

Janggi

Janggi (including romanizations *changgi* and *jangki*), sometimes called **Korean chess**, is a strategy board game popular in Korea. The game derived from *xiangqi* (Chinese chess) and is very similar to it, including the starting position of the pieces, and the 9×10 gameboard, but without the xiangqi "river" dividing the board horizontally in the middle.

Janggi is played on a board nine lines wide by ten lines long. The game is sometimes fast paced due to the jumping cannons and the long-range elephants, but professional games most often last over 150 moves and so are typically slower than those of *Western chess*.

In 2009, the first world janggi tournament was held in Harbin, *China*.^[1]

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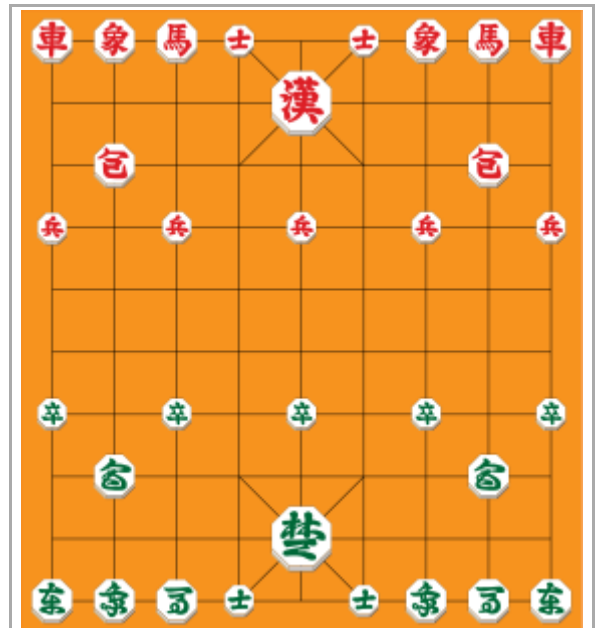
References

Further reading

External links

Rules

Janggi



Janggi board and starting setup

Genre(s)	Board game <p>Abstract strategy game</p> Mind sport
Players	2
Setup time	< 1 minute
Playing time	From 20 minutes to several hours
Random chance	None
Skill(s) required	Strategy, tactics
Synonym(s)	Changgi <p>Janki</p> Korean chess

Janggi	
Hangul	장기
Hanja	將棋
Revised Romanization	<i>janggi</i>
McCune–Reischauer	<i>changgi</i>

Board

The board is composed of 90 intersections of 9 vertical files and 10 horizontal rows. The board has nearly the same layout as that used in xiangqi, except the janggi board has no "river" in the central row. The pieces consist of disks marked with identifying characters and are placed on the line intersections (as in xiangqi and Go). Janggi pieces are traditionally octagonal in shape, and differ in size according to their rank. The sides are Blue (or sometimes Green), which moves first, versus Red. Each side has a *palace* that is 3 lines by 3 lines (9 positions) in the centre of their side of the board against the back edge. The palace contains four diagonal lines extending outwards from the centre, forming an "X" shape.

Pieces

The pieces are labeled with hanja (Chinese characters). The labels on the blue pieces are all written in the semi-cursive script. For instance, the blue chariot or *cha* has a cursive version of 車, which looks something like 𨋖 (the Simplified Chinese equivalent of the traditional character).

General

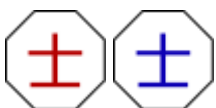


The pieces that are equivalent to the kings in Western chess are actually referred to as military generals (*janggun*) in Korean. They are labelled with the Chinese character Han (in Chinese pinyin: *Hàn*; 漢) on the red side, and *Cho* (*Chǔ*; 楚) on the blue side. They represent the rival states of Han and Chu that fought for power in the post-Qin Dynasty interregnum period in China (see Chu–Han contention). In North Korea, the Chu–Han setup is not used; the red general there is called *jang* (將, "general") and the blue general is called *gwan* (官, "minister"). Both kings can also be referred to generally as *gung* (宮, "palace").^[2]

Janggi differs from its Chinese counterpart in that the janggi general starts the game from the central intersection of the palace, rather than from the centre intersection of the back edge. The general may move one step per turn along marked board lines to any of the nine points within the palace. There are four diagonal lines in the palace connecting the centre position to the corners. When the general is checkmated the game is lost. The general cannot leave the palace under any circumstances. If the generals come to face each other across the board, and the player to move does not move away, this is *bikjang*—a draw. This rule is different from that of xiangqi where it is illegal for the generals to face.

If there is no move for the general to make without getting into check or checkmate, but it is safe for it to stand still, the person may pass their turn (leave the general in position and make no move).

Guards



The pieces are labeled *sa* (士) and are civilian government officials (i.e. council members serving the commander in chief). They are often called guards, since they stay close to the general. Other names are assistants or mandarins.

The guards start to the left and right of the general on the first rank. They move the same as the general, one step per turn along marked lines in the palace. The guards are one of the weakest pieces because they may not leave the palace. They are valuable for protecting the general.

Horses



Called the horse or *ma* (馬), this piece moves and captures exactly like the horse in *xiangqi* (i.e. one step orthogonally then one step diagonally outward, with no jumping). A horse can be transposed with an adjacent elephant in the initial setup.

Elephants



The elephants or *sang* (象) begin the game to the left and right of the guards. They move one point orthogonally followed by two points diagonally away from their starting point, ending on the opposite corner of a 2×3 rectangle. Like the horse, the elephant is blocked from moving by any intervening pieces. Unlike *xiangqi*, which confines elephants to their own side of the board behind a "river", in *janggi* there is no river and elephants are not limited to one side of the board. The *janggi* elephant can therefore be used more offensively than the *xiangqi* elephant. An elephant can be transposed with an adjacent horse in the initial setup.

Chariots



These are labelled *cha* (車). Like the rook in Western chess, the chariot moves and captures in a straight line either horizontally or vertically. Additionally, the chariot may move along the diagonal lines inside either palace, but only in a straight line. The two chariots begin the game in the corners. The chariot is the most powerful piece in the game.

Cannons



These are labelled *po* (包). Each player has two cannons. The cannons are placed on the row behind the soldiers, directly in front of the horses (if the horses are put on the file next to the chariots). The cannon moves by jumping another piece horizontally or vertically. The jump can be performed over any distance provided that there is exactly one piece anywhere between the original position and the target. In order to capture a piece, there must be exactly one piece (friendly or otherwise) between the cannon and the piece to be captured. The cannon then moves to that point and captures the piece. They may also move or capture diagonally along the diagonal lines in either palace, provided there is an intervening piece in the centre (i.e.

it can only happen if the cannon is at a corner of the palace) They are powerful at the beginning of the game when "hurdles" are plentiful, but lose value rapidly with attrition. The other piece over which the cannon jumps may not be another cannon. A cannon may also not capture another cannon. Unlike xiangqi, janggi requires cannons to jump in order to move, as well as capture. This means in the starting position, there are no valid moves available for the cannon.

Soldiers



These are labelled *byeong* (兵) (soldiers, general term for a soldier) for Red and *jol* (卒) (also means soldiers, usually lowest ranking soldiers) for Blue. Each side has five soldiers, initially placed on alternating points, one row back from the edge of where the river would be in xiangqi. Unlike pawns in Western chess, they move and capture one point either straight forward or sideways. (Unlike xiangqi, where soldiers must be promoted to move sideways.) There is no promotion; once they reach the end of the board they may only move sideways. Soldiers may also move one point diagonally forward when within the enemy palace.

Setting up

In tournaments, the elder player, or higher ranked player, conceals a soldier from each side in their hands. The opponent selects a hand to determine their colour. After that, Han places their pieces first, followed by Cho placing theirs. (The reason both sides are not placed simultaneously is because the positions of horse and elephant can be transposed, giving some strategical advantage to the player who places last.)

After the pieces are set up, Cho moves first.

Ending the game

The game is won by checkmating the opposing general. This is called *weh-toeng* (외통).

In Western chess, stalemate is achieved when no legal moves are possible. However, the stalemate is not a draw in janggi. The player must pass their turn when no legal moves are possible. If neither player can move legally, or if neither player can win because neither player has enough pieces, the game ends in a draw.

A player may decide to make a move such that their general faces the opponent's general unobstructed (a condition called *bikjang*). In this situation, the opponent can either call a draw, or make a move that breaks the condition. In many cases, the *bikjang* rule can be used to force the opponent to call a draw on a losing game, by forcing them to sacrifice a valuable piece to break the *bikjang* position. It may not apply in some games, and usually the players will consent on the validity of the rule before the game begins.

Check is announced by declaring *janggun* (將軍), meaning "general". Getting out of *janggun* is called *meonggun*, and one may declare *meonggun* while escaping from *janggun*. But it is not necessary to say *janggun* out loud.

Miscellaneous rules

In South Korean tournaments, according to rules set by the Korean Janggi Association,^[3] there is no draw in any form, including draw by perpetual check or repetition of position. If a position repeats three times, a referee is called to determine who is at fault. Usually the referee orders the player who is losing to make a different move, so the player who is winning can press for an advantage. Sometimes it is not technically clear who is to blame, and different referees may differ as to which player must deviate, or whether repetition is mutually forced. This rule is applied because a winner and a loser must be decided during the game. If both players have less than 30 piece points, however, a draw is allowed by both repetition and perpetual check.

In tournaments where draws are not allowed, draws are resolved by adding up the points of their pieces that are still on the board.

Piece	Points
chariots	13
cannons	7
horses	5
elephants	3
guards	3
soldiers	2

Because the player with the blue pieces (*cho*) starts, they have an advantage. To compensate for this, Red receives 1.5 points (called 'deom' (덤) in Korean), the half-point being to avoid ties. So when the game starts, Blue has 72 points and Red has 73.5 points. If neither side can force a win, the player with the most points is declared the winner.

In South Korean culture

In South Korea one will often see older men crowding around a single janggi board while two men play for small amounts of money. These games are played year round, especially in city parks in Seoul. Janggi is occasionally played as a gambling game, and it is currently less popular in South Korea than the strategy game baduk (known in the West as go).

The Korea Janggi Association is responsible for promoting janggi in South Korea.

See also

- Gwangsanghui (廣象戲, 광상희)—an 18th-century Janggi variant^[4]
- List of Korea-related topics
- Xiangqi

References



Playing janggi on Seoul's streets

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Further reading

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- Pritchard, D. B. (1994). *The Encyclopedia of Chess Variants*. Games & Puzzles Publications. pp. 164–65. ISBN 0-9524142-0-1.
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External links

- "Janggi, the Korean Chess" (<http://history.chess.free.fr/changgi.htm>) by Jean-Louis Cazaux; presentation, rules, history
- Janggi: Korean Chess (<http://www.chessvariants.org/oriental.dir/koreanchess.html>) by Jean-Louis Cazaux, *The Chess Variant Pages*
- Korea Janggi Association (<http://www.kja.or.kr/>) (in Korean)
- "Essentials of Chinese Chess and of Korean Chess" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20070614111608/http://home.att.net/~Mc-Kiernan/XiangQi/XiangQi.pdf>) (PDF). Archived from the original (<http://home.att.net/~Mc-Kiernan/XiangQi/XiangQi.pdf>) (PDF) on 2007-06-14. (217 KiB)
- *Introduction to Korean Chess* (<http://www.smashwords.com/books/view/179829>) by Chris McDade
- Brain TV (<http://www.braintv.co.kr/>) a janggi cable TV channel (in Korean)
- Changgi (<https://www.boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/5400>) at BoardGameGeek

Playsites

- GoldToken.com (<http://goldtoken.com/games/play?rules=XiangqiJ>)
- Janggi applet (<http://www.fungame.pe.kr/javagame/janggi/janggi.htm>)
- Korean Chess (<http://www.pathguy.com/chess/KoreanCh.htm>) a simple program by Ed Friedlander (**Java**)

- [Online Janggi Board \(http://www.koreanchess.co.kr\)](http://www.koreanchess.co.kr) a web Janggi board written in JavaScript
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