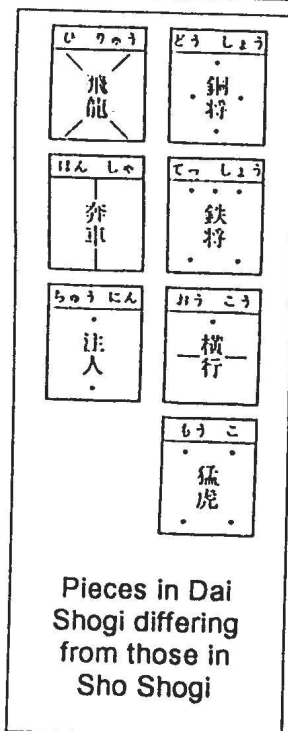


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The previous explanation is not so full as one would like, but a rough outline can be drawn. And at least we are able to obtain very important information and meanings, e.g.:

(1) The description of Shogi is quite short. The 'NI-CHUREKI' writes about Backgammon and Go also. This section lists many masters over rather a long period of time who played these two board games. But there is nothing written about masters playing Shogi; just an account of how the game is played.

(2) The total number of Shogi pieces is not so clear, because the number of squares on the board is not obvious. From the above account of 'Dai-Shogi' it is stated that the 'King stands in the middle of the piece-row' - what

can we deduce from this? It shows, does it not, that the Dai-Shogi board had an odd number of files?

But how many files had the smaller (more normal?) Shogi? Did the Shogi board have an odd number or not? Is there the possibility of the game-board being the same type as the European board (8x8)? (PB: Because the NI-CHUREKI specifies that in Dai-Shogi the King is sitting in the middle, one can assume that in the smaller Shogi this was not so. And herein lies a clue to a possible 8x8 format (with a single Gold General as a Japanese counterpart of the 'minister', vizir etc. in Indian etc. chess). In Masukawa's Japanese books on the History of Shogi, he puts the pawns on the 3rd. rank.) See first diagram on page 100.

(3) Dai-Shogi had 13 kinds of pieces; altogether 68 pieces; it reveals evidence of the original Japanese chess.

Zogei-Sosho

This Dai-Shogi had soon disappeared. In a book of games, 'ZOGEI SOSHO' (AD 1443), there is written concerning the Dai-Shogi of that time, that it was just the name that was the same - but it was a different sort of game to that played earlier. It had different kinds and names of the pieces compared to the Dai-Shogi of the NI-CHUREKI.

From the middle of the 14th century Chu-Shogi came in. Chu means middle; the name was 'middle', but Chu Shogi has 22 kinds of piece; altogether 92 pieces; 12x12 squares, (See diagram on page 52 in VC12.) This was a greater number of pieces than in Dai Shogi. The interesting Chu Shogi was played for a long time - until the 19th century, (PB: It is unclear whether or not Chu-Shogi died at all. Oyama, in a 1970 Shogi Sekai article, promoted the game in public. Oyama was an ardent Chu-Shogi player. George Hodges, in his article about Chu-Shogi in 1976, claimed the game had always stayed alive.)

The 'ZOGEI SOSHO' writes about many other pieces, not just those for the three types of Shogi just mentioned. For

example the largest form of Shogi (Tai Shogi) had 93 kinds; altogether 354 pieces; 25x25 squares - probably this type was just for ornamental purposes. One can find exact information about the very large forms of Shogi from the piece-makers' price lists from AD 1590 till 1602 (see K.Masukawa's article in VC9). In the Middle Ages it was thought pleasant to create more kinds of Shogi, with more pieces. But it is doubtful whether these Shogis were actually played.

Out of all these experiments with different formats and forms, normal Shogi as it is played today evolved. One finally arrived at the most interesting form, Modern Shogi, which has 8 kinds of piece; altogether 40 pieces; 9x9 squares, with the special rule that captured pieces are not eliminated from the game, but are held in reserve by the capturer, who can, when a suitable occasion arises, drop them on to any square. The military commander Ietada Matsudaira gives a picture of the Shogi we know today in his diary of February 1587.

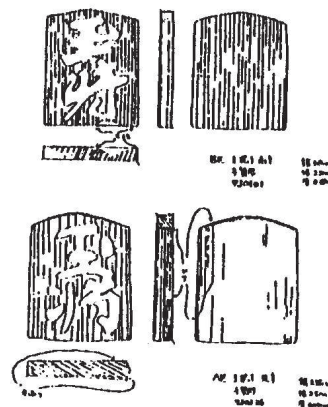
New Information

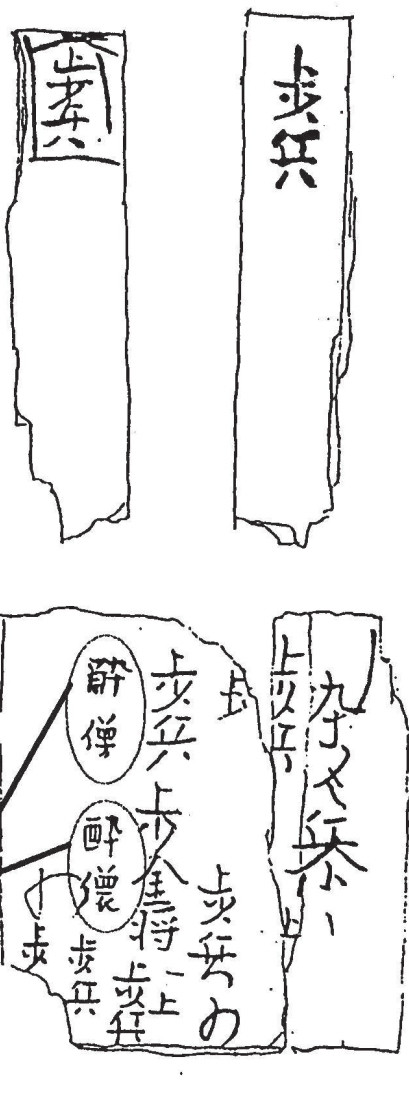
I now wish to come back to the new information of 1993. During building restoration ancient Shogi pieces were unearthed from the precincts of the ancient Kofuku-Ji Temple in Nara city. Nara in AD 710-780 was the capital city of the reigning emperor, and it was at this time that the Kofuku-Ji Temple was founded. Later this Temple became a great Feudal centre - up to the 16th century - with many buildings, many officers and workers, and further domains.

Since the excavation work of 1992, workers have found many Shogi pieces in a well, and also some half-finished articles with Shogi ideograms on them.

On the top surface of the pieces there can be read Gold General, Silver General, Foot-Soldier; and some impossible to decipher.

At the same time there were found several mixed-up separate chits of wood among the goods. On one of these chits of wood there is written the year of the emperor Tenki 6, which is AD 1058. In fact the date of the Shogi pieces is determined by this. Up to now these are the oldest known pieces in Japan.





They show the following characteristics:

- 1) The Shogi pieces were made from left-over wood that was normally used for other daily purposes.
- 2) The right and left sides of the 5-sided (pentagonal) pieces were very similar to those of later pieces.
- 3) On the reverse side of the Silver General there was not just written 'Gold', but 'Promoted Gold'. The elaborate instruction on the piece shows that the game was relatively unknown at the time.
- 4) The study of the writing on the pieces especially surprised the investigator. On one of the pieces the name SUI-ZOU (Energetic Person) is written. (PB: this is the precursor of the 'Drunken Elephant'.)

This was a wholly new discovery. Because both of the Shogis from the 'NI-CHUREKI' do not make use of this name, until now it was believed to be first used in Chu-Shogi in the 14th century. We must look back again and re-examine the history of Shogi, so as to throw light on its origins.

Reliability is needed for this SUI-ZOU of the old Shogi type to see how it fits in with the explanation from the 'NI-CHUREKI'. It shows the existence of another type of Shogi. But where is the SUI-ZOU to be placed? It is not clear at present.

Old Buddhist Document

Futsu-Shodo-Shu

The interpretation of an old Buddhist document, the 'FUTSU-SHODO-SHU' (AD 1297-1302) of Bishop Ryoki, also imparts important material about the history of Shogi. As Mr. Shinichi Sacki, Assistant Professor of the Japanese Literary Institute, has written in *Research into the History of Games No. 11* (1993), the 'FUTSU-SHODO-SHU' is the standard anthology of the lectures of this particular Buddhist bishop. The contents of one chapter are recollections of each profession, and the Sho-Shogi player and the Dai-Shogi player are mentioned. Sho means small; Sho-Shogi is the same as 'Shogi' in the 'NI-CHUREKI'. Under Sho Shogi is listed the names of the pieces, e.g. Foot-Soldier, Gold General, Silver General, and Horseman. Under Dai Shogi is listed KYO-SHA (Lancer), HEN-SHA (Returning Chariot), HI-SHA (Flying Chariot, similar to a Rook), CHU-NIN (Negotiator or Courier), SHIN-I (Ferocious Wild Boar), and KEI-MA (Horseman).

We must give this explanation about Dai-Shogi close attention. There is nothing about the way of playing, and only a few of the pieces are written about. But HEN-SHA, HI-SHA and SHIN-I make their first appearance. In the Dai-Shogi of the 'NI-CHUREKI' nothing is written of these three pieces. Also CHU-NIN has the same pronunciation as a piece from the 'NI-CHUREKI' but the ideogram is different. As is well known, Japanese ideograms are all similar to Chinese, and when there is the need for another ideogram for the same pronunciation, there is another meaning.

Because of several Shogi documents in the 17th century, until today it was believed that the new pieces given in the previous paragraph were first used in the Dai-Shogi of a new type in the 15th century. But the truth shows that the 'new' Dai-Shogi was already being played at the end of the 13th century. Thus:

- 1) Dai-Shogi of the 'NI-CHUREKI' played until the end of the 13th century, had a very short life.
- 2) Dai-Shogi of the 'FUTSU' needed 29 kinds of piece; altogether 130 pieces; 15x15 squares - and at that time it was really played, although naturally not too much.
- 3) As previously mentioned, Chu-Shogi was quite big, possibly bigger than the Dai-Shogi of the 'NI-CHUREKI'. But if the Dai-Shogi of the 'FUTSU' (15x15 squares), was already being played in the 13th century, Chu-Shogi when it appeared would really be the middle type. So, at the beginning there existed the small type, after that the large type was invented, and after both these types the middle type (Chu-Shogi) was created. The 'FUTSU-SHODO-SHU' has cleared up a mystery.

An arrangement:

About 1058 - Shogi with SUI-ZOU. Probably the small type.

About 1210 - Shogi of the small type without SUI-ZOU; and Dai Shogi 13x13 squares.

About 1300 - Shogi of the small type; and Dai Shogi 15x15 squares.

About the middle of the 14th century - Chu Shogi (one can find it mentioned in several documents).

About the middle of the 15th century - various Shogis, from small to big.

Where did Shogi come from?

Now I am going to talk about the origin of Shogi. Where did Shogi come from? Where is the birthplace of the first Shogi? Its most distant ancestors were born in fact in India. So which was the path, and which were the ways that Shogi came?

Very many people believe unequivocally, and without foundation, that Shogi came from China; because it is a geographical neighbour (if one includes the Korean peninsula), and was a cultural influence. In the 18th century it was reported, in the official *Players' Report of the Authority* by an officer of the Tokugawa Government, that Shogi came from China. This was in order to give Shogi and the Shogi player more prestige. Afterwards several Shogi books gave out the same story. As you know, Japan has obtained much culture and scientific knowledge from China. Until modern times, particularly in antiquity and the Middle Ages, almost everyone has, without qualification, held Chinese culture in high regard. It was at this time that many persons thought that Shogi came from China.

It is clear that Chinese chess and Japanese chess have some common characteristics, e.g. the pieces are flat. The greatest common factor is the recognition of the pieces by the ideograms.

However, as I have already written in my books *History of Shogi* (Vol. 1 and Vol. 2), and as I recently told the *Chess Collectors' Institute General Assembly* in 1992 at Paris, there are quite a number of differences between Chinese chess and Japanese chess, e.g.

- 1) Chinese chess is played on the lines of the board, but Shogi is played on the squares.
- 2) Chinese chess has the so-called 'River' and 'Palace'. Japanese chess has neither.
- 3) In Chinese chess, the differentiation between friend and foe is by way of colour. Japanese chess pieces are not coloured.
- 4) Chinese pieces are round (Korean are octagonal). Japanese pieces are characteristically pentagonal.
- 5) On the Chinese chess pieces the writing is 'Singular' (one character). On Japanese chess pieces it is 'Binomial' (two characters) - emperor Genmei (PB: a woman) in AD 713 instructed that place names must be changed to Binomial, so as to bring forth good luck -

sometimes the upper part is used as an epithet meaning joyous or precious.

- 6) There are gaps in the pawn line in Chinese Chess. In Japanese Chess the pawns are lined up next to each other.
- 7) The kind and number of the pieces are different between Chinese chess and Japanese chess.

These points of difference have been there throughout the long history of the two games.

According to the *History of Chinese Chess* by Li Song Fu, the present type of Chinese chess is from about the end of the 11th century, or the beginning of the 12th century. In the *Board Games in Ancient China* by Xu Jia Liang the same opinion is given. He writes that an early form of Chinese chess existed played on a board of 11x11 lines with 32 pieces, as is shown by the Legend of AD 762; but there is no material evidence for this. (Ed.: I quote the chess historian Dr. Beauchamp: *The first recorded description of the Chinese game is that contained in the HUAN KWAI LU or Book of Marvels, a collection of anecdotes attributed to Wiu Sheng-ju who was a government minister in 847 AD. In this book there is an account of a supposed battle in AD 762 where movements of the army units are described in terms of chess moves.*) I have seen an old Chinese chess board and men from the beginning of the 12th century or so, in the museum at Xian in Shaanxi province. This wholly resembled present-day Chinese chess. Really, since the 12th or 13th century Chinese chess has not changed. The changes have only been in Japanese chess; and these have reflected the development of a characteristic Japanese culture.

If Japanese chess was passed on from China, Shogi would have been very similar to Chinese chess. But, as mentioned above, the pieces of Shogi were in existence in 1058. The form, name, and ideograms etc. from Kofuku-Ji are wholly different from those of Chinese Chess. From the 12th to the 13th century Japanese aristocrats from the court have played Shogi; and at the same time Chinese people have played Chinese chess.

Another Parentage

So, if Japanese chess was not passed on from China, we must seek another parentage. Fortunately H.J.R. Murray has given us important information (concerning Shogi he has given us much that is false!), e.g. the Pawn piece from Burma and Malaya was flat, (Ed.: I have checked Murray and other references. Flat pawns are in Malayan and Thai chess - NOT Burmese chess. However this may not have been the case in the distant past.); Thailand's Chess is very similar to the Shogi of 'NI-CHUREKI', apart from the use of solid pieces (statues) etc.. It is obvious that if Asia is roughly divided, it gives us North Asia and South Asia. Probably Shogi belongs to the South Asia region.

From ancient times the ocean current, called Kuro-Shio in Japanese, has flowed, and still flows today, from South-East Asia to Japan. The old Japanese envoys to China (from AD 630-894 approximately) regularly made

use of this current to return home, and a noted Chinese bishop came to Japan from ports in southern China using this ocean current (AD 753). There was a close connection between South China and Japan.

Concrete Example

I should also like to show a concrete example for the passing on of chess. The Ohara-Sanko-Kan Museum in Kobe-city has a few small wooden clothes boxes from South East Asia. On the boxes are carved chess boards or game boards. The dating of this art work is not clear, but it belongs to an early period.

When sailors embarked in a ship from an Indian or South-East Asian port, they loaded up quite a few planks, and during their free time on the voyage they made clothes boxes on board out of the planks. They carved out a playing board on the boxes, and during breaks played on this playing board. At the sale of the boxes in the ports of call, they could play the board games of their home with the natives. The sailors or tradesmen, and naturally also the merchants in the ports of call, had every opportunity to spread this alien board game. Probably chess was spread in this way. Japan, rich in islands, has a theory of the so-called 'Silk Road of the Sea'; and this 'road' would not only have brought ceramics and porcelain, but also chess.

If chess came through this region from South China to Japan, was there not a large possibility that identification of the pieces by way of ideograms would have been learnt from the Chinese? In fact the use of Chinese ideograms as a way of transmitting the written word had been passed on from China (at that time Korea was a colony of China) to Japan very much earlier - by the 3rd or 4th century. Perhaps when chess came to Japan later, the ideograms would shortly afterwards have been marked on the pieces.

The passing on of chess through South East Asia to Japan was not done all at once, but extended over a long period of time. The start was possibly modest, and the game may be referred to as Proto-Shogi. It is not clear if solid pieces were used, and although one can speculate, there is no material evidence. But it seems that the publisher of the

encyclopaedia in the city of the emperor, Heian, (present-day Kyoto), in the 10th century, had received no information about Proto-Shogi in the outlying regions. Finding out about Proto-Shogi will from now on become an important theme of research.

My Opinion

Today my opinion is as follows: concerning the introduction of chess, I conjecture that Shogi came from the Indian estuary region, through South East Asia including the coast from South China to Japan. After the 10th or 11th century when Shogi had taken root, the use of written ideograms on the pieces, so that their types could be identified, had already spread.

May I add something extra? I have already written that the characters on the stones are binomial. It is rare that the character on top adds any relevant information. Thus if one takes away the adjective there is left the following underlying structure: from the left side, Chariot, Horse, General, General, and King - and Soldiers in the front row. H.J.R.Murray said, 'the Elephant has four legs and a long trunk'. A movement of the Silver General is 5-directional; thus the piece 'Elephant' and Silver General can be said to be the same, (*Ed. In support of this, in Thai chess and Burmese chess the piece occupying the 'Bishop square' has the exact move of the Silver General. The piece is called Khon in Thai chess, and Sin in Burmese chess - Sin means Elephant.*) This makes the Japanese arrangement of the pieces, Chariot, Horse, Elephant, General, and King.

Peter Blommers: The earliest mention of a Sui-Zou (Drunken Elephant) in literature dates from 1350. So the piece discovered antedates its first mention by 300 years! Accordingly this is a HUGE discovery for Mr.Masukawa. 'Drunk Elephant' versus 'Energetic Person' is of no relevance here.

The Drunk Elephant in 'small-Shogi-before-drops' sat in front of the King, just as is the case in Tori Shogi (although the name of the piece was changed into a bird-name to be in line with the general theme in Tori Shogi (Tori means bird)). Its use and introduction (especially when compared to its use in Chu and larger Shogi where it can promote to a reserve King) is still intriguing and a topic for future research.

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CHESS VARIANTS by D.B.Pritchard 384 p. Price £21.99 (post free on orders up to 1.3.95)

I wrote in VC9 that 'the world was waiting' for this book. It has now arrived. And a wonderful production it is! It is a joy to open and look at, and (with a few exceptions) the illustrations and diagrams, of which there are many, are clear and of good quality.

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Sent by Jens Nielsen. Tense moment at Double Bughouse (p.113).

