

将棋 Shogi



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Shogi 将棋

Shogi, also known as Japanese Chess, is the most popular chess variant native to Japan and has been around in its current form since the 16th century. One of the most exciting aspects of the game is as compared to international chess, a captured piece can be returned to the board. This allows for a highly dynamic game resulting in very few draws.

Equipment

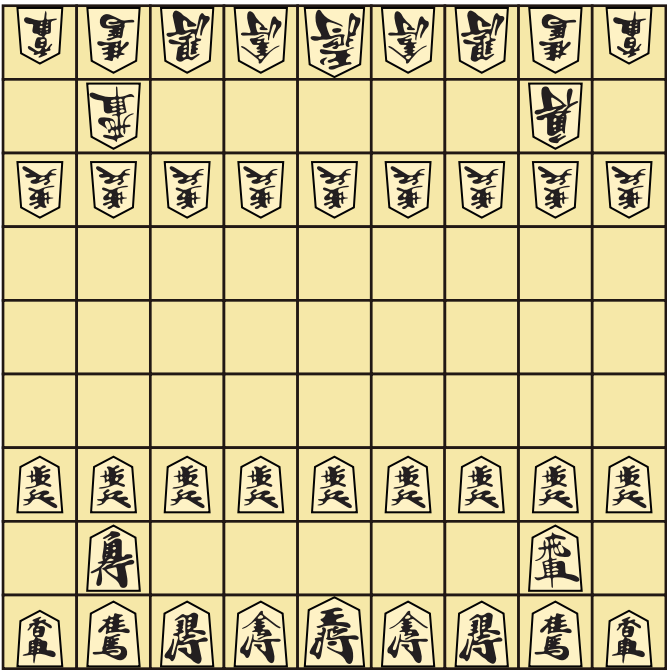
The board is composed of rectangles in a grid of 9 “ranks” (rows) and 9 “files” (columns). Pieces are played within the rectangles and with exception of the king, opposing pieces are differentiated by orientation and not by color. Each piece always points toward the opponent. On the front side in black, identifying the piece, are Chinese characters used in Japanese (kanji). On the reverse side, with the exception of the king and gold general, are one or two other kanji in red. The red kanji indicate a piece that has been promoted and has gained an increased power of movement.

Arrangement

The starting positions of the pieces are arranged as shown below.

- 1. **Back row (closest to you):** Place the pieces in this order, from left to right: Lance, Knight, Silver General, Gold General, King (center), Gold General, Silver General, Knight, and Lance.
- 2. **Second row:** Place the Bishop on the second square from the left and the Rook on the second square from the right.
- 3. **Third row:** Place all nine Pawns across the row, one in each square.

All pieces should point toward your opponent with their unpromoted sides facing up.



Pieces



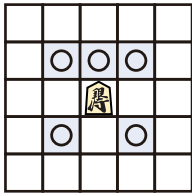
King, “Osho”, 王將 – A king can move one square in any direction.



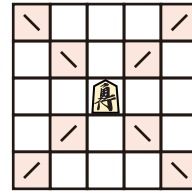
Opposing King, “Gyokusho”, 玉將 – Same as above.



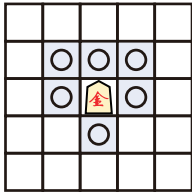
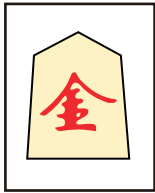
Gold General (“Gold”), “Kinsho”, 金将 – A gold general can move one square in any direction except diagonally back.



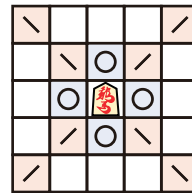
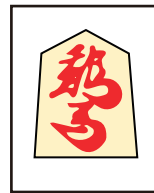
Silver General (“Silver”), “Ginsho”, 銀将 – A silver general can move one square diagonally any direction or one space forward.



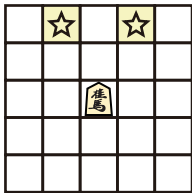
Bishop, “Kakugyo”, 角行 – A bishop can move any number of free squares in any diagonal direction.



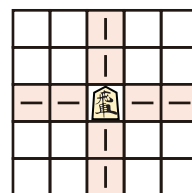
Promoted Silver, “Narigin”, 成銀 – A promoted silver moves the same as gold general.



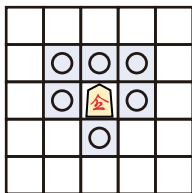
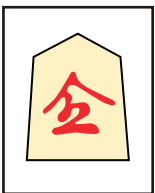
Promoted bishop (“Horse”), “Ryuma”, 龍馬 – A promoted bishop can make the moves of a bishop or the moves of a king.



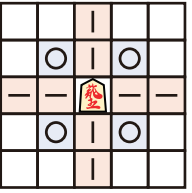
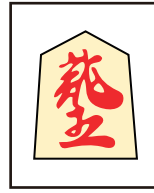
Knight, “Keima”, 桂馬 – A knight can jump one square forward, plus one square diagonally forward. It is the only piece allowed to jump other pieces in its path.



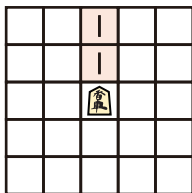
Rook, “Hisha”, 飛車 – A rook can move any number of free squares forward, backward, left or right.



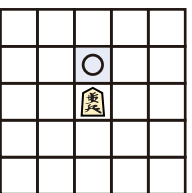
Promoted Knight, “Narikei”, 成桂 – A promoted knight also moves the same as gold general.



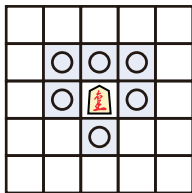
Promoted Rook (“Dragon”), “Ryuo”, 龍王 – A promoted rook can make the moves of a rook or the moves of a king.



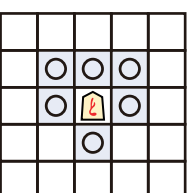
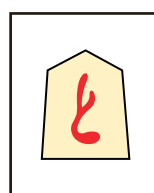
Lance, “Kyosha”, 香車 – A lance can move any number of free squares directly forward. It cannot move in any other direction.



Pawn, “Fuhyo”, 歩兵 – A pawn can only move one square forward.



Promoted Lance, “Narikyo”, 成香 – A promoted lance also moves the same as a gold general.



Promoted Pawn, “Tokin”, と金 – A promoted pawn also moves the same as gold general.

Gameplay

Shogi is a two-player strategy game similar to chess, where the goal is to capture your opponent's king by putting it in checkmate. Each player takes turns moving one piece at a time. A piece moves according to its abilities, and you capture an opponent's piece by landing on its square. Captured pieces can be reused later in the game by dropping them back onto the board as your own.

On your turn, instead of moving a piece, you can drop a captured piece on any empty square, starting with its unpromoted side up. However, there are a few rules for dropping pieces:

- You can't drop a pawn in a column that already has one of your unpromoted pawns (though if your pawn in that column has been promoted, you can drop another unpromoted pawn).
- A pawn cannot be dropped to give immediate checkmate, but other pieces can.
- You can't drop a piece where it can't move, such as pawns, knights, and lances on the last row (or knights and lances on the second-to-last row).

Each player has a promotion zone, which is the farthest three rows on the opponent's side. If one of your pieces moves into, out of, or within this zone, you can promote it at the end of your turn by flipping it over to reveal its stronger side. Pieces like pawns, lances, and knights must promote when they reach the last rows, as they wouldn't be able to move otherwise. Promotion gives pieces new abilities and adds depth to your strategy.

The game ends when one player checkmates the opponent's king, called "詰み" (tsumi), meaning the king has no legal moves to escape capture. If the king is threatened with capture on the next move, it's called a "check," which can be announced with "王手" (oute). If the same board position repeats four times with the same player to move, the game ends in a draw, except when perpetual check is involved. A player who gives an unending check for four consecutive turns automatically loses. Shogi is a game of deep strategy and foresight, where each move can turn the tide. Master the art of careful planning and the strategic use of captured pieces to outwit and outmaneuver your opponent!