

Study of Vanished South Asian Board Game ‘Nyout’

Akash Daulatrao Gedam¹ & Mohini Pundlikrao Gajbhiye²

Abstract

In Chandrapur district, Maharashtra, India the site is located in the west of small village **Erva-Jhari** (N20°38'53, E79°35'23) at the foot hills of Waghahi hills, where engraving (circle and cross) of Korean game ‘**Nyout**’ has been found. Some archaeologists gathered information about this rock petroglyph, but they all suggested that this may be the **cup-marks** or **KALCHAKRA**. While doing the study of “**Mancala**” game in Bhivkund caves at Kuhu-Taluka, Nagpur also looking at the rock painting at **Waghahi hill** and Navtala village and found the secret over there. **Erva-Jhari** where the rock engravings, found circular arranged cup marks and in between is the plus (+) sign mark cupules. From these evidences assumed that this may be a game in ancient time for entertainment to pass time. And in further studies, found that this game is similar to the Korean game “**Nyout**”. That was probably already played 1000 BC. There are references to a game from the 3rd century AD and might be very popular in Korea. From all these evidences, came to a firm conclusion that this is an ancient game played in Korea. And still today it is used as then, for divinations on religious festivals. The present paper discusses about the evidences found related with this game in **Erva-Jhari**, South-Central India. This Korean race game is also found in the archaeology of the ancient **Kyodo** city in Japan and the ancient **Mayans** of Central America and Mexico.

Keywords: Board Game, Circle and Cross, Kyodo, Mancala, Mayan, Nyout.

¹ Assistant Professor, Dept. Applied Sciences and Humanities, Yeshwantrao Chavan College of Engineering, Wanadongari, Hingna Road, Nagpur (India)

² Assistant Professor, Dept. PIADS, Priyadarshini Institute of Architecture Design and Studies, Nagpur

Introduction

In ancient India games like **“Chess and Pachisi”** were played often. These games became the part of their culture. Various games played in ancient India are vanished, the remains of some of the board games found in India. A site located in Erva-Zari village, Chandrapur District, Maharashtra, India. There is game ‘Nyout’ found at the foot of the Waghai hill (2020). Archaeologist gathered information about these petroglyphs may be the cup-marks of **KALCHAKRA**. But it is not true, this game is similar to a board game of Korean and Japan said Yut-Nori or Yunnori or Nyout. This game also found (1989) in archaeological site **Kyodo** ancient capital of Japan. In this paper, we research on one of such board game which is vanished in India but still played in south-eastern Asian country. To explore other purpose any interior and involvement, socio-cultural events, interrelate customs and traditions of the world through this game. The research methodology comprises of literature review and empirical studies.

A Brief History of Board Game:

Some of the earliest evidences of board games come from Indus Valley Civilization in the form of archeological finds. The exact nature of the game and their rules are difficult to ascertain. Playing means entertainment and from ancient days various games were played for entertainment. These games were generally based on some rules, skills and sometimes depend on player’s luck. In ancient India games like **“Chess and Pachisi”** were played often. Similarly, some traditional games which are found in research were converted in board games and they were spread outside the country. Or these games became the part of their culture. Various games played in Ancient India are vanished, by the time and now a day this fact can be clearly identified in the engraving of ancient caves, temples, forts and at the base of hillock.

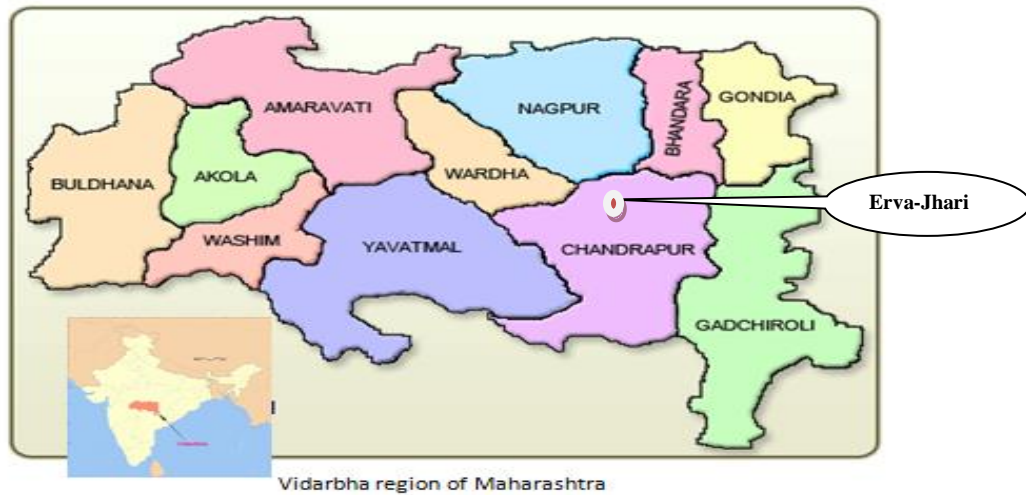


Fig.1: Vidarbha Region of Maharashtra

It seems, the remains of some of the board games found in India are much older than the board games found in other countries. That means the various ancient games were started in India and later spread in south-eastern countries. In this paper, we are going to see on one of such board game played, which is vanished in India but still played in other and south-eastern Asian countries.

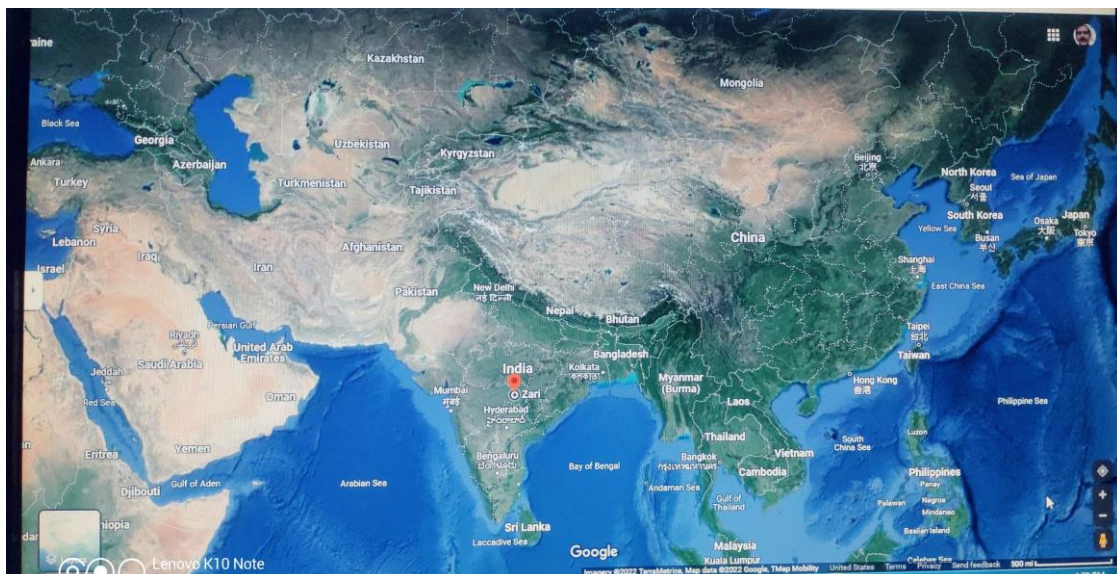


Fig.2: Location of Map Erva-Jhari, Chandrapur, India



Fig. 3: Nyout (Circle and Cross) Game at Erva-Jhari, Chandrapur, India

In India, I have found this board game engraved on the base rocks of “**Waghai Hillock**” at Erva-zari (Navtala) at Chandrapur District. Some archeologist calls this game as *cross & circle engraved, cup-marks*; others said it as “**Kalahari**”. But, at the end of my study, I realize that, that this is not just cross & circle or cup-marks, but are the remains of an ancient board game which is totally vanished in India. In ancient India the name of this board is completely disappeared but this board game is still played in some of the south- eastern countries by various names “**Yut-Nori/Yannori or Nyout**”. To welcome the New Year at the time of harvesting this board game has been played.



Fig. 4: Korean Nyout Game

“Nyout” is a race game of rotation played with two, three or four players. Each player plays with his token (goti) on a circular track and picks the token for being 1st in the game. The exact age and history of Nyout game is not yet found. In 3rd century this board game was imported from China to Korea. And then this game is vanished from China. But in 1885, the famous American scientist and board game historian, Steve Kulin diverted the attention internationally to untrack the history of this game. According to Kulin, there is a very important history related to this board game. This is premonitory of India and south-eastern countries. This board is related with Chess and Pachisi. The game board design elements related to of the event in B.C. 200. The archeological remains of this game are found in west Japan. The **Nara National Research Institute for Cultural Properties** in Nara city has discovered a clay pot in the ancient Japan’s capital city of Heijokyo (Kyodo). At the bottom of that clay pot the engraving of this board game is found. According to researcher this game may be of 8th century. That means the remains of the Nyout game are found in China, Korea, Japan and India. From this we can say, the game of Nyout may be the connection between eastern Asia and Indo-Japan. And this board game is really ancient and spread worldwide 100 of years before.

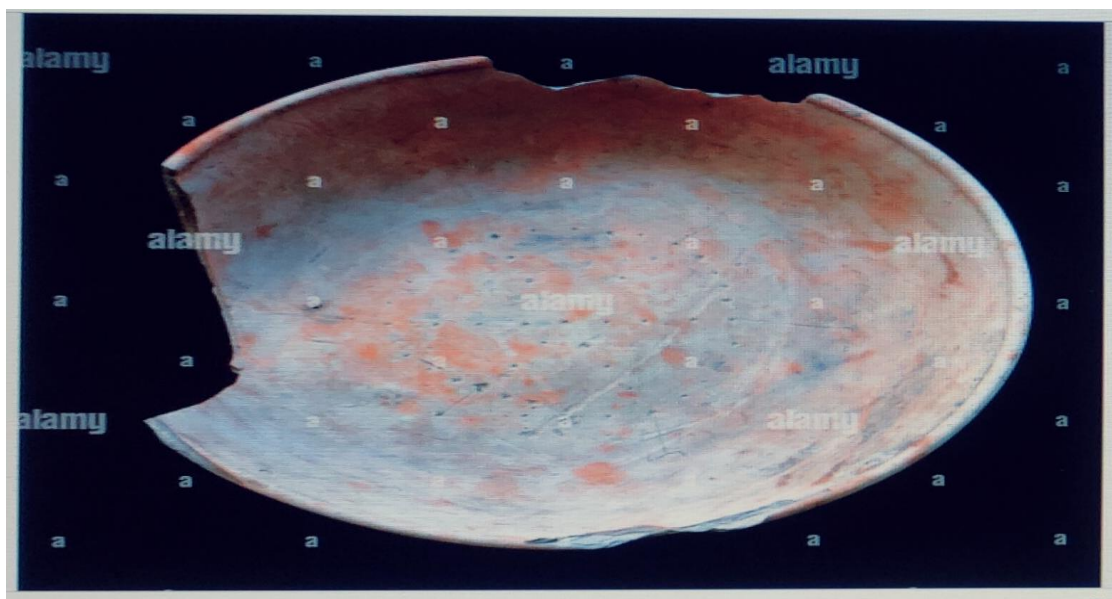


Fig. 5: “Yunnori” The Pot was in the City Ancient Kyodo, Japan

How this game was played in India is unknown, but similar to this game was played in Korea in 3rd century and in Japan in 8th century. The remains in India are much older than this. It may be ancient period during trading and expedition with another area took this game there in. In India, the version with cross and circle (cup-marks) is used, and the boards may sometimes have larger holes ex. (*Erva-Jhari*).

Conclusion

In conclusion, through their various movements across dispersed contexts, board games have come to play an important role in illustrating a historical narrative of our past. We can see how they help us understand religion, philosophy, and the myriad movements of powers across Asia and Europe. These factors necessitate a project to construct a cultural history of board games. Hopefully, in times to come, art historians will pay more attention to these arte facts of ancient India.

References

- A Report on The Field Documentation of Rocks in Maharashtra (Phase-I), Adi. Drishya Department, INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL CENTRE FOR THE ARTS, New Delhi. 12th – 19th November, 2016.
- Asfar Siddiqui, Dr Akash D. Gedam, (Spt.2022) ‘THE MANCALA GAME AND THE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE’, Published in International Journal of Modernization in Engineering Technology and Science, Vol. 04/Issue: 09,pp 1081-1082.
- Bell R. C., M B., F.R.C.E.,(1969) “BOARD AND TABLE GAMES” From many Civilizations, Oxford University Press, Newyork
- Charis Gifford,James Bley, Dayo.Ajayi, and Zach Thompson, (2008) “Searching and Game Playing: An Artificial Intelligence Approach to Mancala” Technical Report, The University of Kansas, Lawrence, US.
- Erwin Neomayer, (1993) Lines on stones, the Pre-historic Rock-Art of India. Manohar, New Delhi, pp 13.

- Gedam Akash D, (2019) "A Pioneer to the Buddhist Art of Nasik Caves, Dist. Nasik, Maharashtra". International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR), Volume 8, Issue 9, ISSN: 2319-7064, pp 44-49. [2]
- Gedam Akash D, (2021), "Rock Arts of Buddhist Caves in Vidarbha, Maharashtra, India" Published in Quest Journals Inc. Vol.-9, Issue-3, Page no. 01-09. [2]
- Gedam Akash Daulatrao, (2021) "Basic Combinatorics of Mancala Game in Bhivkund Caves" Abstract Proceedings of the International Conference on Mathematical Sciences Surat, Gujarat, India (ICMS-2021), October 7-9.
- Gupta S.S., (2018) "Select Monastic establishments in the rock art sites of Central India" The Journal of Rock Art Society of India, Volume, 27-28, pp74-78.
- Loblanchet Michel, (1992) "Rock Art in the Old World" Indira Gandhi National Centre for Art-92.
- Murray, H. J. R., (1952) "A History of Board Games Other than Chess", Oxford University, Press.
- Tiwary Sachin Kumar, (2013) "Rock Art Discoveries in Rohtas Plateau Region, Rohtas District, Bihar" "Journal of Man and Environment, ISPQS, Vol. XXXVIII, No.2, pp 86-91.