



SHOGI

VARIANT LIBRARY

Japan's classic strategy game where captured pieces change sides

24

VARIANTS

2

PLAYERS

8+

AGE

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VARIANT LIBRARY

Shogi (将棋) is Japan's classic strategy board game, descended from the same chess lineage that spread across Asia before 1000 CE. The defining rule is the drop mechanic: captured pieces change allegiance and may be re-entered by the capturing player on any later turn, giving the game a dynamic character unlike any western chess variant. Ancient in origin and public domain in its mechanics, Shogi is governed competitively by the Japan Shogi Association, which holds no copyright over the game itself.

This library includes 24 playable variants.

STANDARD FORM

- ♦ [Standard Shogi](#) — The full 9×9 game with drops, promotion, and the complete piece set

HISTORICAL FORMS

- ♦ [Heian Shogi](#) — Oldest documented Japanese chess (9×8 board, c. 1058 CE); precursor to modern Shogi
- ♦ [Sho Shogi](#) — 16th-century predecessor with the Drunken Elephant and no drop rule; the Elephant promotes to Crown Prince, a second royal piece
- ♦ [Chu Shogi](#) — 12×12 medieval Shogi with 46 pieces per side; the powerful Lion and no drops; Japan's dominant form for centuries
- ♦ [Dai Shogi](#) — 15×15 large variant; 65 pieces per side including Lion, Kirin, Phoenix; precursor to Chu Shogi
- ♦ [Tenjiku Shogi](#) — 16×16 variant with Fire Demons that burn all adjacent enemies; hierarchical jumping generals
- ♦ [Maka-Dai-Dai Shogi](#) — 19×19 with 96 pieces of 50 types per side; contagious promotion through Teaching King
- ♦ [Tai Shogi](#) — 25×25 Grand Chess with approximately 177 piece types per side (354 pieces total)
- ♦ [Taikyoku Shogi](#) — 36×36 Ultimate Chess; 402 pieces per side (804 total); the largest documented chess variant

CHILDREN & INTRODUCTORY

- ♦ [Dobutsu Shogi](#) — Animal chess on a 3×4 board designed for young children; each piece shows its moves printed on the face; a solved game

SMALLER BOARD VARIANTS

- ♦ [Judkins' Shogi](#) — 6×6 condensed Shogi retaining all piece types; fast tactical play
- ♦ [Kyoto Shogi](#) — 5×5 game where every piece flips to its alternate face after each move
- ♦ [Minishogi](#) — Standard Shogi condensed to a 5×5 board with five pieces per side
- ♦ [Gorogoro+](#) — Shogi on a 5×6 board with no Bishop or Rook; Knight and Lance start in hand

LARGER / THEMATIC VARIANTS

- ♦ [Tori Shogi](#) — Bird Shogi on a 7×7 board; two promotable pieces; repetition caused by your own moves is a loss; 8 Swallows per side
- ♦ [Wa Shogi](#) — 11×11 board with animal-themed pieces; unique movement patterns including the Treacherous Fox
- ♦ [Yari Shogi](#) — 9×7 Spear Shogi; Lances, Knights, and Soldiers replaced by spear-themed pieces with forward thrust

NON-STANDARD BOARDS

- ♦ [Hex Shogi 91](#) — 91-hexagon board; all Shogi pieces adapted to hexagonal movement with drops
- ♦ [Sankaku Shogi](#) — 44-cell triangular board; 13 pieces per side; captured pieces removed permanently

MULTIPLAYER

- ♦ [Four Player Shogi](#) — Cross-shaped 189-square board; standard Shogi armies in four wings; team or individual play

DISTINCTIVE MECHANICS

- ♦ [Annan Shogi](#) — 9×9 standard setup; pieces move using the movement of the allied piece directly behind them
- ♦ [Cannon Shogi](#) — Standard 9×9 Shogi with four Cannon types drawn from Xiangqi and Janggi; Pawns replaced by Janggi-style Soldiers
- ♦ [Hasami Shogi](#) — 9×9 custodial-capture game with no drops, no promotion, and one piece type
- ♦ [Mortal Shogi](#) — Captured pieces demote one step in a ranking chain rather than returning to original form



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SHOGI · VARIANT 1 OF 24

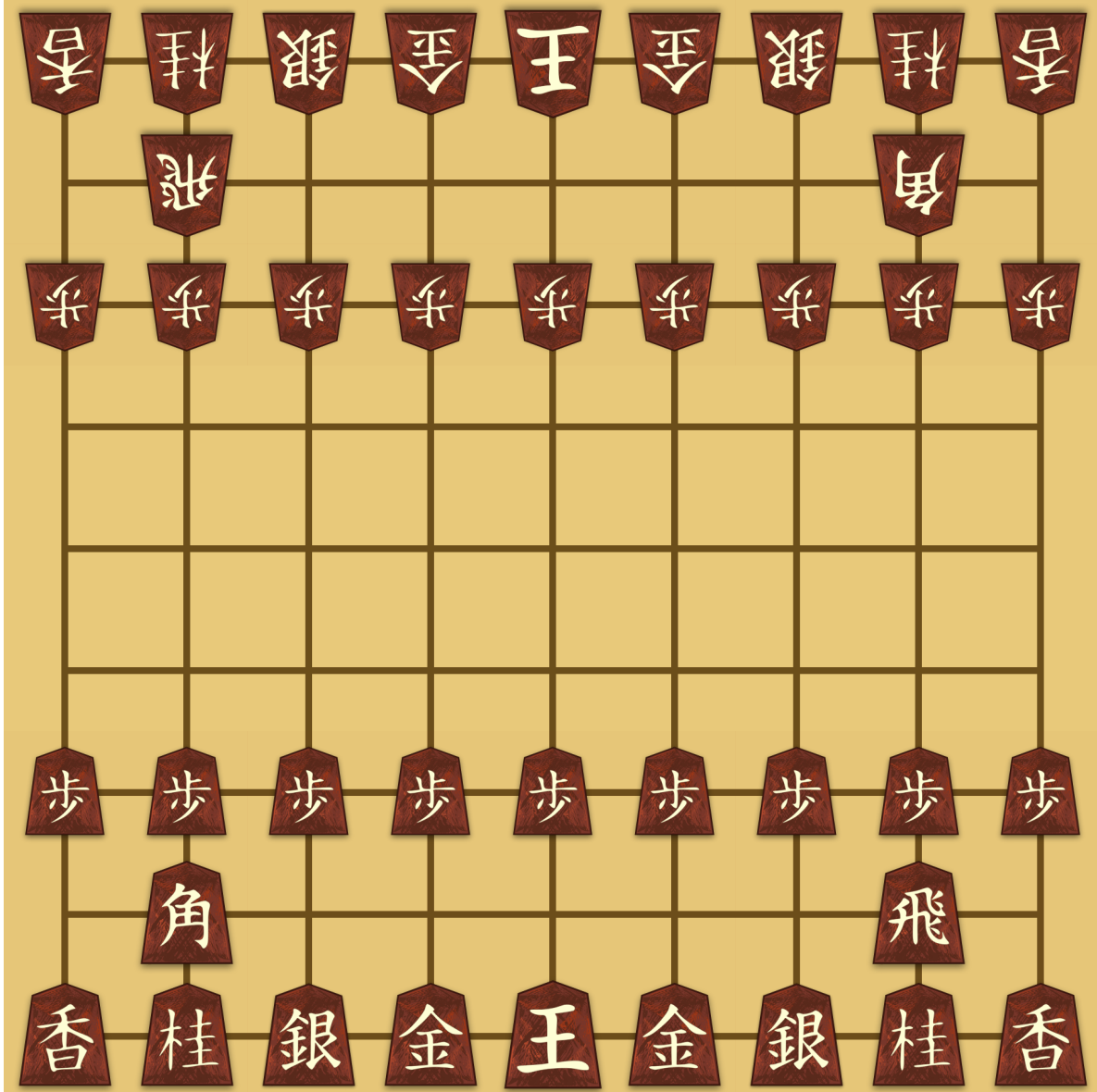
Standard Shogi

9×9
BOARD

2
PLAYERS

STANDARD SHOGI

The full form of Japan's classic strategy game, played since at least the 10th century. The board is 9×9 and each player commands 20 pieces. The drop mechanic (re-entering captured pieces as your own) defines every decision from opening to endgame.



Standard Shogi — starting position

<https://engine.moddable.games/play/?game=shogi&variant=standard>

SETUP

Board: 9×9 grid, 81 squares. Traditional boards use natural wood throughout, with no alternating square colours.

Pieces per player: 20, in eight types.

Starting position:

RANK	FILES 9–1 (LEFT TO RIGHT)
Rank 1 — White back	Lance · Knight · Silver · Gold · King · Gold · Silver · Knight · Lance
Rank 2 — White	Rook (file 8) · · · · · Bishop (file 2)
Rank 3 — White pawns	Pawn × 9
Ranks 4–6	Empty
Rank 7 — Black pawns	Pawn × 9
Rank 8 — Black	Bishop (file 8) · · · · · Rook (file 2)
Rank 9 — Black back	Lance · Knight · Silver · Gold · King · Gold · Silver · Knight · Lance

Black (Sente) moves first.

PIECES

PIECE	ABBREVIATION	MOVEMENT
King (/)	K	One square in any of the 8 directions. Cannot move into check.
Rook ()	R	Any number of squares orthogonally.
Bishop ()	B	Any number of squares diagonally.
Gold General ()	G	One square orthogonally, or one square diagonally forward. Six directions total. Cannot move diagonally backward.
Silver General ()	S	One square diagonally in any direction, or one square directly forward. Five directions total.
Knight ()	N	Jumps exactly two squares forward and one square sideways. The only piece that leaps over others. Cannot retreat.
Lance ()	L	Any number of squares directly forward. Cannot move sideways or backward.
Pawn ()	P	One square directly forward. Captures the same way it moves.

PROMOTION

The promotion zone is the three ranks farthest from each player (the opponent’s back three ranks). A piece may promote when it moves into, out of, or entirely within the promotion zone. Promotion is optional unless the piece would be stranded with no legal move: Pawns and Lances must promote at the final rank; Knights must promote at either of the final two ranks.

Promoted pieces:

BASE PIECE	PROMOTED NAME	MOVEMENT
Rook	Dragon King (龍王)	Rook moves, plus one square diagonally
Bishop	Dragon Horse (龍馬)	Bishop moves, plus one square orthogonally
Silver	Promoted Silver (銀将)	Moves exactly as Gold General
Knight	Promoted Knight (金将)	Moves exactly as Gold General
Lance	Promoted Lance (金将)	Moves exactly as Gold General
Pawn	Token (と)	Moves exactly as Gold General

Kings and Gold Generals do not promote.

THE DROP MECHANIC

When a player captures an opponent's piece, that piece is held in hand. On any turn, instead of moving a piece on the board, the player may drop a piece from hand onto any empty square. Three restrictions apply:

- 1 Nifu (二歩):** A Pawn may not be dropped on a file that already contains an unpromoted friendly Pawn.
- 2 Uchifuzume (打ち詰め):** A Pawn may not be dropped to deliver immediate checkmate. Dropping to give check is legal.
- 3 No dead-end drops:** Pawns and Lances cannot be dropped on the final rank. Knights cannot be dropped on the final two ranks. No legal move would exist from those squares.

Pieces always drop unpromoted, even if they were promoted when captured.

WIN CONDITION

Checkmate the opponent's King: attack the King such that no legal move can escape check. There is no stalemate rule in Shogi. A player with no legal move loses.

DRAWS

Sennichite (三手引き): The same position (including pieces in hand) occurs four times with the same player to move. The game is a draw. If the repetition is caused by perpetual check, the checking side loses.

Impasse (持引き分け): Both Kings advance into the opponent's promotion zone and neither can be mated. Count material value: Rooks and Bishops score 5 points each; all other pieces score 1 point each (Kings excluded). A player with fewer than 24 points loses. If both players reach 24 or more points, the game is a draw.

ATTRIBUTION

Standard Shogi. Ancient origin; public domain. Sources: GNU Shogi Manual (GNU Project, public domain); mastersofgames.com rules reference; pychess.org variants documentation.

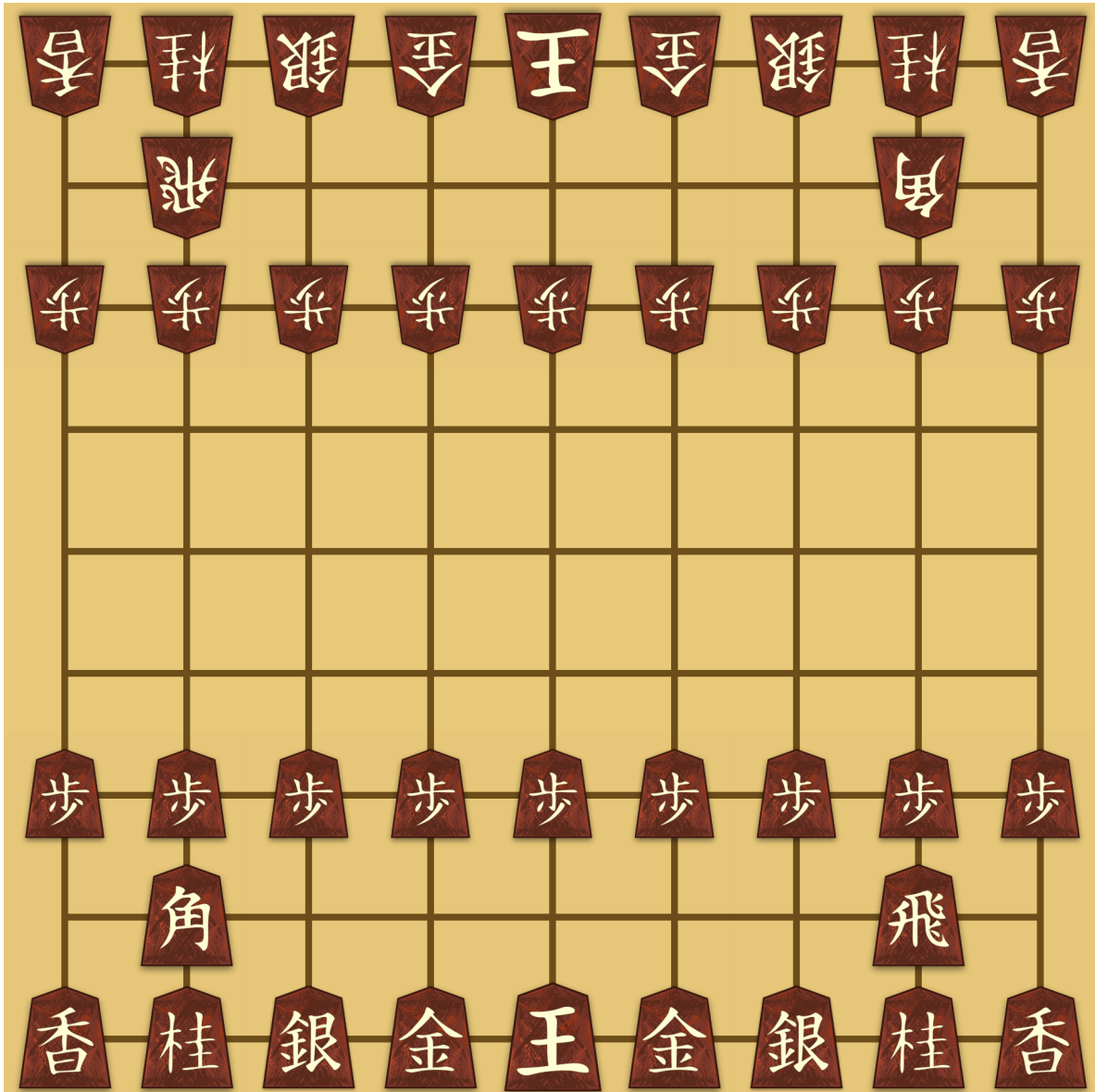
SHOGI · VARIANT 10 OF 24

Sho Shogi

9×9
BOARD

2
PLAYERS

SHO SHOGI



Sho Shogi — starting position

<https://engine.moddable.games/play/?game=shogi&variant=sho-shogi>

Shō Shogi (, “small chess”) is a 16th-century form of Shogi and the immediate predecessor of the modern game. It is played on a standard 9×9 board with the same starting position as modern Shogi, with one addition: each side has a **Drunken Elephant** placed directly in front of the King. According to the *Sho Shogi Zushiki*, the Drunken Elephant was eliminated by Emperor Go-Nara (reigned 1526–1557), and the drop rule is believed to have been introduced at roughly the same time, giving rise to modern Shogi.

SETUP

Board: Standard 9×9 grid.

Pieces per player: 21 — all standard Shogi pieces plus one Drunken Elephant.

Starting position: Identical to Standard Shogi, except each side has a **Drunken Elephant (E)** on the square directly in front of the King.

RANK	CONTENTS
Rank 1 — Gote back	Lance · Knight · Silver · Gold · King · Gold · Silver · Knight · Lance
Rank 2 — Gote	Rook (file b) · Drunken Elephant (file e) · Bishop (file h)
Rank 3 — Gote pawns	Pawn × 9
Ranks 4–6	Empty
Rank 7 — Sente pawns	Pawn × 9
Rank 8 — Sente	Bishop (file b) · Drunken Elephant (file e) · Rook (file h)
Rank 9 — Sente back	Lance · Knight · Silver · Gold · King · Gold · Silver · Knight · Lance

Sente (Black) moves first.

SFEN: lnschkgsnl/1r2e2b1/ppppppppp/9/9/9/PPPPPPPPP/1B2E2R1/LNSGKGSNL [–] b – 1

(E/e = Drunken Elephant; all other letters match standard Shogi notation.)

PIECES

All standard Shogi pieces move as normal. The Drunken Elephant is the sole addition:

Drunken Elephant (E): Moves one square in any of the eight directions **except** directly backward. It cannot step to the square immediately behind it (seven legal directions total). Promotes to the **Crown Prince** on reaching the promotion zone.

Crown Prince (CP): Moves one square in any direction (like a King). The Crown Prince is also a royal piece — if both the King and Crown Prince are on the board, both must be captured or checkmated for that player to lose. A side with a Crown Prince on the board cannot be defeated by checkmate of the King alone.

RULES

All standard Shogi rules apply, with these exceptions:

No drops. Captured pieces are removed from play and do not return to the board.

Dual royalty. A side that has promoted its Drunken Elephant to Crown Prince requires both the King and Crown Prince to be neutralised before that side loses.

PROMOTION

The promotion zone is the three ranks farthest from each player (ranks 7–9 for Sente). Standard Shogi pieces promote as normal. The Drunken Elephant promotes to Crown Prince; the Crown Prince does not promote further.

WIN CONDITIONS

Checkmate: The sole remaining royal piece is in check with no legal escape. If only a King remains (no Crown Prince), standard checkmate applies. If a Crown Prince remains alongside the King, both must be simultaneously without legal escape.

ATTRIBUTION

Sho Shogi is a historical game, public domain. Rules documented from pychess.org/variants/shoshogi and H.J.R. Murray, *A History of Chess* (Oxford University Press, 1913).

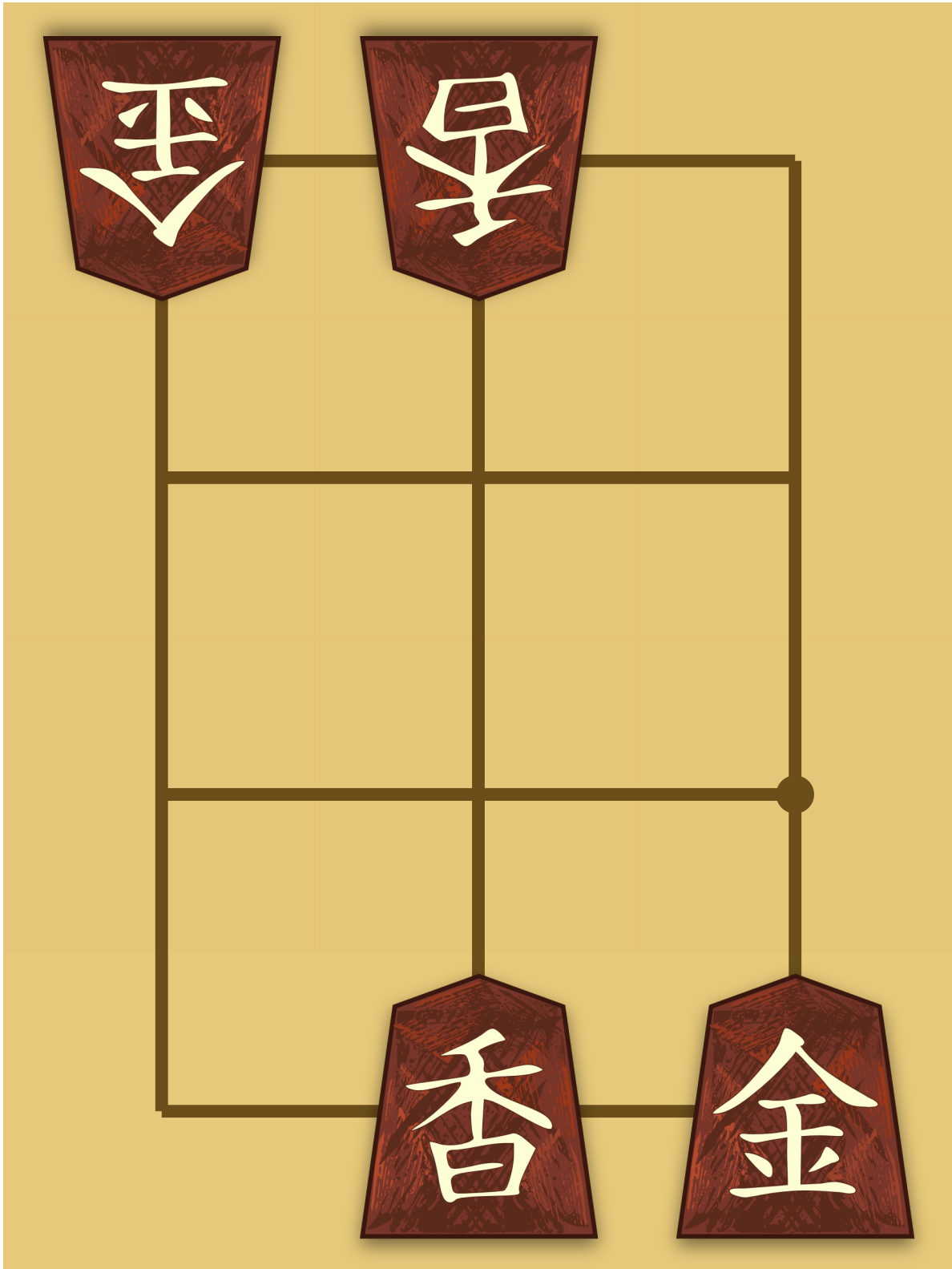
SHOGI · VARIANT 20 OF 24

Dobutsu Shogi

3×4
BOARD

2
PLAYERS

DOBUTSU SHOGI



Dobutsu Shogi — starting position

<https://engine.moddable.games/play/?game=shogi&variant=dobutsu>

Dobutsu Shogi (どうぶつしょうぎ, “animal chess”) is a Shogi variant for young children invented by female professional Shogi player Madoka Kitao, in part to attract young girls to the game. Played on a 3×4 board, it uses a minimal piece set with animal characters; each piece’s legal moves are printed on the piece itself. It is a **solved game** — optimal play by the second player guarantees a win — but remains engaging for beginners and young players.

SETUP

Board: 3 files (a–c) × 4 ranks. No river, no palace.

Pieces per player: 4 — one Lion, one Giraffe, one Elephant, one Chick.

Starting position:

	a	b	c	
1	GIR	LIO	ELE	← Gote (White)
2	·	CHI	·	
3	·	CHI	·	
4	ELE	LIO	GIR	← Sente (Black)

Sente (Black) moves first.

SFEN: g1e/1c1/1C1/ELG[-] b - 1

(G/g = Giraffe, L/l = Lion, E/e = Elephant, C/c = Chick, H/h = Hen.)

PIECES

PIECE	SYMBOL	MOVEMENT
Lion	L	One step in any of the 8 directions. Royal piece.
Giraffe	G	One step orthogonally (forward, backward, left, or right).
Elephant	E	One step diagonally (four diagonal directions).
Chick	C	One step directly forward only. Promotes to Hen on reaching the last rank.
Hen	+C	One step in any direction except diagonally backward (six directions).

RULES

Drops: Captured pieces go to the capturing player’s hand and may be dropped on any empty square on a later turn, exactly as in standard Shogi. There are no Chick drop restrictions — two Chicks may share a file, Chick drop checkmate is legal, and Chicks may be dropped on the last rank.

Promotion: A Chick reaching the last rank must promote to Hen. No other pieces promote.

Win conditions:

1 **Capture the enemy Lion.** If you can capture the Lion, you win immediately. (Checking the Lion is equivalent to check in chess; capturing it wins.)

2 **Campmate.** Move your own Lion to the opponent's last rank (rank 1 for Sente, rank 4 for Gote) without it being in a square the opponent can immediately capture it on their next move. This wins the game.

3 **Stalemate.** If a player has no legal move, that player loses.

Draws: Threefold repetition of the same position (including the same pieces in hand and the same player to move) is a draw. Perpetual check through repetition is also a draw.

ATTRIBUTION

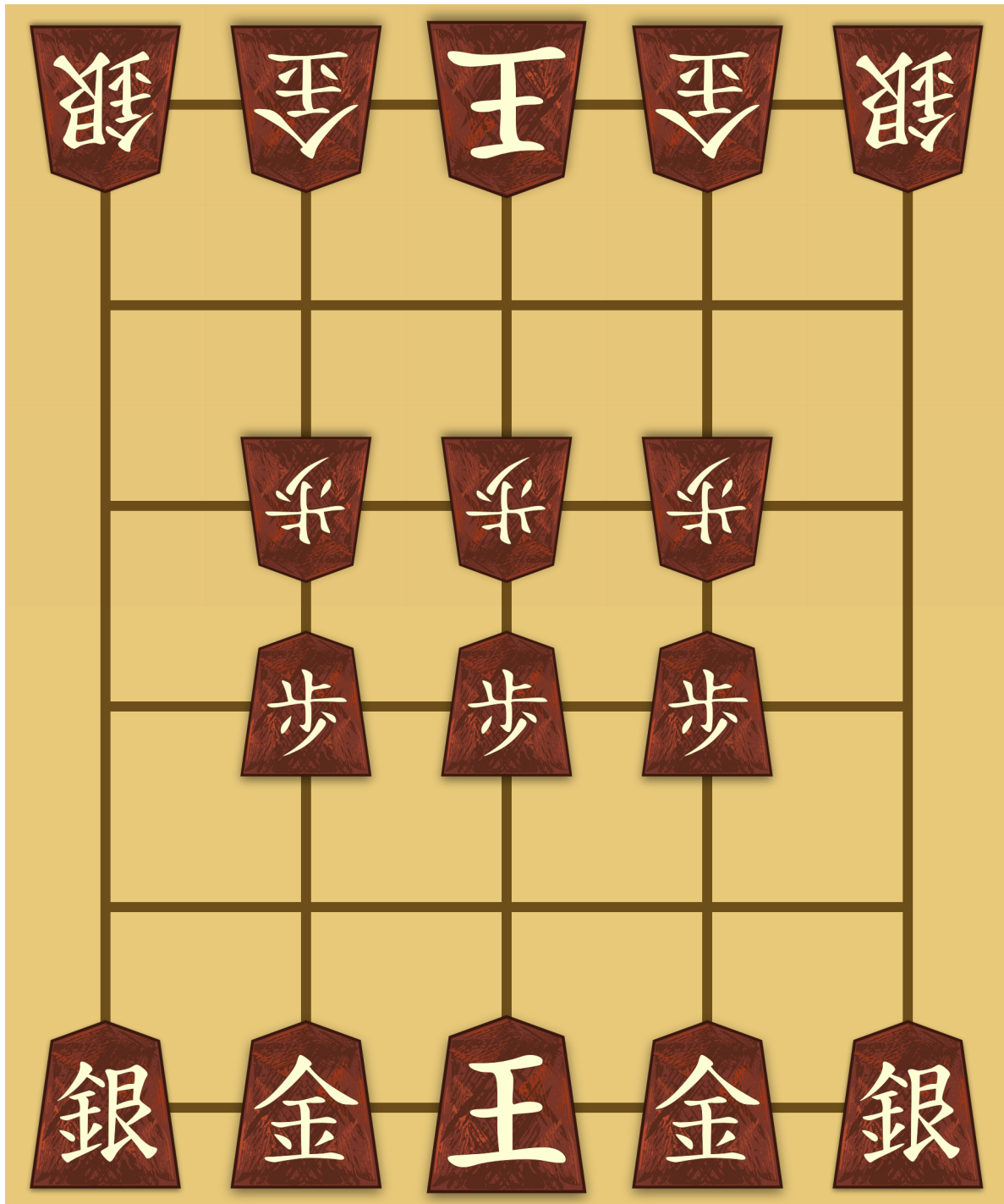
Dobutsu Shogi was invented by Madoka Kitao (まどか). Public domain. Rules documented from pychess.org/variants/dobutsu.

SHOGI · VARIANT 30 OF 24

Gorogoro+

5×6
BOARD

2
PLAYERS



Gorogoro+ — starting position

<https://engine.moddable.games/play/?game=shogi&variant=gorogoro-plus>

Gorogoro+ is a compact Shogi variant played on a 5×6 board. It follows standard Shogi rules but with a reduced piece set — the Bishop and Rook are removed entirely. Each player begins with one Knight and one Lance in hand (available for drops from the first move). Promotion occurs only in the last two ranks.

SETUP

Board: 5 files (a–e) × 6 ranks.

Pieces per player on board: 9 — King, 2 Gold Generals, 2 Silver Generals, 2 Knights, 2 Lances. No Rook, no Bishop, no Pawns on board at start.

Pieces per player in hand at start: 1 Knight (N), 1 Lance (L).

Starting position:

RANK	CONTENTS
Rank 1 — Gote back	Silver · Gold · King · Gold · Silver
Rank 2 — Gote	(empty)
Rank 3 — Gote pawns	· Pawn · Pawn · Pawn · (files b, c, d)
Rank 4 — Sente pawns	· Pawn · Pawn · Pawn · (files b, c, d)
Rank 5 — Sente	(empty)
Rank 6 — Sente back	Silver · Gold · King · Gold · Silver

Gote starts with Knight (n) and Lance (l) in hand. Sente starts with Knight (N) and Lance (L) in hand. Gote moves first.

SFEN: sgkgs/5/1ppp1/1PPP1/5/SGKGS [LNln] w 0 1

(S/s = Silver General, G/g = Gold General, K/k = King, P/p = Pawn, L/l = Lance, N/n = Knight. [LNln] = Sente hand: Lance + Knight; Gote hand: lance + knight.)

PIECES

All standard Shogi pieces except the Rook and Bishop are used. Movement is identical to standard Shogi.

PIECE	ABBREVIATION	MOVEMENT	PROMOTES TO
King	K	One square any direction	—
Gold General	G	One square orthogonally or diagonally forward	—
Silver General	S	One square diagonally or directly forward	Promoted Silver (moves as Gold)
Knight	N	Two squares forward, one sideways; jumps	Promoted Knight (moves as Gold)
Lance	L	Any number of squares directly forward	Promoted Lance (moves as Gold)
Pawn	P	One square directly forward	Tokin (moves as Gold)

RULES

All standard Shogi drop rules apply:

- ♦ No two Pawns of the same player may occupy the same file (Nifu).
- ♦ A Pawn may not be dropped to deliver immediate checkmate.
- ♦ Pawns and Lances cannot be dropped on the final rank; Knights cannot be dropped on the final two ranks.

Promotion zone: the last **two ranks** (ranks 5–6 for Sente, ranks 1–2 for Gote). Pieces may promote when moving into, out of, or within the promotion zone.

Starting hand: Both players begin with a Knight and Lance in hand. These may be dropped on any eligible empty square from the first move.

WIN CONDITIONS

Checkmate the opponent's King. Stalemate is a loss for the player who cannot move.

ATTRIBUTION

Gorogoro+ is a Shogi family variant. Rules documented from pychess.org/variants/gorogoroplus.

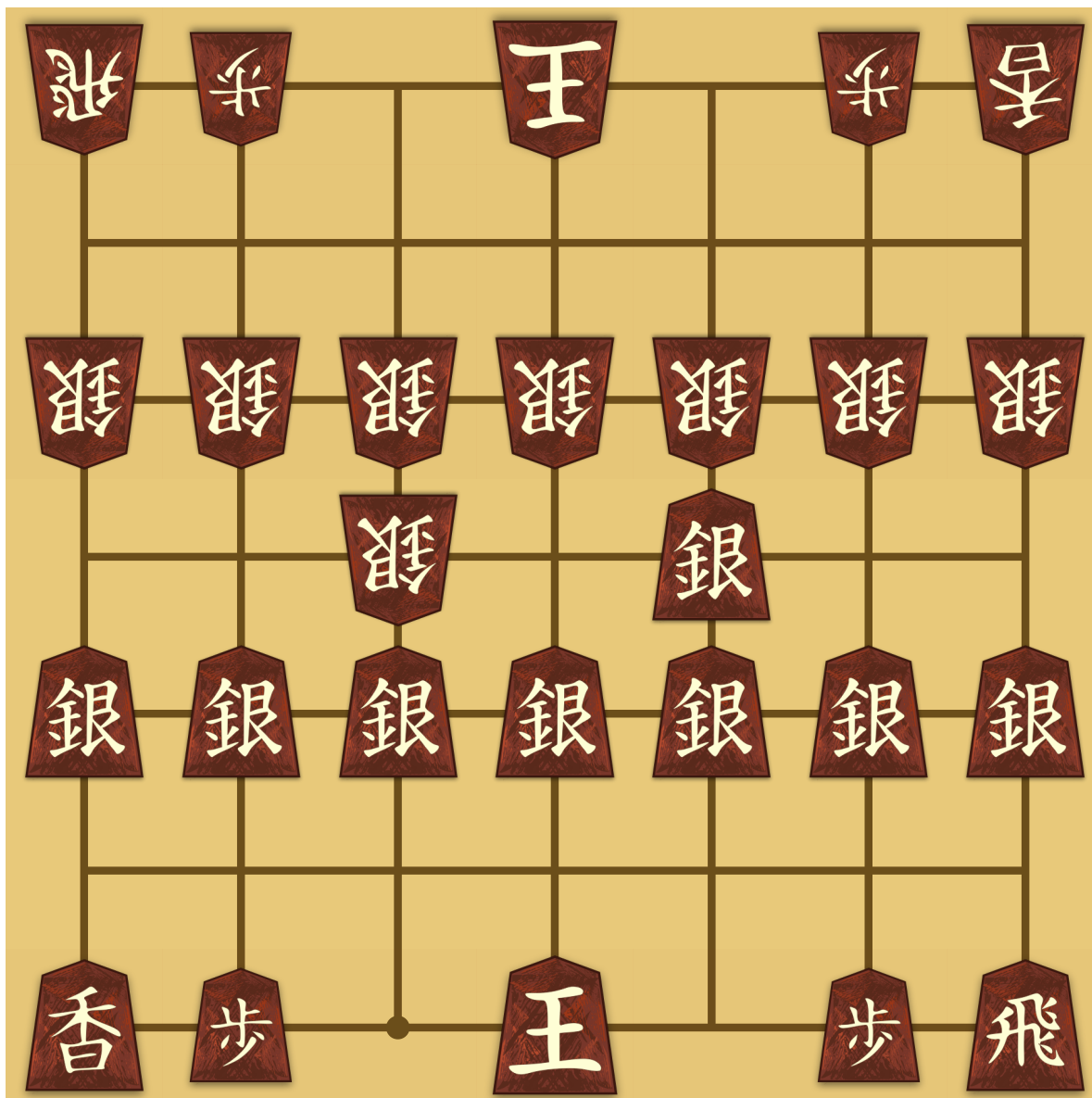
SHOGI · VARIANT 40 OF 24

Tori Shogi

7×7
BOARD

2
PLAYERS

TORI SHOGI



Tori Shogi — starting position

<https://engine.moddable.games/play/?game=shogi&variant=tori-shogi>

Tori Shogi (, “Bird Shogi”) is a Shogi variant invented by Toyota Genryu in 1799, traditionally attributed to his master Ohashi Soei. Played on a 7×7 board with a bird-themed piece set, Tori Shogi has sustained popularity, English-language books, and active tournaments. It is one of the oldest Shogi variants to use the drop rule. The goal is to checkmate the opposing **Phoenix** (the royal piece).

SETUP

Board: 7 files (a–g) × 7 ranks.

Pieces per player: 16 — 1 Phoenix, 1 Left Quail, 1 Right Quail, 2 Cranes, 2 Pheasants, 1 Falcon, 8 Swallows.

Starting position:

RANK	CONTENTS
Rank 1 — Gote back	Right Quail(a) · Pheasant(b) · Crane© · Phoenix(d) · Crane(e) · Pheasant(f) · Left Quail(g)
Rank 2 — Gote	... Falcon(d) ...
Rank 3 — Gote Swallows	Swallow × 7 (all files)
Rank 4 — Advanced	Gote Swallow© ... Sente Swallow(e)
Rank 5 — Sente Swallows	Swallow × 7 (all files)
Rank 6 — Sente	... Falcon(d) ...
Rank 7 — Sente back	Left Quail(a) · Pheasant(b) · Crane© · Phoenix(d) · Crane(e) · Pheasant(f) · Right Quail(g)

Each side's 8 Swallows: 7 on their home Swallow rank + 1 advanced to rank 4. Gote moves first.

SFEN: rpckcpl/3f3/sssssss/2s1S2/SSSSSSS/3F3/LPCKCPR[-] w 0 1

(Piece letter assignments — r/R = Right Quail, l/L = Left Quail, p/P = Pheasant, c/C = Crane, k/K = Phoenix (royal), f/F = Falcon, s/S = Swallow. Empty hand at start: [-].)

PIECES

PIECE	SYMBOL	MOVEMENT
Phoenix	K	One step in any of the 8 directions. Royal piece.
Crane	C	One step in any direction except left or right (six directions: forward, backward, four diagonals).
Pheasant	P	One step diagonally backward (two diagonal directions), OR jumps two squares straight forward (cannot be blocked).
Left Quail	L	Slides any number of squares straight forward; slides any number of squares diagonally right-backward; one step diagonally left-backward.
Right Quail	R	Mirror of Left Quail: slides forward; slides diagonally left-backward; one step diagonally right-backward.
Falcon	F	One step in any of the 8 directions except straight backward (seven directions). Promotes to Eagle .
Swallow	S	One step directly forward. Promotes to Goose .
Goose (+S)	+S	Jumps exactly two squares diagonally forward (either direction), OR exactly two squares straight backward. Cannot be blocked.
Eagle (+F)	+F	Slides any number of squares diagonally forward or straight backward; one step in any direction; up to two squares diagonally backward (not a jump; can be blocked). Strongest piece in the game.

Only the Swallow and Falcon promote. Phoenix, Cranes, Pheasants, and Quails never promote.

RULES

Drops: Captured pieces go to the capturing player's hand and may be dropped on any empty square on a later turn, with the following restrictions specific to Swallows:

- ♦ A Swallow may not be dropped to give immediate checkmate.
- ♦ A Swallow may not be dropped on a file that already contains **two** friendly Swallows.
- ♦ A Swallow may not be dropped on the last rank (rank 1 for Gote, rank 7 for Sente).

Promotion zone: the last two ranks (ranks 6–7 for Sente). Promotion is compulsory when a Swallow or Falcon reaches the promotion zone.

Repetition: If the same position occurs three times with the same player to move and the same pieces in hand, the player who **caused** the repetition loses. This is the reverse of the standard Shogi draw rule.

Perpetual check is likewise a loss for the player causing it.

Stalemate: A player with no legal move loses.

WIN CONDITIONS

Checkmate the opponent's Phoenix — attack it such that no legal move can escape. A player with no legal move loses.

ATTRIBUTION

Tori Shogi was invented by Toyota Genryu (1799). Public domain. Rules documented from pychess.org/variants/torishogi.

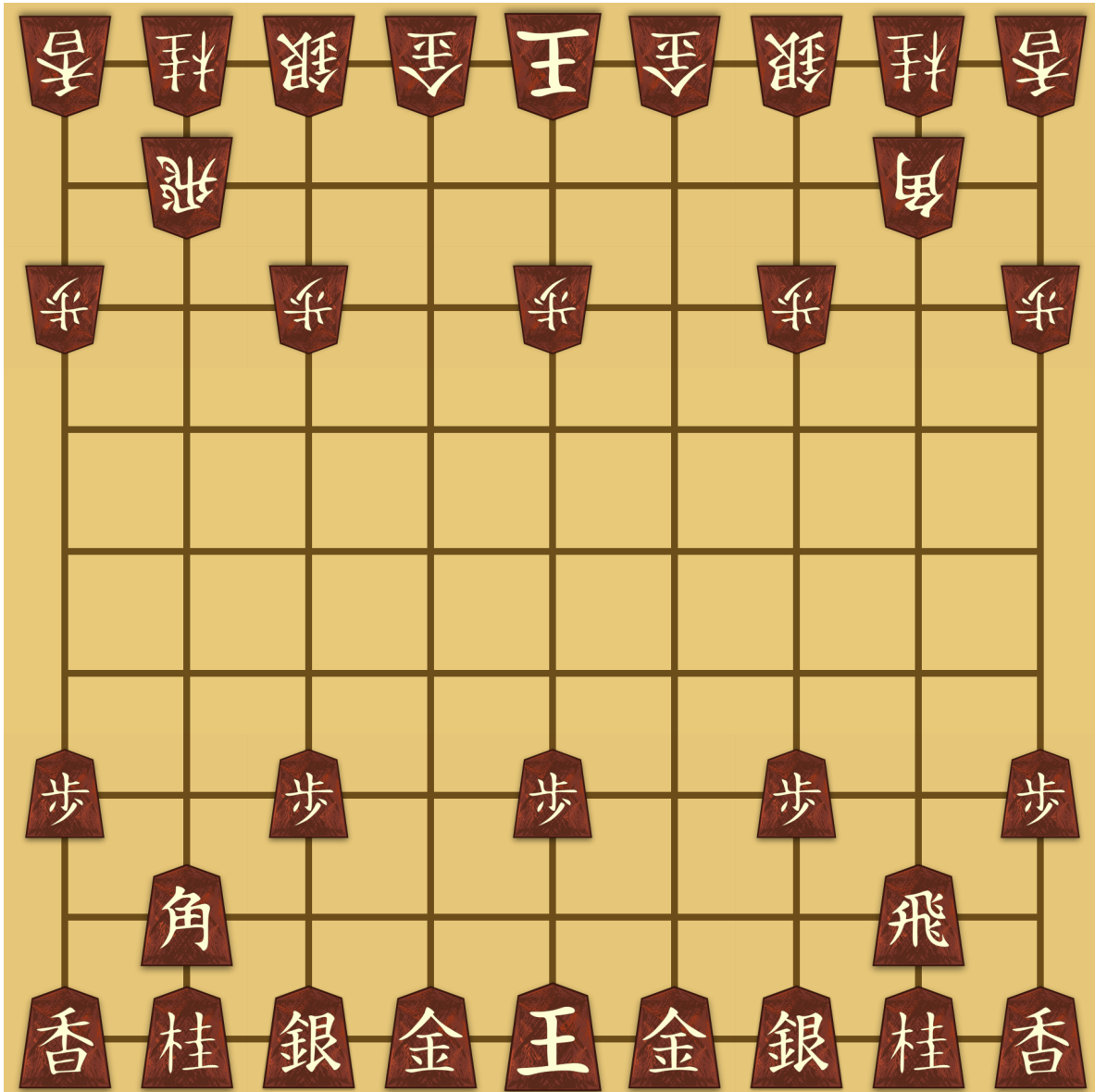
SHOGI · VARIANT 50 OF 24

Cannon Shogi

9×9
BOARD

2
PLAYERS

CANNON SHOGI



Cannon Shogi — starting position

<https://engine.moddable.games/play/?game=shogi&variant=cannon-shogi>

Cannon Shogi is a Shogi variant invented by Peter Michaelson in February 1998. The starting setup is the same as standard Shogi with two modifications: the nine Pawns on rank 3 are replaced by **five Soldiers** (in the Janggi style), and four Cannons of different types are placed in rank 2 between the Bishop and Rook positions.

SETUP

Board: Standard 9×9 grid.

Starting position:

RANK	CONTENTS
Rank 1 — Gote back	Lance · Knight · Silver · Gold · King · Gold · Silver · Knight · Lance
Rank 2 — Gote	Rook(b) · Copper Cannon© · Iron Cannon(d) · Gold Cannon(f) · Silver Cannon(g) · Bishop(h)
Rank 3 — Gote Soldiers	Soldier(a) · Soldier© · Soldier(e) · Soldier(g) · Soldier(i)
Ranks 4–6	Empty
Rank 7 — Sente Soldiers	Soldier(a) · Soldier© · Soldier(e) · Soldier(g) · Soldier(i)
Rank 8 — Sente	Bishop(b) · Silver Cannon© · Gold Cannon(d) · Iron Cannon(f) · Copper Cannon(g) · Rook(h)
Rank 9 — Sente back	Lance · Knight · Silver · Gold · King · Gold · Silver · Knight · Lance

Sente (Black) moves first.

SFEN: lnschkgsnl/1rciluab1/p1p1p1p1p/9/9/9/P1P1P1P1P/1BAU1ICR1/LNSGKGSNL [-] b - 1

(Cannon letter assignments: A/a = Silver Cannon, U/u = Gold Cannon, I/i = Iron Cannon, C/c = Copper Cannon. P/p here denotes Soldier, not Pawn. Standard pieces: B/b = Bishop, R/r = Rook, L/l = Lance, N/n = Knight, S/s = Silver General, G/g = Gold General, K/k = King.)

PIECES

Soldier (S/P): Moves and captures one square **forward or sideways** (left/right). Cannot move diagonally or backward. This is the Janggi Soldier movement. Drop rules from standard Shogi do not apply to Soldiers: two Soldiers may occupy the same file, Soldier-drop checkmate is legal, Soldiers may be dropped on the last rank. Soldiers promote to **Tokin** (Gold General movement) on reaching the promotion zone.

Gold Cannon (GC/U): Slides any number of squares orthogonally. To **capture**, must jump over exactly one intervening piece (the screen), landing on the target. Movement without capturing is free — no screen needed. This is the Xiangqi Cannon.

Silver Cannon (SC/A): Moves orthogonally, but **both movement and capture** require jumping over exactly one intervening piece. It cannot slide to an empty square without a screen; it always jumps. Note: unlike in Janggi, Silver Cannons may jump over and capture other Cannons. This is the Janggi Cannon.

Copper Cannon (CC/C): Diagonal version of the Gold Cannon. Slides any number of squares diagonally. To capture, must jump over exactly one piece on the diagonal. Movement without capturing is free.

Iron Cannon (IC/I): Diagonal version of the Silver Cannon. Both movement and capture require jumping over exactly one piece diagonally. Cannot move diagonally to an empty square without a screen.

All four Cannons promote to **Flying** versions in the promotion zone:

BASE	PROMOTED	ADDED MOVEMENT
Gold Cannon	Flying Gold Cannon	Also: Gold Cannon + Silver Cannon powers combined orthogonally; one step diagonally, jumping over any adjacent diagonal piece
Silver Cannon	Flying Silver Cannon	Same as Flying Gold Cannon
Copper Cannon	Flying Copper Cannon	Copper + Iron Cannon combined diagonally; one step orthogonally, jumping over any adjacent orthogonal piece
Iron Cannon	Flying Iron Cannon	Same as Flying Copper Cannon

RULES

All standard Shogi rules apply except as noted. Drops, the standard promotion zone (ranks 7–9 for Sente), and all other mechanics are unchanged. Soldiers replace Pawns for drop purposes: apply the Nifu and related rules to Soldiers as you would to Pawns in standard Shogi, **except** the special Soldier relaxations noted above.

WIN CONDITIONS

Checkmate the opponent's King. Stalemate is a loss for the player who cannot move.

ATTRIBUTION

Cannon Shogi was invented by Peter Michaelсен (February 1998). Public domain. Rules documented from pychess.org/variants/cannonshogi.

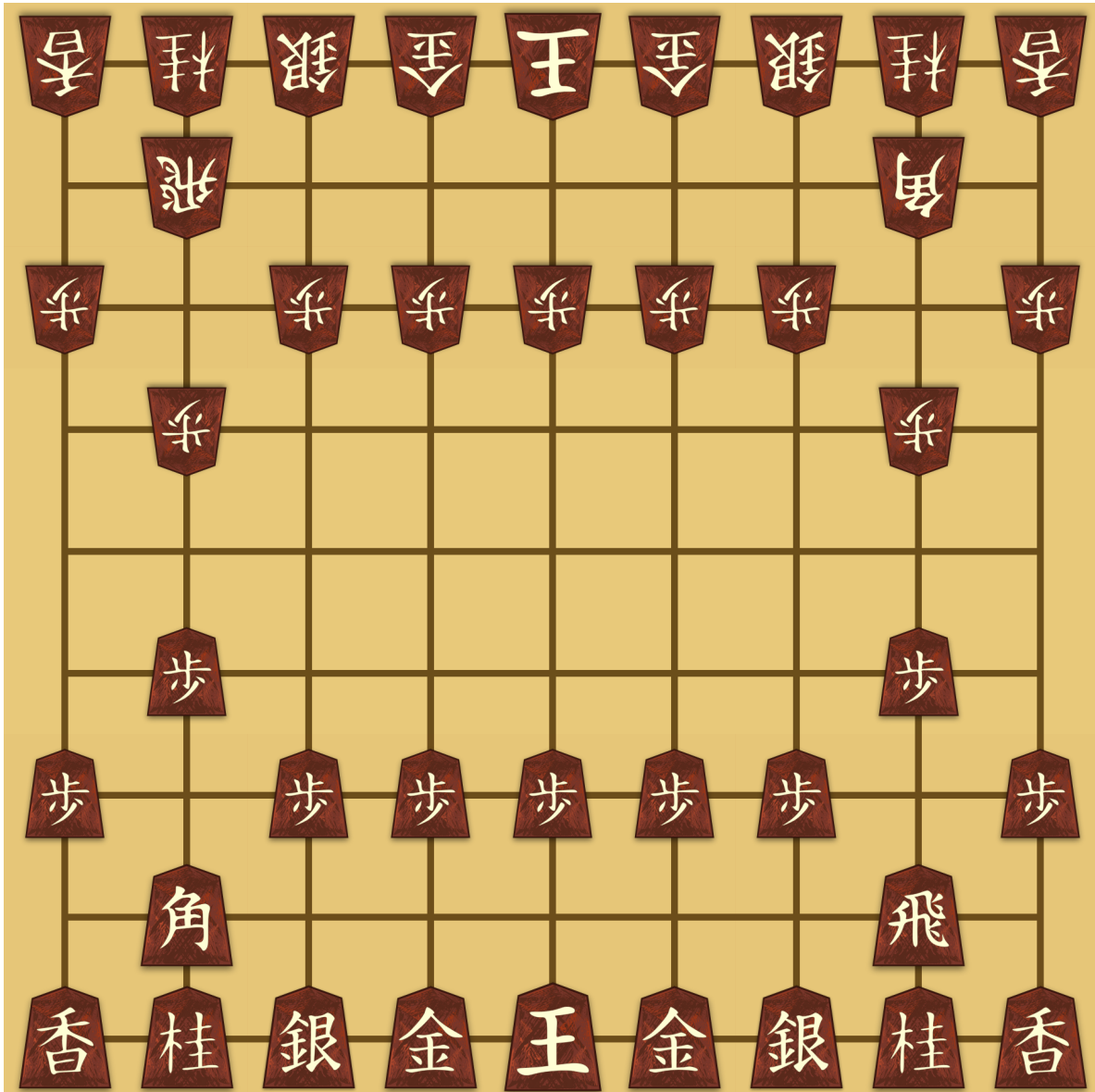
SHOGI · VARIANT 7 OF 24

Annan Shogi

9×9
BOARD

2
PLAYERS

OVERVIEW



Annan Shogi — starting position

<https://engine.moddable.games/play/?game=shogi&variant=annan-shogi>

Annan Shogi (), also called Korean Shogi, is a popular Shogi variant in Japan. All standard Shogi rules apply with one key change: each piece borrows the movement of the friendly piece immediately behind it.

SETUP

Nearly identical to standard Shogi, but the pawn in front of each player's Rook and the pawn in front of each player's Bishop are each shifted one rank toward the center. This prevents those pawns from wielding sliding-piece power on the very first move.

SFEN: `lnsgkgsnl/1r5b1/p1ppppp1p/1p5p1/9/1P5P1/P1PPPPP1P/1B5R1/LNSGKGSNL b - 1`

Reading from White's home rank (rank a) to Black's home rank (rank i), files 9→1:

RANK	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
a									
b	—		—	—	—	—	—		—
c		—						—	
d	—		—	—	—	—	—		—
e	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
f	—		—	—	—	—	—		—
g		—						—	
h	—		—	—	—	—	—		—
i									

 = White (Gote).  = Black (Sente). White's displaced pawns are at d8 and d2; Black's displaced pawns are at f8 and f2.

BORROWED MOVEMENT

When a piece has a friendly piece on the square directly behind it (one rank toward that player's home side), the front piece moves and captures exactly like the rear piece instead of its own. The rear piece is unaffected.

- ♦ A piece with **no friendly piece directly behind it** moves with its own normal movement.
- ♦ The borrowed movement is recalculated continuously; moving the rear piece away immediately restores the front piece's own movement.
- ♦ Borrowed movement stacks through the chain: if piece A is behind piece B which is behind piece C, piece C borrows from B and B borrows from A, but C does not borrow from A.

Example: A Pawn with a Rook directly behind it moves and attacks along the full rank or file like a Rook, for as long as the Rook remains on that square.

DIFFERENCES FROM STANDARD SHOGI

Multiple pawns on a file: A Pawn may maneuver (via borrowed lateral movement) onto a file already holding a friendly Pawn; such a position is legal. However, dropping a Pawn onto a file that already contains a friendly Pawn remains illegal.

Far-rank drops and moves: In standard Shogi, Pawns, Lances, and Knights cannot be placed on squares where they would be permanently immobile. In Annan Shogi, because borrowed movement can provide an escape, these pieces may be moved to or dropped onto any square, including ranks where they would normally lack movement.

Resolving check: Check may be resolved in three ways: (1) move the King, (2) capture or block the checking piece, or (3) capture the piece directly behind the checker, provided doing so eliminates the check by removing the borrowed movement that produced it.

DROPS

Standard Shogi drop rules with the following modifications:

- ♦ Pawns, Knights, and Lances may be dropped onto any rank.
- ♦ A Pawn may not be dropped onto a file that already contains a friendly Pawn (nifu prohibition applies to drops only, not to moved pieces).
- ♦ A drop that delivers immediate checkmate with a Pawn (uchifu-zume) remains illegal.

PROMOTION

Standard Shogi promotion rules apply. A piece may promote upon entering, leaving, or moving within the opponent’s promotion zone (the three ranks farthest from the owning player). Promotion is optional. Pieces that have borrowed movement to reach a far rank are not forced to promote simply because they reached it; the promotion option arises normally.

Promotion table:

PIECE	PROMOTES TO
Pawn (♁)	Token — moves as Gold
Lance (♁)	Promoted Lance — moves as Gold
Knight (♁)	Promoted Knight — moves as Gold
Silver (♁)	Promoted Silver — moves as Gold
Bishop (♁)	Dragon Horse — Bishop + one step orthogonal
Rook (♁)	Dragon King — Rook + one step diagonal
Gold (♁)	Does not promote
King (♁ / ♀)	Does not promote

SHOGI · VARIANT 8 OF 24

Chu Shogi

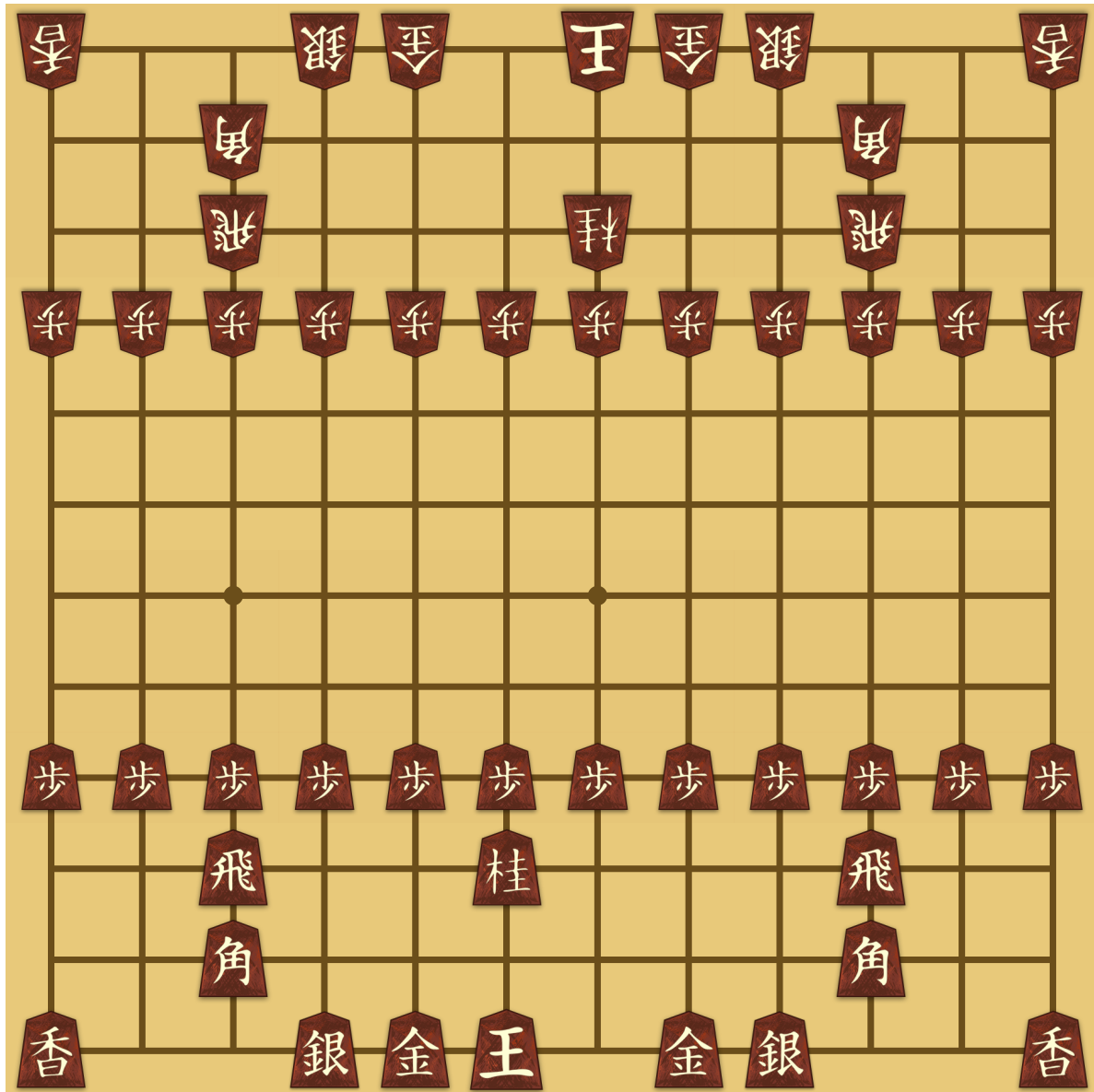
12×12
BOARD

2
PLAYERS

Chu Shogi

Chu Shogi (中將棋, Middle Shogi). First documented ~1350 AD. The dominant form of chess in Japan for centuries until modern Shogi replaced it.

OVERVIEW



Chu Shogi — starting position

<https://engine.moddable.games/play/?game=shogi&variant=chu-shogi>

Chu Shogi is played on a 12×12 board with 46 pieces of 21 different types per side. Unlike modern Shogi, there are no drops. The defining piece is the **Lion**, a double-move piece so powerful that special rules govern its capture to prevent quick trades.

Win condition: Capture all of the opponent’s royal pieces. There is no check or checkmate — the game continues until the last royal is captured. Stalemate is assumed to be a win for the side delivering it.

STARTING SETUP

Pieces are listed by file (a–l = left to right from White’s perspective) and rank. White occupies ranks 1–5, Black mirrors on ranks 8–12.

RANK 1 (BACK RANK)

SQUARE	PIECE	MOVEMENT (BETZA)
a1, l1	Lance	fR (forward slide only)
b1, k1	Ferocious Leopard	FvW (diagonal step + vert. step)
c1, j1	Copper General	fFvW (fwd diagonal + vert. step)
d1, i1	Silver General	FfW (diagonal + fwd step)
e1, h1	Gold General	WfF (orthogonal + fwd diagonal)
f1	King	K (one step any direction)
g1	Drunk Elephant	FfsW (diagonal + fwd/side step)

RANK 2

SQUARE	PIECE	MOVEMENT (BETZA)
a2, l2	Reverse Chariot	vR (vertical slide only)
c2, j2	Bishop	B (diagonal slider)
e2, h2	Blind Tiger	FbsW (diagonal + back/side step)
f2	Kirin	FD (diagonal step + Dabbaba leap)
g2	Phoenix	WA (orthogonal step + Alfil leap)

RANK 3

SQUARE	PIECE	MOVEMENT (BETZA)
a3, l3	Side Mover	sRvW (sideways slide + vert. step)
b3, k3	Vertical Mover	vRsW (vert. slide + side step)
c3, j3	Rook	R (orthogonal slider)
d3, i3	Dragon Horse	BW (Bishop + ortho. step)
e3, h3	Dragon King	RF (Rook + diagonal step)
f3	Lion	KNAD (see below)
g3	Queen	Q (Rook + Bishop)

RANKS 4–5

SQUARE	PIECE	MOVEMENT
a4–l4	Pawn	fW (forward single step)
d5, i5	Go Between	vW (vertical step, either direction)

KEY PIECES

LION

The Lion makes up to **two moves per turn**, independently in any direction (even changing direction after the first). It may:

- ♦ Move or capture to any square within a 5×5 area around it
- ♦ Capture a piece, then move or capture again as a King
- ♦ Move to an adjacent empty square and return (passing the turn)
- ♦ Hop over a square (if moving to the same destination in one leap, with the middle square occupied)

KIRIN

Leaps diagonally one square (Ferz) OR leaps exactly two squares orthogonally (Dabbaba). Promotes to **Lion**.

PHOENIX

Moves one square orthogonally (Wazir) OR leaps exactly two squares diagonally (Alfil). Promotes to **Queen**.

DRUNK ELEPHANT

Moves one step diagonally in any direction, or one step forward/sideways orthogonally (cannot step backward). Promotes to **Prince** (a second King).

PROMOTION

Promotion is **optional** and occurs when a piece **enters** the promotion zone (the four ranks farthest from the player: ranks 9–12 for White). A piece can also promote when it **captures** inside the zone. Each piece may promote **at most once** regardless of its position.

Pawns may promote even without a capture upon reaching the last rank.

King, Lion, and Queen do not promote.

PIECE	PROMOTES TO	PROMOTED MOVE
Pawn	Gold General	WfF
Gold General	Rook	R
Rook	Dragon King	RF
Dragon King	Soaring Eagle	RbBfFfA + limited Lion power fwd
Silver General	Vertical Mover	vRsW
Vertical Mover	Flying Ox	BvR
Copper General	Side Mover	sRvW
Side Mover	Free Boar	BsR
Ferocious Leopard	Bishop	B
Bishop	Dragon Horse	BW
Dragon Horse	Horned Falcon	BbsRfWfD + limited Lion power fwd
Lance	White Horse	vRfB
Reverse Chariot	Whale	vRbB
Blind Tiger	Flying Stag	FbWfsW
Drunk Elephant	Prince (royal)	K
Go Between	Elephant (= Drunk Elephant)	FfsW
Phoenix	Queen	Q
Kirin	Lion	KNAD

Horned Falcon and **Soaring Eagle** have limited Lion power in one/two directions respectively: they may make two consecutive steps along the same ray, continuing after a capture.

PRINCE (TWO ROYAL PIECES)

A Drunk Elephant that promotes becomes a **Prince** — a second royal King. When a player has two royals, losing one is non-fatal; only losing the **last** royal loses the game.

LION CAPTURE RESTRICTIONS

To prevent quick Lion trades, two rules apply:

- 1 **No protected trade:** A Lion may not capture a protected enemy Lion if doing so exposes it to recapture (as if it were an absolute royal for one move).
 - ♦ Exception: A Lion may always capture an adjacent enemy Lion (which could take it “in passing” regardless).
- ♦ Exception: A Lion capturing the enemy Lion together with at least one other non-trivial piece (not a Pawn or Go Between) may do so even if exposed to recapture.
- 1 **Counter-strike rule:** A non-Lion may not capture the enemy Lion if on the immediately preceding turn the enemy captured a friendly Lion using a non-Lion.
 - ♦ Exception: Promotion to Lion during such a capture allows the fresh Lion to be recaptured.

REPETITION RULES

Repeating a position (same side to move) is forbidden. Per the Japanese Chu Shogi Association:

- ♦ Perpetual check: the checking side must vary.
- ♦ If only one side is attacking with all moves since the prior occurrence, the attacker must vary.
- ♦ If both sides are only passing, the side that began passing must vary.
- ♦ If neither side attacks anything, a draw may be claimed.
- ♦ Otherwise, the side whose move caused the repetition loses.

(Rules trigger on the 4th repetition, as in modern Shogi.)

BARING RULE

King + any piece vs. lone King is a win, by convention, for the stronger side. Some interpretations extend this to a full bare-king rule (any pieces remaining = win), but this is disputed.

Source: chessvariants.com/rules/chu-shogi (H.G. Muller)

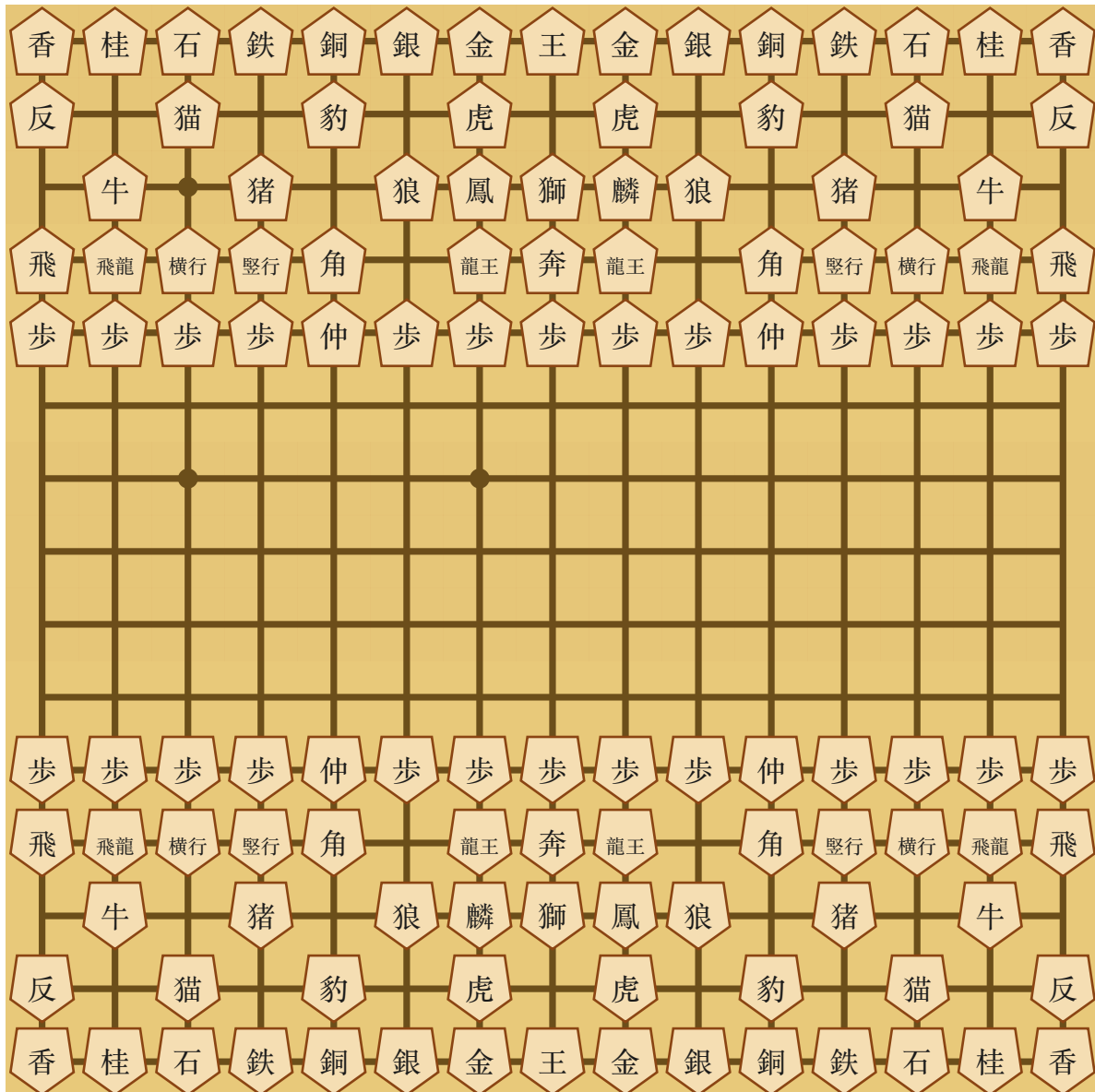
SHOGI · VARIANT 9 OF 24

Dai Shogi

15×15
BOARD

2
PLAYERS

DAI SHOGI



Dai Shogi — starting position

<https://engine.moddable.games/play/?game=shogi&variant=dai-shogi>

Dai Shogi (大將棋, “Large Chess”) is a historical Japanese chess variant played on a 15×15 board with 65 pieces per side. It is the direct predecessor of Chu Shogi and was played in Japan during the medieval period. Compared to Chu Shogi, Dai Shogi has 16 extra piece types (all promoting to Gold General) and plays significantly longer due to the larger board and slower steppers.

STARTING POSITION

Pieces occupy ranks 1–5 (Sente) and ranks 11–15 (Gote), mirrored.

Rank 1 (left to right, files a–o): Lance · Knight · Stone General · Iron General · Copper General · Silver General · Gold General · King · Gold General · Silver General · Copper General · Iron General · Stone General · Knight · Lance

Rank 2: Reverse Chariot (a2, o2) · Cat Sword (c2, m2) · Ferocious Leopard (e2, k2) · Blind Tiger (g2, i2) · Drunk Elephant (h2)

Rank 3: Violent Ox (b3, n3) · Angry Boar (d3, l3) · Evil Wolf (f3, j3) · Kirin (g3) · Lion (h3) · Phoenix (i3)

Rank 4: Rook (a4, o4) · Flying Dragon (b4, n4) · Side Mover (c4, m4) · Vertical Mover (d4, l4) · Bishop (e4, k4) · Dragon Horse (f4, j4) · Dragon King (g4, i4) · Free King (h4)

Rank 5 (Pawn rank): Go-Betweens at e5 and k5; Pawns on all other 13 files of rank 5.

PIECES

Most pieces are directional sliders or steppers with ranges of infinite, 2, or 1 (step). Key unique pieces:

Lion (h3): Double-mover. Makes up to 2 King steps per turn, changing direction freely, including returning to the starting square. Can jump on the first step. May annihilate an adjacent enemy (step there and step back without moving), make a hit-and-run (annihilate and continue to an adjacent empty square), or make a double capture.

Kirin (g3): Leaps to the first diagonal square or the second orthogonal square (FD).

Phoenix (i3): Leaps to the first orthogonal square or the second diagonal square (WA).

Drunk Elephant (h2): Steps in all directions except straight backward (FfsW). Promotes to Crown Prince.

Go-Between (e5, k5): Steps vertically only (vW). Promotes to Drunk Elephant.

Flying Dragon (b4, n4): Leaps to the second diagonal square in any direction (F2).

Ferocious Leopard (e2, k2): Steps diagonally or vertically (FvW).

Blind Tiger (g2, i2): Steps diagonally or sideways-backward (FbsW).

PROMOTION

Pieces may promote upon entering the promotion zone (opponent's last 5 ranks, ranks 11–15 for Sente). Promotion is optional unless the piece would have no legal moves in unpromoted form. Each piece promotes at most once, to a predefined form:

Kirin → Lion · Phoenix → Free King · Dragon King → Soaring Eagle · Rook → Dragon King · Gold General → Rook · Pawn → Gold General · Dragon Horse → Horned Falcon · Bishop → Dragon Horse · Ferocious Leopard → Bishop · Vertical Mover → Flying Ox (BvR) · Silver General → Vertical Mover · Lance → White Horse (vRfB) · Reverse Chariot → Whale (vRbB) · Blind Tiger → Flying Stag (vRFsW) · Drunk Elephant → Crown Prince · Go Between → Drunk Elephant · Side Mover → Free Boar (BsR) · Copper General → Side Mover · Stone General → Gold General · Iron General → Gold General · Knight → Gold General · Angry Boar → Gold General · Cat Sword → Gold General · Evil Wolf → Gold General · Violent Ox → Gold General · Flying Dragon → Gold General

King, Lion, and Free King do not promote.

RULES

Win: Capture all opponent royal pieces. A player loses only when their last royal (King or Crown Prince) is captured.

Crown Prince / Extinction Royalty: The Drunk Elephant promotes to Crown Prince, a second royal King. A player with both King and Crown Prince can afford to lose one — they only lose when the last royal is taken.

No Check: There is no prohibition against moving into or remaining in check. Stalemate (by convention) is a win for the stalemating player.

No Drops: Captured pieces are permanently removed from the game.

Repetition: Repetition of position is forbidden. A player delivering perpetual check must deviate. A player perpetually chasing (opponent is always evading, not threatening) must also deviate. Purely positional repetitions with neither side attacking are draws.

ATTRIBUTION

Historical Japanese game, medieval period. Rules documented from chessvariants.com/rules/dai-shogi (H. G. Muller, 2015).

SHOGI · VARIANT 10 OF 24

Four Player Shogi

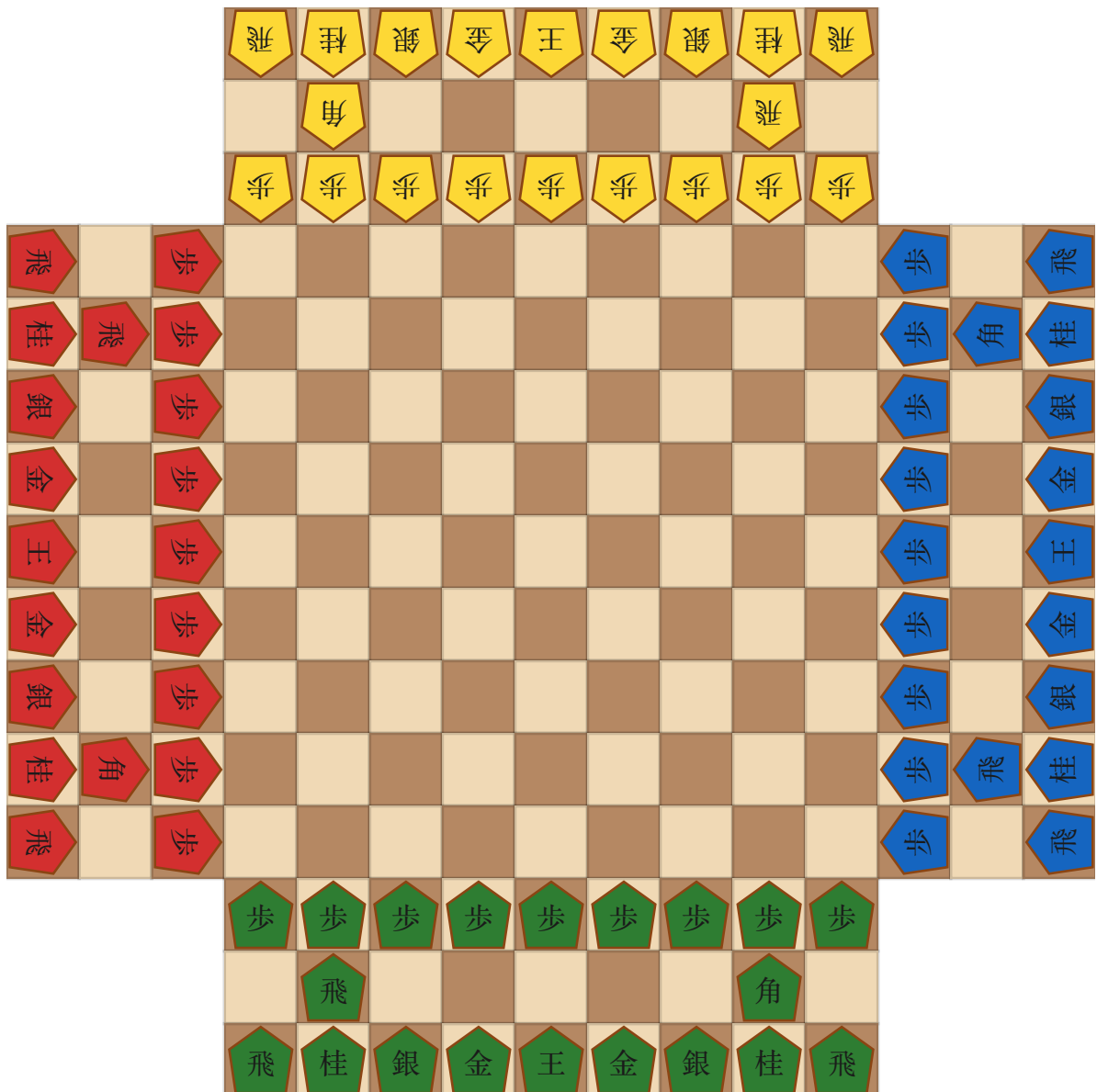
**cross-shaped, 189 squares (9×9 centre +
four 3×9 wings)**

BOARD

4

PLAYERS

FOUR PLAYER SHOGI



Four Player Shogi — starting position

<https://engine.moddable.games/play/?game=shogi&variant=four-player-shogi>

Four Player Shogi is a 4-player adaptation of standard Shogi designed by Michael Shipley in 1999. It is played on a cross-shaped board with a 9×9 central area and a 3×9 wing on each edge, giving 189 playable squares. The overall bounding box is 15×15 with the four 3×3 corner sections off the board.

STARTING POSITION

Each player occupies one 3×9 wing and commands a standard Shogi army, facing inward toward the centre.

North and South wings (back rank, inner to outer): Lance · Knight · Silver · Gold · King · Gold · Silver · Knight · Lance (back rank) · Rook and Bishop on 2nd rank (North: Rook on b-file, Bishop on h-file; South: Bishop on b-file, Rook on h-file) · 9 Pawns on 3rd rank.

East and West wings: Same army as North/South, but with **Rook and Bishop positions swapped** relative to North/South. (East: Bishop left, Rook right; West: Rook left, Bishop right, reading outward.)

No pieces may move through the 3×3 void squares at the four corners of the bounding box.

PIECE MOVEMENT

All pieces move as in standard Shogi:

- ♦ **Pawn:** one square forward
- ♦ **Lance:** any number of squares forward
- ♦ **Knight:** two squares forward + one square sideways (can jump)
- ♦ **Silver General:** one square diagonally or one square forward
- ♦ **Gold General:** one square orthogonally or one square diagonally forward
- ♦ **Bishop:** any number of squares diagonally
- ♦ **Rook:** any number of squares orthogonally
- ♦ **King:** one square in any direction

“Forward” is always toward the opponent’s side (inward toward the board centre, away from each player’s own wing).

PROMOTION

A player may promote a piece when it **enters, moves within, or leaves any opponent’s 3×9 wing**. A piece **must** promote if moved to a square from which it has no legal moves in unpromoted form.

Promoted movement follows standard Shogi:

- ♦ Pawn, Lance, Knight, Silver → move as Gold General
- ♦ Bishop → Dragon Horse (Bishop + one orthogonal step)
- ♦ Rook → Dragon King (Rook + one diagonal step)
- ♦ Gold General and King do not promote

DROPS

Captured pieces may be dropped on any empty square in lieu of a move, with restrictions:

- ♦ Pieces are always dropped in their unpromoted state.
- ♦ A piece may not be dropped where it would have no legal moves (e.g., a Pawn cannot be dropped on the opponent's back rank).
- ♦ A Pawn may not be dropped to give checkmate.
- ♦ A player may not have more than one unpromoted Pawn on the same file; therefore a player may never have more than 15 non-promoted Pawns on the board at once.
- ♦ **Pieces captured by a teammate cannot be transferred** — captured pieces belong only to the player who captured them.

GAME STYLES

Team-Orthogonal: North + South vs East + West. Turn order: North → East → South → West. Partners may not capture each other's pieces. A team wins when **both enemy Kings are in checkmate** simultaneously.

Team-Diagonal: North + East vs South + West. Turn order: North → South → East → West. Otherwise identical to Team-Orthogonal.

Individual: Each player fights all three others. Turn order: North → East → South → West. A player who checkmates an enemy King may capture that King on their next turn — the captured King is removed from play. Remaining pieces of the eliminated player stay on the board until captured; captured pieces in the eliminated player's hand are removed. The last player with a surviving King wins.

Alternative individual variant: Check is not announced and the King is treated as a normal piece that may be captured and dropped as an additional King. The game ends when one player possesses all four Kings.

ATTRIBUTION

Designed by Michael Shipley, 1999. Rules documented from chessvariants.com/shogivariants.dir/fourplayer.html.

SHOGI · VARIANT 11 OF 24

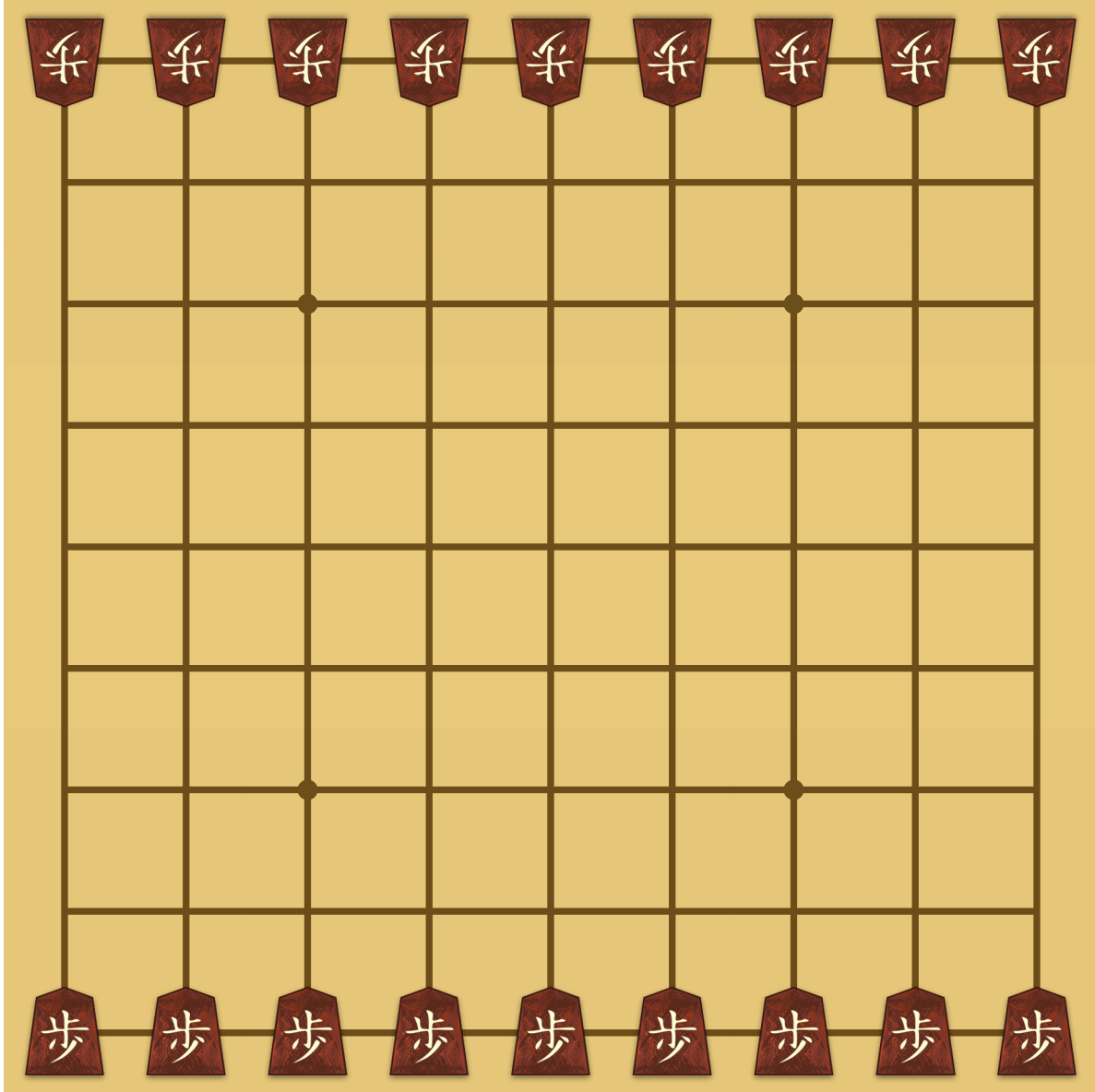
Hasami Shogi

9×9
BOARD

2
PLAYERS

HASAMI SHOGI

Hasami Shogi (はさみ将棋, “sandwiching chess”) is a distinct branch of the Shogi family with a single piece type, no drops, and no promotion. Capture is by sandwiching: a piece is removed when flanked on two opposite sides by the opponent. Ancient origin; public domain.



Hasami Shogi — starting position

<https://engine.moddable.games/play/?game=shogi&variant=hasami-shogi>

SETUP

Board: 9×9 grid, 81 squares.

Pieces: 9 per player, all identical. Player 1 places 9 pieces on the nearest rank; Player 2 places 9 pieces on the far rank.

RULES

Movement: Pieces move orthogonally any number of empty squares, in any direction. This is the same range as a Rook in chess. A piece cannot jump over another piece.

Capture (custodial sandwich): A piece is captured when an opponent moves a piece to flank it on two opposite sides along a row or column. The moving piece must close the trap: moving between two opponents does not capture the mover. One move may sandwich and capture multiple pieces simultaneously if several are flanked at once.

Corner capture: A piece on a corner square is captured when both adjacent squares (one on the row, one on the column) are occupied by opponent pieces.

Self-protection: A player cannot lose their own pieces on their own turn. If a move sandwiches a friendly piece between two opponents, that friendly piece is not captured.

No drops. No promotion.

WIN CONDITION

The player whose pieces are reduced to one remaining piece loses.

ATTRIBUTION

Hasami Shogi (Variant 1). Public domain. Sources: steventran619/Hasami-Shogi implementation documentation; ryan-gallagher-atx/Hasami-Shogi-Game (OSU CS162 final project); OlliePoole/Hasami-Shogi iOS implementation.

SHOGI · VARIANT 12 OF 24

Heian Shogi

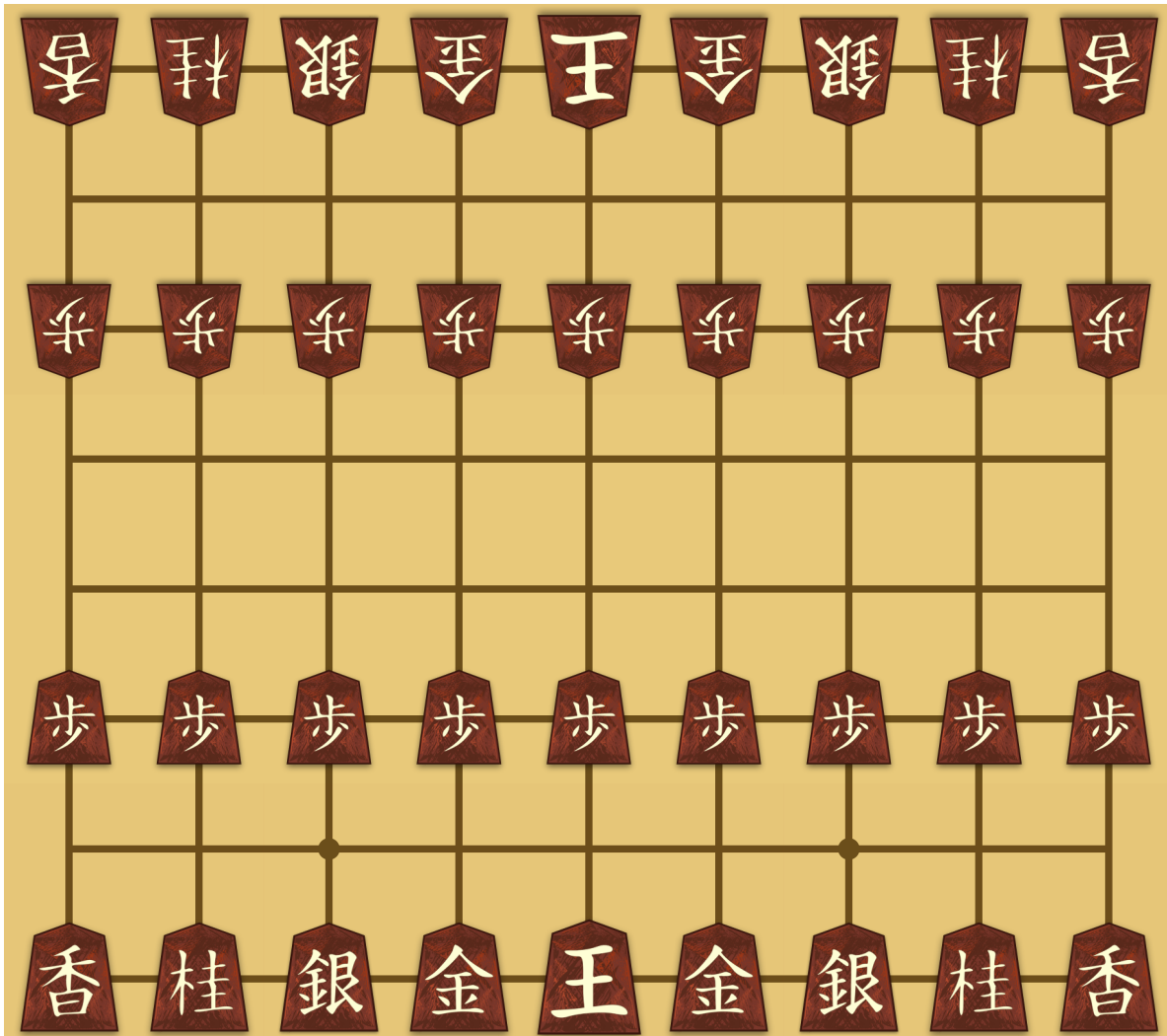
9×8
BOARD

2
PLAYERS

Heian Shogi

The earliest known form of Japanese chess, first documented in the *Nichureki* (1126–1130). Historically of the 8th–9th century. Primarily of historical interest.

OVERVIEW



Heian Shogi — starting position

<https://engine.moddable.games/play/?game=shogi&variant=heian-shogi>

Heian Shogi is played on a 9×8 board (9 files, 8 ranks) with 18 pieces per side. There are no Rooks, no Bishops, and no drops. All pieces (except the King) promote to Gold General upon reaching the promotion zone. The game is considerably slower than later Shogi variants.

SETUP

FEN: `lnsgkgsnl/9/ppppppppp/9/9/PPPPPPPPP/9/LNSGKGSNL w - - 0 1`

Back rank (White rank 1): Lance(a1), Knight(b1), Silver(c1), Gold(d1), King(e1), Gold(f1), Silver(g1), Knight(h1), Lance(i1)

Third rank (White rank 3): Pawns a3–i3 (9 pawns)

Black mirrors White's setup on the opposite side of the board.

PIECES

PIECE	MOVEMENT	PROMOTES TO
King	One step any direction	Does not promote
Gold General	One step ortho. or diagonally forward (not diag. backward)	Does not promote
Silver General	One step diagonally or straight forward (not sideways or backward)	Gold General
Knight	Forward L-shape only: 1 ortho. + 1 diag. forward (jumps over)	Gold General
Lance	Slides straight forward any distance (no backward or sideways)	Gold General
Pawn	One step straight forward	Gold General (Token)

The Knight is the only piece that can jump over other pieces.

PROMOTION

The **promotion zone** is the three ranks furthest from each player (White: ranks 6–8). Promotion to **Gold General** is optional at the end of a turn when the piece enters, moves within, or leaves the promotion zone, with these exceptions:

- ♦ A **Pawn** or **Lance** must promote upon reaching the last rank (rank 8 for White), as it could not otherwise make a legal move.
- ♦ A **Knight** must promote upon reaching the 2nd-to-last rank (rank 7 for White), as it could not otherwise make a legal move.

All promotions are to **Gold General** (or Token for Pawns, which is functionally identical).

WIN CONDITIONS

Checkmate: If a player's King is in check and no legal move can escape the check, that player loses.

Bare King (bareing): A player wins by capturing all of the opponent's pieces except the King. However, a bare King may secure a **draw** by also baring the opponent's King on the immediately following move.

No drops: Captured pieces are permanently removed from the game.

NOTES

The game was reconstructed from the *Nichureki* (1126–1130) and other historical sources. The *Nichureki* describes piece

- ♦ movements and states that all pieces promote to Gold General upon reaching the 3rd rank, and that baring the King wins the game.
-
- ♦ An 8×8 variant also exists but is less commonly reconstructed.
-
- ♦ Notation uses Japanese-style: files numbered 1–9 (right to left), ranks lettered a–h (top to bottom from Black's view).

Source: chessvariants.com/shogivariants.dir/heian.html; based on John Fairbairn, “Shogi History & the Variants,” *Shogi* magazine, September 1980

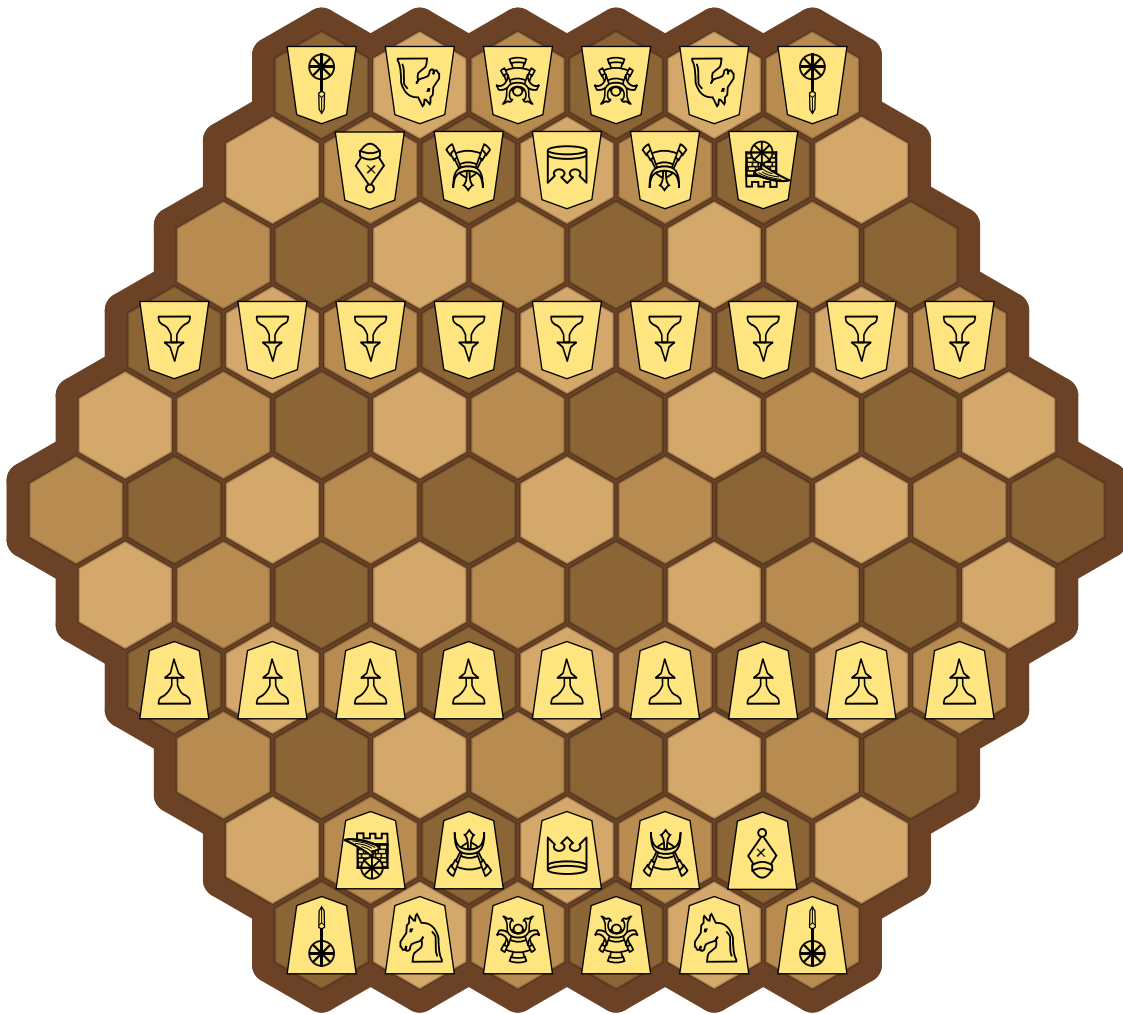
SHOGI · VARIANT 13 OF 24

Hex Shogi 91

91-cell hexagonal
BOARD

2
PLAYERS

HEX SHOGI 91



Hex Shogi 91 — starting position

<https://engine.moddable.games/play/?game=shogi&variant=hex-shogi-91>

Hex Shogi 91 is a Shogi variant for two players, played on a 91-hexagon board. It was invented by Fergus Duniho and is part of the Hex Shogi family of games. The board is the same shape used for Glinski's Hexagonal Chess and McCooey's Hexagonal Chess, but oriented differently. The game plays very much like Shogi, with pieces and rules adapted for the hexagonal board geometry.

BOARD

The board consists of 91 hexagonal cells. Movement on a hexagonal board differs from a square board: hexagons are **orthogonally adjacent** when they share a side (each hexagon has 6 orthogonal neighbours), and **diagonally adjacent** when connected at corners (not sharing sides). The board uses three colors so that orthogonally adjacent cells are never the same color and diagonally adjacent cells are always the same color — diagonal movement is colorbound.

DROPS AND PROMOTION

As in Shogi, captured pieces are held in hand and may be dropped on any empty square in lieu of a move. The following rules differ from standard Shogi:

- ♦ **No two-Pawn-per-file restriction:** The standard Shogi rule against dropping a Pawn on a file already occupied by a friendly Pawn is omitted, because Pawns have two forward directions on a hexagonal board and can share a file.
- ♦ **No Pawn drop to check:** Rather than Shogi's rule against checkmate by Pawn drop, Hex Shogi 91 uses the stricter rule: a Pawn may not be dropped to **check** (not just checkmate) the enemy King.
- ♦ **Promotion zone:** A piece may promote when it moves through, from, or into any of the **4 ranks** on the opponent's side of the board (rather than Shogi's 3 ranks).

PIECES AND MOVEMENT

All standard Shogi pieces are used, adapted for hexagonal movement:

King: Moves to any adjacent hexagon, orthogonal or diagonal — up to 12 possible squares. May not move into check. Does not promote.

Rook: Slides in a straight line along orthogonal directions. On the Hex Shogi 91 board this gives 6 directions (left, right, left-forward, right-forward, left-backward, right-backward). Promotes to **Dragon King** (Rook + one diagonal step).

Bishop: Slides in a straight line along diagonal directions. On this board this gives 6 directions including up and down — but remains colorbound despite this range. Promotes to **Dragon Horse** (Bishop + one orthogonal step).

Gold General: Moves one square in any orthogonal direction, plus one square in any diagonally forward direction — up to 9 squares. Does not promote.

Silver General: Moves one square in any diagonal direction, plus one square in any orthogonally forward direction — up to 8 squares. Promotes to a piece that moves like the Gold General.

Lance: Slides orthogonally forward only. On the hex board there are **two** forward directions, giving wider coverage than Shogi. Must promote upon reaching the last rank. Promotes to a piece that moves like the Gold General.

Knight: Leaps one square orthogonally forward, then one square diagonally outward (or equivalently: two steps in the same orthogonal-forward direction, then one step 60 degrees left or right). With two orthogonal-forward directions, a Knight can reach up to 4 squares. Must promote upon reaching either of the last two ranks. Promotes to Gold General movement.

Pawn: Moves and captures one square orthogonally forward. On the hex board there are **two** orthogonal-forward directions, so a Pawn can move to up to 2 squares. Must promote upon reaching the last rank. Promotes to **Tokin** (Gold General movement).

RULES

Win: Checkmate the opponent's King.

All other Shogi rules apply: no passing, Sente (Black) moves first, pieces promote at most once.

ATTRIBUTION

Designed by Fergus Duniho. Rules documented from chessvariants.com/hexagonal.dir/hexshogi/hexshogi91.html.

Note: The original build spec described this as a 3-player game. The actual game is 2-player.

SHOGI · VARIANT 14 OF 24

Judkins' Shogi

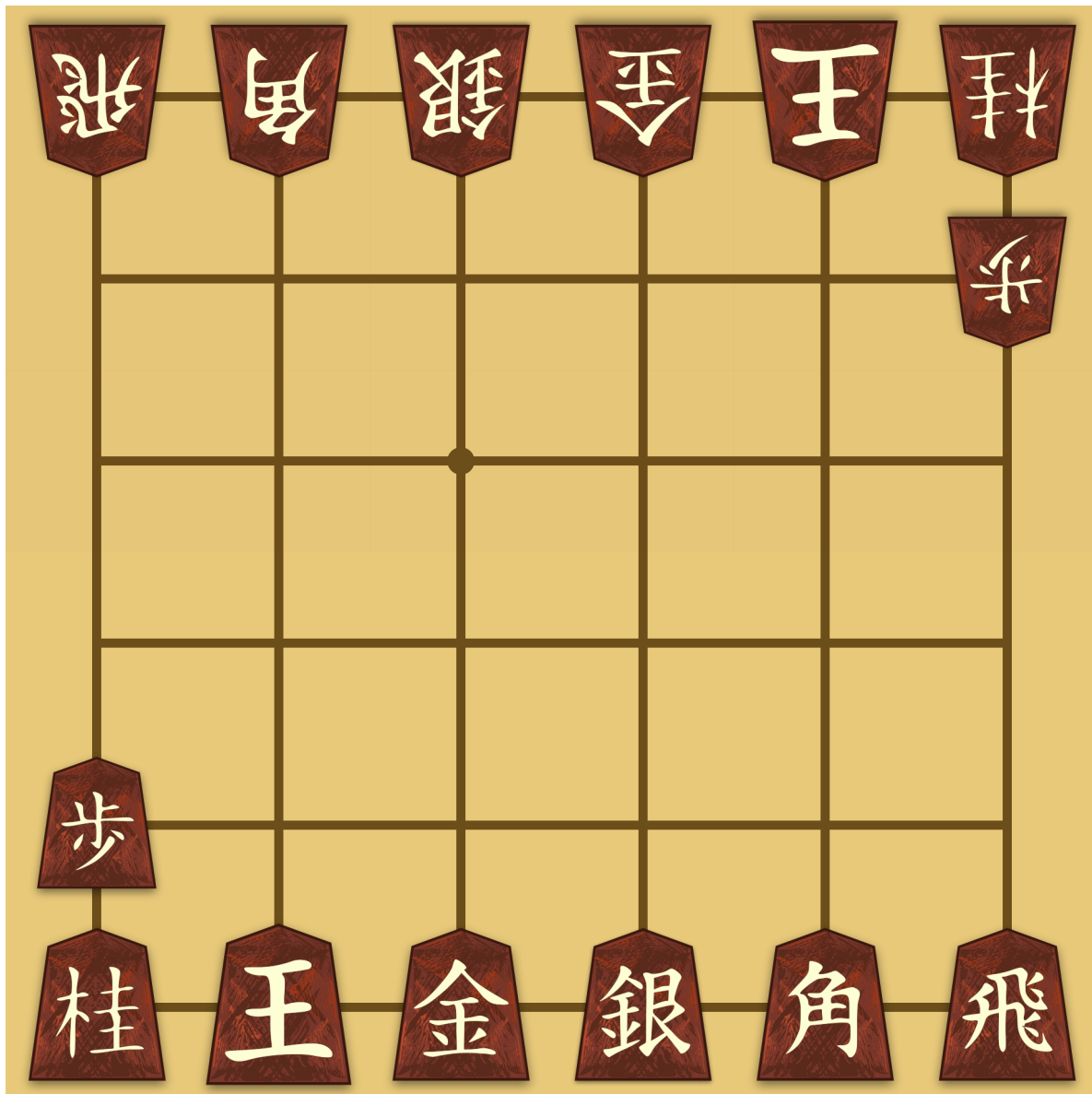
6×6
BOARD

2
PLAYERS

Judkins' Shogi

Modern miniature Shogi variant on a 6×6 board. Named after its inventor.

OVERVIEW



Judkins' Shogi — starting position

<https://engine.moddable.games/play/?game=shogi&variant=judkins-shogi>

Judkins' Shogi compresses modern Shogi onto a 6×6 board with 7 pieces per side, retaining drops. It plays very similarly to standard Shogi but in a much faster format.

SETUP

Each player has 7 pieces: King, Gold, Silver, Knight, Bishop, Rook, and one Pawn.

FEN: rbsgkn/5p/6/6/P5/NKGSBR w - - 0 1

(Approximate; pawn is on the square directly in front of the King)

White (rank 1, left to right): Rook(a1), Bishop(b1), Silver(c1), Gold(d1), King(e1), Knight(f1) **White (rank 2):** Pawn at e2 (directly in front of the King)

Black mirrors White on the opposite side of the board.

PIECES

All pieces move exactly as in standard Shogi:

PIECE	MOVEMENT	PROMOTES TO
King	One step any direction	Does not promote
Gold General	One step ortho. or diagonally forward	Does not promote
Rook	Slides ortho. any distance	Dragon (Rook + diagonal step)
Bishop	Slides diagonally any distance	Horse (Bishop + ortho. step)
Silver General	One step diagonally or straight forward	Gold General
Knight	Forward L-shape only (1+2 forward, jumps over)	Gold General
Pawn	One step straight forward	Gold General

PROMOTION

The **promotion zone** is the **last 2 ranks** (ranks 5–6 for White). Promotion is optional at the end of a turn when the move enters, moves within, or leaves the promotion zone, except:

- ♦ A Pawn must promote upon reaching rank 6 (the last rank), as it could not otherwise move.
- ♦ A Knight must promote upon reaching rank 5, as it could not otherwise move forward.

DROPS

Captured pieces are held in hand and may be dropped on any empty square on the player's turn, with these restrictions:

- ♦ A piece may not be dropped on a square from which it has no legal moves (Pawns cannot be dropped on the last rank).
- ♦ A Pawn may not be dropped into a file already containing an unpromoted friendly Pawn.
- ♦ A Pawn may not be dropped to give immediate checkmate.
- ♦ A piece dropped inside the promotion zone does **not** promote immediately; it may promote on a subsequent move.

All promoted pieces revert to their unpromoted form when captured and returned to hand.

Source: chessvariants.com/shogivariants.dir/judkin.html

SHOGI · VARIANT 15 OF 24

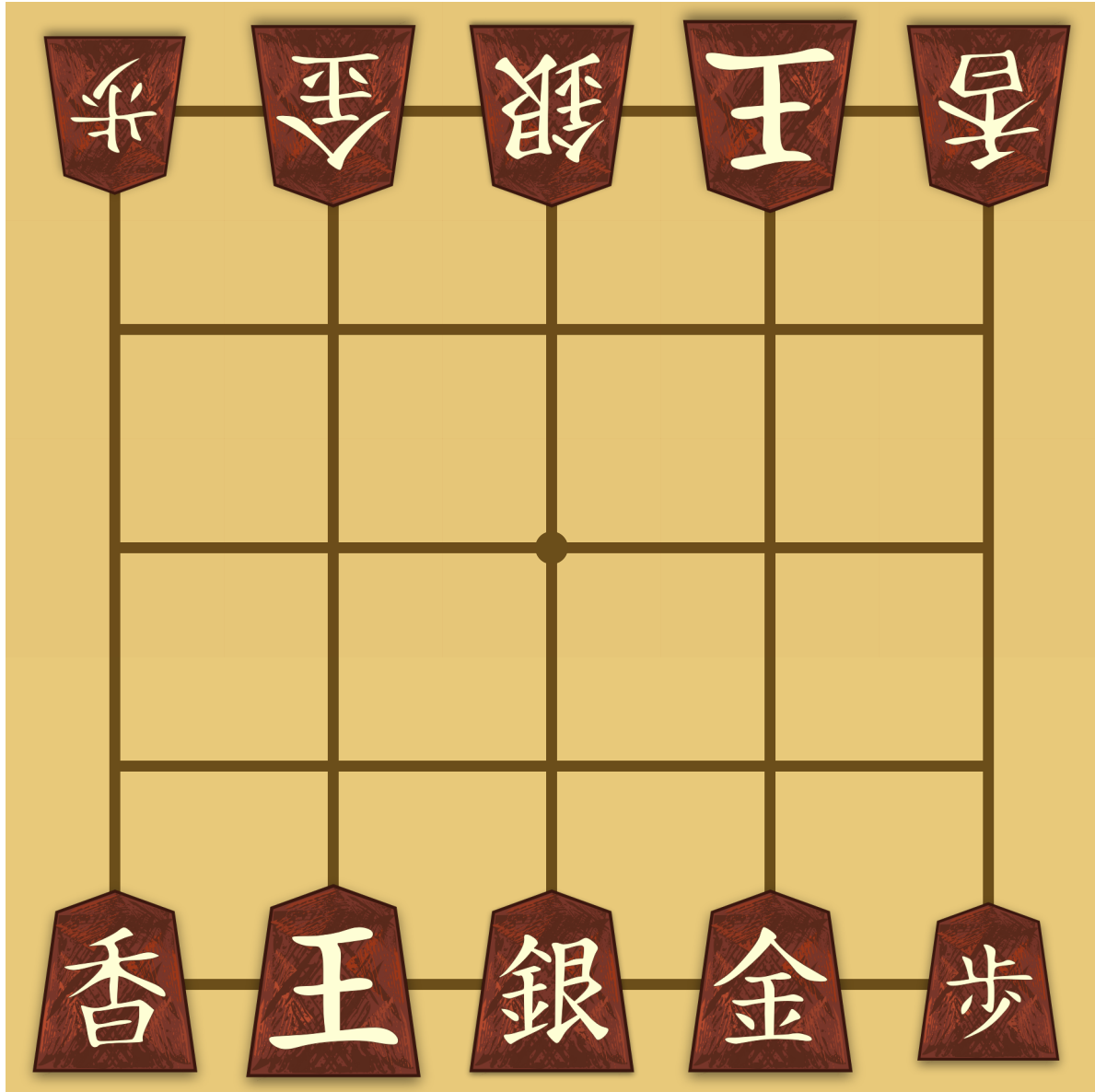
Kyoto Shogi

5×5
BOARD

2
PLAYERS

KYOTO SHOGI

Kyoto Shogi was invented by Tamiya Katsuya around 1976. It is played on a 5×5 board, and every piece except the King represents a pair: after each move, the moved piece must flip to show its other face. The game name plays on the pairing of the Japanese pronunciation of Kyoto (, Kyō-to) with piece name components. Public domain.



Kyoto Shogi — starting position

<https://engine.moddable.games/play/?game=shogi&variant=kyoto-shogi>

SETUP

Board: 5×5 grid, 25 squares.

Pieces per player: 5 (King + 4 dual-sided pieces).

Starting position:

PLAYER	RANK	PIECES (FILES 5–1, LEFT TO RIGHT)
White (top)	Rank 5	Pawn · Gold · King · Silver · Token
Black (bottom)	Rank 1	Token · Silver · King · Gold · Pawn

Black (Sente) moves first. The position is point-symmetric (180-degree rotation).

PIECE PAIRS

Each non-King piece has two faces. The piece flips to its alternate face after every move, mandatory.

FACE A	FACE B
Token (と)	Lance ()
Silver General ()	Bishop ()
Gold General ()	Knight ()
Pawn ()	Rook ()

Piece movements:

PIECE	MOVEMENT
King	One square in any direction
Token	One step orthogonally or diagonally forward (Gold General movement)
Lance	Any number of squares forward only
Silver General	One step diagonally, or one step forward
Bishop	Any number of squares diagonally
Gold General	One step orthogonally or diagonally forward
Knight	Jumps two squares forward and one sideways
Pawn	One step forward
Rook	Any number of squares orthogonally

THE FLIP RULE

After every move, the moved piece must flip to its alternate face. A piece may be moved to a square from which it would immediately have no legal move (for example, a Lance on the final rank that will flip to a Tokin on the next turn) — this is legal in Kyoto Shogi, unlike Standard Shogi.

DROPS

Captured pieces may be dropped back onto any empty square. When dropping, the player chooses which face of the pair to place face-up.

WIN CONDITION

Checkmate the opponent's King.

DRAWS

The same position occurring three times with the same player to move is a draw.

ATTRIBUTION

Kyoto Shogi. Invented by Tamiya Katsuya, c. 1976. Rules published freely since at least the 1980s; game mechanics are not copyrightable. Sources: pychess.org/variants/kyotoshogi; Fairy-Stockfish `variants.ini` engine definition.

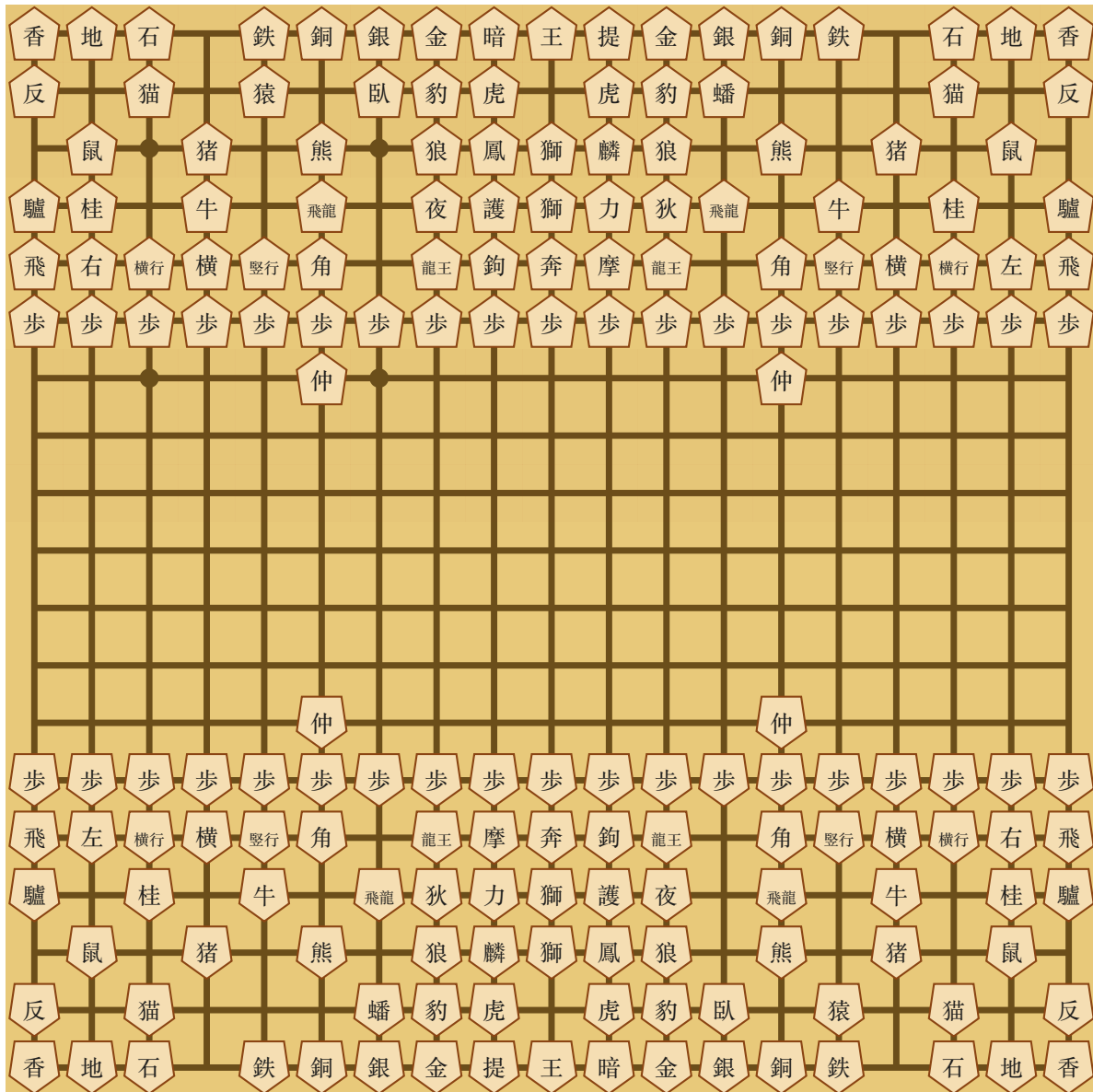
SHOGI · VARIANT 16 OF 24

Maka-Dai-Dai Shogi

19×19
BOARD

2
PLAYERS

MAKA-DAI-DAI SHOGI



Maka-Dai-Dai Shogi — starting position

<https://engine.moddable.games/play/?game=shogi&variant=maka-dai-dai-shogi>

Maka-Dai-Dai Shogi ([Maka-Dai-Dai Shogi](#), *Great Dai-Dai Chess*) is a historical Japanese Shogi variant played on a 19×19 board — the same dimensions as a Go board. Each side starts with 96 pieces of 50 different types (192 pieces total), making it double the size of Chu Shogi. No drops; captured pieces are permanently removed.

THE BOARD

19×19 grid. Standard Shogi orientation (sente at bottom). Files are labelled a–s (19 files); ranks 1–19. Pieces start on ranks 1–7 (Sente) and 13–19 (Gote); ranks 8–12 are empty at the start.

ROYALS

Three piece types are royal (their capture wins or advances the win condition):

- ♦ **King** (j1) — standard King; promotes to **Emperor** (universal leaper)
- ♦ **Drunk Elephant** (j2) — promotes to **Crown Prince** (royal King) on capture
- ♦ **Emperor** (promoted King) — cannot be captured if protected

Win: capture the opponent's last royal. If the opponent has both a King and a Crown Prince (promoted Drunk Elephant), both must be captured.

STARTING SETUP

Only Sente's side is given; Gote's setup is Sente's rotated 180°.

Rank 1 (back rank):

POSITION	PIECE	MOVEMENT	PROMOTES TO
a1, s1	Lance	Slides forward orthogonally	Gold General
b1, r1	Earth General	Steps 1 backward or forward orthogonally	Free (slider in each step direction)
c1, q1	Stone General	Steps 1 forward diagonally	Free
d1, p1	Tile General	Steps 1 forward diagonally or 1 backward orthogonally	Free
e1, o1	Iron General	Steps 1 forward orthogonally or forward diagonally	Free
f1, n1	Copper General	Steps 1 forward diagonally or 1 vertical	Free
g1, m1	Silver General	Steps 1 diagonally or 1 forward orthogonally	Free
h1, l1	Gold General	Steps 1 orthogonally or 1 forward diagonally	Free
i1	Deva	Steps 1 forward diagonally or 1 left or right or 1 forward left;	Teaching King
j1	King	Steps 1 in any direction	Emperor
k1	Dark Spirit	Steps 1 forward diagonally or 1 right or 1 left back	Buddhist Spirit

Rank 2:

POSITION	PIECE	MOVEMENT	PROMOTES TO
a2, s2	Reverse Chariot	Slides forward or backward orthogonally	Gold General
c2, q2	Cat Sword	Steps 1 diagonally	Free
e2	Chinese Cock	Steps 1 forward diagonally or 1 backward sideways	Wizard Stork (fRbWB)
g2	Coiled Serpent	Steps 1 backward diagonally or 1 vertical	Free
h2, l2	Ferocious Leopard	Steps 1 diagonally or 1 vertically	Free
i2, k2	Blind Tiger	Steps 1 diagonally or 1 backward sideways	Free
j2	Drunk Elephant	Steps 1 forward ortho/sideways or diagonal	Crown Prince (royal King)
m2	Reclining Dragon	Steps 1 orthogonally or 1 backward diagonally	Free
o2	Blind Monkey	Steps 1 diagonally or 1 backward orthogonally	Mountain Witch (bRfWB)

Rank 3:

POSITION	PIECE	MOVEMENT	PROMOTES TO
b3, r3	Old Rat	Leaps 2 forward diagonally or 2 backward orthogonally	Bat (fRbB)
d3, p3	Angry Boar	Steps 1 sideways	Free Boar (BsR)
f3, n3	Blind Bear	Steps 1 diagonally; slides backward orthogonally	Free Bear
h3, l3	Evil Wolf	Steps 1 forward diagonally or 1 forward orthogonally sideways	Free
i3	Kirin	Steps 1 diagonally; leaps 2 orthogonally	Great Dragon (sRvW ² F ³)
j3	Lion	Lion power (up to 2 King moves per turn; may capture twice; may pass)	Furious Fiend (Lion + Lion Dog)
k3	Phoenix	Steps 1 orthogonally; leaps 2 diagonally	Golden Bird (vRsW ² F ³)

Rank 4:

POSITION	PIECE	MOVEMENT	PROMOTES TO
a4, s4	Donkey	Leaps 2 orthogonally; steps 1 sideways	Gold General
c4, r4	Knight	Leaps 2 forward then 1 side (Shogi knight)	Gold General
e4, p4	Violent Ox	Steps 2 orthogonally	Gold General
g4, n4	Flying Dragon	Leaps 2 diagonally	Gold General
h4	Buddhist Devil	Steps 3 forward diagonally; steps 1 backward sideways	Gold General
i4	Wrestler	Steps 3 diagonally	Gold General
j4	Lion Dog	Up to 3 steps along any ray; may hop; may capture adjacent without moving	Gold General
k4	Guardian of the Gods	Steps 3 orthogonally; steps 1 forward diagonally	Gold General
l4	She-Devil	Steps 5 orthogonally; leaps 2 diagonally	Gold General

Rank 5:

POSITION	PIECE	MOVEMENT	PROMOTES TO
a5, s5	Rook	Slides orthogonally	Gold General
b5	Left Chariot	Slides forward ortho; steps 1 backward; slides left-forward and right-backward diagonally	Gold General
c5, q5	Side Mover	Slides sideways; steps 1 vertically	Gold General
d5, p5	Side Flyer	Leaps diagonally; slides sideways	Gold General
e5, o5	Vertical Mover	Slides vertically; steps 1 sideways	Gold General
f5, n5	Bishop	Slides diagonally	Gold General
g5, m5	Dragon Horse	Steps 1 orthogonally; slides diagonally	Does not promote
h5, l5	Dragon King	Steps 1 diagonally; slides orthogonally	Does not promote
i5	Capricorn	Bishop that may make one 90° turn in its path	Gold General
j5	Queen	Slides orthogonally or diagonally	Does not promote
k5	Hook Mover	Rook that may make one 90° turn in its path	Gold General
r5	Right Chariot	Slides forward ortho; steps 1 backward; slides right-forward and left-backward diagonally	Gold General

Ranks 6–7:

POSITION	PIECE	PROMOTES TO
a6–s6	Pawn (steps 1 forward orthogonally)	Gold General
f7, n7	Go-Between (steps 1 forward or backward orthogonally)	Free (slider version)

KEY PIECE DESCRIPTIONS

Lion: Moves up to twice per turn in independent directions. The second move may be a capture, pass, or hop. Can capture two pieces in one turn or pass its turn by moving to an adjacent empty square and back. The strongest piece in Chu Shogi; in Maka-Dai-Dai there are no restrictions on capturing Lions.

Lion Dog: Takes up to three steps along any ray through its position. Each step may be a move, capture, or hop. Can return to the starting square but cannot overshoot it. Effectively attacks up to 3 squares in any direction with line-of-sight modification.

Teaching King (promoted Deva): Moves as Lion Dog or Queen. Contagious: any piece that captures the Teaching King promotes to Teaching King (except royals, which promote to their own promoted form).

Buddhist Spirit (promoted Dark Spirit): Moves as Lion or Queen. Same contagious promotion rule as Teaching King.

Furious Fiend (promoted Lion): Moves as Lion Dog or Lion.

Emperor (promoted King): Universal Leaper — can move to any square on the board. Cannot capture a protected piece (any piece the opponent could recapture if play continued). Both Emperors can only capture each other if unprotected.

Hook Mover: A Rook that may make one 90° turn anywhere in its path (but is not required to turn). Like a Rook, it stops at the point of capture.

Capricorn: A Bishop that may make one 90° turn anywhere in its path.

PROMOTION

- ♦ Promotion may occur **anywhere on the board**, triggered by **making a capture** (not by entering a zone)
- ♦ Each piece has a fixed promoted form — there is no choice
- ♦ Promoted condition is **contagious for Teaching King and Buddhist Spirit**: any piece that captures TK or BS promotes to that piece (royals are immune, promoting to their own form instead)
- ♦ When capturing a promoted piece, you **must** promote
- ♦ When capturing an unpromoted piece, promotion is optional
- ♦ Promotion is irreversible
- ♦ The Deva and Dark Spirit (unpromoted) also trigger contagious promotion on capture

REPETITION

Repetition is forbidden. The convention (following Asian chess traditions) is that the player giving perpetual check or perpetually chasing must be the one to deviate.

ATTRIBUTION

Maka-Dai-Dai Shogi is a historical Japanese chess variant of unknown precise origin. Rules documented from chessvariants.com/rules/maka-dai-dai-shogi, authored by H. G. Muller.

SHOGI · VARIANT 17 OF 24

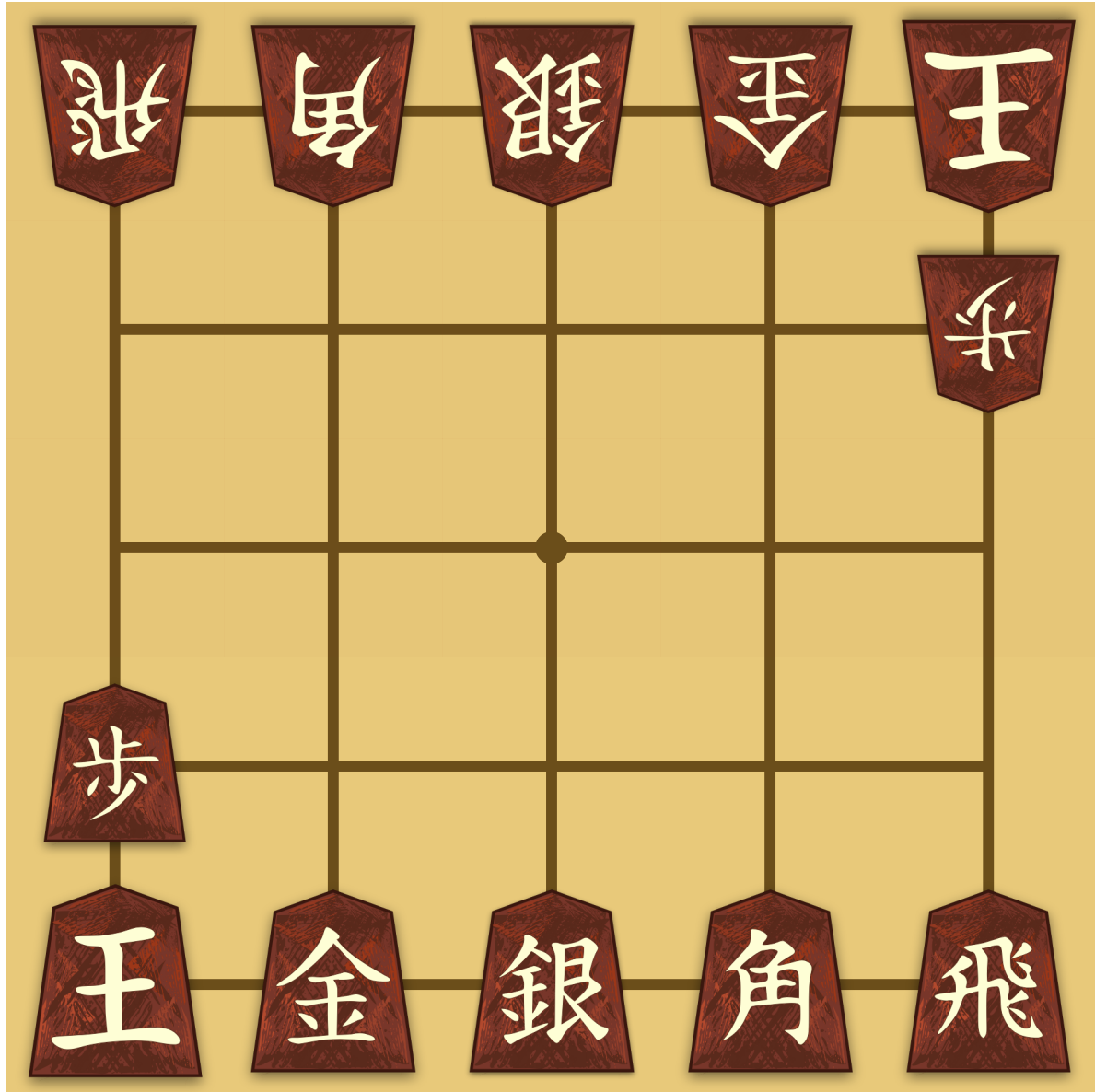
Minishogi

5×5
BOARD

2
PLAYERS

MINISHOGI

Minishogi was invented (or rediscovered) around 1970 by Shigenobu Kusumoto of Osaka, Japan. It applies Standard Shogi rules to a 5×5 board, reducing each player's force to five pieces and the promotion zone to the single back rank. Game mechanics are not copyrightable; the rules have been freely published for over 50 years.



Minishogi — starting position

<https://engine.moddable.games/play/?game=shogi&variant=minishogi>

SETUP

Board: 5×5 grid, 25 squares.

Pieces per player: 6 (King, Rook, Bishop, Gold General, Silver General, one Pawn). No Knights or Lances: the board is too small for their jump.

Starting position:

PLAYER	RANK	PIECES (FILES 5–1, LEFT TO RIGHT)
White (top)	Rank 5	Rook · Bishop · Silver · Gold · King
White	Rank 4	Pawn at file 1 only
Black (bottom)	Rank 1	King · Gold · Silver · Bishop · Rook
Black	Rank 2	Pawn at file 5 only

PIECES

PIECE	MOVEMENT
King	One square in any direction. Cannot move into check.
Rook	Any number of squares orthogonally.
Bishop	Any number of squares diagonally.
Gold General	One step orthogonally or diagonally forward. Six directions.
Silver General	One step diagonally, or one step forward. Five directions.
Pawn	One step directly forward.

PROMOTION

The promotion zone is the final rank only (rank 5 for Black, rank 1 for White). A piece may promote when it moves into or within the promotion zone. Promotion is mandatory when the Pawn reaches the final rank with no other legal move.

Promoted pieces:

BASE PIECE	MOVEMENT WHEN PROMOTED
Rook	Dragon King: Rook moves plus one square diagonally
Bishop	Dragon Horse: Bishop moves plus one square orthogonally
Silver General	Moves as Gold General
Pawn	Tokin: moves as Gold General

Kings and Gold Generals do not promote.

DROPS

The drop mechanic applies as in Standard Shogi. Captured pieces are held in hand and may be dropped onto any empty square on a later turn, unpromoted. Restrictions: no Pawn drop on a file already containing a friendly unpromoted Pawn; no Pawn drop for immediate checkmate; no drop where the piece would have no legal move.

WIN CONDITION

Checkmate the opponent's King. A player with no legal moves loses.

DRAWS

Sennichite: The same position (including pieces in hand) occurs four times with the same player to move. Draw. If caused by perpetual check, the checking side loses.

Impasse: Both Kings enter the promotion zone and neither can be mated. Count material: Rooks and Bishops score 5 points each; all others score 1 point each. A player with fewer than 24 points loses. If both reach 24 or more, the game is a draw.

ATTRIBUTION

Minishogi. Invented (or rediscovered) c. 1970 by Shigenobu Kusumoto of Osaka. Rules freely published since then; game mechanics are not copyrightable. Sources: pychess.org/variants/minishogi; Fairy-Stockfish variants.ini engine definition.

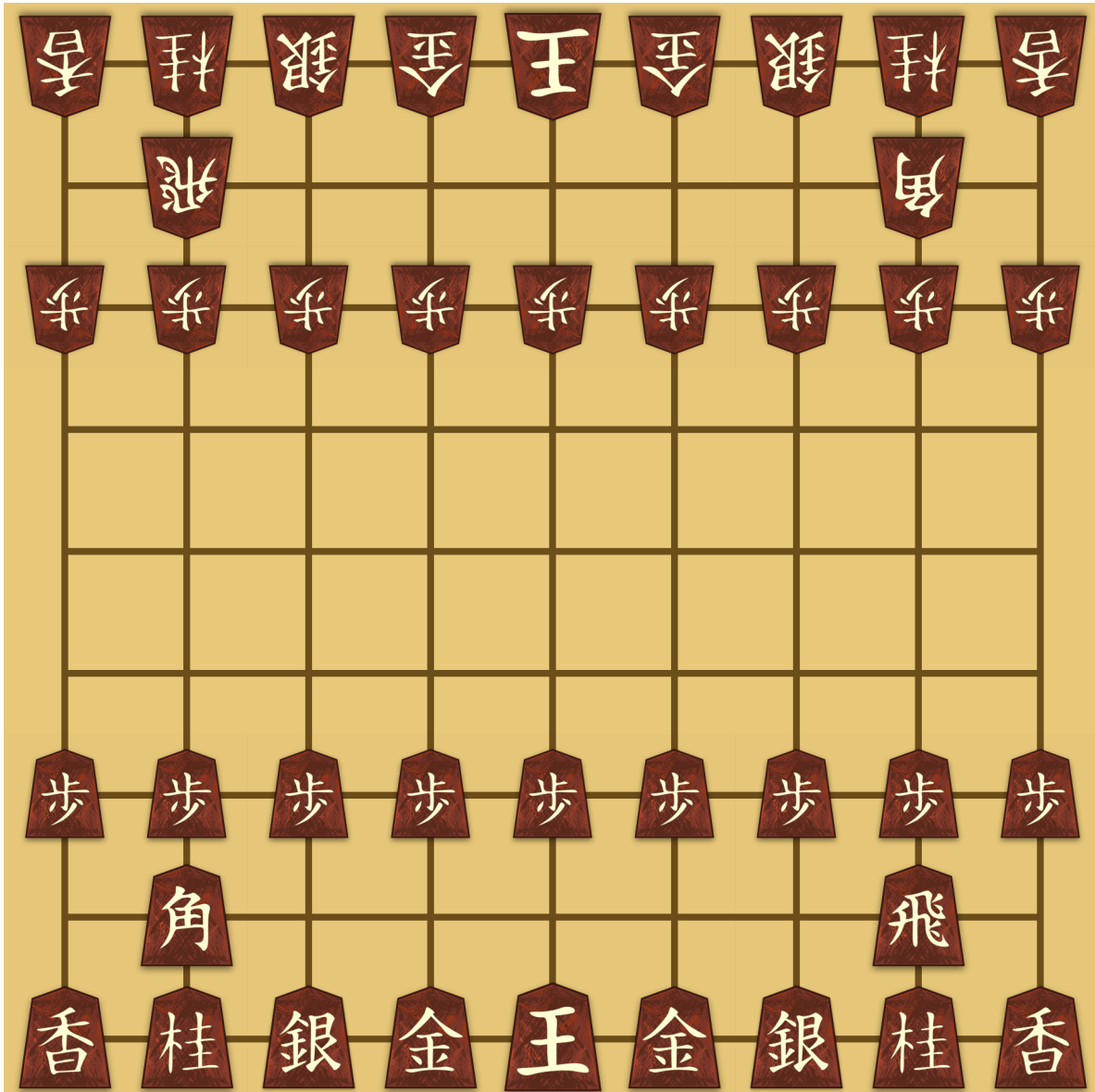
SHOGI · VARIANT 18 OF 24

Mortal Shogi

9×9
BOARD

2
PLAYERS

MORTAL SHOGI



Mortal Shogi — starting position

<https://engine.moddable.games/play/?game=shogi&variant=mortal-shogi>

Mortal Shogi is a modern Shogi variant created collaboratively by Roberto Lavieri and Fergus Duniho. It introduces **mortality** to Shogi pieces: instead of reverting to their original form when captured, pieces demote one rank down a fixed chain and change sides. When a Pawn is captured, it is removed from the game entirely.

STARTING POSITION

Identical to standard Shogi.

SFEN: lnsbkgsnl/1r5b1/ppppppppp/9/9/9/PPPPPPPP/1B5R1/LNSGKGSNL b - 1

PIECE RANKING AND DEMOTION

Pieces are ranked high to low. When a piece is captured, it demotes one step:

- 1 Dragon King → demotes to Dragon Horse
- 2 Dragon Horse → demotes to Rook
- 3 Rook → demotes to Bishop
- 4 Bishop → demotes to Gold General
- 5 Gold General → demotes to Silver General
- 6 Silver General → demotes to Lance
- 7 Lance → demotes to Knight
- 8 Knight → demotes to Pawn
- 9 Pawn → **removed from the game permanently**

After demotion, the piece changes sides and goes to the capturing player's hand for dropping. This replaces the standard Shogi rule of promoted pieces reverting to their unpromoted form.

PIECE MOVEMENT

All pieces move as in standard Shogi. The standard Shogi promoted forms for Pawn, Knight, Lance, and Silver (Token, etc.) are not used.

- ♦ **Dragon King:** Rook + one diagonal step (as standard Shogi).
- ♦ **Dragon Horse:** Bishop + one orthogonal step (as standard Shogi).
- ♦ **Rook:** Slides orthogonally. Promotes to Dragon King.
- ♦ **Bishop:** Slides diagonally. Promotes to Dragon Horse.
- ♦ **Gold General:** Steps forward, orthogonally, or diagonally forward (not diagonally backward). Does not promote.
- ♦ **Silver General:** Steps diagonally or straight forward. Promotes to Gold General.
- ♦ **Lance:** Slides straight forward. Promotes to Silver General or Gold General.
- ♦ **Knight:** Leaps to either of the two forward-most Knight squares (two forward, one sideways). Promotes to Lance, Silver General, or Gold General.
- ♦ **Pawn:** Steps and captures one square straight forward. Promotes to Knight, Lance, Silver General, or Gold General.

PROMOTION

Promotion zone is the last 3 ranks (ranks 7–9 for Sente). A piece may optionally promote when it enters, exits, or moves within the zone. A piece **must promote** if it would otherwise have no legal moves from that square.

Rooks promote to Dragon King and Bishops to Dragon Horse, as in standard Shogi.

For all pieces below Gold General, promotion is **flexible**: the piece may promote to any higher-ranked piece up to and including Gold General, provided the promoted form has at least one legal move from that square. This means a Knight may promote to Lance, Silver General, or Gold General (not Dragon Horse or higher).

Mandatory promotions by position:

- ♦ Lance must promote upon reaching rank 9.
- ♦ Knight must promote upon reaching rank 8 or 9.
- ♦ Pawn must promote upon reaching rank 9.

DROPS

Drop rules follow standard Shogi:

- ♦ Any piece in hand may be dropped on any empty square, subject to restrictions.
- ♦ Pawns: not on rank 9; not on a file already containing a friendly Pawn; not to give checkmate.
- ♦ Lances: not on rank 9.
- ♦ Knights: not on rank 8 or 9.
- ♦ Any drop must leave the dropped piece with at least one legal move from that square.

RULES

Win: Checkmate the opponent's King. All standard Shogi check rules apply.

Black (Sente) moves first.

ATTRIBUTION

Designed by Roberto Lavieri and Fergus Duniho. Rules documented from chessvariants.com/shogivariants.dir/mortalshogi.html.

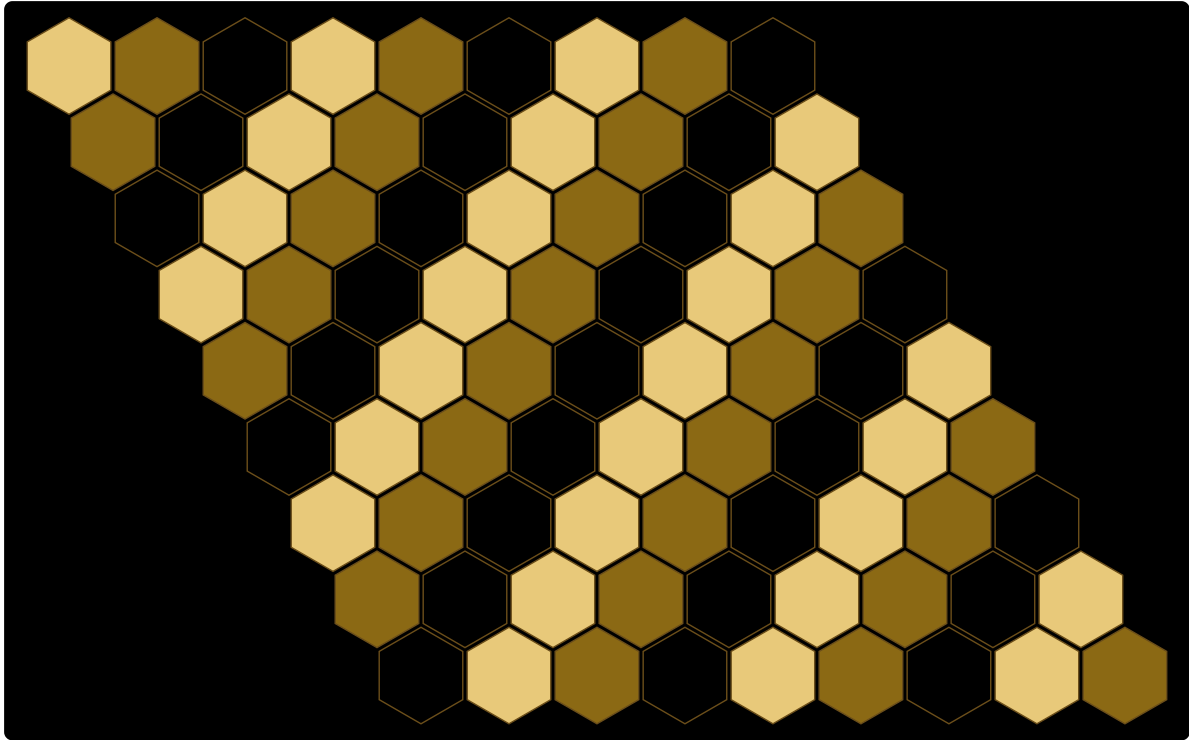
SHOGI · VARIANT 19 OF 24

Sankaku Shogi

44-cell triangular
BOARD

2
PLAYERS

SANKAKU SHOGI



Sankaku Shogi — starting position

<https://engine.moddable.games/play/?game=shogi&variant=sankaku-shogi>

Sankaku Shogi (, “Triangle Shogi”) is a modern Shogi-inspired variant designed by L. Lynn Smith in 2004. It is played on a field of 44 triangular cells. Each player controls 13 pieces. Unlike standard Shogi, captured pieces are permanently removed from play — there are no drops.

BOARD

The playing field consists of 44 triangular cells in a diamond pattern with the four extreme corners removed to reduce choke points. Files are labeled a–g; ranks 1–8. The field is narrowest at ranks 1 and 8 (2 cells wide) and widest at ranks 4 and 5 (4 cells wide).

Orthogonal movement is through shared sides (each step from one cell to the next sharing a complete side). Adjacent movement includes cells connected by either side or point — giving each interior cell up to 5 neighbours.

STARTING POSITION

Black:

- ♦ Emperor: d1
- ♦ Chariots: c1, e1
- ♦ Cavalry: b2, c2, e2, f2
- ♦ General: d2
- ♦ Soldiers: b3, c3, d3, e3, f3

White:

- ♦ Emperor: d8
- ♦ Chariots: c8, e8
- ♦ Cavalry: b7, c7, e7, f7
- ♦ General: d7
- ♦ Soldiers: b6, c6, d6, e6, f6

PIECES

Emperor: Leaps to any cell on the entire board. Cannot capture an opponent Emperor that is defended (any opponent piece could recapture on that square).

Chariot: Slides orthogonally any number of cells. Cannot be captured by Soldiers. Can “run down” a Soldier: captures the Soldier and continues sliding to end on a vacant cell or capture another piece.

General: Steps to any adjacent cell (connected by side or point — up to 5 cells).

Cavalry: Leaps to the second orthogonal cell. If that cell is occupied by a friendly piece, the Cavalry makes one additional leap in any direction (not returning to start). The second leap must land on a vacant or enemy-occupied cell.

Soldier: Steps one orthogonal. May capture on the second orthogonal cell if the first orthogonal cell is vacant. Cannot capture Chariots. Mandatorily promotes to General upon making any capture.

PROMOTION

Soldiers and Cavalry **promote to General immediately and mandatorily upon making any capture**. There is no optional promotion and no promotion zone. Generals, Emperors, and Chariots do not promote.

RULES

- ♦ Black moves first.
- ♦ Each player must move every turn — passing is not allowed.
- ♦ All captured pieces are permanently removed (no drops, no recycling).
- ♦ **Win:** Capture the opponent's Emperor.
- ♦ **Repetition:** A player may not repeat a position solely to avoid capture.

ATTRIBUTION

Designed by L. Lynn Smith, 2004. Rules documented from chessvariants.com/44.dir/sankaku-shogi.html.

SHOGI · VARIANT 20 OF 24

Tai Shogi

25×25
BOARD

2
PLAYERS

Tai Shogi — starting position

<https://engine.moddable.games/play/?game=shogi&variant=tai-shogi>

Tai Shogi (, *Grand Chess*) is a historical Japanese Shogi variant played on a 25×25 board (625 squares) with approximately 177 piece types per side (354 pieces total). It occupies the scale tier between **Maka-Dai-Dai Shogi** (19×19, ~96 piece types) and **Taikyoku Shogi** (36×36, 402 piece types). Tai Shogi holds the distinction of being the largest chess variant with **fully documented and verified movement rules** for every piece.

No game record of Tai Shogi being played to completion has survived. Whether it was ever genuinely played at this scale is uncertain.

THE BOARD

25×25 grid (625 squares). Standard Shogi orientation: Sente (First Player) at the bottom, Gote (Second Player) at the top.

Each player's pieces span approximately the first 12 ranks from their side, with several ranks of empty space in the centre.

SCALE

DIMENSION	VALUE
Board	25×25 (625 squares)
Pieces per side	~177 piece types
Total pieces	~354 (both sides combined)
Board coverage (start)	Each player occupies roughly 12 ranks

PIECE SET

Tai Shogi includes all pieces found in Maka-Dai-Dai Shogi (19×19) plus many additional types unique to this scale. Piece categories include:

- ♦ All standard Shogi pieces and their promoted forms
- ♦ All Chu Shogi additions (including Lion power pieces)
- ♦ Additional pieces from Dai Shogi, Taikyoku-Dai Shogi, and larger variants
- ♦ Pieces with unique movement patterns documented only in Tai Shogi and Taikyoku
- ♦ Ultra-powerful pieces: pieces that can reach any square in a direction without stopping
- ♦ Contagious-promotion pieces (as in Maka-Dai-Dai: Teaching King, Buddhist Spirit)

ROYALS

- ♦ **King** — royal; does not promote
- ♦ **Crown Prince** (promoted Drunk Elephant) — royal once promoted

Win: capture both the opponent's King and Crown Prince (or the King alone if the Drunk Elephant has not promoted).

PROMOTION

- ♦ Pieces promote upon entering the opponent's promotion zone (the opponent's ranks, approximately the last 10 ranks from their perspective)
- ♦ No drops — captured pieces are permanently removed from play
- ♦ Each piece has a fixed promoted form
- ♦ Promotion on capture applies to contagious pieces (Teaching King, Buddhist Spirit)

GENERAL MOVEMENT CATEGORIES

Pieces in Tai Shogi fall into these broad movement categories:

- ♦ **Generals:** steppers that move 1 square in limited directions (Gold, Silver, Copper, Iron, Stone, Tile, Elephant, Earth generals)
- ♦ **Riders:** unlimited sliders (Rook, Bishop, Lance, Reverse Chariot, Side Mover, Vertical Mover)
- ♦ **Hoppers:** leap over intervening pieces (Knight, Kirin, Phoenix)
- ♦ **Lion-power pieces:** take two moves per turn; may capture twice; may pass
- ♦ **Lion Dog class:** up to 3 steps along any ray
- ♦ **Ultra-powerful sliders:** can turn corners in their path (Hook Mover, Capricorn)
- ♦ **Universal leaper** (Emperor): can jump to any square on the board

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Tai Shogi is documented in historical Japanese manuscripts alongside the other large Shogi variants. The [chessvariants.com](#) entry for Tai Shogi links only to an external Japanese-language source (the [shogi.net](#) documentation). Murray's *A History of Chess* covers the Shogi variant family including large games in this scale range.

The game represents the theoretical maximum scale at which complete move documentation was maintained in historical records. Taikyoku Shogi (36×36) exceeds it in scale but is documented in only one known manuscript.

ATTRIBUTION

Tai Shogi is documented in historical Japanese manuscripts. English documentation is limited; the primary Japanese-language source is referenced via [chessvariants.com/link/TaiShogi](#).

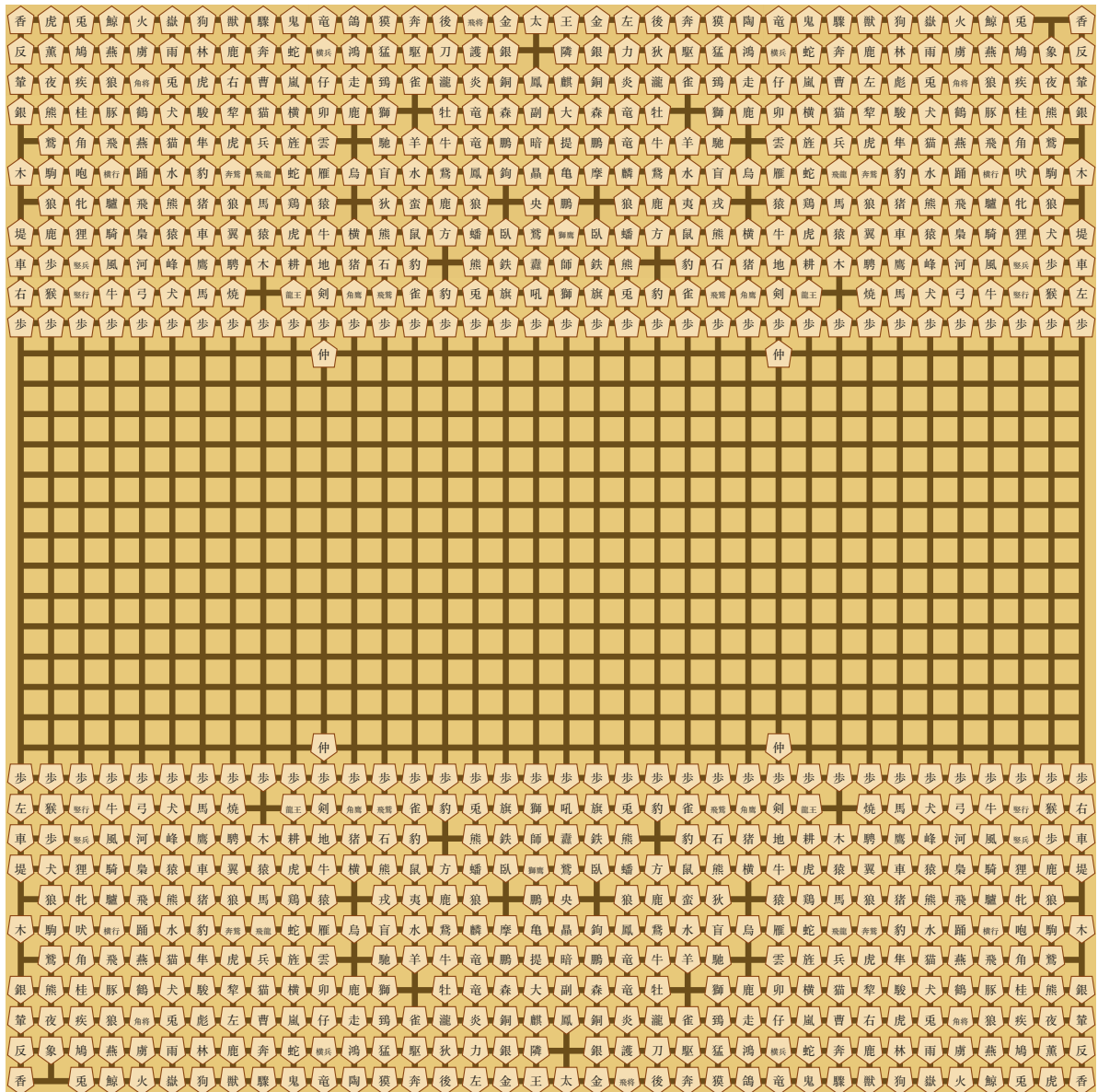
SHOGI · VARIANT 21 OF 24

Taikyoku Shogi

36×36
BOARD

2
PLAYERS

TAIKYOKU SHOGI



Taikyoku Shogi — starting position

<https://engine.moddable.games/play/?game=shogi&variant=taikyoku-shogi>

Taikyoku Shogi (, *Ultimate Chess*) is the largest chess variant ever documented. Played on a 36×36 board with 402 piece types per side (804 pieces total) on 1,296 squares, it is documented in a single known Japanese manuscript held at Osaka Municipal Central Library. Whether the game was ever actually played to completion is disputed — a single game would require an estimated 10,000+ moves. The transcription used here is by L. Lynn Smith.

THE BOARD

36×36 grid (1,296 squares). Standard Shogi orientation. Each player occupies the first 12 ranks from their side (Sente: ranks 1–12; Gote: ranks 25–36). Ranks 13–24 are empty at the start.

ROYALS

- ♦ **King** (does not promote) — royal
- ♦ **Crown Prince** (promotes to King) — royal once promoted

Win: capture both the opponent's King and Crown Prince (or their only royal if the Crown Prince has not promoted).

PIECE LIST

All 402 pieces per side, with count and promoted form:

PIECE	QTY	PROMOTES TO
King	1	— (does not promote)
Crown Prince	1	King
Gold General	2	Rook
Right General	1	Right Army
Left General	1	Left Army
Rear Standard	2	Center Standard
Free King	2	Great General
Free Tapir	2	Free King
Wooden Dove	1	—
Ceramic Dove	1	—
Earth Dragon	2	Rain Dragon
Free Demon	2	Free King
Running Horse	2	Free Demon
Beast Cadet	2	Beast Officer
Long-Nosed Goblin	2	—
Mountain Eagle	2	Soaring Eagle
Fire Demon	2	Free Fire
Whale	2	Great Whale
Running Rabbit	2	Treacherous Fox
White Tiger	1	Divine Tiger
Turtle Snake	1	Divine Turtle
Lance	2	White Horse
Reverse Chariot	2	Whale
Fragrant Elephant	1	Elephant King
White Elephant	1	Elephant King
Mountain Dove	2	Great Dove
Flying Swallow	2	Rook
Captive Officer	2	Captive Bird
Rain Dragon	2	Great Dragon
Forest Demon	2	Thunder Runner

Total: 402 pieces per side.

STARTING POSITION (SENTE)

Positions are given as (rank, column). Columns 1–36 run left to right; rank 1 is Sente’s back rank. Gote’s setup is the mirror: rank 36 = Gote’s back rank, column positions reversed.

RANK	PIECES AND COLUMNS
1	Lance (1,36), Reverse Chariot (2,35), White Elephant (3 — singular), FrAGRant Elephant (34), Mountain Dove (4,33), Flying Swallow (5,32), Captive Officer (6,31), Rain Dragon (7,30), Forest Demon (8,29), Mountain Stag (9,28), Running Pup (10,27), Running Serpent (11,26), Side Serpent (12,25), Great Dove (13,24), Running Tiger (14,23), Running Bear (15,22), Night Sword (16), Rear Standard (17,20), King (18), Crown Prince (19) , Gold General (17,20 shared), Right General (21), Left General (16 — overlaps Night Sword?), Wrestler (16)...

Note: The original manuscript gives setup positions by rank and column number. Rank 1 holds the outermost defensive pieces; Ranks 2–10 hold the remaining armies; Rank 11 holds all 36 Pawns; Rank 12 holds Dogs (columns 6, 15, 22, 31) and Go-Betweens (columns 11, 26).

For the authoritative column-by-column starting position, consult chessvariants.com/shogivariants.dir/taikyoku_english.html.

PIECE RANKING (FOR JUMP CAPTURES)

The following pieces can jump over lower-ranked pieces to make captures (as in Tenjiku Shogi):

RANK	PIECES
1 (highest)	King, Crown Prince
2	Great General
3	Vice General
4	Bishop General, Rook General, Violent Dragon, Flying Crocodile
5 (all others)	All remaining pieces

A piece of rank R can jump over any number of pieces ranked 5 (the rank below R), continuing until making a capture.

PROMOTION

- ♦ Pieces promote upon reaching any of the **opponent’s 11 ranks** (ranks 26–36 for Sente)
- ♦ Captured pieces are permanently removed from play (no drops)
- ♦ Each piece promotes to its fixed promoted form (listed in the piece table above)
- ♦ Promotion is irreversible

HISTORICAL NOTE

Taikyoku Shogi is documented in a manuscript held at Osaka Municipal Central Library. Its playability has been questioned by historians — some believe it was a theoretical exercise assembled by combining all known Shogi variants rather than a game designed for practical play. No game records from historical times have survived, and no mating problems have been published.

ATTRIBUTION

Taikyoku Shogi is documented in a single known Japanese manuscript. English transcription by L. Lynn Smith, with thanks to Patrick Davin. Source: chessvariants.com/shogivariants.dir/taikyoku_english.html

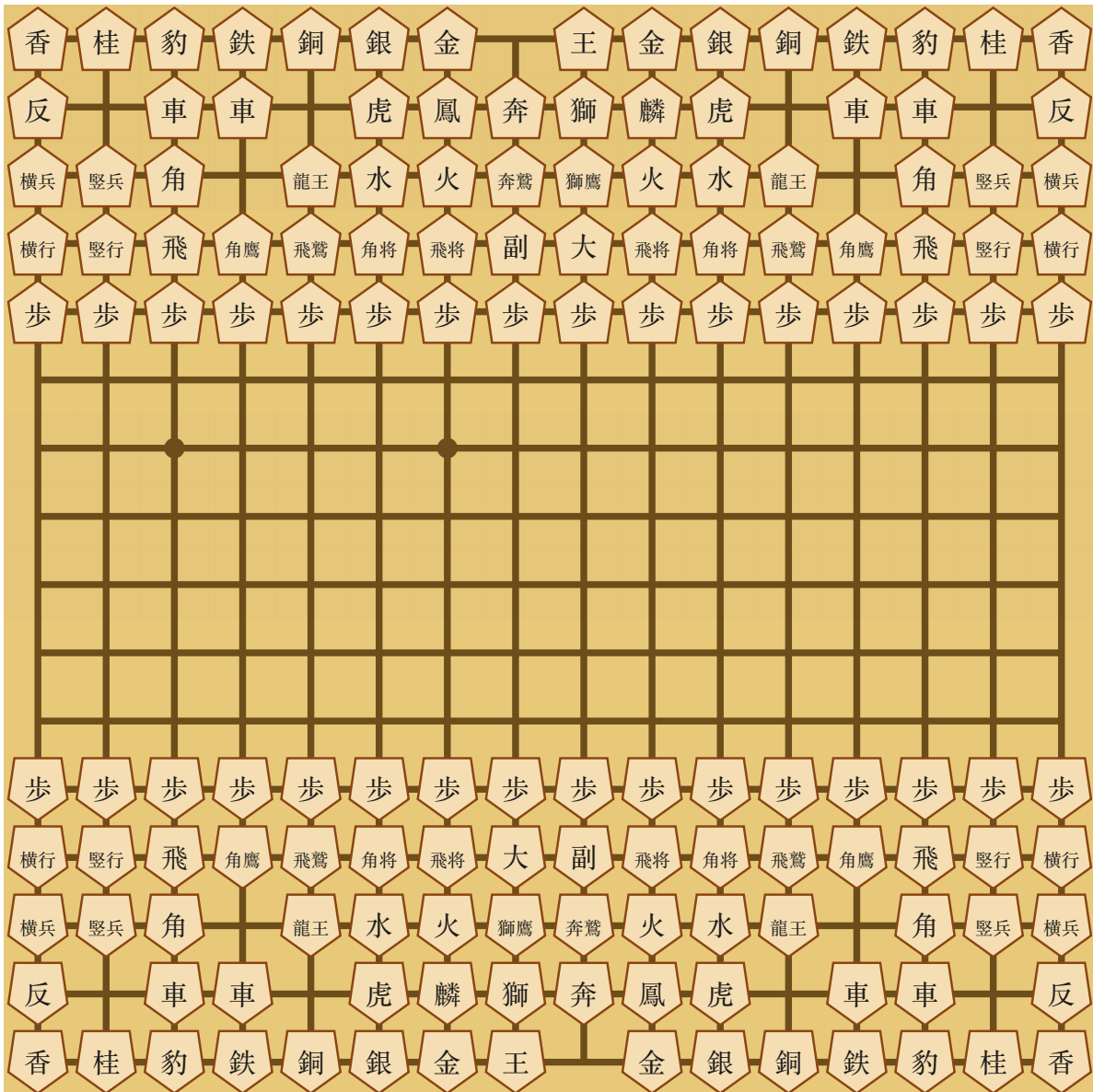
SHOGI · VARIANT 22 OF 24

Tenjiku Shogi

16×16
BOARD

2
PLAYERS

TENJIKU SHOGI



Tenjiku Shogi — starting position

<https://engine.moddable.games/play/?game=shogi&variant=tenjiku-shogi>

Tenjiku Shogi () is a medieval Japanese chess variant played on a 16×16 board. It is derived from Chu Shogi, expanding the board from 12×12 to 16×16 to accommodate powerful new pieces — most critically the Fire Demon. Despite the larger board, games tend to be shorter than Chu Shogi due to the Fire Demon’s destructive reach.

STARTING POSITION

Pieces occupy ranks 1–6 (Sente) and ranks 11–16 (Gote), mirrored. Files run a–p (16 files).

Rank 1 (back rank, files a–p): Lance · Knight · Ferocious Leopard · Iron General · Copper General · Silver General · Gold General · King · Drunk Elephant · Gold General · Silver General · Copper General · Iron General · Ferocious Leopard · Knight · Lance

Rank 2: Reverse Chariot (a2, p2) · Chariot Soldiers (c2, d2, m2, n2) · Blind Tiger (f2, k2) · Kirin (g2) · Lion (h2) · Free King (i2) · Phoenix (j2)

Rank 3: Side Soldier (a3, p3) · Vertical Soldier (b3, o3) · Bishop (c3, n3) · Dragon Horse (d3, m3) · Dragon King (e3, l3) · Water Buffalo (f3, k3) · Fire Demon (g3, j3) · Lion Hawk (h3) · Free Eagle (i3)

Rank 4: Side Mover (a4, p4) · Vertical Mover (b4, o4) · Rook (c4, n4) · Horned Falcon (d4, m4) · Soaring Eagle (e4, l4) · Bishop General (f4, k4) · Rook General (g4, j4) · Great General (h4) · Vice General (i4)

Rank 5: Pawns on all 16 files.

Rank 6: Dog at e6 and l6.

KEY PIECES

Fire Demon (g3, j3): The most powerful piece. After moving, burns (removes) all enemy pieces on any of the 8 squares adjacent to its destination. Additionally, any enemy piece that moves adjacent to a stationary Fire Demon is immediately burned by the Demon passively — the moving piece is destroyed before it can attack. A Fire Demon moving adjacent to another Fire Demon is burned (the moving Demon loses). Fire Demons can also make an area move of up to 3 King steps in freely chosen directions, stopping after capturing; burning only occurs after the final step. When a Water Buffalo promotes to a Fire Demon, all adjacent enemy pieces are immediately burned.

Jumping Generals — Great General (h4), Vice General (i4), Rook General (g4/j4), Bishop General (f4/k4): All slide as Queen, Bishop/Rook respectively, but may also jump over any number of pieces when capturing. Jump-capture is restricted by a hierarchy:

- ♦ Rank 3 (highest among generals): Great General
- ♦ Rank 2: Vice General
- ♦ Rank 1: Rook General and Bishop General
- ♦ Rank 0: all other pieces
- ♦ Rank 4 (highest of all): King and Crown Prince — cannot be jump-captured

A general may jump over only those with rank lower than itself, but may capture any piece regardless of rank (except royals). The Vice General may also make up to 3 King steps as an area move (no jumping; stops after capture).

Lion (h2): Double-mover as in Chu Shogi — up to 2 King steps per turn, freely changing direction, including returning to start, annihilating adjacent enemies, or making double captures. No Lion-trading restrictions apply in Tenjiku (unlike Chu Shogi).

Lion Hawk (h3): Lion double-move combined with Bishop slide.

Free Eagle (i3): Queen slide combined with diagonal double-move (Lion-style restricted to diagonal directions). Can annihilate diagonally adjacent enemies without moving.

Soaring Eagle / Horned Falcon: Slide as Queen, but in certain directions have a stinging move: can move to or jump to the second square, jump to the second while annihilating the first, or annihilate the first without moving. Soaring Eagle does this diagonally forward; Horned Falcon straight forward.

PROMOTION

The last 5 ranks form the promotion zone. Pieces promote optionally when entering the zone or moving within it to make a capture. Each piece promotes at most once:

Water Buffalo → Fire Demon · Vertical Soldier → Water Buffalo · Iron General → Vertical Soldier · Lion → Lion Hawk · Kirin → Lion · Free King → Free Eagle · Phoenix → Free King · Rook General → Great General · Soaring Eagle → Rook General · Dragon King → Soaring Eagle · Rook → Dragon King · Gold General → Rook · Pawn → Gold General · Dog → Multi-General (fRbB) · Reverse Chariot → Whale (vRbB) · Bishop General → Vice General · Horned Falcon → Bishop General · Dragon Horse → Horned Falcon · Bishop → Dragon Horse · Ferocious Leopard → Bishop · Chariot Soldier → Heavenly Tetrarchs · Side Soldier → Chariot Soldier · Knight → Side Soldier · Vertical Mover → Flying Ox (BvR) · Silver General → Vertical Mover · Lance → White Horse (vRfB) · Blind Tiger → Flying Stag (vRFsW) · Drunk Elephant → Crown Prince · Side Mover → Free Boar (BsR) · Copper General → Side Mover

King, Fire Demon, Great General, Vice General, Lion Hawk, and Free Eagle do not promote.

RULES

Win: Capture all opponent royal pieces. Royals are the King and Crown Prince (Drunk Elephant's promoted form). A player with both survives losing one; they lose only when the last royal is captured or burned.

No Drops: Captured pieces are permanently removed.

No Check Rule: No prohibition against moving into or remaining in check. Stalemate cannot occur in practical play.

Repetition: Perpetual check is forbidden — the checker must deviate. Perpetual chasing also requires the chaser to deviate. Pure positional repetitions (neither side attacking) are draws.

ATTRIBUTION

Medieval Japanese game. Rules documented from chessvariants.com/rules/tenjiku-shogi (H. G. Muller; revised A. M. DeWitt, 2026).

SHOGI · VARIANT 23 OF 24

Wa Shogi

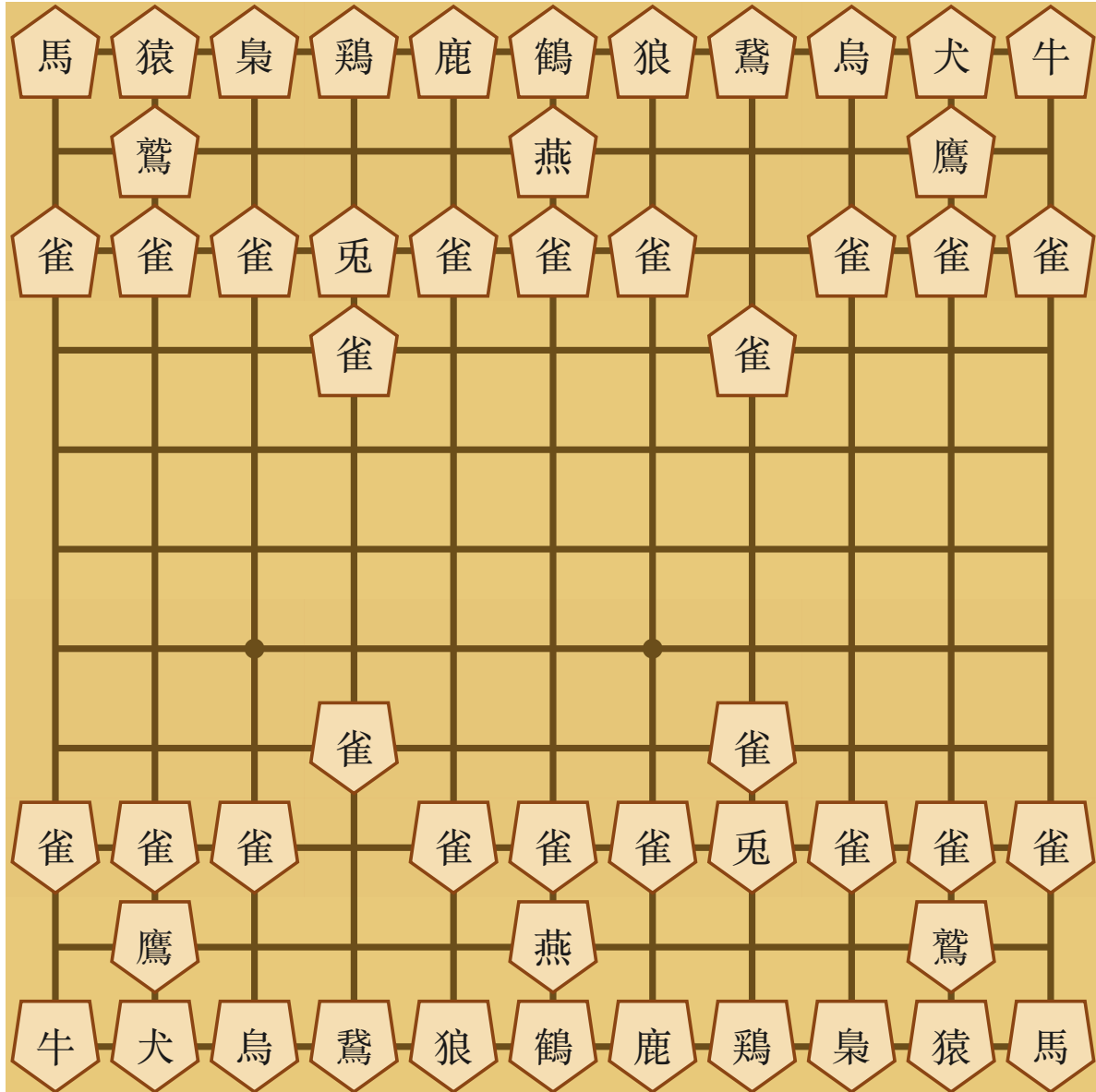
11×11
BOARD

2
PLAYERS

Wa Shogi

Historical Japanese Shogi variant on an 11×11 board. Played both with and without drops in modern practice.

OVERVIEW



Wa Shogi — starting position

<https://engine.moddable.games/play/?game=shogi&variant=wa-shogi>

Wa Shogi uses an 11×11 board. All pieces except the Pawns are of unique types, and they are generally weaker than Shogi pieces, making the game well-suited to drops. Historical rules make no mention of drops, however, so the game is today played in two forms: with or without drops.

Win condition: Capture the opponent’s Crane King. No check restriction.

STARTING SETUP

Pieces are listed by file (a–k from left to right, White’s perspective) and rank.

RANK 1 (BACK RANK)

FILE	PIECE	MOVEMENT (BETZA)
a1	Oxcart	fR (forward Rook slide)
b1	Blind Dog	fFbsW (fwd diagonal; back/side step)
c1	Strutting Crow	fWbF (fwd step; bwd diagonal)
d1	Flying Goose	fFvW (fwd diagonal; vert. step)
e1	Violent Wolf	WfF (orthogonal step; fwd diagonal)
f1	Crane King (royal)	K (one step any direction)
g1	Violent Stag	FfW (diagonal; fwd orthogonal)
h1	Flying Cock	fFsW (fwd diagonal; side step)
i1	Swooping Owl	fWbF (fwd step; bwd diagonal)
j1	Climbing Monkey	fFvW (fwd diagonal; vert. step)
k1	Liberated Horse	fRbW2 (fwd Rook slide; 2-sq bwd step)

RANK 2

SQUARE	PIECE	MOVEMENT (BETZA)
b2	Flying Falcon	BfW (diagonal slide; fwd step)
f2	Swallow’s Wings	sRvW (side Rook slide; vert. step)
j2	Cloud Eagle	vRsWfF3bF (vert. Rook; side step; 3-sq fwd diag; bwd diag step)

RANKS 3–4 (PAWNS AND SPECIAL PIECES)

SQUARE	PIECE	MOVEMENT
a3, b3, c3, e3, f3, g3, i3, j3, k3	Sparrow Pawn	fW (fwd step)
d3	Treacherous Fox	FAvWvD (diag step; Alfīl; vert. step; Dabbaba)
h3	Running Rabbit	FfRbW (diag step; fwd Rook; bwd step)
d4, h4	Sparrow Pawn	fW (fwd step)

Total: 23 pieces per side (1 King, 2 special, 9 back-rank, 3 rank-2, 8 pawns).

PROMOTION

The **promotion zone** is the last 3 ranks (ranks 9–11 for White). Promotion is **optional** at the end of a turn when the move starts or ends in the zone. Each piece has a fixed promoted form:

PIECE	PROMOTES TO	PROMOTED MOVEMENT
Sparrow Pawn	Golden Bird	WfF
Running Rabbit	Treacherous Fox	FAvWvD
Flying Falcon	Tenacious Falcon	BvRsW
Swallow's Wings	Gliding Swallow	R (Rook)
Violent Wolf	Bear's Eyes	K
Violent Stag	Roaming Boar	FfsW
Flying Goose	Swallow's Wings	sRvW
Climbing Monkey	Violent Stag	FfW
Blind Dog	Violent Wolf	WfF
Flying Cock	Raiding Falcon	vRfFsW
Liberated Horse	Heavenly Horse	vN (vertical Knight)
Oxcart	Plodding Ox	K
Strutting Crow	Flying Falcon	BfW
Swooping Owl	Cloud Eagle	vRsWfF3bF

Non-promoting: Treacherous Fox, Cloud Eagle, Crane King.

Note: Swooping Owl and Strutting Crow move identically (fWbF) but promote differently. Flying Goose and Climbing Monkey also move identically (fFvW) but promote differently.

RULES

Repetition: If the same position with the same player to move occurs a 4th time, the game is a draw. Exception: if one side has been delivering check on every move, that side loses.

Impasse (drops only): If both Crane Kings reach their respective promotion zones, the game is drawn.

Drops: When played with drops, captured pieces revert to their unpromoted form and cannot be promoted immediately upon being dropped, even when dropped inside the promotion zone.

Source: chessvariants.com/rules/wa-shogi (H.G. Muller)

SHOGI · VARIANT 24 OF 24

Yari Shogi

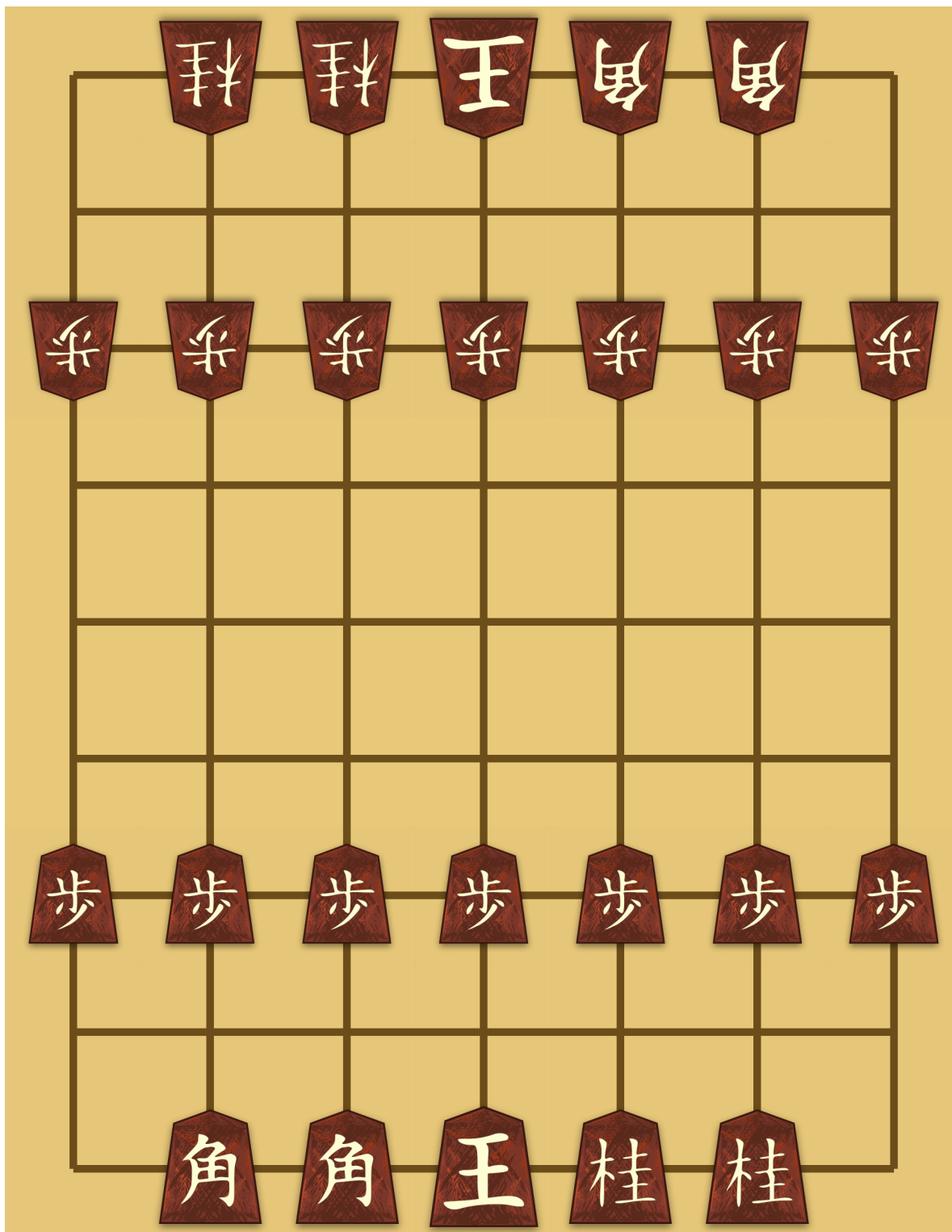
9×7
BOARD

2
PLAYERS

Yari Shogi

Invented by Christian Freeling (Netherlands), 1981. “Yari” means lance in Japanese.

OVERVIEW



Yari Shogi — starting position

<https://engine.moddable.games/play/?game=shogi&variant=yari-shogi>

Yari Shogi takes Shogi's characteristic forward orientation to an extreme: every unpromoted piece (except the General) includes a forward-Lance component in its movement. Captures happen the same way as regular moves. Drops are included; the only rule difference from standard Shogi drops is that Pawn drops that immediately deliver checkmate are **allowed**.

SETUP

9-row × 7-column board.

White

- ♦ Rank 1: Forward Rook(a1), Bishop(b1), Bishop(c1), General(d1), Knight(e1), Knight(f1), Forward Rook(g1)
- ♦ Rank 3: Pawns a3–g3

Black

- ♦ Rank 9: Forward Rook(a9), Knight(b9), Knight(c9), General(d9), Bishop(e9), Bishop(f9), Forward Rook(g9)
- ♦ Rank 7: Pawns a7–g7

PIECES

GENERAL

Moves one square in any direction (as a King). Does not promote.

FORWARD ROOK

Slides along the rank (sideways) or forward along the file — but **not backward**. Effectively a Rook without the backward move.

Promotes to: Full Rook (slides orthogonally in all four directions).

BISHOP (YARI)

Slides forward along the file (fR component), **or** steps one square diagonally forward (fF component). Cannot move backward or sideways.

Promotes to: Gold.

KNIGHT (YARI)

Slides forward along the file (fR component), **or** makes a forward L-shape leap — two squares forward then one square sideways (the standard Shogi knight leap, forward only, jumps over pieces).

Promotes to: Gold.

PAWN

Moves one square straight forward. Captures by the same move.

Promotes to: Silver.

GOLD (PROMOTED BISHOP OR KNIGHT)

Moves one square forward, diagonally forward, or sideways **or** slides backward along the file (backward Lance). Combined: any Shogi-Gold step plus a backward file slide.

SILVER (PROMOTED PAWN)

Moves one square straight forward or diagonally forward **or** slides backward along the file (backward Lance). Cannot move sideways or step backward.

PROMOTION

The **promotion zone** is the three ranks furthest from each player (White: ranks 7–9). Promotion is optional unless it would leave the piece immobile:

- ♦ Bishop, Knight, and Pawn **must** promote if moved to the last rank (rank 9 for White).

Pieces are dropped unpromoted and do not promote upon being dropped even inside the promotion zone.

DROPS

Captured pieces change sides and may be dropped on a vacant square as a turn, with these restrictions:

- ♦ A piece may not be dropped where it would have no legal moves. (Bishop, Knight, and Pawn cannot be dropped on the last rank.)
- ♦ A Pawn may not be dropped in a file already containing an unpromoted friendly Pawn.
- ♦ **Pawns may drop to give checkmate** (unlike in standard Shogi).

Source: chessvariants.com/ms.dir/yarishogi.html; rules by Christian Freeling