

Richmond Feb² 73

Spoke on the subject of

Secular education

MYSTERY OF THE WAY

Q Y S H I N S U



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As for my
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to guide if*

My Friend,

Welcome to my second original collection of classic strategy entitled "Qyshinsu : Mystery of the Way." This edition includes an enriched narrative and storyline that will provide timeless moments of challenge and intrigue.

Qyshinsu is the second chapter of a sacred journey told through the eyes of a fictional traveler named "Hakummar." At the request of Gubrel, a desert nomad and guide in the ways of Zhadu, Hakummar travels to a far away land in search of the legendary Master Qy. Along his way, he encounters a mysterious herbalist named Li. She assists him on his sojourn as he discovers the secrets that lie within the ancient practice known as Qyshinsu.

Thank you for taking the time to experience one of my many gifts to come. I am honored by your presence and wish you peace in the days to follow.

Be Well,

*R.A. Frederickson
Master Ludician*



“The harmony of one is the harmony of all.”

-Master Qy

Old is this wind called breath. Ageless and unformed, it is wise. And yet lost in our whims of fabled regrets, its nectar grows hard.

The days are long and without measure. In this land of many things, I seek the parables of an open sky. How I long for the scent of that desert rose called solace. A promise for those of us whose fire remains untamed.

I am far from where I have been and farther still of where I must go. My quest continues but my heart speaks of another way. A passage not to understand, but a way to return.....

*Hakummar
1st Moon, Sun of Alms*

my time since we
met another. I
wrote for you
and send me this post
letter my thoughts
best to guide us



"Sway your wishes skyward and follow the Windsong."

-Anonymous

The shadows fled from their mischief as the candle flame signaled our arrival. What was once a wall in my eyes, was now revealed to be a hidden door. Our destination became clear as we entered a seemingly secret room. Li motioned for me to sit as she carefully lifted a square panel in the floor. What arose in her grasp was a circular object whose face remained dormant in the shade.

"Qyshinsu", she placed the object and a small leather pouch down gently on the floor. The smooth curvature of the board belies its hard wood origins. A darkened edge harbors a soft tapestry of shade and color along the surface grain. Twelve triangles align the inner core of this crafted enclosure.

Among the lines, my eyes dance to and fro only to find rest in the haven of an empty center. The allure of such movement leads me to repose.

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As I continued to observe the beauty of the board, she opened the pouch and poured forth small stones along each side of the board. There were a total of twenty four of these stones. Twelve of the stones are engraved with markings in ebony while the other half is more crimson in their hue. The distinction between them is further accentuated by slight variations in their design. There is a natural progression of the mark edges in terms of quantity and orientation. Overall, the full offering consists of six unique kinds of stones that range in value and purpose.

The stones also bare a lightness in touch which seems to compliment their transient nature. Li would later explain that there are two actions one performs in Qyshinsu - *place* a stone on the board or *remove* a stone from the board.

It is this relationship between the stones and the board that I find the most intriguing. This continuity in movement that the stones exemplify is in contrast to the perpetual stillness of the board. And yet, they are bound to one another.

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She placed a stone on the board. This “Stone of One”, as I will refer to as, consists of a single engraved mark that stems from its circular host. There is one pair of this kind of stone per color. The orientation of the mark edge also differs according to its hue.

When this stone is *placed* in a space on the board, your opponent must place or remove one of their stones one space away from it in either direction on the board - to the right or left of your stone.

While this benign simplicity is elegant in its operation, I would soon come to learn it is the principles they adhere to which truly illustrates the majesty in their conception.

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When this stone is *removed* from a space on the board, your opponent must place or remove one of their stones one space away from it in either direction on the board - to the right or left of your stone. The consequence for which a stone engenders on ones opponent is consistent no matter what action one performs - placing or removing a stone.

The apparent neccessity for one to remember where a stone was removed was apparent. I inquired to Li if this concern was considered part of the learning.

"It is a courtesy in Qyshinsu to remove ones stone partially off its space to lean along the edge," she replied.

This act allows ones opponent to see where a stone was removed and which kind it was. While it appears to have been originally conceived as a gesture of humility, I realized it also ensures that a certain kind of rhythm is maintained between two people as well.

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The Stone of Two consists of two engraved marks that stem from their circular host. There is one pair of this kind of stone per color. The orientation of the mark edge also differs according to its hue.

When this stone is *placed* in a space on the board, your opponent must place or remove one of their stones two spaces away from it in either direction on the board - to the right or left of your stone.

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When this stone is *removed* from a space on the board, your opponent must place or remove one of their stones two spaces away from it in either direction on the board - to the right or left of your stone.

As I watched Li remove this stone from the board, I couldn't help but wonder as to what inspirations may have led to the stones creation. Although the *Annals* do not provide such specific information, there is an often quoted term attributed to Master Qy that I intuit is related in some way. It is called the *Windsong*.

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The Stone of Three consists of three engraved marks that stem from their circular host. There is one pair of this kind of stone per color. The orientation of the mark edge also differs according to its hue.

When this stone is *placed* in a space on the board, your opponent must place or remove one of their stones three spaces away from it in either direction on the board - to the right or left of your stone.

The spaces that this stone designates is in direct alignment with one another. They form an axis across the board. Whether this proves to be advantageous or not remains to be seen.

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As Li removed the Stone of three, I noticed her hand paused halfway above the board. Her eyes seemed lost in something that wasn't there, but once may have been.

"Is everything well..." I asked.

"Sometimes the stones touch memory," her hand retreated into the folds of her robe.

I chose to let my questions drift into the warm sweetness of my tea cup. Silence would befriend us in the moments to come.

When this stone is *removed* from a space on the board, your opponent must place or remove one of their stones three spaces away from it in either direction on the board - to the right or left of your stone.

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The Stone of Four consists of four engraved marks that stem from their circular host. There is one pair of this kind of stone per color. The orientation of the mark edge also differs according to its hue.

When this stone is *placed* in a space on the board, your opponent must place or remove one of their stones four spaces away from it in either direction on the board - to the right or left of your stone.

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When this stone is *removed* from a space on the board, your opponent must place or remove one of their stones four spaces away from it in either direction on the board - to the right or left of your stone.

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The Stone of Five consists of five engraved marks that stem from their circular host. There is one pair of this kind of stone per color. The orientation of the mark edge also differs according to its hue.

When this stone is *placed* in a space on the board, your opponent must place or remove one of their stones five spaces away from it in either direction on the board - to the right or left of your stone.

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When this stone is *removed* from a space on the board, your opponent must place or remove one of their stones five spaces away from it in either direction on the board - to the right or left of your stone.

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There is one particular stone that is unique. It consists of an engraved circle near its' outer edge. This facet of distinction from the other stones persists further by the addition of having a name - "the Old Stone".

I inquired to Li as to the history of this strange occurrence.

"Sometimes what is before has always been....", she said.

Given the nature of this stone, I wonder whether or not it was a precursor to the others. Perhaps in the evolution of Qyshinsu, there existed a prior version of sorts. There is no mention of this in *Annals* and yet I consider my presumption to be reasonable at best.

When this stone is *placed* in a space on the board, your opponent must also place one of their stones in the vacant space that is nearest to the Old Stone in either direction on the board - to the right or left of your stone.

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Another interesting aspect of the Old Stone is that it seems to mirror the capacity of the other stones during the play. It is the only stone whose nature is determined by the proximity of other stones. In some sense, it is the relationship between this stone and others that shape its value and meaning.

At times this stone behaves as if it were a Stone of One, Stone of Two, etc. As the play naturally unfolds, so does the Old Stone. It adapts to the circumstances in a very elegant way. It offers no resistance in where it finds itself and yet it yields only to the calling of the *Windsong*. For unlike the other stones, when this stone is placed it offers no choice - we must do as it does.

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When this stone is *removed* from a space on the board, your opponent must remove one of their stones that is nearest to the Old Stone in either direction on the board - to the right or left of it. There is no other choice offered when removing this stone from the board. We must do as it does.

Similarly, when this stone is placed, the proximity of the other stones determines its reach. I envision that mastery of this stone alone might prove to be elusive. The challenge that I see is not so much in deciding whether to use this stone or not, but in how to answer the question posed by its very existence - when.

*Hakummar
4th Moon, Sun of Alms*

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“Do not move until you are moved.”

-Kur'San the Hawk

Your intention in Qyshinsu is to “return to the Way”. This occurs when your opponent is unable to place or remove one of their stones. While achieving the intention is concise in expression, I would later learn that it is “how” one does this that speaks to a deeper involvement.

One's journey, of returning to the Way, is governed by what is known as the *Precepts*. There are three in total although legend has it that the Old Stone itself once considered one as well. Each Precept is a rule that underlies the nature of the play. It applies to both players and remains unchanged throughout the duration of the play.

*Hakummar
6th Moon, Sun of Alms*

The *first Precept* states that one is not permitted to touch the opponent's stones under any circumstances. I was unfamiliar with such a tenet before this and was somewhat skeptical in how well ones journey would develop given this rare and almost obscure limitation.

The *second Precept* states that only two of each kind of stone is allowed on the board at the same time. These two stones may vary from being ones own, the opponent's, or a combination of both - one from each side. When the two stones reside on the board, the same kind of stone may not be placed on the board until either of two has been removed.

The *third Precept* states that when one removes a stone from a space, that same kind of stone cannot be placed back in that same space on that player's very next turn.

The Precepts provide the fabric from which the intention is woven through the play. I can understand how the Old Stone was once alongside these others. The nature of this stone engenders it with a special quality that is unlike the current Precepts.

Hakummar
7th Moon, Sun of Alms

On this particular night, Li proceeded to take three of the ebony marked stones and reversed them to reveal their blank side. She placed the three stones on the board in different places. I wasn't sure whether or not we were to begin engaging Qyshinsu, as I wasn't familiar with this initial placement of the stones.

"Imagine these ebony stones are yours. Their kind is of no consequence for now. In one move, you can place a stone on the board and return to the Way", she pointed her hand towards the board waiting for me to proceed.

I understood this to be part of the learning beyond mere discourse. The *Annals* seem to place emphasis on the value of learning from ones own experiences. These steps in learning to "see", demonstrate of ones understanding of the *Precepts* and the nature of the stones themselves.

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I remembered my previous instruction with the Stone of One and how the spaces were so close to the stone itself. I also recalled that the *first Precept* prohibits the touching of the opponent's stones. Therefore, by placing my Stone of One in the space between the two closest blank stones on the board, my opponent would be unable to place or remove one of their stones.

I placed the stone in the space and waited for Li's affirmation. She slowly bowed her head and pointed towards the board once more.

"Six", she said.

"There are six ways to returning here?" I glanced down at the board once again.

She bowed her head once more.

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While removing the Stone of One from the board, I began to consider the sense of balance between the stones. I couldn't articulate it at the moment, but I intuited a relationship between them. Before I could finish my thread of reflection, the next stone to be placed seized my attention - the Stone of Five.

As I placed this stone on the board, I noticed that this stone and the Stone of One shared the same "pattern" in a sense. They were both placed in opposite sides of the board as well. So far I had discovered two ways and there remained another four to be revealed.

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My eyes searched the board for the next way. Without hesitation, I saw where the Stone of Two was to be placed. I carefully put the stone on the board and looked once again for the next stone to be placed.

Judging by my experience with the prior stones thus far, I looked across the board opposite the Stone of Two to consider which stone was appropriate.

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The Stone of Four was the stone that shared the same “pattern” with the Stone of Two. The depth of Qyshinsu slowly began to surface within me. Although I had yet to fully engage the play, I could sense the many layers woven together in some unknown harmony of sorts.

There were only two other stones remaining to choose from. My ability to “see” had improved but it had yet to be tested in the waters of the play.

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The sense of “opposites” came to me previously when first learning about the Stone of Three. I remembered the spaces this stone designates forms an imaginary straight line across the board.

Being the fifth way, it didn’t take me long to reckon as to what the sixth and final way was.

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As I presumed, the sixth way in this arrangement of the stones consisted of the Stone of Three residing on the opposite side of the previous space I placed it before.

I realized that this exercise of sorts was a clear demonstration of how the *first Precept* coincides with the stones in order for one to “return.” Each of the five stones had a pattern associated with it. Some even shared this with other stones. Another epiphany was that if these stones were already on the board, the removing of them in these spaces that I just explored would equate to the same result - “returning to the Way”.

But what of the Old Stone? The *Annals* state that it was once considered a Precept itself. The very nature of this stone is different from the other five, so I assumed its way of “returning” would differ as well.

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Li reached across and began placing the crimson marked stones on the board. She appeared to place some of them in the very spaces I discovered previously. The board was almost completely filled save for one empty space.

“One stone, one space” she gestured towards the board with her eyes.

The only stone I had yet to understand was the Old Stone, so I placed it in the space.

“Are you sure?” she raised her head to meet my gaze.
I hesitated to respond. I wasn’t entirely sure as to why this particular stone should be the stone chosen. I examined the board carefully and contemplated the nature of this stone. When it is placed, the opponent must place a stone in the nearest empty space to it. And since there were no other spaces available, my opponent wouldn’t be able to do this, so I would have “returned”.

The potential of this stone became slightly more obvious than before. Although I do feel there is even more to fathom from this than I am currently aware of. As I was about to speak, Li removed the crimson marked stones from the board.

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She left the blank stones on the board and the Old Stone as well. The crimson marked stones were once again aligned in the original position to the side of the board.

“One stone, one space..” she remarked once more.

I was confused at this point for all the other stones had been explored. The Old Stone was still in its space. Since I hadn’t removed a stone as of yet, I proceeded to remove this stone.

Li seemed mesmerized by the board and stones. The question was being asked by her presence - “Was I sure?”

When the Old Stone is removed, the opponent must remove their closest stone to it. There were no longer any crimson marked stones on the board - assuming those would have been my opponent’s stones. In this situation, they would be unable to remove a stone at all because there were no stones left for them to do so. Once again, the result - I would have “returned to the Way.”

“How do I return by way of *third Precept?*” I inquired.

Her eyes softly squinted as if she was pleased with my question, “*second Precept..third Precept* - you must discover on your own.”

Hakummar
8th Moon, Sun of Alms

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“Reflect the loss of what is untrue.”

-Jnaiya

It is said that no two boards are alike in terms of their surface. Each one is a constant reminder that every journey to returning to the Way is a sole endeavor by those who follow its course. I was eager in taking my own first steps to explore this path for myself.

To initiate our engagement with Qyshinsu, Li cleared the board of all remaining stones and aligned them to the sides. I'm not sure if this is considered part of the tradition for I've seen pictures from the *Annals* in which some person's stones were placed together in no particular order of any kind. I presume this aspect of the play is of a personal nature.

Once everything was properly positioned, a peculiar thing occurred thereafter. I noticed Li became very still. Her eyes glanced occasionally from one space on the board to another in a seemingly rhythmic fashion. I was unsure about what this gesture was suggestive of so I held my silence accordingly.

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After our unexpected shared silence, Li selected the ebony marked Stone of Two and gently placed it on the board. The small snapping sound of the woods touching seemed to usher in the begining of our journey together. It is customary in Qyshinsu that the one who partakes of the ebony stones goes first.

It is written in the *Annals*, that Master Qy waited twelve years before placing the first stone. Every angle was given refuge in the comfort of his reflections. No consideration was left untouched.

I would later discover that the stillness I witnessed of Li was an old tradition of Qyshinsu. The first stone is not to be placed on the board until after the 12th breath of the holder of the ebony marked stones. Each breath is concentrated with the attentive gaze given to a single space on the board at one time. This process is said to honor the twelve years of Master Qy's reflections. I was touched by the reverence displayed in this act alone.

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I decided to select my Stone of Three and place it in one of the spaces designated by her Stone of Two. She now would have to decide which stone to place three spaces away from my own.

It is still too soon to surmise whether I made the right choice or not in choosing this particular stone. I gather from my limited understanding thus far that perhaps it is of no true importance at this stage in the play. This remains to be seen.

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She selected her Stone of One to be placed on the board. This stone was a single space away from her Stone of Two. Upon looking at the closely, I suddenly recalled the dictates of the *first Precept* which states that one “is not permitted to touch the opponent’s stones under any circumstance.” I had originally considered this odd and unusual, but by the actual demonstration of this in the play I was now intrigued.

The nature of this tenet was now obvious to me for I was restricted in where I could place my next stone. Since I was not allowed to touch her Stone of Two, I was now limited to only one space to choose from for which to place my stone.

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The Stone of Two would be my next choice in the stone to be placed on the board. A small smile crept unto the solemn face of my gracious host. I waited for a remark of some kind to follow, but was only met with her soft silence.

I carefully studied the board to see if I perhaps had made a mistake. I saw none, but did notice that there were now two Stone of Twos on the board. This brought to mind the *second Precept*, which states “only two of each kind of stone is allowed on the board at the same time.” Therefore, no other Stone of Two could be placed on the board until one of these was to be removed. Although I admit to ignorance of any advantage, I felt a certain satisfaction knowing that at least one of these stones was mine.

Also, my choosing of this stone put Li in the position of having to make a choice - either place a stone two spaces away from my own or remove her Stone of Two which happened to be two spaces away as well.

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She chose to remove her Stone of Two from the board. I was curious as to how come she didn't take the stone off the board completely. She actually put the stone in the engraved circle near the edge of the board. Her stone was now at an angle pointing upward.

"A courtesy" she whispered.

My chin found the restful comfort of my hand as I paused to think about this for a moment. After a moments time, I remembered that it can be quite a burden upon the opponent to continually remember which stone was removed. There was a humaneness to this action that I found admirable.

For the first time, I was now in the position of not having the choice as to whether to place or remove a stone. I had to do the latter and my obligation was in choosing which of my two stones to take away. The dance of when and how one is to choose seems to be another layer unto the play itself.

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I chose to remove my Stone of Three. I had no particular reason for doing so, other than a swift intuition. I also enjoyed the fact, for some reason, of putting Li in the position of whether to place or remove one of her stones. Not matter how fleeting my reasoning may be at this point, it is empowering to some degree.

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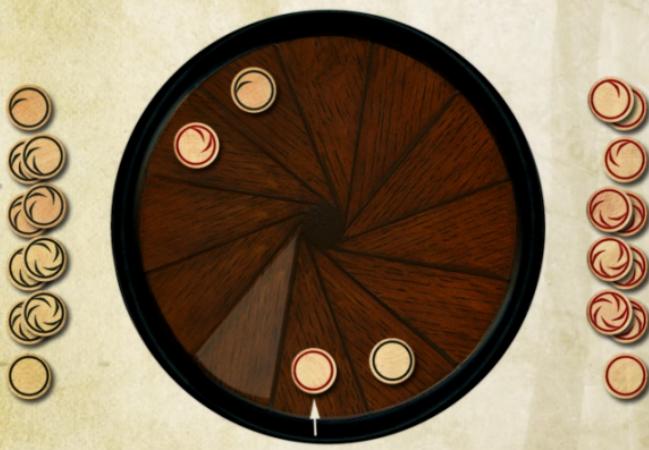
The Old Stone would be Li's next choice. As she placed the stone on the board, I felt a slight chill course through me. The lack of any markings save for a simple circle conveyed some kind of meaning unlike anything I've experienced thus far. I felt that the very presence of this stone into the play signified a transition of some kind.

When the Old Stone is placed on the board, one must also place a stone in the nearest empty space to it. Since no other stones were in close proximity to it, I had to place a stone a single space away. In this sense, her stone mimicked the behavior of the Stone of One.

I searched for Li's child of a smile that visited me once before. It was nowhere to be found. What blossomed before me was older and far wiser. Her eyes spoke of an ageless time as they held this stone in their embrace.

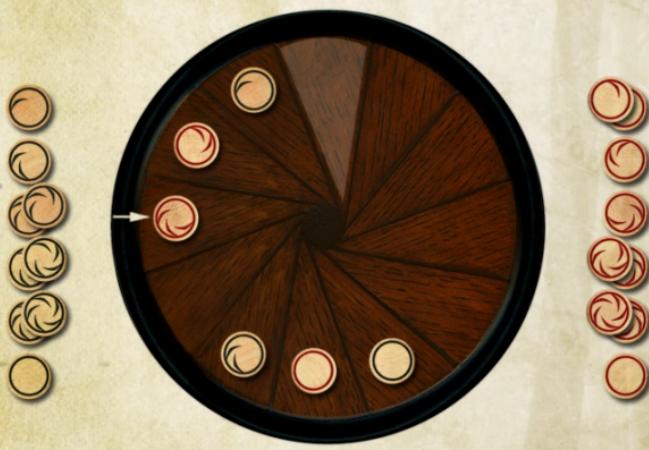
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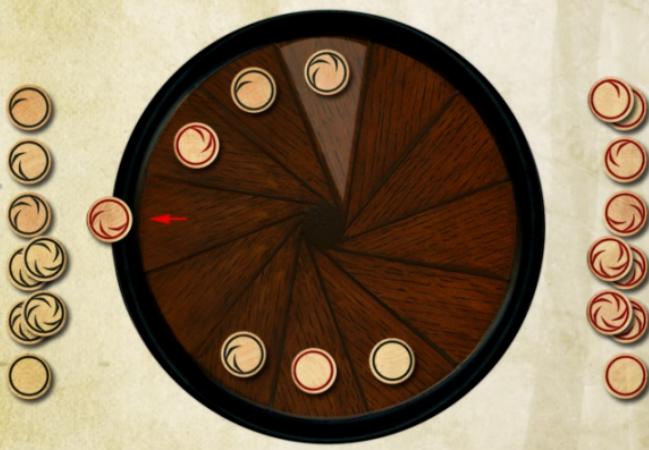
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Once she removed her stone from the board, I realized that the *third Precept* had now made its debut. It states “when a stone has been removed from a space, that very same kind of stone cannot be placed back in that same space on the player’s next turn.” Therefore, I was unable to place my Stone of Three back to where it was.

I then realized that this very same rule would apply to Li as well. So I simply placed my Stone of Three in the other direction of her stone that she removed. Since my Old Stone happened to be three spaces away, and the *first Precept* prevents her from touching this stone, she had no choice but to go back to the same space from where she had removed her own Stone of Three previously.

I couldn’t help but feel a slight encouragement from this circumstance. I not only was able to limit where she must place a stone, but also of what kind as well. The *third Precept* prevented her from putting a Stone of Three back in that same space since this was to be her very next turn after from when it was removed.

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My hopes in enduring the eventual unfolding of the play was short lived. While I was perhaps justified in my newfound discoveries of the role of the *Precepts* themselves, I had failed to consider what kind of stone she could actually place in that space. This aspect of our dynamic seemed to elude me prior to this stage.

She selected her Stone of Five and placed it on the board in the space that had been designated by my Stone of Three. I counted five spaces away from her stone to realize that her two other stones occupied both spaces that this stone was pointing to. Hence, the *first Precept* is brought to bear once more, as I am not permitted to touch her stones. The consequence of this is that I am now not able to either place or remove one of my stones. It was clearly evident from this that she was able to *return to the Way....*

Hakummar
11th Moon, Sun of Alms

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For more information on "Qyshinsu: Mystery of the Way" and other original collections of classic strategy by R.A.Frederickson, please send your requests to the following:

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