



Art of Chinese
Board Games

中国棋艺

房明◎编著



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围棋

Go

围棋是中国古代文人、士大夫最喜爱的娱乐竞技活动之一，同时也是历史最为悠久的一种棋戏。围棋将竞技与艺术修养、人生体悟融为一体，不仅有助于发展人的智力、锻炼人的意志，并且可以培养出机动灵活的战略和战术意识，因而几千年来长盛不衰。

Go, one of the favorite entertainment and competition games of ancient Chinese literati, was the oldest board game in history. It has integrated athletic skills with aesthetic taste and life experiences of its players, which helps them to develop wit and will and teaches them practical strategies, and thus has been popular for thousands of years.





> 围棋的起源与发展

围棋在古代称为“弈”，在整个古代棋类中可以说是棋之鼻祖，相传已有4000多年的历史。自古以来，关于围棋的起源就有着多种说法。在记载先秦时期（前221以前）历史的《世本》中，古人将围棋的发明归功于远古五帝之一的尧帝。西晋时（265—316）的张华在其所撰的《博物志》中也说：“舜以子商均愚，故作围棋以教之。”（舜帝因其儿子商均愚笨，所以发明了围棋来开发他的智力。）尧和舜都是传说中的人物，造围棋之说并不可信，而且围棋是一项复杂的竞技活动，不可能是某一个人创制的。它应当是在一段较长的历史时期内逐渐发展而来的，是众人智慧的结晶。

> Origin and Development of Go

Go was known as “Yi” in ancient China. It dates back to over 4,000 years ago and is regarded the primogenitor of board games. There are various sayings about the origin of Go. According to the *Shi Ben (History of the State of Zhao)*, a history text written before the Qin Dynasty (before the 221 B.C.), it was the legendary ancient Emperor Yao who invented it. Nevertheless, according to the *Bo Wu Zhi (Records about Vast Topics)* written by the scholar Zhang Hua of the West Jin Dynasty (265-317), “Go was invented by Shun to enlighten his less intelligent son Shang”. However, it is not sensible to enshrine Yao and Shun as the inventors of Go, because they are imaginary figures from ancient mythology. As a complex adversarial game, Go may not have been created by



传说中的尧舜时期处于中国原始社会的末期，那个时代的数学、天文学、阴阳学和军事知识都有了很大的发展，为围棋的诞生打下了基础。有研究人员推测，在原始宗教活动十分盛行的时期，人们在进行生产、收获、集会、打仗等活动之前都要进行祭祀占卜的活动。巫师们在地上划出纵横的线条，摆上代表人、物、星相的石头来举行仪式。所以，很有可能是他们在有



• 舜帝像

舜为远古时代的部落联盟首领，古代贤明君主的代表之一，受尧帝的禅让而即位。

Portrait of Emperor Shun

Shun was chief of a tribes' union in ancient times and was regarded as one of the best sage rulers. He was enthroned after his predecessor Yao's abdication.

a single mind, but gradually developed through collective wisdom in a long historical period.

The legendary emperors Yao and Shun might have lived during the last years of China's primitive society when mathematics, astronomy, Yin and Yang theory, and military tactics made great progress, which laid foundation for the invention of Go. According to some researchers, religious activity had played an important role in ancient times. Sacrifice ceremonies were indispensable prior to any important activities like production, harvesting, gathering, and fighting. The wizards would draw vertical and horizontal lines on the ground and then lie out stones to represent people, things, and star signs, etc. Thus, they might have created the Go intentionally or unintentionally. Several pottery jars made in the late primitive society were unearthed from Yongchang County of Gansu Province. Many of them were painted with black, red or colorful strip patterns with evenly-distributed crossing lines which form neat checks and thus resemble modern Go board. Such patterns have been named as the "board pattern" by archaeologists. Hence, we may infer that Go had its early form in primitive society.



• 马家窑文化彩陶罐（新石器时代）

Painted Clay Jar from Majiayao Culture (Neolithic Age, approx. 10,000-4,000 years ago)

意无意中创造了最初的围棋。甘肃永昌出土过一批原始社会末期的陶罐，其中不少罐身上都绘有黑色、红色甚至彩色的条纹图案，线条均匀，纵横交错，格子齐整，很像现在的棋盘，考古学家称之为“棋盘纹图案”。可以推想，围棋在原始社会已具雏形，纵横交错的棋盘已基本形成。

春秋战国时期，围棋已在社会上广泛流传了。在记录春秋时期历史的史书《左传》中记载了这样一件事。公元前559年，卫国国君卫献

During the Spring and Autumn Period (770 B.C.-476 B.C.) and the Warring States Period (475 B.C.-221 B.C.), Go had been widely circulated in the society. According to *Zuo Zhuan (Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals)*, Duke Weixian, the ruler of the State of Wei was expelled by scholar-bureaucrats Sun Wenzhi and Ning Huizi in 559 B.C. due to his arrogant and violent behaviors. Subsequently, when Ning Huizi was dying, he regretted for what he had done to the king and commanded his son to bring Duke Weixian back to the State of Wei. However, Sun Wenzhi criticized Ning Huizi's decision by saying "If the player of Go is indecisive, he will lose the game. How can you lack of a decisive mind for such an important issue about our king", which means that it is impossible for the player of Go to win the game if he cannot decide the next step without hesitation. As for more important matters, like whether we shall have the king back, we need to be more decisive. Sun Wenzhi's using Go as a metaphor to explain the harm of indecisiveness in political issues indicates that Go was commonly seen in the society at that time. The first famous Go player in written historic record was named Yi



Qiu. According to the Confucian classics *Mengzi* (*Works of Mencius*) written in the Warring States period (475 B.C.-221 B.C.), “Yi Qiu is a player of Go whose fame has spread to every state”. His skills of Go was so good that the book *Yi Dan Ping* (*Commentary on Famous Players of Go*) regarded him as the “originator” of Go.

During the Qin Dynasty and the Western Han Dynasty (221 B.C.-25 A.D.), there were few historic records about Go except for *Xijing Zaji* (*Miscellany of the Western Capital*), a book recording anecdotes happened in the Western Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-25 A.D.). It mentioned that Du Ling who lived in the early Western Han Dynasty was the best player of Go at that time.

• 《四皓弈棋图》谢时臣（明）

“四皓”指的是秦代的四位隐士，因秦始皇焚书坑儒，四人为避危乱，逃离秦都咸阳，隐居在陕西商山。后代画家经常以商山四皓隐居的故事为题材进行绘画创作。

Four Hermits Playing Go, by Xie Shichen (Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644)

"Four Hermits" refers to four of the hermits who lived in the Qin Dynasty (221 B.C.-206 B.C.). They escaped from the capital city Xianyang to Shangshan Mountain of Shaanxi to avoid death threat by the Emperor Qin Shihuang who ordered to destroy all books and to kill all literati. Their story in Shangshan Mountain is frequently featured in paintings by subsequent artists.





弈秋与弟子

战国初期，有个人特别擅长下围棋，堪称当时第一高手。他因棋艺高超而出名，所以人们都叫他“弈秋”。据《孟子》一书的记载，由于弈秋棋术高明，有很多年轻人想拜他为师，向他学习棋艺。弈秋收了两个学生。一个学生诚心学艺，听先生讲解时十分专心；而另一个学生只是慕名而来，虽拜在弈秋门下，但在弈秋讲棋时却经常心不在焉，老是朝窗外看，一心想着鸿鹄鸟什么时候飞来，好张弓搭箭射它两只。这样一来，两个学生虽然同拜一个老师，但前者学有所成，而后者却始终未能领悟棋中真谛。《孟子》书中讲这个故事，就是为了告诫人们，做任何事都要专心致志，才能有所成就。

Yi Qiu and His Apprentices

During the early Warring States Period (475 B.C.-221 B.C.), there was a man who was so good at playing Go that he had no competitor. He was renowned for his skills of Go and known as "Yi Qiu". According to *Mengzi (The Works of Mencius)*, due to Yi Qiu's fame, many young people wished to learn playing Go from him. Nevertheless, he only had two apprentices. One came for Yi Qiu's skills and always concentrated in class, and the other came for Yi Qiu's fame and didn't pay enough attention in class. He was so lucky to be Yi Qiu's apprentice, but he often looked outside of window and wondered when the swans would fly pass so he could use his bow to shoot some. Therefore, both of the apprentices were taught by Yi Qiu, but only the dedicated student became a good player of Go and the absent-minded one was never able to know the quintessence of Go. This story tells us the importance of dedication in success.

公因骄横无道，被卫国大夫孙文子和宁惠子驱逐出国。后来，宁惠子临死前后悔，吩咐儿子把卫献公迎回国来。孙文子批评道：“弈者举棋不定，不胜其耦，而况置君而弗定乎？”就是说，下棋的人拿着棋子犹豫不决，就不能战胜对手，更何况对待国君这样的大事呢？孙文

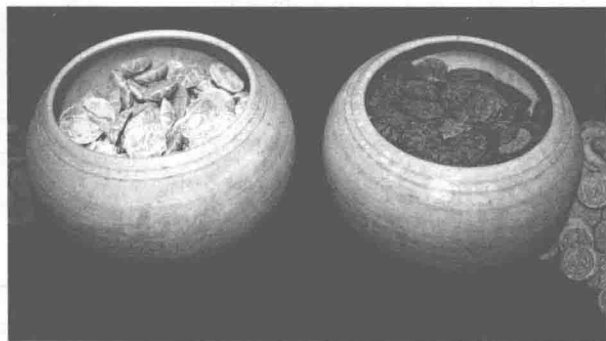
He regarded playing Go as the most important thing in life. When someone taunted him wasting his time on Go, he replied: "If I master the quintessence of Go, I can make up for the areas even Confucius failed to cover". As an ancient literati, he dared to say something like this about Confucius, it showed that he indeed treated Go seriously and possibly



子用“举棋不定”这种围棋术语来比喻政治上的优柔寡断，说明围棋活动在当时社会上已经在一定范围内流行。第一位见于文字的围棋高手是战国时齐国的弈秋。战国时期儒家经典《孟子》一书中载：“弈秋，通国之善弈者也。”弈秋是当时各国都知晓的国手，棋艺高超，品评历代棋手棋事的明代著作《弈旦评》推崇他为围棋“鼻祖”。

秦代到西汉年间（前221—公元8），有关围棋活动的记载较少，但收录西汉时遗闻轶事的笔记小说集《西京杂记》中曾提到，西汉初年的杜陵“善弈棋，为天下第一人”。他棋艺高强，好棋如命。有人讥笑他在下棋上花工夫是浪费时间，他却这样回答：“我精通了围棋之道，可以弥补孔夫子之不足。”一个古代文人竟敢说这样的话，可见他确实是把围棋当做一种艺术和学问来研究的。汉代宫中盛行围棋。据《西京杂

as a type of art and science. Besides, Go also prevailed in the imperial court during the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-220 A.D.). *Xijing Zaji (Miscellany of the Western Capital)* mentioned that the founder of the Han Dynasty Liu Bang would play Go with his beloved concubine Madame Qi on the fourth day of the eighth month every year. Gradually, playing Go on that day became a tradition in the imperial court. Aside from Du Ling, Liu Qu and Chen Zhu were also famous for their skills of Go. It was said that the Emperor Xuan of the Han Dynasty was pleased by Chen Zhu's performance when they played Go together and appointed him as Prefect of Taiyuan later. In the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220), Go became more



• 陶制围棋罐和围棋子（汉）

Clay Go Stones and Clay Bowls for the Stones (Han Dynasty, 206 B.C.-220 A.D.)

国手

在古代，精通某种技能（如医道、棋艺等）而在当时达到该领域最高水平的人，被称为“国手”。这个称呼尤以棋坛使用更多。《唐诗纪事》中记载，诗人裴说的《棋》诗有“人心无算处，国手有输时”的名句。时至今日，人们仍习惯用“国手”二字形容棋艺高超的棋士。

National Champion

In ancient times, people who mastered certain skills (such as medical knowledge, playing Go, etc.) and reached the highest level in the field were known as "national champion". This title was often given to players of Go. According to *Tang Shi Ji Shi (Legends of Poetry in the Tang Dynasty)*, there was a famous verse from the poem *Go* written by the poet Pei Yue that "no one can work out everything, because even the national champion loses his game sometimes". Up to the present, "national champion" is still used to describe grand masters of Go.

记》记载，每年八月四日这一天，汉高祖刘邦的爱妃戚夫人总要陪刘邦下围棋。渐渐地，在八月四日这一天，下围棋成了汉宫中的风俗。西汉时以棋扬名的人还有刘去和陈逐。据说，陈逐因陪汉宣帝下棋，讨得天子欢心，后来还得了太原太守的官职。到了东汉时，围棋更为盛行。中国第一部断代体通史《汉书》的作者班固还著有《弈旨》，这是历史上第一篇专门论述围棋理论的文章。东汉末年，围棋进入了一个大发展的时期，涌现出大批优秀的棋手。1952

prevalent. Ban Gu, the compiler of *Han Shu (The History of the Former Han Dynasty)* and the originator of the format for dynastic history, wrote a paper called *Yi Zhi (The Essence of Go)*, which was the first paper on the theories of Go. The late Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220) witnessed great development of Go and many excellent players were recorded in history. In the year 1952, a square stone Go board with four feet and 17 by 17 grids on its surface were unearthed from the No. 1 tomb of the Eastern Han Dynasty in Wangdu, Hebei Province

年，考古工作者于河北望都一号东汉墓中发现了一件石质围棋盘，呈正方形，盘下有四足，局面纵横各17道。这件棋盘的发现为汉魏时期围棋盘形制提供了形象的实物资料。

三国时期（220—280），围棋又达到了一个新的阶段，成为当时最受欢迎的游艺活动。爱好下棋的人越来越多，从帝王、文人士大夫到各阶层民众。围棋流行的区域也更为广泛，从中原地区和黄河流域



• 曹操像

曹操（155—220），字孟德，三国时期曹魏政权的缔造者，著名的政治家、军事家、文学家。

Portrait of Cao Cao

Cao Cao (155-220), courtesy name Meng De, was the creator of the Kingdom of Wei during the Three Kingdoms Period (220-280). He was a famous statesman, warlord and litterateur.

by archaeologists. The discovery of this board provided important evidence for the format of Go board during the Han Dynasty and the Three Kingdoms Period (220-280).

During the Three Kingdoms Period (220-280), Go reached its new stage and became the most popular recreational activities. Go had more and more players from all walks of life, including the emperors, the literati and commoners. It also spread to wider areas from the Central Plains and Yellow River basin to the south of the Yangtze River.

Go flourished in the northern areas under the regime of the Kingdom of Wei (220-280), because it was the favorite game of the ruler Cao Cao's family. Cao Cao loved Go and reached a high level. He even played against some of the famous players of Go. Two of his sons including Cao Pi (Emperor Wen of the Kingdom of Wei), Cao Zhang (Prince of Rencheng) also enjoyed playing Go. Besides, Wang Can, one of the seven famous prodigies of Jian'an Period (196-220), was also known for his skills of Go apart from his fame in poetry. It was said that one day Wang Can was watching others playing Go, but somehow the game was messed up. He rearranged



逐渐扩大到了江南地区。

曹魏政权控制下的北方地区，围棋活动由于曹操家族的爱好和提倡而蓬勃发展。曹操本人不仅爱好围棋，而且棋艺水平较高，曾与当时的围棋高手对局。曹操的两个儿子魏文帝曹丕和任城王曹彰也喜好围棋。而当时“建安七子”之一的王粲，除了以诗赋闻名于世外，同时也是个围棋高手。据说一次王粲看人下棋，棋局乱了，王粲凭着记忆就重新摆出了原来的棋局。旁人不敢相信，用布把复盘的棋局盖起来，请王粲再摆一遍。王粲第二次摆出了打乱前的棋局，对照之下一子不错。在《弈旦评》一书中，王粲被誉为“弈中神人”。

蜀汉政权的建立者刘备占据蜀地后，他的大批将领和官员中不乏围棋的爱好者，其中以丞相诸葛亮和名臣费祎最为著名。这些围棋爱好者的活动推动了蜀地围棋的发展。

在东吴，围棋活动更是风行。东吴政权的奠基者孙策、大将陆逊等人都是围棋的爱好者。据说孙策常在与臣子对弈时商讨军国大事，而陆逊在军情紧急时也能弈棋如

the pieces and restored the last scenario of the game. The bystanders could not believe their eyes, and used a cloth to cover the Go board and asked Can to arrange the pieces again on another board. Can rearranged the pieces again and the comparison between the two boards proved that he didn't make any mistake. He was praised as the God of Go by the book *Yi Dan Ping (Commentary on Famous Players of Go)*.

After Liu Bei came to Sichuan and established the Kingdom of Shu-Han (221-263), he brought with him a large number of generals and officials and many of them were fond of Go, which



• 青瓷熏炉（三国吴）

Celadon Censer (Kingdom of Wu in the Three Kingdoms Period, 222-280)



• 东吴大将陆逊像

Portrait of General Lu Xun from the Kingdom of Wu

常。东吴朝中棋风很盛，甚至常有官员因下棋而耽误公事。为此，东吴太子孙和命一个叫韦曜的文人写了篇《博弈论》，批评这些下棋误事的人。围棋风行到这种程度，名手自然越来越多，精彩的对局也随之出现。此后，经典的对局慢慢被人记录下来，变成棋谱，一代一代流传下来。

魏晋时期（220—420），政局虽然动荡不定，但帝王皇室和士族阶层仍过着优游奢侈的生活，士人

helped the development of Go in Sichuan. The most famous players among them were the Prime Minister Zhuge Liang and the renowned court official Fei Yi.

In the Kingdom of Wu (222-280), playing Go also prevailed there, too. Its enthusiastic followers included Sun Ce—the founder of the Kingdom of Wu and general Lu Xun, etc. It was said that Sun Ce and his court officials could discuss important issues while playing the Go, while Lu Xun could play Go as good as usual even when he faced emergent situations in war. However, as playing Go was so popular in the Kingdom of Wu, sometimes the court officials delayed their business for it. To criticize these addicts, Sun He, the crown prince of Wu, asked a scholar named Wei Yao to write the article *Bo Yi Lun (The Theory of Game)*. Many good players of Go, as well as their nip and tuck scenarios emerged due to the popularity of this game. Some of the classic scenarios in the game was recorded as tutorials of Go and passed on to later generations.

Political situations during the Three Kingdoms Period (220-280) and the Western Jin Dynasty and Eastern Jin Dynasty (265-420) were volatile, but this did not stop the kings, the royal





• 晋武帝司马炎像

Portrait of Sima Yan, Emperor Wu of the Western Jin Dynasty (265-316)

们崇尚清谈，追求享乐，文学、史学、宗教、书法、绘画、雕刻等在这一时期都有很大的发展。围棋也得到帝王和士族的重视，在朝野上下十分风行。西晋的建立者晋武帝司马炎就非常喜好围棋。《晋书·杜预传》载，公元280年，将军杜预向晋武帝启请讨伐吴国。他将表章送至宫中时，晋武帝正在同棋手张华下棋。晋武帝原本不想立即

families, and other aristocracy to live a luxurious life. They advocated talking shop and enjoyed pursuit of pleasures, and thus literature, history, religion, calligraphy, painting, and carving gained rapid development at that time. Besides, as the rulers and aristocracy also liked playing Go, it became very popular in the imperial court. Sima Yan, founder of the West Jin Dynasty (265-317) known as the Emperor Wu was fond of Go. According to the *Biography of Du Yu in Jin Shu (The Book of the Jin Dynasty)*, in the year 280 A.D. General Du Yu came to plea for declaring a war against the Kingdom of Wu. When he arrived with his memorial tablet, Emperor Wu was playing Go with Zhang Hua and did not show any intention to have a war with the Kingdom of Wu right away. Nevertheless, as Zhang Hua supported Du Yu's proposal, he moved the board aside and suggested the Emperor to fight against the State of Wu immediately. Finally, Emperor Wu agreed Du Yu's proposal. Go was even more popular among aristocratic scholars. For instance, celebrity scholars who were masters of Go include Cai Hong, Cao Shu, and Yin Zhongkan, and Yang Tao, as well as Ruan Ji and Wang Rong known as the "Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove". In



伐吴，但张华支持杜预的意见，把棋盘推开，主张马上出兵，晋武帝这才同意。在当时的士族文人中，围棋更是广受青睐，名士蔡洪、曹摅、殷仲堪、羊陶及“竹林七贤”中的阮籍、王戎等都是围棋高手。东晋时期，朝中最为显赫的王、谢两大家族，包括拥立东晋元帝司马睿的王导、成功指挥淝水之战的谢安，以及许多族中子弟都爱棋成痴，水平极高，东晋的棋风之盛可见一斑。

当时的围棋除继承了以前斗智、娱乐的传统外，陶情怡性的艺术成分明显增强，人们在临局对弈时更重视感情的抒发与交流，文人则更将下围棋作为修身养性之道。围棋从此又被赋予“手谈”的雅称。



• 青釉褐彩刻花莲瓣纹盘口壶（东晋）

Brown-glazed Celadon Jar with Broad Mouth and Eversion Rim and Carved with Lotus Petal Pattern (Eastern Jin Dynasty, 317-420)

the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317-420), many young men from the two most influential families in the imperial court loved Go and could play it extremely well. Some of them were related with Wang Dao who contributed to the enthronement of Sima Rui as the first Emperor of the Eastern Jin Dynasty, and others were from the family of Xie An who commanded the army and achieved victory in the Battle of Fei Shui. Their devotion to Go revealed its prevalence at that time.

In addition to its nature as a game for competition and entertainment, Go included more artistic features during this period. Players paid more attention to expressing and exchange feelings. Literati even regarded playing Go as a way of self-cultivation. Hence, playing Go was also known as “hand communication”.

阮籍与围棋

“竹林七贤”是魏晋文人中很有代表性的人物，他们崇尚老庄虚无之学，优游于竹间林下，放旷不羁，大多喜爱围棋，而且有许多惊世骇俗之举。“七贤”中的阮籍（210—263）是著名的文学家。他为逃避当权的司马氏集团的迫害，常醉酒佯狂，不拘礼教。《晋书·阮籍传》中说他是个孝子。他母亲去世时，他正与人下围棋。消息传来，对局者请求罢棋，而阮籍却坚持要一决胜负。到一局终了，他才“饮酒二斗，举声一号，吐血数升”。

Ruan Ji and Go

“Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove” were representatives of the literati lived during the Three Kingdoms Period (220-280) and the Western Jin Dynasty and Eastern Jin Dynasty (265-420). They advocated of the nothingness theory of Laozi and Zhuangzi. They also travelled around, and enjoyed a bohemian lifestyle. Most of them loved playing Go and were known for their shocking behaviors. One of them was Ruan Ji (210-263), a famous writer. To avoid the persecution of the Sima family, he often got drunk, pretended to be mad, and ignored the ethical codes. According to the *Biography of Ruan Ji in Jin Shu (History from the Jin Dynasty)*, when his mother died, he was playing Go and his counterpart asked for pausing the game, but he refused. At the end of the game, he drank some alcohol, cried out loudly, and vomited lots of blood.



• 《竹林七贤》年画（清）

New Year Picture: *Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove* (Qing Dynasty, 1611-1911)



南北朝时期（420—589），围棋继两晋蓬勃发展的势头，地位更高，出现了盛极一时的局面。南朝共历刘宋、齐、梁、陈四朝，历代帝王大都爱好并提倡围棋，如宋文帝刘义隆、齐高帝萧道成、梁武帝萧衍都嗜好下棋，并且格外宠爱棋艺水平高的臣子。他们以棋设官，建立“棋品”制度，对有一定水平的棋士授予与棋艺相当的“品格”（等级）。这样一来，围棋的地位大大提高，逐渐成为朝廷中带有礼仪性质的活动项目，甚至成了一些人加官晋爵的阶梯。另一方面，围棋的艺术价值也进一步得到

The Southern and Northern Dynasties (420-589) witnessed Go's further upgrade of status and then reached its peak of development after its booming momentum during the Western Jin Dynasty (265-317) and the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317-420). All emperors of the Southern Dynasties including the Liu Song Dynasty (420-479), the Qi Dynasty (479-502), the Liang Dynasty (502-557), and the Chen Dynasty (557-589) were addicted to playing Go and they favored court officials who could play Go well. They used the skills of Go as the criteria to select officials and determine their ranks. Thus, good players of Go would have equivalent official ranks. As a result,



• 青釉刻花莲瓣纹唾壶（南朝）

Celadon Spittoon Carved with Lotus Petal Patterns (Southern Dynasties, 420-589)

王质烂柯

晋朝时有一位叫王质的人，有一天他到信安郡的石室山（今浙江省衢县）去打柴。他看到两位老者在溪边的大石上下围棋，于是把砍柴用的斧子放在旁边的地上，驻足观看。看了多时，老者说：“你该回家了”。王质起身去拿斧子时，发现斧柄（古称“柯”）已经腐朽了，磨得锋利的斧刃也锈迹斑驳。他回到家里后，发现家乡已经与以前大不一样，乡邻中没人认得他，提起他的事，只有几位老者还有印象，但也都说那是几百年前的事了。原来，王质在石室山打柴时误入仙境，遇到了神仙。仙界一日，人间已是百年。后来，“烂柯”就成为了围棋的一个别名，这个故事也常常被人们用来形容人世间的沧桑巨变。唐代诗人刘禹锡的诗中就有“到乡翻似烂柯人”之句，表达了他离开京城二十多年后，人事巨变给他带来恍如隔世的感觉。

Wang Zhi, the Woodcutter and His Rotten Axe Handle

In the Jin Dynasty, there was a man named Wang Zhi. One day, he went to the Stone Chamber Mountain of the Xin'an County (now in Quxian County of Zhejiang Province) to cut firewood. On his way, he saw two old men playing Go on a big stone by the side of the river, so he put down his axe by his side and watched the game. After a while, the old men said: "You should Go home". When Wang Zhi stood up and picked up his axe, he found the handle of the axe was rotten and the sharp blade of the axe rust away. When he returned to his hometown, he found it looked different and none of the fellow villagers could recognize him. When he mentioned about himself, only few old people could have some clues about his story but they said this had

happened hundreds of years ago. It turned out that Wang Zhi entered the wonderland of the immortals. One day there equaled to a hundred years on earth. Later, the phrase "rotten axe handle" was used to as an alternative name for Go. Liu Yuxi, a poet lived in the Tang Dynasty (618-907) once wrote that "When I came back, I felt like it were Wang Zhi who returned to his hometown", expressing his feelings towards the capital city after he had been away for over 20 years and noticed tremendous changes had happened there.



• 《烂柯图》荷叶形瓷盘（宋）

Lotus Leaf-shaped Porcelain Plate with the *Rotten Axe Handle Scene* (Song Dynasty, 960-1279)