無聊之戲，莫此若也。

Simwon and Jaseung threw [dice to play] the “Table of [Joining] the Government” with a bet of food and drink but quit without a settlement [after] competing all day long. No other games for recreation and passing boring time are better than this.<sup>208</sup>

諸少年六七輩咸會，或著弈、或擲「政圖」，以為戲笑，消遣長日。承旨令官備水飯饋諸人。午後尹御史景立亦至，與宋進士爾昌擲「政圖」，賭酒肴。尹也見屈，即令官備時酒一盆，各呈盤果膾炙。余飲三大杯，臨夕先辭而出還。

All the six or seven groups of youngsters gathered to amuse [themselves] having fun for a long day, either playing chess or throwing dice on the “Table of [Joining] the

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<sup>205</sup> O Huimun 吳希文 (1539-1613), *Swaemirok* 瑣尾錄 [A Record of Triviality] (Seoul: Haeju Ossi Chutangongpa jongjung 海州吳氏楸灘公派宗中, 1990) 557. The date for this entry in the diary is in the twenty-ninth day of the eleventh lunar month in the *imjin* 壬辰 year (January 1, 1593).

<sup>206</sup> Simwon was the courtesy name of Choi Jip 崔湫 (ca. 16<sup>th</sup> century), a Joseon *Jwarang* 佐郎, or Assistant Section Chief at the time.

<sup>207</sup> Jaseung was the courtesy name of Lim Hyeon 林晁 (ca. 16<sup>th</sup> century), a Joseon *Hyeongam* 縣監, or County Magistrate at the time.

<sup>208</sup> O Huimun, *Swaemirok*, p. 638. The date for this entry is in the twenty-seventh day of the second lunar month in the *gapoh* 甲午 year (April 17, 1594).

Government.” The Royal Secretary<sup>209</sup> commanded [some] officials to prepare congee to treat all of them. In the afternoon, Royal Inspector Yoon Gyeongrip [(1561-1611)]<sup>210</sup> also arrived and [played] with *Jinsa* Song Yichang [(1561-1627)]<sup>211</sup> to throw [dice] on the “Table of [Joining] the Government” with a bet of wine and meat and fish dishes. Yoon was defeated and immediately commanded officials to prepare a basin of seasonal wine, and present each [of us] a tray of fruits, minced meats, and grilled meats. I drank three mugs and, at dusk, preceded to leave and return [home].<sup>212</sup>

朝食後，就上東軒，與申大興及任誠、申應規做話。大興與任公擲「政圖」為戲。

Immediately after the breakfast, [I] went to the study on the east [side of the building] to make conversation with Sin Daeheung [(ca. 16<sup>th</sup> century)], Lim Gye [(ca. 16<sup>th</sup> century)], and Sin Eunggyu [(ca. 16<sup>th</sup> century)]. Daeheung and Elder Lim were throwing dice on the “Table of [Joining] the Government” for fun.<sup>213</sup>

These diary notes give a good sketch of the game’s role played in the last years of the sixteenth century when the country was in a critical condition. Apparently, for the purposes of gambling and amusement, the *Jongjeongdo* was still a popular game played by many *yangban* youngsters, scholars, and government officials, including those of high ranks such as Royal Inspector. Instead of money, food and drink seemed to be adults’ favourite bet perhaps due to the harsh financial situation at the time. Based on these descriptions, the game seemed to be so entertaining that *yangban* men of all ages enjoyed it so much that they

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<sup>209</sup> The name of this Royal Secretary, or *Seungji* 承旨, was Baek Yuham 白惟咸 (1546-1618).

<sup>210</sup> The Sino-Korean characters of this Royal Inspector, or *eosa* 御史, Yoon Gyeongrip 史景立 can also be written as “史敬立.”

<sup>211</sup> The term *jinsa* 進士 here referred to a candidate who had only passed the first level of civil examination.

<sup>212</sup> O Huimun, *Swaemirok*, p. 657. The date for this entry is in the twenty-seventh day of the fifth lunar month in the *gapoh* year (July 14, 1594).

<sup>213</sup> O Huimun, *Swaemirok*, p. 712. The date for this entry is in the twelfth day of the second lunar month in the *eulmi* 乙未 year (February 9, 1595).

could play it for the whole day, not to mention that children would enhance their enjoyment making fun of each other by mischievous punishments such as encircling losers' eyes with ink. Undoubtedly, the game was an indispensable ingredient of the social network among the adult *yangban* by that time, though their purposes tended to be for amusement and gambling.

When the didactic function was underplayed by the urges of gambling and amusement, some *yangban* intellectuals began to express a different attitude towards playing the bureaucratic game. The standpoint of this group of elite can be represented by a short passage in the *Seokju jip* 石洲集 (Collection of Seokju) by Gwon Pil 權韡 (1569-1612), a descendant of a declining powerful family and a prominent poet who had no interest in joining the government. When Gwon Pil brings up the subject of *Jongjeongdo*, he clearly denounces the device:

世之游閑者，群居無事，則聯數幅之紙，列敘官班爵秩，而附以升降黜陟之法。削木為六面，刻「德、勳、文、武、貪、軟」六字於其面。如此者凡三顆。於是數人對局，呼而擲之，隨其所得而升黜其班秩，視班秩之貴賤以決其輸贏，目之曰：「從政之圖」。其來蓋久。余自少時，不嗜此戲，見儕輩為之，則必麾而去之。

[When our] world's idlers and wanderers lived together yet had no work or duties, [they] connected up several pieces of paper, on which [they] listed the ranks of officials and aristocrats, along with the rules of promotion and demotion. A stick was pared [hexagonally] to bear six sides, on which the six characters of "*deok*, or virtue," "*hoon*, or merit," "*mun*, or literature," "*mu*, or martial art," "*tom*, or greed," and "*yeon*, or timidity" were carved. About three stick [dice] were made like this. Then, several people played against each other, shouting while throwing the dice. The ranks [of the players] were promoted and demoted in accord with the pips they obtained, and [they]

compared the nobleness and humbleness of their ranks to determine whether they win or lose. [They] entitled it as the “Table of Joining the Government.” In fact, it has been in existence for a long time. Ever since I was young, [I] have not been fond of this game; [whenever I] see my fellows playing it, [I] will direct<sup>214</sup> [them] to discard it.<sup>215</sup>

Gwon Pil’s remarks are indeed revealing as he uses “idlers and wanderers” to describe the creators of the *Jongjeongdo* and deemed that the game was invented out of sheer boredom. Gwon also discloses that his dislike of the game was developed early in his childhood and that he never hesitated to discourage his peers to play it. He does not provide a reason for his attitude but his premature indifference towards the game and towards its aid to memorizing the official system can be attributed to his lifelong detachment from the bureaucracy. Disregarding his career aptitude, Gwon’s passage was still able to reveal how scholars like him reacted to the trend that more and more *yangban* gambled on the game or simply played it for passing time.

### 5.1.3 Joseon dynasty from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries

The popularity of the *Jongjeongdo* among the aristocratic ruling class during the late-sixteenth-century war as well as the increase in number of the *yangban* class in the late Joseon almost guaranteed the continued success of the game in the peninsula. Although more and more people indulged themselves in gambling on the *Jongjeongdo*, its main purpose as a teaching aid was never neglected by Confucian scholars who had ties with the

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<sup>214</sup> This character *hui* 麾 (a flag; to command) may be referred to the homophonic character *hui* 揮 (to wave; to brandish). If this is the case, the sentence can be understood as “[whenever I] see my fellows playing it, [I] will whisk my sleeve and leave them” or “[whenever I] see my fellows playing it, [I] will whisk my sleeves to disband them.”

<sup>215</sup> Gwon Pil 權韓 (1569-1612), *Seokju jip* 石洲集 [Collection of Seokju] (Seoul: Ohseongsa 昨晟社, 1982) 465-466.

administrative authority. A 1703 preface for the publication of an unknown version of *Jongjeongdo* still called for the attention of such traditional use. The preface, titled as the “*Jongjeongdoseo* 從政圖序 (Preface of the Table of Joining the Government)” is included in the *Myeonggok jip* 明谷集 (Myeonggok Collection) by a *yangban* Choi Seokjeong 崔錫鼎 (1646-1715), who was a licentiate *jinsa* 進士 (literary candidate [for the lower literary examination of the *gwageo* system]). Choi begins his preface with a brief introduction that is similar in content with other aforementioned passages:

「從政圖」不知昉於何時。意者本朝中葉以前文士閒居者所創。骰子凡三介，立方形，四面分書「德、文、武、勳」，上下二面書「貪、軟」。畫紙為局，列書官職名品從政式例右。手持骰子而擲於板，視其輪面高下，依圖行用：發身、從仕、薦駁、陞貶；並遵朝廷官制分曹對擲，先退者勝。

It is not known when the “Table of Joining the Government” originated. [I] imagine that [it] was created by those literary men who had no official duty before the middle period of our dynasty. There are three dice of cubical shape; on the four sides write [the characters of] “*deok*, or virtue,” “*mun*, or literature,” “*mu*, or martial art,” and “*hoon*, or merit” and the two sides of the top and the bottom write [the characters of] “*tom*, or greed” and “*yeon*, or timidity.” Draw a chessboard on a [piece of] paper, on which the ranks and the titles of official positions in the government are written in order as listed on the right. [The players] hold the dice in hand and throw [them] on the game board, compare the highness and lowness [represented by the characters on] the dice faces, and move according to [the instruction listed on] the table, from career origin to becoming an official, [going through] recommendation, rejection, promotion, and demotion. Moreover, [the players] follow the official system of the central

government, divide [among them their] official duties, and throw [the dice to compete] against each other; those who [finish] first by retiring [from the bureaucracy] win.<sup>216</sup>

After telling the reader how to manufacture the components of the game and how to play the game in groups, the main text continues to argue for the game's invention against those negative comments like the one made by Gwon Pil. It is fortunate that the content also provides some interesting information such as a specific, once-popular version that has never been mentioned elsewhere:

昔者白江李相國嘗修「從政圖」，盛行于世，稱為「白江板」。先祖遲川公在燕獄亦嘗修正，以示同館諸子弟。前輩之為此，非直為消寂遣閒之具；要為朝廷官制因此可識差，賢於蒲博雜戲故耳。余屏居鎮川之芝山，鄉村學子相從者，昧然不識官方政例之如何，遂於觀書之暇，取見行圖板，略加修潤為冊子，俾學子時觀，因以寓夫無所用心之戒云。玄默敦牂之歲日南至明谷病夫序。

In former days, Prime Minister Yi Baekgang [Yi Gyeongyeo 李敬輿 (1585-1657; literary name Baekgang; a native of Jeonju 全州)] had revised the “Table of Joining the Government,” which spread widely in society and was called the “Baekgang Edition.” When he was jailed in Yanjing [(present-day Beijing)], my ancestor Elder Jicheon [Choi Myeonggil 崔鳴吉 (1586-1647)] had also revised [the game] and showed [it] to the young students [who stayed] in the same place. That our seniors did this is not just to make a toy for amusement and passing boredom but hereby the official system of the government can be distinguished, which is definitely much

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<sup>216</sup> Choi Seokjeong 崔錫鼎 (1646-1715), Myeonggok\_jip 明谷集 [Myeonggok Collection] (Seoul: Taehaksa 太學社, 1982) vol. 1: 654.

better than [playing] the *Popark* gambling dice game<sup>217</sup> and [seeing] dramas and vaudeville shows. When I lived in Jisan of Jincheon as a recluse, the village students who followed [me] were ignorant and did not comprehend official and political practices, for which [I] obtained a circulating version of the game board and slightly revised and compiled [the content] into a pamphlet during my free time after reading. Thus, the students can frequently read it as a way to avoid having an empty head. This preface is by Myeonggok an ill man at the winter solstice in the year of *imoh*<sup>218</sup> [1703].<sup>219</sup>

Simply based on the extent that a specific title could be given to a particular version, the *Jongjeongdo* must have reached a certain degree of popularity, having more than just a few versions in circulation. This period of flourishing development can actually be dated from as early as the first quarter of the seventeenth century to the early eighteenth century, as the mentioned Prime Minister died in 1657 and the publication of this preface was in 1703. At the time of writing of this preface, however, the game might have come under criticism like the case in China due to the growing vulgarization of the *Jongjeongdo* and its use in gambling. Hence, to justify his revision and publication of the works that were based on the content of the *Jongjeongdo*, Choi Seokjeong provides two versions he knew that were modified by an esteemed ancestor of his and a high government official. The argument he provided is that the game was useful even for the students who lived in the villages in learning the duties and the network related to the contemporaneous official system. Since the game had already been widely circulated among the aristocratic *yangban*, the majority of the students mentioned in this preface probably referred to the young men from the local

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<sup>217</sup> The term “*Popark* 蒲博” refers to an ancient dice game called “*Jeopo* 擲蒲” and both of them can generally mean “gambling.”

<sup>218</sup> The terms “*hyeonmuk* 玄默” and “*donjang* 敦胖” are the alternative names of “*im* 壬” from the decimal Heavenly Stems and “*oh* 午” from the duodecimal Earthly Branches, respectively.

<sup>219</sup> Choi Seokjeong, *Myeonggok jip*, vol. 1: 655-656.

*yangban* and the *jungin* classes. Choi's effort can also be viewed as an indicator of the development of the game that marked its infusion in the life of village dwellers. Besides, it is noticeable that the compiled pamphlet was indeed a "manual" for the *Jongjeongdo*, not a game board. Although there is no other available source on the existence of other game manuals in Korea, this preface can open the door to such a possibility.

On the other hand, a variation of the bureaucratic game that originated from Song China also appeared in Joseon as the promotion games diffused to the rest of the country. This variation is called the "view-winning game" by Stewart Culin in his study, in which he briefly describes that on such a game board "the one hundred and sixty-four squares into which the sheet is divided being inscribed with the names of as many places throughout Korea which are famous for the beauty of their scenery."<sup>220</sup> The earliest primary source regarding this sight-seeing ramification that is available to this study is the one by Yi Gyugyeong 李圭景 (b. 1788-ca. 1850) in his *Ohju yeonmun jangjeon sango* 五洲衍文長箋散稿 (Uncollected Draft of Exegesis and Redundancy by Ohju) under the entry of "Huigu byeonjeung seol 戲具辨證說 (Investigation of Games and Toys)." The text traces a variety of ancient and contemporary gambling games, including the mere mentions of the *Jongjeongdo* and this device:

有「陞政圖」、「從政圖」。此外戲具又有「觴詠圖」，取天下名勝之地製圖，投骰觴詠，以賭勝否；雜戲中稍雅。

There is [a game called] the "Table of Governmental Promotion" and the "Table of Joining the Government." Also, there is a game [called] the "Table for Drinking and

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<sup>220</sup> Stewart Culin, "The Japanese Game of Sugoroku," p. 225.



Singing,” which game board is created with places of famous sites in the world, on which [the players] throw dice [to determine who is] to drink or sing as well as to bet on who the winner is. Among all sorts of games, [it is] slightly elegant.<sup>221</sup>

Created with the drawing of famous sites on the game board, this “Table for Drinking and Singing” undoubtedly was the Korean parallel of the Chinese sight-seeing version, which was known as the *Xiaoye tu* 消夜圖 or *Xiaoye tu* 宵夜圖 (Table of Night Outing on the 15th Day of First Lunar Month)<sup>222</sup> in the Song and then the *Lansheng tu* 攬勝圖 (Table of Enjoying Famous Scenic Spots) in the Qing. The above description and the given title “*Sangyeong* (Drinking and Singing)” suggest that, like its Chinese counterpart, the sole purpose of adopting this game was for entertainment.

#### 5.1.4 Japanese Occupation between 1910 and 1945

During the latter period of the Japanese Occupation, the Japanese government conducted a countrywide field research on the folk entertainment activities in Korea and subsequently an extensive, book-length report was published in 1941. In order to demonstrate the condition of the game during the first half of the twentieth century in a more visual and graphic way, this study has collected and tabled all information related to the bureaucratic and sight-seeing games from the report as listed below. The data were gathered from the thirteen provinces of colonial Korea, where each province was roughly divided by the location of major cities into a number of regions. The data of each province is presented in one table, in which, from the left to the right, are the names of every provincial region, the name of the game called in each region, playing period for the game in each region, statuses

<sup>221</sup> Yi Gyugyeong, *Ohju yeonmun jangjeon sango*, pp. 836-837.

<sup>222</sup> Ma Guojun and Ma Shuyun, *Zhonghua chuantong youxi daquan*, p. 237.

of the players, research notes about the playing process, and the number of the page in the report on which the related data are found. The two numbers in parentheses on the top of each table are the number of the regions in a province and the number of those regions that had records of the promotion games. The tables are as follows:<sup>223</sup>

**Table 5.1 Folk entertainment activities in Korea during the latter period of the Japanese Occupation**

京畿道 (Gyeonggi Province): (22/14)

	Area	Game's Title	Playing Period	Player	Playing Process	Page #
1	京城地方 (Gyeongseong)	從卿圖	正月	青少年男子 (中流以上)	從卿圖と稱する中央地方の官廳及官職名を圖記せる盤上に賽を投げてその點數だけ進み速く中央の總理大臣 (領議政) になるを争ふ、これは中以上の家庭にて遊戯の間に國內の著名地、官職名及び官等昇進の知識を得せしめ同時に志を立つるに資したものである。	p. 1
2	開城地方 (Gaeseong)	德板	正月	中流舊式家庭男女	木片を橡實の如く刻み、その面に德、才、功、庄と記し、支那の昔の官位を記した紙板の上に投じ、德、才、功は位次上り、庄は位次下る。かくて先に最上位の官職に上りたるを勝とする、相手は二人以上何人でもよい。	pp. 4-5
3	高陽地方 (Goyang)	--	--	--	--	--
4	廣州地方 (Gwangju)	從卿圖	正月	儒林	--	p. 12
5	楊州地方 (Yangju)	--	--	--	--	--
6	漣州地方 (Yeonju)	從卿圖	冬季	有識階級	五角形の長さ一米+厘位、角面一、二、三、四、五の點數ある棒を轉がして點數を見、圖中の地方官職を歷速く總理大臣に上るを争ふ。	p. 23

<sup>223</sup> Chōsen Sōtokufu 朝鮮總督府 [Government-General of Chōsen, 1910-1945], Chōsen no kyōdo goraku 朝鮮の郷土娛樂 [Chōsen Local Entertainments] (Keijō: Chōsen Sōtokufu, 1941) 1-367.

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	Area	Game's Title	Playing Period	Player	Playing Process	Page #
7	抱川地方 (Pocheon)	--	--	--	--	--
8	加平地方 (Gapyeong)	--	--	--	--	--
9	揚平地方 (Yangpyeong)	從卿圖	正月	子供	--	pp. 29-30
10	驪州地方 (Yeoju)	--	--	--	--	--
11	利川地方 (Icheon)	從卿圖	冬	中流以上男	--	p. 34
12	龍仁地方 (Yongin)	從卿圖	冬	儒林	--	p. 40
13	安城地方 (Anseong)	從卿圖	正月	儒林	--	p. 40
		覽勝圖	正月	儒林	支那の古蹟、名勝地を記した覽勝圖を開き、五面の賽(捧)を投げ、各名勝を速く廻はるを競ふ、出發に際し賽の目の一に當つた者は美人、二は漁夫、三は僧、四は神仙、五は詩客として旅立つものとす。	p. 41
14	振威地方 (Jinwi)	--	--	--	--	--
15	水原地方 (Suwon)	--	--	--	--	--
16	始興地方 (Siheung)	--	--	--	--	--
17	富川地方 (Bucheon)	從卿圖	正月	子供	--	p. 47
18	金浦地方 (Gimpo)	陸卿圖	正月	男子	--	p. 49
19	江華地方 (Ganghwa)	從卿圖	隨時	有識階級	--	p. 51
20	坡州地方 (Paju)	從卿圖	正月	老人	--	p. 51
21	長湍地方 (Jangtan)	陸卿圖	正月	儒林	--	p. 52
22	開豐地方 (Gaepung)	從卿圖	正月	儒林	--	p. 54

忠清北道 (North Chungcheong Province): (10/9)

	Area	Game's Title	Playing Period	Player	Playing Process	Page #
1	清州地方 (Cheongju)	從卿圖	正月	一般	--	p. 56
2	報恩地方 (Boeun)	從卿圖	正月	一般	--	p. 58
3	沃川地方 (Okcheon)	從卿圖	正月	子供	--	p. 60
4	永同地方 (Yeongdong)	--	--	--	--	--
5	鎮川地方 (Jincheon)	從卿圖	正月	儒林	--	p. 63
6	槐山地方 (Goesan)	昇卿圖	正月	儒林	--	p. 64
		各國遊覽圖	--	一般	双六遊にて、從卿圖に代へるに各國遊覽圖を以てしたものなり。	p. 64
7	陰城地方 (Eumseong)	從卿圖	正月	男子	--	p. 66
8	忠州地方 (Chungju)	從卿圖	正月	儒林之子弟	--	p. 68
9	堤川地方 (Jecheon)	從卿圖	正月	一般	--	p. 72
10	丹陽地方 (Danyang)	從卿圖	正月	一般	--	p. 74

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忠清南道 (South Chungcheong Province): (14/12)

	Area	Game's Title	Playing Period	Player	Playing Process	Page #
1	大德地方 (Daedeok)	從卿圖	正月	一般	--	p. 76
2	燕岐地方 (Yeongi)	政纏圖 (從卿圖)	正月	儒林	--	p. 78
3	公州地方 (Gongju)	從卿圖	冬	儒林男子	--	p. 79
4	論山地方 (Nonsan)	從卿圖	正月 十五日	男子	--	p. 81
5	扶餘地方 (Buyeo)	從卿圖	冬	書堂生徒	--	p. 82
6	舒川地方 (Seocheon)	從卿圖	正月	儒林	--	p. 84
7	保寧地方 (Boryeong)	從卿圖	正月	儒林	--	p. 86
8	洪城地方 (Hongseong)	從卿圖	正月	一般	--	p. 87
9	青陽地方 (Cheongyang)	從卿圖	正月	儒林	--	p. 88
10	禮山地方 (Yesan)	--	--	--	--	--
11	瑞山地方 (Seosan)	從卿圖	正月	儒林	--	p. 91
12	唐津地方 (Dangjin)	--	--	--	--	--
13	牙山地方 (Asan)	從卿圖	正月	小子	--	p. 93
14	天安地方 (Cheonan)	從卿圖	正月	儒林	--	p. 96

全羅北道 (North Jeolla Province): (15/3)

	Area	Game's Title	Playing Period	Player	Playing Process	Page #
1	全州 (Jeonju) (完州 Wanjū)	從卿圖	隨時	一般男子	--	p.101
2	鎮安地方 (Jinan)	從卿圖	正月	儒林	--	p. 102
3	錦山地方 (Geumsan)	從卿圖	冬	儒林	--	p. 103
4	茂朱地方 (Muju)	--	--	--	--	--
5	長水地方 (Jangsu)	--	--	--	--	--
6	任實地方 (Imsil)	--	--	--	--	--
7	南原地方 (Namwon)	--	--	--	--	--
8	淳昌地方 (Sunchang)	--	--	--	--	--
9	井邑地方 (Jeongeup)	--	--	--	--	--
10	高敞地方 (Gochang)	--	--	--	--	--
11	扶安地方 (Buan)	--	--	--	--	--
12	群山地方 (Gunsan)	--	--	--	--	--
13	金堤地方 (Gimje)	--	--	--	--	--
14	沃溝地方 (Okgu)	--	--	--	--	--
15	益山地方 (Iksan)	--	--	--	--	--

全羅南道 (South Jeolla Province): (22/6)

	Area	Game's Title	Playing Period	Player	Playing Process	Page #
1	光州地方 (Gwangju)	--	--	--	--	--
2	谷城地方 (Gokseong)	從卿圖	正月	上流	--	p. 128
3	求禮地方 (Gurye)	從卿圖	正月	儒林	--	p. 130
4	光陽地方 (Gwangyang)	--	--	--	--	--
5	麗水地方 (Yeosu)	--	--	--	--	--

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	Area	Game's Title	Playing Period	Player	Playing Process	Page #
6	順天地方 (Suncheon)	從卿圖	正月	儒林	--	p. 133
		從卿圖	隨時	儒林	--	p. 134
		詞客遊び	隨時	儒林	詞客、美人、金+刀客、緇衣、漁夫が朝鮮の名勝地めぐりをして速く京城の景福宮に入る双六遊び、進行途中それぐ旅客に適する名勝地に到着したときは其所で賞與にありつく。	p. 134
7	高興地方 (Goheung)	--	--	--	--	--
8	寶城地方 (Boseong)	--	--	--	--	--
9	和順地方 (Hwasun)	--	--	--	--	--
10	長興地方 (Jangheung)	--	--	--	--	--
11	木浦地方 (Mokpo)	從卿圖	隨時	學生	--	p. 143
12	康津地方 (Gangjin)	--	--	--	--	--
13	潭陽地方 (Damyang)	--	--	--	--	--
14	長城地方 (Jangseong)	--	--	--	--	--
15	海南地方 (Haenam)	--	--	--	--	--
16	靈巖地方 (Yeongam)	--	--	--	--	--
17	務安地方 (Muan)	--	--	--	--	--
18	羅州地方 (Naju)	從卿圖	隨時	子供	--	p. 154
19	咸平地方 (Hampyeong)	--	--	--	--	--
20	靈光地方 (Yeonggwang)	從卿圖	隨時	儒林	--	p. 157
21	莞島地方 (Wando)	--	--	--	--	--
22	濟州島地方 (Jeju Island)	--	--	--	--	--

慶尚北道 (North Gyeongsang Province): (24/20)

	Area	Game's Title	Playing Period	Player	Playing Process	Page #
1	大邱地方 (Daegu)	從卿圖	隨時	一般	昔の朝鮮の文武百官の昇進方を示したる圖を擴げ、賽を廻してその目により駒を運ばし早く終りたる者が勝つ。	p. 166
2	達城地方 (Dalseong)	從卿圖	正月	一般男子	--	p. 167
3	軍威地方 (Gunwi)	從卿圖	隨時	儒林	--	p. 169
4	義城地方 (Uiseong)	--	--	--	--	--
5	安東地方 (Andong)	從卿圖	正月	儒林	--	p. 174
6	青松地方 (Cheongsong)	從卿圖	隨時	儒林	--	p. 176
7	英陽地方 (Yeongyang)	從卿圖	正月中	儒林	--	p. 176
8	盈徳地方 (Yeongdeok)	從卿圖	正月	一般	--	p. 178
9	迎日地方 (Youngil)	從卿圖	正月	儒林	--	p. 178
10	慶州地方 (Gyeongju)	從卿圖	隨時	儒林	--	p. 180
11	永川地方 (Yeongcheon)	從卿圖	隨時	農民	--	p. 181
12	慶山地方 (Gyeongsan)	從卿圖	冬期	儒林	--	p. 181

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	Area	Game's Title	Playing Period	Player	Playing Process	Page #
13	清道地方 (Cheongdo)	--	--	--	--	--
14	高靈地方 (Goryeong)	從卿圖	隨時	儒林	--	p. 184
15	星州地方 (Seongju)	從卿圖	隨時	儒林	--	p. 184
16	漆谷地方 (Chilgok)	從卿圖	正月	男子一般	--	p. 185
17	金泉地方 (Gimcheon)	--	--	--	--	--
18	善山地方 (Seonsan)	從卿圖	正月中	儒林	--	p. 187
19	尚州地方 (Gyeongju)	從卿圖	冬季	儒林	--	p. 188
20	聞慶地方 (Mungyeong)	從卿圖	正月	儒林	--	p. 189
21	醴泉地方 (Yecheon)	--	--	--	--	--
22	榮州地方 (Yeongju)	從卿圖	正月前後	儒林	--	p. 192
23	奉化地方 (Bonghwa)	從卿圖	秋冬	男子	--	p. 193
24	鬱陵島 (Ulleung Island)	從卿圖	--	--	--	p. 194

慶尚南道 (South Gyeongsang Province): (19/16)

	Area	Game's Title	Playing Period	Player	Playing Process	Page #
1	晉陽地方 (Jinyang)	從卿圖	隨時	一般	--	p. 195
2	宣寧地方 (Uiryeong)	從卿圖	正月	儒林	--	p. 196
3	咸安地方 (Haman)	從卿圖	正月	學童	--	p. 197
4	昌寧地方 (Changnyeong)	--	--	--	--	--
5	密陽地方 (Miryang)	從卿圖	隨時	男子	--	p. 202
6	梁山地方 (Yangsang)	從卿圖	隨時	男子	--	p. 203
7	蔚山地方 (Ulsan)	從卿圖	隨時	男子	--	p. 204
8	金海地方 (Gimhae)	從卿圖	隨時	儒林、 其他一般	--	p. 205
9	東萊地方 (Dongnae)	從卿圖	隨時	男子有識階級	--	p. 209
10	昌原地方 (Changwon)	從卿圖	隨時	儒林	--	p. 211
11	統營地方 (Tongyeong)	從卿圖	隨時	男子	--	p. 213
12	固城地方 (Goseong)	從卿圖	正月中	男子	--	p. 213
13	泗川地方 (Sacheon)	從卿圖	正月	男子	--	p. 214
14	南海地方 (Namhae)	--	--	--	--	--
15	河東地方 (Hadong)	從卿圖	正月	儒林	--	p. 216
16	山淸地方 (Sancheong)	從卿圖	隨時	儒林	--	p. 218
17	咸陽地方 (Hamyang)	從卿圖	隨時特 に正月	儒林	--	p. 219
18	居昌地方 (Geochang)	從卿圖	正月	男子	--	p. 220
19	陝川地方 (Hapcheon)	--	--	--	--	--

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黄海道 (Hwanghae Province): (17/14)

	Area	Game's Title	Playing Period	Player	Playing Process	Page #
1	延白地方 (Yeonbaek)	從卿圖	冬	男子	--	p. 222
2	金川地方 (Gimcheon)	從卿圖	正月	男子	--	p. 225
3	平山地方 (Pyeongsan)	從卿圖	正、二月	男子	--	p. 225
4	新溪地方 (Singye)	從卿圖	一月	青少年男子	--	p. 227
5	甕津地方 (Ongjin)	從卿圖	隨時	儒林	--	p. 229
6	長淵地方 (Jangyeon)	從卿圖	隨時	一般	--	p. 230
7	松禾地方 (Songhwa)	從卿圖	隨時	儒林	--	p. 231
8	殷栗地方 (Eunyul)	--	--	--	--	--
9	安岳地方 (Anak)	從卿圖	冬	男子	--	p. 233
10	信川地方 (Sincheon)	--	--	--	--	--
11	載寧地方 (Jaeryeong)	從卿圖	隨時	一般男子	--	p. 235
12	黃州地方 (Hwangju)	從卿圖	正月中	一般	--	p. 235
13	鳳山地方 (Bongsan)	--	--	--	--	--
14	瑞興地方 (Seoheung)	從卿圖	冬	儒林	--	p. 237
15	遂安地方 (Suan)	從卿圖	冬	男子	--	p. 239
16	谷山地方 (Goksan)	從卿圖	隨時	一般男子	--	p. 240
17	海州地方 (Haeju)	從卿圖	隨時	中流以上	--	p. 243

江原道 (Gangwon Province): (21/18)

	Area	Game's Title	Playing Period	Player	Playing Process	Page #
1	春川地方 (Chuncheon)	從卿圖	自正月一日至正月十五日	一般男子	五角の木柶を造り手にて投擲すると一より五までの數字が示される、この數字により文武官を記載せる圖表の上にコマを運ばして勝負を決するものにして初仕に及第して領議政に至れば一年の運勢を大吉とし、若し中途にて破職すれば一年の運勢を凶なりと云ふ。	p. 244
2	麟蹄地方 (Inje)	--	--	--	--	--
3	楊口地方 (Yanggu)	從卿圖	冬	有識男子	--	p. 258
4	淮陽地方 (Hoeyang)	從卿圖	正月	男子	--	p. 261
5	通川地方 (Tongcheon)	--	--	--	--	--
6	高城地方 (Goseong)	從卿圖	正月中	一般儒林	--	p. 264
7	襄陽地方 (Yangyang)	從卿圖	正月	儒林	--	p. 267
8	江陵地方 (Gangneung)	從卿圖	正月	男子	--	p. 270
9	三陟地方 (Samcheok)	--	--	--	--	--
10	蔚珍地方 (Uljin)	從卿圖	正月	儒林	--	p. 276
11	旌善地方 (Jeongseon)	從卿圖	正月	一般	--	p. 278
12	平昌地方 (Pyeongchang)	從卿圖	冬季	一般主に儒林	--	p. 279
13	寧越地方 (Yeongwol)	從卿圖	正月	男女兒	--	p. 281

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	Area	Game's Title	Playing Period	Player	Playing Process	Page #
14	原州地方 (Wonju)	從卿圖	正月	儒林	--	p. 283
15	橫城地方 (Hoengseong)	從卿圖	正月	男子	--	p. 286
		德遊び	休日	有識男子	木製四角のコマを作り、各面に一字づゝ徳、才、功、庄の四字を書き舊朝鮮の官職名を記入した紙面上に之を廻し夫々合點した官職へ馬を置く、かくして上官は所屬下官より酒を頂戴して遊ぶ。	p. 286
16	洪川地方 (Hongcheon)	從卿圖	正月	有識青少年男子	--	p. 287
17	華川地方 (Hwacheon)	從卿圖	正月	儒林	--	p. 288
18	金化地方 (Gimhwa)	從卿圖	正月中	儒林	--	p. 289
19	鐵原地方 (Cheorwon)	從卿圖	正月	上流	--	p. 291
20	平康地方 (Pyeonggang)	從卿圖	正月	老人	--	p. 292
21	伊川地方 (Icheon)	從卿圖	隨時	儒林	--	p. 293

平安南道 (South Pyeongan Province): (16/7)

	Area	Game's Title	Playing Period	Player	Playing Process	Page #
1	平壤地方 (Pyeongyang)	--	--	--	--	--
2	鎮南浦 (Jinnampo)	--	--	--	--	--
3	大同地方 (Daedong)	--	--	--	--	--
4	順川地方 (Suncheon)	從卿圖	隨時	上中流人士	--	p. 301
5	孟山地方 (Maengsan)	從卿圖	冬	一般	--	p. 301
6	陽德地方 (Yangdeok)	--	--	--	--	--
7	成川地方 (Seongcheon)	--	--	--	--	--
8	江東地方 (Gangdong)	--	--	--	--	--
9	中和地方 (Junghwa)	從卿圖	隨時	一般男子	--	p. 304
10	龍岡地方 (Yonggang)	從卿圖	隨時	儒林	--	p. 306
11	江西地方 (Gangseo)	從卿圖	農閑期	農民	--	p. 306
12	平原地方 (Pyeongwon)	從卿圖	隨時	一般	--	p. 308
13	安州地方 (Anju)	--	--	--	--	--
14	价川地方 (Gaechon)	從卿圖	農閑期	儒林	--	p. 310
15	德川地方 (Deokcheon)	--	--	--	--	--
16	寧遠地方 (Yeongwon)	--	--	--	--	--



5. Gambling Board Games as Cultural Transmitters of Confucian  
Bureaucracy and Buddhist Doctrine in Premodern Korea

平安北道 (North Pyeongan Province): (18/7)

	Area	Game's Title	Playing Period	Player	Playing Process	Page #
1	義州地方 (Uiju)	--	--	--	--	--
2	龜城地方 (Guseong)	--	--	--	--	--
3	泰川地方 (Taecheon)	--	--	--	--	--
4	雲山地方 (Unsan)	--	--	--	--	--
5	熙川地方 (Huicheon)	--	--	--	--	--
6	寧邊地方 (Yeongbyeon)	從卿圖	隨時	儒林	--	p. 318
7	博川地方 (Bakcheon)	從卿圖	隨時	男子	--	p. 319
8	定州地方 (Jeongju)	從卿圖	隨時	儒林	--	p. 320
9	宣川地方 (Seoncheon)	從卿圖	冬	儒林	--	p. 322
10	鐵山地方 (Cheolsan)	--	--	--	--	--
11	龍川地方 (Yongcheon)	--	--	--	--	--
12	朔州地方 (Sakju)	--	--	--	--	--
13	昌城地方 (Changseong)	從卿圖	隨時	一般	--	p. 328
14	碧潼地方 (Byeokdong)	--	--	--	--	--
15	楚山地方 (Wiwon)	從卿圖	正月	儒林	--	p. 329
16	渭原地方 (Wiwon)	--	--	--	--	--
17	江界地方 (Ganggye)	從卿圖	隨時	儒林	--	p. 331
18	慈城地方 (Jaseong)	--	--	--	--	--

咸鏡南道 (South Hamgyeong Province): (16/5)

	Area	Game's Title	Playing Period	Player	Playing Process	Page #
1	元山地方 (Wonsan)	--	--	--	--	--
2	咸州地方 (Hamju)	--	--	--	--	--
3	定平地方 (Jeongpyeong)	--	--	--	--	--
4	永興地方 (Yeongheung)	--	--	--	--	--
5	高原地方 (Gowon)	--	--	--	--	--
6	文川地方 (Muncheon)	--	--	--	--	--
7	德源地方 (Deokwon)	--	--	--	--	--
8	安邊地方 (Anbyeon)	--	--	--	--	--
9	洪原地方 (Hongwon)	從卿圖	正、二月	男子	數人にて組を分ち昔の朝鮮の官職名を列記したる厚紙を中心に圍座し雙六を以て官職の階級を踏み昇り最高官に上りたるもの勝ちとす。	p. 344
10	北青地方 (Bukcheong)	從卿圖	隨時	儒林又は壯年	--	p. 346
11	利原地方 (Riwon)	從卿圖	冬季	農民	--	p. 346
12	端川地方 (Dancheon)	從卿圖	隨時	儒林	--	p. 347
13	新興地方 (Sinheung)	--	--	--	--	--
14	長津地方 (Jangjin)	--	--	--	--	--
15	豐山地方 (Pungsan)	從卿圖	秋冬	儒林	--	p. 349
16	甲山地方 (Gapsan)	--	--	--	--	--

5. Gambling Board Games as Cultural Transmitters of Confucian Bureaucracy and Buddhist Doctrine in Premodern Korea

咸鏡北道 (North Hamgyeong Province): (12/3)

	Area	Game's Title	Playing Period	Player	Playing Process	Page #
1	鏡城 (Gyeongseong) (+ 羅南 Nanam) 地方	--	--	--	--	--
2	明川地方 (Myeongcheon)	--	--	--	--	--
3	吉州地方 (Gilju)	從卿圖	冬	青年	--	p. 356
4	城津地方 (Seongjin)	從卿圖	隨時	男子	武文官位・名の書いてある圖面があるが、枰を投げて得點の多いものは次第に高官に昇ることが出来る斯様にして最高官位に達したものが勝つ遊びである。	p. 359
5	富寧地方 (Buryeong)	--	--	--	--	--
6	茂山地方 (Musan)	--	--	--	--	--
7	會寧地方 (Hoeryeong)	--	--	--	--	--
8	鍾城地方 (Jongseong)	--	--	--	--	--
9	穩城地方 (Onseong)	--	--	--	--	--
10	慶源地方 (Kyongwon)	從卿圖	一月一日	一般	--	p. 367
11	慶興地方 (Kyongheung)	--	--	--	--	--
12	清津地方 (Cheongjin)	--	--	--	--	--

Based on the above tables, the games were found still in circulation in totally one hundred and thirty-four (134) regions out of two hundred and twenty-six (226) regions in these thirteen provinces, which occupied approximately of sixty percent of the country. Other revealed facts include the games' alternative names, seasonal association, player groups, and playing methods.

Except for five regions, the previous best-known name *Jongjeongdo* had been superseded by the new term *Jonggyeongdo* 從卿圖 (Table of Joining the Bureaucracy) during this period. In three of these regions, the game was called by two different names of similar characters with the same meaning, which were the *Seunggyeongdo* 陞卿圖 (Table of Bureaucratic Promotion) and the *Seunggyeongdo* 昇卿圖 (Table of Bureaucratic Promotion),

while the other two regions by another pair of names with a similar meaning, the *Deokpan* 德板 (Board of Virtue) and the *Toku susabi* 徳遊び (Game of Virtue).

The next new change is that, in many regions, playing the bureaucratic game had become a tradition associated with the Lunar New Year celebration like what happened to its Chinese counterpart in the latter part of its development in China. In terms of popular religious belief, winners of the those games played during the New Year days or the first lunar month were believed to have been ritualistically blessed for the whole year with good luck, such as passing the civil service examination with good results. Depending on the design of the game board, players in some versions who lost their careers in the midst of the game were foretold to have bad luck that year. What is discussed in the research note on the *Jonggyeongdo* circulated in the Chuncheon region of the Gangwon Province on page 244 is exactly about this tradition.<sup>224</sup>

This change was probably another marker of the cultural influence from the late Qing. Based on several sources on the festivals and seasonal folk customs of the Joseon dynasty by late-Joseon scholars, the tradition of playing the bureaucratic game during the Lunar New Year season actually had not yet been established in the peninsula by the mid-nineteenth century. In the texts like the *Gyeongdo japji* 京都雜志 (Miscellaneous Records of the Capital; late 18<sup>th</sup> century) by Yoo Deukgong 柳得恭 (1748-1807), the *Yeolyang sesigi* 洌陽歲時記 (Festivals and Annual Customs of Yeolyang; 1819) by Kim Maesun 金邁淳 (1776-1840), and the *Dongkuk sesigi* 東國歲時記 (Festivals and Annual Customs of the Eastern Country; 1849) by Hong Seokmo 洪錫謨 (1781-1850), the authors never mention any practice similar to this type; evidently, by 1849 when the *Dongkuk sesigi* was published, the

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<sup>224</sup> Chōsen Sōtokufu, *Chōsen no kyōdo goraku*, p. 244.

elite like these authors had no knowledge of such practice.<sup>225</sup> Since the research report was released in 1941 and the game's association with the New Year celebration had not been recorded before 1849, this tradition was likely developed in the late nineteenth century.

In spite of these changes, the target players of the game remain largely the same as in the past. As indicated in the tables, the player groups were described to be boys, intellectuals, Confucian scholars and students, and men of high and middle social statuses, which were within the aristocratic *yangban* and the techno-commercial *jungin* classes. The games in approximately three dozen regions are reported to have been enjoyed by unspecified groups of “men” and the “general public” and a few of them are even said to be played by “peasants,” a highly unlikely group of people who had no incentive to play the game in the past because they were supposedly illiterate and not in any way allowed to enter the government. In other words, while the game still held a strong connection with the Korean elite, it expanded its influence to the rest of the society, slowly yet steadily, perhaps with the help of the Lunar New Year fortune-telling tradition.

There are totally eleven research notes included in the report and eight of them are on the *Jonggyeongdo*.<sup>226</sup> The descriptions are brief and their introductions of the game are similar in content, which are consistent with what have been discussed above. Two points need to be stressed here though. The first point is that the capital Gyeongseong region still emphasized the didactic function, believing that the games could help the players of high social status to whet their ambitions and acquire knowledge about the bureaucracy and

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<sup>225</sup> For details, see Hong Seokmo 洪錫謨 (1781-1850), Kim Maesun 金邁淳 (1776-1840), and Yoo Deukgong 柳得恭 (1748-1807), *Dongkuk sesigi / Yeolyang sesigi / Gyeongdo japi happyeon* 東國歲時記 / 洌陽歲時記 / 京都雜誌 合編 [The Combined Edition of the Festivals and Annual Customs of the Eastern Country (1849), the Festivals and Annual Customs of Yeolyang (1819), and the Miscellaneous Records of the Capital (late 18<sup>th</sup> century)] (Seoul: Minsokwon 民俗苑, 1995) 1-19, 1-7, and 11-21.

<sup>226</sup> Chōsen Sōtokufu, *Chōsen no kyōdo goraku*, pp. 1, 4-5, 23, 166, 244, 286, 344, and 359.

important administrative and strategic locations.<sup>227</sup> The second point is that the dice had been modified to different degrees. Two research notes mention that the six Sino-Korean characters were decreased to four, “*deok* 德 (virtue),” “*jae* 才 (capability),” “*o* 功 (accomplishment),” and “*jang* 庄 (賊; corruption),”<sup>228</sup> but the stick dice and the cubical dice used for the game recorded in four other research notes were inscribed with dots or strokes, ranging from one to five in number.<sup>229</sup> These trends of simplification and numeralization may relate to the growing use of the game for gambling and amusement for which its intrinsic value was ignored by many game players and producers.

Other than the *Jonggyeongdo*, the records of another version of the promotion game, the “Table for Drinking and Singing,” are mentioned in three research notes within the tables. They show that there were three different designs circulating in Korea at the time, with the relics, resorts, and historic places of China, Korea, and other countries as the content. The one regarding sight-seeing Chinese places might be an honest reproduction of an original copy imported from China as the title, the playing method, and the five particular pieces that represented five different characters of a beautiful woman, a fisherman, a Buddhist monk, a Daoist immortal, and a poet were similar to those described in the Qing sources (Figure 5.5).<sup>230</sup> The other two were the indigenized (Figure 5.6) and internationalized versions. In the former version, the names of Chinese resorts were replaced by those in Korea and the game piece that represented a Daoist immortal was substituted by that of a swordsman.<sup>231</sup> The latter version was titled as the *Gakgukyuramdo* 各國遊覽圖 (Table of Traveling through the Nations of the World); according to this name, the listed places must be those from

<sup>227</sup> Chōsen Sōtokufu, *Chōsen no kyōdo goraku*, p. 1.

<sup>228</sup> Chōsen Sōtokufu, *Chōsen no kyōdo goraku*, pp. 4-5 and 286.

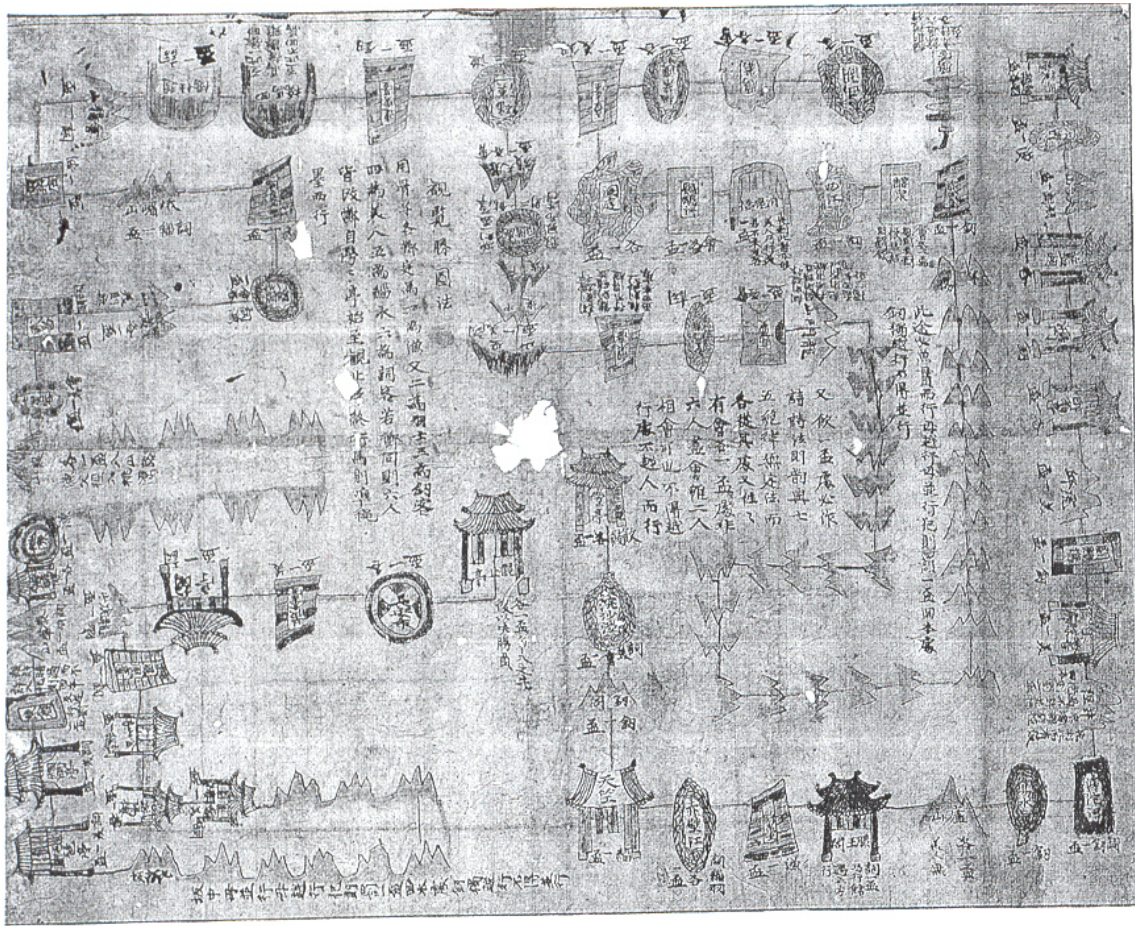
<sup>229</sup> Chōsen Sōtokufu, *Chōsen no kyōdo goraku*, pp. 1, 23, 244, and 359.

<sup>230</sup> Chōsen Sōtokufu, *Chōsen no kyōdo goraku*, p. 41.

<sup>231</sup> Chōsen Sōtokufu, *Chōsen no kyōdo goraku*, p. 134.

different countries.<sup>232</sup> It is also noticeable that some research notes here compare the Korean promotion games to the Japanese *Sugoroku* 双六 (Double Sixes), their similarities actually can reveal their common underlying cultural influence.

Figure 5.5 An example of a Korean *Ramseungdo* 覽勝圖.



This may be a Korean collection of Chinese *Lansheng tu* as the scenic spots in this game board are of China, such as the West Lake 西湖 of Hangzhou, Laolao Pavilion 勞勞亭 of Nanjing, Huima Bridge 回馬橋 of Shandong, River Pan 礮溪 of Shanxi, and Mount Lu 廬山 of Jiangxi. Instructions of how to gamble and play are written in the middle and on the sides of the board. (Kungnip Minsok Pangmulgwan (Korea), 2004, p. 416)

<sup>232</sup> Chōsen Sōtokufu, *Chōsen no kyōdo goraku*, p. 64.



Figure 5.6 *Seungramdo* 勝覽圖.



SEO10297

This game board contains the scenic spots of both China and Korea, with the names of famous geographic scenery of China on the top half and those of Korea on the bottom half. 62.7 x 101.7 cm. (National Museum of Korea: [http://www.koreamuseum.go.kr/sch/full.cgi?v\\_db=3&v\\_doc\\_no=00043207&v\\_ltype=1&LF=N](http://www.koreamuseum.go.kr/sch/full.cgi?v_db=3&v_doc_no=00043207&v_ltype=1&LF=N); 18 June 2009)

## 5.2 Game Components and Their Characteristics

### 5.2.1 The game board of the bureaucratic *Jongjeongdo*

The components of the games were identical with those of Chinese origin, which consisted of a game board, a few dice, and some game pieces. Similar to its Chinese prototype, the *Jongjeongdo* was modeled after the bureaucratic structures of premodern Korean dynasties. The layout designs of the existing Korean games were similar and comparatively less creative than those seen in China. On a large piece of paper, ranging from approximately fifty centimetres to one metre in width and eighty centimetres to one metre and fifty centimetres in length, the game board is divided into about three hundred small spaces; inside over a hundred of them the names of major government posts and their ranks are written. Within the spaces on the four sides of the table are disposed the posts of the eight provinces' governors, the military commanders of local troops, the heads of naval forces, and the chief magistrates of important districts. In some existing tables, the few squares that represent the starting point, the highest rankings, and the death penalties are decorated with the drawing of a gate embellished with a Chinese-style canopy or rooftop, sometimes in red or pink.

The content largely corresponds to the Joseon administrative structure, as showed in the Gyeonguk daejeon 經國大典 (Great Code for State Administration) finalized in 1485. Under the code, the highest deliberative organ to assist the king was the State Council which was staffed by three high state councilors. State laws and policies were executed and managed by the Six Ministries (Personnel, Taxation, Rites, Military Affairs, Punishments, and Public Works). The central government appointed officials for local administration of



the four-level administrative divisions of the eight provinces (Gyeonggi 京畿, Chungcheong 忠清, Gyeongsang 慶尙, Jeolla 全羅, Hwanghae 黃海, Gangwon 江原, Yeongan 永安 [renamed Hamgyeong 咸鏡 in 1509], and Pyeongan 平安).<sup>233</sup> Hence, the posts of the Six Ministries and many major local administrators of the eight provinces can be commonly seen in the *Jongjeongdo*, in which the three state councilors of the State Council are designated as the winning destination.

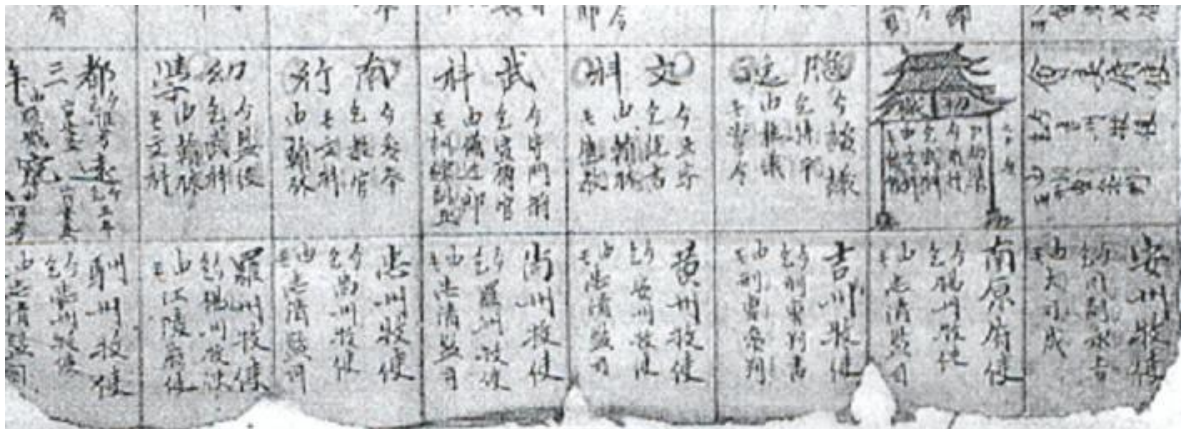
All pieces begin at the starting point labeled as the “*yuhak* 幼學 (literally, juvenile scholar; see Figure 5.2), referring generally to those who studied for the civil service examination, the “*chojik* 初職 (first post; Figure 5.7b),” which can be understood as “*ipsachojik* 入仕初職 (first post when joining government service).” This feature was clearly a continuation of the Chinese notion of “*chushen* (career origin).”<sup>234</sup> However, the options for the first post in the *Jongjeongdo* were not as many as those seen in the Chinese models. According to some extant game boards, in different combinations, the first post usually contains five to ten choices of status, including statuses labelled as the “*yuhak*,” “*saengwon* 生員 (classics candidate [for the lower literary examination]),” “*jinsa* 進士 (literary candidate [for the lower literary examination]),” “*geupje* 及第 (candidate who received the highest score; a short term of the “*jangwongeupje* 壯元及第”),” “*eunil* 隱逸 (hermit),” “*eunsa* 隱士 (hermit),” “*mugwa* 武科 (military examination),” “*mungwa* 文科 (literary examination),” “*gunjol* 軍卒 (soldier),” and “*namhaeng* 南行 (literally, southern

<sup>233</sup> Peter H. Lee, and Wm. Theodore de Bary, eds., *Sources of Korean Tradition*, vol.1: 263.

<sup>234</sup> See also Kim Gwangeon 김광언, “Seunggyeongdo notyi 승경도 (陞卿圖) 놀이 [The Game of the Table of Bureaucratic Promotion],” *Hanguk minsok notyi 한국 의 민속 놀이* [Folk Games in South Korea] (Incheon 仁川: Inha daehakgyo chulpanbu 仁荷大學校出版部, 1982) 98-99.

goers),”<sup>235</sup> of which the “*yuhak*,” “*saengwon*,” “*jinsa*,” “*eunil*,” “*mugwa*,” and “*mungwa*” seem to be the most basic set for the first post. Each game ends when a player is declared the winner after advancing to the highest-ranking post, the *Yeonguijeong* 領議政 (Prime Minister). On the other hand, a player could be punished or disqualified in the midst of a game when he reaches one of the positions indicated as the “*wonchan* 遠竄 (banishment),” “*yusamcheonri* 流三千里 (go into exile to a distance of three thousand *ri*),” “*sagwejang* 賜几杖 (death by flogging bestowed [by the king]),” “*sayaksa* 賜藥死 (death by poison bestowed [by the king]),”<sup>236</sup> or “*pajik* 罷職 (dismissal from office).”

**Figure 5.7b Detail of Figure 5.7a.**



The decorated “*chojik* 初職 (first post)” here is designated as the starting point of the game.

<sup>235</sup> This term referred to those officials who were appointed by their family backgrounds. Other terms of similar meaning include “*eumsa* 蔭仕,” “*muneum* 文蔭,” “*eumjik* 蔭職,” and “*baekgol namhaeng* 白骨南行.”

<sup>236</sup> This was a practice outside the law-codes much used during the factional struggles of Joseon dynasty to punish members of the royal family and high-ranking officials who were condemned to death. They were bestowed a dose of poison but were regarded committing suicide. Keith Pratt, and Richard Rutt, *Korea: A Historical and Cultural Dictionary* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1999) 353.

Figure 5.7a An untitled *Jongjeongdo*.



Important spaces like the starting point and the destinations are highlighted with the embellishment of multi-storey decorative archways. 80 x 120 cm. (Kungnip Minsok Pangmulgwan (Korea), 2004, p. 414)



### 5.2.2 The *Jongjeongdo*, the *gwageo* examinations, and the *yangban* ruling class

Apparently, the terms “*yuhak*,” “*saengwon*,” “*jinsa*,” “*mugwa*,” “*mungwa*,” and “*namhaeng*” in the section of the first post originated from the Korean *gwageo* 科擧 (national civil service examinations), which comprised the *mungwa*, the *mugwa*, and the *japgwa* 雜科 (miscellaneous examinations) in the Goryeo and Joseon dynasties, while the limited choices of status suggest that the game was initially adopted for the aristocratic *yangban* ruling class, which is clearly a Korean characteristic. In China, although there were a variety of game board designs for different dynastic-bureaucratic focuses, the *chushen* section managed to sustain the tradition to include some junior positions of those professions that fell outside both the civilian and military bureaucratic circles, such as physician and astronomer. In the surviving *Jongjeongdo*, however, the first post focuses mainly on the junior positions that came from the literary and military examinations, particularly from the former.

The *gwageo* was based on the Chinese civil service examination that was established to help select government officials by their literary proficiency and learning of Confucian texts. It was first administrated in Unified Silla 統一新羅 (668-935) in 778.<sup>237</sup> Even though the examinations were rather loosely executed compared to those of later dynasties, their function of evaluating the scholastic ability of Korean officials was ensured. However, these examinations did not have a strong effect on the government because Silla was a segregated society by lineage and bloodline and governmental appointments were largely made on the basis of birth.<sup>238</sup> In the tenth century, near the beginning of the Goryeo dynasty, the examinations began to be operated more systematically, incorporating with the complete

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<sup>237</sup> Peter H. Lee, and Wm. Theodore de Bary, eds., *Sources of Korean Tradition*, vol.1: 65.

<sup>238</sup> John Isaac Goulde, *Anti-Buddhist Polemic in Fourteenth and Fifteenth Century Korea: the Emergence of Confucian Exclusivism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1985) 59-60.

replication of the Tang bureaucracy and the establishment of a National Academy in 992, and became more politically influential.<sup>239</sup> By law, the *gwageo* examination was open to all members of the freeborn class except for the descendants of criminals and lowborn people. However, the hereditary factor was still predominant and this system remained only one among several methods to power; for example, an official whose position was of the fifth or higher ranking could automatically have one son placed in the same position.<sup>240</sup> “The effect was to maintain Confucianized yet aristocratic control of the educational and bureaucratic system.”<sup>241</sup> Eventually, in the Joseon dynasty, the *gwageo* system became the only avenue to the bureaucracy as other roads to socio-political advancement were basically closed.<sup>242</sup>

Nonetheless, the qualification for the examinees of the three categories of examinations remained caste-based. Unlike the *keju* examinations in China which were open to all regardless of social status, the *gwageo* system was closely associated with the contemporaneous social castes, in which the literary examinations were restricted to the aristocratic *yangban* class, the miscellaneous examinations were generally limited to the *jungin* 中人 class of hereditary technical and professional workers, while the military examinations were basically monopolized by aristocrats but, over time, came to be open to members of the *cheonmin* 賤民 (lowborn people).<sup>243</sup>

During the Joseon, the *gwageo* examinations were held regularly every three years, known as the *singnyeonsi* 式年試 (triennial examinations), but the *byeolsi* 別試 (special examinations), generally restricted to the literary and military examinations, were held

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<sup>239</sup> John Isaac Goulde, *Anti-Buddhist Polemic in Fourteenth and Fifteenth Century Korea*, pp. 81-82.

<sup>240</sup> Peter H. Lee, and Wm. Theodore de Bary, eds., *Sources of Korean Tradition*, vol.1: 264; and John Isaac Goulde, *Anti-Buddhist Polemic in Fourteenth and Fifteenth Century Korea*, p. 81.

<sup>241</sup> John Isaac Goulde, *Anti-Buddhist Polemic in Fourteenth and Fifteenth Century Korea*, p. 82.

<sup>242</sup> Eugene Y. Park, *Between Dreams and Reality*, p. 16.

<sup>243</sup> Eugene Y. Park, *Between Dreams and Reality*, p. 48.

irregularly on some special occasions.<sup>244</sup> As the dynasty progressed, the regular examinations became less important, slowly giving way to the irregular examinations; there were a total of 163 *singneonsi* but 581 *byeolsi* held over the course of the dynasty.

By holding the *gwageo* examinations, the Joseon authorities recruited their officials with the *munghwa*, or literary examinations, military officers with the *mugwa*, or military examinations, and government functionaries and technical experts with the *japgwa*, or miscellaneous examinations.<sup>245</sup> The literary examination was divided into two levels, the lower and the higher examinations. The lower examinations were known as the *saengjin-gwa* 生進科 (examinations of *saengwon*, or classics candidate, and *jinsa*, or literary candidate), with the *saengwon* degree awarded to the graduates of the classics and the *jinsa* degree to those of literary writings; examinees had to pass the higher examinations to be qualified to serve in the government as an official.<sup>246</sup> The examinees of the examinations of classics candidate were required to master the knowledge of the Chinese Four Books and Five Classics based on Neo-Confucian commentaries while those of literary candidate to master the compositional skill in various forms of Chinese poetry and prose. After they passed the *saengjin-gwa*, both groups of examinees were allowed to take the higher literary examination, which was administered triennially and divided into three parts to test the examinees on their understanding of the Confucian classics, compositional ability in various literary forms, and political aptitude. Obviously, successful candidates in the examinations were required to have a firm grasp of Confucian texts and relevant commentaries, for which even the curriculum for military candidates was also Confucian-based as the military examination was a three-stage test of a mixture of military skills and theories as well as

<sup>244</sup> Eugene Y. Park, *Between Dreams and Reality*, pp. 26 and 30.

<sup>245</sup> Eugene Y. Park, *Between Dreams and Reality*, p. 25.

<sup>246</sup> Peter H. Lee, and Wm. Theodore de Bary, eds., *Sources of Korean Tradition*, vol.1: 300.

Confucian knowledge.<sup>247</sup> As a result, like the situation in China, literary scholarship turned into a Korean statecraft, and scholar-officials became the ruling elite and custodians of political power. Nevertheless, this requirement of Confucian learning was not extended to the miscellaneous examinations, which were categorized into four main groups, the *yeokgwa* 譯科 (translation examination), the *uigwa* 醫科 (medicine examination), the *eumyanggwa* 陰陽科 (*eumyang* examination; such as astrology and geography), and the *yulhak* 律學 (legal learning).<sup>248</sup>

In the Goryeo period, the *japgwa* examinations also included Buddhism called the *Seunggwa* 僧科 (monk [qualification] examination), with separate tests set for the *Seon* 禪 (Meditation) and *Gyo* 教 (Doctrine) Schools.<sup>249</sup> The special title *Daeseon* 大選 (Monk Designate) would be given to those monks who passed the examination and the highest ranks, given to the monks of the *Gyo* and *Seon* Schools monk, were known as the *Seungdong* 僧統 (Patriarch) and the *Daeseonsa* 大禪師 (Great *Seon* Master), respectively.<sup>250</sup> On a regular basis, most of these examinations were administrated once every three years, but special examinations were recorded to have been held in the cases of national events and celebrations. Different from other civil service examinations, each of these monastic examinations was administrated by only one examiner, in the form of a discussion between the examiner and the examinees on sūtras for the *Gyo* monks and on meditative experience for the *Seon* monks. Production assets like fields and trees were awarded to licentiate monks and those who passed with distinction would be appointed abbots of important

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<sup>247</sup> Eugene Y. Park, *Between Dreams and Reality*, p. 27.

<sup>248</sup> Eugene Y. Park, *Between Dreams and Reality*, p. 199n32.

<sup>249</sup> Won Yi Beom and Lim Byeong Ho, *A History of Korean Buddhist Culture and Some Essays: the Buddhist Pure Land & the Christian Kingdom of Heaven* (Seoul: Jip Moon Dang Publishing Co., 1992) 43; and John Isaac Goulde, *Anti-Buddhist Polemic in Fourteenth and Fifteenth Century Korea*, pp. 91-92.

<sup>250</sup> Won Yi Beom and Lim Byeong Ho, *A History of Korean Buddhist Culture and Some Essays*, p. 44.

monasteries.<sup>251</sup> Despite the efforts made by early Joseon kings to maintain this system, the examinations were finally abolished in 1566.<sup>252</sup>

It should be noted that although the social system only allowed the aristocratic *yangban* class to take the literary and military examinations, not every son of this class could or would join the government service. Under Joseon law, the *seoja* 庶子 (*yangban* descendants born of concubines or secondary wives) were deprived of their privilege to take the *gwageo*,<sup>253</sup> and those who were not the sons of officials of the second or higher ranks were prevented from taking high government positions, unless they had passed the *gwageo*. On the other hand, not every learned *yangban* student was eager to join officialdom. Some of them considered that being a moral exemplar for the rest of society was more essential to them as a student of Confucius. This group of Confucian *yangban* was known as the *seonbi* 儒 (gentleman-scholar), a social status that was more cultural than political in nature. In comparison with the Seoul-centered bureaucratic *yangban* lineages, the *seonbi*'s lineages had their bases in villages. These local *yangban* were credited with their contributions to their local villages and their leading role in educating common people and slaves about the hierarchical social relations in the hope of forming a harmonious moral and ethical community. Although these groups of *yangban* were not accepted as the members of the ruling elite, who secured their power by passing the higher literary examination, many *seoja*

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<sup>251</sup> For more details about the monk qualification examination, see The Korean Buddhist Research Institute, *The History and Culture of Buddhism in Korea* (Seoul, Korea: Dongguk University Press, 1993) 133-135; and Kanayama Shōkō 金山正好, *Dongya fojiao shi* 東亞佛教史 [History of Buddhism in East Asia], trans. Liu Guozong 劉果宗 (Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe 文津出版社, 2001) 473.

<sup>252</sup> Keith Pratt, and Richard Rutt, *Korea: A Historical and Cultural Dictionary*, p. 115.

<sup>253</sup> The 1469 Great Code of State Administration provides a list of those who were not qualified for the *Gwageo*: “(1) enfeoffed members of the royal family; (2) *hallyang*, the countryside descendents of Koryŏ [Goryeo] central officials; (3) elite guards married to a non-*yangban* wife; (4) illegitimate sons and their descendants; (5) sons and grandsons of remarried mothers and other women deemed lacking in the cardinal Confucian virtue of chastity; (6) state criminals permanently barred from holding an official; and (7) the lowborn, including slaves and holders of certain socially despised occupations.” See Eugene Y. Park, *Between Dreams and Reality*, p. 39.



and *seonbi* became local gentries and functionaries. Their roles in local economies and administration were very similar to those of the *shishen* 士紳 (scholar-gentry) or the *xiangshen* 鄉紳 (local gentry) in late imperial China. Another similarity regarding the qualification for the *gwageo* in premodern Korea was that women were not allowed to take any examination though they could learn informally at home with the expectation that they would thereby carry out more appropriately their duties in family and society.<sup>254</sup>

Accordingly, the *gwageo* system was integrated quite successfully with the rigid, four-level hierarchical social system that comprised, beginning from the highest, the *yangban*, the *jungin*, the *sangmin* 常民 (common people), and the *cheonmin*.<sup>255</sup> By the Joseon dynasty, the *yangban* became the highest social class and, by way of passing the *gwageo* examinations, they were granted many privileges such as the bestowal of lands and stipends as well as exemption from military service and labour tax. In society, *yangban* lived in exclusive locations away from other social groups; they resided in special quarters in cities or lived in separate villages in the countryside.<sup>256</sup> The *jungin* was called as such because it lay between the classes of the *yangban* and the commoners. To become a *jungin*, one almost always had to pass the miscellaneous examinations, which tested a variety of technical and professional subjects, such as law, medicine, art, culinary culture, commerce, geography, astronomy, and translation, covering almost all professions like physicians, astronomers, interpreters, accountants, legal clerks, and low government functionaries. The *jungin* were the lowest-ranking literate people who were actually the machinery and backbone of the bureaucracy. Thus, they functioned as the educated technicians or professionals, the middle class gentry,

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<sup>254</sup> Peter H. Lee, and Wm. Theodore de Bary, eds., *Sources of Korean Tradition*, vol.2: 34 and 46.

<sup>255</sup> Suzanne Crowder Han, *Notes on things Korean* (Elizabeth, NJ; Seoul: Hollym, 1995) 208; and Eugene Y. Park, *Between Dreams and Reality*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>256</sup> Suzanne Crowder Han, *Notes on things Korean*, p. 209.

and literati. The *sangmin* consisted of farmers, fishermen, labourers, some artisans and merchants. They were poor yet were the tax base and subject to the military draft; they were considered “clean workers” yet had little social status. In theory, the *sangmin* could sit for the civil service examinations but, in practice, few of them could gather enough resources to receive sufficient education for their success in the examinations.<sup>257</sup> The lowest-level *cheonmin* was composed of the outcastes, slaves, prisoners, and members of despised groups who held specialties that were considered dirty or improper, covering occupations like butchers, shamans, shoemakers, metalworkers, magicians, sorcerers, jail keepers, prostitutes, and performers.<sup>258</sup> The *cheonmin* were prohibited from almost all opportunities of social advancement, not to mention taking the *gwageo* examinations.

With all this background information of the Korean social and administrative systems, it is probable that the *Jongjeongdo* was deliberately imported by Korean *yangban* for their political and didactical needs. According to Joseon tradition, only the *yangban* and the *jungin* were allowed to receive education but the latter was not permitted to take the literary examinations to enter officialdom. In theory, both classes could have been interested in playing the game. However, given that the bureaucratic positions listed on the game board could only be taken by the *yangban* graduates and there was no position in the first post section that had any relation to the miscellaneous examinations or the *jungin* professions, the actual intended customers of this game market must have been the people from the *yangban* class. The Chinese *Shengguan tu* apparently had been customized during the course of importation, which suggests that Korea’s acceptance of this culture-embedded product was

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<sup>257</sup> Eugene Y. Park, *Between Dreams and Reality*, pp. 39 and 48; Peter H. Lee, and Wm. Theodore de Bary, eds., *Sources of Korean Tradition*, vol.1: 265-266; and Keith Pratt, and Richard Rutt, *Korea: A Historical and Cultural Dictionary*, pp. 402-403.

<sup>258</sup> Peter H. Lee, and Wm. Theodore de Bary, eds., *Sources of Korean Tradition*, vol.1: 266.

also highly selective. This game reached its unprecedented popularity during the late Joseon partly because of the disproportionate growth of the *yangban* population as a result of the gradual rise in the sale of *yangban* titles, along with the prevalence of forging and purchasing genealogies to take a false surname of a false lineage.<sup>259</sup> Such a close connection between the game and the *yangban* class also explained why this device was that popular among *yangban* adults as a gambling tool.

### 5.2.3 The generalization and the didactic characteristic of the *Jongjeongdo*

The Joseon government organized a well-structured educational system because Neo-Confucians regarded education as vitally important for promoting Confucian ideals and preparing qualified students for the civil service examinations. In addition to the Seonggyungwan, or the National Confucian Academy, and the four district schools established in the capital city Seoul, numerous county schools were set up throughout the country. Funded by the state and the local authorities, these schools provided students stipends and other prerogatives like exemption from military duty. From the mid-sixteenth century onwards, this educational force was further enhanced by the founding of hundreds of private academies headed by local scholars in the countryside.<sup>260</sup>

Such a large group of students ensured the continued publication and creation of the game. In addition to Chinese characters (Sino-Korean 漢字 *hanja*), the industry managed to expand the market by producing more games in *Hunminjeongeum* 訓民正音 (literally, Proper Sounds for the Education of the People), the native alphabet of the Korean language.

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<sup>259</sup> For the sale of ranks and offices by the Joseon government, see Eugene Y. Park, *Between Dreams and Reality*, pp. 128-132.

<sup>260</sup> Peter H. Lee, and Wm. Theodore de Bary, eds., *Sources of Korean Tradition*, vol.1: 264-265 and 296-297.

This language system was created by a group of scholars commissioned by King Sejong 世宗 (r. 1418-1450) in 1443 and was promulgated in 1446; after the early twentieth century, it is called the 한글 *hangul*, meaning “Korean writing.”<sup>261</sup> Before the latter years of the nineteenth century, the *Hunminjeongeum* was disparaged as the *eonmun* 諺文 (vulgar script) by the literate elite who preferred the more classical *hanja* writing system; hence, it is reasonable to say that the publication of the *Jongjeongdo* in *Hunminjeongeum* was meant for people beyond the ruling *yangban* class. This was precisely a Korean way of vulgarizing the game.

It is indisputable that the Korean cultural importers adapted and considerably modified the Chinese promotion game. The Koreans borrowed the idea and the design from the Chinese *Shengguan tu* and substituted their official systems for the Chinese bureaucracy and the cubical dice for the traditional *yut* stick dice. Like the Chinese elite, ever since it was introduced to Korea, the Korean *yangban* also considered the device educational and thus integrated the game with other teaching means to prepare for the career of their students. In the history of pedagogy in Korea, it occupied a position that its Chinese counterpart had never experienced.

In order to encourage their sons memorize the official structure, preparing them to be a successful member of the ruling party, the *yangban* had their young boys play the *Jongjeongdo*, along with other fighting and administrative games. As early as 1469, the number of all central and local civil official posts of the Joseon government had reached about eighteen hundred, and the combined comprehension of their ranks, appellations, and

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<sup>261</sup> See The Korean Buddhist Research Institute, *The History and Culture of Buddhism in Korea*, pp. 181-183; Suzanne Crowder Han, *Notes on things Korean*, pp. 139-140; and Peter H. Lee, and Wm. Theodore de Bary, eds., *Sources of Korean Tradition*, vol.1: 294-295.

mutual relationships was even complicated.<sup>262</sup> To deal with this problem, the Joseon aristocrats and intellectuals encouraged their young boys to play this game to systematically learn and familiarize themselves with the names and the interrelations of major government posts and administrative regions.

Moreover, according to some Joseon scholars, the game also served to ignite the desire of educated young men for an ambitious career in bureaucracy. The argument can be supported by a series of contests developed for children to learn about leadership. The combination consisted of the *Gamassaum* 駕馬戰 (palanquin battle), the *Wonnolyi* 員戲 (county magistrate game), and the mock government service examination. The contests provided the children an opportunity to learn and practice how to engage in a battle, serve as a county magistrate, and take the examination.<sup>263</sup>

The palanquin battle was a team game played by the *yangban* boys who attended the village schools, with an aim to snatch opponents' flags and destroy their palanquins. It was usually held during a brief break within a fortnight or less around *Chuseok* 秋夕 (the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the eighth lunar month) when the school headmasters took days off for *Chuseok* memorial services. Students in every village school were divided into groups. Each team contained an attack unit and a guard unit, presided over by a student who carried a *chongsugi* 總帥旗 (flag of the Commander in chief). The schoolboys in the attack unit, called frozen Pollack heads, had to be strong and fleet-footed as they were required to charge at the opponents' palanquin. Those in the guard unit were responsible for the protection of the palanquin by encircling it. The two opposing teams would shout out while circumambulating the village to the field

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<sup>262</sup> Eugene Y. Park, *Between Dreams and Reality*, p. 35.

<sup>263</sup> Lee E-Wha, *Korea's Pastimes and Customs: A Social History*, trans. Park Ju-Hee (Paramus, New Jersey: Homa & Sekey Books, 2006) 58.

where the contest was about to take place. Upon arrival, before the battle began, the two teams would debate for a while until the battle was waged. After winning the battle, on the one hand, the team would wave the trophy flags while parading the streets; on the other hand, their parents and fellow villagers would feast them, believing that the victory was an auspicious omen of their passing the government service examination that year. It is notable that the adults' involvement in and interpretation of the result had turned a mere schoolboys' game into a central ritual of the festival for the schools and their respective villages.<sup>264</sup>

The function of the palanquin battle was paired up with that of the county magistrate game. Different from the former, a seasonal event, the magistrate game was played more frequently by the schoolboys in their spare time. Having dressed up as the county magistrate and the local civil functionaries, the children began the game by circumambulating the village to a big yard or the male quarter of a house, where they sequentially performed a mock trial and a mock examination. In the mock trial, the boys pretended to hold a hearing about those who claimed to have been unjustly convicted; sometimes they even pretended to punish and ridicule officials who were convicted of corruption. After the trial, the children took a mock government service examination and the highest scorer was given an award. Apparently, in a number of ways, the military-like palanquin battle, the civilian magistrate trial, and the mock examinations for both the civilian and military candidates were highly educational for the students, who were prospective government officials.<sup>265</sup> Obviously, the use of the game with such an intention indicates that it was not only considered to be a game for children but also a very practical exercise in dynastic-bureaucratic education for the *yangban* class.

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<sup>264</sup> Lee E-Wha, Korea's Pastimes and Customs: A Social History, pp. 58-60.

<sup>265</sup> Lee E-Wha, Korea's Pastimes and Customs: A Social History, pp. 60-61.

#### 5.2.4 The game board of the Buddhist *Seongbuldo*

Buddhism was officially introduced to Korea in 372 during the Three Kingdoms (57 BC- 668) period when a Chinese cleric-emissary from northern China arrived at the Goguryeo 高句麗 (37 BC-668) royal court.<sup>266</sup> Twelve years later, in 384, an Indian monk travelled to Baekje 百濟 (18 BC-660) via China and was received by the king of Baekje.<sup>267</sup> Both Goguryeo and Baekje actively promoted the newly introduced faith that was brought along with it the then advanced culture of China. Under the influence, a number of Korean monks travelled to China to study under eminent masters of different Buddhist sects. On the whole, the study of *Vinaya* texts, such as the Nirvana Sūtra and the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra, flourished in Baekje while the Three Treatise School was more prevalent in Goguryeo. To deepen their knowledge of the religion, some of the Korean monks even travelled to India. Throughout the sixth century, Baekje monks brought Buddhist texts home directly from India, which encouraged the advancement of specialized Buddhist studies within the Baekje kingdom.<sup>268</sup>

The early Silla 新羅 kingdom (57 BC-668), located on the relatively isolated south-eastern coast, was recorded to have officially accepted Buddhism late in 527, and began regular diplomatic missions to China towards the end of the sixth century. Silla was slower in developing from the conservative clan-based power groups that sponsored native religions to a centralized state with a strong royal court that accepted Buddhism in the mid-sixth century.<sup>269</sup> The Silla royal court even identified the kingdom as a “Buddha Land” and related

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<sup>266</sup> John Isaac Goulde, Anti-Buddhist Polemic in Fourteenth and Fifteenth Century Korea, p. 25.

<sup>267</sup> John Isaac Goulde, Anti-Buddhist Polemic in Fourteenth and Fifteenth Century Korea, p. 36.

<sup>268</sup> Peter H. Lee, and Wm. Theodore de Bary, eds., Sources of Korean Tradition, vol.1: 34-35 and 38.

<sup>269</sup> Peter H. Lee, and Wm. Theodore de Bary, eds., Sources of Korean Tradition, vol. 1: 34.

the royal families to the Śākya clan.<sup>270</sup> Buddhism prospered in the Unified Silla (668-935) period. Architecture of Buddhist monasteries and stūpas blossomed in many areas, especially in the capital and its vicinity, and many local Buddhist institutions were patronized by powerful local lords.<sup>271</sup>

Buddhism continued to thrive during the Goryeo (918-1392) dynasty, being viewed as a state religion that could effectively protect the nation as many Buddhist practices of the time also integrated with geomantic prognostication and elements rooted in native religions.<sup>272</sup> The Goryeo bureaucracy was less influential, as major government policies were made by a powerful council of aristocrats.<sup>273</sup> The royal families continued to sponsor Buddhism and the accomplishments can be represented by the woodblock-printed Goryeo Buddhist Tripitaka. However, lavish aristocratic patronage in Buddhist practices and ceremonies and the unlawful activities engaged in by some corrupt monastic communities made Buddhism vulnerable to attack. As the Confucian-based civil service examination system expanded, scholar-officials became dominant in government by the end of the dynasty. From the early fourteenth century onward, Buddhism became the target of severe criticism by the Neo-Confucian scholar-officials.

With the ascendancy of Neo-Confucianism as the state orthodoxy, the Joseon dynasty (1392-1910) left little latitude for official support of Buddhism and was anti-Buddhist *per se*. The Joseon government systematically persecuted Buddhism by repeatedly confiscating monastic lands, defrocking monks and nuns, and suspending clerical certifications, regardless of periodic patronage by members of significant circles including a few early Joseon rulers

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<sup>270</sup> Peter H. Lee, and Wm. Theodore de Bary, eds., Sources of Korean Tradition, vol. 1: 34; and John Isaac Goulde, Anti-Buddhist Polemic in Fourteenth and Fifteenth Century Korea, p. 65.

<sup>271</sup> John Isaac Goulde, Anti-Buddhist Polemic in Fourteenth and Fifteenth Century Korea, pp. 90-91 and 98.

<sup>272</sup> John Isaac Goulde, Anti-Buddhist Polemic in Fourteenth and Fifteenth Century Korea, pp. 76-77 and 91.

<sup>273</sup> John Isaac Goulde, Anti-Buddhist Polemic in Fourteenth and Fifteenth Century Korea, p. 81.



and some royal family members. In 1424, the authority even commanded a re-categorization of various Buddhist sects into two schools, the meditative *Seon* School and the scripture-oriented *Gyo* School. Under this reduction of the schools, Korean Buddhism became less sectarian and more controllable. Early in the following century, Buddhism was further suppressed as the government abolished the monastic examination that was established early in the Goryeo dynasty, eventually severing the religion's governmental ties. Despite the five-century attempt, however, the persecution was unable to uproot and destroy the much longer tradition of Korean Buddhism, which had been the mainstream cultural value and criterion in Korea for generations even when it was under attack. Nevertheless, the Joseon Neo-Confucian officials did effectively amalgamate the religion with elements of other religious traditions, including Daoism, shamanism, and popular religions, into a belief system that was chiefly followed by women and commoners.

Although Buddhism has been in this region for such a long time, there seemed to be only one Buddhist game called the *Seongbuldo* 成佛圖 (Table of Attaining Buddhahood) that was reminiscent of the Chinese *Xuanfo tu*. A brief description in English of this religious device can be seen in a century-old pilot study by Stewart Culin. The game board sheet available to him was a small one, “which measures some twelve by twelve inches” and “is divided into one hundred and sixty-nine squares (13 by 13).”<sup>274</sup> According to him, each square was inscribed with the names of the various conditions of existence, starting from the lowest forms through the eighteen Brahmaloas to the highest goal of reaching *Nirvana*. Under each name was the instruction for the next move, and the movements were made in

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<sup>274</sup> Stewart Culin (1858-1929), “The Japanese Game of Sugoroku,” The Brooklyn Museum Quarterly 7 (Oct. 1920) 225.

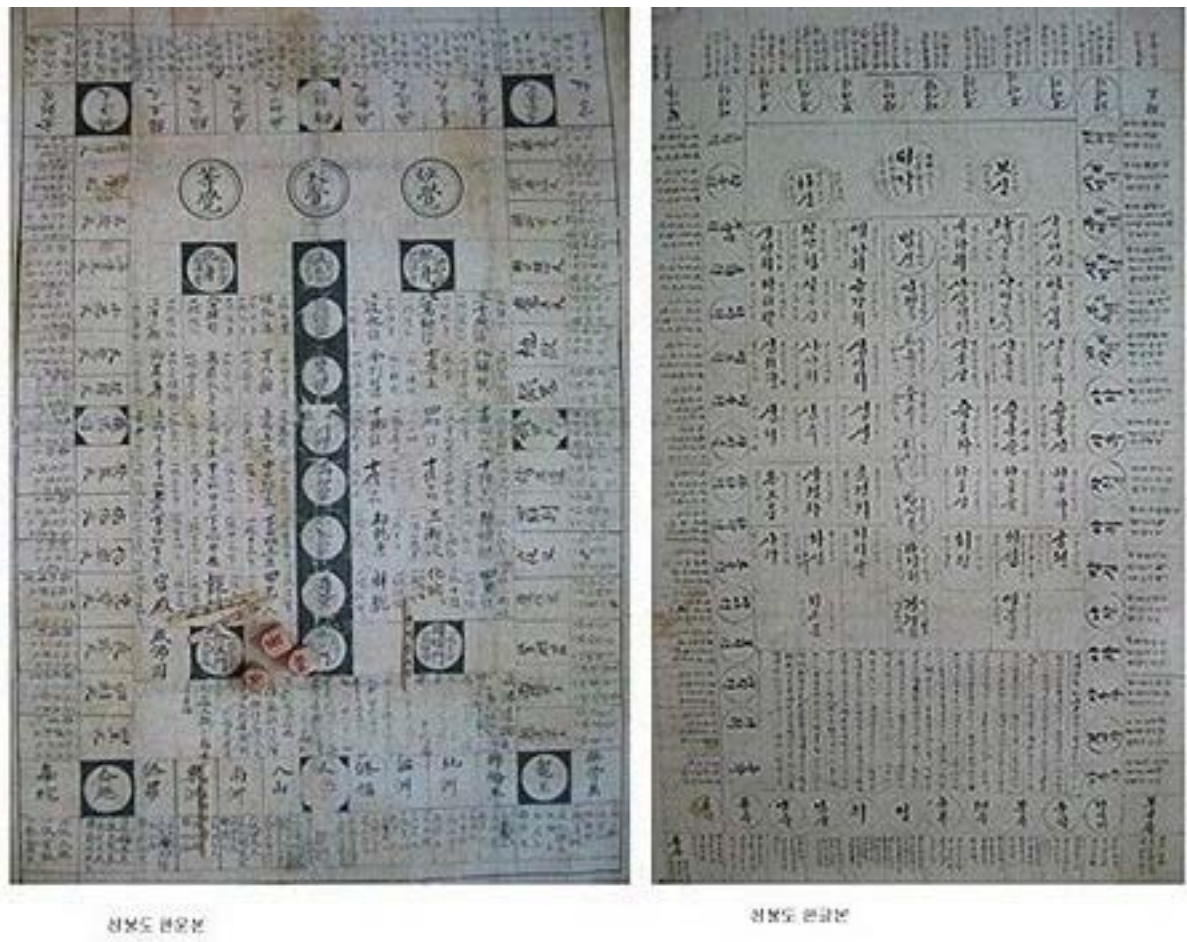
accordance with the throws of three dice.<sup>275</sup> Culin's description, however, is too brief to provide a sufficient idea of the content and its Buddhist affiliation.

It is fortunate that some *Seongbuldo* that have survived in the possession of Korean museums and collectors; a more detailed examination of these game boards can help supplement our knowledge of this religious device and shed as much light as possible on the koreanization of it. Two well-preserved examples of these game boards can be seen in the collection of the Jikji Museum of Buddhist Arts, one in *hanja* and the other one in *hangul* (Figure 5.8). In size, they are approximately 68.4 and 62.7 centimeters in width and 105.1 and 104.2 centimeters in length, bigger than Culin's version and consistent with those of the bureaucratic *Jongjeongdo*. The layouts of these two game boards are very similar; both are made up of three concentric oblongs, which form two outer layers of strip margins encircling the central oblong. The two outer margins are divided into small oblongs and squares, and the central space is divided into dozens of squares and two oblongs of larger size. On the *hanja* game board, some of these squares and oblongs are highlighted with black circular margins.

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<sup>275</sup> Stewart Culin, "The Japanese Game of Sugoroku," p. 225.

**Figure 5.8** *Seongbuldo* in *hanja* (left; 68.4 x 105.1 cm) and in *hangul* (right; 62.7 x 104.2 cm).



(Jikji Museum of Buddhist Arts 直指聖寶博物館: [www.jikjimuseum.org/file/wind/05/P1200143.Jpg](http://www.jikjimuseum.org/file/wind/05/P1200143.Jpg); 18 June 2009)

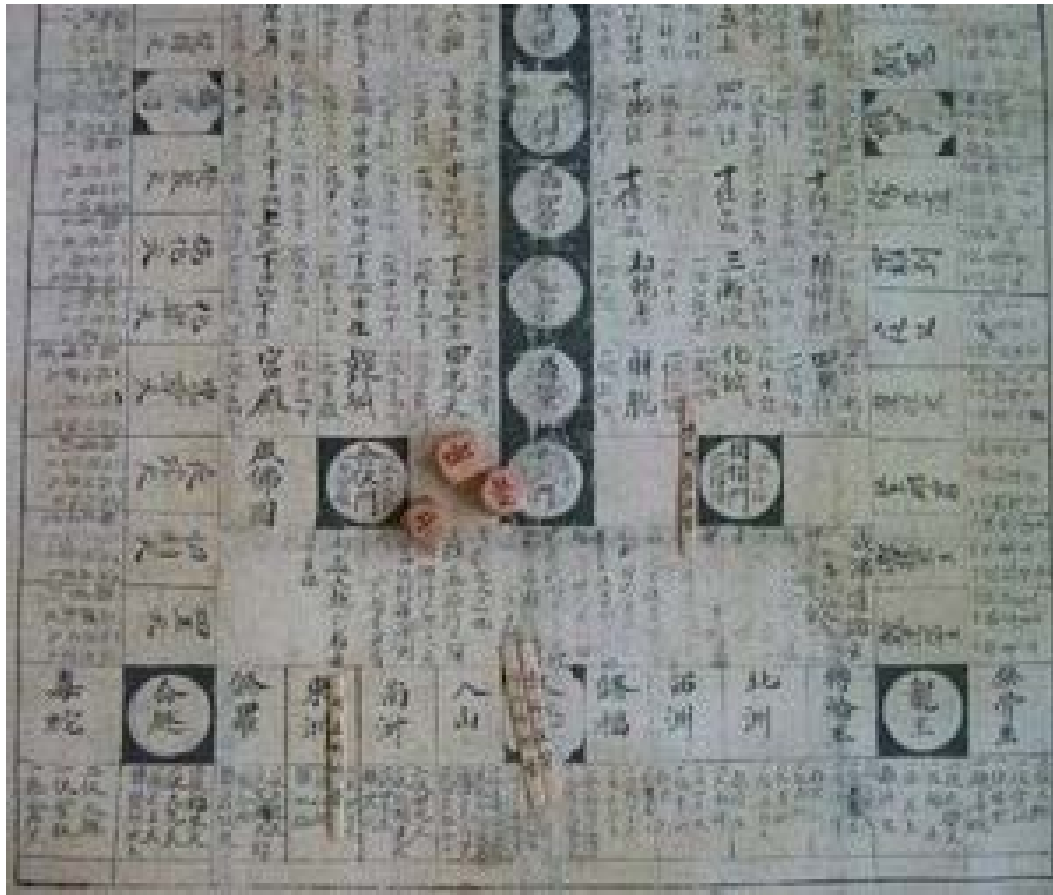
Inside these squares are captioned with Buddhist terms. Take the *hanja* version as an example. The game begins at the square called “the *inchwi* 人趣 (human world),” which is located at the center square of the second outer layer. On the same layer, inside all other small oblongs is a series of Buddhist terms regarding different forms of existence within the six paths of reincarnation, starting immediately from the left and the right sides of the *inchwi* to the far ends. By the sides of the *inchwi* are the terms “*dongju* 東洲 (eastern continent;

Pūrva-videha),” “*seoju* 西洲 (western continent; Aparā-godānīya),” “*namju* 南洲 (southern continent; Jambudvīpa),” and “*bukju* 北洲 (northern continent; Uttarakuru),” referring to the Buddhist interpretation of the universe called the *sadae buju* 四大部洲 (four continents), as well as special personages including the *Sura* 修羅 (Asura) and the *Jeonryunwang* 轉輪王 (Cakravarti). Then, following on the left side are the names of the twenty-eight-level heavens within the three realms of the *Yokgye* 欲界 (Realm of Desire), the *Saekgye* 色界 (Realm of Forms), and the *Musaekgye* 無色界 (Realm of Formless), and, on the right side are other forms of existence resulting from bad karma like the *yacha* 夜叉 (yaksa), the *ahgwi* 餓鬼 (hungry ghosts), and the *jioek* 地獄 (purgatory [dwellers]). The instruction for the next movements is written inside each space on the first outer layer corresponding to the term listed on the second outer layer, but the four corners are saved for the “bad retributions” that result in demotion or punishment in the game, which are the *doksa* 毒蛇 (viper), the *jeonnara* 全那羅, the *gwanno* 官奴 (government slave), and the *mugolchung* 無骨虫 (boneless worm). These punishments are definitely of Korean characteristic because they are not seen in Chinese Buddhist texts as the negative retributions to those who had committed harsh sins.

While the two outer layers are filled with a variety of forms of existence, the central space is two different sets of enlightenment levels pertinent to the *Yeombulmun* 念佛門 (Way of Mindfulness of the Buddha) and the *Wondonmun* 圓頓門 (Way of Sudden and Complete [Enlightenment]), two major Buddhist practices for salvation. The ultimate goal for the practitioner is to reach the ultimate enlightenments that lead to Buddhahood. For the game, this is represented by the destination spaces located at the top section of the central space,

labeling as the *Deunggak* 等覺 (Perfect Enlightenment), the *Myogak* 妙覺 (Marvelous Enlightenment), and the *Daegak* 大覺 (Great Enlightenment).

**Figure 5.9** Detail of the *Seongbuldo* in *hanja* shown in Figure 5.8.



Based on the terms listed on this game board, it is evident that the creator intended to compress a wide range of Buddhist teachings into a small sheet, which can be roughly classified into two main groups by their functions in Buddhist teaching. The first main group consists of notions that constitute the basic world view of Buddhism built on the principles of karma and causation, including those terms associated with the Buddhist cosmological landscape, the interrelationship among residents of different dimensions, and the causes for

their perpetual cycles of rebirth. In answer to the problems raised from this group, the second group offers two types of Buddhist practice as the solution, which are meditation and *yeombul* 念佛 (Mindfulness of the Buddha). According to the nine grades of rebirth into the Pure Land of Buddha Amitābha and the detailed listings of the enlightenment levels, it is apparent that the game was created with an intention to familiarize the players with the two most popular Buddhist practices that have long been promoted by the *Jeongto* 淨土 (Pure Land) School and the meditative *Seon* School in Korea. Contextually, the framework of the content of this game board is similar to that of Zhixu's design.

Although it is not certain when and by whom the Pure Land teachings, the worship of Amitābha Buddha, and the practice of *yeombul* were introduced to the Unified Silla, it is generally believed to have taken root by the collective efforts of some remarkable Buddhist monks in the early Unified Silla, including Wonkwang 圓光 (541-630?), Jajang 慈藏 (590-658? / 608-686?), and Wonhyo 元曉 (617-686).<sup>276</sup> Among them, Wonhyo was particularly influential in preaching the belief to the remote areas as he “personally visited villages, dancing and singing to the chanting of Amitābha so that even the most stupid knew the name of Amitābha and could chant it.”<sup>277</sup> Through the effort of Wonhyo and other Unified Silla monks, Buddhism began to spread among the common people, before which the religion was largely confined to aristocratic circles.<sup>278</sup> He was influential also because of his vital role in assimilating the broad range of Buddhist doctrines that had been transmitted into the peninsula by different schools. His deep comprehension of Buddhism was recognized as he revealed the underlying unity of truth within these schools yet still maintained the

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<sup>276</sup> The Korean Buddhist Research Institute, *The History and Culture of Buddhism in Korea*, pp. 94-96.

<sup>277</sup> The Korean Buddhist Research Institute, *The History and Culture of Buddhism in Korea*, p. 95.

<sup>278</sup> John Isaac Goulde, *Anti-Buddhist Polemic in Fourteenth and Fifteenth Century Korea*, pp. 65-66.

distinctiveness of the teachings expounded in their texts.<sup>279</sup> Hence, under Wonhyo's teaching, the *yeombul* practice became so popular among both the intelligentsia and the common people that it had exerted a continuing influence on Buddhist thought in the following generations and even had regained its popularity during the last two centuries of the Joseon dynasty despite the surveillance of Neo-Confucian officials. This game board probably was made during this revival period between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries.

The *Seon* School began during the latter Unified Silla period. In general, the initial transmission of the Chinese *Chan* teaching into Silla is attributed to a seventh-century Silla Master Beoprang 法朗 (ca. 632-646) and the teaching was continued by other monks like Master Sinhaeng 神行 (704-779) and Master Doui 道義 (d. 825).<sup>280</sup> By the end of the ninth century, this school had developed into various sub-sects that were represented by the establishment of the *Gusanseonmun* 九山禪門 (Nine Mountains of *Seon* Schools), seven of which were formed in the late Silla and two founded during the early Goryeo. They were the Sect of Mount Silsang 實相山, the Sect of Mount Gaji 迦智山, the Sect of Mount Dongri 桐裡山, the Sect of Mount Sagul 閼崛山, the Sect of Mount Seongju 聖住山, the Sect of Mount Saja 獅子山, the Sect of Mount Bongrim 鳳林山, the Sect of Mount Sumi 須彌山, and the Sect of Mount Huiyang 曦陽山.<sup>281</sup> By emphasizing meditating for long hours, the

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<sup>279</sup> For more information on Wonhyo's activities and writings, see Robert E. Buswell, Jr., "The Biographies of the Korean Monk Wŏnhyo (617-686): A Study in Buddhist Hagiography," in *Biography as a Genre in Korean Literature*, ed. Peter H. Lee (Berkeley, Calif.: Center for Korean Studies, 1989) 1-68; Alan Sponberg, "Wonhyo on Maitreya Visualization Chinese Buddhism in the Korean Kingdom of Silla," in *Maitreya, the future Buddha*, eds. Alan Sponberg, and Helen Hardacre (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire] ; New York : Cambridge University Press, 1988) 94-109; The Korean Buddhist Research Institute, *The History and Culture of Buddhism in Korea*, pp. 84-92; and Hugh Wylie and Koh Wonyoung, *Korea: a Timeless Beauty* (Toronto: Gallery of Korean Art, Royal Ontario Museum, 1999) 49-50.

<sup>280</sup> The Korean Buddhist Research Institute, *The History and Culture of Buddhism in Korea*, p. 113.

<sup>281</sup> The Korean Buddhist Research Institute, *The History and Culture of Buddhism in Korea*, pp. 113-115 and 139-142; and Kanayama Shōkō, *Dongya fojiao shi*, pp. 278-279.

*Seon* sects challenged the authority of the then more traditional scripture-based *Gyo* schools and thus were regarded as radical and repressed by the state-supported *Gyo* schools, such as the *Samnon* 三論 (*Mādhyamika*) School, the *Yeolban* 涅槃 (*Nirvāna*) School, and the *Gyeyul* 戒律 (*Vinaya*) School.<sup>282</sup> The tension continued in the Goryeo dynasty and led to the synthetic movements between the *Seon* and the doctrinal schools, particularly the *Hwaeom* 華嚴 School. The influence of the *Seon* gradually extended to the aristocratic government and the rest of the society toward the end of the dynasty. It was eventually treated as a state religion and enjoyed extensive support and prerogatives through connections with the royal family and powerful court members. It was also during this period that the philosophies of Confucianism and Daoism began to catch the attention of *Seon* monks, partly due to the increasing influence of Chinese classics as the foundation of education and statecraft.<sup>283</sup> The tendency for Buddhist monks to expound the “Three Teachings” had since become more marked. In the new Joseon dynasty, Buddhism suffered a huge setback when the anti-Buddhist ruling party gained political power and enforced restrictions to suppress Buddhism, including the reduction of Buddhist schools. Other restrictions included reducing the numbers of clergy, lands, and monasteries, limiting ages for entering the *saṃgha*, and prohibiting the *saṃgha* from entering cities. Nonetheless, these suppressions were occasionally relieved when the rulers were devotees of Buddhism.<sup>284</sup>

The content of this *Seongbuldo* seems to be consistent with the development of Buddhism in Korea. First of all, this study assumes that all extant Buddhist games were produced during the Joseon dynasty because there is no evidence to suggest that any existing

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<sup>282</sup> Hugh Wylie and Koh Wonyoung, *Korea: a Timeless Beauty*, p. 49.

<sup>283</sup> Kanayama Shōkō, *Dongya fojiao shi*, p. 472.

<sup>284</sup> For more information, see The Korean Buddhist Research Institute, *The History and Culture of Buddhism in Korea*, pp. 172-181.



*Seongbuldo* was created before Joseon. The dating of this *Seongbuldo* can be revealed from the two Buddhist practices shown in the game board; since the *Seon* School had been a dominant Buddhist tradition for such a long period of time that its meditative practice must have been an indispensable component on the game board, the meditative practice here is useless in helping with the dating. It is the Pure Land practice shown on the game board that can provide a clue to the religious background at the time of the game's creation, which was possibly produced after the seventeenth century when the influence of the Pure Land School resurfaced. This dating also corresponds to the fact that the dual practices of meditation and *yeombul* were strongly advocated by the prominent Buddhist Master Hyujeong 休靜 (1520-1604) around the turn of the seventeenth century and had since been faithfully observed by his followers.<sup>285</sup> It is possible that this game could have been produced and circulated among Buddhists associated with Hyujeong and his followers. In addition, the consistency showed in the general layouts of the Buddhist *Seongbuldo* and the bureaucratic *Jongjeongdo* also indicates the closeness within their time span of creation.

Judging from the focus of their contents, this *Seongbuldo* and Master Zhixu's *Xuanfo tu* are of Pure Land affiliation, even though they have no apparent direct relationship with each other in terms of layout design. Zhixu's version tends to present a holistic view of the teachings of Buddhism among different schools, with an emphasis that the ultimate enlightenment attained by the Pure Land practice is equivalent to other meditative and visualization practices associated with different Buddhist schools. His teaching was understandable against the background of the highly synthetic tradition at the time, not to mention the dominance of the Pure Land School after the mid-Ming dynasty. For this

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<sup>285</sup> The Korean Buddhist Research Institute, *The History and Culture of Buddhism in Korea*, p. 205; and Kanayama Shōkō, *Dongya fojiao shi*, p. 472.

*Seongbuldo*, the purpose of juxtaposing the Pure Land practice with other practices was similar, though in this case the Pure Land practice was only comparable to the *Seon* practice. Such a simple comparison was clearly a reflection of the suppressive situation of the religion caused by the Joseon authorities. Although there is no record of the introduction of the Chinese *Xuanfo tu* in Korea, the fact that Korea had adopted the bureaucratic model from China suggests the same possibility. If this was the case, the Korean *Seongbuldo* may be of reference value to understanding other long lost Buddhist games in China. Unfortunately, the lack of sufficient information makes such discussion infeasible.

Like its bureaucratic counterpart, the *Seongbuldo* has versions in Korean alphabet too. However, different from the *Jongjeongdo*, the use of the alphabet in the Buddhist version cannot be deemed a sign of vulgarization for the game. At the time after the alphabet was promulgated, in spite of the ruler's efforts in promotion, the system was used only by illiterate people for accounting and correspondence. The situation changed as the Buddhist community began to translate Buddhist sūtras into *hangul* during the reign of King Sejo 世祖 (r. 1455-1468).<sup>286</sup> These publishing activities were relatively active and extensive and thus a considerable number of Buddhist publications, including the *Seongbuldo*, were printed in *hangul*.<sup>287</sup> Considering that games like this used to promote Buddhism were meant for all people and that the alphabetic system was comparatively easier to learn for common people, the Buddhist versions' designers would never hesitate to produce concurrently the alphabetic and the Sino-Korean versions to match people's capacity for reading.

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<sup>286</sup> The Korean Buddhist Research Institute, *The History and Culture of Buddhism in Korea*, p. 182; and Won Yi Beom and Lim Byeong Ho, *A History of Korean Buddhist Culture and Some Essays*, p. 60.

<sup>287</sup> Kanayama Shōkō, *Dongya fojiao shi*, p. 470; and Won Yi Beom and Lim Byeong Ho, *A History of Korean Buddhist Culture and Some Essays*, p. 60.

### 5.2.5 Dice

Both the *Jongjeongdo* and the *Seongbuldo* were played with two to six *yut* sticks or cubical dice to determine the movement of the game pieces. Culin has discussed both types of dice. In regard to the cubical dice, he mentions that the moves in the *Seongbuldo*, referred to as the Monk's Game of Promotion in his article, "are made according to the throws with three small wooden dice, each inscribed on its six sides with the magic formula: Nam no a ni t'o fat."<sup>288</sup> The "magic formula" is actually identical with the six characters written in the dice used in the Chinese *Xuanfo tu* that pronounce "nan," "mo," "a," "mi," "tuo," and "fo," and mean "taking refuge in Buddha Amitābha." The use of three cubical dice like this has also been mentioned in a late-seventeenth-century source on the bureaucratic *Jongjeongdo*.<sup>289</sup> However, most surviving dice seen today for both games are *yut* sticks, which are purely of Korean characteristic. According to Culin, instead of cubical dice, the bureaucratic games "use a long wooden die with five sides, having its six edges notched with from one to six notches. This die, ... , is a derivative from or a substitute for four wooden or "stick dice," which the Koreans use in what may be called their national game of nyout."<sup>290</sup> The Korean word "nyout" refers to the nowadays "*yut* 윷" or "*yunnori* 윷놀이," which is equivalent to the Sino-Korean terms "*Cheoksa* 擲杙 (stick throwing game)," or "*Sahui* 杙戲 (stick game)." This traditional game was a stick throwing game playing with a game board, a few markers, and four *yunmok* 輪木 or *yut* stick dice. As the components and the rules of this game were simple, it virtually can be enjoyed by anyone, regardless of age and gender, anywhere. The ancient Koreans used to play *yut* from the first day to the fifteenth day of the first lunar

<sup>288</sup> Stewart Culin, "The Japanese Game of Sugoroku," pp. 225-226.

<sup>289</sup> Choi Seokjeong, *Myeonggok jip*, vol. 1: 654.

<sup>290</sup> Stewart Culin, "The Japanese Game of Sugoroku," p. 225.

month and occasionally held *yut* contests in villages and counties. In modern Korea, this game is played all year round, irrespective of the season, and generally considered the most popular of all traditional amusements. The popularity of this traditional game explains and guarantees the persistence of the Kṣitigarbha-inspired *yunmok* in Korea. Hence, the use of the stick dice in the games *Jongjeongdo* and *Seongbuldo* reveals a strong Korean preference.

Seong Hyeon also records that the Sino-Korean characters of “*deok* 德 (virtue),” “*jae* 才 (capability),” “*geun* 勤 (diligence),” “*gam* 堪 (endurance or being responsible),” “*yeon* 軟 (timidity),” and “*tom* 貪 (greed)” were inscribed on the six sides of the stick dice.<sup>291</sup> In comparison with the aforementioned Chinese characters, “*de* 德 (virtue),” “*cai* 才 (capability),” “*gong* 功 (accomplishment),” “*liang* 良 (decency),” “*rou* 柔 (timidity),” and “*zang* 贓 (corruption),” on the dice for the Chinese bureaucratic game, these six characters are similar in content and in didactic quality. Somehow, by the end of the sixteenth century, another set of Sino-Korean characters emerged, which was read as “*deok* 德 (virtue),” “*hoon* 勳 (merit),” “*mun* 文 (literature),” “*mu* 武 (martial art),” “*tom* 貪 (greed),” and “*yeon* 軟 (timidity).”<sup>292</sup> Although some characters had been changed in these two sets of inscribed words, they managed to retain the combined ethical meanings inherited from their Chinese model, of which the Confucian ethics of personal virtue, capability, feats, rectitude, and braveness were considered to be essential to an employable and successful government official. In later periods, these Sino-Korean characters were replaced by simple notches, which resembled the game’s development in China, where the six Chinese characters on the

<sup>291</sup> Seong Hyeon, *Yongjae chonghwa*, p. 268.

<sup>292</sup> For details, see Gwon Pil 權韓 (1569-1612), *Seokju jip* 石洲集 [Collection of Seokju] (Seoul: Ohseongsa 晬社, 1982) 465; and Choi Seokjeong, *Myeonggok jip*, vol. 1: 654.

cubical dice were substituted by red and black dots. Such a simplification may imply that the didactic purpose of the device was gradually overwhelmed by the urge for gambling.

The materials in this chapter present findings that both the bureaucratic and Buddhist gambling games were adopted and modified by the Korean elite and Buddhist communities in the interest of teaching. This study investigates the developments and the significance of both games so as to reveal their ties to their Chinese originals and the extent to which they were modified to fit into Korean's social and political needs before the modern period. Although the discussion on the impact of the *Seongbuldo* cannot be as thorough and detailed as that of the *Jongjeongdo* due to the limitation of available sources, its relationship with the Pure Land School is indisputable. In addition, the creation of the alphabetic versions aptly demonstrates how the Korean Pure Land practitioners used this game to continue Wonhyo's preaching among the common people. By comparing the Chinese originals with the Korean versions, the traces of koreanization are detected; as Chinese and Korean influences had spread further east to Japan, would there be any japanization of the same gambling devices? Would both the bureaucratic and religious versions be adopted to Japan the same way as they were in Korea? The next chapter will explore these aspects to complete our understanding about these two countries where Buddhism and the Confucian-based administrative systems had been assimilated, observed and implemented, and where the related bureaucratic and religious games had been popular for centuries.

## 6 GAMBLING BOARD GAMES AS CULTURAL TRANSMITTERS OF CONFUCIAN BUREAUCRACY AND BUDDHIST DOCTRINE IN PREMODERN JAPAN

In Japan, the gambling board games that are similar to the aforementioned promotion games can be found among the best-known pictorial board games called “*e-sugoroku* 絵双六 or 絵雙六 (Pictorial Double Sixes),” or, less commonly, “*gami-sugoroku* 紙双六 (Paper Double Sixes),”<sup>293</sup> which are characterized by their animated pictorial layouts that come in a great variety of secular themes. The first *e-sugoroku* games were recognized to be of Buddhist origin, which are generally classified into the categories of the *Buppō-sugoroku* 仏法双六 (Double Sixes of Buddhist Dharma) and the *Jōdo-sugoroku* 浄土双六 (Double Sixes of Pure Land). However, the plain, diagram-like bureaucratic versions originating in China had never had a chance to develop in Japan until the longtime military regimes began to decline and the new governing systems were instituted by the subsequent Meiji 明治 (1868-1912) authority. Such a new socio-political situation in modern Japan was crucial in stimulating the creation of new *e-sugoroku* of a variety of new themes, among which the bureaucratic *e-sugoroku* finally emerged though only based on propagandizing the Western, not Chinese, style bureaucracy. In order to further explore the social, cultural, and political factors that resulted in the early dominance of Buddhist versions and the oblivion of the bureaucratic games in premodern Japan, brief overviews of these factors are discussed alongside aspects relevant to the religious and bureaucratic *e-sugoroku*.

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<sup>293</sup> Ono Takeo 小野武雄, *Edo no yūgi fūzoku zushi* 江戸の遊戯風俗図誌 [Catalogue of Games and Customs in Edo (Period)] (Tokyo: Tenbosha 展望社, 1983) 38 and 45-47; and Qian Daosun 錢稻孫, “Ribēn shuanglutan 日本雙陸談 [On Japanese Double Sixes],” *Qinghua xuebao* (Beijing) 清華學報 10: 2 (1935) 478-479.

### 6.1 The *Ban-Sugoroku* and the *E-Sugoroku*

As mentioned, in Japan, the promotion games can be found among the pictorial *e-sugoroku* (Pictorial Double Sixes), which is considered to be a ramification of an older race board game called “*sugoroku* 双六 (Double Sixes),” a term that suggests its Chinese origin. A Chinese gambling game with the same name, *shuanglu* 雙陸 or 雙六 (Double Sixes), was believed to have been introduced from India during the Northern and Southern dynasties (386-589) and become fashionable in Tang society.<sup>294</sup> The *shuanglu* was also believed to have been a modification of another dice game called “*chupu* 樗蒲,” which was spread in approximately the same period of time and was itself an evolution from an earlier race game known as “*lubo* 陸博 or 六博.”<sup>295</sup> Based on different sources, however, some scholars consider that the *shuanglu* game was merely an alternative name of the *lubo*; if this was the case, the game could be predated to as early as the Eastern Zhou dynasty (770-256 B.C.).<sup>296</sup> Based on Hong Zun’s 洪遵 (1120-1174) *Pu shuang* 譜雙 (Manual of [the Dice Game of] Double [Sixes]), by the mid-twelfth century, the game also came to be known by the titles “*wosu* 握塑,” “*changhang* 長行,” or “*poluosai* 婆羅塞戲.”<sup>297</sup> In fact, the history of the game can be more complicated for more games and names, in some ways, were believed to have connections with the *shuanglu*, including the “*wumu* 五木,” “*gewu* 格五,” “*sai* 塞,” and

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<sup>294</sup> Gao Guofan 高國藩, *Dunhuang minsuxue* 敦煌民俗學 [Ethnology in Dunhuang] (Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe 上海文藝出版社, 1989) 510-511; Cai Fengming 蔡豐明, *Youxi shi* 遊戲史 [History of Games] (Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe 上海文藝出版社, 1997) 73; and Ono Takeo, *Edo no yūgi fūzoku zushi*, p. 36.

<sup>295</sup> Wang Dingzhang, *Caiquan, boxi, duiwu: Zhongguo minjian youxi dubo huodong*, pp. 87-93.

<sup>296</sup> Zhu Yunying 朱雲影, *Zhongguo wenhua dui Ri Han Yue de yingxiang* 中國文化對日韓越的影響 [The Influence of Chinese Culture on Japan, Korea, and Vietnam] (Taipei: Liming wenhua shiye gongsi 黎明文化事業公司, 1981) 584 and 622.

<sup>297</sup> Hong Zun 洪遵 (1120-1174), *Pu shuang* 譜雙 [Manual of (the Dice Game of) Double (Sixes)] 1151 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan 藝文印書館, reprint 1966) 1.

“*jiusheng ju* 九勝局.”<sup>298</sup> It was definitely a long-lived gambling game as some people of the Ming-Qing era were still fond of it but, like many other gambling games, it faded after the rise of the *majiang/mahjong* 麻將, or *madio* 馬吊,<sup>299</sup> a gambling amusement that still entertains Chinese and the people of some other Asian countries.

Generally, *shuanglu* was played by two people with a pair of dice as well as fifteen black and fifteen white game pieces on a small rectangular box-like table (see Figure 6.1); the table could either be made of wood or lacquer-ware, on which two sets of twelve-square divisions were marked facing each other as the game track.<sup>300</sup> The black and white pieces were separately used by the two players to compete with each other by moving the pieces at the cast of the dice. In some Asian versions, the *shuanglu* could be played on a rug (see Figure 6.1) marked with a similar game track.

In order to differentiate the pictorial *sugoroku* from its older backgammon-like kin, the terms “*e-sugoroku*” and “*ban-sugoroku* 盤双六 (Board Double Sixes)” are applied to refer to them, respectively. The theories about when the *ban-sugoroku* was introduced to Japan are inconclusive but two possibilities have been proposed: a source of the Bunsei 文政 reign period (1818-1830) suggests that the game was brought to Japan around the first decade of the sixth century while some scholars tended to believe that it was carried back by the

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<sup>298</sup> For more comprehensive discussions on these games, see Cai Fengming, *Youxi shi*, pp. 5, 10-22, 50-53, 73, 101, 145, and 150-181.

<sup>299</sup> Guo Panxi 郭泮溪, *Zhongguo minjian youxi yu jingji* 中國民間遊戲與競技 [Chinese Folk Games and Sports] (Shanghai: Shanghai sanlian shudian 上海三聯書店, 1996) 160-162.

<sup>300</sup> Masukawa Kōichi 増川宏一, *Tobaku no Nihon shi* 賭博の日本史 [Japanese History of Gambling] (Tokyo: Heibonsha 平凡社, 1989) 42; Seki Tadao 関忠夫, ed., “Yūgigu 遊戲具 [Game Equipment],” *Nihon no bijutsu* 日本の美術 32 (1968) 72; Cai Fengming, *Youxi shi*, p. 181; Gao Guofan, *Dunhuang minsuxue*, p. 510; and Wang Dingzhang, *Caiquan, boxi, duiwu: Zhongguo minjian youxi dubo huodong*, pp. 90-91 and 94-95.



*kentōshi* 遣唐使 Kibi no Makibi 吉備真備 (695-775) from the Tang China in 735.<sup>301</sup> In regard to this issue, a Sui source actually helps to narrow down the possibility to the earlier time of the sixth century, as this source had already described the *ban-sugoroku* among one of those gambling games that were indulged in by the Japanese before the Sui-Tang dynasties.<sup>302</sup> By the mid-twelfth century, according to Hong Zun, among the variety of the *shuanglu* circulated in China at the time, such as the *Bei shuanglu* 北雙陸 (Northern Double Sixes; see Figure 2.1), the *Zhenla shuanglu* 真臘雙陸 (Zhenla's Double Sixes; Zhenla, present-day Cambodia) and the *Dashi shuanglu* 大食雙陸 (Dashi's Double Sixes; Dashi, present-day Persia; Figure 6.1), there was one termed as “*Riben shuanglu* 日本雙陸” (Japanese Double Sixes; Figure 6.2),<sup>303</sup> which further testified that the game had already been in Japan long enough to form a particular model that suited the preference and gambling habit of the Japanese people.

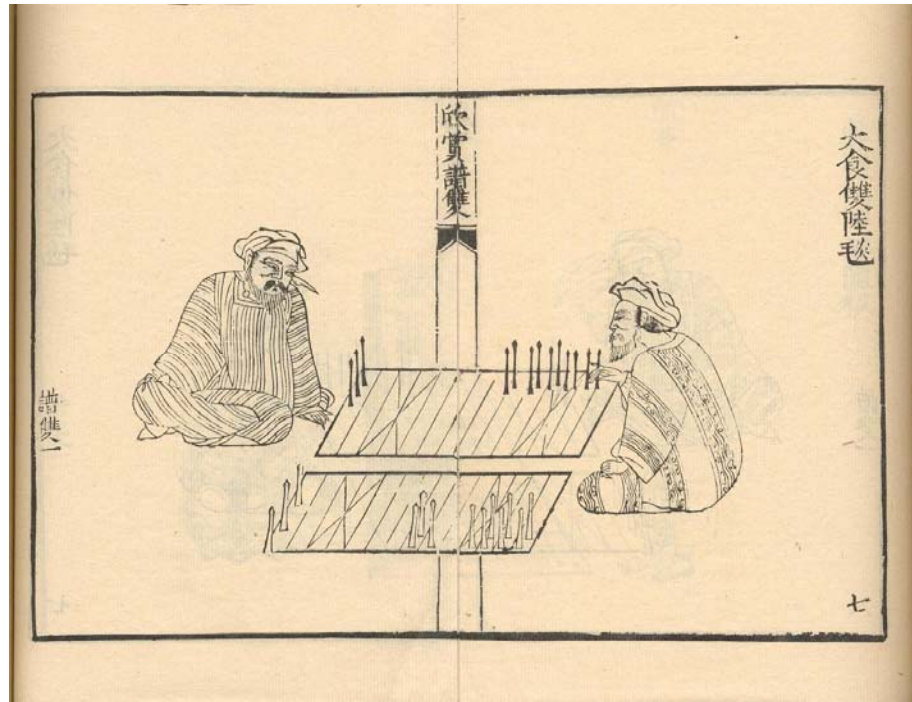
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<sup>301</sup> Takahashi Junji 高橋順二, *Nihon esugoroku shūsei* 日本繪双六集成 [Collection of Japanese Pictorial Double Sixes] (Tokyo: Kashiwa bijutsu shuppan 柏美術出版, 1994) 145.

<sup>302</sup> Zhu Yunying, *Zhongguo wenhua dui Ri Han Yue de yingxiang*, pp. 594 and 624.

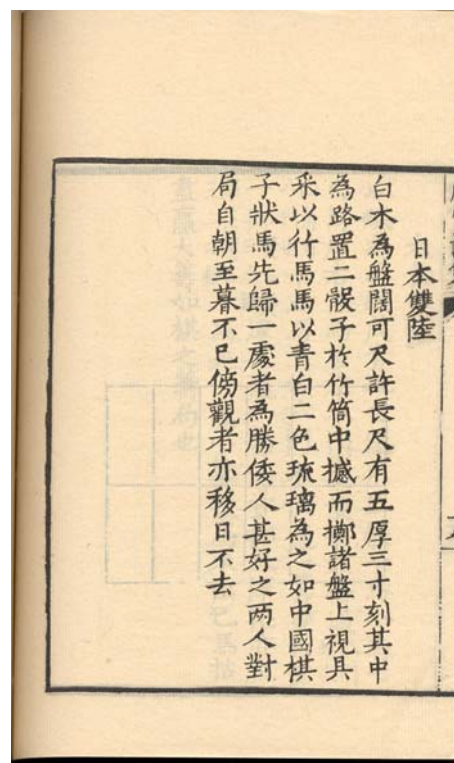
<sup>303</sup> Hong Zun, *Pu shuang*, pp. 5, 7-9, and 17-18; and Cai Fengming, *Youxi shi*, p. 181.

Figure 6.1 The *Dashi shuanglu*, or Dashi's Double Sixes.



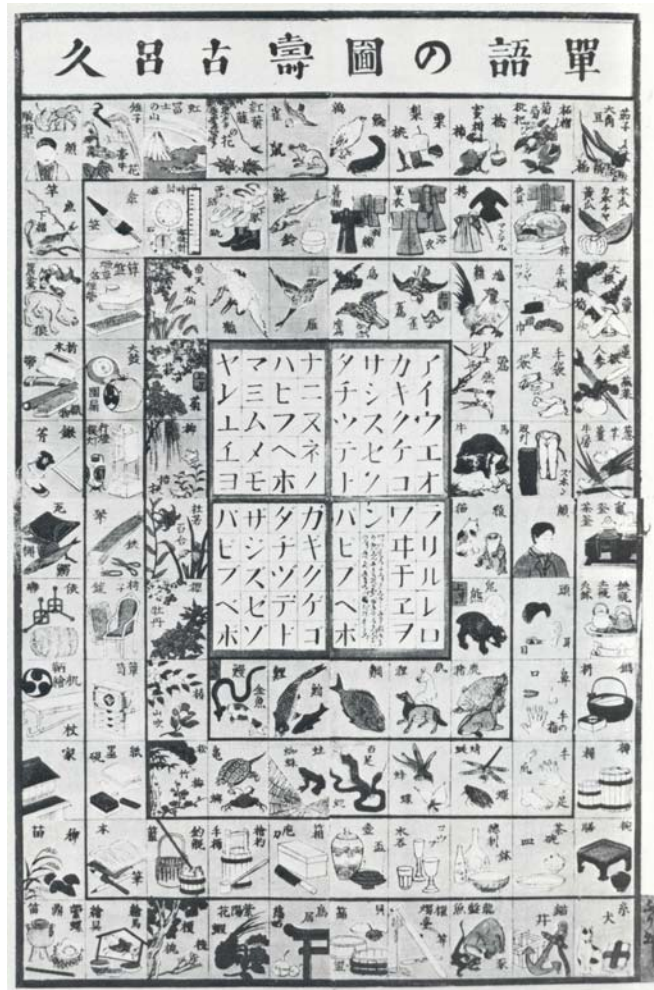
(Hong Zun, *Pu shuang*, p. 7)

Figure 6.2 The *Riben shuanglu*, or Japanese Double Sixes.



(Hong Zun, *Pu shuang*, p. 18)

**Figure 6.3** The *Tango-no-zu-sugoroku* 單語の圖壽古呂久 (単語の図寿古呂久; **Double Sixes of [Japanese] Syllabary**).



An example of the characters “寿(壽)古路久” used to refer to the pronunciation of *sugoroku* in Japanese *e-sugoroku*. 47 x 72 cm. (Takahashi, 1994, p. 94)

Gambling on *ban-sugoroku* had been a problem to the society and a headache for the Japanese authority, which repeated prohibitions on the game that had to be commanded at least three times in 689, 701, and 754 before the mid-eighth century to deal with people’s problem of excessive indulgence in gambling.<sup>304</sup> However, these bans were not effectively enforced as such interdictions on the *ban-sugoroku* can still be found in the records of the

<sup>304</sup> Ono Takeo, *Edo no yūgi fūzoku zushi*, pp. 38-41; Masukawa Kōichi, *Tobaku no Nihon shi*, pp. 42-45; and Zhu Yunying, *Zhongguo wenhua dui Ri Han Yue de yingxiang*, pp. 594-595 and 624.

following centuries.<sup>305</sup> It had to wait till the Tokugawa (1603-1868) regime that the prohibition could successfully be executed to halt the problem caused by gambling on the *ban-sugoroku*.<sup>306</sup>

The continuous prevalence of the *ban-sugoroku* and the *e-sugoroku* also explains why there were over thirty alternative Sino-Japanese characters, such as the “寿語録,” “寿古路久 (Figure 6.3),” “数語呂久,” and “四五六,” used to refer to the pronunciation of *sugoroku* in Japan.<sup>307</sup> Among these words, the character “*ju* 寿 (longevity)” was frequently used. The fact that playing the *e-sugoroku* during the Lunar New Year became a custom for Edo people and thus the game board became popular free gifts for both adults and children were most likely the reasons why this “*ju*” character was often used by the merchants and the publishers to title their newly published games during the first lunar month.<sup>308</sup> The character’s auspicious meaning for celebrating the season was obviously a good marketing strategy.

The *e-sugoroku* games are characterized by their animated pictorial layouts of various secular themes. By the Meiji period (1868-1912), these *e-sugoroku* had already developed into a fine collection of a wide range of themes, which can be classified differently depending on different criteria. The category classified by Takahashi Junji 高橋順二 is a fine example. He roughly divided the *e-sugoroku* from the Edo period to the Shōwa 昭和 reign period (1926-1989) into sixteen groups, with an attempt to follow their historical development that began to prosper from the Edo period onwards.<sup>309</sup> His division is as

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<sup>305</sup> For details, see Masukawa Kōichi, *Tobaku no Nihon shi*, pp. 48-69; and Ono Takeo, *Edo no yūgi fūzoku zushi*, pp. 41-42.

<sup>306</sup> Ono Takeo, *Edo no yūgi fūzoku zushi*, p. 42.

<sup>307</sup> Takahashi Junji, *Nihon esugoroku shūsei*, p. 146.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid, p. 146; and Rebecca Salter, *Japanese Popular Prints: From Votive Slips to Playing Cards* (Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 2006) 181.

<sup>309</sup> Takahashi Junji, *Nihon esugoroku shūsei*, p. 146.

follows: 1. the *kyōkun-sugoroku* 教訓双六 (Double Sixes of Moral Instruction), 2. *dōchū-sugoroku* 道中双六 (Double Sixes of Journey), 3. *shibai-sugoroku* 芝居双六 (Double Sixes of Theatric Performance), 4. *shusse-sugoroku* 出世双六 (Double Sixes of Successful Career), 5. *rekishi-sugoroku* 歴史双六 (Double Sixes of History), 6. *meisho-sugoroku* 名所双六 (Double Sixes of Famous Places), 7. *yūgei-sugoroku* 遊芸双六 (Double Sixes of Artistic Accomplishment), 8. *bungei-sugoroku* 文芸双六 (Double Sixes of Art and Literature), 9. *kaika-kyōiku-sugoroku* 開化教育双六 (Double Sixes of Enlightenment and Education), 10. *onna-sugoroku* 女双六 (Double Sixes of Woman), 11. *sensō-sugoroku* 戦争双六 (Double Sixes of War), 12. *tankenryokō-sugoroku* 探検旅行双六 (Double Sixes of Adventureful Journey), 13. *senden-sugoroku* 宣伝双六 (Double Sixes of Propaganda), 14. *kodomo-sugoroku* 子供双六 (Double Sixes of Child), 15. *manga-sugoroku* 漫画双六 (Double Sixes of Comic), and 16. *zatsu-sugoroku* 雑双六 (Assorted Double Sixes).<sup>310</sup> In most of these games, each player was supposed to move his piece from the *furidashi* 振り出し or *furihajime* 降り始め (starting point) by the count on the throw of two dice; like other promotion games, the first one to reach the section of *agari* 上がり (goal/completion) was the winner.<sup>311</sup> These games have attracted European scholars' attention because of their apparent relationship with some European games, especially the kind of games played with dice upon a pictured sheet known as the Game of Goose and Snakes and Ladders.<sup>312</sup>

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<sup>310</sup> Ibid, pp. 6-7 and 149.

<sup>311</sup> Susanne Formanek, "The 'Spectacle' of Womanhood: New Types in Texts and Pictures on Pictorial *Sugoroku* Games of the Late Edo Period," *Written Texts – Visual Texts: Woodblock-Printed Media in Early Modern Japan*, eds. Susanne Formanek and Sepp Linhart (Amsterdam: Hotei Publishing, 2005) 73-74.

<sup>312</sup> An art historian has briefly discussed these variants in his article on the Indian origins, *gyān chaupar*. According to him, the "earliest English example of a 'Snakes and Ladders' game is the circular board, with a spiral track numbered 1-100, which was registered in London in October 1892 by F. H. Ayres. ... At about the

## 6.2 Bureaucratic Promotion Gambling Games

Unlike China and Korea, the plain, diagram-like bureaucratic versions did not set foot in premodern Japan because of Japan's unique development in national administrative structures despite being subject to strong, constant influences from the two neighboring countries. Japan's receipt of massive cultural infusions from China and Korea likely began in the fourth century during the Kofun 古墳 period (250-538) under the rule of the Yamato 大和 clan via naturalized Chinese and Korean (mainly from Baekje 百濟 [18 BC-660]) immigrants known as the *toraijin* 渡来人 (people from overseas) or *kikajin* 帰化人 (naturalized people).<sup>313</sup> Confucian ideals gradually played a major role in the development of ethical and political philosophies in Japan. Based on Chinese models, the Yamato clan started to develop into a centralized state that consisted of subordinate clan chieftains headed by the imperial court, with the adoption of the intricate systems of court ranks and bureaucracy to reinforce the power of the center.<sup>314</sup> However, the appointment of government officials was still hereditary in nature, basically determined by inherited social

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same time the snakes and ladders device also appeared in the game of 'Kismet'. An example of c. 1895 in the Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood was printed by chromolithography in Bavaria for the British market ... 'Kismet' was essentially a product of the Georgian and Victorian tradition of edifying morality games of the type of 'Virtue Rewarded and Vice Punished' (1818) and 'The Game of Human Life' (1790); the ultimate progenitor of all such race games being the 16<sup>th</sup> century Florentine Game of Goose. Only the snakes and ladders and the name of the game are of Indian origin (according to the Oxford Dictionary, the first use of 'kismet' – Arabic/Persian *qismet*, meaning fate or destiny – was in 1849, by the Orientalist Eastwick). The generalised virtues and vices of the square names derive from 'Virtue Rewarded' not *gyān chaupar*." "By the turn of the century 'Snakes and Ladders' games had become extremely popular in England. A c. 1900 board, with similar square names to 'Kismet' but now labelled 'Snakes and Ladders', is even more heavy-handed in its moral exhortations. However, this approach went out of fashion after the end of Victoria's reign. Inscriptions in the squares were eventually discontinued, and the playing area became a simple numbered track, in some cases illustrated with auspicious and inauspicious scenes in some of the squares. ... But after the 1930's no further pictorial references to the Indian scene are found. They did not survive the economic stringencies of war-time production and, more crucially, the end of British rule in India." It is noticeable that the adoption or invention of all of these western board games is for moral education. For details, see Andrew Topsfield, "The Indian Game of Snakes and Ladders," *Artibus Asiae* 46. 3 (1985): 213-214.

<sup>313</sup> Kenneth B. Lee, *Korea and East Asia: the Story of a Phoenix* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1997) 27-28.

<sup>314</sup> Delmer M. Brown, *The Cambridge History of Japan: Volume 1: Ancient Japan* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 133-140.

status, not individual ability. The Yamato government had never adopted any Chinese style civil service examination system.

Direct contacts between Japan and China about Confucianism also took place. In the early Asuka 飛鳥 period (538-710), Prince Shōtoku 聖徳太子 (574-622), a devout Buddhist who was also learned in Chinese literature, adopted to his government Confucian ways of rank and etiquette similar to those of Goguryeo and Baekje and issued a Confucian-based *Jūshichijō kenpō* 十七条憲法 (Seventeen-Article Constitution) to prescribe a set of moral and virtue criteria for government officials and the people.<sup>315</sup> Along with the emissaries known as the *kenzuishi* 遣隋使 like Ono no Imoko 小野妹子 (or Su Yingao 蘇因高 in Chinese; ca. late 6<sup>th</sup> - early 7<sup>th</sup> cent.),<sup>316</sup> students were sent to Sui China to study Buddhism and Confucianism in 600, 607, 608, 610, and 614.<sup>317</sup> From 630 to 659, Japan sent four official missions of envoys, priests, and students to Tang China.<sup>318</sup> Some stayed there for over twenty or thirty years and many returnees who had learned Chinese political systems became prominent reformers.<sup>319</sup> The resulting *Taika no Kaishin* 大化の改新 (Reforms under the Taika Era; 645-649) intensified the adoption of Chinese cultural practices, reorganizing the government and the penal code in accordance with the Tang administrative structure of the time to enhance the authority of the central government.

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<sup>315</sup> Ibid, p. 177; Lee, Korea and East Asia, p. 28, and Zhu Yunying, *Zhongguo wenhua dui Ri Han Yue de yingxiang*, p. 408.

<sup>316</sup> Victor Cunrui Xiong, *Emperor Yang of the Sui Dynasty: His Life, Times, and Legacy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006) 202 and 256; and Delmer M. Brown, *The Cambridge History of Japan*, p. 177.

<sup>317</sup> Shi Dongchu 釋東初, *Zhong Ri fojiao jiaotong shi* 中日佛教交通史 [History of the Interflow of Buddhism between China and Japan] (Taipei: Zhonghua fojiao wenhua guan 中華佛教文化館, 1970) 112-115.

<sup>318</sup> Ibid, p. 135.

<sup>319</sup> Ibid, p. 119.

Based on the Confucian-oriented code of the Tang dynasty, the *Taihō-ritsuryō* 大宝律令 (Great Treasure Law Code or Taihō Code) was issued in 701 by the Japanese authority to provide for central administration.<sup>320</sup> According to the Code, under the emperor, the administrative structure was led by the Council of Kami Affairs, which ran affairs pertinent to the worship of deities, and the Council of State, which oversaw secular affairs heading by the Chancellor. Under the Chancellor were the Minister of the Left and the Minister of Right, who were assisted by the four senior counselors. These ministers and counselors had the power to make decisions on important policies and the appointments and promotions for high-ranking officials. This ministerial structure was completed by the eight ministries (Central Affairs, Personnel, Civil Affairs, Popular Affairs, War, Justice, Treasury, and Imperial Household), with the first four led by the Minister of the Left and the next four by the Minister of the Right.<sup>321</sup> Under the code, although the ruling clans were now deprived of their traditional privileges, they acquired a new status as high-ranking bureaucrats or local officials and were given fiefs and income from the state treasury based on their post, rank, and merits.<sup>322</sup> A civil service examination based on the Confucian classics was instituted but the passed candidates were usually appointed and confined to low rank positions.<sup>323</sup> Highest positions apparently continued to be reserved for aristocrats holding high statuses and imperial ranks, including members of the royal families and chieftains of old and powerful clans. The dominance of this group was further protected by the Taihō Code as its members were allowed to pass on their high ranks and offices to their male descendants.<sup>324</sup> Besides, in

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<sup>320</sup> Brown, *The Cambridge History of Japan*, pp. 33 and 231-234; and Ryūichi Abé, *The Weaving of Mantra: Kūkai and the Construction of Esoteric Buddhist Discourse* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999) 26.

<sup>321</sup> Brown, *The Cambridge History of Japan*, p. 234; and Abé, *The Weaving of Mantra*, p. 455 note 17.

<sup>322</sup> Brown, *The Cambridge History of Japan*, pp. 178 and 236.

<sup>323</sup> Ibid, p. 236.

<sup>324</sup> Ibid, p. 237.



the Code, instead of the “Mandate of Heaven,” a Chinese idea that an incapable ruler could be legitimately removed through revolution, the Japanese emperor was defined as the “Son of Heaven” to emphasize his divine status.<sup>325</sup> The Code thus denied the alternation of the lineage of the sovereign, which was one of the contributing factors to the forming of the political cultures in the following centuries during which the military ruling parties rose and alternated yet did not attempt to overthrow the emperors. It was under this political culture that the military rulers discouraged the creation of any systems like civil service examinations that could divest them of their powers and privileges to maintain their political rights within their clans. With the same attitude, the military rulers would never allow any slight chance of those ideas of sharing powers be spread among the people even via the circulation of a gambling game.

The Nara 奈良 (710-794) court continued to import Chinese civilization by sending diplomatic envoys known as the *kentōshi* 遣唐使 to the Tang court, during which many Japanese students, both lay people and Buddhist priests, were sent to study in Chang’an and Luoyang. One such student called Abe no Nakamaro 阿倍仲麻呂 (698-770) even passed the Chinese civil service examination and was appointed as the Governor-General in Annam in 761.<sup>326</sup> Again, many returnees were promoted to high government posts and the administrative system grew into a considerable size based on the fact that the capital at Nara was reported to have over seven thousand people who worked in the government.<sup>327</sup> It was also during this era that Buddhism gained ground in the court, being revered as the “guardian of the state” by Emperor Shōmu 聖武 (701-756; r. 724-749), a devoted Buddhist who

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<sup>325</sup> Abé, *The Weaving of Mantra*, p. 21.

<sup>326</sup> Shi Dongchu, *Zhong Ri fojiao jiaotong shi*, p. 288; and Joshua A. Fogel, *The Literature of Travel in the Japanese Rediscovery of China, 1862-1945* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1996) 22-23.

<sup>327</sup> Brown, *The Cambridge History of Japan*, p. 236.

actively promoted Buddhism in his reign.<sup>328</sup> In many other ways, the Japanese upper classes continued to adopt the Chinese writing system, fashion, and Buddhist teachings. The last official mission sent to Tang China was in 894 and the *kentōshi* was suspended thereafter due to the decline of the Tang dynasty and the damaging aftermath of the 845 persecution of Buddhism. However, Confucianism and other Chinese influences remained strong as trade expeditions and Buddhist pilgrimages to China persisted.

In the Nara and the Heian 平安 periods (794-1185), cultural learning and education were the concern primarily of the nobility and the Buddhist monks. A court academy titled “*Daigaku-ryō* 大学寮 (Bureau of the Higher Learning)” modeled on Chinese institutions was founded in the capital to train young aristocrats on how to handle state affairs based on Confucian classics.<sup>329</sup> For the same training purpose, the *kokugaku* 国学 (National School) was built in the provinces where families of influential clans lived. Emperor Heizei 平城天皇 (774-824) made it mandatory in 806 that all sons of the aristocrats of the fifth rank or above and even imperial princes enter the *Daigaku-ryō*.<sup>330</sup> The early curriculum was almost identical to that of the Tang China but had been considerably modified in the subsequent centuries to meet the needs of the authorities. In addition to Confucian classics, students also studied law, history, and literature; during these lessons they were taught knowledge immediately relevant to governance procedures of the court.<sup>331</sup> Since the nobility’s interest in living an artistic life grew with devotion to poetry, music, and calligraphy, the emphasis of the *Daigaku-ryō*’s curriculum gradually shifted from moralistic Confucianism to artistic

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<sup>328</sup> Brown, *The Cambridge History of Japan*, pp. 249-251.

<sup>329</sup> Ryūichi Abé, “Scholasticism, Exegesis, and Ritual Practice: on Revolution in the History of Buddhist Writing in the Early Heian Period,” *Heian Japan, Centers and Peripheries*, eds. Mikael Adolphson, Edward Kamens, and Stacie Matsumoto (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2007) 180.

<sup>330</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 180.

<sup>331</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 180-181.

literature.<sup>332</sup> According to the Tang and Joseon experiences, all of these institutions and policies should have favored the adoption of the bureaucratic game but the following political atmosphere altered the destiny of it.

During the Heian period, the Fujiwara 藤原 aristocratic family, which had implemented the Taika Reforms, became the most powerful military clan with close ties to the imperial family through marriage, rising to power to govern Japan and determine state affairs.<sup>333</sup> While the Fujiwara clan took most of the high government positions, the middle and the lower level officials were hereditarily monopolized by a small number of other aristocratic clans. By the beginning of the eleventh century, imperial control was weakened to the extent that Fujiwara no Michinaga 藤原道長 (966-1027) was able to enthrone and dethrone emperors at will.<sup>334</sup> No authority was left to the traditional bureaucracy.

Towards the end of the twelfth century, conflicts between various military clans turned into civil war, from which emerged a society administrated by the military elite, the *samurai* 侍 (retainer) or *bushi* 武士 (warrior), led by the *shogun* 将軍 (warlord), who eventually took full power over the nation. Instead of the Confucian examination system, a sort of meritocracy based on martial skills evolved. Lasted until the nineteenth century, this so-called feudal era of Japan began when Minamoto Yoritomo 源頼朝 (1147-1199) established a new government called “*bakufu* 幕府 (tent government or *shogunate*)” at his native town in Kamakura 鎌倉.<sup>335</sup> During this Kamakura period (1185-1333), provincial

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<sup>332</sup> Abé, “Scholasticism, Exegesis, and Ritual Practice,” pp. 180-181.

<sup>333</sup> For example, see G. Cameron Hurst, “Kugyō and Zuryō: Center and Periphery in the Era of Fujiwara no Michinaga,” *Heian Japan, Centers and Peripheries*, eds. Mikael Adolphson, Edward Kamens, and Stacie Matsumoto (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007) 70-74.

<sup>334</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 70-76.

<sup>335</sup> Jeffrey P. Mass, “The Kamakura Bakufu,” *Warrior Rule in Japan*, ed. Marius B. Jansen (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 1 and 8.

officials were still appointed by the imperial court but the provincial protectors were selected among vassals by their local *shogun*.<sup>336</sup>

The change of the administrative structure was significant in the subsequent Muromachi 室町 period (1333-1568) under the reign of Ashikaga Yoshimitsu 足利義満 (1358-1408), the third *shogun* of the Ashikaga *shogunate*. These Ashikaga *shoguns* were the constables who rose to become strong regional leaders later known as the *daimyo* 大名 (feudal lords). Earlier in the Kamakura period, these law enforcement units only had limited powers. The ruling power was then shared by the *shogun* and the *daimyo* and this newly unified feudal structure was described as the *bakuhan* 幕藩, a combination of the terms *bakufu* and *han* (domains). In the *bakuhan*, the once military-centered *han* became local administrative domains; the national authority remained in the hands of the *shogun* while the *daimyo* gained regional authority, having full administrative control over their territory with a social hierarchy of retainers, bureaucrats, and commoners.<sup>337</sup> No matter how the political power was shared, transferred, or reconstructed, the core of the power remained in the hands of the warrior class. Entering the power structure through civil service examination had thus never been a consideration to this ruling class. So did the fate of the bureaucratic game.

The Tokugawa 徳川 clan was the most powerful of over two hundred *daimyo* and this family finally established the Tokugawa *shogunate* at Edo and ruled Japan from the year of 1603 to 1868. The Tokugawa not only succeeded in consolidating their control over a reunified Japan but also in gaining unprecedented power over the emperor, the court, all *daimyo*, and the religious orders.

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<sup>336</sup> Mass, "The Kamakura Bakufu," pp. 1 and 8.

<sup>337</sup> For details, see John Whitney Hall, "The Bakuhan System," *Warrior Rule in Japan*, ed. Marius B. Jansen (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 195-199.

The major philosophical development in the Tokugawa *shogunate* was the flourishing of Neo-Confucianism. Confucian doctrine had long been studied and taught by Japanese Buddhist samgha and it was also the Zen monks, who had visited China, brought Neo-Confucianism back to Japan during the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries. As the doctrine of ethical humanism and rationalism of Neo-Confucianism appealed to the officials, the new learning soon became the intellectual guidance of the Tokugawa *bakufu*, under which a new form of government and a new vision of society emerged.<sup>338</sup>

In regard to political order, the Tokugawa feudal hierarchy consisted of various classes of *daimyo*.<sup>339</sup> Termed as “*shinpan* 親藩 (relative domain),” the twenty-three *daimyo* on the borders of Tokugawa lands were the relatives of the Tokugawa house. They were all related to Tokugawa Ieyasu 徳川家康 (1543-1616), the founding *shogun* of the Tokugawa *shogunate*, and were given honorary titles and appointed advisory posts in the *bakufu*. The second group of the hierarchy was the *fudai* 譜代 (hereditary vassal), which primarily filled the ranks of the Tokugawa administration and were rewarded with lands located close to the Tokugawa holdings for their loyal service. The third of the hierarchy was the *tozama* 外様 (outside vassal) which constituted ninety-seven *han* of Tokugawa’s former opponents or new allies. Since they were the least trusted *daimyo*, they were excluded from central government positions and most of them were located on the peripheries of the archipelago. This new “aristocratic” body was still military in character.<sup>340</sup>

Claimed to be built on Neo-Confucian principles, a rigid and highly formalized social order was established in terms of inherited position, not personal merits. Each person had a

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<sup>338</sup> For details, see Marius B. Jansen, *The Making of Modern Japan* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2000) 192-204.

<sup>339</sup> For the three vassals, see also Zhu Yunying, *Zhongguo wenhua dui Ri Han Yue de yingxiang*, pp. 414-415.

<sup>340</sup> For details on the *fudai* and *tozama* vassals, see Jansen, *The Making of Modern Japan*, pp. 33-62.

specific place in society and was expected to work and live in accord with this social position so as to fulfill his or her mission in life. The highest were the emperor and aristocrats as well as the *shogun* and *daimyo*. Below them the subjects were classified by a four-class system termed as the *mibunsei* 身分制 (identity system), in which the sequence from the top level down was the *samurai*, peasants, craftsmen, and merchants. Only the peasants lived in the countryside. The *samurai*, craftsmen and merchants resided in those towns built around the castles of the *daimyo*, each restricted to their own quarter.<sup>341</sup>

Obviously, the Tokugawa regime was built on these intensified hierarchical social, political, and demographic orders, through which the ruling class monitored the whole country and extended its control over people of all classes. To prevent the breakdown of this feudal hierarchy, a logical and effective means was to eliminate any systems that could disarrange the imposed properness and restrictions. The short-lived civil service examination was precisely one such system that the *bakufu* would endeavor to avoid or abolish.<sup>342</sup> The bureaucratic game thus could not find the grounds to enter this country since the authorities would never risk their allocated powers and acquired privileges to encourage the spread of those games that were embedded with ideas that could challenge their rules and political ideology.

Accordingly, unlike China and Korea, the plain, diagram-like bureaucratic versions did not set foot on Japan during the long reigns of the warlords. The situation changed over

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<sup>341</sup> Jansen, *The Making of Modern Japan*, pp. 96-97. There were more classifications of populaces outside this identity system. These people were excluded because of their taboo occupations and were despised as the *burakumin* 部落民 (literally, tribe people), the *eta* 穢多 (literally, defilement abundant; e.g. butchers, tanners, and undertakers) and the *hinin* 非人 (non-human; e.g. ex-convicts and vagrants who worked as town guards, street cleaners or entertainers). The *burakumin* was referred to the descendants of the outcaste communities, many of them became the *eta* as their occupations violated against religious taboo of death because Buddhism prohibited against killing and Shintōism considered it the *kegare* 穢れ (defilement). The *hinin* were only allowed to dwell in a special quarter of the town. Other outsiders included beggars, entertainers, and prostitutes.

<sup>342</sup> Jansen, *The Making of Modern Japan*, pp. 192-193.

the last years of the military regime. When the subsequent Meiji authority instituted new examination and bureaucratic systems for selecting government officials, a new socio-political situation that favoured the creation and circulation of the bureaucratic game quickly took form. In answer to the demand of a new group of potential players against this political background, the type of *e-sugoroku* reminiscent of the Chinese *Shengguan tu* was designed and produced. Within Takahashi's classification, this type of *e-sugoroku* can be found under the category of the *shusse-sugoroku* or Double Sixes of Successful Career but the term "*kanshoku-sugoroku* 官職雙六 (Double Sixes of Government Service)" can actually be dated back to the first decades of the nineteenth century.<sup>343</sup> An 1883 example, titled "*Meiji-kanshoku-sugoroku* 明治官職雙六" (Double Sixes of Meiji Government Service; Figure 6.4), was an apparent Japanese parallel to those produced in China during the Republican period (see Figures 2.5 and 2.6) in terms of their simple designs and their contents of the then newly adopted Western official systems. The production of this *kanshoku-sugoroku* suggests that the Chinese promotion games, though as late as of the Republican period, were finally allowed to enter the country in due time for the new market needs of the *e-sugoroku*. Such a late emergence of the bureaucratic *e-sugoroku* was an exclusive development in the history of the promotion games in the three countries in question. This phenomenon actually can testify to the suggestion raised in this study that the official promotion game could only emerge and develop in a sovereign state with well-established bureaucratic and civil service examination systems, only under which selected officials were allowed for upward social mobility.

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<sup>343</sup> Ono Takeo, *Edo no yūgi fūzoku zushi*, pp. 55 and 58.

Figure 6.4 *Meiji-kanshoku-sugoroku*.

(Takahashi, 1994, p. 42)

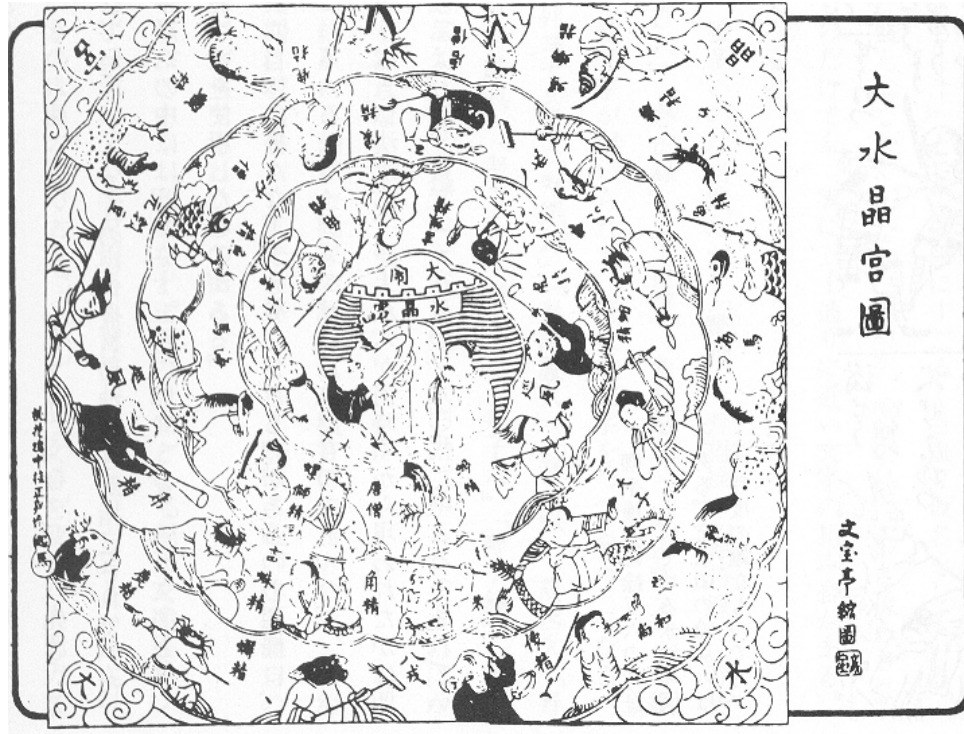
Although the Chinese *Xuanfo tu* and *Shengguan tu* are recognized by some Japanese researchers as having had considerable influences on the emergence of the *e-sugoroku*,<sup>344</sup> the layouts of Japanese game boards are quite different from most of its Chinese and Korean counterparts. Comparatively speaking, the *e-sugoroku* is far simpler in composition in terms of game track design but is visually complicated by the rich arrangement of splendidly depicted illustrations. Most of these game boards are not rigidly divided into checkers but are partitioned into spaces by way of skilfully illustrated backgrounds, and within each allocated space a term and/or a brief text can be found. Judging from the simple and

<sup>344</sup> One of these researchers is Takahashi Junji; see Takahashi, *Nihon esugoroku shūsei*, pp. 147-148. Also see Osatake Takeki 尾佐竹猛 (1880-1946), *Tobaku to suri no kenkyū* 賭博と掏摸の研究 [Study on Gambling and Pickpocket] (Tokyo: Shinsensha 新泉社, 1969) 82-83.



illustrated design of the game, it would be better to say that the majority of the surviving *e-sugoroku* are more associated with the vulgarized versions of the promotion games that had been widespread in Ming-Qing China (see Figures 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4). The fact that many Chinese vulgarized versions are included and discussed along with Japanese prints in some late-Edo publications on the collections of woodblock prints proves that such versions were collected by and not unfamiliar to Edo Japanese. For example, in one such publications, the Nanpo yūgen 南畝莠言 (Nanpo's Vicious Sayings; 1817) by Ōta Nanpo 大田南畝 (1749-1823), the Chinese versions Ōta includes are like the one titled as the “*Danao shuijingong* 大鬧水晶宮” (*Daidō Suishōkyū* in Japanese; Making Great Trouble in the Crystal Palace; Figure 6.5), a motif originates from the Ming novel Journey to the West. Even a casual comparison of this print with the one printed in the Qing dynasty shown in Figure 3.4 can tell that this game board is by and large another vulgarized version of the same theme in China produced at about the same period of time, with similarities in composition, drawing style, and the swirl-pattern design. The collection of Chinese prints implies that, at the time, some specific groups of Japanese literati and artists were well aware of the existence of the pictorial Chinese game boards, or certain degrees of Chinese influence may have taken place.

Figure 6.5 *Danao shuijinggong (Daidō Suishōkyū)*.



(Takahashi, 1994, p. 148)

### 6.3 Daoist and Shintō Versions

In contrast to the rejection of the bureaucratic game, the religious promotion games were adopted and popularized by the Japanese. The Buddhist versions, particularly those based on the Pure Land beliefs, seemed to have had no problem in entering the Japanese *sugoroku* market. This was understandable since Buddhism had long been the dominant religion in Japan. In the case of Daoism, the developments of both the religion and its related games were entirely different. Daoism was believed to have been introduced to Japan before the eighth century but its influence on the circulation of the Daoist promotion games had never been effectively exercised, a circumstance that was similar to that in Korea.

Although no record of any definite dates for their introductions to Japan can be found, both philosophical and religious Daoism are believed to have been brought to this country before the Nara period mostly by immigrants from Korea and China.<sup>345</sup> This early stage of Daoism in Japan can be highlighted by the construction of a Daoist temple at Mount Tōnomine 多武峯談 by Empress Saimei 斉明 (594-661; r. 654-661) in the mid-seventh century during the Asuka period. The celestial maps and the murals of the contemporaneous Takamatsu-zuka 高松塚 (Takamatsu Tumulus) also demonstrate the influence of the Daoist cosmology; on the tomb walls the legendary animals and symbols of Chinese constellations like the Black Warrior of the north (in Chinese Xuanwu 玄武) are drawn.<sup>346</sup>

Although the introductory period of Daoism in Japan is not completely certain, the impact of the introduction of this religion cannot be neglected. Generally, the religion was credited with the formation of some local religious groups. Philosophical Daoism had relatively little influence on Japanese thinking of the time but the religious counterpart was well assimilated into Shintō beliefs because of their folk origins.<sup>347</sup> Religious Daoism introduced a variety of new knowledge and techniques, such as the calendar, astrology, geomancy, and divination, all of which were gradually absorbed into the general forms of Japanese religious activity.<sup>348</sup> The sects of *Onmyōdō* 陰陽道 (Sect of Yin and Yang) and *Shugendō* 修験道 (Sect of Training and Testing) are good examples showing how this new

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<sup>345</sup> Kazuo Kasahara, ed., *A History of Japanese Religion*, trans. Paul McCarthy and Gaynor Sekimori (Tokyo: Kosei Publishing Co., 2002) 146.

<sup>346</sup> J. Edward Kidder, Jr., "The Newly Discovered Takamatsuzuka Tomb," *Monumenta Nipponica* 27. 3 (Autumn, 1972): 245-251; and Charles Higham, *Encyclopedia of Ancient Asian Civilizations* (New York: Facts On File, 2004) 337.

<sup>347</sup> Paula R. Hartz, *Shinto: World Religions* (New York: Facts On File, Inc., 1997) 38.

<sup>348</sup> Ian Reader, *The Simple Guide to Shinto: The Religion of Japan* (Kent, England: Global Books Ltd., 1998) 29; and Ichiro Hori, *Folk Religion in Japan: Continuity and Change* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968) 71.

imported knowledge and related techniques were incorporated with Shintō beliefs to satisfy people's social and religious demands.

Some scholars believe that it was a Korean scholar named Wani 王仁 who introduced the idea of Daoist dualism, yin and yang, to Japan, along with Confucian practical ethics.<sup>349</sup> *Onmyōdō* (a mixture of Shintō and religious Daoism) and its ritualistic practices were known for their associations with these dualistic astrological systems. This sect had been dominated by the families of Kamo 賀茂 and Abe 安倍 since the Heian period (794-1185), who gained official rank, serving as court astrologers in charge of astrology and the preparation of the official calendar based considerably on the complicated Daoist calendar of good and bad days. For common people, these *Onmyōdō* specialists served as diviners and fortune tellers and chanted magical invocations for purification, good harvests, and good weather. While some of their descendants of the lower class travelled from village to village to propagate their beliefs, those who belonged to large Shintō shrines would occasionally visit neighboring villages to distribute talismans and professional agricultural calendars. Many beliefs and practices of folk or popular Shintō owe their origin to them.<sup>350</sup>

*Shugendō* (a mixed school or sect of Shintō, Buddhism, and religious Daoism) and some religious sects also adopted the same yin-yang techniques in the Shintō rituals at the imperial court.<sup>351</sup> Some spells and ritual formulas of the *Shugendō* tradition can be traced back to those grave contracts popularized in Han China (206 B.C.-220) and some early Daoist texts, such as the *Baopuzi* 抱朴子 (Master Who Embraces Simplicity), a fourth-

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<sup>349</sup> For example, Lee, *Korea and East Asia*, p. 28; and William K. Bunce, *Religions in Japan: Buddhism, Shinto, Christianity* (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1955) 3.

<sup>350</sup> Hori, *Folk Religion in Japan*, pp. 14-15, 52, 73, and 79-80; Paula R. Hartz, *Shinto: World Religions* (New York: Facts On File, Inc., 1997) 38; and Bunce, *Religions in Japan*, pp. 105-106.

<sup>351</sup> Hori, *Folk Religion in Japan*, pp. 14-15, 52, and 73.

century Daoist work on magic, alchemy, and immortality.<sup>352</sup> Some folk religions assimilated other aspects of yin-yang, too.

As a matter of fact, the most important impact of Daoist beliefs on Japanese religions was its contributions to the establishment of new liturgies and rituals by amalgamating with Shintō. Hence, rituals are their core activities, of which the purification rituals substantiate the basic values of purification: renewal, gratitude, and respect for the *kami* or the Way and have been regarded as the most efficacious means for people to bring about felicities and remove calamities. Generally, their functions are to acquire divine help to remove evils and bring about renewal, to worship and express gratitude for benefits bestowed, and to express the emphasis on purity and the importance of maintaining harmony between worshipers and the *kami* or the Way.<sup>353</sup> In comparison, Daoist rituals were more highly developed than was Shintō but their goals to purify and to maintain close harmony among people, the nature, and the *kami* or deities were certainly identical.

Other examples of the relationships between Shintō and Daoist rituals include the ceremonies described in the Engi-shiki 延喜式 (Regulations of the Engi Era) and the purification words read during the Great Purification recorded in the Jingiryō 神祇令 (Shintō Code). The former is said to be related to the *jiao* 醺 (offerings), a kind of Daoist rituals performed to renew cosmic mandate and efficacy,<sup>354</sup> while the latter, to the laws regulating the duties of the *Jingikan* 神祇官 (Department [for the Affairs] of Deities) in the 718 Yōrō-

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<sup>352</sup> Livia Kohn, "Taoism in Japan: Positions and Evaluations," *Cahier d'Extreme-Asie* 8 (1995): 404-405.

<sup>353</sup> Hartz, *Shinto: World Religions*, p. 83; and Reader, *The Simple Guide to Shinto*, pp. 91-92.

<sup>354</sup> Kohn, "Taoism in Japan: Positions and Evaluations," p. 405.

ritsuryō 養老律令 (Yoro-code; the first extant body of laws in Japan), is believed to have been influenced by Daoism.<sup>355</sup>

Most of the practices and traditions mentioned above are now either only observed in a few areas or simply became unpopular but the fact that a number of Daoist beliefs became parts of Japanese culture is indisputable. It was such an early syncretisation of Japan's native folk beliefs with Daoist traditions that caused Daoist cultures to lose their distinct characteristics. This resulting indistinctiveness in fact provides a good reason as to why Daoist dice games did not attract Japanese people's attention. Besides, the syncretisation also signified that the Japanese adoption of Daoism was highly selective in nature, which allowed them to be integrated together easily and smoothly.

Hence, instead of Daoism, motifs pertinent to the indigenous Shintō are commonly adopted by the designers of the *e-sugoroku*. Actually, begun early in the Nara period, under the influence of the syncretic practices, Shintō commenced to perform Buddhist rituals that were compiled and practiced by the esoteric Shingon-shū 真言宗 (True Word School). As a result, Shintō was almost absorbed by Buddhism between the eighth and the fourteenth centuries, which was known by the name “Ryōbu Shintō 両部神道 (Dual Shintō).”<sup>356</sup> However, the Mongol invasions in the late thirteenth century inspired a national consciousness of the role of the *kamikaze* 神風 (divine wind) in saving Japan from the invasive fleets. The subsequent publication of the Jinnōshōtōki 神皇正統記 (Chronicle of the Direct Descent of the Divine Sovereigns) by Kitabatake Chikafusa 北畠親房 (1293-1354) helped to propagate the rekindled belief by emphasizing the importance of maintaining the

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<sup>355</sup>Nelly Naumann, “The State Cult of the Nara and Early Heian Periods,” Shinto in History: Ways of the Kami, eds. John Breen, and Mark Teeuwen (England: Curzon Press, 2000) 47 and 60.

<sup>356</sup> Kasahara, ed., A History of Japanese Religion, pp. 165 and 306-309.

divine imperial line, retouching Japanese history with a Shintō perspective, and stressing Japan's spiritual supremacy over China and India. Consequently, Shintō reemerged as the primary religious tradition between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries, during which it became a strong nationalistic force with its own philosophy and scripture based on Confucian and Buddhist texts. Meanwhile, Tokugawa's strict separation of society into *han*, wards, villages, and households reaffirmed local Shintō attachments, linking up the individual with the community. With Shintō's spiritual support to the political order, a sense of national identity was preserved. Such a revival of Shintō was well reflected in some groups of *e-sugoroku* printed in the Edo period, during which some social and cultural activities that were closely associated with the Shintō worship became fashionable.<sup>357</sup>

The commonly seen Shintō *e-sugoroku* are all related to Shintō shrines. *E-sugoroku* of this kind are included in the categories of the *dōchū-sugoroku*, or Double Sixes of Journey, and the *meisho-sugoroku*, or Double Sixes of Famous Places, in accordance with the passion for travelling shared by the Edo people. Leisure travelling and pilgrimage had been greatly facilitated by the construction of the five highways leading out from Edo due to the *sankin kōtai* 参勤交代 (alternate attendance) system that was introduced by the Tokugawa *bakufu* in 1634 as a means to tighten its control over *daimyo*.<sup>358</sup> Many pilgrimage routes were also developed to cope with this travel trend.<sup>359</sup> In terms of content and approach, these types of board games were undoubtedly a Japanese parallel of the Chinese sight-seeing game, the *Lansheng tu*, or Table of Enjoying Famous Scenic Spots. After Japan re-opened its doors to the world, the travel motif of the *e-sugoroku* became international, including worldwide

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<sup>357</sup> Salter, *Japanese Popular Prints*, pp. 26 and 94-95.

<sup>358</sup> Ibid, p. 26.

<sup>359</sup> Ibid, p. 95.

capital cities and landscapes to remote wilderness and places for imaginative adventure.<sup>360</sup>

Moving from the local to the international, the development of this sight-seeing game is similar to its Korean counterpart; no wonder the compiler of the 1941 report on Korean folk customs for pastime compares the Korean sight-seeing game to the *e-sugoroku*, as mentioned in previous chapter. Aside from gambling, game boards of this kind were helpful in propagandizing the lineages of the shrines, especially that of the Ise 伊勢 Shintō shrines to the sun goddess Amaterasu ōmikami 天照大神, a shrine complex composed of over one hundred individual shrines located in the towns of Yamada 山田 and Uji 宇治, as is reflected in the game board titled as the “*Sangū-jōkyō-dōchū-ichiran-sugoroku* 参宮上京道中一覽雙六 (Double Sixes of the General View of the Journey to the Capital to Pilgrim to the [Ise] Shrine; Figure 6.6).”<sup>361</sup> To a number of players and buyers, these game boards were the souvenir-like item, with which they could recollect their traveling experiences, or the guide map for the spiritual pilgrimage to the sacred places to which they might not be able to access (Figure 6.6 and Figure 6.7 “*Senja[fuda]-sankei-shusse-sugoroku* 千社[札]参詣出世雙六 (Double Sixes of the Success in the Pilgrimage of Thousand Shrines Votive Slips)”).<sup>362</sup>

Following the same line of reasoning about the relationship between the development of a religion and the motif of the *e-sugoroku*, the pervasiveness of Buddhism in Japan justifies the continued production of different Buddhist versions there, as is also reflected in the promotion games that have survived in Japan.

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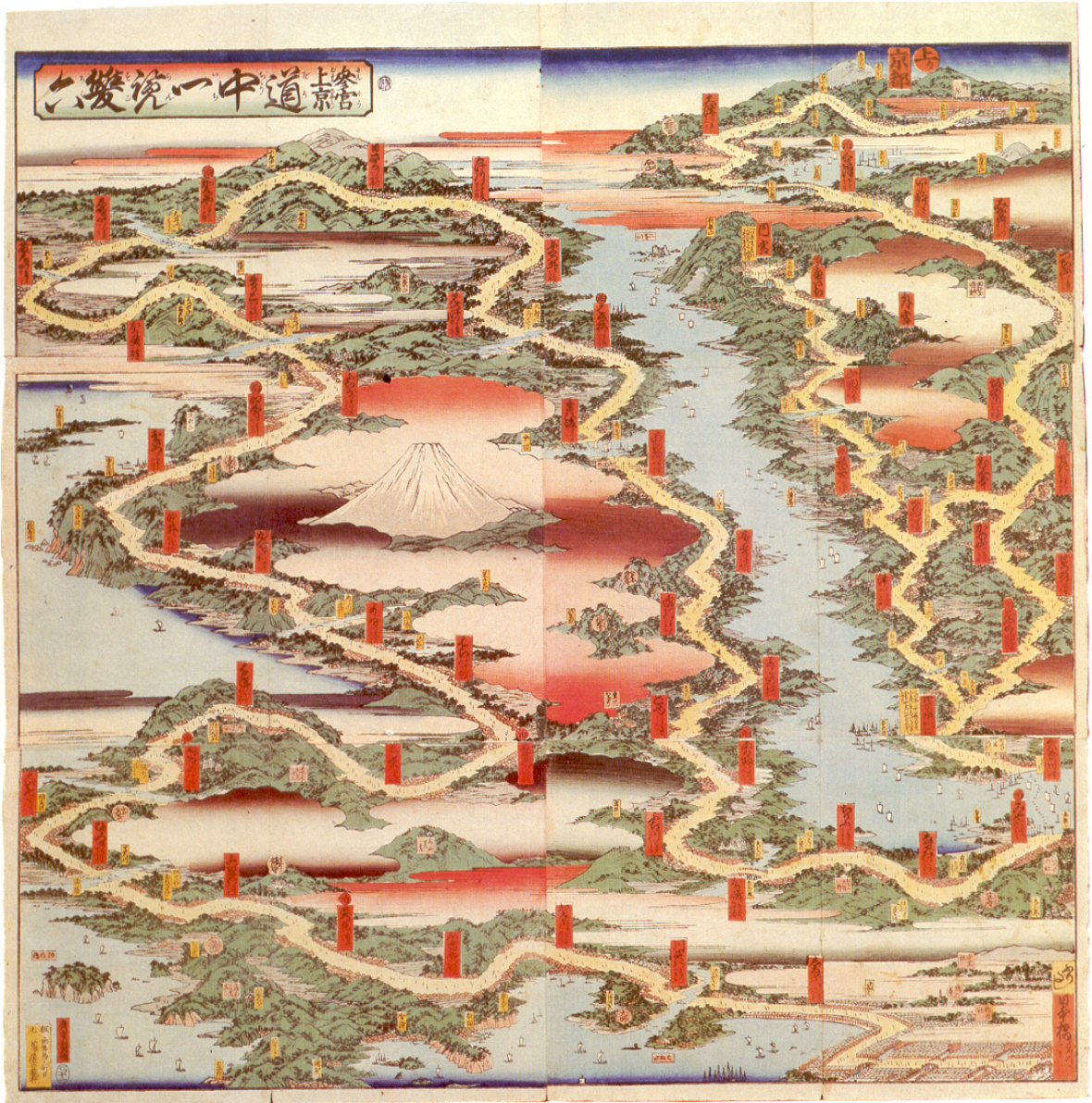
<sup>360</sup> Ibid, p. 172.

<sup>361</sup> Takahashi, *Nihon esugoroku shūsei*, pp. 15 and 22-23.

<sup>362</sup> Ibid, pp. 66-67.



Figure 6.6 *Sangū-jōkyō-dōchū-ichiran-sugoroku*.

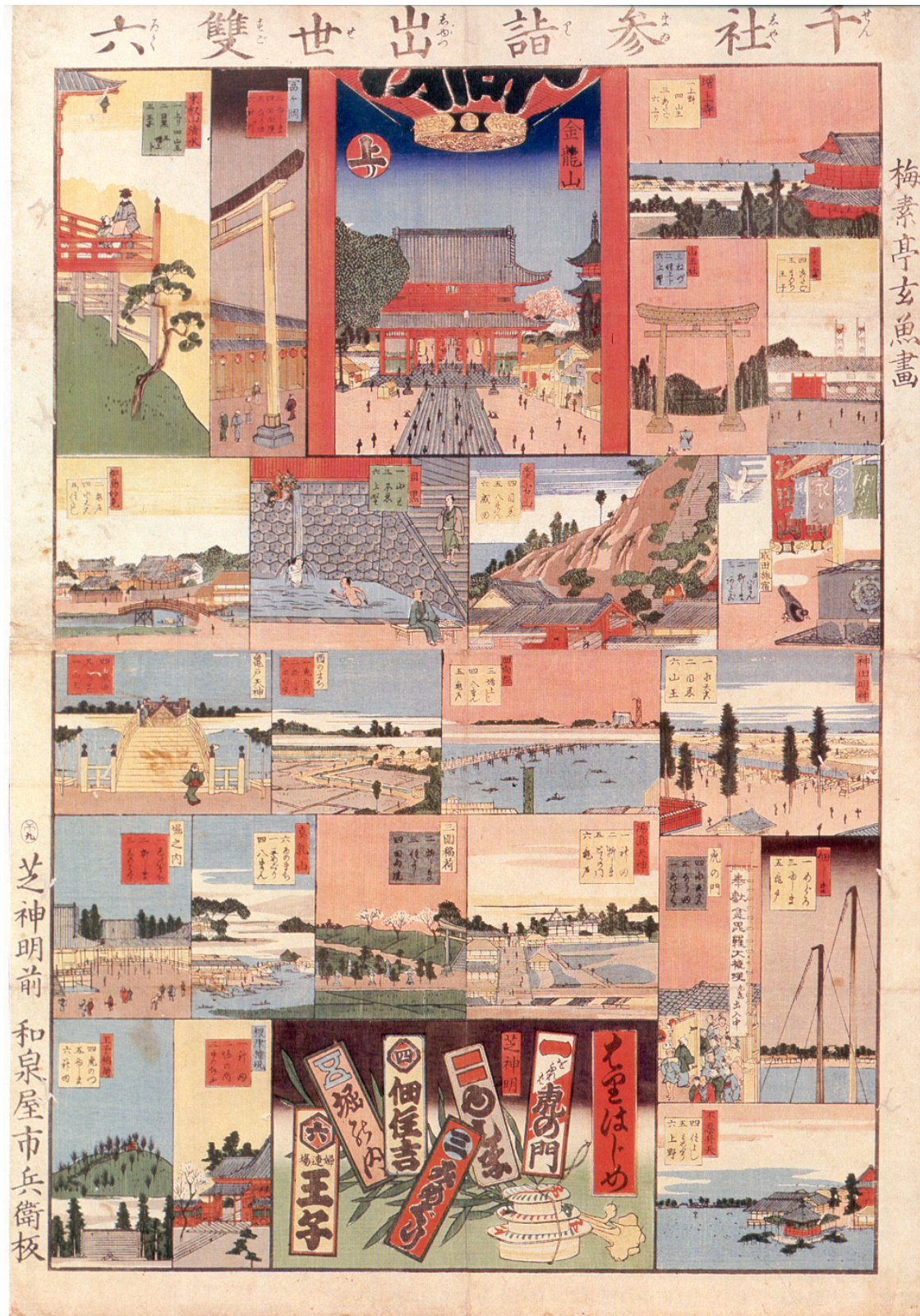


72 x 71 cm. (Takahashi, 1994, p. 23)



6. Gambling Board Games as Cultural Transmitters of Confucian Bureaucracy and Buddhist Doctrine in Premodern Japan

Figure 6.7 *Senja[fuda]-sankei-shusse-sugoroku*.



51 x 72 cm. (Takahashi, 1994, p. 67)

## 6.4 Buddhist Promotion Games

The earliest games of *e-sugoroku* that were recognized to be of Buddhist origin are traceable to the Kōan 弘安 reign period (1278-1287) by the mention of the “term” *meimoku-sugoroku* 名目双六 (Nominal Double Sixes).<sup>363</sup> However, it is not known whether this device was the prototype of the *e-sugoroku* produced in the following centuries. Some Japanese scholars do point out that, as a graphic aid, this kind of games is believed to have been designed to help young Tendai monks memorize the Sino-Japanese Buddhist terminology that were helpful to their scriptural and terminological studies.<sup>364</sup>

It was during the Heian period that Buddhism began to promulgate throughout the country through two esoteric schools, the Tendai-shū 天台宗 (Celestial Terrace School) and the Shingon-shū 真言宗 (True Word School).<sup>365</sup> Originating in China, the Tendai School

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<sup>363</sup> Takahashi, *Nihon esugoroku shūsei*, p. 148.

<sup>364</sup> Seki Tadao, ed., “Yūgigu,” p. 94; Takahashi, *Nihon esugoroku shūsei*, p. 148; and Ono Takeo, *Edo no yūgi fūzoku zushi*, p. 54.

<sup>365</sup> Ever since the early period of cultural contact, the cultural contributions made by the Korean kingdoms to Japan were particularly prominent, especially those to Buddhism. In 538, a diplomatic embassy sent by King Seong 聖王 (r. 523-554) of Baekje introduced Buddhism to Japan, bringing Buddhist scriptures, ceremonial implements, and statues of Buddhas to the imperial court. Other cultural importations including the Chinese writing system were also introduced to Japan through Baekje’s periodic embassies that were constituted by Confucian scholars, Buddhist monks, and craftsmen. For examples, in 577, some sūtras and śāstras were brought to Japan by an embassy that included a technician, an architect, and several Vinaya and *Seon* masters; in 584, two Buddhist images were carried back from Baekja by the Japanese; in 588, the relics of the Buddha were sent to Japan by monks along with people of different professions (painter, architect, carpenter, and roof tile expert); in 597, a son of King Seong introduced the worship of Avalokiteśvara (in Japanese Kannon) to Japan; and, in 602, publications on astrology, geography, necromancy, and agricultural calendar were taken to Japan with Buddhist scriptures by a Buddhist master. By the mid-seventh century, other than Baekje, many Buddhist missionaries were sent to Japan from Goguryeo and Silla. In 595, Master Hyeja 慧慈 or 惠慈 (d. 623) of Goguryeo went to Japan, where he became a tutor of Prince Shōtoku 聖徳太子 (574-622), teaching the prince Buddhism and helping him with political and educational affairs. Another Goguryeo monk, Master Tamjing (ca. 610), who was also a painter well versed in the *Five Classics* of Confucianism, taught the Japanese people how to make colors, millstones, and grinding stones. In 625, Goguryeo Master Hyegwan 慧灌 (ca. 625), a disciple of the Three Śāstras Master Jizang 吉藏 (549-623) of the Sui China, went to Japan and founded the Three Śāstras School there. In 686, a Sillan prince brought Buddhist implements to Japan. Two years later, a Sillan envoy of fifty people was sent to Japan.

was founded on Mount Hiei 比叡 in Kōyō by Saichō 最澄 (767-822) and based on the Lotus Sūtra of Mahāyāna Buddhism.<sup>366</sup> The latter, a branch of Vajrayāna Buddhism, was founded on Mount Kōya 高野 by Kūkai 空海 (774-835) with theories affiliated to Indian, Tibetan, and Chinese Buddhist teachings.<sup>367</sup> Kūkai also brought back from China many esoteric pictures including the *mandara* (in Sanskrit *maṇḍala*), which were copied several times in Shingon monasteries.<sup>368</sup> It was noticeable that, under the immediate successors of Saichō, the Tendai School tended to assimilate the esoteric thoughts preached by the Shingon School. The variety of *maṇḍala* used for meditation must have also been studied by and circulated among Tendai monks. Thus, the colorful, highly decorative, and meticulously executed *maṇḍala* may have some influence on the layout designs of the *e-sugoroku* in Japan.

By the Kamakura period (1185-1333), the older Buddhist schools continued to thrive but encountered limitations. For instances, the esoteric Shingon-shū and its rituals were primarily supported by the aristocratic families in Kyōto and the politically powerful Tendai-shū appealed mainly to literate people whose education and social standing permitted them to study its teachings systematically.<sup>369</sup> This period was also marked by the setting up of Buddhist schools founded by a number of Tendai monks, including Hōnen 法然 (1133-1212),

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Consequently, the efforts made by these three Korean kingdoms greatly helped Buddhism to grow in Japan, which can be exemplified by records of both countries. Take a record about Japanese monasteries during the reign of King Munmu 文武王 (r. 661-681) of the Unified Silla as an example, the number of Buddhist monasteries in Japan had reached approximate five hundred and the size of the Japanese Buddhist saṃgha had expanded to the extent that, in only one single ceremonial feast, a total of three thousand monks and nuns were said to have been offered food. Based on the 720 Nihon Shoki 日本書紀 (Chronicles of Japan), the oldest extant official annuals, in 624, there were forty-six Buddhist monasteries housing totally eight hundred and sixteen monks and five hundred and sixty-nine nuns. For the details regarding the cultural contributions made by the Korean kingdoms to Japan discussed here, see Zhu Yunying, Zhongguo wenhua dui Ri Han Yue de yingxiang, pp. 647 and 650; Akiyama Terukazu, Japanese Painting (Geneva: Skira, 1961) 19; The Korean Buddhist Research Institute, The History and Culture of Buddhism in Korea, pp. 47-48, 52-53, and 110-111; and Hugh Wylie and Koh Wonyoung, Korea: a Timeless Beauty, pp. 16 and 47-49.

<sup>366</sup> Kasahara, ed., A History of Japanese Religion, pp. 73-98.

<sup>367</sup> Ibid, pp. 99-103.

<sup>368</sup> Akiyama Terukazu, Japanese Painting, p. 39.

<sup>369</sup> Kasahara, ed., A History of Japanese Religion, pp. 84-85.



the founder of Jōdo-shū; Shinran 親鸞 (1173-1263), a disciple of Hōnen who subsequently founded the Jōdo-shinshū 浄土真宗 (True Pure Land School) that was influential among people particularly in northern and eastern Japan; Ippen 一遍 (1234-1289), the founder of the Ji-shū 時宗 (Time School) that advocated the devotion to Amida Buddha (Amitābha) through dancing ecstatically; Eisai 栄西 (1141-1215), who founded the Rinzaishū 臨済宗 (Rinzai Sect), or “sudden” sect, of the Zen School; Dōgen 道元 (1200-1253), who founded the Sōtōshū 曹洞宗 (Sōtō Sect), or “gradual” sect, of the Zen School; and Nichiren 日蓮 (1222-1282), the founder of the Nichirenshū 日蓮宗 (Nichiren School) that emphasized the worship of the Lotus Sūtra.<sup>370</sup> The influence of the Tendai School was so extensive that it also had a great impact on the early-stage development of the Buddhist *e-sugoroku*, as the practitioners of the school were considered to be the originators of the game’s tradition in Japan, which was believed to have begun around this period of time. Such influence lasted through the Edo period as suggested by the fact that the Tokugawa clan still designated monasteries of the Tendai School as its *kigan-sho* 祈願所 (Prayer Place) to pray for the nation.<sup>371</sup>

Different from the colourful illustrated layouts of the *e-sugoroku* published in latter periods, this terminological device had Buddhist terms printed in black and white inside plain checker-pattern squares that were similar to those bureaucratic and religious promotion games developed in China and Korea. An undated and anonymous printed game board titled as the *Shōka-zōshin-no-zu* 證果増進之圖 (証果増進の図; Table of the Advancement and Realization of the Truth; Figure 6.8) is a fine extant example that can shed some light on the

<sup>370</sup> Shi Dongchu, *Zhong Ri fojiao jiaotong shi*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>371</sup> Murakami Senjō, *Riben fojiao shi gang*, p. 232.

content and the composition of the *meimoku-sugoroku*. It has fifteen rows of squares enveloping Buddhist captions in both Sino-Japanese characters and phonetic *katakana*, and the words on each row are of a specific terminological theme. Indicated on the right margin outside the frame, from the bottom to the top, these themes are the *Jūroku jigoku* 十六地獄 (Sixteen Purgatories), *Shiō shishū* 四王四州 (Four Kings and Four Continents),<sup>372</sup> *Rokuyoku ten* 六欲天 (Six Heavens of the Desire Realm),<sup>373</sup> *Shizen ten* 四禪天 (Four Meditation Heavens),<sup>374</sup> *Mushiki ten* 無色天 (Formless Heavens),<sup>375</sup> *Shikō shika* 四向四果 (Four Accesses and Four Realizations),<sup>376</sup> *Jisshin* 十信 (Ten [Stages of] Faith),<sup>377</sup> *Jūjū* 十住 (Ten [Stages of] Abidance),<sup>378</sup> *Jūgyō* 十行 (Ten [Stages of] Practice),<sup>379</sup> *Jūekō* 十迴向 (Ten

<sup>372</sup> These terms refer to the four celestial kings of the four quarters of every universe, with *Zōchō tennō* 增長天王 (*Virūdhaka*) of the *Nansenbu shū* 南瞻部洲 (*Jambudvīpa*) in the south, *Jikoku tennō* 持國天王 (*Dhrtarāstra*) of the *Bidaika shū* 毘提訶洲 (*Pūrva-videha*) in the east, *Kōmoku tennō* 廣目天王 (*Virūpākṣa*) of the *Saigoke shū* 西牛貨洲 (*Apara-godānīya*) in the west, and *Tabun tennō* 多聞天王 (*Vaiśravaṇa*) of the *Hokkuru shū* 北俱盧洲 (*Uttarakuru*) in the north.

<sup>373</sup> In addition to the heavens of the above four celestial continents, the other five heavens that formed the desire realm or the form realm are the *Tōri ten* 忉利天 (*Trāyas-trimśa*), *Yama ten* 夜摩天 (*Yāma*), *Tosotsu ten* 兜率天 (*Tuṣita*), *Gyōhenge ten* 樂變化天 (*Nirmāṇa-rati*), and *Takejizai ten* 他化自在天 (*Paranirmita-vaśa-vartin*).

<sup>374</sup> These heavens are in the realm of form and the condition for those who are born into depends on their level of meditation in the four meditative concentrations.

<sup>375</sup> This term refers to the four heavens within the realm of formless for those who practice the four formless concentrations; the four heavens are the *Kūmuhensho ten* 空無邊處天 (*akāśa-anantya-āyatana*), *Shikimuhensho ten* 識無邊處天 (*viññāna-anantya-āyatana*), *Mushousho ten* 無所有處天 (*akiñcanya-āyatana*), and *Hisōhihisōsho ten* 非想非非想處天 (*naīvasamjñāna-asamjñā-āyatana*).

<sup>376</sup> The terms refer to the four enlightenment levels of the *śrāvaka* path, namely, the *Shudaon ka* 須陀洹果 (*srota-āpanna*), *Shidagon ka* 斯陀含果 (*sakrd-āgāmin*), *Anagon ka* 阿那含果 (*anāgāmin*), and *Arakan ka* 阿羅漢果 (*arhat*), from the lowest to the highest levels.

<sup>377</sup> The *jisshin* is the first ten-stage level of the fifty-two-stage path to becoming a Buddha through Bodhisattva practices. It is called as such because faith is the entry practice and is listed as the Stages of the *shinshin* 信心 (Faith), *nenshin* 念心 (Mindfulness), *shōjinshin* 精進心 (Endeavor), *jōshin* 定心 (Mental Stability), *eshin* 慧心 (Wisdom), *kaishin* 戒心 (Self-Restraint), *ekōshin* 迴向心 (Merit Dedication), *gohōshin* 護法心 (Maintaining the Dharma), *shashin* 捨心 (Detachment), and *ganshin* 願心 (Resolution).

<sup>378</sup> It refers to the second ten-stage level of the fifty-two-stage path to becoming a Buddha through Bodhisattva practices. They are the Stages of the *hosshinjū* 發心住 (Abidance of the Mind of Awareness), *jijichū* 治地住 (Abidance of Nurturing the [Mind-]Ground), *shugyōjū* 修行住 (Abidance of Practice), *shōkijū* 生貴住 (Abidance of Producing Virtues), *gusokuhōbenjū* 具足方便住 (Abidance of Complete Expedient Means), *shōshinjū* 正心住 (Abidance of Proper Mind), *futaijū* 不退住 (Abidance of No Retrogression), *dōshinjū* 童眞住

[Stages of] Merit Dedication),<sup>380</sup> and *Jūji* 十地 (Ten [Stages of Mind-]Ground).<sup>381</sup> This is indeed a general layout of the cosmological structure of the Ten Dharma Realms expounded in many Mahāyāna sūtras in terms of the levels of enlightenment and the degrees of delusion. Ascending from the bottom to the top symbolizes the advancement of the enlightenment levels.

Such a vertical, linear ascending layout, however, is different from those Buddhist game boards that have survived in China and Korea. As discussed above, the *Xuanfo tu* and the *Seongbuldo* are characterized by their layers of concentric squares with characters written facing to the four sides of the game board so that players can surround the game board to play or gamble. Unexpectedly, it looks like that the layout design of this terminological Tendai version resembles rather more closely those of the Korean bureaucratic *Seunggyeongdo*, as seen in Figures 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3. Such a resemblance is very suggestive

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(Abidance of Childlike Pure [Mind]), *hōōshijū* 法王子住 (Abidance of Dharma Prince), and *kanjōjū* 灌頂住 (Abidance of Lustration).

<sup>379</sup> This is the third ten-stage level of the fifty-two-stage path to becoming a Buddha through Bodhisattva practices, namely, the Stages of the *kangigyō* 歡喜行 (Joyful Practice), *nyōyakugyō* 饒益行 (Beneficial Practice), *muigyakugyō* 無違逆行 (Non-Contradictive Practice), *mukutsudōgyō* 無屈撓行 (Indomitable Practice), *muchirangyō* 無癡亂行 (Non-Confusion Practice), *zenkengyō* 善見行 (Good Manifestation Practice), *mujakugyō* 無著行 (Non-Attachment Practice), *nantokugyō* 難得行 (Unattainable Practice), *zenhōgyō* 善法行 (Good Dharma Practice), and *shinjitsugyō* 眞實行 (True Practice).

<sup>380</sup> The *jūekō* refers to the fourth ten-stage level of the fifty-two-stage path to becoming a Buddha through Bodhisattva practices and these ten are the Stages of the *kugoshūjō rishūjōsō* 救護衆生離衆生相 (Saving All Sentient Beings without Mindful Attachment to Such Phenomena), *fue* 不壞 (Indestructibility), *tōissaishobutsu* 等一切諸佛 (Equal to All Buddhas), *shiissaisho* 至一切處 (Omnipresence), *mujinkudokuzō* 無盡功德藏 (Inexhaustible Virtuous Merit Storage), *zuijunbyōdōzenkon* 隨順平等善根 (Virtuous Causation of Equal Adaptation), *zuijundōkan issaishūjō* 隨順等觀一切衆生 (Visualization of Equal Adaptation to All Sentient Beings), *shinnyosō* 眞如相 (Thusness Phenomenon), *mubakugedatsu* 無縛解脫 (Unbound Liberation), and *hokkaimuryō* 法界無量 (Infinite Dharma Realm).

<sup>381</sup> This term refers to the fifth ten-stage level of the fifty-two-stage path to becoming a Buddha through Bodhisattva practices, which includes the Stages of the *kangiji* 歡喜地 (Joyful [Mind-]Ground), *rikuji* 離垢地 (Defilement-Free [Mind-]Ground), *hokkōchi* 發光地 (Illuminous [Mind-Ground]), *eneji* 焰慧地 ([Mind-]Ground of Glowing Wisdom), *nanshōji* 難勝地 (Unchallengeable [Mind-]Ground), *genzenchi* 現前地 ([Mind-]Ground of Manifesting of Reality), *ongyōchi* 遠行地 (Far-Reaching [Mind-]Ground), *fudōji* 不動地 (Unmovable [Mind-]Ground), *zeneji* 善慧地 ([Mind-]Ground of Virtuous Wisdom), and *hōunji* 法雲地 ([Mind-]Ground of Dharma-Cloud).

but there is no other evidence to offer a more substantial explanation here. On the other hand, even though this terminological Tendai version is character-based like those in China and Korea, the closest game boards with similar contents and layout arrangements can actually be found in some South Asian countries that had a history of esoteric traditions, from which the religious paintings and game boards evolved are pictorial-based. This connection between the Tendai School and the esoteric traditions is understandable as the Japanese Tendai teachings had long developed with esoteric elements. Hence, from another angle, these game boards that circulated in these South Asian countries can be considered as the illustrated versions of the Tendai terminological game board, which is to be discussed in more detail in the next chapter on the religious game boards in Tibet and some other South Asian countries.



## 6. Gambling Board Games as Cultural Transmitters of Confucian Bureaucracy and Buddhist Doctrine in Premodern Japan

[illegible]

78 x 84cm. (Takahashi, 1994, p. 13)

The game begins from the big square, located at the centre of the fourth and fifth rows from the bottom, indicated as *Nansenbu shū* 南瞻部洲 (Skt. *Jambudvīpa*), to which our world supposedly belongs, and ends when a player ascends to the top central square that

represents the “Myōgaku 妙覺 (Marvelous Enlightenment),<sup>382</sup>” or a Buddha. Also written inside this big square are the six words of “*ton* 貪 (greed),” “*jin* 瞋 (hatred),” “*chi* 癡 (ignorance),” “*kai* 戒 (precept),” “*jō* 定 (concentration),” and “*e* 慧 (wisdom),” with the first three characters refer to the *sandoku* 三毒 (Three Poisons), the sources of all desires and delusions, while the second three characters referring to the *sangaku* 三學 (Three Learnings), the countermeasures to the Three Poisons in Buddhist practice. Under these six words are six reincarnated realms and each of them is placed under the word that indicates the corresponding spiritual quality or condition for the transmigration. From the *ton* to the *e*, they are the *gaki* 餓鬼 (hungry ghost), *jigoku* 地獄 (purgatory), *chikushō* 畜生 (animal), *Tōri ten* 忉利天 (Heaven of the Thirty-Three [Deities]; *Trāyas-trimśa*), *Bonshu ten* 梵眾天 (Heaven of the Followers of Brahma; *Brahma-pārisadya*), and *se daiichi* 世第一 (Highest [Meditative Stage] in the World). Aside from reminding the players about the relationship between the mind and the realm of existence, these six words also stand for the pip of the dice, meaning that the dice for this game board is inscribed with these six characters. To compare this starting point with that of the *Xuanfō tu* (see Figure 1.3) by Master Zhixu, the composition of this print seems to be relatively simple as the variation of the routes to Buddhahood is limited.

The ultimate enlightenment of a Buddha and the highest enlightenment level that can be attained by a Bodhisattva before becoming a Buddha are placed on the top row that signifies the destination. At the top center is the Myōgaku, or Marvellous Enlightenment. Other terms on the same row are, in one way or other, all related to the absolute realization,

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<sup>382</sup> This is the last stage of the fifty-two-stage path to becoming a Buddha through Bodhisattva practices and is also known as the Perfect or Buddha Stage.

like the *tōgaku* 等覺 (Equal Enlightenment; *samyak-sambodhi*)<sup>383</sup> and the *sanshin* 三身 (Three Bodies [of the Buddha]) of the *hōshin* 法身 (Dharma Body; *dharma-kāya*), *hōshin* 報身 (Reward Body; *sambhoga-kāya*), and *keshin* 化身 (Manifest Body; *nirmāṇa-kāya*). The creator's interest in the practices of Bodhisattva is explicitly demonstrated by the layout, within which the subject occupies six out of fifteen rows of space. Based on the Avatamsaka Sūtra (Flower Adornment Sūtra), an eminent Mahāyāna sūtra, the fifty-two meditative stages of how a Bodhisattva can become a Buddha by practicing meditative methods is systematically tabled here. The complexity of these terms and their meanings as well as the lack of interesting illustrations suggest that this game was not meant for public circulation but limited to those who engaged in serious study of the teachings. Judging from the words “*Zōtsūbetten* 藏通別圓 (Tripiṭaka, Shared, Distinct, and Perfect [Categories of Buddhist Teachings])”<sup>384</sup> inside a circular space on the top right corner margin, this print was most likely relevant to the Tendai School since the term refers to the School's way of classifying Buddhist doctrines. In other words, this Japanese glossary, like its Chinese and Korean parallels, was created to teach the literate players, whether they be Tendai monks or laymen, to be familiar with the Mahāyāna cosmology and the metaphysical relationship between each realm and its reborn residents.

There are only a few figures in this print: the three lotus flowers underneath the terms of the Buddha's Three Bodies on the top, the Dharma wheel and the cloudlet in the middle, and the darkened square with cloud-like smoke and the words “*mugen* 無間 (ceaselessness)” that signifies the *Mugenjigoku* 無間地獄 (Ceaseless [Torture] Purgatory; *avīci-naraka*) at the

<sup>383</sup> This is the fifty-first stage of the fifty-two-stage path to becoming a Buddha through Bodhisattva practices. It is called as such is because the enlightenment attained by a Bodhisattva at this stage is equivalent to that of a Buddha.

<sup>384</sup> The four doctrinal categories classified and adopted by the Tiantai (Tendai) School.

left bottom corner.<sup>385</sup> It is noticeable that the creator also put a particular emphasis on the Sixteen Purgatories that consist of the two sets of purgatories located at the two bottom rows known as “*hachikan* 八寒 (Eight Cold [Purgatories])”<sup>386</sup> and “*hachinetsu* 八熱 (Eight Burning [Purgatories])”.<sup>387</sup> Such an emphasis can also be found in some early Buddhist *e-sugoroku* of primitive and vulgarized style (see Figures 6.11 and 6.12), making it a characteristic unique to the Japanese Buddhist *e-sugoroku* as the Buddhist promotion games in China and Korea did not detail the variety of the purgatory, merely treating it as one term out of many. The emphasis on the purgatories in these vulgarized *e-sugoroku* suggests that this plain terminological *e-sugoroku* had certain influence over the development of the illustrated versions at its early stage. The idea of “purgatory” itself must have had a great impact on the emotionally distraught and traumatized Japanese people because of their prolonged sufferings brought about by the longtime civil war period that devastated the country from the mid-fifteenth to the late-sixteenth centuries before the rise of the Edo regime.<sup>388</sup> The purgatorial characteristic undoubtedly was a reflection of the contemporary historical background within which the war-weary warriors and common people who were haunted by their distress and uneasiness could be comforted by the doctrine of karmic retribution.

<sup>385</sup> Takahashi Junji, *Nihon esugoroku shūsei*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>386</sup> These eight cold purgatories (*narakas*) refer to the realms where beings are said to be tortured by the coldness that cause blisters, tumors, and body parts frozen: 頽浮陀 (*arbuda*), 泥羅浮陀 (*nirarbuda*), 阿吒吒 (*atata*), 阿波波 (*hahava*, or *ababa*), 嘔侯侯 (*ahaha*, or *hahava*), 優鉢羅 (*utpala*), 波頭摩 (*padma*), and 分陀利 (*pundarīka*, or *mahāpadma*).

<sup>387</sup> These eight burning purgatories are the realms where beings are believed to be tortured by fire and different instruments of torture. They are the *tōkatsujigoku* 等活地獄 (Being Reborn [to be Tortured Again] Purgatory; *saṃjīva-naraka*), *kokujōjigoku* 黑繩地獄 (Black Iron Chain Purgatory; *kāla-sūtra-naraka*), *shugōjigoku* 衆合地獄 (Being Crushed Together Purgatory; *saṃghāta-naraka*), *gōkyōjigoku* 號叫地獄 (Screaming Purgatory; *raurava-naraka*), *daikyōjigoku* 大叫地獄 (Great Screaming Purgatory; *mahāraurava-naraka*), *ennetsujigoku* 炎熱地獄 (Scorching Hot Purgatory; *tāpana-naraka*), *dainetsujigoku* 大熱地獄 (Extremely Scorching Hot Purgatory; *pratāpana-naraka*), and *mugenjigoku* 無間地獄 (Ceaseless [Torture] Purgatory; *avīci-naraka*).

<sup>388</sup> Takahashi Junji, *Nihon esugoroku shūsei*, pp. 163-164.

On the other hand, the belief of *mappō* 末法 (the latter day of Dharma) that pervaded the minds of the Japanese population long before this war period also enhanced the sense of pessimism. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, a series of *samurai*'s insurgencies, social disorders, and natural disasters, including fires, cyclones, famines, and earthquakes, had been regarded as signs of the times explainable only by the concept of *mappō*.<sup>389</sup> The political events associated with the founding of the Kamakura *shogunate* were only to further intensify the sense of *mappō* among the people. Such a rise of anxiety over *mappō* to a great extent ensured and facilitated the continued dissemination of the Pure Land teachings, even to the adherents of other Buddhist schools.<sup>390</sup>

In regard to the Pure Land teachings, Jōdo-shū 浄土宗 (Pure Land School), together with the meditative Zen-shū (禅宗), which primarily attracted the samurai class as Zen's discipline and austerity answered for the warrior code, became the two dominant new schools that characterized the development of Buddhism during the Kamakura period (1185-1333).<sup>391</sup> The earliest presence of Pure Land texts and terms in Japan is generally acknowledged to occur around the turn of the seventh century in Prince Shōtoku's time but the worship of Amida Buddha only drew attention from both Buddhist and aristocratic circles over the course of the eighth century.<sup>392</sup> The increasing number of the statues, Amida and Kannon (Avalokiteśvara), cast in a few foremost aristocratic temples in Nara from 724 to 806 suggests that the popularity of the cult grew correspondingly. However, the teaching on the

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<sup>389</sup> James C. Dobbins, "A Brief History of Pure Land Buddhism in Early Japan," Engaged Pure Land Buddhism: Challenges Facing Jōdo Shinshū in the Contemporary World, eds. Kenneth K. Tanaka and Eisho Nasu (Berkeley, California: WisdomOcean Publications, 1998) 146-147.

<sup>390</sup> Ibid, pp. 147 and 155.

<sup>391</sup> Wang Yi 王儀, Zhao Song yu Wang shi Gaoli ji Riben de guanxi 趙宋與王氏高麗及日本的關係 [The Relationships between the Zhao (Sovereign) of the Song and the Wang Family of Goryeo and Japan] (Taipei: Chung Hwa Book Company, Ltd. 臺灣中華書局, 1980) 144, and 149-150.

<sup>392</sup> Dobbins, "A Brief History of Pure Land Buddhism in Early Japan," p. 115.

nine grades of the rebirth into Amida's Pure Land only took form in the Tendai doctrine in the course of the tenth century.<sup>393</sup> It was Genshin 源信 (942-1017), a learned Tendai monk, who first attracted the attention of the educated middle class with the teachings of Pure Land.<sup>394</sup> The beliefs finally spread to the entire aristocratic class in the eleventh century, particularly after Genshin came into contact with Fujiwara no Michinaga in 1004, one of the enthusiastic aristocratic Pure Land patrons.<sup>395</sup> The middle class found consolation in the teaching of Pure Land to despise worldly life as they were deprived of the privileges that only the aristocracy could enjoy. The aristocrats also turned to the school with the hope of prolonging their way of life in the Buddha's Land. Even the Tokugawa clan had monasteries of the Pure Land School as the clan's *bodai-sho* 菩提所 (*Bodhi* Place), clan temples established to make offerings and prayers for the salvation of lineage ancestors.<sup>396</sup> These facts certainly ensured a smooth path for the development of the *e-sugoroku* with Pure Land motifs, particularly, during the reign of Tokugawa family.

Although the above game board is undated, a nineteenth-century source provides more information about its provenance. This 1826 *Sukikaeshi* 還魂紙料 (Recycled Wasted Paper) was a work by Tanehiko Ryūtei 柳亭種彦 (1783-1842), who was one of the eminent pioneering researchers on the pictorial game boards.<sup>397</sup> It is when he traces the history of the *e-sugoroku* to respond to a quotation from an early eighteenth-century work that he describes

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<sup>393</sup> Ibid, pp. 116-117 and 123-126.

<sup>394</sup> Akiyama Terukazu, *Japanese Painting*, pp. 40 and 42.

<sup>395</sup> James C. Dobbins, "A Brief History of Pure Land Buddhism in Early Japan," p. 142.

<sup>396</sup> Murakami Senjō 村上專精 (1851-1929), *Riben fojiao shi gang* 日本佛教史綱 [An Outline of the History of Buddhism in Japan], trans. Yang Zengwen 楊曾文 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1999) 232.

<sup>397</sup> Seki Tadao, ed., "Yūgigu," p. 94; Ono Takeo, *Edo no yūgi fūzoku zushi*, p. 50; and Takahashi, *Nihon esugoroku shūsei*, p. 147.

the content of a game board that is reminiscent of the layout just mentioned.<sup>398</sup> In response to the quotation, Tanehiko talks about the category of the *Jōdo-sugoroku* 浄土雙六 (Double Sixes of Pure Land), tracing back the first appearance of the name with the help of a few mid-seventeenth-century poems.<sup>399</sup> His discussion explicitly suggests that some game boards like the above model may still be in circulation during his time or a few of out-of-press examples were still in the possession of collectors and researchers of his time.

Another important point here is that Tanehiko also suggests that the *Jōdo-sugoroku* was equivalent to a particular version specified as the *Senbutsuzu* 遷仏図 (Table of Becoming a Buddha).<sup>400</sup> The Chinese-like title implies that there was a cultural link between the Chinese *Xuanfo tu* and the Japanese *Jōdo-sugoroku*, if not for all the Buddhist *e-sugoroku*.

As a matter of fact, the earliest mention of the game *Jōdo-sugoroku* and its dice can be seen in the *Sanetaka kōki* 実隆公記 (Sanetaka's Diary), a diary full of valuable information regarding the court from 1474 to 1536 witnessed by Sanjōnishi Sanetaka 三条西実隆 (1455-1537), a courtier who was also recognized as a famous calligrapher in the Muromachi period. The entry, dated the twelfth day of the eighth month of the sixth year of the Bunmei 文明 reign period (1469-1487), records that Sanjōnishi was commanded by the court to write six Sino-Japanese characters of “*na* 南,” “*mu* 無,” “*a* 阿,” “*mi* 彌,” “*da* 陀,” “*butsu* 佛” on the dice for the game *Jōdo-sugoroku* 浄土双六.<sup>401</sup> Accordingly, promotion games of Pure Land motifs like this one must have been known to the Japanese court well before 1474. It should be noted that this game was at that time considered by the court

<sup>398</sup> Ono, *Edo no yūgi fūzoku zushi*, pp. 50-53; and Takahashi, *Nihon esugoroku shūsei*, p. 147.

<sup>399</sup> Takahashi, *Nihon esugoroku shūsei*, pp. 147 and 152. Also see Ono, *Edo no yūgi fūzoku zushi*, pp. 50-55.

<sup>400</sup> Ono, *Edo no yūgi fūzoku zushi*, p. 53.

<sup>401</sup> Masukawa, *Tobaku no Nihon shi*, pp. 99-100.

residents an elegant gambling amusement,<sup>402</sup> which suggests that, aside from the monasterial communities, the *Jōdo-sugoroku* was also circulated among the ruling class but had not been vulgarized to be circulated beyond the ruling class. The fact that the Tendai monasteries on Mount Hiei had a geographical advantage to establish a close relationship with the imperial court residing at the foot of the mountain perhaps can explain how the Buddhist game found its way to the royal families.<sup>403</sup> As these six characters were not used on the dice for the *e-sugoroku* in later periods, this court version might relate more to those long lost Chinese *Xuanfo tu* made before the time of Zhixu.

Probably inspired by the *meimoku-sugoroku* created for young monks, illustrated versions later emerged for the religious needs of the general public and the extant game boards of this type are classified under Takahashi's category of the *kyōkun-sugoroku*, or Double Sixes of Moral Instruction, which comprises the *Jōdo-sugoroku* and the *Buppō-sugoroku* 仏法双六 (Double Sixes of Buddhist Dharma).<sup>404</sup> As their titles suggest, the content of the former is only concerned with the Pure Land teachings while that of the latter is relevant to the basic Buddhist doctrines with no specific sectarian affiliation. Three types of characted dice were used in these games; two of them had six of their sides inscribed with the *kanji* 漢字 (Sino-Japanese characters) “*na* 南,” “*mu* 無,” “*bun* 分,” “*shin* 身,” “*sho* 諸,” and “*butsu* 仏, (Figure 6.9)”<sup>405</sup> meaning “taking refuge in Buddhas with various manifestations,” or “*ton* 貪 (greed),” “*jin* 瞋 (hatred),” “*chi* 癡 (ignorance),” “*kai* 戒

<sup>402</sup> See Masukawa, *Tobaku no Nihon shi*, pp. 94-100.

<sup>403</sup> Akiyama, *Japanese Painting*, p. 37.

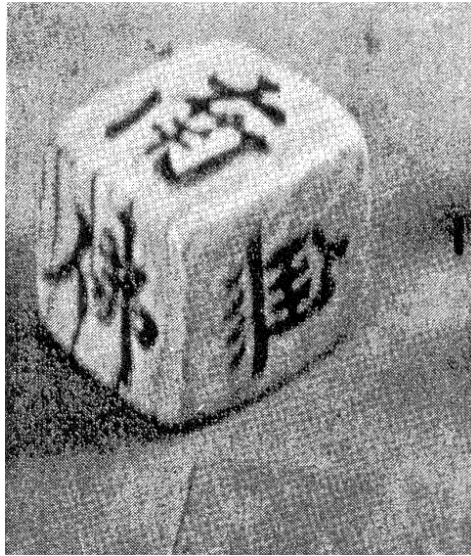
<sup>404</sup> Takahashi, *Nihon esugoroku shūsei*, p. 146.

<sup>405</sup> Takahashi, *Nihon esugoroku shūsei*, p. 146; Seki, ed., “Yūgigu,” pp. 19 and 94; and Formanek, “The ‘Spectacle’ of Womanhood,” p. 75.



(precept),” “*jō* 定 (concentration),” and “*e* 慧 (wisdom),”<sup>406</sup> with the first three characters referring to the Three Poisons and the second three characters the Three Learnings. Slightly different in appearance, the third type of dice was four-sided and carved with the characters “*shin* 信 (trust),” “*gi* 義 (righteousness),” “*zen* 善 (good),” and “*aku* 惡 (bad).”<sup>407</sup> In the latter periods, three *sangi* 算木 (calculation sticks) with black and white faces<sup>408</sup> or the dice inscribed with one to six dots were also used.<sup>409</sup> According to the merits and demerits showed on the dice, the players could pass through different forms of existence printed inside the spaces to learn about the causal differences of their mental and meditative states.

**Figure 6.9** Charactered dice for playing Buddhist *e-sugoroku*.



(Seki, 1968, p. 18)

Generally, the layouts of the *Jōdo-sugoroku* allow the players to visually wander through the six paths of reincarnation or the Ten Dharma Realms, with the human realm as

<sup>406</sup> Takahashi, *Nihon esugoroku shūsei*, p. 146.

<sup>407</sup> Ibid, p. 146.

<sup>408</sup> Ono, *Edo no yūgi fūzoku zushi*, p. 50.

<sup>409</sup> Takahashi, *Nihon esugoroku shūsei*, p. 11.

the starting point and the Pure Land teachings and practices as the means to the salvational destination. Those who reach the “Pure Land” win the game and, in some game boards, a player is punished by being forced out of game if he lands in the “purgatory.” This kind of *e-sugoroku* apparently was created to visually promote the embedded Pure Land teachings, of which the extreme differences of the karmic consequences were represented by the scenes of the Western Pure Land and the purgatories. Hence, aside from lecturing about the Pure Land practice and teachings to the general public in an easy-to-understand manner, the school also endeavoured to attract illiterate people with these visual aids. This assumption can actually be supported by the story about how Buddhist nuns of the Kumano 熊野 area<sup>410</sup> indoctrinated lay women with the help of their drawings of the Western Pure Land and purgatories; the nuns were said to have explained and elaborated the meanings of the images in the drawings selected by the women by means of throwing flowers on the images.<sup>411</sup> As a matter of fact, in Japan, the creation of sacred images executed by the monks of each monastery only began after the Heian period, before which sacred images were primarily executed by artists attached to the official studio of painting.<sup>412</sup> From the thirteenth century on, in order to have enough sacred images to offer to increasing numbers of converts, the Buddhist communities also employed the woodblock printing technique to reproduce more sacred images.<sup>413</sup> The adoption of this technique certainly accelerated the emergence of Buddhist *e-sugoroku*.

Besides, the flower throwing tradition had a relation to the initiation ritual for Shingon novices. By the landing of a flower thrown on a *maṇḍala*, the ritual was to determine which practice and teaching of a tutelary being or Bodhisattva the initiate should

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<sup>410</sup> Kumano is a sacred place located south of Yoshino 吉野, Honshū. The deities were believed to have lived there since ancient times.

<sup>411</sup> Takahashi, *Nihon esugoroku shūsei*, p. 147.

<sup>412</sup> Akiyama, *Japanese Painting*, p. 39.

<sup>413</sup> *Ibid*, p. 164.

follow.<sup>414</sup> Since the Tendai School had been strongly influenced by esoteric theories, its practitioners as well as the believers of the Pure Land School with whom the Tendai had affiliations should not be strange to the two kinds of *maṇḍala* and their related rituals and practices. The pantheons of esoteric Buddhism are represented in the *Taizō-kai-mandara* (Womb Realm; in Sanskrit *garbha-dhātu maṇḍala*; Realm of Reason) and the *Kongō-kai-mandara* (Diamond Realm; in Sanskrit *vajra-dhātu maṇḍala*; Realm of Wisdom); in the former the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas are arranged in concentric circles while the latter in a rectangle with nine subsections.<sup>415</sup> Hence, it is very likely that, to a certain extent, the early layout arrangement of the illustrated Buddhist *e-sugoroku* like the Kumano drawings was inspired by the *maṇḍala*. This possible interaction between the gambling game and the *maṇḍala* is exceptionally distinct in those promotion games found in Tibet, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Figure 6.10 is an excellent example of the *Jōdo-sugoroku* to demonstrate the impact of the *meimoku-sugoroku* on the development of the *Jōdo-sugoroku* in terms of layout design and content arrangement. The ten-row vertical, ascending format comprises five bottom rows of realms related to bad karmas including purgatories represented by ghosts and monsters, and five top rows of stages leading to the rebirth into the Western Pure Land, represented by Buddhist figures and characters from popular beliefs. The destination square is placed at the top center and is pictorialized by the descending scene of a Buddha and his retinue reminiscent of a painting genre developed from the Pure Land beliefs called “*raigō-zu* 来迎図 (Painting of Welcoming Descent [of Amida Buddha]);”<sup>416</sup> this painting genre can also be portrayed as a dominant scene in other *e-sugoroku* such as the example discussed

<sup>414</sup> Salter, *Japanese Popular Prints*, p. 165.

<sup>415</sup> Akiyama, *Japanese Painting*, pp. 37 and 39.

<sup>416</sup> Ibid, p. 63.

below. Based on this illustration, the affiliation of this *e-sugoroku* with the Pure Land beliefs can be testified. The linear, ascending format echoes the composition of the aforementioned terminological *e-sugoroku* and the contrast between the unenlightened and the enlightened and the emphasis on the horror of purgatories persist. The black and white color further suggests that this game board might be produced at the early stage of the development of the *Jōdo-sugoroku*. On the other hand, this is also an excellent example demonstrating how striking are the similarities between the *Jōdo-sugoroku* and those game boards in some South Asian countries as shown in Figures 7.1 and 7.17; in terms of their vertical layout arrangement and lively illustrations, the likenesses are obvious simply at a glance.

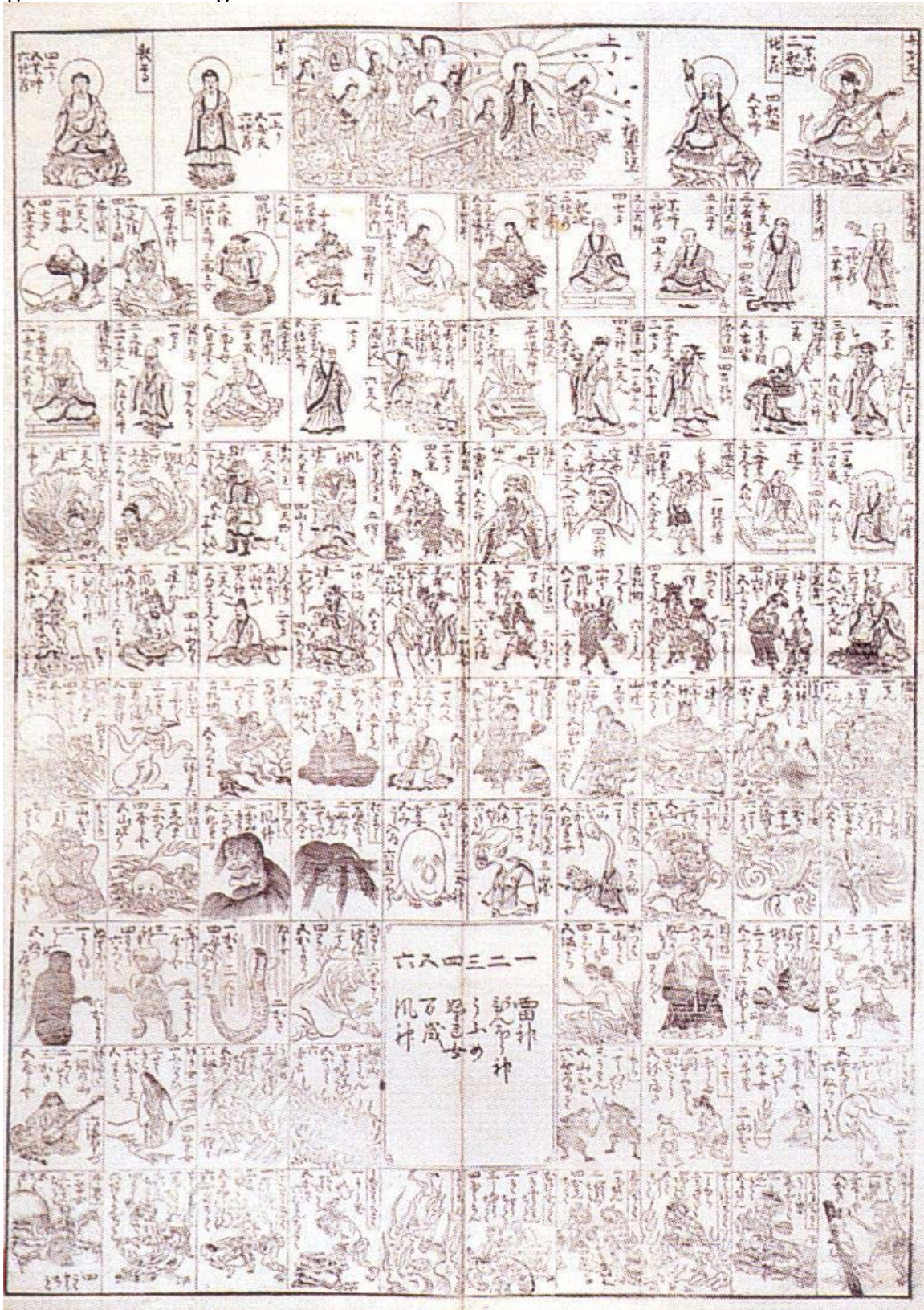
A game board titled *Muryōjukoku-Jōdo-sugoroku* 無量壽國浄土雙六 (無量寿国浄土双六; Double Sixes of the Pure Land of the Buddha of Infinite Life; Figure 6.11)<sup>417</sup> is another fine example of the *Jōdo-sugoroku*. The doctrine about the *kuhonōjō* 九品往生 (Nine Grades of Rebirth) within the Pure Land of Buddha Amida is the main focus here, of which the descriptive teachings of the rebirths into the paradisiacal realm are pictorialized. Produced in Nagoya 名古屋 (in the central region of Honshū 本州), this game board is undated and anonymous yet, again, the monochromic print suggests that it might be produced at the early stage of the development of the *Jōdo-sugoroku*.

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<sup>417</sup> Takahashi, *Nihon esugoroku shūsei*, pp. 10-11.



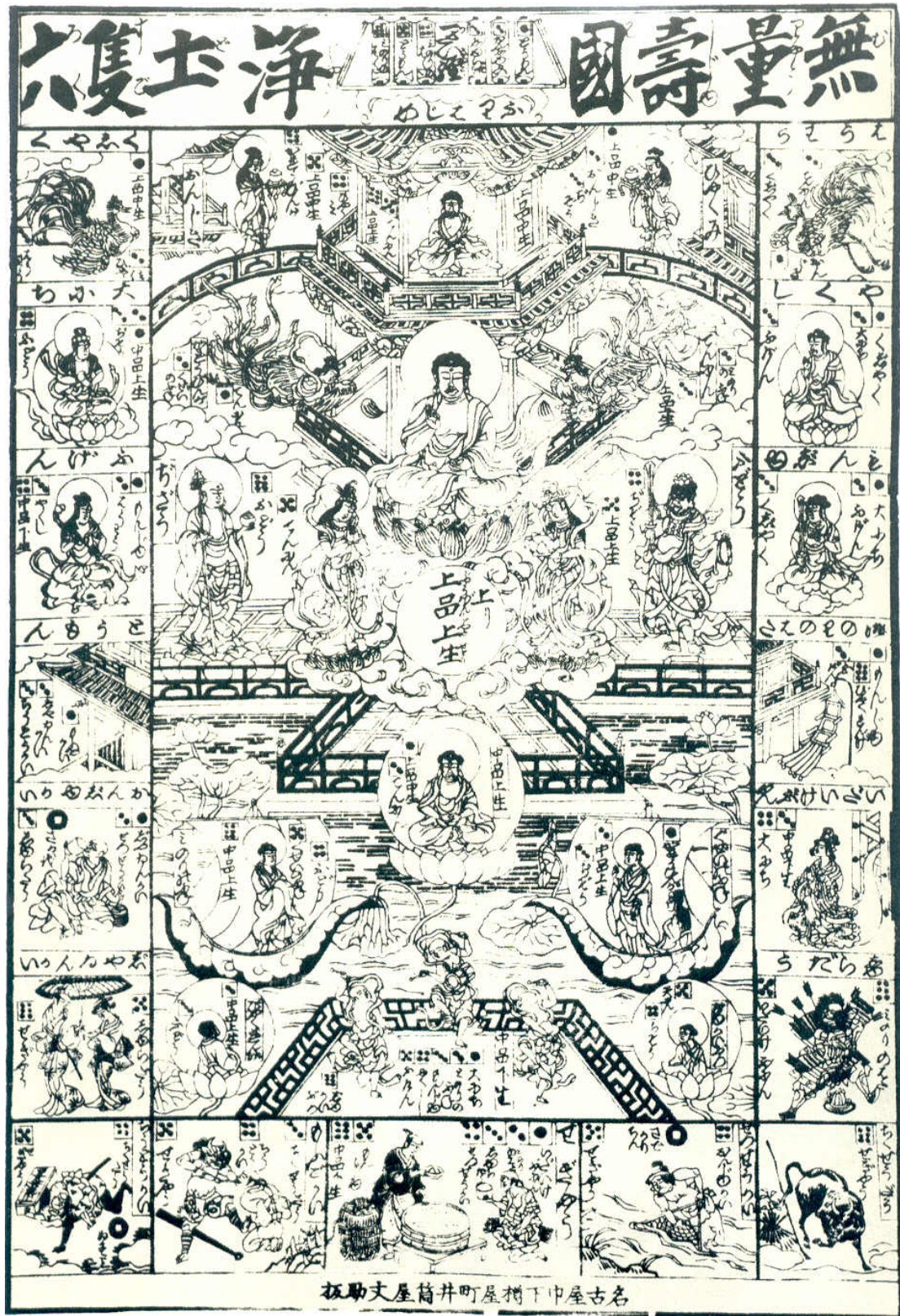
Figure 6.10 *Jōdo-sugoroku*.



(Salter, 2006, p. 165)



Figure 6.11 *Muryōjukoku-Jōdo-sugoroku*.



33 x 49 cm. (Takahashi, 1994, p. 11)

At first glance, this print can be mistaken for a painting of the *raigō* 来迎 (coming to welcome) image, a genre of religious painting unique to Japan known as the *raigō-zu*, which depicted Buddha Amida and his retinue descending from the Pure Land to welcome a devotee at his deathbed.<sup>418</sup> As a ritual, this kind of paintings was often hung by the bedside within sight of a dying devotee who resolved to be reborn into the Pure Land by reciting the name of Buddha Amida.<sup>419</sup> This deathbed ritual had increased in popularity during the tenth century, along with the rise of *nembutsu* 念佛 (chanting the name of Amida) societies, but it soon became a common practice among aristocrats after the influential Fujiwara no Michinaga adopted this ritual on his death bed.<sup>420</sup> In this case, although the descending scene is omitted, under the influence of this ritual in which the *raigō* paintings were hung by the deathbed of the aristocrats, these plebeianized Buddhist game boards could probably be employed as a consolatory substitute for the deathbed ritual observed by the grass roots as well.

This grandly designed game board, drawn like a scene taking place before our eyes, can visually attract people by the depiction of the imagined scene of the Pure Land with detailed and elaborate illustrations of gazebos and footbridges floating over the water against the background of a heavenly garden, which was suggested by the low-lying clouds and flying celestial beings. Three Buddhas are portrayed sitting in front view on giant lotus-flower seats placed in the central axis in a perpendicular order accompanied by attendant Bodhisattvas, celestial beings, monks, and reborn residents; many of them are either sitting or standing on a giant lotus-flower that symbolizes their rebirth into the Pure Land. This central

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<sup>418</sup> Akiyama, *Japanese Painting*, p. 63; and Kazuo, ed., *A History of Japanese Religion*, pp. 126-127.

<sup>419</sup> Akiyama, *Japanese Painting*, pp. 40 and 42. For more details about this deathbed ritual, see Sarah Johanna Horton, “*Mukaekō*: Practice for the Deathbed,” *Death and the Afterlife in Japanese Buddhism*, eds. Jacqueline Ilyse Stone, and Mariko Namba Walter (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2008) 27-60.

<sup>420</sup> Dobbins, “A Brief History of Pure Land Buddhism in Early Japan,” pp. 142-143.

scene is surrounded by seventeen squares; inside them the beings of different realms of existence are delineated. Next to each figure are pip signs and a few words of game direction, in both Sino-Japanese characters and *katakana*, to show the game pieces' next moves and indicate the grades of the rebirth into the Pure Land and the realms of existence in transmigration.

Generally speaking, the above layout, with one bigger square in the center surrounded on three or four sides by smaller square divisions, seems to be the prototype of the *Jōdo-sugoroku* as it is consistent with a few other existing early monochromatic models, even though their composition is in fact simpler with only a dozen or so square divisions and the figures are presented in a more primitive manner. More than coincidence, this kind of layout can easily find a counterpart among religious paintings in countries where Esoteric Buddhism had been prosperous — with a tutelary being or Bodhisattva executed in the central space encircled by other images of celestial beings or Bodhisattvas, as shown in Figure 7.1. The following two examples are both titled *Jōdo-sugoroku* (Figures 6.12 and 6.13)<sup>421</sup> and were created during the Hōei 宝永 reign period (1704-1711).<sup>422</sup> The starting point of both prints is the *Nansenbu shū*, or *Jambudvīpa*, located in the big central square and the destinations are placed in the surrounding small squares. Again, the creators of both examples put great emphasis on the purgatories that occupy almost half of the composition, for which scholars regard this kind of game boards as the *Eichinnozu* 永沈の図 (Table of Eternal Fall) or the *Eichin-sugoroku* 永沈双六 (Double Sixes of Eternal Fall) to point out people's exceptional

<sup>421</sup> Ono, *Edo no yūgi fūzoku zushi*, pp. 51-52.

<sup>422</sup> Takahashi, *Nihon esugoroku shūsei*, p. 147.



concern over the Buddhist notion of purgatory.<sup>423</sup> Both games were played with the dice written with the six characters that mean “taking refuge in Buddhas with various manifestations.”

**Figure 6.12** An example of a plebeianized *Jōdo-sugoroku* with an emphasis on purgatories.



(Ono, 1983, p. 51)

<sup>423</sup> See Seki, ed., “Yūgigu,” p. 94; Ono, *Edo no yūgi fūzoku zushi*, p. 54; and Takahashi, *Nihon esugoroku shūsei*, p. 147.

**Figure 6.13** An example of a plebeianized *Jōdo-sugoroku* with an emphasis on purgatories.



(Ono, 1983, p. 52)

Similar to these illustrated *Jōdo-sugoroku*, the majority of the *Buppō-sugoroku* seem to be produced for the common people who had little knowledge about Buddhism. The content of many surviving examples of this type of *e-sugoroku* is about the fundamental principles of Buddhism such as the discrimination of good and bad deeds as well as their karmic consequences. In Japan, Buddhism had long provided guidelines for social behaviour, even along with Neo-Confucianism under the Tokugawa rule. In 1640, Buddhism was further benefited by the policy against Christianity that everyone

was required to register at a monastery.<sup>424</sup> This newly established relation definitely consolidated the religion's role in ethical teachings, which was also well reflected in the *Buppō-sugoroku*. Examples can be seen in the *Zenaku-dōchū-shusse-sugoroku* 善惡道中出世壽古六 (Double Sixes of the Success in the Journey of Good and Bad; Figure 6.14) and the *Dou-zenaku-dōchū-furiwake-sugoroku* 童善惡道中振分双六 (Double Sixes of the Journey of the Division of Good and Bad for Children; Figure 6.15), two colorful works dated to the years 1855 and 1859, respectively. The former is of the traditional square-pattern layout, within which are the images of men and women in different indoor and outdoor settings labeled with created names of places or villages that represent the virtues and wickednesses, such as the *Rei chi shin no michi* 禮智信の道 (Road of Propriety, Wisdom, and Trustworthiness), *Kōkō saka* 孝行坂 (Slope of Filial Conduct), *Wagō no hō* 和合の峰 (Peak of Harmony), *Fuchū son* 不忠村 (Village of Disloyalty), *Gaman gōyoku son* 我慢強欲村 (Village of Pride and Avarice), and *Shakkin no fuchi* 借金の淵 (Sea of Debt). Located at the top central square, the destination is termed with auspicious connotations as the *Kokuonsan shison hanjō no hō* 國恩山子孫繁昌の峰 (Peak of Prosperity of Descendant of Mount National Favor) as if it is a blessing to the winner.

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<sup>424</sup> Murakami, *Riben fojiao shi gang*, p. 237.

Figure 6.14 *Zenaku-dōchū-shusse-sugoroku*.



70 x 71 cm. (Takahashi, 1994, p. 14)

Presented in a very different style, the latter example can be mistaken as a realistic landscape painting at a glance until the audience reads about the descriptions and the landmark icons with names that imply the stages of human life from birth to death. For instance, the stages of conception, pregnancy, and delivery are symbolized by the places called the Fubo no ryōsha 父母の両社 (Two Shrines [of Devotion] to Father and Mother),

Tainai-sen 胎内潜 (Latency in the Interior of Womb), and Zanjin-ja 産神社 (Shintō Shrine of Delivery), respectively. The main composition is structured by the paths leading from the Zenkai-dō 善海道 (Road of Ocean of Good) and the Akukai-dō 悪街道 (Road of Bad), which symbolize the two polar ethical development of human beings. Located likewise at the top center, the destination is represented by the scenery in which three large sailboats with a big character “*hō* 寶 (treasure)” written on their sails are sailing toward the other end of the water where a giant mountain reminiscent of Mount Fuji stood. Apparently, the three characters are referred to as the *sanbō* 三宝 (Three Treasures) of Buddhism and the sailboats are the metaphor commonly used to describe the salvation of sentient beings delivered by the Bodhisattvas and Buddhas from this shore of suffering and ignorance to the other shore of enlightenment where the salvaged are promised eternal liberation from the perpetual cycle of transmigration.

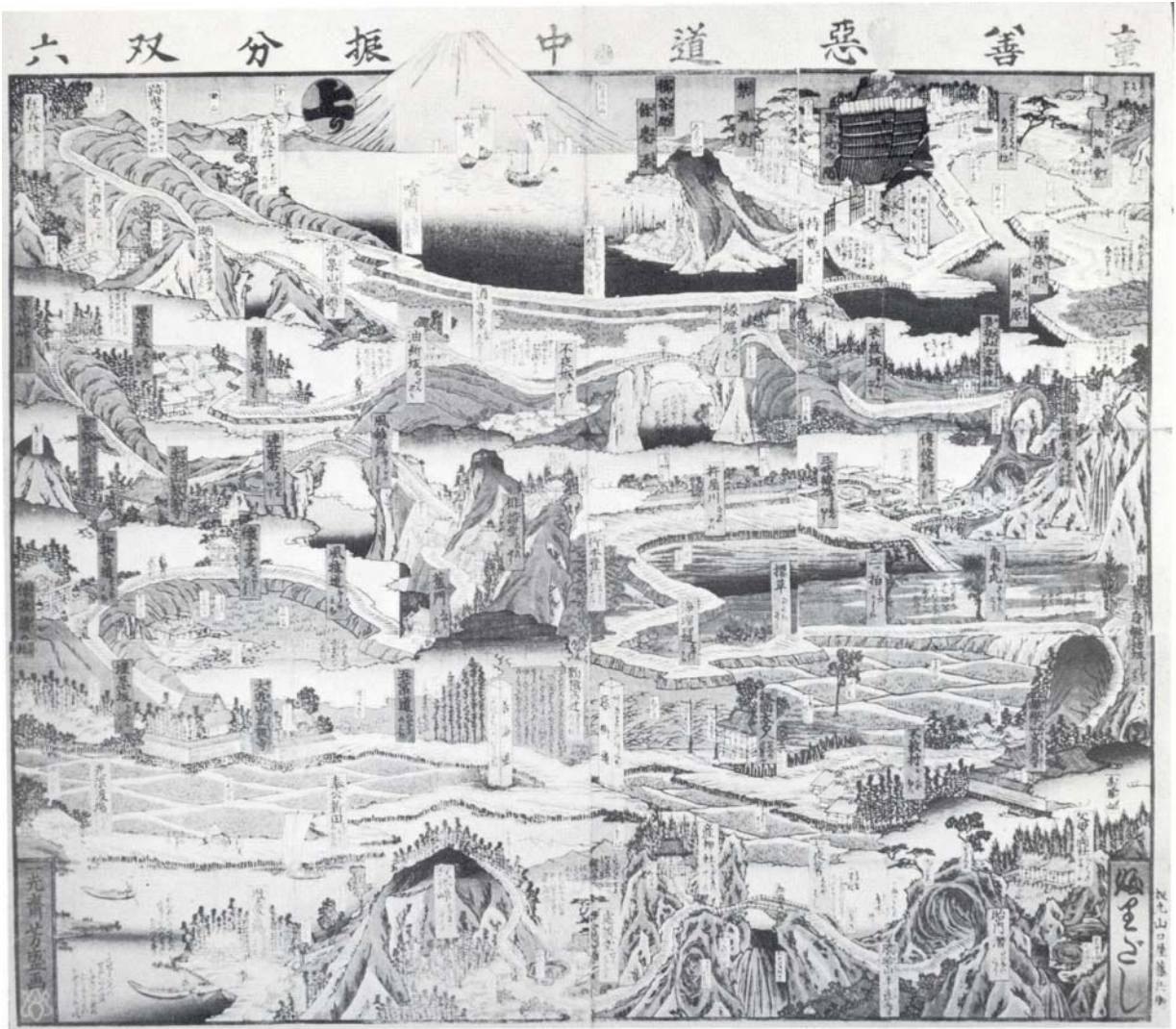
Although in two different artistic styles and ways of expression, both game boards successfully interpret and visualize the journey of life through the metaphorical journey of landscape to explain the karmic consequences of one’s deeds and thoughts. By incorporating ethical teachings with landscape images, this type of game boards has been valued for their function of *kanzen chōaku* 勧善懲悪 (encouraging the good and punishing the evil) ever since the Edo period, an era that was characterized by the rise of urban culture and commercialization.<sup>425</sup>

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<sup>425</sup> Takahashi, *Nihon esugoroku shūsei*, pp. 12, 14, 163, and 168.



Figure 6.15 *Dou-zenaku-dōchū-furiwake-sugoroku*.



70 x 60 cm. (Takahashi, 1994, p. 12)

The standard of living grew significantly in the Edo period. Despite the rulers' efforts to restrict wealth, economic activities went well, commerce spread, and a money economy developed. New ideals of lifestyle gradually developed along with these economic growths as well as the emergence of the then new social and political orders. Cultural values were redefined and extensively imparted throughout the *samurai* and *chōnin* 町人 classes. In the towns, the concept of the *bushidō* 武士道 (way of the warrior) was popularized among

the *samurai* and that of the *chōnindō* 町人道 (way of the townspeople) among the craftsmen and merchants. Mass-produced by woodblock printing, all *e-sugoroku* game boards were one of the best mediums to speedily reproduce multiple facets of such new society experienced by these townsmen, particularly under the great influence of the so-called *ukiyo* 浮世 (floating world)<sup>426</sup> culture that had swept over the metropolitan Edo. Being the representative art form of the period, the *ukiyo-e* 浮世絵 (Pictures of the Floating World), a genre of Japanese woodblock prints that was exceptionally popular in depicting passing scenes and momentary pleasures between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries, apparently provided a favorable environment that helped stimulate and maintain the circulation of the *e-sugoroku* as many secular motifs for the game emerged during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>427</sup> Like the creators of vulgarized versions of the promotion games in China, the Japanese designers of the *e-sugoroku* were professional craftsmen or *ukiyo-e* artists, leaving no space for intellectual amateurs.<sup>428</sup> In the above cases, the 1855 *Zenaku dōchū shusse sugoroku* and the 1859 *Dou zenaku dōchū furiwake sugoroku* were even created by celebrated *ukiyo-e* artists. The former was the work of Ichiyūsai Kuniyoshi 一勇齊國芳 (一勇齊國芳; better known as Utagawa Kuniyoshi 歌川国芳; 1797-1861) and the latter was that of Ikkōsai Yoshimori 一光齊芳盛 (一光齊芳盛; better known as Utagawa Yoshimori 歌川芳盛; 1830-1885); both of them were the successors of the *Utagawaha* 歌川派 (Utagawa School), the most popular *ukiyo-e* school in the Edo period.<sup>429</sup> Their names were explicitly indicated on the right margin and at the bottom left corner. As a tradition for the

<sup>426</sup> This term first appeared in the writings of the Edo period in 1681; Akiyama, *Japanese Painting*, p. 164.

<sup>427</sup> Takahashi, *Nihon esugoroku shūsei*, p. 3.

<sup>428</sup> Seki, ed., “Yūgigu,” p. 94.

<sup>429</sup> Takahashi, *Nihon esugoroku shūsei*, p. 152.

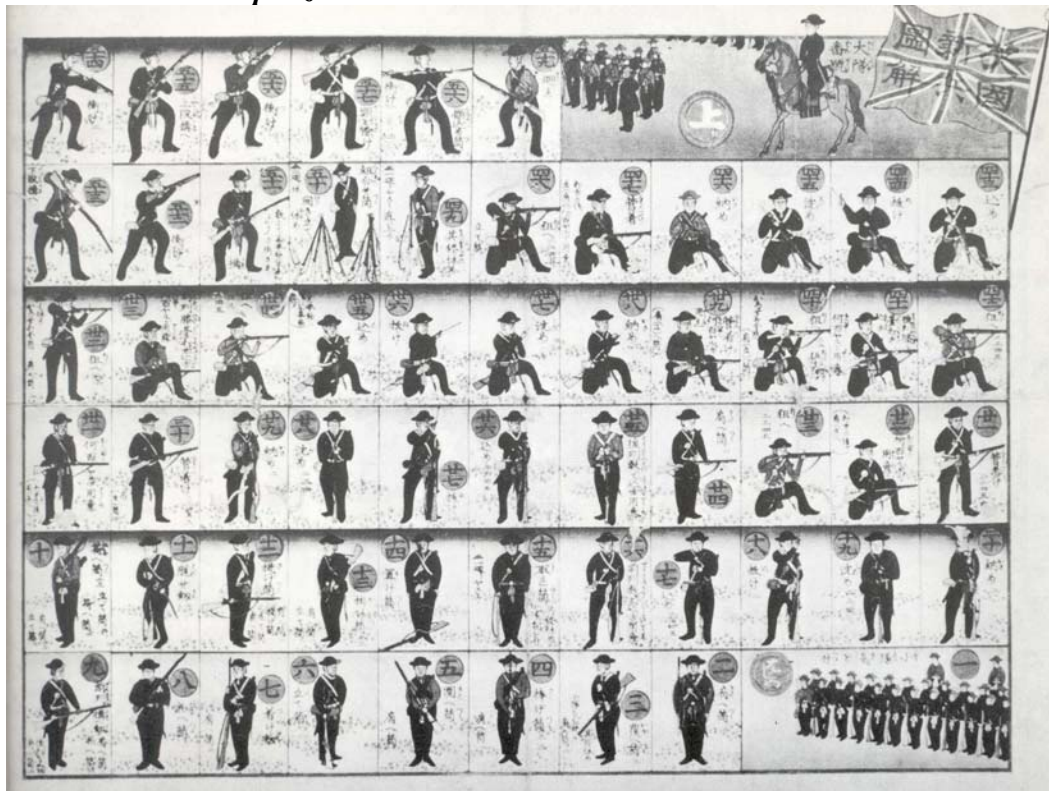
woodblock printing industry in Japan during the blossoms of *ukiyo-e* and woodblock printing, the publishing date and the names of the artist, carver, and publisher were commonly engraved on the margins of a print, which was different from the conditions in China and Korea where such manufacturing information were regarded highly rather by book publishers instead — all this information was usually engraved in the colophon and at the bottom part of the fore-edges of printed books.

During the prime time of the *ukiyo-e*, the majority of the *e-sugoroku*, like other *ukiyo-e*, was of advertising, casual entertaining, and art collection purposes, and only a part of them still maintained the didactical function that originated from the Tendai-affiliated *meimoku-sugoroku*. The religious game boards, as mentioned, were developed from the teaching aids designed for young monks to familiarize themselves with the terminology about the basic principles of Buddhism and the Tendai way of doctrinal classification. As time passed, this function inevitably diminished into a subordinate concern after a large number of the *e-sugoroku* turned into advertising posters resulting from the growing popularity of theatrical performances, traveling across scenic spots, and pilgrimizing to Shintō shrines. Although the theme and purpose of the *e-sugoroku* became varied, the game's effect on conveying messages to the audience in visual form with literal assistance is sustained. Actually, as a characteristic of the *e-sugoroku*, the means to label, define, and explain images of a picture is itself educational *per se*. Hence, under the stimulus of Western learning during the Meiji regime, the variety of those *e-sugoroku* that served for educational purpose grew. Most of them can be found in Takahashi's categories of *kaika-kyōiku-sugoroku*, or Double Sixes of Enlightenment and Education, *onna-sugoroku*, or Double Sixes of Woman, and *kodomo-sugoroku*, or Double Sixes of Child. The following are three excellent examples of these



game boards, which are the *Tango-no-zu-sugoroku* 単語の圖壽古呂久 (単語の図寿古呂久; Double Sixes of [Japanese] Syllabary; see Figure 6.3), the *Eikokushinpei-zukai* 英國新兵圖解 (英国新兵図解; Illustration of New Arms [and Ways of Combat] of England; Figure 6.16), and the *Wirusonji-riidoru-sugoroku* ウィルソン氏リードル双伍呂久 (Double Sixes of Wilson's Reader; Figure 6.17).<sup>430</sup> The format that having names written beside simple figures reminds us of Chinese vulgarized versions but the neat symmetric pattern differentiates them from the playful swirl-pattern design commonly seen in China and Taiwan. The effect of the neat pattern was to avoid overshadowing the didactic content.

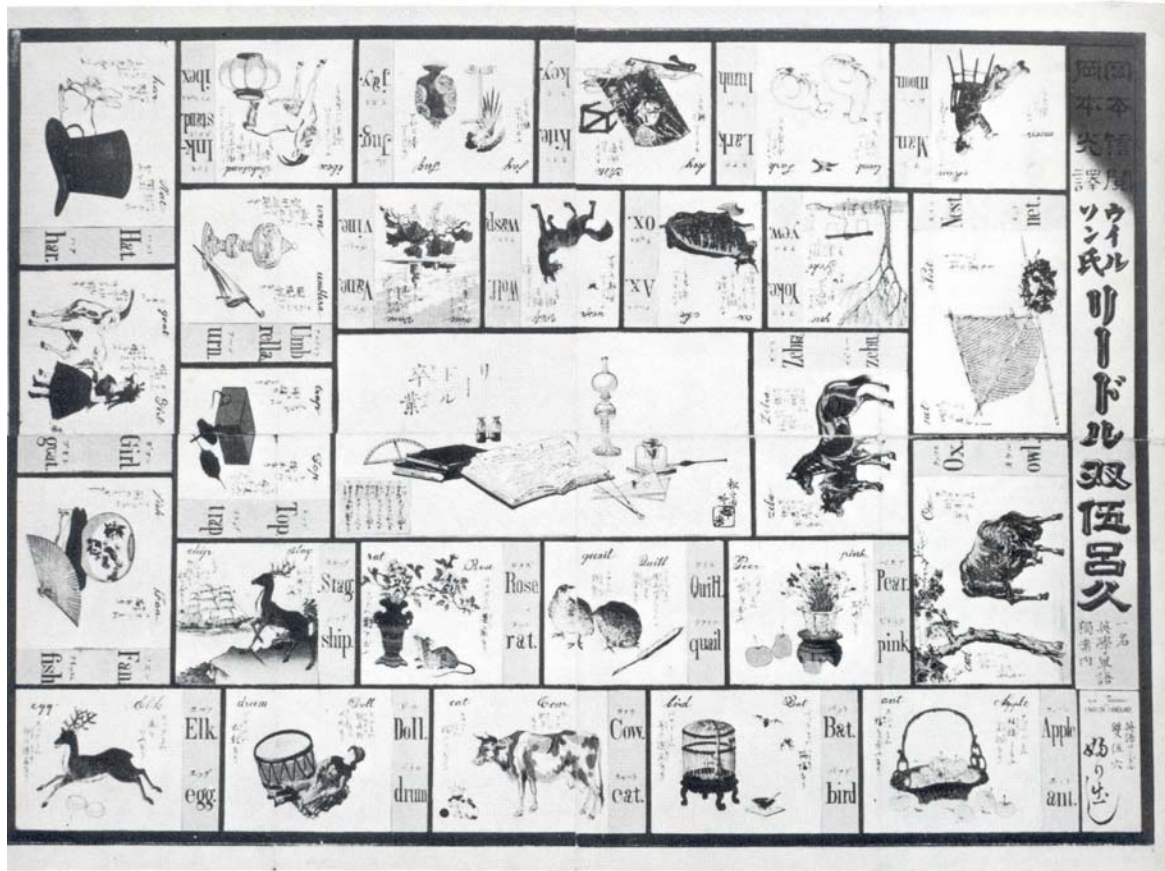
**Figure 6.16** *Eikokushinpei zukai*.



51 x 38 cm. (Takahashi, 1994, p. 96)

<sup>430</sup> This device was produced to help primary students of the Meiji period to memorize the English vocabulary listed in the readers taught in school under the new education system adopted in Japan at the time. Inside each square are images drawn to depict the two words of the same English alphabet listed alongside and, thus, there are totally fifty two words.

Figure 6.17 *Wirusonuji-riidoru-sugoroku*.



72 x 50 cm. (Takahashi, 1994, p. 100)

In regard to the institution for education, from the late twelfth to the seventeenth centuries, Zen Buddhist monasteries were the centers of learning for the common people in Japan. The so-called *terakoya* 寺子屋 (monasterial school) was organized and managed by Buddhist monks initially for the training of novitiates in the Muromachi period; gradually, these schools opened to *samurai* children and then to commoner children of the vicinity.<sup>431</sup> By Tokugawa times, the *terakoya* were eventually disengaged from the monasterial connection becoming purely secular institutions for commoners in major urban areas like Edo and Kyōto and, by the end of the regime, there were more than eleven thousand such

<sup>431</sup> Herbert Passin, *Society and Education in Japan* (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1965) 27-28.

schools, attended by approximately nine hundred twenty-two thousand students.<sup>432</sup> Reading and writing were the basic core curriculum but many *terakoya* provided more moral, academic, vocational or Western subjects such as etiquette, Chinese, history, geography, composition, calligraphy, science, military arts, accounting, arithmetic, and the use of the abacus.<sup>433</sup> In general, the *terakoya* were coeducational with no grade division and each school admitted approximately thirty to sixty pupils, who usually entered between the ages of six and nine and left between eleven and fourteen in time to begin work or apprentice training.<sup>434</sup> Although this teaching affiliation cannot prove that the terminological *meimoku-sugoroku* could be accessed by or had influence on the lay pupils, the saṃgha's close and frequent contact with the laymen must have played an important role in catalyzing the emergence of the *Jōdo-sugoroku* and the *Buppō-sugoroku*, the simplified plebeian versions of the more abstruse *meimoku-sugoroku*. Accordingly, the aforementioned story about the Kumano nuns who indoctrinated lay women Buddhist teachings with the help of their drawings likely had honestly and precisely portrayed the forming stage of the development of these Buddhist games.<sup>435</sup>

For *samurai* in the approximately two hundred and eighty feudal domains, the education centers were the *hankō* 藩校 (domainal schools). While the *terakoya* was a private institution operated by the local Buddhist monastery, the *han* school, modeled after the orthodox Confucian academy *Shōheikō* 昌平校 (Shogunal schools), was a domainal institution patronized by the local domainal lord.<sup>436</sup> The *hankō*, also called the *hangaku* 藩学,

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<sup>432</sup> Passin, *Society and Education in Japan*, pp. 14 and 44.

<sup>433</sup> Ibid, p. 31.

<sup>434</sup> Takahashi, *Nihon esugoroku shūsei*, p. 31

<sup>435</sup> Ibid, p. 147.

<sup>436</sup> Ibid, pp. 17-19.

*hangakkō* 藩学校, and *hankō* 藩黌, was initially set up to educate children of *daimyo* and their *samurai* in the domains outside the capital, but subsequently also admitted children from other social classes.<sup>437</sup> Students entered at seven or eight and usually graduated between the age of fifteen and twenty. For the cultivation of the *samurai* elite, the curricula of the *han* schools focused on reading and memorizing Confucian classics as well as etiquette, calligraphy, composition, and histories of Japan and China, but then expanded to include classical Japanese studies, medicine, and even Dutch studies and Western learning like mathematics, astronomy, military science, and ballistics.<sup>438</sup> After the Meiji Restoration of 1868, Japan still had more than two hundred domainal schools but they were all abolished in 1871. Nevertheless, the Confucian learning had not been entirely eradicated yet. After intensive promotion of Western educational notions, the Meiji authority still emphasized the importance of Confucian virtues to the nation and to human relations as exemplified in the 1890 Imperial Rescript on Education,<sup>439</sup> which basically guided Japanese education under the highly centralized control by the government until the end of the Second World War. The dual emphases of the Confucian tradition and the Western learning may explain why the motifs pertinent to Western experiences did not overwhelmingly dominate the Meiji market of the *e-sugoroku*, which luckily left ample space for the continuation of the *Jōdo-sugoroku* and the *Buppō-sugoroku*.

With the help of other minor schooling institutions, the Tokugawa education successfully increased the literate populace, particularly in cities like Edo, Kyōto, and Osaka. It is estimated that, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the majority of the *samurai* class was literate and, by the end of the era, the literacy rates were over seventy percent for

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<sup>437</sup> Takahashi, *Nihon esugoroku shūsei*, pp. 21-23.

<sup>438</sup> Ibid, p. 19.

<sup>439</sup> Ibid, pp. 226-228.

merchants and artisans, almost a hundred percent for village notables, and over fifty percent for middle- and lower-layer village peasants.<sup>440</sup> The *terakoya* alone was credited for providing commoners a sufficient level of literacy to be able to read the orders and instructions written on the notice boards for neighborhood associations; this level of literacy also allowed the creation of the *e-sugoroku* freely commented upon with short sentences of instructions that became a feature of this game, and created extensive readership of popular literature that prospered with the publishing industry.<sup>441</sup>

Consequently, in spite of their efforts to import Chinese social, political, and philosophical cultures from China via China and Korea, the premodern Japanese authorities had never truly adopted the Chinese-style civil service examination system. This is a significant factor that differentiates Japan from its Korean neighbors in terms of their adoption of Chinese political systems as well as their underlying administrative theories originated from both Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism. The civil examination system in China was a relatively fair system opened to all people of varied backgrounds for selecting the most capable individuals for governance through competitive examinations. In Korea, since the Goryeo dynasty, an elaborate government apparatus based on the Chinese model was institutionalized and the Confucian examination system to select civil officials was adopted. Aristocratic lineages still monopolized the highest government positions and dominated the educational institutions since the eligible candidates for both the civil and military government posts were mainly confined to the aristocratic *yangban* class. However, as their qualifications for being appointed were largely determined by their civil examination results, the selected officials still maintained an active check on the power of the aristocracy

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<sup>440</sup> Takahashi, *Nihon esugoroku shūsei*, pp. 49 and 57.

<sup>441</sup> Ibid, pp. 36-37.

in the latter half of the dynasty. Hence, to a limited extent, in premodern Korea, this system remained a fair system for the eligible in the *yangban* class. However, in Japan, the Japanese social and political systems did not allow for upward social mobility through any uncontrollable systems like the civil service examination system.<sup>442</sup> Government positions were mainly allocated on the basis of birth and, in later periods, martial skills. From the twelfth century onwards, the political power over the nation had fallen into the hands of warlords and powerful regional families, who chose their officials chiefly by loyalty and kinship from *samurai*. By the mid-Tokugawa, the *samurai* class had evolved from warrior to administrator. Hence, the civil examination system, an important feature for which the bureaucratic dice game emerged and sponsored by literate people who had the opportunity to join the government, had never taken root in premodern Japan. For the same reason, the secular official promotion game did not appear to have been circulated in Japan before the late-nineteenth century, even though it was very likely that different versions of the game may have been brought to Japan occasionally by Chinese or Koreans in the last few centuries.

Although the mainstream *e-sugoroku* seem to be of secular nature, many of them are designed for the promotional and educational purposes, which actually well reflect the continued influence of the didactic function emphasized by the Buddhist versions. As for the religious promotion games, other than Buddhism, the dominating motifs are mostly related to Shintō. Game boards with Shintō subjects not only reflect a variety of activities broadly participated by the Edo society that were relevant to the indigenous religion but also reveal the tremendous energy and playful creativity of the Edo artists. Nevertheless, the tradition of *e-sugoroku* did not originate in Shintō, but in Buddhism. It was evident that Chinese or Korean or both versions of Buddhist themes had been introduced to the Japanese court at

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<sup>442</sup> Zhu Yuning, *Zhongguo wenhua dui Ri Han Yue de yingxiang*, p. 433.

least before 1474 but, somehow, based on those earliest extant examples, the content and layout design show little continental influence, forming distinctive patterns of their own. Probably those Buddhist game boards from China and Korea were mainly preserved in the imperial collection and circulated among imperial families and the circles of their patronized monasteries. The latter groups were thus inspired to produce the same device for their own needs. In the late thirteenth century at the latest, the so-called *meimoku-sugoroku* had already been created to be a teaching aid for the Tendai community, which has been recognized as the earliest traceable record for the development of Buddhist promotion game in Japan. These monochromic checkered *e-sugoroku* were based on Buddhist cosmological ideas, which had been circulated among Buddhist and aristocratic circles before the emergence of its pictorial versions categorized in the later periods as the *Jōdo-sugoroku* of Pure Land motifs and the *Buppō-sugoroku* of karmic themes. The majority of the existing examples of these two categories seen today are colourfully illustrated and picture-oriented, which in some ways resemble the composition of the esoteric *maṇḍala* that reminds us of its South Asian connection. In order to trace the possible connections among Zhixu's *Xuanfo tu*, Japan's Buddhist versions, and those games prevailed in Tibet and some other South Asian countries, the following (seventh) chapter will take a brief look at the development of the religious games in these places.

## 7 THE BUDDHIST GAMES IN TIBET AND SOME SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRIES

After studying a variety of Buddhist promotion games in China, Korea, and Japan, this chapter turns our attention to other neighbouring countries of China in order to further reinforce our understanding on the subject in terms of religious interaction and cultural exchange. As to the question of whether any devices of similar purpose and religious principle had ever existed on the other side of the Asian continent, the answer is certain. In regard to this basic question, this study provides strong evidence for the existence of such a tradition. Simultaneously, the evidence also reveals sufficient information about the devices' contents and roles in their religious communities, which can clarify more details of the subject, such as how were the devices created and formatted? How were their contents handled to highlight their corresponding religious traditions? In what ways and to what extent did they relate to their East Asian counterparts? On account of the availability of sources and supporting materials, the places to be discussed here mainly focus on Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan and India.

As discussed in Chapter Three, one of the opinions about the earliest Buddhist adoption of the game was attributed to “lama monks.”<sup>443</sup> No version made by these lama monks is left in China, but there are a number of such game boards in the format of *thangka* painting<sup>444</sup> found in Tibet, where they are known as the *Sa-lam Nam-shak* or *Salam Namshak* (in Chinese characters, *Salanglangxia* 薩朗朗廈 or *Shalanglangxia* 莎朗朗廈; literally, Expounding the [Ten] Grounds and [Five] Paths). Unfortunately, it is not known whether the

<sup>443</sup> As discussed in Chapter Two, to Zhixu's knowledge, the lama monks were believed to have designed some *Xuanfo tu* by imitating the early-Ming *Shengguan tu* created by Xie Jin 解縉 (1369-1415).

<sup>444</sup> *Thangkas* and *patas* are two regional terms that respectively stand for the same important art form, at which Tibet and Nepal excel. They are usually painted on cotton cloth, after being rubbed smooth, mineral and vegetable colors are employed with, in many cases, gold pigment.



*Salam Namshak* was the version seen in China before the emergence and spread of Zhixu's version. The Tibetan game boards are relatively consistent in layout design, containing oval and square partitions painted with portrayals of the enlightened ones and components that represent the Buddhist cosmic geography. The players' movements were determined by the cast of a die, on each side of which a letter of the six syllables was marked: “*a* 阿,” “*sha* 莎,” “*ka* 卡,” “*ta* 塔,” “*re* 熱,” and “*ya* 亞.”<sup>445</sup> Since the game was allowed in monasteries in Tibet, young monks, through the course of playing, could learn a complex array of Buddhist principles that consists of karmic causations, guidelines for transcendence, and states of attainment.

Likewise, variants of the game can be found in Nepal, Bhutan and India. In the Bhutanese and Nepalese game boards, the player progresses towards Buddhahood and nirvana by way of the Tantric path, being demoted and promoted according to the cast of dice, passing through different states of existence and levels of Buddhist practices and achievements.<sup>446</sup> Other religious game boards of the same didactic function and karmic doctrine are seen in Nepal and India but their contents are associated with Hinduism and Jainism, not Buddhism. In Nepal, such a device was known as *Nāgapāśa* (snake-noose; meaning “trap formed of snakes” or “falling in the trap of snake”) or *Vaikuntha khel* (Game of *Vaikuntha*). It was of Hindu origin, having the realm of one of the three Hindu deities as the destination, in contrast to their Indian counterparts, which had different regional names. Although each version of the games is unmistakably distinct, bearing religious or regional characteristic of its own, their purpose is identical; hence, they were generally described as

<sup>445</sup> Huang Ti 黃逖, *Xizang tangka* 西藏唐卡 [Tibetan Thangka] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe 文物出版社, 1985) 195.

<sup>446</sup> Mark Tatz, and Jody Kent, *Rebirth: The Tibetan Game of Liberation* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press, 1977) 12-15.

the Game of Karma, or the Game of Liberation. Of the Hindu and Jain game boards, a special feature of “the ladders and snakes” that could cause rapid promotion or demotion was added to the layout. They are believed to be the model from which the sixteenth-century Florentine “Game of Goose,” the Georgian and Victorian edifying morality games “The Game of Human Life” and “Virtue Rewarded and Vice Punished,” and the late-Victorian British children’s game of “Snakes and Ladders” are said to be derived.<sup>447</sup>

All of these variants are discussed respectively below. The features of the Buddhist versions in Tibet, Nepal, and Bhutan are highlighted to relate and compare with their East Asian counterparts to see whether and to what extent these two lines of transmission are similar to each other. Analyses are conducted with artistic and background information derived from Art of the Himalayas: Treasures from Nepal and Tibet by Pratapaditya Pal and The Circle of Bliss: Buddhist Meditational Art by John C. Huntington and Dina Bangdel. These analyses are followed by the coverage of those game boards embedded with other religious teachings found in India and Nepal. They are all with karmic themes. This part of discussions aims to demonstrate that these karmic games had been so popular that their extant copies can still be found in many South Asian regions and that their formats were so flexible that they could be adopted by many different religions in various cultural settings. Arguments are made on the basis of research studies conducted by scholars and art historians, such as Andrew Topsfield and Deepak Shimkhada, whose articles were among the few studies in English that investigate those game boards found in India and Nepal that were created with religious ideas other than Buddhism. Information gathered in some of their works are valuable in helping to present again the prevalence and the characteristics of those game boards that had been widely circulated for centuries in such an extensive area.

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<sup>447</sup> Andrew Topsfield, “The Indian Game of Snakes and Ladders,” Artibus Asiae 46.3 (1985): 213-214.

## 7.1 The Buddhist *Salam Namshak* in Tibet

In respect of the originator of the *Salam Namshak*, there are two different attributions and both are legendary and associated with prominent personae in the development of Tibetan Buddhism. Two Chinese secondary studies,<sup>448</sup> without mention of their source, consider that the game was first created in and transmitted down from the Sangpu Néütok 桑浦尼烏托 Monastery in southwest Lhasa, Tibet, which was established in 1073 by Ngok Lekpé Shérab 俄·雷必喜饒 (1059 - 1109), a master and eminent translator of the Kadam 噶當 Sect. This monastery was the first major centre of the study of the then newest philosophical systems in Tibet and began to assume primary importance among all monasteries of the Sect in the early twelfth century. As the monastery emphasized the study of epistemological treatises and the translation of Sanskrit texts, it was generally known as a locus where the practices of Tibetan debate and scholasticism began. In the fifteenth century, the Kadam tradition was eventually assimilated by the Gelug 格魯 Sect, which was founded by Tsongkhapa 宗喀巴 (1357-1419), one of Tibet's greatest lamas, who established the Ganden 噶丹 Monastery in Lhasa that became a major monastery of the Gelug order. Hence, the Kadam traditions inherited by the Gelug Sect probably include the entertaining teaching aid *Salam Namshak*. It is also noticeable that the year of 1073 fell under the Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), a period by which the Chinese Buddhist game had probably emerged, as suggested by the historical survey in Chapter Three. Although there is no historical source indicating that any Chinese *Xuanfo tu* had ever been brought to Tibet and vice versa, the

<sup>448</sup> Huang Ti, *Xizang tangka*, p. 195; and Tsedan Geleh 次旦格列, "Jieshao yifu Xizang tangka sengren youxitu 'Salang langxia' 介紹一幅西藏唐卡僧人遊戲圖《薩朗朗廈》 [An Introduction of the 'Salam Namshak,' a Tibetan Thangka of Game Board for Monks]," *Tibetan Art Studies* 西藏藝術研究 3 (1994) 26.

periods ascribed for the emergence of the devices in both countries were so close that such a cultural interaction might not have been improbable. According to Rebirth: The Tibetan Game of Liberation by Mark Tatz and Jody Kent, another alleged inventor was the Śākya Pandita Kunga Gyaltsen 貢噶堅贊 (1182-1251), the Fourth Patriarch and great Sanskrit scholar of the Śākya Sect of Tibetan Buddhism, who was said to have made it in the first part of the thirteenth century to amuse and educate his ailing mother.<sup>449</sup> This attribution seems to be drawn from a lay Tibetan artist of a Nyingma family living in India, although the authors fail to mention any written source. Nevertheless, Kunga Gyaltsen can be regarded as the first one who adopted or modified the game into the religious traditions he promoted, even if he was not the inventor of the game in Tibet.

It is hard to determine whether these attributions are reliable but it should be noted that the game must have emerged after the embedded teachings had already been observed in Tibet. According to Mark Tatz and Jody Kent, the Buddhist system used in the *Salam Namshak* follows the one imparted by the Indian Master Atīśa Dīpankara Śrījñāna (982-1054) in one of his masterpieces The Lamp of the Enlightenment Path, “a brief but comprehensive guide to the spiritual discipline of Mahāyāna Buddhism,”<sup>450</sup> in which the clear division of the Buddhist vehicles of greater and lesser, or sūtra and tantra, is explained.<sup>451</sup> Their study clearly suggests that the first game should have been created after 1042, the year Atīśa came to Tibet.

In fact, since the game board of *Salam Namshak* is a minor subject in the field of Tibetan culture, there are only a few detailed studies available on its creation, development,

<sup>449</sup> Deepak Shimkhada, “A Preliminary Study of the Game of Karma in India, Nepal, and Tibet,” Artibus Asiae 44.4 (1983): 318.

<sup>450</sup> Matthew Kapstein, The Tibetans (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006) 96.

<sup>451</sup> Tatz, and Kent, Rebirth, p. 6.

and religious content. Although some museums have identified their collections of *Salam Namshak* and provided information on the background and the way of playing the game in their catalogues, their photographs provide no details of the game boards and their discussions are only a few lines long. In this study, the discussion on the content of *Salam Namshak* is largely based on a 1977 book, *Rebirth: The Tibetan Game of Liberation*,<sup>452</sup> and a 1994 Chinese article “Jieshao yifu Xizang tangka sengren youxitu ‘Salang langxia’ 介紹一幅西藏唐卡僧人遊戲圖《薩朗朗廈》 (An Introduction of the ‘Salam Namshak,’ a Tibetan Thangka of Game Board for Monks)” by a Tibetan author,<sup>453</sup> with additional information garnered from the surviving *Salam Namshak* from museums and private collections.

The layouts of the Tibetan game board, as mentioned, are relatively consistent, which can be demonstrated in Figure 7.1. The layout shown in this game board is simple, roughly in three sections, consisting of a playing area and, above it, two rows of squares painted with figures and, on top of it, a painting of a Buddhist Pure Land. In a vertical manner, the playing area is constituted by rows of partitions, square or oval, painted with pictures of figures that represent different realms of existence, ways of practice, and stages of enlightenment. The painting above it is a triad of enlightened beings attended by their disciples in front of a grand monastery against a background of landscape and buildings that represent the abode of a Buddha. The game is played with a die marked with six Tibetan syllables. Like its East Asian parallels, the game ends when the first player reaches the space that symbolizes attaining Nirvana but, depending on the rules of playing, the game can be played until every player has reached the winning space to attain enlightenment. Of the latter case, a single game can go on for hours and the crowd can become noisy with enthusiasm.

<sup>452</sup> Tatz, and Kent, *Rebirth*.

<sup>453</sup> Tsedan Geleh, “Jieshao yifu Xizang tangka sengren youxitu ‘Salang langxia’.”

**Figure 7.1** *Salam Namshak* in the *thangka* format.



117 x 81 cm. (Huang Ti, 1985, p. 139)

Besides, there are two more versions of the game board that can be of reference to the content of *Salam Namshak*. This information is found in Rebirth: The Tibetan Game of

Liberation, in which the two devices are said to have been designed by Śākya Pandita, the attributed inventor of *Salam Namshak*, and Pema Dorje, a young lay Tibetan from a Nyingma family exiled in India in the mid-twentieth century who is believed to be one of the last generation of Tibetan artists that are able to create and systematize traditional forms.<sup>454</sup> One game board was a woodblock-printed version claimed to be the original design of the *Salam Namshak* and the other one was a *thangka* version painted in 1971 by a Tibetan lay artist based on a traditional model. As the alleged original design was related to the Śākya family while the *thangka* version was executed by a Nyingma artist, we can assume that these two game boards belonged to two lines of Tibetan sectarian tradition and were likely created exclusively for their young disciples.

Since being a good artist has been one of the accomplishments for a well-educated monk in Tibet, these *Salam Namshak* game boards, like many religious *thangka*, could be painted by monks. Buddhist monks and professional lay artists generally created their art pieces in their monasteries and studios after they were commissioned by private patrons or monasteries; meanwhile, people of local and rural areas were served by a number of itinerant craftsmen who would paint their works according to people's requests for particular subjects and painting styles.<sup>455</sup>

### 7.1.1 Śākya Pandita's version

Consisting of eight rows by nine partitions, Figure 7.2 is the woodblock print claimed to be invented by Śākya Pandita. Like many other East Asian prototypes, this *Salam Namshak* is monochrome and character-oriented, not figurative. The carving of the lines,

<sup>454</sup> Tatz, and Kent, *Rebirth*, pp. 2 and 47.

<sup>455</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 48-49.

letters, and ornamentation is elegant and precise. The winning squares are located at the central areas of the top row, signified by the decoration of monastic structures and emission of light. The six Tibetan syllables of the die shown on the game board are pronounced as “*a*,” “*sa*,” “*ra*,” “*ma*,” “*ya*,” and “*da*.” It is noticeable that seven verses are written on the game board in the ornamental style to describe the reason why Śākya Pandita invented the game and a few main points about playing the game. Five of the verses are placed at the top above the playing area and the other two are below it. The following are the seven verses translated by the authors; they are quoted here according to their sequence on the board from the top to the bottom:

(Verse 1) After doing homage to Mañjuśrī, Bodhisattva of learning and wisdom and Sa-pan’s<sup>456</sup> special patron ..., Sa-pan states his purpose in creating the game.

(Verse 2) He says that most living beings find themselves neurotic and helpless. Continually dissatisfied, tossed by the waves of birth and death, and without the leisure or opportunity for the Doctrine, they build up only the karmic causes of further strife and hardship.

(Verse 3) Therefore in playing this educational game they may become certain as to the effects of vicious and virtuous activity. It will then be possible for them to create good karma and improve their situation.

(Verse 4) Sa-pan mentions the various cosmological systems and paths on the board, which are essentially the ones found in the present edition—he describes the squares as “the path to the pacification of existence.”

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<sup>456</sup> Sa-pan is the abbreviation of Śākya Pandita designated by the authors.



(Verse 5) Tokens should be used to mark the karmic progress of each player and should be arranged on Square 1. Then the die should be cast with a fierce oath “whose content is an imagined prayer to the Precious Three ... .”

(Verse 6) One’s lot in life will improve through the tradition of the profound and oceanic Doctrine.

(Verse 7) Praise the possible states of attainment found on the board.<sup>457</sup>

The tone of these verses tells that the writer was a follower of Śākya Pandita, who was said to have been so serious about creating the game that he even prayed to Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī before working on the design. The same seriousness is also revealed by the oath made to the “Precious Three.” Making an oath like this one seems to be the only available record of such a rule but it definitely suggests that playing this game was regarded as a serious religious practice in the eyes of the inventor. The writer claims that Śākya Pandita decided to make this game in order to educate living beings who suffered from the reincarnation resulting from the karmic causation to know how to create good karma. Hence, similarly, the karmic causation between sentient beings and their realms of existence that constitutes the Buddhist cosmological system became the focus of the design. As for the last two verses, they can be considered as the conclusion of the statement, which is to encourage the players with the promise of future merits and forthcoming enlightenment.

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<sup>457</sup> Tatz, and Kent, Rebirth, pp. 11-12.

Figure 7.2 The alleged prototype of *Salam Namshak* attributed to Śākya Pandita.

Figure 7.2 displays a complex grid of 100 squares, arranged in 10 rows and 10 columns. Each square contains a small illustration (such as a stupa, a seated figure, or a symbolic object) and a block of text in Tibetan script. The grid is framed by a decorative border. Above the grid, there is a line of text in Tibetan script, and below the grid, there is another line of text. The grid is a prototype of the game *Salam Namshak*.

(Tatz and Kent, 1977, p. 11)

Although this statement clearly suggests that the content of this Śākya version relates mostly to the cosmological system of Buddhism, the authors of Rebirth: The Tibetan Game of Liberation merely provide a sketchy description since this version is not the focus of the book. Nevertheless, the description still gives a general picture of the details in which a similar structure can be seen in other Buddhist versions of the promotion games in Tibet and other countries:

Sa-pan's is a primitive form of the game. ... The central row of squares is the trunk, descending from Square 1 (Jambu Island, the earth) into *bardo*, the "intermediate" state between death and rebirth, down to the ghosts and the lowest hell. From Jambu Island one may rise quickly upward by casting four "one's" in a row, via the tantric path to Dharmabody, the winning square. This tantric path is much faster and easier than that of the modern game.<sup>458</sup>

### 7.1.2 The Nyingma affiliation modern version

Although the version for the focus of the discussions in this Rebirth book is a modern one, its content can still be of some relevance to our understanding of its ancient counterpart. Since this modern *Salam Namshak* was created by the Tibetan artist who was trained with the artistic tradition passed down to him, it is quite possible that his version is an honest copy or modification of an older prototype that was designed for and circulated among the practitioners of the Nyingma Sect.

Similar to many other surviving game boards, this version is graphic-based and its playing area is composed of squares, which total one hundred and four, thirteen rows by

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<sup>458</sup> Tatz, and Kent, Rebirth, p. 12.

eight partitions. A picture or a symbol is painted inside each square, in which a term or a name is written in the middle or bottom area while instructions like the six syllables of the Tibetan die, the six numbers of the Western die, and the next movements for the pieces are written around the edges. The six syllables are pronounced as “*sa*,” “*a*,” “*ga*,” “*da*,” “*ra*,” and “*ya*,”<sup>459</sup> which are different from those in the Śākya prototype. However, the authors do not provide the meaning of these syllables.

The terms and the numbers inscribed in the squares of the playing area, from bottom to top, right to left, are as follows: on the bottom row are (1) Vajra Hell, (2) Interminable Hell, (3) the Hot and Very Hot Hells, (4) the Howling and Great Howling Hells, (5) the Black Rope and Crushing Hells, (6) Reviving Hell, (7) the Cold Hells, and (8) the Temporary Hells or “Hell for a Day;” on the second row are (9) Lord of the Dead (*Yama*), (10) Hungry Ghosts (*Preta*), (11) Animals, (12) Divine Animals, (13) World of the *Nāgas*, (14) Demon Island, (15) *Asuras*, and (16) Black Freedom (*Rudra*); on the third row are (17) the Southern Continent, (18) the Western Continent, (19) the Eastern Continent, (20) the Northern Continent, (21) Barbarism, (22) Hinduism, (23) *Bön*, and (24) the Heavenly Highway; on the fourth row are (25) Beginning the Tantra, (26) Wheel-turning King, (27) Heaven of the Four Great Kings, (28) Heaven of the Thirty-three, (29) Heaven without Fighting, (30) the Joyful Heaven, (31) Delighting in Emanations, and (32) Ruling the Emanations of Others; on the fifth row are (33) Tantra, Lesser Path of Accumulation, (34) *Mahākāla*, (35) Realm of Form, (36) the Formless Realm, (37) Pure Abodes, (38) Disciples, Path of Accumulation, (39) Disciples, Path of Application, and (40) Disciples, Paths of Vision and Cultivation; on the sixth row are (41) Tantra, Middle Path of Accumulation, (42) Tantra, Greater Path of Accumulation, (43) Independent Buddha, Path of Accumulation, (44) Independent Buddha,

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<sup>459</sup> Tatz, and Kent, *Rebirth*, p. 50.

Path of Application, (45) Independent Buddha, Path of Vision, (46) Independent Buddha, Path of Cultivation, (47) Independent Buddha, Arhatship, and (48) Cessation; on the seventh row are (49) Tantra, Path of Application: “Heat,” (50) Tantra, Path of Application: “Climax,” (51) Disciples, Arhatship, (52) Mahāyāna, Lesser Path of Accumulation, (53) Mahāyāna, Middle Path of Accumulation, (54) Mahāyāna, Greater Path of Accumulation, (55) Mahāyāna, Path of Application: “Heat” and (56) Mahāyāna, Path of Application: “Climax;” on the eighth row are (57) Tantra, Path of Application: “Receptivity,” (58) Tantra, Path of Application: “Highest Teachings,” (59) *Shambhala*, (60) *Potāla*, (61) *Urgyan*, (62) Hindu Wisdom-holder, (63) Mahāyāna, Path of Application: “Receptivity,” and (64) Mahāyāna, Path of Application: “Highest Teachings;” on the ninth row are (65) Wisdom-holder of the *Bön* Tradition, (66) First Tantra Stage, (67) Wisdom-holder among the Gods of Sense-desire, (68) Wisdom-holder of the Realm of Form, (69) Tantric Wheel-turning King, (70) Realm of Action-completion, (71) First Sūtra Stage, and (72) Wisdom-holder of the Eight *Siddhis*; on the tenth row are (73) Second Tantra Stage, (74) Third Tantra Stage, (75) Fourth Tantra Stage, (76) Realm of Jewelled Peaks, (77) Land of bliss, (78) Fourth Sūtra Stage, (79) Third Sūtra Stage, and (80) Second Sūtra Stage; on the eleventh row are (81) Fifth Tantra Stage, (82) Sixth Tantra Stage, (83) Seventh Tantra Stage, (84) Supreme Heaven, (85) Realm of Superjoy, (86) Seventh Sūtra Stage, (87) Sixth Sūtra Stage, and (88) Fifth Sūtra Stage; on the twelfth row are (89) Eighth Tantra Stage, (90) Ninth Tantra Stage, (91) Tenth Tantra Stage, (92) Great Enjoyment Body, (93) Great Dharma Body, (94) Tenth Sūtra Stage, (95) Ninth Sūtra Stage, and (96) Eighth Sūtra Stage; on the top row are (97) Adopting a Physical Form, (98) the Setting Forth, (99) Ascetic Practices, (100) Conquest of *Māra*, (101) Buddhahood, (102) Turning the Wheel of Dharma, (103) Demonstration of Miracles, and (104) Nirvana.<sup>460</sup>

<sup>460</sup> For details of these terms, and their meanings and mutual relationships, see Tatz, and Kent, *Rebirth*, pp. 66-

As with other forms of the game, its goal is religious achievement. The players begin in the “Heavenly Highway,” hoping to reach “Nirvana” to end the game that symbolizes the ultimate attainment in spiritual practice. Based on the throw of a die, the player proceeds upward or downward into higher or lower states of rebirth showed on the board. Squares in the lower rows are written with the terms of different groups of living beings and their realms of existence in this universe (*Sahā-lokadhātu* or *Sahā* World), including the purgatories, the six paths of reincarnation, the four continents, and the heavens. During the game, the player can be reincarnated into different realms of existence or become a deity, Wheel-turning King, Asura, Yama (Lord of the Dead), divine animal, animal, hungry ghost, or the being suffering in one of the purgatories. Since the core of the game is to successfully follow one of the Buddhist paths to enlightenment, the upper part of the game board consists of a variety of religious practice stages and their resulting realms of existence, which cover the ten Tantra stages, ten Sūtra stages, Mahāyāna paths, Shambhala, Supreme Heaven, Land of Bliss [of Buddha Amitābha], Great Dharma Body, and Great Enjoyment Body. Like other religious game boards, the winning squares are on the top row but, as a special feature of this Tibetan game board design, Buddhahood is not the ultimate achievement; after attaining Buddhahood, the player needs to pass through the course of “turning the wheel of Dharma” and “demonstration of miracles” and then finally reach the ultimate winning square “Nirvana.” The winner is the first to reach the square of “Nirvana,” where a short statement is written: “Pass your relics into the stupa above and become an object of reverence for the rest of the age.” In fact, there is one more feature that can help identify this game board to be Tibetan,

which is the inclusion of its local religion, Bön, and this religion's patriarch, the "Wisdom-holder of the Bön Tradition."<sup>461</sup>

Besides, the terms listed above prove that the central Buddhist principles shown in this version are related to the Five Paths (*Wudao* 五道) and the Ten Grounds (*Shidi* 十地), for which the game was given the title "*Salam Namshak*." In this example, both the Five Paths and the Ten Grounds occupy a large part of the playing area stretching from the fourth to the twelfth rows. These two groups of doctrines are in some degree correlated. The Five Paths of Mahāyāna Buddhism refer to the ways to full enlightenment, which are (1) the Path of Accumulation (*ziliang dao* 資糧道), (2) the Path of Application / Preparation (*jiaxing dao* 加行道), (3) the Path of Vision / Insight (*jian dao* 見道), (4) the Path of Cultivation / Meditation (*xiuxing dao* 修行道), and (5) the Path of No More Learning (*wuxue dao* 無學道 or *wuxiu dao* 無修道). At the Path of Accumulation, the practitioner emphasizes on practicing purification and accumulation of merit while at the Path of Application / Preparation, on uprooting desire using insight into emptiness. Having reached the Path of Vision / Insight, the practitioner is considered to be capable of understanding emptiness and going beyond the cycle of existence, and the level of attainment is identical with the first stage of the Ten Grounds of Bodhisattva development. While the Path of Cultivation / Meditation is equal to the phase between the second and the ninth stages of the Ten Grounds, the Path of No More Learning, as the path of full enlightenment, is equivalent to the tenth stage of the Ten Grounds. Corresponding to the last three of the Five Paths, these Ten Grounds of Mahāyāna Bodhisattva development are the ten stages of realization and activity a bodhisattva progresses towards complete and perfect enlightenment; they are (1) *Pramuditā*;

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<sup>461</sup> Mark Tatz, and Jody Kent, *Rebirth: The Tibetan Game of Liberation*, pp. 61-63.

the Ground of Joy (*huanxi di* 歡喜地), (2) *Vimalā*; the Ground of Stainlessness (*ligou di* 離垢地), (3) *Prabhākarī*; the Ground of Illumination (*faguang di* 發光地), (4) *Arcismatī*; the Ground of Glowing Wisdom (*yanhui di* 燄慧地), (5) *Sudurjayā*; the Ground of Overcoming Utmost Difficulties (*jinansheng di* 極難勝地), (6) *Abhimukhī*; the Ground of Manifestation (*xianqian di* 現前地), (7) *Dūramgamā*; the Ground of Far Going (*yuanxing di* 遠行地), (8) *Acalā*; the Ground of Unwavering (*budong di* 不動地), (9) *Sādhumatī*; the Ground of Virtuous Wisdom (*shanhui di* 善慧地), and (10) *Dharmamegha*; the Ground of Dharma Cloud (*fayun di* 法雲地).<sup>462</sup>

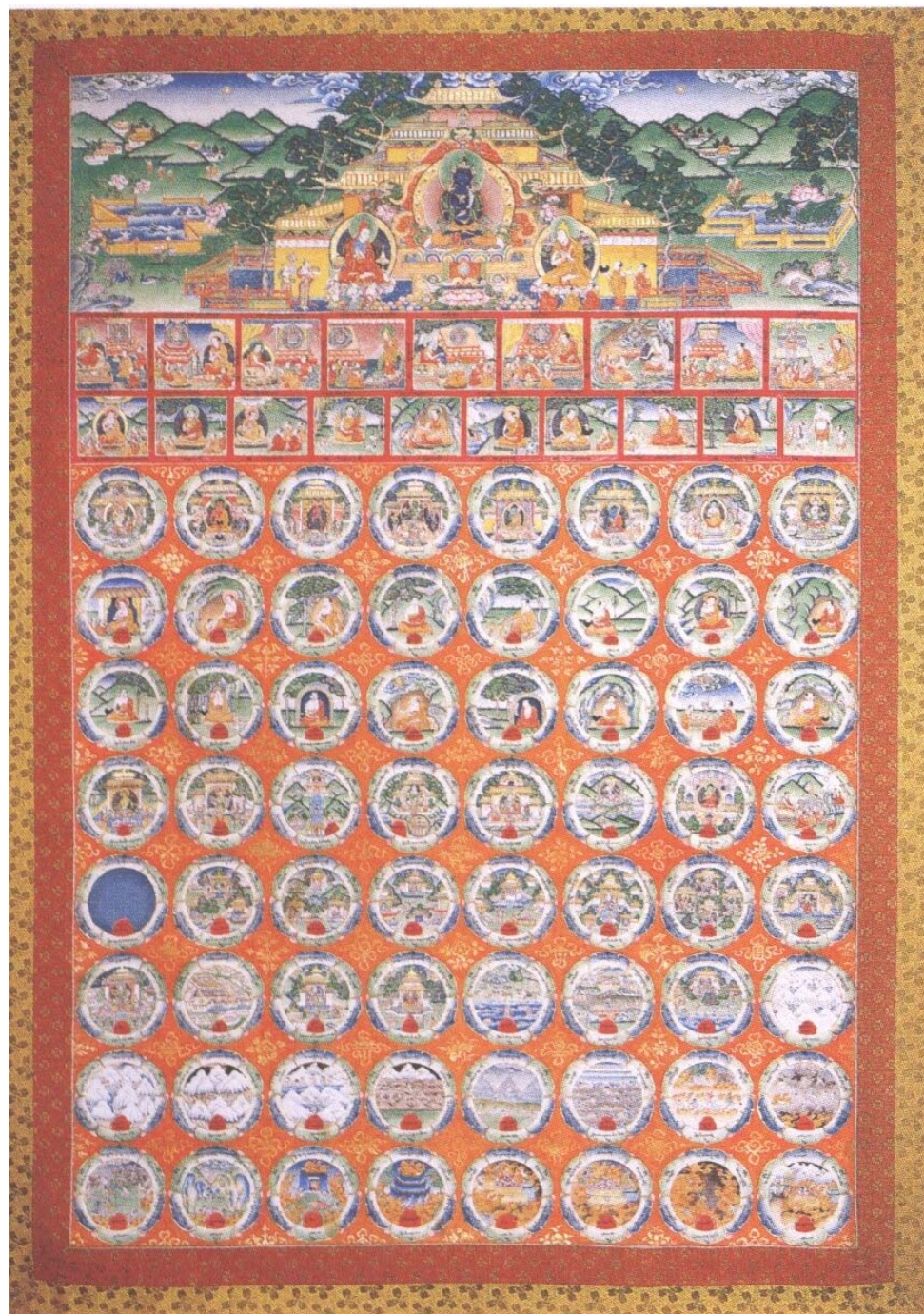
Other than these stages of Buddhist practices, this game board also contains various terms that indicate the Ten Dharma Realms that are commonly seen in those models from China, Korea, and Japan. The terms about the six paths of reincarnation are placed in the first and second rows from the bottom while those about the four realms of enlightened beings (Arhat, Pratyekabuddha, Bodhisattva and Buddha) are placed separately in other rows. The emphasis of this *Salam Namshak*, however, remains on the academic-like combination of the Five Paths and the Ten Grounds, which evidently suggests that this game was not designed for lay Buddhists, not to mention the general public. In other words, the targeted players were monks who needed to learn these theories through playing the game; that is, the

<sup>462</sup> The condition of the first stage for Bodhisattvas refers to their “joy at having overcome the former difficulties and now entering on the path to Buddhahood;” the second stage to their “freedom from all possible defilement;” the third stage to their “further enlightenment;” the fourth stage to their “glowing wisdom;” the fifth stage to their “mastery of utmost or final difficulties;” the sixth stage to their “open way of wisdom above definitions of impurity and purity;” the seventh stage to their “getting above ideas of self in order to save others;” the eighth stage to their “attainment of calm unperturbedness;” the ninth stage to their “finest discriminatory wisdom, knowing where and how to save, and possessed of the ten powers;” and the tenth stage to their “attaining to the fertilizing powers of the law-cloud.” For details, see William Edward Soothill, and Lewis Hodous, A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms: with Sanskrit and English Equivalents, a Chinese Index, and a Sanskrit-Pali Index (Taipei: Hsin wen feng Pub. Co., 1982) 47.



game was likely created for young monks for didactic, and only partly for amusement, purposes.

**Figure 7.3** *Salam Namshak* in the *thangka* format executed in the late-Qing dynasty.



118.4 x 78.3 cm. (Xizang bowuguan [Tibet Museum], 2001, p. 156)

### 7.1.3 Version discussed in Tsedan Geleh's study

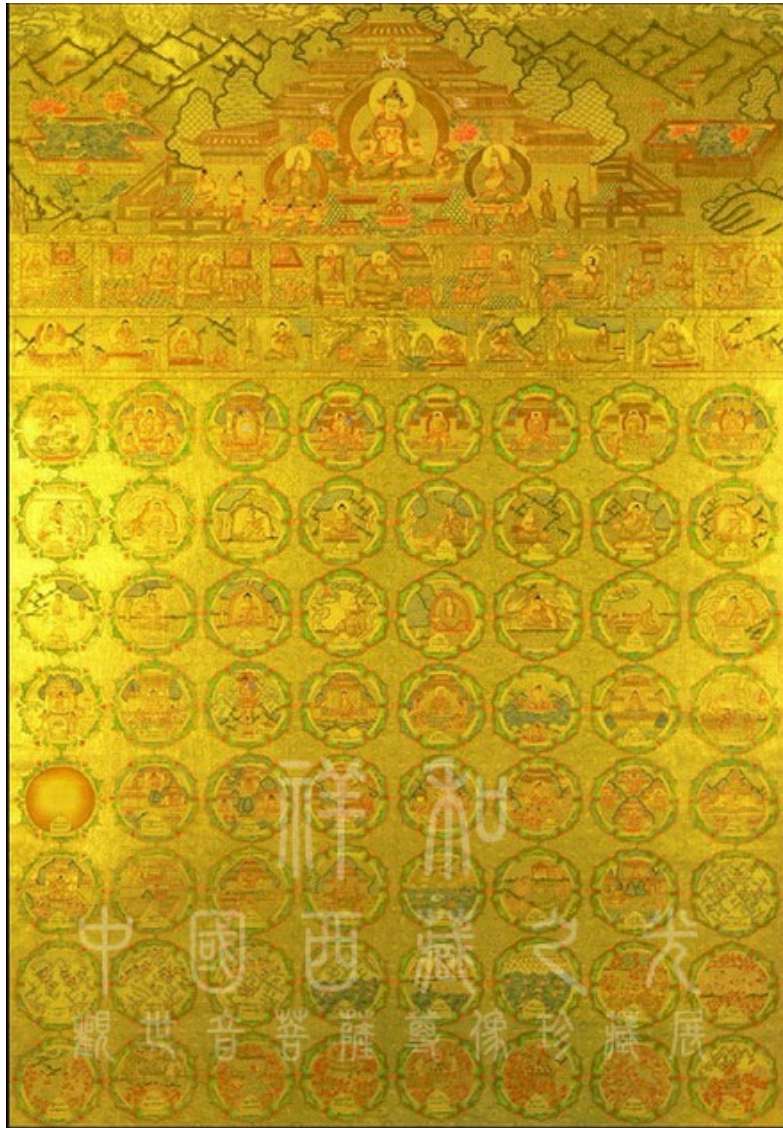
In addition to the contribution made by Mark Tatz and Jody Kent, Tsedan Geleh's study provides further information about the subject. His study focuses on the content of a *Salam Namshak* accessible to him but, unfortunately, he makes no mention of the present whereabouts of the game board. Nevertheless, Tsedan Geleh manages to provide some general information about the game board he discussed.<sup>463</sup> According to him, it was painted on a cloth *thangka* during the republican period (1912-1949), 78 by 117 centimetres in size, and its four sides were bound with silk, of which the bottom part of the binding was embellished with the Chinese character “*shou* 壽 (longevity)” in a decorative manner. On top of the game board was the painting of the Pure Land of Buddha Amitābha, the center of which was a square structure of *maṇḍala*, in which Vajradhara 金剛持 (Thunderbolt Bearer) was the central deity of the triad representatives of enlightenment. The other two of this triad were Padmasambhava 蓮花生 (ca. 730-ca. 805) and Tsongkhapa 宗喀巴 (1357-1419). They were accompanied by several disciples. While this frontal structure was surrounded by divine trees and lotus ponds, the background was decorated with the sun, the moon, auspicious cloud, holy mountains, and celestial beings. Right below this Pure Land painting were two rows of squares, nine squares on the top row and ten at the bottom. Inside each square, 5.8 by 7 centimetres in size, was a picture of a Buddhist master delivering a lecture to a group of disciples. Below each of these pictures, from right to left, were inscribed with Tibetan syllables that indicated the classification of the Ten Grounds of Mahāyāna Bodhisattvas. Under these two rows was the playing area of the game board, which consists of eight rows of eight circular partitions, under each of which a Buddhist term was indicated;

<sup>463</sup> Tsedan Geleh, “Jieshao yifu Xizang tangka sengren youxitu ‘Salam langxia’,” p. 25.



each circle, 6.8 centimetres in diameter, was encircled with lotus petals, on which directions of next movements were marked. Such a layout format seems to be the most common model shared by almost all extant game boards, as demonstrated in Figure 7.3 and Figure 7.4.

**Figure 7.4** *Salam Namshak* in the *thangka* format.



Apparently created for royal and wealthy patrons, this is one of those precious examples that were painted and delineated in gold. Some *thangka* paintings are rendered in gold or silver against a monochrome background like red or black, which create a striking aesthetic effect that are unique in Tibet.<sup>464</sup> ([http://www.xiang-he.org/exhibition/artifact\\_details\\_eng.php?lang=eng&type=a&no=3&cat=1&display\\_row=2](http://www.xiang-he.org/exhibition/artifact_details_eng.php?lang=eng&type=a&no=3&cat=1&display_row=2); 18 June 2009)

<sup>464</sup> Pratapaditya Pal, *Art of the Himalayas: Treasures from Nepal and Tibet* (New York: Hudson Hills Press, 1991) 105.

As a matter of fact, the three enlightened beings in this game board reveal more about the subject as each of them has his own history of Buddhist affiliations. Vajradhara 金剛持 (Bearer of Thunderbolt Scepter), depicted with his arms crossed on his chest, holding a thunderbolt and a bell, is recognized in Tibetan Buddhism as an emanation of the Adi (Primordial) Buddha or the Tantric form of Śākyamuni Buddha. Many Tantric teachings are ascribed to him; as a result, he becomes the central figure in the Refuge Tree of the Kagyu 噶舉 Sect, the enlightened holder of the Vajrayāna teachings in the Nyingma 寧瑪 tradition, and the highest of the Buddhist Pantheon in Vajrayāna Buddhism. Padmasambhava 蓮花生 (ca. 730-ca. 805), one of the *mahāsiddhas* (Great Perfected Ones; the ideal Tantric practitioners), is commonly known to have established the Vajrayāna Buddhist tradition, the first monastery, and the Nyingma Sect in Tibet. He gained mastery not only in the teachings of Tantric Buddhism and Yogi Traditions but also in the techniques of meditation and healing. Thus, his accomplishment earned him the recognition as the incarnation of Gautama Buddha (in body), of Amitābha Buddha (in speech), and of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva (in mind). As mentioned, Tsongkhapa 宗喀巴 (1357–1419) was one of the greatest lamas and the founder of the Gelug 格魯 Sect. Hence, simply based on the triad's associations, it is quite safe to suggest that this game board was executed and circulated within the circles of Nyingma and its derived traditions.

Tsedan Geleh has a detailed description of the full content of this *Salam Namshak*. On the top row, from left to right, are the *Yangliu gong* 楊柳宮 (Willow Palace; the abode of Vajrapāni, Holder of the Thunderbolt Scepter, the Bodhisattva who symbolizes the power of all the Buddhas), *Jile shijie* 極樂世界 (Pure Land of Ultimate Happiness; that is, the Pure

Land of Amitābha), *Kongxing chatu* 空行剎土 (Pure Lands of Dakas / Dakinis; the realms of male / female Buddhist yogis who have achieved high realizations on the Tantric path), *Dumu chatu* 度姆(母)剎土 (Pure Lands of Tara; the Pure Land of a female Buddha in Vajrayāna Buddhism, who is the female aspect of Avalokiteśvara and symbolizes the virtues of success in work and accomplishments), *Chatu zhuangyan* 剎土莊嚴 (Glorified Pure Lands), *Miaoxi shijie* 妙喜世界 (Pure Land of Wonderful Joy; that is, Abhirati, the Eastern Pure Land of Akshobhya), *Doushuai neiyuan* 兜率內院 (Inner Court of Tushita; the abode of Maitreya), and *Putuo* 普陀 (Mount Potāla; the abode of Avalokiteśvara in Tibetan Buddhism); they represent the Pure Lands of all directions in the teachings of Mahāyāna Buddhism. On the next two rows below are the separate classifications of the Five Paths with Mahāyāna (bodhisattvayana) Buddhism, Pratyeka-buddhayana, and Hīnayāna (Śrāvakayāna) Buddhism. Inside the squares on the higher row are depicted with a Bodhisattva in a monastic robe seated in meditation pose while on the lower row are Arhats seated in different poses.

On the next row down, that is, the fourth row from the top, from left to right, are the Dishitian 帝釋天 (*Śakra-devānām Indra*; the Lord of the Heaven of Svargaloka in Hindu mythology), *Zhuanlunwang* 轉輪王 (Wheel-turning King; *Chakravarti-rajā*; the ideal political figure in Buddhism), Wutaishan 五臺山 (Mount Wutai; Mount Pancaśirsha; the place where Mañjuśrī had manifested and thereafter became its patron saint), Xiangbala 香巴拉 (*Shambhala*; a mythical land inhabited by *dakinis* believed in Tibetan Buddhist tradition to be hidden somewhere in Inner Asia), Wuzhangna 烏仗那 (*Oddiyāna* or *Udyāna*; a small kingdom in ancient India known for its importance in the development and dissemination of

Tantric Buddhism), Chizhoushan 持舟山 (Mount Potāla; the abode of Avalokiteśvara in Tibetan Buddhism), *Jingangzuo* 金剛座 (Diamond Seat; *Vajrasana*; the place where Śākyamuni Buddha attained enlightenment), and *Mizong dao* 密宗道 (Path of Tantric Buddhism). These are places that represent realms of heaven, human, and bodhisattva as well as all divine places in *jambūdvīpa*, the continent on which our world is located, such as *Shambhala* in the north, *Oddiyāna* in the west, Mount Potāla in the south, and *Vajrasana* in the centre.

On the next row below, that is, the fifth row from the top, from left to right, are the *wuse jie* 無色界 (Formless Realm; *Ārūpyadhātu*), *sichan* 四禪 (Fourth *Dhyāna* [Heaven of the Realm of Form]), *sanchan* 三禪 (Third *Dhyāna* [Heaven of the Realm of Form]), *cichan* 次禪 (Second *Dhyāna* [Heaven of the Realm of Form]), *chuchan* 初禪 (First *Dhyāna* [Heaven of the Realm of Form]), *sanshisian tian* 三十三天 (Heaven of Thirty-three [Devas]; *Trayastrimśās*), *sitianwang* 四天王 (Four Deva-kings [of the Four Continents]; *Caturmahārājās*), and Juluzhou 俱盧洲 (*Uttarakuru*; the continent north of Mount Meru of every universe in the cosmologies of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism). These are realms to be reborn in by the achievements of meditation and their corresponding squares are symbolized by the drawing of *maṇḍalas* and Buddhas, except that the Formless Realm is represented by the color of dark blue.

Then, on the sixth row from the top, from left to right, are the *feitian* 非天 (Non Devas; that is, *Asuras*), Zhanbuzhou 瞻部洲 (*Jambūdvīpa*; the continent south of Mount Meru), Shengshenzhou 勝神洲 (*Pūrva-videha*; the continent east of Mount Meru), Niuhezhou 牛貨洲 (*Apara-godānīya*; the continent west of Mount Meru), *chusheng* 畜牲

(Animals), *egui* 餓鬼 (Hungry ghosts), *gudu diyu* 孤獨地獄 (Solitary Purgatory; *Lokāntarika*), *pao diyu* 疱地獄 (Chilblains Purgatory; *Arbuda*; the first of the eight cold purgatories), and *azhazha* 阿吒吒 (Chattering Purgatory; *Atata*; the third of the eight cold purgatories). The pictures in the squares are the portrayals of these realms and their dwellers.

On the last two rows are a variety of purgatories. The seventh row, from left to right, are the *huhupo* 虎虎婆 (*Hahava*, or *ahaha*; the fifth of the eight cold purgatories), *huohuopo* 臙臙婆 (*Hahava*, or *ababa*; the fourth of the eight cold purgatories), *qinglian* 青蓮 (Blue Lotus Flower; *Utpala*; the sixth of the eight cold purgatories), *honglian* 紅蓮 (Red Lotus Flower; *Padma*; the seventh of the eight cold purgatories), *shifenni* 屍糞泥 ([Purgatory of] Muddy Excrement and Corpses; *Kunapa*; the second of the four kinds of the sub-purgatories), *tiēcishu* 鐵刺樹 ([Purgatory of] Iron Thorn Tree; *Ksuramarga*; the third of the four kinds of the sub-purgatories), *liren* 利刃 ([Purgatory of] Sharp Blade; *Ksuramarga*; the third of the four kinds of the sub-purgatories), *wutanhe* 無灘河 ([Purgatory of Caustic] River; *Nadi Vaitarani*; the last of the four kinds of the sub-purgatories), and *rehuikeng* 熱灰坑 ([Purgatory of] Hot Ember Pit; *Kukula*; the first of the four kinds of the sub-purgatories). The bottom row, from left to right, are the *heisheng diyu* 黑繩地獄 (Purgatory of Black Cords; *Kāla-sūtra*; the second of the eight hot purgatories), *zhonghe diyu* 眾合地獄 (Purgatory of Crushing; *Sanghāta*; the third of the eight hot purgatories), *haojiao diyu* 號叫地獄 (Purgatory of Howling; *Raurava*; the fourth of the eight hot purgatories), *dajiao diyu* 大叫地獄 (Purgatory of the Great Howling; *Mahāraurava*; the fifth of the eight hot purgatories), *shaore* 燒熱 ([Purgatory of] Burning; *Tapana*; the sixth of the eight hot

purgatories), *jire* 極熱 ([Purgatory of] Fierce Heat; *Pratāpana*; the seventh of the eight hot purgatories), *wujian* 無間 (Unintermitted [Purgatory]; *Avīci*; the last of the eight hot purgatories), and *jingang yan* 金剛焰 ([Purgatory of] Vajra Fire). As these terms indicate, inside all these squares are delineated with different kinds of suffering scenes.

A distinct feature in this example in comparison with the one studied by Mark Tatz and Jody Kent is the long list of purgatories, which occupies almost one-third of the playing area. This feature reminds us of those Japanese game boards that have been discussed in the previous chapter, which are also characterized by the inclusion of a considerable number of purgatories, too. This similarity indicates that the game boards of these two countries may have been influenced by the same source, both in content and design, or one of them was the source for the other.

In fact, the content can even be more complicated. Figure 7.5 is the “map” of one of the game boards, in which the variety of the religious and philosophical elements that could be combined within a game board is revealed. This map outlines the ideas that cover the six paths of reincarnation, Buddhas’ Pure Lands, Three Vehicles of Buddhism (Hīnayāna Buddhism, Mahāyāna Buddhism, and Vajrayāna Buddhism), and religious traditions other than Buddhism in Tibet. The following is an overview of the game board on which this map is based:

The Tibetan Buddhist vision of the universe, comprising both saṃsāra and nirvana, is represented in outline by the squares of the board. The scheme of the game is in fact a combination of several overlapping systems. Beginning from the bottom are the regions of the world with its karmic destinies. From the fifth row upwards are the paths to Buddhahood. The aim in playing the game is to move from the degrading



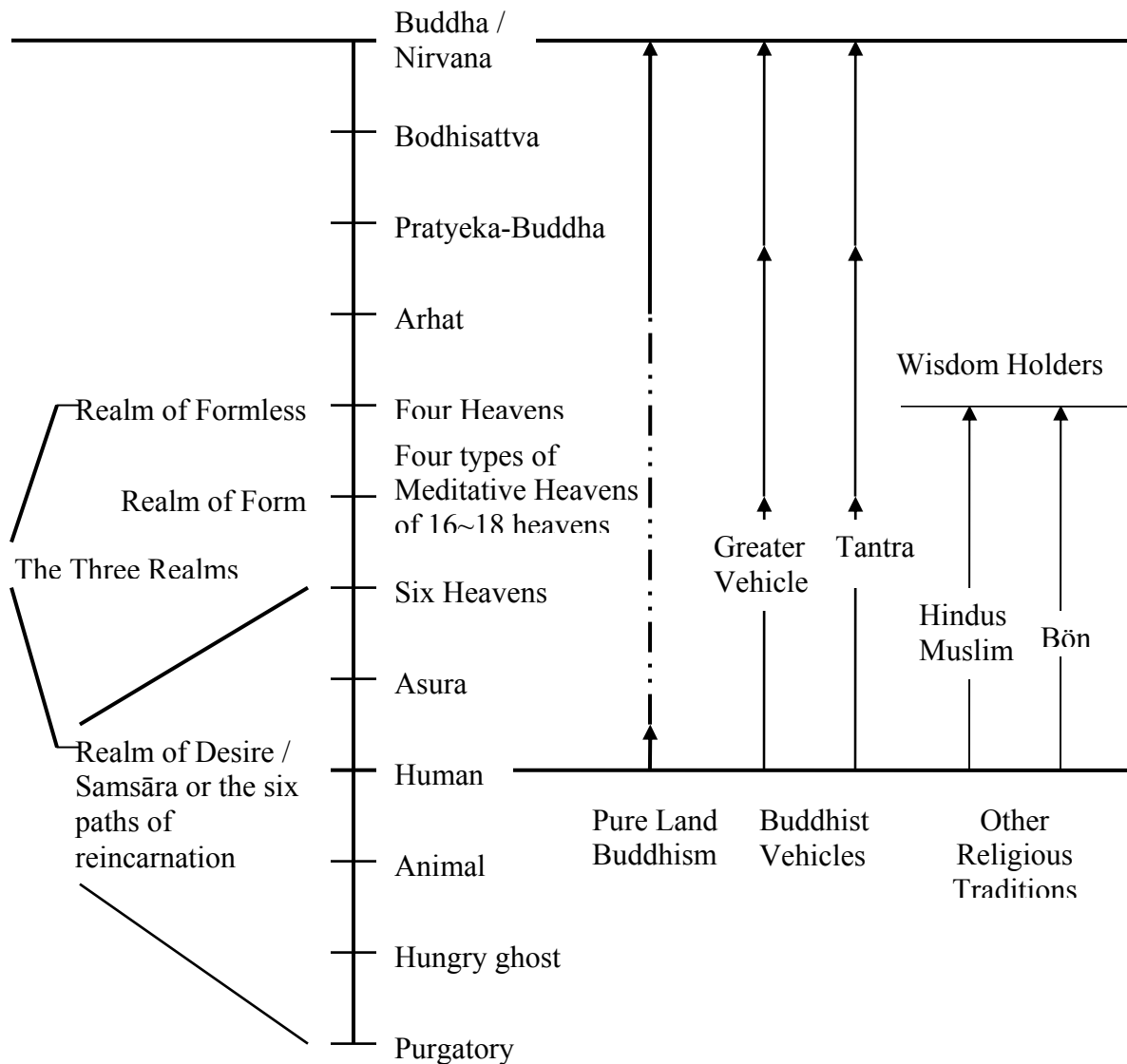
round of rebirth among the lower states, from hells to gods and back, into one of the paths of the Great Vehicle—the Mahāyāna proper or its tantric subdivision—and to continue on it, past the irreversible stage, to the Dharma body of the Buddha. From there one performs the various tasks of the fully Awakened, gradually moving to nirvana, the top-left square.

Across the top of the board, three representations of the enlightenment principle oversee the progress of the game. At the left is Amitābha, Buddha of “boundless light,” seated in meditation. At the right is Padmasambhava, “lotus born,” the precious guru of Tibet who holds the trident, skullcup, and vajra thunderbolt of a tantric yogi. A stupa is at the center, depository of the indestructible relics of a Buddha who has reached nirvana and left the world.<sup>465</sup>

Regardless of how complex the content of examples such as this could be, it is noticeable that the elements still fall within the notion of the Ten Dharma Realms that dominates the contents of most East Asian Buddhist game boards mentioned in previous chapters. Besides, the placement of Buddha Amitābha above the playing area as one of the three enlightened representatives for the ultimate goal of Buddhist practice also suggests that the Pure Land beliefs were considered crucial in the religious systems of Tibetan Buddhism observed by the patrons and the painter. Actually, such a close relationship between the worship of Amitābha and the Buddhist game is not unique to the *Salam Namshak*; this relation is also expressed in other Buddhist gambling games circulated in China, Korea, and Japan, where most game boards of Buddhist origin were in one way or other related to Pure Land Buddhism.

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<sup>465</sup> Tatz, and Kent, *Rebirth*, pp. 32-33.

**Figure 7.5 Map of the *Salam Namshak*.<sup>466</sup>**

Because of the fact that the game was embedded with the sophisticatedly arranged cosmic geography of Tibetan Buddhism and that Tibetan monks, like professional artists, also learned how to portray images and *maṇḍalas*,<sup>467</sup> the attributions that the *Salam Namshak* was created by monastic persons seem to be highly plausible. In addition to the complexity of the content, the high quality painting techniques demonstrated in all surviving *Salam*

<sup>466</sup> This graph is a modified version based on the one listed in Tatz, and Kent, *Rebirth*, p. 33.

<sup>467</sup> Pal, *Art of the Himalayas*, p. 99.

*Namshak* further reveals that these religious devices were not executed simply for mass production or commercial purpose. Tsedan Geleh even mentions that, ever since the Eighth Dalai Lama, Jamphel Gyatso (1758-1804), every generation of Dalai Lama would personally paint a *Salam Namshak*, and their game boards are now all in the collection of the Potāla and Norbulingka Palaces in Lhasa.<sup>468</sup> Hence, it is understandable why the *Salam Namshak* is one of the only few games permitted to be played by lamas in Tibetan Buddhist monasteries among all popular board games in Tibet. It is also understandable why later Tibetans sustained the idea that the *Salam Namshak* was didactic, inculcating players with the Buddhist cosmology and the workings of karma and Buddhist practices, as shown on the verse statement inscribed on the prototype game board.

Nevertheless, since Tibetans were very fond of dice games and often gambling on them, the *Salam Namshak* subsequently became a device of amusement for all Tibetans, whether lay or monastic, young or old. Many lay Tibetans got used to play the game during picnics and camping and people in some Tibetan cultural areas like Sikkim and Bhutan still enjoy the game. To all these players, through the throws of dice, karmic causations are revealed with great merriment. In monasteries, the elders generally enjoyed the game on holidays while the young usually spent long afternoons playing it after rituals and study. The merriment of playing the game has remained unchanged till the present time and the Western Pure Land is still set as the final destination.<sup>469</sup> A reminiscent account of his childhood by Thubten Jigme Norbu (1922-2008), the eldest brother of the present fourteenth Dalai Lama, describes how warm and joyful the atmosphere could become. In his description, Thubten

<sup>468</sup> Tsedan Geleh, “Jieshao yifu Xizang tangka sengren youxitu ‘Salam langxia’,” p. 26.

<sup>469</sup> Ning Shiqun 寧世群, *Zangchuan fojiao senglü shenghuo: kuxing yu lequ* 藏傳佛教僧侶生活: 苦行與樂趣 [Life of Samgha in Tibetan Buddhist Traditions: Asceticism and Fun] (Taipei: Daqian chubanshe 大千出版社, 2002) 26.

Norbu and other young monks played the game during the New Year celebration. On the fourth day of the first month, following the three-day great tour of congratulation from monastery to monastery, after a long series of banquets, Thubten Norbu recalls that:

The rest of the day would be spent in playing games; and we were particularly fond of dice games. We used a large wooden die with six sides, each of which was marked with one syllable of the mantra *om mani padme hum* ['Oh, thou treasure in the lotus'<sup>470</sup>]. Together with this game there was a large map on which favourable and unfavourable places were marked. You arrived on these spots or avoided them according to the particular syllable you threw. Amongst the favourable spots was [*sic*] Lhasa, various pilgrimage centres in India, and a number of mythical centres such as Devachen and Shambala. Amongst the unfavourable spots were various hells in which the unfortunate who landed there was subjected to appropriate torments. For example, in one it would be intolerably hot, in the other intolerably cold, and so on. The winner was rewarded with a prize of sweets. Sometimes such a game would last for hours, and occasionally it would get very noisy. Particularly fortunate or unfortunate throws were greeted with a chorus of congratulations or groans as the case might be. Now and again we also played dice with small rectangular sheep osselets, just as we had done as children in Tengtser. Almost every young monk carried a bag of such dice bones under his robes.<sup>471</sup>

Thubten Norbu's description is brief yet informative. In addition to his memory of the merriment amongst the crowd when playing the dice game, he also recalls two kinds of dice that were popular among the young monks in the Kumbum Monastery (in present-day Qinghai, China). One was the die with the inscription of the six syllables of the popular

<sup>470</sup> Thubten Jigme Norbu, and Heinrich Harrer, *Tibet is My Country: Autobiography of Thubten Jigme Norbu, Brother of the Dalai Lama as told to Heinrich Harrer*, trans. Edward Fitzgerald (London: Wisdom Publications, 1986) 82.

<sup>471</sup> Thubten Jigme Norbu, and Harrer, *Tibet is My Country*, p. 88.

mantra of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara that was used along with the game board while the other one was the kind of rectangular die made of sheep osselets. Above all, it seems that the version of the game board played by Thubten Norbu and other young monks was different from the one that is now commonly seen and preserved in museums and private collections. As discussed above, the content of many existing *Salam Namshak* is mainly related to Buddhist cosmology but this version is clearly about “favourable and unfavourable places,” combining mythical places like purgatories, Devachen, and Shambala with earthly geographical cities, which reminds us of the sight-seeing board games that had been popular in China, Korea, and Japan. Given that inland China and Tibet experienced centuries of cultural exchanges, the Chinese secular scenic game boards must have found their ways into Tibet and somehow left their traces in this version of *Salam Namshak*. Although earthly cities were included in this game board, it should not be considered as a “secularized” version of the religious *Salam Namshak* as the included cities, in Thubten Norbu’s own words, were famed “pilgrimage centres” in Tibet and India, which were all regarded as holy places in Tibetan Buddhism. The fact that this version was permitted to be played in Tibetan monasteries at the time also suggests that this version was religious *per se*.

## 7.2 Sino-Tibetan Cultural Interactions

The only available source to this study that connects the Tibetan monks with the Buddhist promotion game in China is the manual *Xuanfo pu* written by Zhixu of the late Ming dynasty. To Zhixu’s knowledge, the Buddhist promotion game was first designed by the “lama monks” modelled after the bureaucratic version attributed to a Ming scholar-official Xie Jin 解縉 (1369-1415). In fact, as discussed in Chapter Two, historical

documents have proved that various Buddhist promotion games had been widely circulated long before the Ming (as early as the twelfth/thirteenth century). There is no direct evidence to link the origin of the Chinese *Xuanfo tu* to the Tibetan model or to show the influence of the Chinese game on the creation of *Salam Namshak*. However, as economic and military contacts between Tibet and China had already been established since the medieval period, Sino-Tibetan cultural interactions had taken place alongside, making the emergence of the Buddhist game in both countries more than a mere coincidence. Although there is no direct evidence to link them together, other factors like the communications of religions, politics, and art between inland China and Tibet still suggest such a possibility. Hence, this section endeavours to explore whether any Sino-Tibetan contacts had occurred between the *Salam Namshak* and *Xuanfo tu* or other Buddhist games seen in Japan and Korea, even if the associations were not significant. Before tracing any underlying influences, we will discuss the establishment of Buddhism in Tibet and cultural interactions between China and Tibet as some background knowledge.

### 7.2.1 The establishment of Tibetan Buddhism

Founded in Yarlung valley, the first Tibetan dynasty was known as “Yarlung” (416 BC-842). Little is known about the early history of Tibet prior to the sixth century except for the record of nearly a dozen regional kingdoms ruled by nomadic leaders within the area.<sup>472</sup> Nevertheless, Sino-Tibetan cultural and Buddhist interactions had already been established by the mid-seventh century under the reign of Songtsän Gampo 松贊干布 (ca. 604-650), one of the three important Tibetan kings who set up Buddhism as state ideology. The

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<sup>472</sup> John C. Huntington, and Dina Bangdel, *The Circle of Bliss: Buddhist Meditational Art* (Ohio: The Columbus Museum of Art and Serindia Publications, Inc., 2003) 37.

introduction of Buddhism into Tibet was attributed to Songtsän Gampo's two wives, daughters of the Nepalese King Amshuvarma (r. ca. 605-621) of the Licchavi dynasty (ca. 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> century-8<sup>th</sup> century) and the Chinese Emperor Taizong (599-649; r. 626-649) of the Tang dynasty (i.e. Princess Wenchen). They respectively married the king in 639 and 641. Both princesses were Buddhists and they were known to have brought to Tibet Buddhist images and objects along with other cultural products.<sup>473</sup> Their contributions caused them to be venerated as the incarnations of the green and white Taras, two popular Buddhist goddesses in Tibet and Nepal.<sup>474</sup>

Trisong Detsän 赤松德贊 (r. 755-797), the thirty-eighth Yarlung king, was another of the three important "Buddhist" kings in Tibet. During his reign, he was said to have successively sent emissaries to invite Shantarakshita, Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra, and other eminent Indian teachers to Tibet for promulgating Buddhism. Their combined efforts established Indian Buddhist teachings, including Tantric Buddhism, in Tibet.

Padmasambhava eventually initiated twenty-five Tibetans as monks who contributed significantly to the transmission of Buddhism in Tibet, including launching a huge project to translate Sanskrit Buddhist sūtras into Tibetan. It was also during this time that the Samye Monastery, the first Tibetan Buddhist monastery, was built. Thanks to Trisong Detsän's endeavour, Buddhism was formalized as a state religion in Tibet and this stage was known as the "First Propagation."<sup>475</sup> Aside from Indian Buddhist traditions from India, Chan Buddhism had also been introduced into Tibet from inland China at the time. The conflicting views between the teachings of the "gradual enlightenment" of the Indian Buddhist tradition and the "sudden enlightenment" of the Chinese Chan School caused Trisong Detsän to

<sup>473</sup> Huntington, and Bangdel, *The Circle of Bliss*, p. 37.

<sup>474</sup> Pal, *Art of the Himalayas*, p. 21.

<sup>475</sup> Huntington, and Bangdel, *The Circle of Bliss*, p. 38.

sponsor a debate held at the Samye Monastery that lasted for over two years (792-794). The Indian tradition was finally declared the winner and thereafter the Tibetan state fully supported it as the source from which various forms of the religious teachings and methodology were formed and developed.<sup>476</sup>

Besides, Padmasambhava was claimed to have established Tantric, or Vajrayana, Buddhism, a school of Mahāyāna Buddhism, in Tibet. However, if there is any historical veracity in a Tibetan record that the tomb of Songtsän Gampo was made in the form of a *maṇḍala*, Tantrism must have been practiced in Tibet almost a century before the so-called introduction of Tantric Buddhism by Padmasambhava in the eighth century.<sup>477</sup>

Buddhism encountered a setback in the ninth century but was later revived through the joint efforts of several Tibetan scholars and Atīśa Dīpankara Śrījñāna (982-1054), a famous Indian master who arrived in Tibet in 1042 and spent the rest of his life teaching there. Thereafter, Buddhism gradually dominated almost every aspect of Tibetan life and Buddhist monasteries became the centres of both political and economic powers.<sup>478</sup>

### 7.2.2 The most active periods of political interactions between China and Tibet

In 1244, Genghis Khan's (d. 1227) grandson, Prince Godan, first took an interest in Tibetan religion, summoning the head of the Śākya order, Kunga Gyaltsen (1182-1251; the famed Śākya Pandita who was also the alleged inventor of the *Salam Namshak*), to his court in Liangzhou 涼州 (presently Gansu province). Kunga Gyaltsen arrived in 1246 with two of his nephews, Chogyal Phagpa (1235-1280) and Chagna Dorje. After Godan was converted,

<sup>476</sup> Matthew Kapstein, *The Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism: Conversion, Contestation, and Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) 25; and Huntington, and Bangdel, *The Circle of Bliss*, p. 38.

<sup>477</sup> Huntington, and Bangdel, *The Circle of Bliss*, p. 38.

<sup>478</sup> Pal, *Art of the Himalayas*, p. 14.



he designated the Śākya as sole representatives of the Mongols, but it was Kublai Khan (1215-1294) who, in collaboration with Chogyal Phagpa, truly implemented this policy and deepened Mongol-Śākya relations.<sup>479</sup>

The pair's political cooperation began with religious affiliation. It was because of Kublai's recognition that Chogyal Phagpa was able to lead a distinguished career in religion and then in government. Kublai appointed Phagpa to join his inner circle in 1253. Then, Phagpa was promoted to higher official posts consecutively in a few years, from religious to administrative: in 1260, as State Preceptor; in 1261, as the head of saṃgha; in 1264, as the first director of the newly established *Zongzhiyuan* 總制院 (Council for General Governance; later renamed as the *Xuanzhengyuan* 宣政院, Council for the Spread of Governance) to nominally rule over the whole of Tibet and administer the saṃgha in Mongol China; and, in 1269, as the *dishi* 帝師 (Imperial Preceptor) entitled to suggest nominees for official appointments and issue decrees and proclamations to all Tibetan institutions and monasteries.<sup>480</sup> Phagpa had been dispatched to Tibet to persuade Tibetans to accept Mongol rule as Chagna Dorje was designated as the head of all Tibet. Meanwhile, during his lifetime, Kublai was recognized as an incarnation of Mañjuśrī and a Wheel-turning King by Phagpa and other Tibetan Buddhists.<sup>481</sup> This mutually-dependent pattern of state and saṃgha, having a member of the Śākya sects as state preceptor to dwell in China to supervise the Buddhist saṃgha of both countries and a selected Tibetan officer to stay in Tibet to supervise the country, had been followed by all successive Yuan rulers.<sup>482</sup> In addition to such a strong lama-patron relationship between Mongol emperors and their Śākya preceptors, the

<sup>479</sup> Kapstein, *The Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism*, p. xix; and Huntington, and Bangdel, *The Circle of Bliss*, p. 45.

<sup>480</sup> Huntington, and Bangdel, *The Circle of Bliss*, p. 45.

<sup>481</sup> Ibid, p. 46.

<sup>482</sup> Ibid, p. 45.

development of Tantric Buddhism in Yuan China was also credited by the fruitful Sino-Tibetan contacts as a result of the orchestrated efforts by Kublai and Phagpa.<sup>483</sup>

Throughout the Ming dynasty, Tibetan Buddhism still enjoyed a considerable amount of imperial patronage because of the emperors' religious motives. In spite of the fact that the Ming Shi 明史 (History of the Ming Dynasty) has disparaging accounts of the religion, Tibetan hierarchs were granted titles and privileges, with monasteries built for them, and Tibetan Buddhist canons printed at imperial orders.<sup>484</sup>

Basically Ming China maintained the patterns and policies established by the Yuan court towards Tibet, though with some changes. Titles like Imperial Preceptor were replaced by those of lesser status and fewer Tibetan monks were given these titles out of political considerations. Tibet remained self-governing, along with a dual secular and religious administrative system set up by the Ming court.<sup>485</sup> In fact, the strategy of making political use of the saṃgha was adopted immediately after the founding of the Ming dynasty by Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋 (1328-1398; posthumous title Ming Taizu 太祖, r. 1368-1398). For instance, during his reign, Buddhist masters had frequently been dispatched as emissaries to neighbouring countries as far as Japan, Sri Lanka, and Central Asia.<sup>486</sup>

The genuine effort of re-strengthening the Sino-Tibetan religious relations was initially made by Zhu Di 朱棣 (1360-1424; posthumous title Ming Chengzu 成祖, also known as Emperor Yongle 永樂, r. 1402-1424). Under his reign, religious titles granted to Tibetan hierarchs of various sects increased and, unprecedentedly, the prestigious title of “*wang* 王 (king)” was affixed to some religious titles to emphasize the union of religion and

<sup>483</sup> Huntington, and Bangdel, The Circle of Bliss, p. 45.

<sup>484</sup> Ibid, p. 48.

<sup>485</sup> Ibid, p. 47.

<sup>486</sup> Ibid, p. 48.

government in Tibet. During this period, there were eight general ranks of religious titles, among which the third one was the “*Xitianfozi* 西天佛子 (literally, Son of the Buddha of the Western [Pure Land]; referring to Bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta, the attendant Bodhisattvas of Buddha Amitābha);” to a great extent this title reflected how important the Pure Land tradition was in both the Yongle court and Tibetan orders.<sup>487</sup> In religion, as early as his first year as a ruler in 1403, Yongle invited Dezhin Shegpa (1384-1415; the Fifth Karmapa of the Karma Kagyu Sect of Tibetan Buddhism) to China, with the intention to secure a Tibetan ally and religious mentor. The Karmapa arrived in 1406 and, in the following year, presided over a grand funeral ceremony at Mount Wutai for Yongle’s deceased parents. Functionally, such occasional invitations of prominent Tibetan hierarchs to China could renew Sino-Tibetan ties.<sup>488</sup>

After Yongle, more Ming emperors continued to evince deep faith in Tibetan Buddhism. Among them, Emperor Wuzong 武宗 (r. 1506-1521) even acquired a mastery over Sanskrit and entitled himself “Daqing fawang 大慶法王 (Dharma King of Great Celebration).” Members of the imperial families like Empress Dowager Cisheng 慈聖 (1546-1614), the mother of Shenzong 神宗 (r. 1573-1619), who was known for her devotion to and promotion of Buddhism, also played key roles in the development of Buddhism. Shenzong, like his predecessor Yongle, sponsored Tibetan Buddhism as enthusiastically as he did Chinese Buddhism.<sup>489</sup>

For the subsequent dynasty, Qianlong (1711-1799; r. 1735-1796) was the best exemplar of all Qing rulers who successfully patronized Tibetan Buddhism to fulfill political

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<sup>487</sup> Huntington, and Bangdel, *The Circle of Bliss*, p. 47.

<sup>488</sup> Ibid, p. 47.

<sup>489</sup> Ibid, p. 48.

needs and personal beliefs. The aesthetics and artistic styles of Tibet, China, Mongolia, and Manchuria were blended perfectly through his numerous imperial and architectural projects.<sup>490</sup>

### 7.2.3 Cultural and artistic interactions between Tibet and China

Artistically, the coming of Tibetan masters to inland China had a great impact on the art of both areas. Many secular and religious images were exchanged between Tibet and inland China and the stylistic elements of different art traditions in these two areas influenced each other.

Cultural interactions were known to have been established under the reign of Trisong Detsän, though—quite ironically—through a series of Sino-Tibetan battles. For instance, through the exchanges of treaties, goods, and a few princesses as brides during the war time with China, Tibetan nobility and officials had become acquainted with Chinese products and their intrinsic cultural significance, which definitely had a considerable and persistent impact on Tibetan art and aesthetics.<sup>491</sup> Another example can be seen in the fact that central Tibetan Buddhism was believed to have been brought to the northeastern areas of China by people from the Kokonor region in the northeast (Amdo, now in Qinghai Province), one of the Chinese territories conquered by Tibet.<sup>492</sup> Moreover, artistic representations of the murals and relief at the Mogao caves near Dunhuang, which had been occupied by Tibet after 781, can also affirm cultural communications between Tibet and China. In the light of the portraits of actual Tibetan kings and the ongoing Tibetan artistic influences shown in the mural paintings, it is evident that a certain number of Tibetan artists had familiarized

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<sup>490</sup> Huntington, and Bangdel, *The Circle of Bliss*, p. 49.

<sup>491</sup> Ibid, p. 38.

<sup>492</sup> Ibid, p. 38.

themselves with both the painting and sculpture traditions of the Tang Buddhist schools and presumably brought such information back to Tibet.<sup>493</sup>

The so-called Lamaist style was formed in Tibet where the Indian Pala-Sena (ca. 730-1197) tradition that came from Nepal, Kashmir, and other Himalayan regions like the Punjab hills intermingled with the artistic traditions of China and Central Asia. Although the style in each region changed gradually according to local ethnic conditions, the iconographies are similar. The Nepalese Aniko (or Anige; 1244-1306) was one of the most celebrated artists of this international style, who had already earned his reputation at the tender age of sixteen. He was summoned to Tibet by the hierarch of the Śākya monks to head a contingent of eighty artists and craftsmen to answer the request of the Mongol Emperor Kublai Khan (1216-1294). Under Kublai and Phagpa as well as Aniko's forty-year leadership, Buddhist art from imperial ateliers rose to unprecedented heights of productivity and aesthetic refinement, and gave rise to one of the most prolific, lavish, and aesthetically refined Buddhist artistic traditions in the world.<sup>494</sup> In China, Aniko painted portraits, made innumerable images, and was in charge of metal-casting ateliers for the Mongol court, including many for the Tibetan monastery of Dadu 大都 in Peking. Images of lamas were produced for exports as well. Based on the *Yuandai huasu ji* 元代畫塑記 (Records of the Paintings and Sculptures of the Yuan Dynasty), the artistic projects overseen by Aniko were of a variety of religious, cultural, and artistic traditions. Aniko's religious projects included not only those of Buddhism but also Confucianism and Daoism. Other than religious projects, he also supervised the manufacturing of armillary spheres and instruments of astronomy. Aniko's architecture was famous for his integration of Indian, Chinese, and

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<sup>493</sup> Huntington, and Bangdel, *The Circle of Bliss*, p. 38.

<sup>494</sup> Ibid, pp. 45-46.

Nepalese styles, for which the configuration of his stupa continued to be influential up to the Ming dynasty.<sup>495</sup>

Accordingly, Buddhist images and products had been exchanged through religious, diplomatic, and commercial activities between Tibet and China for centuries long before the Yuan dynasty. It was probable that different versions of the *Xuanfo tu* designed in the Tang and Song dynasties had found their ways to Tibet for religious and commercial purposes. In view of the fact that some Chinese embroidered and woven images that are found in Tibetan monasteries can be dated back to as early as the Song period, artistic interactions between China and Tibet must have taken place by the Song.<sup>496</sup> Nonetheless, it was in the Yuan period that an enormous variety of cultural interactions occurred among Nepal, Tibet, and China, during which Śākya Pandita could have been inspired by different versions of Buddhist promotion games he encountered in China or during which the Tibetan Buddhist games might have been brought to China and Nepal along with other religious objects. The fact that a cross-national artistic style was formed during this period suggests how frequent the intercommunications were among these states. Unfortunately, only one version of Buddhist promotion games survived in China, Zhixu's *Xuanfo tu*, a design created late in the late Ming period; otherwise, comparisons can be made between the Tibetan and the Tang-Song Buddhist game boards to examine their similarities as well as national and religious characteristics. The lack of sufficient written sources makes it impossible to answer questions such as whether these versions had influenced each other or if one of the models had impact on the others. The only thing that can be ascertained is that over time the *Salam*

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<sup>495</sup> Huntington, and Bangdel, *The Circle of Bliss*, p. 46.

<sup>496</sup> Pal, *Art of the Himalayas*, p. 21.

*Namshak* had already been developed into a standard format, which is what we can see in the extant game boards.

However, Chinese influences are traceable through examinations of artistic elements in other Tibetan paintings executed in the *thangka* format. Judging from the early arhat *thangkas*, many motifs and the manners of drawing were borrowed from the Chinese painting tradition, including the landscape elements such as the vegetation, blue-green boulders, jagged escarpments, and cascading waterfalls, as well as the details like furnishings, facial expression, and the volumes of robes.<sup>497</sup> The same artistic representations of arhats, *mahāsiddhas* (Great Perfected Ones; the ideal Tantric practitioners) and monks in these early *thangkas* are found in many of the portraits of Tibetan hierarchs that came to light in recent years; some of them can be dated to as early as the eleventh century.<sup>498</sup> On the other hand, the landscape and decorative motifs adopted from Chinese art can be dated back to the fourteenth century.<sup>499</sup> Such landscape motifs became more popular by the end of the sixteenth century during which Chinese landscape elements that were incorporated with Tibetan artistic styles developed in Kham, Eastern Tibet, spread to other Tibetan regions.<sup>500</sup> The sketchbooks or manuals circulated among Nepalese artists also helped greatly in disseminating artistic styles.<sup>501</sup> Probably, as a result, by the seventeenth century, paintings of arhats and *mahāsiddhas* (Great Perfected Ones; the ideal Tantric practitioners) were commonly depicted against the background of rich, visionary landscape, which now can commonly be seen in the drawings depicted in the squares of the *Salam Namshak*. In fact, in addition to the Chinese landscape elements, the idea of placing figures in landscapes is also

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<sup>497</sup> Pal, *Art of the Himalayas*, p. 103.

<sup>498</sup> Ibid, p. 21.

<sup>499</sup> Ibid, p. 21.

<sup>500</sup> Ibid, p. 105.

<sup>501</sup> Ibid, p. 105.

believed to have been derived from Chinese pictorial tradition. Other Chinese influences are found in the use of color and mounting as well; gold paint was gracefully applied to enliven the archaistic blue-green landscapes in many of the *thangkas* and the borders of these paintings were made of fine Chinese brocades.<sup>502</sup> Nevertheless, these details and elements were freely employed by Tibetan artists to create their works, combining with their regional styles. However, from the seventeenth century on, woodblock prints became popular in producing important series; thereby the various styles of Tibetan painting were gradually unified, to the extent that the layout and drawing style of most of the surviving game boards are very much alike.<sup>503</sup>

Likewise, Chinese influence upon the game can be detected directly from the game board given that the same types of artistic manners and compositional elements were employed. As mentioned above, art historians have recognized that the tendency of picturing figures of idealized and apotheosized Buddhist hierarchs in landscapes is the most essential contribution of Chinese art to Tibetan painting.<sup>504</sup> The same tendency is clearly demonstrated in the large painting above the playing area of the *Salam Namshak*, of which the depiction of the enlightened triad is placed in a grand monastery against a background of landscape. Figure 7.6 is the picture of the details of some squares in the playing area of a *Salam Namshak* and is an excellent example to reveal how painters of the *Salam Namshak* liked to use such a composition. In each of these squares, the painter depicted a relatively complex drawing of a monk or an arhat-like figure in a landscape or an architectural settings, which is of the same type of composition as that mentioned above. Besides, this is also a good example beautifully presenting how these complex drawings can be delineated in fine,

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<sup>502</sup> Pal, *Art of the Himalayas*, pp. 20 and 105.

<sup>503</sup> Ibid, p. 105.

<sup>504</sup> Ibid, p. 21.



delicate detail within such a small spatial scale on the game board. As these aforementioned characteristics are seen on many game boards of the *Salam Namshak*, the impact of Chinese art on the game is clear.

**Figure 7.6** Details of Figure 7.3.



In addition to the Chinese influences, this figure also fully displays how refined and elaborate the pictures can be in such small spaces. (Xizang bowuguan [Tibet Museum], 2001, p. 157)

### 7.3 Buddhist Games in Nepal and Bhutan

Tibet not only shares a common border with China in the north but also with Nepal, Bhutan, and India in the south, extending from Ladakh in India in the west to Sichuan and Yunnan in China in the east. Since early times, Tibet has had close contacts via trade and pilgrimage with Nepal and India. As merchants, monks and pilgrims travelled from one temple and country to another, the cultural practices, religious beliefs, and artistic styles of these countries interacted with one another. Among these countries, Nepal was particularly important to Tibet as Nepal became the principal source of Buddhist teachings for the Tibetans after the decline of Buddhism in India in the twelfth century.<sup>505</sup> Historically, the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal was widely known as one of the great centres of Tantric practice as this area had developed into an essential foundation of Tantric Buddhism where the Tibetan practitioners learned Sanskrit and teachings from famous Nepalese Buddhist masters including those Tantric teachers who were invited to confer initiation there.<sup>506</sup> Nepal acted like a culture mixer that bridged Tibet and northeast India, and thus these regions shared many cultural practices and characteristics.

The same feature is also displayed in the field of art in Nepal. The majority of Nepalese art was actually created by a minority group called “Newars” who were indigenous of the Kathmandu Valley. Their artistic reputation reached the Tang court as early as the seventh century.<sup>507</sup> They were also known to have played important roles in artistic and commercial developments in Tibet and thus settlements of Newari artisans and merchants could easily be found in many important Tibetan towns and monastic communities, such as

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<sup>505</sup> Pal, *Art of the Himalayas*, p. 15.

<sup>506</sup> Huntington, and Bangdel, *The Circle of Bliss*, pp. 29 and 33.

<sup>507</sup> Pal, *Art of the Himalayas*, p. 28.

Lhasa, Śākya, Gyantse, and Shigatse.<sup>508</sup> Hence, it is not easy to determine whether artistic objects like the *Salam Namshak* were made in Tibet or brought to Tibet by Newari artists who created them in Nepal. Along with members of the Nepalese monastic communities, some Newari artists served as itinerant artists in Central Tibet like Lhasa and Samye to work for monasteries.<sup>509</sup> Through their efforts, the *Salam Namshak* painted by these artists and other Tibetan itinerant artists must have been spread to different Buddhist regions within a rather short period of time.

Like those Tibetan *Salam Namshak*, in the Nepalese and Bhutanese variants, the player progresses towards Buddhahood and nirvana by way of the Tantric path, being demoted and promoted according to the cast of dice. Different states of existence and levels of Buddhist practices and achievements are in between the starting square and the destination.

Figure 7.7 shows a nineteenth-century variant of the Buddhist game from Nepal.<sup>510</sup> Its general layout is similar to that of Tibetan versions, with seven rows of seven squares and, above them, two and three rows of partitions and a painting of Pure Lands represented by a triad of enlightened beings on lotus seats inside three grand celestial palaces. In the centre of almost every square in the playing area is a picture of a figure that represents the term written beside it; many of them are monks symbolizing different statuses of enlightenment. The terms or titles of the squares are in both Sanskrit and Tibetan, which may imply that this game board was produced for the market in Tibet as well, or it may be a Tibetan product imported to Nepal. Given that Nepalese Buddhism had been translated from Sanskrit into Tibetan since the medieval period, the cultural and religious interactions between Nepal and Tibet had been very frequent. In Tatz and Kent's opinion, this game board "represents a

<sup>508</sup> Pal, *Art of the Himalayas*, p. 14.

<sup>509</sup> Huntington, and Bangdel, *The Circle of Bliss*, p. 31.

<sup>510</sup> Tatz, and Kent, *Rebirth*, p. 14.

characteristically Nepalese fusion of Sanskrit with Tibetan elements” that shows a reversed process of cultural influence by which the Tibetan culture became the source of a Sanskrit folk product.<sup>511</sup> The six syllables inscribed on the dice are “sa,” “a,” “ga,” “da,” “ya,” and “ra.”

**Figure 7.7 A Nepalese version of the Buddhist promotion game.**



(Tatz and Kent, 1977, p. 14)

<sup>511</sup> Tatz, and Kent, *Rebirth*, pp. 13 and 15.

Figure 7.8 is a more recent Bhutanese version, whose content “has a very heavy tantric emphasis” and “represents the mainstream of Tibetan cosmology” that derived more directly from Śākya Pandita’s prototype.<sup>512</sup> The six syllables, *om-ma-ni-pad-me-hūm*, of the dice used to play equate to the mantra of Avalokiteśvara, who is the attendant bodhisattva of Amitābha, and stand for the six realms of reincarnation in the Tantric tradition.<sup>513</sup> However, this Bhutanese game board does not seem to have much similarity with the Tibetan versions. It has its own features. Although the playing area is divided into sixty-four squares, the same as those game boards seen in Tibet, it is not graphic-oriented but filled with characters of terms and directions for next movements. Another difference is that the playing area is extended with a thirteen-layer platform-like structure; inside each layer is written with a Buddhist term that represents a stage of one of the thirteen final stages leading to Buddhahood. A divine bird, a celestial being, and three stupa-like structures atop with Tantric symbols are drawn on each side of the platform, which probably symbolize the realm and spiritual condition of final enlightenment. The representation of this painting by no means reminds us of the Pure Land painting above the playing area in Tibetan *Salam Namshak*; instead, it has many similarities with other religious didactic games in India and Nepal that will be discussed in the following section.

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<sup>512</sup> Tatz, and Kent, *Rebirth*, p. 12.

<sup>513</sup> *Ibid*, p. 12.



**Figure 7.8 A Bhutanese version of the Buddhist promotion game.**

(Tatz and Kent, 1977, p. 13)

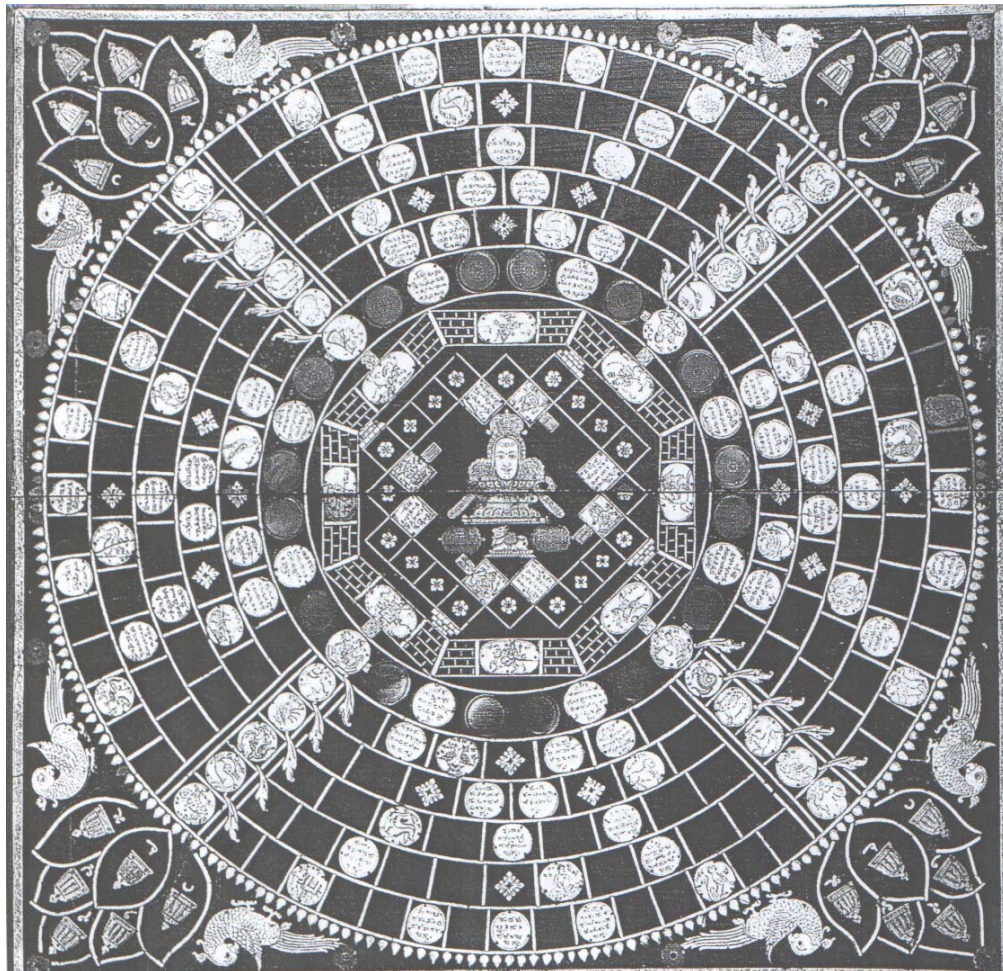
## 7.4 Other Karmic Games in India and Nepal

### 7.4.1 Hindu Shivasayujyam and Devisayujyam in India

Shivasayujyam, or “Union with Shiva,” and Devisayujyam, “Union with Devi,” the two sides of a reversible wooden folding game board resurfaced in London in 1982, were a remarkable pair of karmic games made in the mid-nineteenth Mysore dynasty (1399-1947), a kingdom of southern India. It was made with rosewood and both sides were inlaid with ivory roundel and brass plaques; the elaborateness of this elegant device suggests that it was created for a royal or a rich patron. According to Andrew Topsfield, the pairing of them

“reflects the complementary nature of Shiva as supreme god and the female Shakti as his active power.”<sup>514</sup>

**Figure 7.9 The karmic game of Shivasayujyam board.**



Folding rosewood board with engraved ivory or brass inlaid plaques. 114x116cm.  
(Topsfield, 2006, p. 159).

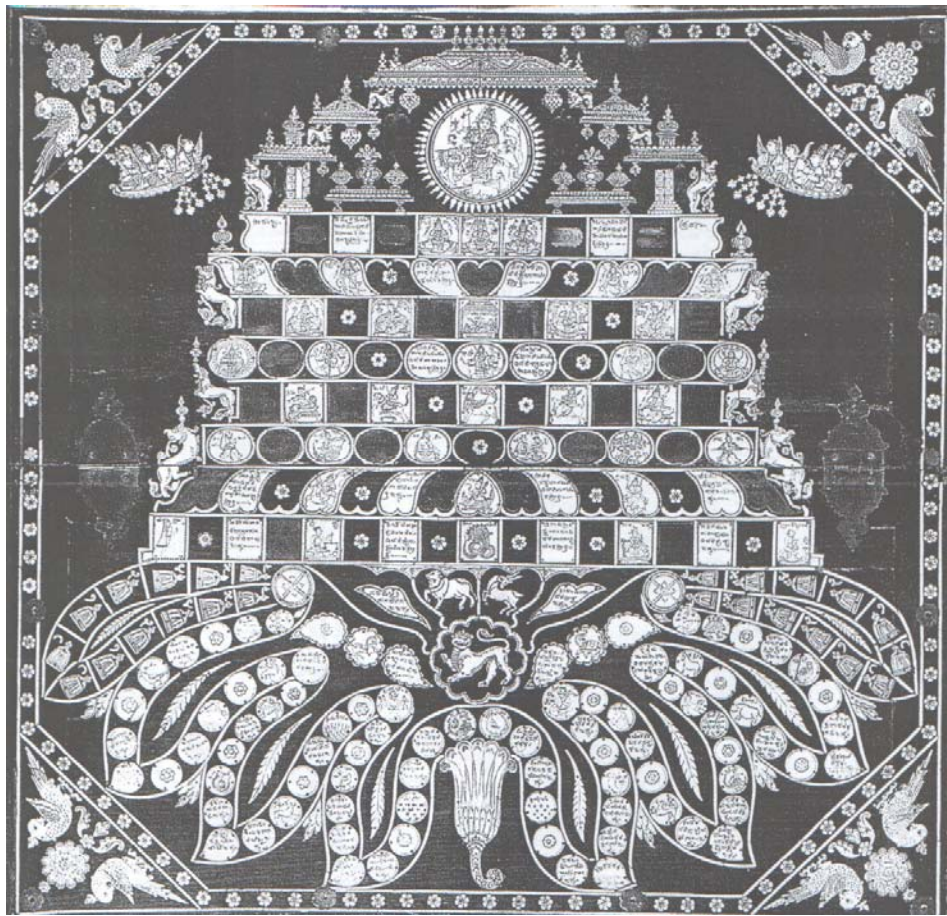
The Shivasayujyam board, as seen in Figure 7.9, is composed with six concentric circles of a few dozen partitions, some of which are engraved with images and Kannada inscriptions, and highlighted with lac. The destined Shiva’s heavenly realm is placed at the

<sup>514</sup> Andrew Topsfield, “Some Mysore Games in British Collection,” *The Art of Play: Board and Card Games of India*, ed. Andrew Topsfield (Mumbai, India: Marg Publications, 2006) 159.



centre, surrounded by other Hindu deities. At the corners of the board are the images of lotuses designed as the starting squares for the four players, each of whom have six pieces. The karmic elements are presented in the inscription and the images; while the inscriptions specify the retributions of good and bad deeds, the images pictorialize the realms of reincarnation including heaven and hell states.

**Figure 7.10 The karmic game of Devisayujyam board.**



Reverse side of the board in Figure 7.9. (Topsfield, 2006, p. 160).

On the reverse side is the Devisayujyam board, Figure 7.10. The impression of this board seems to be more delicate and elegant and the entire layout is completely different, which appears to be a combination of the eight rows of square, oval, and petal-shaped



partitions on the top section and the eight lotus-petal-shaped of partitions at the bottom section. On the top of the layout is the temple-like architecture that represents the winning space dedicated to the tutelary deity of the Mysore dynasty, Chamundeshvari, who is presented here mounting on a lion inside a radiant ivory roundel. The starting squares are located at the base area of the two outermost lotus-petals. Karmic inscriptions and images are also found in many partitions; examples of these inscriptions are: “ ‘one who is cruel will be reborn as a tiger’; ‘one who is arrogant will be reborn as an elephant’: ‘one who indulges in pleasure will be reborn a prostitute’; or, on a more positive note, ‘one who performs many sacrifices will reach Indraloka (heaven of Indra)’ ... a Vaishnava ‘will reach Vaikuntha (Vishnu’s heaven)’ , while a Virashaiva ‘will reach Kailasa (the abode of Shiva)’ .”<sup>515</sup> Apparently, like other karmic games, these inscriptions are religious and didactic in nature. Generally, this Devisayujyam board can be likened to the Tibetan versions because of its lineal layout and the placement of the heavenly settings that represents the realm of a tutelary deity above the playing area. These are also the features that can be found in other karmic game boards of different religious traditions that had been widely circulating in India and other South Asian countries which are to be discussed in the following sections.

#### 7.4.2 *Gyān Chaupar*

Recognized as the precursors of the modern western children’s game Snakes and Ladders, the traditional South Asian devices were in fact religious-based, characterized by their philosophical captions and metaphysical profundity. Most of the few dozen surviving game boards of this religious game were discovered in India and Nepal, where the game was known by various regional names. Across much of north India, they were titled “*Gyān*

<sup>515</sup> Topsfield, “Some Mysore Games in British Collection,” p. 160.

*Chaupar* (Dice Game of Knowledge or Gnosis),” or “*Gyān Bazi* (Game of Knowledge),” in Maharashtra of northwestern India, as “*Moksapata* (Board of Liberation or Enlightenment)” while in Nepal, as “*Nāgapāsa* (Snake-noose; meaning trap formed of snakes or falling in the trap of snake),” or “*Vaikuntha khel* (Game of *Vaikuntha* [the abode of *Visnu*; also called *Visnuloka*]).”<sup>516</sup> The juxtaposition of these variants reveals not only the common format design and cultural influence shared by them but also their distinctive regional features associated with their religious beliefs.

Similar to their East Asian counterparts, these South Asian variants lead the players to experience a kind of two-dimensional virtual spiritual ascension. Based on the results of each throw of dice, the players, in turn, move their pieces from the lower-level squares of hellish states and inferior births to earthly vices and illusions or karmic impediments to the higher-level squares of more advanced virtuous states, higher spiritual attainments and celestial realms, and eventually to the winning squares that house the supreme deities that represent the ultimate liberation or union with the supreme deities. The squares in the playing area of these games are usually numbered and inscribed; many of them start at the left corner of the bottom row, double back in the next upper row and finish in the central squares of the top row. However, the apparent feature that differentiates these *Gyān Chaupar* versions from their East Asian parallels is the add-on drawings of snakes and ladders that give these games their name. They are placed at irregular intervals to rapidly demote or promote the game pieces. Nevertheless, issues related to the drawing style,

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<sup>516</sup> Other titles include the *Jñāna Chaupār* (Dice Game of Knowledge), *Leelā* (Game of Self-Knowledge), *Moksha-Patamu*, *Golok dhām*, and *Kismet* (Destiny). See Shimkhada, “A Preliminary Study of the Game of Karma in India, Nepal, and Tibet,” pp. 317 and 319-320; Topsfield, “The Indian Game of Snakes and Ladders,” pp. 203, 206, and 213; Andrew Topsfield, “Instant Karma: The Meaning of Snakes and Ladders,” *The Art of Play: Board and Card Games of India*, ed. Andrew Topsfield (Mumbai, India: Marg Publications, 2006) 75; and Andrew Topsfield, “Snakes and Ladders in India: Some Further Discoveries,” *Artibus Asiae* 66. 1 (2006): 143.

number, and allocation of these snakes and ladders are not to be discussed here as they are beyond the scope of this study.

### 7.4.3 Jain *Gyān Chaupar*

As shown in those surviving game boards in India and Nepal, it is evident that the *Gyān Chaupar* game had been used to spread the teachings of Hinduism, Jainism, and Islam. Among them, the Jain versions are believed to be the pioneer. Based on a late-tenth-century source, Andrew Topsfield suggests that this karmic game “may have developed first among the pious Jains of western India ... with a purely didactic purpose.”<sup>517</sup> The quotation cited from this source, the *Rishabhpanchashika* by Dhanapala, is a brief compliment on a game imbued with Jain idea of karmic reincarnation: “Like gamesmen, the living beings on the gaming board of Samsara [the cycle of rebirth] are carried away by the dice [or: senses], but when they see you, O Jina, the place of refuge [or: square on a game board], they become free from possession by prison, slaughter and death.”<sup>518</sup> Obviously, Jain followers in the late tenth century had already been aware of the game and likened playing the game to the experiences within the paths of reincarnation. Unfortunately, no information regarding the inventor and his prototype can be found. Although no Jain prototype survives, the extant Jain versions, dated from the eighteenth to the nineteenth centuries mostly produced in Gujarat or Rajasthan, reveal a high level of standardization in format design<sup>519</sup> and a complex arrangement of Jain terms that demonstrate “the most elaborate and consistent doctrinal

<sup>517</sup> Topsfield, “Instant Karma,” pp. 75-76.

<sup>518</sup> According to the author, this English translation is adapted from Micaela Soar’s “India in the history of backgammon” in *Board Games in Perspective*. See Topsfield, “Instant Karma,” pp. 75 and 89 note 2. Words in box brackets are added by the author.

<sup>519</sup> For example, the “84 numbered squares are arranged in a 9 x 9 grid with three additional squares (1, 56, 66) projecting at bottom left and at either side.” For details, see Topsfield, “Instant Karma,” p. 77.

systems of karmic classification.”<sup>520</sup> Such kinds of standardization and sophistication suggest that the creation and circulation of Jain *Gyān Chaupar* might have developed into a standard guideline sometime before the eighteenth century that only versions within the standard were allowed. Apparently, the Jain version had gone through a long period of development and modifications to the extent that such a standard format was formed.

Nevertheless, despite lacking a prototype, the format of the early models can still be discovered. Based on the description in a circa eleventh- to twelfth-century manuscript of the Mahānīśitha Sūtra in a Jain temple library on Mount Satrunjaya, Gujarat, India, the Jain game board might have been developed from some *maṇḍala*-like yet snake-and-ladder-free grid diagrams inscribed with karmic terms that were occasionally used as the teaching aid to explain the inter-connections of karma causation.<sup>521</sup> Since the theory of karma and its complicated operations corresponding to the *jīva* (individual soul) journey are important in Jain doctrine and cosmology,<sup>522</sup> this sūtra is of the utmost significance because it discusses the good and bad conducts of monks and nuns, the preachers of the religion, and the ways to repent their misdeeds.<sup>523</sup> If the *maṇḍala*-like diagram was the origin of the karmic *Gyān Chaupar*, the game was glossary-like and didactic in the beginning but became pictorial after being modified for teaching the lay communities the Jain karmic doctrines. Interestingly, this argument for the origin of the game being used as the realia for doctrinal texts greatly resembles the case in Japan, where the origin of Buddhist *e-sugoroku* is believed to have been the terminological *meimoku-sugoroku*, which was designed to help young Tendai monks to memorize the Sino-Japanese Buddhist terminology for their scriptural studies.

<sup>520</sup> Topsfield, “Instant Karma,” p. 76.

<sup>521</sup> Ibid, p. 76; and Topsfield, “Snakes and Ladders in India,” p. 175.

<sup>522</sup> Ibid, p. 76.

<sup>523</sup> Topsfield, “Snakes and Ladders in India,” p. 176 note 56.

Subsequently, karmic causation also became one of the major themes for the Japanese Buddhist promotion games.

Like other karmic game boards in China, Korea and Japan, the Jain game boards remind players of their spiritual goal, as “the *jiva* gradually progresses from base or subhuman conditions to more virtuous states of being, the higher *loka* realms, the *vimanas* (palaces) of the Panchanuttara heaven, and beyond these, finally to Ishatpragbhara or Siddhashila, the blissful, crescent-shaped abode of perfected beings (*siddhas*) at the topmost point of the universe.”<sup>524</sup> Located above the main playing area, always flanked with a pair of peacocks or celestial musicians or deities, the winning squares that house the supreme heavens are usually depicted as a multi-domed structure with decoration of flags, banners, or stylized flowers, as seen in Figure 7.11.<sup>525</sup> In some cases, the *Pañcānuttara* heaven, the highest heaven in Jain cosmology, and the *Isatprāgbhāra*, where the perfected souls can enjoy the ultimate liberation, are respectively represented by the face and the forehead’s crescent of the *lokapurusha* or Cosmic Man, whose head and four limbs are portrayed protruding above and from the sides of the playing area, which forms the body of the Cosmic Man, as seen in Figure 7.12.<sup>526</sup> Actually, the Cosmic Man layout reminds us of the Tibetan “Wheel of Life,” or “Wheel of Becoming (Bhavachakra),” Figure 7.13, the illustration of the eternal cycling of living beings through the *samsāra*, in which the circular picture of *samsāra* is held between the jaws, hands, and legs of Māra as if it was his body.<sup>527</sup> Such a similarity is very suggestive but, unfortunately, no available material provides a solid reason to support

<sup>524</sup> Topsfield, “Instant Karma,” p. 76.

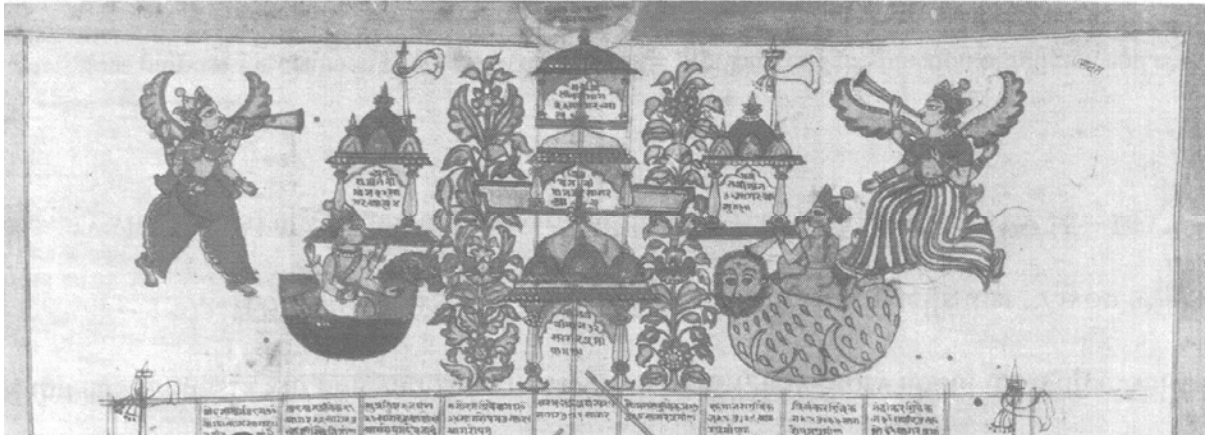
<sup>525</sup> Ibid, pp. 76-77; and Topsfield, “The Indian Game of Snakes and Ladders,” p. 208.

<sup>526</sup> Topsfield, “The Indian Game of Snakes and Ladders,” p. 207.

<sup>527</sup> Huntington, and Bangdel, *The Circle of Bliss*, pp. 66-67.

such an iconographical connection, other than the karmic teachings shared by Jainism and Buddhism.

**Figure 7.11** Detail of a mid-nineteenth-century Jain *Gyān Chaupar*.

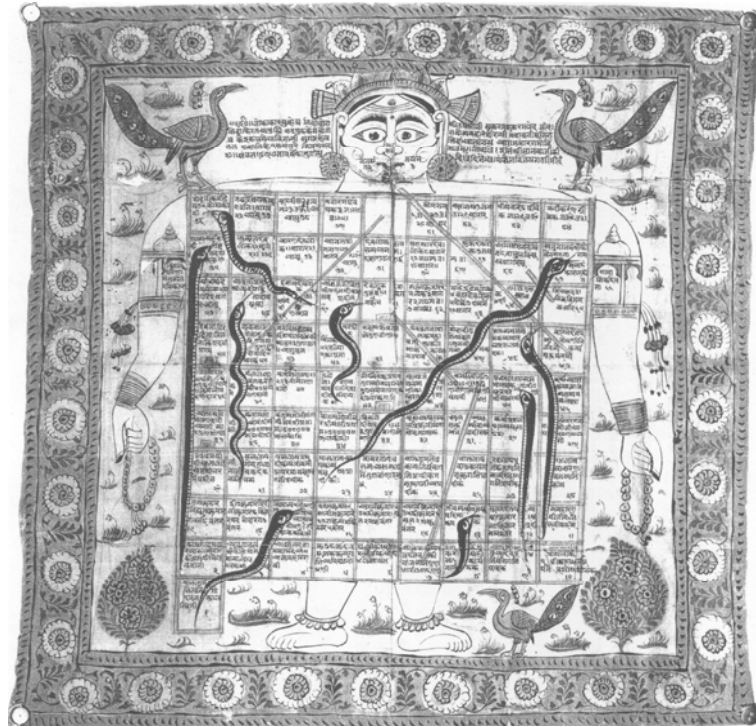


(Topsfield, 1985, Figure 5)

Figure 7.14 is noteworthy for its unique combination of the heavenly palaces and the Cosmic Man, though the latter is merely represented by his two arms and feet. This game board is unusual also because of its vignettes at the bottom part of the game board below the playing area. These vignettes, painted in a rather primitive style, are scenes of suffering in some hell-like realms. Apparently, in addition to instructing the players of the soul journey to *Isatprāgbhāra* or *Siddhaśilā*, the creator of this Jain game board also wanted to warn the players about the karmic results of bad deeds. In another example that is dated early or mid-nineteenth century, the playing area is surrounded not only by detailed depictions of the hells but also those of the heavens.<sup>528</sup>

<sup>528</sup> Topsfield, “The Indian Game of Snakes and Ladders,” p. 208.

**Figure 7.12** Cosmic Man in a Jain *Gyān Chaupar* painted on cotton cloth.



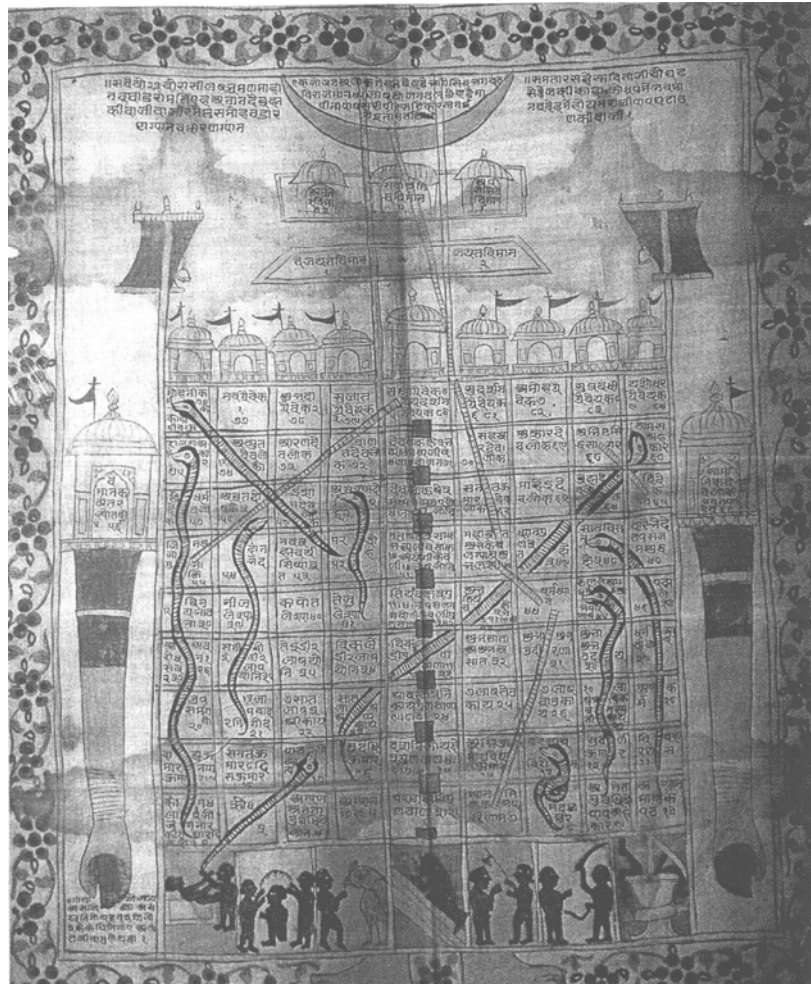
Gujarat, dated 1834. 63 x 63 cm. Calico Museum of Textiles, Ahmedabad, India.  
(Topsfield, 2006, p. 78).

**Figure 7.13** The Wheel of Life.



A popular theme in Tibetan painting. (Tatz and Kent, 1977, p. 21)

**Figure 7.14** A nineteenth-century Jain *Gyān Chaupar* on cotton cloth.



Present location unknown. (Topsfield, 2006, p. 77)

#### 7.4.4 Hindu *Gyān Chaupar* in India

Hindu game boards are comparatively large in size, with greater variations in format designs, and their terminologies are of Sankhya, Yoga, Vedanta, or Tantric affiliations, exhibiting a strong sense of *bhakti* devotionism that was popular in north India from the thirteenth century onwards.<sup>529</sup> Most of the surviving Hindu game boards are related to the worship of Vishnu or his associated avatars, principally Rama and Krishna, as the winning

<sup>529</sup> Topsfield, "Instant Karma," pp. 79 and 82.



square is captioned as *Vaikuntha*, the heaven of Vishnu. However, there is insufficient evidence to explain why the *Vaishnavas* were so fond of such karmic games. The earliest extant example of a *Vaishnava* board can be dated back to the early 1780s; although this board was commissioned by a British official at Lucknow in north India, the terms and names written in the squares are in Persian and Devanagari script.<sup>530</sup>

There is an attribution for the inventor or the first adaptor of a local version of the Hindu *Gyān Chaupar*. The game was known as the *Moksapata* in Maharashtra of northwestern India and this local variant was considered to be created by a yogi master called Jnaneshvara (d. 1290; also known as Jnanadeva) for the purpose of “bringing relief to those oppressed by Samsara.”<sup>531</sup> It is not known whether or not the design of this yogi master was the prototype of the Hindu *Gyān Chaupar*, but this information may suggest that the game had been in circulation in northwestern India in as early as the late thirteenth century. Since the thirteenth century was also marked as the beginning of the *bhakti* devotionism that was popularized in north India, the art historian Topsfield suggests that the Hindu game could have developed “at a relatively early phase of the *bhakti* era,” modelling after the Jain game boards.<sup>532</sup>

A group of *Gyān Chaupar* in the language of Pahari is known for their large size that is made up of squares totalling over 350. As such grandiose and elaborate games prevailed from the late eighteenth to the nineteenth centuries at the Rajput courts of the Punjab Hills, the invention of this large format can perhaps be ascribed to the court of Maharaja Sansar Chand of Kangra (b. 1765, r. 1775-1823), noted for his lifelong devotion to chess.<sup>533</sup> Since

<sup>530</sup> Topsfield, “Instant Karma,” p. 79.

<sup>531</sup> Ibid, p. 79.

<sup>532</sup> Ibid, p. 79.

<sup>533</sup> Ibid, p. 84.

the size of this Pahari type apparently could bring on unusually lengthy and complex games, this type of games probably could only be played by those who had sufficient leisure hours, such as the Hill rajas and their courtiers, to roll the dice and move their pieces while reviewing the doctrines of karma and contemplating the spiritual path.<sup>534</sup> *Gyān Chaupar* was also known to be a popular pastime in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century India among the ladies of the court and of some towns and centres in Rajasthan of western India.<sup>535</sup>

Accordingly, it is not unusual to find that some of the game boards were designed by Brahmins and members of the royalty. For instance, based on the fact that, in an early nineteenth-century game board from Maharashtra in west India, Indra's heaven and its related zones are the final destination in the playing area, the designer of this board must have been a Brahmin.<sup>536</sup> An example of a royal designer can be represented by Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar III of Mysore (1794-1868), a man of distinctive cultural attainment, who was conversant in many languages and known to be a religious philosopher and a talented mathematician.<sup>537</sup> A four-armed cruciform *pachisi* game board, Figure 7.15, is attributed to him or to his court.

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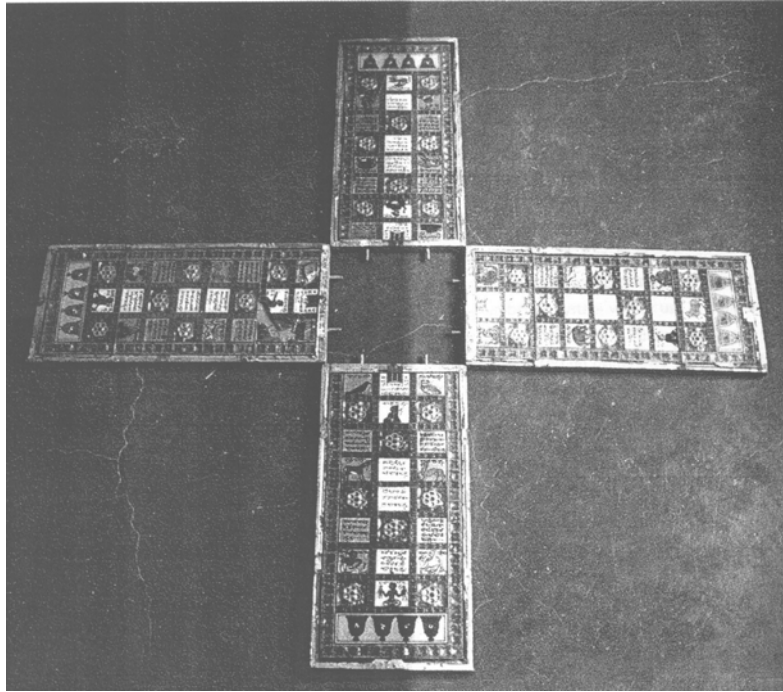
<sup>534</sup> Topsfield, "Instant Karma," p. 84.

<sup>535</sup> Topsfield, "The Indian Game of Snakes and Ladders," p. 205 note 6.

<sup>536</sup> Topsfield, "Instant Karma," pp. 82-83.

<sup>537</sup> Vasantha Rangachar, "Games and Puzzles of Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar of Mysore," *The Art of Play: Board and Card Games in India*, ed. Andrew Topsfield (Mumbai, India: Marg Publications, 2006) 143.

**Figure 7.15** A mid-nineteenth-century cruciform karmic game board.



Painted and inscribed on glass with wooden backing. 50 x 50 cm.  
Shri Jayachamarajendra Art Gallery, Mysore, India. (Rangachar, 2006, p. 149)

This format is probably the only example of its kind and it might have been regarded as a playful experiment to combine such kind of *pachisi* game board with the karmic *Gyān Chaupar* by the designer:

Here the pictures and Kannada inscriptions within the squares relate to karmic philosophy and instruct the player how to move his pieces, either forward or backward, in response to the good or bad karma represented by each square. Often in such karmic versions of *pachisi*, the four castes (brahmin, kshatriya, vaishya, and shudra) are represented by the four arms, while the images on the board represent the higher or lower states of existence that the players attain in turn, such as fish, animal, or human incarnations. The central section of this board is now missing.<sup>538</sup>

<sup>538</sup> Rangachar, “Games and Puzzles of Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar of Mysore,” p. 148.

On the other hand, the majority of Hindu game boards produced in Rajasthan are more graphic and decorative, characterized by their stylized floral patterned borders and drawings of deities above the playing area. These features are ascribable to the patronage of the wealthy and nobility, which can also be reflected by the depictions in the drawings, in which the triad of Vishnu, Shiva, and Brahma, for example, were often portrayed royally in regal fashion, sometimes against a *gaddi* cushion.<sup>539</sup> (Elaborately drawn illustrations are seen in some of the squares in an early-nineteenth-century board from Maharashtra, too.<sup>540</sup>) Hence, this game seemed to have established a very substantial market among members of high castes in India.

In 1895, Gerald Dampier, a junior magistrate at Saharanpur in northeast India, witnessed the prevalence of the *Gyān Chaupar* in the area. His brief account was the first comment on the game in English language: “Gyan chausar, or the ‘Chess of Knowledge,’ is a game much played by Hindus, especially those of the Brahman caste ... It is very popular with pious Hindus, as it forms at once a pleasurable amusement, and an instructive lesson on the best means of attaining to heaven.”<sup>541</sup> Dampier’s description is simple and clear enough to tell why and how popular the game had been in the late-nineteenth-century northeast India among Hindus, particularly the Brahman.

The images of heavenly and hellish scenes can be found in an early-nineteenth-century Pahari example in the Kangra style, Figure 7.16. Above the playing area are the images of the Hindu triad of Vishnu, Brahma and Shiva as well as three containers of fruit and flowers and below the playing area are the illustrations of how demons cheerfully torture beings in hells. Besides, the playing area is characteristically divided by a column of

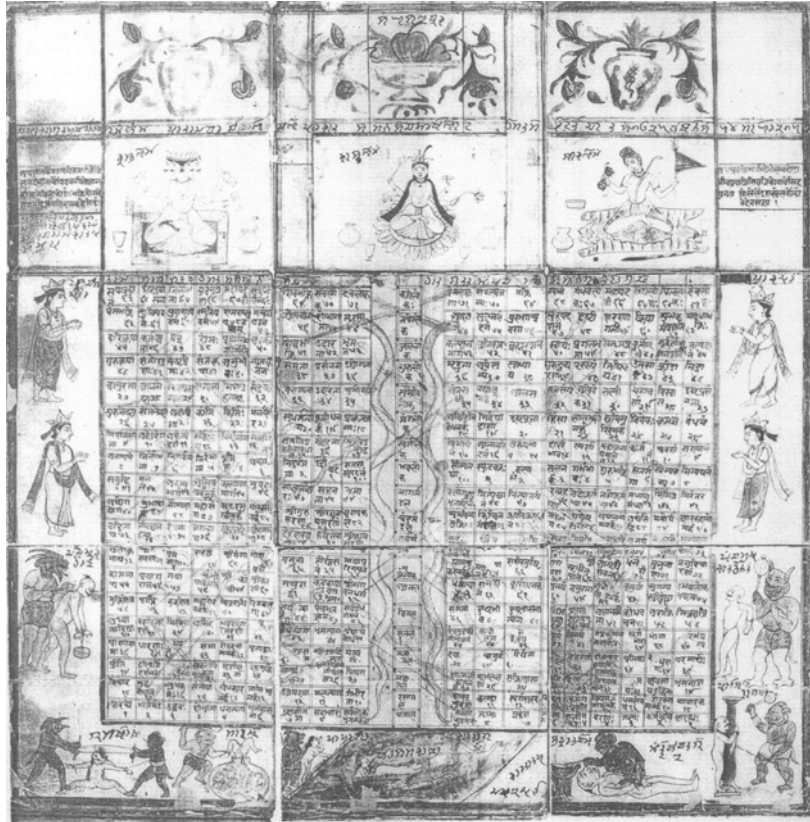
<sup>539</sup> Topsfield, “Instant Karma,” p. 80.

<sup>540</sup> Ibid, p. 82.

<sup>541</sup> Ibid, pp. 79 and 89 note 6.

unnumbered squares into left and right panels, each with separate serial numbering; from bottom to top, this central axis represents the ascending *loka* realms from purgatories to heavens.<sup>542</sup>

**Figure 7.16** An early-nineteenth-century Pahari Kangra style *Gyān Chaupar*.



342 squares, on paper; Chhote Bharany collection, New Delhi. (Topsfield, 2006, p. 85)

The depiction of heavens and purgatories is also found in another early-nineteenth-century example. Called “*Golok dhām*,” this game had been seen and played at Kishorganj, Mymensingh District, Bengal, around 1905 to 1910 and at Shillong circa 1915.<sup>543</sup> This was a

<sup>542</sup> Topsfield, “Instant Karma,” pp. 84-85; and Topsfield, “The Indian Game of Snakes and Ladders,” pp. 211-212.

<sup>543</sup> Topsfield, “The Indian Game of Snakes and Ladders,” p. 213 note 37.

printed game board of sixty-four squares, inscribed with terms of Hindu mythology, yet without the drawing of snakes and ladders. Its layout and content sound familiar:

At the top was an ornate panel showing Goloka or Vaikuntha, the heaven of Visnu, and the ultimate ascent was to that. Below... was a whole Divina Commedia, so to speak, showing an ascent from Inferno to Paradiso through Purgatorio. Among the squares allocated to the world were *Śaundikālaya* (liquor shop) showing people drinking, and *Veśyālaya* (brothel) showing men as well as Bengali prostitutes, cruder in the woodcuts than even in life. At the lowest level was a picture of hell, of awful hideousness ... The game was played with cowries as dice.<sup>544</sup>

#### 7.4.5 Hindu *Gyān Chaupar* in Nepal: *Nāgapāśa*

Both Hinduism and Buddhism were established in Nepal by the fifth century and their coexistence lasted till the eighteenth century; thereafter the influence of the Buddhist Newars diminished gradually in the Nepalese culture.<sup>545</sup> Anyhow, over the centuries each religion and its pantheon influenced the iconographic norms and theories of the other. Based on their extant sketchbooks that contain drawings of both Hindu and Buddhist deities, the Newari artists apparently worked for both Hindu and Buddhist patrons, though they were predominantly Buddhists.<sup>546</sup> Of the Hindu triad, it is not Brahma but Vishnu and Siva that are the focus of popular worship in Nepal; in the form of Paśupatinātha, Siva is even the patron deity of Nepal.

There is a *Vaishnava* game board produced in Nepal in the nineteenth century notable for its fusion of the Hindu and Buddhist iconographies, in which all the squares are occupied

<sup>544</sup> Topsfield, "The Indian Game of Snakes and Ladders," p. 213 note 37.

<sup>545</sup> Pal, *Art of the Himalayas*, p. 14.

<sup>546</sup> Ibid, p. 28.

by elaborately painted Hindu deities, Buddhas, and other deific and demonic figures.<sup>547</sup> The mixed iconography and the figurative format of this board are recognized as the characteristics of Nepalese karmic games.

**Figure 7.17** *Nāgapāśa*, a Nepalese karmic game.



Early nineteenth century, 36 x 48 inches, gouache on cloth; Nepal National Museum, Kathmandu, Nepal. (Shimkhada, 1983, Figure 2)

As demonstrated in Figure 7.17, the composition of the game boards is:

<sup>547</sup> Topsfield, "Instant Karma," p. 80.

divided into eight horizontal rows, and each row represents a realm of human consciousness at one level. They are, from bottom to top, the realm of human existence, the realm of fantasy, the realm of karma, the realm of balance, the realm of human consciousness, the realm of knowledge, the realm of reality, and finally the realm of gods. The lower rows are the lowest levels of human existence, since they represent anger, greed, delusion, conceit, and sensual pleasure – qualities that prevent man from achieving higher consciousness. The upper rows obviously represent the higher planes. On the very top are painted the figures of the Hindu trinity – Brahma, Visnu, and Siva. The plane occupied by these gods is the highest level that a Hindu can attain, the equivalent of *Sukhāvatī*, the Buddhist paradise of bliss.<sup>548</sup>

The layout and the content like this board as well as the depiction of the triad of Visnu flanked by Brahma and Siva in the space above the playing area are common features shared by many Nepalese Hindu *Gyān Chaupar*. The depiction of figures and deities of Hinduism and Buddhism shown in some of the extant examples bears a strong resemblance to the Buddhist *Salam Namshak*, which means that the Hindu and Buddhist games might have mutually influenced each other in Nepal.<sup>549</sup> Because of their Hindu affiliation, the Nepalese Hindu *Gyān Chaupar* may have been introduced into Nepal from northern India earlier than the nineteenth century.<sup>550</sup>

#### 7.4.6 Sufi Islamic *Gyān Chaupar* in India

The content of another nineteenth-century *Vaishnava* game board (Figure 7.18) from Punjab or Rajasthan of northwest India catches the moment of religious transition in creating the game, probably, for local patrons. The square inscriptions here are in Persian, which are

<sup>548</sup> Shimkhada, “A Preliminary Study of the Game of Karma in India, Nepal, and Tibet,” p. 318.

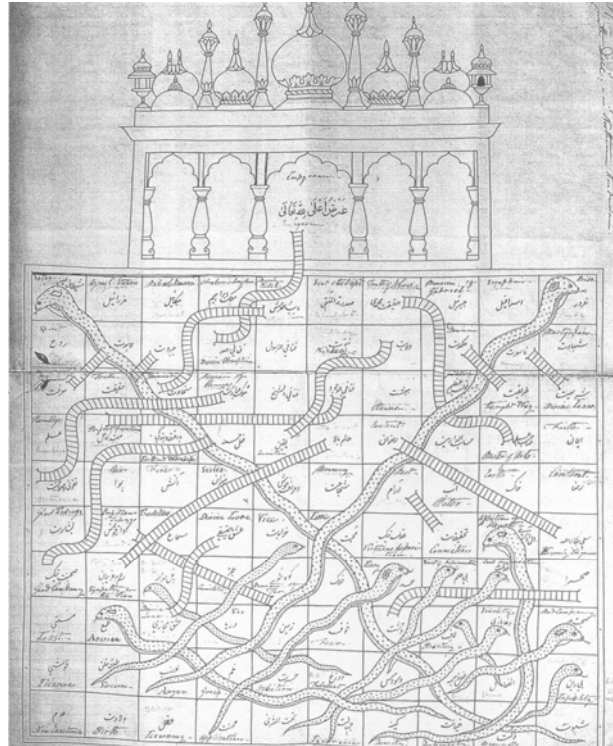
<sup>549</sup> Topsfield, “The Indian Game of Snakes and Ladders,” p. 206.

<sup>550</sup> Ibid, p. 206.



a unique feature not only because they are transcriptions of the Devanagari Sanskrit-Hindi terms but also because it was the creator's attempt to translate them into their Islamic (or Sufi) equivalents.<sup>551</sup> Accordingly, it is reasonable to consider that Sufi followers had attempted to adopt the *Gyān Chaupar* to their own religion and deliberately designed this board “for use by moderately free-thinking Muslims as well as by Hindus, perhaps even playing together at the same time.”<sup>552</sup>

**Figure 7.18** A 100-square Muslim *Gyān Chaupar* on paper.



Early nineteenth century, 54.5 x 45.4 cm; Royal Asiatic Society, London.  
(Topsfield, 2006, p. 86)

Only three examples of the *Gyān Chaupar*, all dated in the first half of the nineteenth century, adapted the teachings of Islam and the stages of the Sufi mystical path. The earliest of them was collected by Major-General Harriott (1780-1839) in the Ajmer region around

<sup>551</sup> Topsfield, “Instant Karma,” pp. 80 and 82.

<sup>552</sup> Ibid, p. 82.

1810; its squares are unnumbered and inscribed in Persian with the names of virtues, vices, and spiritual states, starting from square one “non-existence” and two “birth,” and ending at the “Throne of God” above the playing area housed within the central arch of a mosque.<sup>553</sup> By the late nineteenth century, this kind of Sufi game lost popularity in north India but had already been introduced with slight changes to the Sufi communities in Turkey and Syria, where the game was renamed “*shatranj al-’arifin* (Chess of the Gnostics)” and attributed to the prominent Andalusian philosopher-mystic Ibn al-’Arabi (d. 1290).<sup>554</sup> Interestingly, this Andalusian creator of the Sufi *Gyān Chaupar* and the yogi Jnaneshvara attributed by the Maharashtra tradition as the inventor of the Hindu variety as well as the ascribed creator of the Tibetan Buddhist counterparts were contemporaries of the thirteenth century. Such a close range of time for the invention of the game in different places may suggest that the creation of the religious didactic game was so successful that immediately it was copied and modified by clergy and lay followers of different religious orders in various regions and countries within a relatively short period of time. The scope and speed of their spread must have been accelerated by the efforts of monks and merchants as they carried the game boards when they travelled.

Nevertheless, based on the fact that a comprehensive commentary on its terminology first published in 1938 was reprinted in 1988, the Sufi game seems to be still influential till as recently as the late twentieth century.<sup>555</sup> This is a philosophical commentary on the terms or inscriptions on the game board composed by the Sufi Shaikh Muhammad al-Hashimi at Damascus.<sup>556</sup> He highly praises the device affirming that the “‘Chessboard of the Gnostics’

<sup>553</sup> Topsfield, “The Indian Game of Snakes and Ladders,” p. 209; and Topsfield, “Instant Karma,” pp. 85-86.

<sup>554</sup> Topsfield, “Instant Karma,” pp. 86-87.

<sup>555</sup> Ibid, p. 89 note 12.

<sup>556</sup> Ibid, p. 87.

[reveals to us] how to find our direction towards God, and how we are guided on the right path to Him when we sincerely turn to Him, by the means and modes which He approves, while struggling against the unlawful desires of the Lower Self and detecting its intrigues: while learning to recognize, ultimately, the desert places and the pitfalls encountered on the road.”<sup>557</sup> To Sufi followers like him, playing the game is no different from a religious experience, which is undoubtedly the exact reflection of the creators and players of all religious games.

## 7.5 Concluding Remarks

This chapter examines and analyzes a variety of promotion games of Buddhism, Jainism, and Hinduism created and circulated in Tibet, Nepal, India and Bhutan, discussing their layouts, cultural backgrounds, and embedded religious doctrines. The Tibetan *Salam Namshak* is the main focus here; a few examples are discussed in detail to give a general idea on its format and its religious basics that consist of the Ten Dharma Realms, Five Paths and Ten Grounds, and the emphasis on purgatories. Game boards of similar layout and religious base are also found in Bhutan and Nepal but only a few of them survived. In order to paint a larger picture as to how influential the promotion games could be, religious games other than Buddhist but of the same purpose and similar layout are included in this study. Karmic teachings are the common theme that connects with these Jain, Hindu, and Sufi versions. A brief survey of some of these extant game boards reveals that the promotion game had been an extremely popular device during the last few centuries because of its universal adaptability to almost any religious and ethical doctrines in spite of ethnical differences.

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<sup>557</sup> Topsfield, “Instant Karma,” p. 85.

Functionally, all of them are of didactic value, though gambling may be involved as the case in East Asian countries, but the record of such practice seems to be rare or inexplicitly recorded in sources available to me.

Both Tibetan and Nepalese art were heavily influenced by Tibetan Buddhism, a religious tradition that also integrated with native shamanistic elements from Bön religion. However, the Buddhist pantheons of both regions are not the same. While both pantheons contain Hindu and Buddhist images, the one of Tibetan Buddhism is characterized by the inclusion of numerous Tibetan deities that consists of thousands of apotheosized kings and lamas.<sup>558</sup> Although both Tibet and Nepal had been strongly affected by Indian Buddhist cultures, the apotheosis of mortal kings and lamas only occurred in the pantheon of Tibetan Buddhism yet was absent in that of the Nepalese Buddhism. Such a difference may indicate that such a practice was not of Indian origin. Hence, the apotheosis of kings and lamas has been regarded as a distinct character of Tibetan Buddhist art. Was this indigenous to Tibet? It is not possible to offer an answer here but I speculate that the practice of using portraits of deceased masters and abbots in various rituals of Chan Buddhism ever since the Tang dynasty may have something to do with it given that Chan teachings had been observed in Tibet for a certain period of time before the debate at the Samye Monastery in the eighth century and actually did not entirely die out after that:

Though Tibetan Chan certainly faded away, it would not be quite accurate to say that it ever actually died. ... it is now clear that the early ninth century witnessed the rise of a syncretic Tibetan Chan lineage based in northeastern Tibet (Amdo) and also active in and around Dunhuang. ... While this line of Chan teaching appears to have preserved a radical teaching of sudden enlightenment, it also seems to have

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<sup>558</sup> Pal, *Art of the Himalayas*, p. 17.

contextualized it within a framework of normative Buddhist cosmology, emphasizing the doctrine of karma, and probably also to have transmitted it in association with some tantric ritual and contemplative disciplines. ... Furthermore, there is some reason to believe that elements of the Chan teaching, ... remained current in far eastern Tibet at least through the beginning of the eleventh century.<sup>559</sup>

Likewise, there was a possibility that the *Salam Namshak* had experienced the same kind of intensive Chinese influence sometime during the Tang-Song era and the modified outcome persisted and outlived the original sources.

The perpendicular arrangement of the squares and the colourful, picturized design of the *Salam Namshak* differentiate the Tibetan game boards from their Chinese and Korean counterparts, but not from the Japanese versions. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Tibetan and Japanese versions have some similarities; in addition to the graphical layout, their contents have some points in common, including the Ten Dharma Realms and the emphasis of purgatories, particularly the latter. In these Japanese versions, such as Figure 6.10, above the playing area is a painting related to the Pure Land belief, which is also similar to the Tibetan models. This chapter has already demonstrated that the design of the Tibetan game board had been shaped by some Chinese artistic elements and is different from other neighbouring South Asian variants by iconography, the drawing of a Buddha's Pure Land, and the use of snakes and ladders. These points imply that certain extinct early Chinese models with Pure Land affiliation had probably played a considerable role in the development of the *Salam Namshak*. Unfortunately, since there is no pre-late-Ming Buddhist promotion game extant in China, this assumption cannot be verified. On the other hand, as Japan had adopted Chinese culture and religious teachings through frequent interactions with

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<sup>559</sup> Kapstein, *The Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism*, p. 75; for details, see pp. 42-44 and 75-78.

both China and Korea since early times, it would be safe to assume that the Japanese Buddhist promotion games were strongly influenced by the Chinese models imported from these two countries. These Chinese models were likely to be of the Tang-Song period, the prominent period for Buddhist exchanges between Japan and China. In fact, this was also the period of time to which the Chinese influences on the *Salam Namshak* can be dated. Hence, it is logical to consider that the similarities shared by both the Tibetan and Japanese Buddhist game boards are more than a mere coincidence. However, since the existence of early Chinese models of Pure Land influence is only an assumption, it is fair to suggest that the *Salam Namshak* could have been introduced or brought to Japan or made known to those creators no later than the nineteenth century, despite the fact that no record of such a contact can be found.

In some religious traditions, playing the game might have been a serious practice along with their regular religious practices. Two records give a clue as to the probability of such religiosity. The fifth verse on the Śākya prototype game board mentioned above is the first one. As the verse states that the die should be cast with a fierce oath to the Precious Three, the players were reminded not to lose their minds every time they cast the die. The second record is more detailed and concrete, regarding a book of chants containing Sanskrit *schlokas*, or verses, accompanied a Hindu game board titled “*Leelā*.” When playing the game, with each throw of the die, the player was required to intone the appropriate chant written for the square corresponding to the resulting number. The *schlokas* were highly religious and didactic describing the nature and meaning of the square. Since the original model of the book of chants has been lost, writing a commentary for the game has become a common practice to show “the network of philosophical ideas indicated by the names of the

squares” and introduce “the method by which the game board can be used by those who are interested in knowing and playing the game.”<sup>560</sup> These may be incidental records but they reveal the attitude of some religious practitioners towards the devices and indicate that the Buddhist promotion games were not treated as a mere game before the modern period. To these practitioners, playing the game was a regular religious practice.

There are two theories developed with attempts to further explain the importance of the device in various aspects that can be of reference to this study and thus are worth mentioning here as well. Based on the history that both Tibet and Nepal are known to have been influenced greatly by much of the earlier Indian Buddhist religious and artistic traditions, Topsfield speculates that there may have been a Buddhist version of *Gyān Chaupar* or promotion game in northern India during the Pala-Sena period (ca. 730-1197), a period of intense international activities, during which Indian scholars and monks travelled abroad while great numbers of devotees came to India from other Buddhist countries for the purposes of religious study and pilgrimage.<sup>561</sup> He suspects that such a precedent may have become lost in India along with Buddhist traditions after the invasions of Muslims around 1200 and likely have preserved in Tibet as the *Salam Namshak*. If it was true, the Buddhist version of *Gyān Chaupar* in India would be the precursor of the game in South Asia; but unfortunately this assumption cannot be verified by any supporting materials.

As the game boards of some extant *Gyān Chaupar* and *Nāgapāsa* contain seventy-two squares, an idea is theorized by Deepak Shimkhada to explain this number considering that the partition of seventy-two is deliberate and suggesting that “the original of all these

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<sup>560</sup> Harish Johari, *The Yoga of Snakes and Arrows: The Leela of Self-Knowledge* (Rochester, Vt.: Destiny Books, 2007) 2.

<sup>561</sup> Topsfield, “The Indian Game of Snakes and Ladders,” p. 212.

games ultimately stemmed from Buddhism.”<sup>562</sup> The reason is that, being believed to be a “golden number” in Buddhism, seventy-two symbolizes a perfectly structured universe, which shows the intimate connections among this number, the Buddhist cosmology, and the game board layout.<sup>563</sup> Although this is only a theory, the game board of the Tibetan Buddhist Śākya prototype, of which Deepak Shimkhada has no knowledge, also contains seventy-two squares. Hence, this theory is worthy of reconsideration and perhaps further investigation. To support his opinion, Shimkhada even compares the use of the number in formatting the game board with the use of the number in another Buddhist project, a famous architectural structure in Indonesia:

The great stupa of Borobudur in Java, which contains seventy-two small bell-shaped stupas with images of Buddha enshrined in them on the top three circular terraces, may be cited to support the Buddhist notion of cosmology. That the stupa of Borobudur was meant to be a representation of the universe in three dimensions is a fact well known not only from its maṇḍala plan but also from the sophisticated application of numerology to the stupa iconography. In that sense, these game-boards are maps of the universe.<sup>564</sup>

Accordingly, the assumption that Buddhist practitioners, likely those of the Pure Land traditions, were the pioneer-designer of the promotion game is very plausible. In Tibet, it became a common practice for Buddhist monasteries to create and adopt the games as both a teaching aid and an amusement toy. It was very possible that, for teaching purposes, many Buddhist monks brought with them the games along with other religious objects to travel

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<sup>562</sup> Shimkhada, “A Preliminary Study of the Game of Karma in India, Nepal, and Tibet,” p. 321.

<sup>563</sup> Ibid, p. 321.

<sup>564</sup> Ibid, p. 321.



around, county to county, city to city and country to country. The games played an important yet under-recognized role in transmitting Buddhism in Asia. They are now only treated as a popular artwork or a folk product and have merely been studied by the scholars of these fields. The intelligence of the early Buddhist preachers and the way how they fully employed the idea of *upāya*, “expedient means,” in their contemporary social background has been unfairly neglected for a long time. Hopefully this study is the beginning to rediscover those Buddhist tools and practices outside the mainstream.

## 8 CONCLUSION

As this dissertation has shown, the *Xuanfo tu* and the *Shengguan tu* were two related entertaining and didactic board games that enjoyed great popularity in late imperial China. The only surviving version of the former is the one designed by the late Ming Buddhist master Zhixu, who was widely respected as the Ninth Patriarch of the Pure Land School and as one of the “four great masters of the Ming Era.” This kind of religious game was modeled after its secular counterpart, the *Shengguan tu*, which had also been used for gambling by adults ever since its appearance in the Tang dynasty. The historical survey of this gambling game in Chapter Two shows that its popularity continued during the Song-Yuan era, when many new versions with refined designs were made according to different emphases or dynastic official systems by members of the literati and scholar-officials. In terms of political culture, the *Shengguan tu* reflects the dual influence of the Confucian bureaucratic system and the *keju* national civil service examination. This secular gambling game soon became the model for religious board games, of which Zhixu’s *Xuanfo tu* was one. His design reveals his endeavour to teach players about groups of Buddhist terms through playing, outlining the classifications of different stages of enlightenment, and the causations between all sentient beings and the Ten Dharma Realms. A historical overview of the development of the religious promotion games up to the present in China is reconstructed in Chapter Three, with a focus on the time from the late Ming to the Qing. This survey provides a cultural and historical context for the variety and popularity of the games; for instance, the prevalence of these devices can be shown by some Qing sources with rather detailed descriptions of the similar entertaining games that include Daoist and popular

sectarian ideas. In short, this part of my work not only gives the first in-depth look at Buddhist promotion games in China but also draws a comparatively complete picture of all adoptions and adaptations of the secular device, with ideas and terms of other Chinese religions in light of extant game boards and fragmentary records of them that are traceable to available primary sources.

As the *Xuanfo tu* is the only extant Chinese example of the Buddhist promotion game, Chapter Four turns to look closer at the game board and its manual. Beyond an academic analysis of the content and the arrangement of the Buddhist terms on the game board, this part of the study also yields substantial information on the way in which Zhixu proposed to influence common people through the game. This can be seen in the rules of the game in his manual, in which the relationships between each “ascension” and “descent” are clarified and explained with Buddhist principles such as good and bad deeds, the six realms of reincarnation, retribution, the three vehicles, and the practice of chanting Buddha’s name. At the beginning of the manual, Zhixu clearly reveals his hope that, by way of this version, common people could be gradually influenced by the game, and convert to Buddhism and chant Amitābha’s name. Hence, by analyzing the content of the manual, the range of Buddhist teachings that Zhixu selected for people who had no or little knowledge about Buddhism and the Pure Land School can be demonstrated. Zhixu’s fame and teachings reached many ordinary people in far-flung regions with whom he had no direct contact as an undoubted result of the success of his game in its printed versions. In other words, this chapter suggests that the game played an important role in Zhixu’s growing popularity during his life time among people of common origins.

The circulation of the game and its manual seemed to have declined in the early twentieth century but my research shows that they actually did not fully die out. The delicately carved version of Zhixu's *Xuanfo tu* (Figure 3.8) printed in 1943 in the Japanese-controlled state of Manchukuo (Nation of Manchuria) indicates that the game still persisted then. From another point of view, this print can even reveal the position of this version in the eyes of the Manchurian authorities, who still considered it worthy of circulation probably because of its religious and didactic natures. As for the manual *Xuanfo pu*, it was still highly regarded by some literati and intellectuals around the mid-twentieth century, as reflected in the fragmentary accounts left by the famous Buddhist Master Hongyi 弘一 (1880-1942) and the noted and influential writer Lu Xun 鲁迅 (1881-1936). It appears that even at the end of the republican period, the game still had roots firmly and deeply established among intellectual Buddhists, very likely including imperial family members of the former Qing dynasty.

Since Zhixu was also a well-known preacher for three decades in the first half of the seventeenth century, his reputation must have greatly facilitated the dissemination of his *Xuanfo tu* and *Xuanfo pu*, for which this dissertation also provides two additional explanations for his growing popularity. The first explanation is the formerly undiscovered political and occupational backgrounds of some of his circles of discipleship pointed out in the Introduction, and the second explanation is his effort in simplifying Buddhist basics for ordinary people, which is well-reflected through his motive for creating the *Xuanfo tu*. The relationship between the second explanation and Zhixu's growing popularity was clearly mutually dependent; while the game board became widespread largely because of the reputation of Zhixu among Buddhist communities, his fame was further enhanced by the

circulation of the game board and its manual. These two explanations also suggest that the social statuses of Zhixu's disciples were more complex than previously believed.

However, although Zhixu was a well-known preacher for three decades in the first half of the seventeenth century, he was not immediately recognized as a patriarch of the Pure Land School by his contemporaries but only belatedly so by Buddhist communities in the nineteenth century. The probable reasons for the resurgence of Zhixu's influence two centuries after his death are among the topics that my Introduction attempts to answer. This issue commenced with the loss and destruction of Buddhist texts that severely hampered the development of Buddhism by a series of political events that involve the change of regime in 1644, the compilation of a newly revised Buddhist canon by the Qing government (1733-1738) and the Taiping Rebellion (1851-1864). The wars between the Ming and the Qing armies extensively damaged written materials; among them were those on the life and preaching experiences of Zhixu in the years before the downfall of the Ming dynasty. Zhixu died in 1655 and left his disciples with a number of his writings and commentaries on Buddhist sūtras. However, many copies of his writings were successively lost and destroyed with many other Ming Buddhist texts and their wooden printing boards in the following centuries by orders of early Qing emperors for the project of the Empire's newly edited Buddhist canon and the decade-long Taiping Rebellion that raged through the Jiangnan area. The effect was that a number of Zhixu's works fell into oblivion along with his name. Fortunately, some of his writings were found once again and it was because of the rediscovery and reprinting of his works by later Pure Land practitioners that he became known again. The re-emergence of these works must have fascinated the Buddhist communities at this time, who acknowledged Zhixu's achievements in annotating Buddhist

texts of various schools and in promoting Pure Land beliefs and practices. Among those who first realized and called attention to the accomplishments of Zhixu was Gukun, who admired Zhixu and regarded his Pure Land teachings as a perfect spiritual guide during the declining period of the Qing Empire. My Introduction suggests that the strong and timely promotion of Zhixu's teachings by Gukun was an essential factor for the restored influence of Zhixu among the circles of Pure Land practitioners.

In addition, my study attempts to provide the relevant socioeconomic background as a foundation for understanding Zhixu's decision to convert the secular game into a religious didactic tool and as a framework for analysing its circulation. Zhixu lived in a highly commercialized society in which social customs, cultural diffusion, and economic growth were heavily shaped by the booming printing industry, the rise of scholar-merchants, and the formation and expansion of the *shangbang* 商幫 (business benefit societies) from Huizhou and Shanxi. In this commercialization process, many major cities enjoyed economic prosperity, but had to deal with the social problems that came along with it. The gambling problems and extravagant lifestyle associated with the new value of *xia* (chivalry/chivalrous man) were only a small part of the big picture. It was in such a socioeconomic situation, with the stimulation of the prevalence of gambling on the *Shengguan tu*, that Zhixu was inspired to utilize this medium to disseminate the teachings that he wanted to preach. In other words, the emergence of the *Xuanfo tu* reflects not only the social problem of gambling at the time of its creation but also Zhixu's flexibility in dealing with this situation.

The Buddhist concept that is relevant to this kind of flexibility in preaching is known as *upāya* (Expedient Means), which was the basic principle that justified how Buddhist beliefs, particularly those of the Pure Land, could be popularized through secular means

during the late imperial era. In fact, this concept can be better explained with the idea of non-duality.

While stressing on how to salvage sentient beings from the *samsāra* to attain Buddhahood, from the material to the immaterial, from the delusion to the enlightenment, etc., Buddhism also emphasizes the principle of middle-way and non-duality, or the one Buddha-nature. Accordingly, one can attain enlightenment even in an environment that is full of the Three Poisons (greed, anger, and ignorance), as demonstrated in the famous story of Shancai tongzi 善財童子 (Skt. Sudhana) in the chapter of “Ru fajie pin 入法界品 (Chapter of Entering into the Dharma Realm; skt. *Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra*)” of the Da fang guang fo huayan jing 大方廣佛華嚴經 (Flower Adornment Sūtra; Skt. *Buddhāvataṃsaka-mahāvaiṣṭhī-sūtra*; the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*).<sup>565</sup> This chapter describes the Dharma journey of Sudhana, who travels to look for Dharma teachers for attaining ultimate realization. His journey represents the fifty-three stages of enlightenment for a bodhisattva to achieve Buddhahood. Among these teachers, there are three special characters who symbolize the qualities of the Three Poisons (sources of all the passions and delusions) to indicate that one can even achieve enlightenment under such conditions. They were the ninth teacher, Shengrepoluomen 勝熱婆羅門 (Skt. Jayosmāya), a disciplinant who symbolizes ignorance; the seventeenth teacher, Wuyanzuwang 無厭足王 (Skt. Anala), a despot who symbolizes anger; and the twenty-fifth teacher, 婆須蜜多女 (Vasumitrā), a prostitute who symbolizes greed. Those who attain enlightenment can realize the Buddha-truth that the delusions are no

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<sup>565</sup> Dipoheluo 地婆訶羅 (Skt. *Divakara*; 613-687), “Ru fajie pin 入法界品 (Chapter of Entering into the Dharma Realm; skt. *Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra*)” of the Da fang guang fo huayan jing 大方廣佛華嚴經 (Flower Adornment Sūtra; Skt. *Buddhāvataṃsaka-mahāvaiṣṭhī-sūtra*; the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*), Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō 大正新修大藏經, vol. 10, no. 0295: 0876b-0878c.

different from the enlightened stages. In terms of salvation, the expedient means actually links or bridges the two extremities of duality and this idea is actually well-illustrated in a well-known fourth-century sūtra. In the second chapter “Fangbian pin 方便品 (Chapter of Expedient Means)” of the Weimojie suo shuo jing 維摩詰所說經 (*Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa sūtra*), the enlightened Vimalakīrti is said to have engaged in many different kinds of secular activities to save people with a number of expedient means. One of which is his frequent visits to places where people gamble and play racing board games, where he is still capable of teaching them Buddhist teachings.<sup>566</sup> Apparently, until the generalization movement of Pure Land Buddhism that the principle of *upāya* could be fully put into practice and the fact that Pure Land teachings and the practice of chanting Amitābha’s name are still pervasive among Buddhists in Chinese communities around the world shows that the movement was successfully. In fact, the idea of using a popular device or media to promote the teachings is just like the employment of nowadays multi-media (the Internet, TV, DVD, etc).

The aforementioned background information also helps to provide a clear and more accurate picture of how Pure Land Buddhism was generalized in some cultural centres at the time. In order to be adaptable to such a highly industrialized and commercialized society, the popularization of Pure Land Buddhism took many forms, varying by audience, socio-political context, and economic situation. Other than the promotion efforts made by lay Buddhists, in terms of *upāya*, the success of such kinds of popularization can be illustrated

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<sup>566</sup> Jiumoluoshi 鳩摩羅什 (Skt. Kumārajīva; 334-413 or 350-409), Weimojie suo shuo jing 維摩詰所說經 (*Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa sūtra*), Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō 大正新修大藏經, vol. 14, no. 0475: 0539a. Probably, to bodhisattvas like Vimalakīrti, the Ten Dharma Realms are just like a board game for them to experience the spiritual journey and examine their minds; to sentient beings like human, playing the Buddhist games would be a mean to have a glimpse of their *youxi sanmei* 遊戲三昧 (Skt. *Vikrīḍita samādhi*; the pleasures from saving sentient that are enjoyed by bodhisattvas). Ding Fubao 丁福保 (1874-1952), Foxue dacidian 佛學大辭典 [Great Dictionary of Buddhist Teaching], 1920 (Taipei: Huazang Fojiao shiting tushuguan 華藏佛教視聽圖書館, reprint 1989) 2372.



by the modifications of secular media that were prevalent at the time. As secular media were a prime contributor, the widespread diffusion of Zhixu's game and other previously-designed-yet-lost versions clearly was an additional active force in facilitating the spread of Pure Land beliefs during the last several hundred years. As my study argues, the circulation of Zhixu's creation lasted for at least three centuries: a compelling reason for the contribution it made to Pure Land Buddhism to be re-evaluated.

A variety of aspects discussed in this dissertation demonstrate that Zhixu's adoption of the gambling game was comparable to the adoptions of two other secular devices, dramas and account books,<sup>567</sup> the two most outstanding media being employed by different religious traditions to transmit their teachings. In regard to the adoption of the drama, the most notable script was the only existing *chuanqi* 傳奇 drama with a Buddhist theme, the Gui yuan jing 歸元鏡 (Exemplars of Returning to the Origin), in which the stories of three Pure Land patriarchs were dramatized by the Buddhist monk Zhida 智達 (fl. 1650) sometime before 1650.<sup>568</sup> As for account books, their format inspired a special popular religious genre known as "*Gongguo ge* 功過格 (Ledgers of Merit and Demerit)." This is a kind of morality book that was further promoted among Ming Buddhist circles to teach people to observe Buddhist precepts and practices by the consecutive efforts of Yuan Huang 袁黃 (1533-1606; *zi* Liaofan 了凡) and Zhuhong 祿宏 (1535-1615), the Eighth Pure Land Patriarch. The Gui yuan jing and the texts composed by Yuan Huang and Zhuhong, the Liaofan si xun 了凡四訓 (Four Lessons of Liaofan) and the Zizhi lu 自知錄 (Record of Self-knowledge), respectively,

<sup>567</sup> A Buddhist concept refers to those practitioners who teach in accordance with the capacity of the learner or audience, by any suitable technique or means, including that of device or stratagem, that is beneficial to the recipient's understanding.

<sup>568</sup> Zhida 志達 (fl. 1650), Gui yuan jing 歸元鏡 [Exemplars of Returning to the Origin], 1652; reprint 1892, p. 4.

were well-known in their role as the successful promoters of the beliefs and precepts among people within and outside the Buddhist communities. Likewise, the wide circulation of the *Xuanfo tu* was sufficient to prove that this creation was a great success and that the conversion of the secular gambling game was another excellent method for expedient means. Hence, my study shows that the expedient use of the bureaucratic game was fruitful in transmitting Buddhist teachings, perfectly complementing the channels of musical performance and commercial production to extend their collective influences to people of different social classes. To be exact, the *Xuanfo tu* should be treated as a missing link in the preaching network of Buddhist basics and Pure Land beliefs during the last centuries.

Accordingly, from a practical angle, Zhixu's success in creating his version of the promotion game to spread Buddhist teachings must have been another significant factor that contributed to his being nominated as the Ninth Patriarch of the Pure Land School, as his sphere of influence expanded along with the wide circulation of the game. To Zhixu, the game *Xuanfo tu* was a good lure for the masses to be gradually edified with the content in the manual *Xuanfo pu*, which was his real intention — wherever the game board went, the manual of Buddhist terms and ideas accompanied it. Aside from the analyses and examinations of Zhixu's thoughts and writings, the discovery of this aspect will hopefully deepen our understanding of him, and redefine his status and the genuine value of his game.

As is repeatedly mentioned in this dissertation, Buddhist promotion games have long been neglected by Chinese historians or been treated as a very minor topic in folk studies. Thus, one of the intentions for the surveys conducted in Chapters Two and Three is also to introduce such devices to these historians, especially those of Buddhism and folk customs. The historical survey of the bureaucratic promotion game in China demonstrates that the

format of promotion games was a special local product of China that was inspired by the dual political system of bureaucracy and national examination. The relation of these secular products to their Buddhist counterparts is clearly delineated in the history of the religious promotion games in the subsequent chapters. These historical surveys help strengthen my argument that the tradition of Buddhist promotion game very likely originated in China and then was introduced to other neighbouring countries, where it was modified to fit in with the cultural and religious needs of different regions. Nevertheless, in the process of adaptation, each country still preserves its own cultural references or characteristics in the designs of the game board. Hence, the study of such modifications and national characteristics revealed the traces of transmission.

Likewise, when encountering different cultures and changes in religious and political conditions, the destinies of the bureaucratic and Buddhist promotion games altered accordingly. For examples, in terms of the choice and the development of the games, after the Confucian-dominated Joseon dynasty replaced the Buddhist-oriented Goryeo dynasty, the bureaucratic and the sightseeing board games soon took over the Buddhist promotion game in popularity and had since sustained their entertaining and gambling functions during the last centuries; on the contrary, while Japan's political culture prohibited the circulation of the bureaucratic games, its religious preference strongly facilitated the creation and the spread of Buddhist versions, particularly those of the Pure Land teachings with emphasis on purgatories, an emphasis that was also shared by the Tibetan counterparts as one of the similarities in significance. However, as some South Asian countries had for centuries closely influenced and interacted with one another culturally and religiously, their cultural differences were much more subtle and indefinite, for which studying their religious game

boards alone would not sufficiently help to discriminate between their regional or national significances and cultural affiliations. This difficulty was solved with the help of other academic studies on South Asian folk arts and games, in which a variety of religious game boards with clear indication of their places of origin are found, from which the second part of Chapter Seven selects those with significant cultural characteristics to demonstrate how popular these promotion board games were and how well this device could be modified for different religious and cultural groups.

Accordingly, the results and information in the last chapters give new insights to the study of the subject in each of the countries. This dissertation's cross-cultural explorations of the promotion games suggest the wide range of the impact of Zhixu or his *Xuanfo tu* on Buddhist communities outside China. The interactions between China and these areas and among each of these areas were complex, so further research is still required to gather more supporting materials to consolidate this assumption. Before gathering sufficient evidence, we shall not exclude the possibility that these areas might have experienced a transnational cultural phenomenon that emerged and developed concurrently.

Aside from all the outcomes mentioned above, the significance of this study includes the presentation of some new materials and information. Firstly, a Korean source that is previously unknown to scholars and historians of Ming studies and Chinese folk customs is highlighted in the second chapter. It preserves a relatively detailed description on the popularity of the bureaucratic games in the Jiangnan area in the late-Ming period. While Chinese sources on this aspect are not sufficient, the inclusion of this source helps more accurately portray the situation at the time, which is important not only to the study of the subject but also to the studies of other related late-Ming socio-political topics. Secondly, in

regard to Zhixu's background, I have attempted to gather as many fragmentary sources as possible to highlight his acquaintance with a network of scholar-officials, merchants, publishers, and bibliophiles, whose social statuses and occupations provided some convenient channels for the spread of his teachings as well as his *Xuanfo tu* and the Xuanfo pu. The influence of this circle of friends has never been mentioned in any previous academic works; hence, the discovery of this new network complements past studies and provides new materials for future studies yielding new perspectives on Zhixu's life and missionary career. Thirdly, my study also formulates a theory for how Zhixu was honoured as a Pure Land patriarch in the nineteenth century and shows that this belated reputation was essential in promulgating his teachings about Pure Land beliefs and practices to Pure Land practitioners of later generations. Lastly, methodologically speaking, although cross-referencing is no longer a new practice in academic study, the cross-reference of primary texts in different countries and cultural regions and their research results provided an additional pool of materials that sheds new light on the relevant subjects. Such benefits can be demonstrated in the following example. The historical survey of the bureaucratic promotion games in China shows that the original name given to the game was *Caixuan ge*; this information was helpful in suggesting the range of time for the introduction of the games to both Korea and Japan.

The findings and discussions of the Buddhist promotion games in this dissertation prove that the games had a positive influence on the prevalence of Buddhist teachings during the Ming-Qing era in China and probably facilitated the preaching of Buddhism for the last several centuries in those Asian countries mentioned here. Besides, like other forms of art and other folk arts that have been studied by art historians, the study of the content of these

Buddhist board games, long been neglected by many art historians and scholars of religions and interdisciplinary studies, have the potential of providing more insight into a variety of academic fields including religion and sociology. The cross-cultural interdisciplinary nature of this dissertation brings together religious devices from different Asian countries with similar artistic design, cultural structure, and social function, which allows them to be examined from a macroscopic angle to present a bigger cultural picture that can appeal to a wide range of readers relevant to a number of different academic fields.

For a study that covers such a wide range of cultural regions, it is inevitable that certain challenges would be encountered in the course of investigation. In the case of my research on the subject in South Asian countries, language barriers seem to have posed a major limitation. However, despite the language barrier, my readings of the secondary sources on the subject in these areas were sufficient and in-depth enough to reveal new connections across culture and enable my study to be as deep and thorough as it could be. Other challenges include limited access to extant examples in person for which I was not able to examine closely as many varied examples as possible but the images collected in both academic and popular publications and on the Internet are clear, diverse, and representative enough for me to do a comprehensive analysis and comparison and to support the resulted arguments.

On the other hand, the outcomes of several topics in this dissertation can pave the way for future research in a number of areas to reveal more insightful discoveries. One of these topics is Zhixu's acquaintance with scholar-officials, merchants, publishers, and bibliophiles mentioned in the Introduction. Many aspects about this network have not been entirely analysed. More thorough and in-depth research on this will provide more and richer

details for Zhixu's preaching activities in the Jiangnan area as well as his interactions with different groups of his disciples. The investigation of such a network certainly would yield some unknown yet definitive facts related to the spread and the impact of Zhixu's teachings as well as the developments of Pure Land Buddhism and of the leadership of lay Buddhists around the decades before and after the change of dynasties. My study also laid the groundwork for new studies on similar subjects. For instance, an examination of similar religious devices that had been circulating in other South Asian countries that have not been featured in this work is another underdeveloped research direction that is worthy of a more comprehensive analysis and evaluation. Based on the widespread diffusion of Buddhism and the complex cultural interactions among many South Asian countries as well as the discoveries demonstrated in this study, the impact of the religious promotion game must surely have been far greater than previously known. Juxtaposing religious gambling devices found within the same or between different cultural regions in some of these neighbouring countries like the approach shown in this study will yield new discoveries that probably can rewrite the histories of various cultural subjects. Either a more detailed and careful scrutiny on any of these places or a thorough comparison of these surveys will give us an unprecedented look at the diffusion, divergence, and convergence of religions and cultures within Asia. Furthermore, this scope of study can even be expanded to include those games of similar designs and functions that had been popularized for decades or even centuries in some European countries where the Asian promotion games were brought back and modified by those who were fascinated by their appealing designs, and didactic and ethical natures.

On the whole, this dissertation contributes to a better understanding of these unique ancient board games, which were characterized by their capacity to combine the values and

functions of education, amusement, gambling, and aesthetical appreciation, and its results and approaches will be a useful reference to future studies of subjects that are also embedded with rich cultural connotations. In addition, my investigation provides sufficient facts and supporting materials to call attention to the study of these devices as an additional window to the histories and civilizations of the world that still have many interesting untold stories and missing links to be uncovered and explored. For this reason, it would be helpful for students that the results of this study can be lectured as a specially designed course, in which the histories of the cultures and religions of the aforementioned Asian countries can be arranged, discussed, and compared according to the creation, development, and paths of transmission of the games discussed here. Likewise, more teaching curriculums of this type can be designed for courses that are overflowing with information, such as history and civilization. The curriculum can feature an item or a subject with rich cultural connotations (such as a fan or a chair) in each class, during which topics from different disciplines that connect with the item or subject can be discussed separately and integratively. An ideal design should be adaptable to primary, secondary, and tertiary educations, with flexible combinations of varying emphases of storytelling, lecturing, outlines of history, further reading, and topical research and review.

Actually, early in 1986, Peter J. Claus has already made an enlightened remark on research works like this dissertation in his article on a folk game in India, which I think is still adequate to be cited here to summarize the message conveyed in this study:

With few exceptions, anthropological studies of games have focused on historical questions, detailing the distribution of different forms and identifying variations in rules of play. But games can also provide us with interesting commentary on more



general cultural phenomena. Games are meaningfully situated within cultures. Aspects of games are associated with analogous aspects of politics, economics, and social relations. And, because of such analogies, games have sensitivities to particular contexts; they are appropriate at some times, in some places, between some people, and inappropriate elsewhere. The more restricted a game's particular contexts, the more clearly it stands to express the values and sentiments of a culture.<sup>569</sup>

My hope is that this dissertation has gone some way towards showing just how important games can be in cultural studies in connecting political, economic, religious, and social aspects to reveal “the values and sentiments” of any cultures.

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<sup>569</sup> Peter J. Claus, “Playing *Cenne*: The Meanings of a Folk Game,” *Another Harmony: New Essays on the Folklore of India*, ed. Stuart H. Blackburn and A.K. Ramanujan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986) 283.

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