

SHOGI · VARIANT 21 OF 24

Taikyoku Shogi

36×36
BOARD

2
PLAYERS

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