

SOMETHING ABOUT XIANGQI IN GERMANY

by **Truong Quoc Cuong Germany**

Germany, a country with a population of 80,000,000, is advanced in science and technology, and a strong rival in the chess world.

Prof. Emanuel Lasker dominated the throne of chess World Champion nearly 30 years. The grandmaster Vlastimil Hort is the current simultaneous blind chess record holder. His record is 550 games in 24 hours which is unparalleled at present time. The grandmaster Robert Hubner is one of the world top players and has a record of winning over the current world champion Gari Kasparov in April 1992. There are still many other top players in Germany and chess is certainly very prosperous in the country.

As for xiangqi, it is yet not well-known. Early in 1938, Gruber published some xiangqi manuals in German but it was not widely spread. In 1985, Rainer Schmidt spared no efforts to form a Xiangqi society in Berlin. Since then, Xiangqi gradually became known in Germany. Following this, Rainer Schmidt, Vladimir Budde, Brigit Goecke, Rudi Reinders and David Wurman have published a number of xiangqi manuals one after the other in German language. Especially Rainer Schmidt, who has gathered his xiangqi friends together and published a xiangqi magazine in German. He has really made great efforts in promoting xiangqi. Unfortunately due to financial difficulties, the magazine was forced to a stop and that even affected his own living conditions. However, his effort has gradually resulted in fruitful achievements. Later, Julius, Uwe Frischmuth and Michael Nagler came to take over the relay baton. In 1989, Schortemeier initiated the establishment of the German Xiangqi e. V. Julius, Uwe Frischmuth and Michael Nagler have organized the national and European Tournaments and have sent teams to China to participate in the tournaments held in Chengdu, Kunming and Beijing. They have also invited the Chinese masters Hu Ronghua, Liu Dahua, Li Laiqun, Xu Tianhong, Zhu Yongkang and Huang Yong to visit Germany.

It must be specially mentioned here that German e. V. is established by the Germans, aiming at publicizing xiangqi among non-Chinese people. Its members are mostly Germans. This time in the 13-members delegation to the 3rd World Xiangqi Championships, 12 of the 13 are non-Chinese. Our aim and duty in the future are still the popularizing of xiangqi among non-Chinese people. At present, though the number is not large, yet our enthusiasm is immense and is growing with each passing day. Wherever there is a tournament, we will joyfully go to take part in despite the distance. We learn it diligently and always enjoy it. If someday there will be a few flowers blooming in this barren land, it will be enough for us to console ourselves for our hard work.

This page was last modified on December 20, 2003

HOW I GOT IN CONTACT WITH XIANGQI

by Dr. Michael Nagle Vice-President of WXF

A short time before, I together with my wife, started a tour and a half week journey to China in 1988, a young woman who had traveled in China for six months made a diapositive film show about her journey in a school near the place where we lived. She showed some pictures of men sitting in parks and on boardwalks playing a board game. She said it must be a sort of chess. As I had been a tournament chess player in western chess for a very long period at that time, I become very interested. So from that time, our journey started I tried to get information about this game. My first board and xiangqi piece set was bought in Jinan, the local tour guide who went with us up to Taishan mountain explained me the rules. I played my first games with tour guides and I saw that I made good progress in the game because of the things I knew from western chess. Then I tried to find a book in English language about the game, but this was impossible.

One evening in the hotel in Nanjing I went to the souvenir shop for looking. As there were no people buying things the men on duty in the shop on duty in the shop was sitting there reading a newspaper. It was in English language concerning sports in China. On the front page was announced an interview with the well known western chess grandmaster Dr. Robert Hubner from Germany and an article about a tournament held in Chengdu in 1987. I asked the men whether I can read in his newspaper, and he agreed. After reading, I told him that urgently needed his newspaper. He tried to sell me a long time contract., but I convinced him that I only need this issue. I still have this newspaper, for me and for xiangqi in Germany it is a historical document. In this issue there were information about a Mr. Rain Schmidt from Berlin who had written books about the game in German language.

Back in Germany after searching for a long time in book shops for the address of Mr. Uwe Frischmuth, meanwhile well known in the WXF, and one of my best friends. Uwe and I then started the xiangqi organization in Hamburg, and together with the friends from Berlin, improvement of xiangqi in Germany Went on steadily.

This page was last modified on December 20, 2003

THE ENTERING OF VIET NAM IN THE XIANGQI WORLD

By Quach Anh Tu Vietnamese Xiangqi Association

It is the first time in the xiangqi history for a Vietnamese delegation to attend the world xiangqi Federation's Preparatory Committee Conference and also the first time for the Vietnamese Xiangqi players to participate in the 3rd World Xiangqi Championships. We are very honored to be able to meet with many prestigious xiangqi officials and players from various countries on this occasion. We would like to say some of our feelings as follows:

1. The Conference was efficiently organized and was a full success. The officials elected are all well-known xiangqi celebrities who have made great contribution to the fast development and internationalization of xiangqi. The founding of the World Xiangqi Federation will further speed up the development and popularization of xiangqi in various countries and regions especially in America and Europe. Viet Nam is very pleased to be taken as one of the countries where the sport of xiangqi is popularized.
2. The 3rd World Xiangqi Championships boast its number of participants which surpasses that of the previous two Championships. The level of the games in the 3rd championships is also higher. Of course China is the birth place of xiangqi and has a powerful group of strong players. It will take a certain period of time for the players of other areas to catch up. However, players from other countries other than China are almost equally matched in their strength and obviously are making rapid progress. This is a very encouraging scene which will make the game of xiangqi even more attracting and fascinating.
3. The organizing work was perfect. The Chinese Xiangqi Association were very considerate in the reception, accommodation and sightseeing arrangements, and the competitions were very well organized with no unpleasantness. Arbiters were fair and selfless in conducting the matches. All these are good for the others to learn from.

The exchanges between the Vietnamese and Chinese players have an early record. Early in 1925, the well-known players Zhong Zhen and Zeng Zhan Hong traveled south to develop the sport of xiangqi. In 1933, the renowned player Zhao Kun came to Viet Nam and played a number of games which promoted the development of xiangqi there. During the years of the Vietnamese Liberation War, in the 1960s, the coast of Saigon was honored to receive the noted player Lee Chee Hoi. In 1970, the famous Hong Kong player Li Huidong visited Viet Nam. In north Viet Nam, in the spring of 1966, a Chinese team with members including Yang Guanling, Cai Furu and Hu Ronghua visited Viet Nam and played games in the capital Hanoi and the neighbouring provinces, and left beautiful memories.

We believe the above visits have deep significance which promoted the friendship between the Vietnamese and the Chinese xiangqi circles. The Vietnamese players always take the Chinese noted players as their good teachers and helpful friends.

During the historical occasion of the World Xiangqi Federation Congress and the 3rd World Xiangqi Championships, the Chinese Xiangqi Association gave us and other players warm reception and lend us all kinds of assistance, for this we are very grateful. We believe it was a big stride forward for the Vietnamese players as it was the first time for the Vietnamese players to enter the world of xiangqi. Although great distances have separated us from other xiangqi friends, yet it is "not difficult for us to understand each other on a small xiangqi board."

This page was last modified on December 19, 2003

A FEW WORDS FROM U.K. TEAM

By C. K. Lai UK Team Leader

The 3rd World Xiangqi Championships held in Beijing from the 4th to 11th April 1993 has brought closer together Xiangqi friends from all over the world. Xiangqi federation marks a new leaf in the long history of xiangqi.

In the UK, Xiangqi activities are just awakening, everything has to start from the beginning. Therefore, we feel all the proud to be able to take part in the 1st and 3rd World Xiangqi Championships' prestigious gathering.

Through the exchange of Xiangqi, we believe we can promote understanding, kindness and friendship a step further among all nations. Victories and defeats are only temporary. There are no permanent winners, as there are no permanent losers. In this World Xiangqi Championships, our main purpose is to learn from everybody. When we say good-bye, and are on our way home, we would think very much on how to promote wider the game of xiangqi in Europe.

Wishing you all the best of luck, see you again in Singapore in 1995.

This page was last modified on December 20, 2003

PROSPECTS FOR THE WORLD XIANGQI FEDERATION

by Liu Baoren Chinese Taipei

A group of fellow Xiangqi enthusiasts, having worked almost ten years for campaigning, advocating and planning, and gone through all kinds of hardships, finally proclaimed the founding of the World Xiangqi Federation on April 6, 1993 in Beijing. This can be taken as an important event in the history of xiangqi and signifies that xiangqi has stepped out of Asia and is marching onto the world. While being gratified and rejoiced at this moment, we must specially express our admiration and respects to our sagacious forerunners.

Xiangqi is a tempered and refined cultural crystal in the Chinese history. It is an art of thinking and is always bearing a new appearance despite its long existence in our country. Moreover, in recent years, it is attracting more and more people from different parts of the world. Therefore, it certainly should not be confined in Asia only.

Up till now, three World championships have been held but all were in Asia, and the hosts were only two, Singapore and China. Now the World Xiangqi Federation has been established and it is expected to see that in the future more and more countries and regions other than that in Asia will be able to stage World championships, so as to make xiangqi truly marching out of Asia onto the other parts of the world, and not to be mocked that the World Xiangqi Federation is nothing but a piling up organization on the basis of the Asian Xiangqi Federation.

The games of the 3rd World Championships show that there were examples for the Chinese Grandmasters forced to draw with non-Chinese-origin players. Obviously, the top placing are no longer the exclusive rights for the Chinese-origin players. More and more outstanding non-Chinese-origin players will surely emerge in the days to come. We are not only pleased with the fact, but will also be able to see clearly the brilliance of xiangqi shedding its light on the whole globe.

I myself personally come from Chinese Taipei. As I mentioned above, I hope to see world championships soon be held outside of Asia in other parts of the world. What is more, I wish the Chinese people on both sides of the Taiwan Straits will soon break through the sensitive factors, and let xiangqi be xiangqi , to have a world championship staged in Taiwan as early as possible. This will be another of my earnest wishes!

This page was last modified on December 20, 2003