

SHOGI · VARIANT 8 OF 24

# Chu Shogi

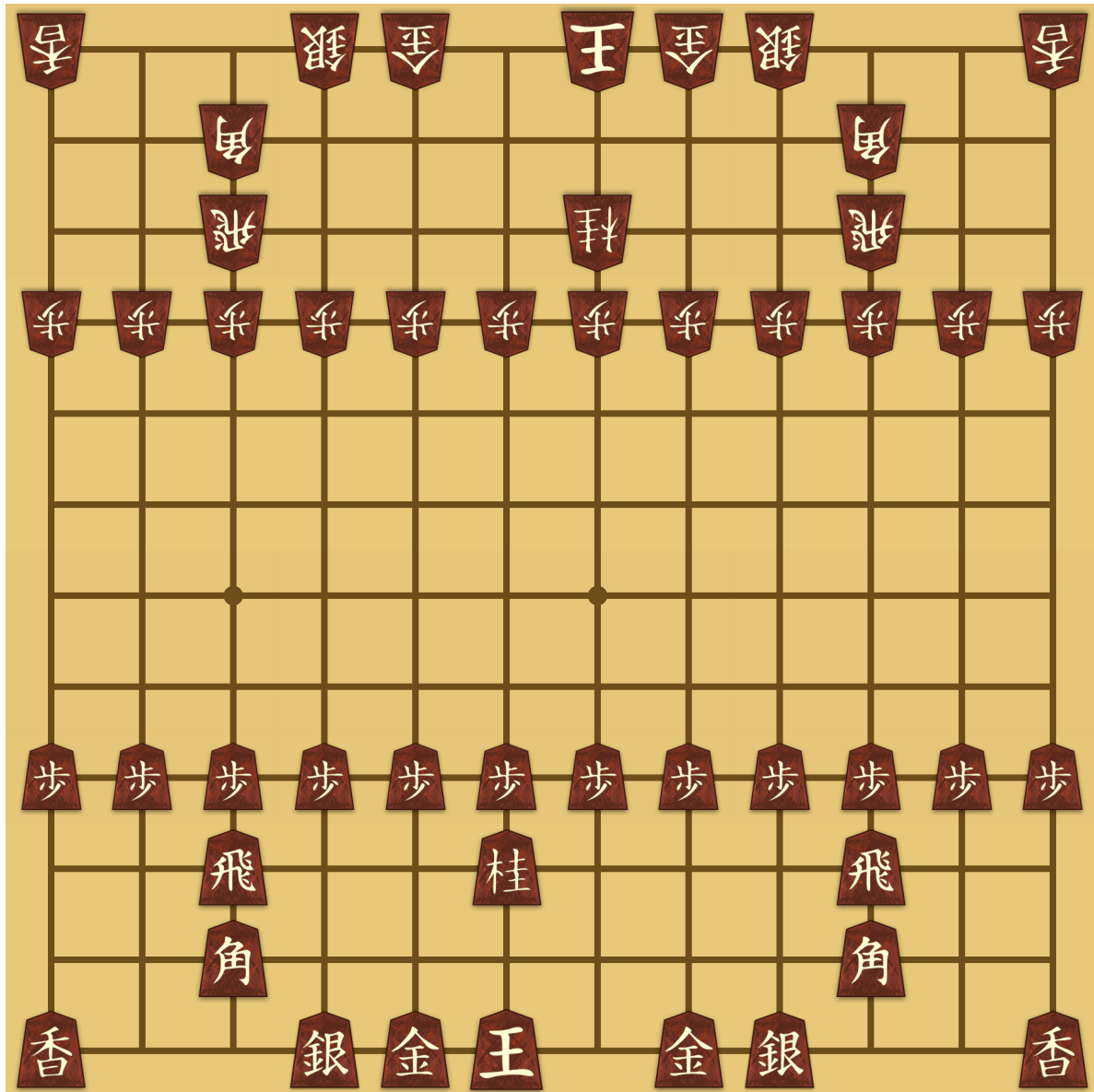
**12×12**  
BOARD

**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 + Alfīl 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     | <b>Lion</b>    | 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    | <b>Prince</b> (royal)       | K                                 |
| Go Between        | Elephant (= Drunk Elephant) | FfsW                              |
| Phoenix           | Queen                       | Q                                 |
| Kirin             | <b>Lion</b>                 | 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)

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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

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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

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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

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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](http://chessvariants.com/rules/chu-shogi) (H.G. Muller)*