

CROSSROADS

CROSSROADS Language Studio's Newsletter September, 2015

Just a game?

First came play. In addition to mankind, zoologists have identified many species, from chimpanzees to turtles, and just about everything in between, that partake in it. Through play, a species can learn valuable lessons for future survival, not to mention experiencing the apparently simple joy of participating in and bonding with one's fellows while playing.

Humans have taken play to a higher level of sophistication. By abstracting play and introducing the concept of "rules", we humans have, over millennia, developed countless forms of "organized" play. We generally refer to these as "games".

Games, whether on a field played between two teams such as soccer, or played on a board like chess, have one common characteristic; both sides must understand and follow the rules if the game is to succeed.

The following are some of the board games that have been with us for, in some cases, thousands of years:

The ancient game of "**Senet**" (S'n't) was played in Egypt from about 3,100BC (5,000 years ago!) up until 400AD. Variations are still played in Egypt today. A magnificent example of this game was found buried with Tutankhamen.



Tutankhamen's Senet set made of wood and ivory, inlaid with gold.

Another ancient board game discovered in a tomb in modern-day Iraq is called "**The Royal Game of Ur**", and it was played in that area as far back as 2,500BC.



The Royal game of Ur set.



Modern day Chess is played throughout the world today. It was originally called **Chaturanga**, and dates back 1,400 years to ancient India.



An even older game that has come down to us from India is called **Snakes and Ladders** ("Shoots and Ladders" in North America). It was conceived at around 200BC as a game to teach morality and, to this day, remains virtually unchanged. It still serves its original purpose of teaching children about good and evil.

China, of course, has produced some classic games that have endured for centuries. **Mah Joug** is said to have originated in the Tang Dynasty some 4,000 year ago.

Wei-qi, or modern day **Go**, dates back to 2,300BC. It is unique in that it is still played to this day following the original, roughly 4,000 year old rules.



Games travel across cultures; they travel across time. The reason they can do this is because the rules remain constant no matter where the game is played or who is playing it. When two players face-off on opposite sides of a board, in addition to agreeing to compete, they also agree to communicate. Even if the players do not have a common spoken language, they are still able to gain a level of understanding of each other through the game. It is possible to communicate through such games with anyone from any culture, China, America, Africa, so long as both players agree to follow the rules.

Indeed, if Tutankhamen were to be granted his wish for immortality and returned to this world, you could easily sit down with him and play a game of Senet, provided you learn the rules first.

Net News

NET LESSONS: Too busy to come to CROSSROADS?

.... Try our *lessons through the net!*

Here is a site outlining some of the history of ancient games:

<http://astralcastle.com/games/index.htm>

Some Thoughts for the Month



Joshua Says: This month we have to say “goodbye” to Aaron as he must return to America to help with some family matters. It is always disappointing to see a good teacher leave us, but circumstances prevail. We will miss Aaron at Crossroads and we wish him all the best of success back home. If there is a chance for him to rejoin us again next year here in Matsuyama, we would be happy to welcome him back. In the mean time, “all the best in America, Aaron!”

Junko Says: Recently I started teaching a TOEIC course for one of our outside clients. There are 14 students in this class. They say they found our regular TOEIC course too difficult and asked if we could prepare an easier course for them. And, they requested a Japanese teacher, so I guess that’s me! I hope I can help them gain some confidence during this course, but, actually, I find that with the right attitude and enough study, it is not so difficult for anyone to improve on their score. I hope I can get them to agree with me!



Mark Says In my home country of NZ a referendum will be held in November to select a possible new national flag. A selection of four flags was released in late August for voters to choose from. Unfortunately, three of the four designs are almost identical and all are very unpopular. Via social media, a fifth option has appeared and there is hope that it may be added to the referendum. Take a look - <http://goo.gl/xGrBWH>

Aaron Says: Unfortunately I will be returning to my home country at the end of this month. I sincerely wish I did not have to go, but there are a few important matters I must attend to. I hope to be back in Matsuyama teaching with Crossroads as soon as possible. I will miss everyone and look forward to seeing you all again.



Danielle dit: Ça y est, les vacances sont finies, c'est la rentrée. Qui dit rentrée dit pleures pour les plus jeunes, retour des devoirs pour les collégiens et lycéens (et oui, il n'y a pas de devoirs pendant les vacances d'été !) et nouveau rythme de vie pour les étudiants qui entrent à l'université. Quoiqu'il en soit, tous attendent la même chose : les prochaines vacances !

ACROSS

- 4 complexity, refinement
- 5 of extraordinarily high quality
- 6 the same in essence, but not in actuality
- 10 a little different from others of the same kind
- 11 to many to count
- 13 placed underground
- 14 continue through hardship
- 15 the ability to live forever
- 16 everywhere

DOWN

- 1 fairly close to correct
- 2 taking part in an activity
- 3 theorizing, conceptualizing
- 7 created, thought up
- 8 unchanging
- 9 a specialist concerned with animals
- 12 developing a close personal relationship

Play A Game!

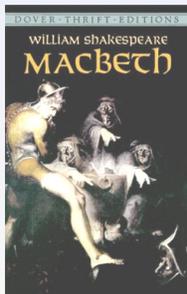


(print version [here](#))

NOTICE BOARD

Critic's corner with S(a)3's Taro:

In my apartment, on the train, or in Crossroads' Open House, I spend most of my time reading books. Recently, I got several English books. If you feel it's hard to read foreign books, I recommend you choose stories that you have read in your own language. In fact, I read *Sherlock Holmes* and *Harry Potter* in both Japanese and English. It is interesting to check how they are translated. Original texts have their unique nuances. For example, "To be or not to be, that is the question" in *Hamlet* is well known.



You might think Shakespeare is too long to read. Today, I want to talk about Macbeth. It is the shortest of Shakespeare's tragedies, so you can read it more easily than *Othello* or *King Lear*. It's a very famous play, but please let me explain the plot. In the story, Macbeth, the brave Scottish soldier encountered three witches. They predicted he would become king. He believed them and assassinated the Scottish prince to become the king himself.

After becoming king, Macbeth met the witches again. This time they said, "No one born of a woman could harm you". He felt confident because all people are born of a woman.

Macduff, whose wife was killed by Macbeth, led a resistance to defeat the tyrant.

At the climax, Macduff drove Macbeth into a corner. Macbeth depended on the witches' word and insisted that he wouldn't be harmed by one born of a woman. Macduff answered that he was drawn from his mother's womb by caesarean section (literally, he was not "born" of a woman). Macbeth noticed that he had been deceived by the witches. In the end, he was killed by Macduff.

There are many Japanese versions of this story, but I think many translators have difficulty in translating "one born of a woman". To enjoy a story more deeply, we should read it in its original language. It's one of the reasons why I study English.

Here is the 8th installment of Ren's "My stay in China", series 2:

During my stay in Hong Kong, I also visited Macau in a tour group. It is very close to Hong Kong, although you require a passport to enter from Hong Kong. It was too short a visit. I was not satisfied with my length of stay, so I want to visit again by myself someday.

The 3rd place I went to was Guanzhou. I went by train from Hong Kong. I heard that, technically, this place is not a tourist location. Actually, I couldn't find it at the tourist information center. But I enjoyed seeing many lantern festivals there. And I tried hiking again on my last day there.



Lantern festival in Guanzhou

Lastly, I went to Kunming. I think this place is not so famous in Japan. But I heard, in China, that it is the best tourist spot in the country. That's why I chose to go there. It was so interesting. I think my choice was right. I stayed here for 5 days. I first went to a popular spot named "West hill". The scene from the cliff was a little bit scary. But when I reached the top of the hill, the view was incredible. Another impressive site there was Yunnan Ethnic village. "Yunnan" is the name of this place's province, meaning Kunming is the capital city of Yunnan province.



West hill in Kunming

Anyway, this village has 26 tribes. The area is so huge that I needed to spend a whole day to get to all the spots. They showed us dances in some places. The amusement park is very interesting and I recognized a distinct touch of Chinese culture there. It is absolutely worth visiting Kunming if you can.



Ethnic dance performance

To be honest, here are more places I wanted to visit, but unfortunately, the transportation system there is still weak: it was just being developed at the time of my visit. Actually, I saw that most of the subway was still under construction. I heard there are more exciting places in the suburbs. I didn't have time and any means of getting to them so I gave up. I really hope to go to Kunming again. This place is friendly to students who travel there because most commodities are not so expensive.

After this mid-length travel experience, I started studying again by going to a private school in Beijing. My university also started soon after, too. I had been looking forward to my 2nd semester! (To be continued)

DISTINGUISH



Last Month's puzzle Solution

ACROSS

- 1 see or hear differences
- 6 not attractive or appealing
- 8 forced to serve a master
- 11 forced submission
- 12 a logical result or outcome
- 13 quickly
- 14 something unusual and interesting
- 15 a machine that closely resembles a human being
- 16 not clear, hazy

DOWN

- 2 a useful device or tool
- 3 being present everywhere at once
- 4 not based on facts
- 5 capable of serving a purpose well
- 7 being only one
- 9 similarity of appearance
- 10 having the characteristics of a human being



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