Xiangqi

Xiangqi (Chinese: 象棋; pinyin: *xiàngqí*; English: /ˈʃɑːntʃi/), also called **Chinese chess**, is a strategy board game for two players. It is one of the most popular board games in China, and is in the same family as Western (or international) chess, *chaturanga, shogi,* Indian chess and *janggi*. Besides China and areas with significant ethnic Chinese communities, *xiangqi* is also a popular pastime in Vietnam, where it is known as *cờ tướng*.

The game represents a battle between two armies, with the object of capturing the enemy's general (king). Distinctive features of xiangqi include the cannon (*pao*), which must jump to capture; a rule prohibiting the generals from facing each other directly; areas on the board called the *river* and *palace*, which restrict the movement of some pieces (but enhance that of others); and placement of the pieces on the intersections of the board lines, rather than within the squares.

Contents
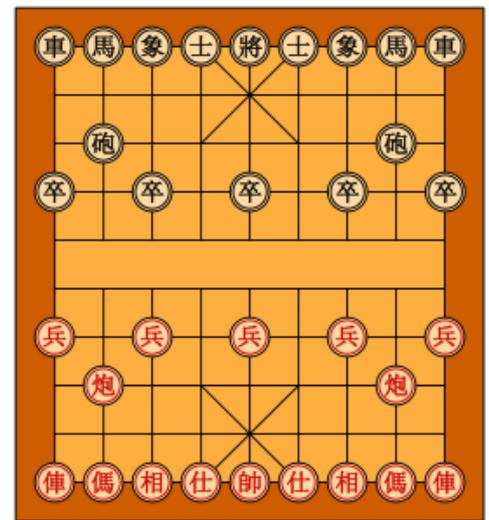
Xiangqi

Xiangqi board and starting setup

Genre(s)	Board game Abstract strategy game Mind sport
Players	2
Setup time	< 1 minute
Playing time	Informal games: may vary from 20 minutes to several hours Blitz games: up to 10 minutes
Random chance	None
Skill(s) required	Strategy, tactics
Synonym(s)	Chinese chess Elephant chess Elephant game

Xiangqi

Chinese	象棋
Transcriptions	
Standard Mandarin	
Hanyu Pinyin	xiàngqí
Wade–Giles	hsiang[4]-ch'i[2]
IPA	[ɕjâŋ.tɕʰǐ] (◀ listen)
Yue: Cantonese	
Yale Romanization	jeuhng kéi

Jyutping	zoeng^6 kei^2
Southern Min	
Hokkien POJ	chhiūⁿ-kî

Board

Xiangqi is played on a board nine lines wide and ten lines long. As in the game Go (*Wéiqí* 圍棋/围棋), the pieces are placed on the intersections, which are known as *points*. The vertical lines are known as *files* (Chinese: 路; pinyin: *lù*; "road"), and the horizontal lines are known as *ranks* (traditional Chinese: 線; simplified Chinese: 线; pinyin: *xiàn*; "line").

Centred at the first to third and eighth to tenth ranks of the board are two zones, each three points by three points, demarcated by two diagonal lines connecting opposite corners and intersecting at the centre point. Each of these areas is known as 宮/宫 ◀ *gōng*, a castle.

Dividing the two opposing sides, between the fifth and sixth ranks, is 河 *hé*, the "river". The river is often marked with the phrases 楚河 ◀ *chǔ hé*, meaning "River of the Chu ", and 漢界 (in Traditional Chinese), ◀ *hàn jiè*, meaning "Border of the Han", a reference to the Chu–Han War. Although the river provides a visual division between the two sides, only two pieces are affected by its presence: soldiers have an enhanced move after crossing the river, and elephants cannot cross it. The starting points of the soldiers and cannons are usually, but not always, marked with small crosses.

Rules

Xiangqi is a common pastime in Chinese cities.

The pieces start in the position shown in the diagram above. Which player moves first has varied throughout history and from one part of China to another. Different xiangqi books advise either that the black or red side moves first. Some books refer to the two sides as north and south; which direction corresponds to which colour also varies from source to source. Generally, Red moves first in most modern tournaments.[1]

Each player in turn moves one piece from the point it occupies, to another point. Pieces are generally not permitted to move through a point occupied by another piece. A piece can be moved onto a point occupied by an enemy piece, in which case the enemy piece is captured and removed from the board. A player cannot capture one of his own pieces. Pieces are never promoted (converted into other pieces), although the soldier is able to move sideways after it crosses the river. Almost all pieces capture using their normal moves, while the cannon has a special capture move described below.

The game ends when one player captures the other's general. When the general is in danger of being captured by the enemy player on his next move, the enemy player has "delivered a check" (simplified Chinese: 照将/将军; traditional Chinese: 照將/將軍, abbreviated (simplified Chinese: 将; traditional Chinese: 將; pinyin: *jiāng* ◀ *jiāng*)), and the general is "in check". A check should be announced. If the general's player can make no move to prevent the general's capture, the situation is called "checkmate" (simplified Chinese: 将死; traditional Chinese: 將死). Unlike in chess, in which stalemate is a draw, in xiangqi, it is a loss for the stalemated player.

An instance of checkmate that assumes the cannon is safe and Black cannot block the check. The horse is not needed for this checkmate.

In xiangqi, a player—often with a material or positional disadvantage—may attempt to check or chase pieces in a way such that the moves fall in a cycle, forcing the opponent to draw the game. The following special rules are used to make it harder to draw the game by endless checking or chasing, regardless of whether the positions of the pieces are repeated or not:

- A player making perpetual checks with one piece or several pieces can be ruled to have lost unless he or she stops such checking.

- A player who perpetually chases any one unprotected piece with one or more pieces, excluding generals and soldiers, will be ruled to have lost unless he or she stops such chasing.[2]
- If one side perpetually checks and the other side perpetually chases, the checking side has to stop or be ruled to have lost.
- When neither side violates the rules and both persist in not making an alternate move, the game can be ruled as a draw.
- When both sides violate the same rule at the same time and both persist in not making an alternate move, the game can be ruled as a draw.

Different sets of rules set different limits on what is considered perpetual. For example, club xiangqi rules allow a player to check or chase six consecutive times using one piece, twelve times using two pieces, and eighteen times using three pieces before considering the action perpetual.[2]

The above rules to prevent perpetual checking and chasing, while popular, are not the only ones; there are numerous end game situations.[3]

Pieces

Each player controls an army of 16 pieces; the armies are usually coloured red and black.[4] Pieces are flat circular disks labeled or engraved with a Chinese character identifying the piece type, and in a colour indicating which player has ownership. The black pieces are marked with somewhat different characters from the corresponding red pieces.

In mainland China, most sets still use traditional Chinese characters (as opposed to simplified Chinese characters). Modern pieces are usually plastic, though some sets are wooden, and more expensive sets may use jade. In more ancient times, many sets were simple unpainted woodcarvings; thus, to distinguish between pieces of the two sides, most corresponding pieces used characters that were similar but varied slightly.[4] This practice may have originated in situations where there was only one material available to make the pieces from and no colouring material available to distinguish the opposing armies. The oldest xiangqi piece found to date is a 俥 (chariot) piece. It is kept in the Henan Provincial Museum.

General

Generals (or **kings**) are labelled 將 (trad.) / 将 (simp.) 🔊 *jiàng* ("general") on the black side and 帥 (trad.) / 帅 (simp.) 🔊 *shuài* ("marshal") on the red side.

The general starts the game at the midpoint of the back edge, within the palace. The general may move and capture one point orthogonally and may not leave the palace, with the following exception.

The two generals may not face each other along the same file with no intervening pieces. If that happens, the 飛將 ("flying general") move may be executed, in which the general to move may cross the board to capture the enemy general. In practice, this rule means that creating this situation in the first place means moving into check, and is therefore not allowed.[5]

General and advisors

The Indian name *king* for this piece was changed to *general* because of Chinese naming taboos; China's rulers objected to their royal titles being given to game pieces.[6]
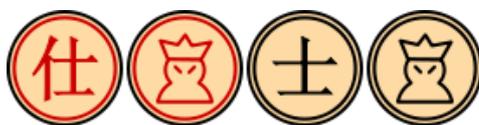
Advisor

Advisors (also known as **guards** or **ministers**, and less commonly as **assistants**, **mandarins**, or **warriors**) are labelled 士 🔊 *shì* ("scholar", "gentleman", "officer", "guardian") for Black and 仕 🔊 *shì* ("scholar", "official", "guardian") for Red. Rarely, sets use the character 士 for both colours.

The advisors start on either side of the general. They move and capture one point diagonally and may not leave the palace, which confines them to five points on the board. The advisor is probably derived from the mantri in chaturanga, like the queen in Western chess.

There is some controversy about whether "士" really is intended to mean "scholar", "gentleman" which would be "士人", or "guard", "guardian" which would be "衛士" (simplified Chinese: 卫士). To some, the latter seems more plausible because their functionality seems to be to guard/protect the general. The common Western translation "advisor" does not reflect this layer of meaning.

Elephant

Elephants (or bishops) are labeled 象 *xiàng* ("elephant") for Black and 相 *xiàng* ("minister") for Red. They are located next to the advisors. These pieces move and capture exactly two points diagonally and may not jump over intervening pieces; the move is described as being like the character 田 *Tián* ("field"). If an elephant cannot move due to a diagonally adjacent piece, it is known as "blocking the elephant's eye" (塞象眼).

Elephants may not cross the river to attack the enemy general, and serve as defensive pieces. Because an elephant's movement is restricted to just seven board positions, it can be easily trapped or threatened. The two elephants are often used to defend each other.

The Chinese characters for "minister" and "elephant" are homophones in Mandarin (🔊 Listen) and both have alternative meanings as "appearance" or "image". However, in English, both are referred to as elephants.
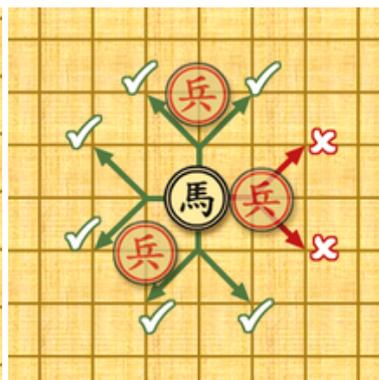
Horse

Horses (or knights) are labelled 馬 🔊 *mǎ* for Black and 傌 *mǎ* for Red in sets marked with Traditional Chinese characters and 马 *mǎ* for both Black and Red in sets marked with Simplified Chinese characters. Some traditional sets use 馬 for both colours. Horses begin the game next to the elephants, on their outside flanks. A horse moves and captures one point orthogonally and then one point diagonally away from its former position, a move which is traditionally described as being like the character 日 *Rì*. The horse does not jump as the knight does in Western chess, and can be blocked by a piece located one point horizontally or vertically adjacent to it. Blocking a horse is called "hobbling the horse's leg" (蹩馬腿). The diagram on the left illustrates the horse's movement.
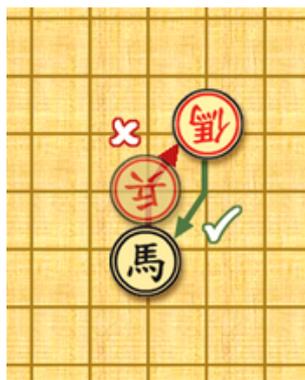
The red horse may capture the black horse, but the black horse cannot capture the red horse because its movement is obstructed by another piece.

Green moves are legal; red ones are illegal because another piece is obstructing the movement of the horse.

Since horses can be blocked, it is sometimes possible to trap the opponent's horse. It is possible for one player's horse to have an asymmetric attack advantage if an opponent's horse is blocked, as seen in the diagram on the right.

Chariot

Chariots (or rooks) are labelled 車 🔊 *jū* for Black and 俥 🔊 *jū* for Red in sets marked with Traditional Chinese characters and 车 for both Black and Red in sets marked with Simplified Chinese characters. Some traditional sets use 車 for both colours. In the context of Chinese Chess, all of these characters are pronounced as 🔊 *jū* (instead of the common pronunciation *chē*). The chariot moves and captures any distance orthogonally, but may not jump over intervening pieces. The chariots begin the game on the points at the corners of the board. The chariot is often considered to be the strongest piece in the game due to its freedom of movement and lack of restrictions.

The chariot is sometimes known as the rook by English-speaking players, since it is like the rook in Western chess. Chinese players (and others) often call this piece a car, since that is one modern meaning of the character 車.
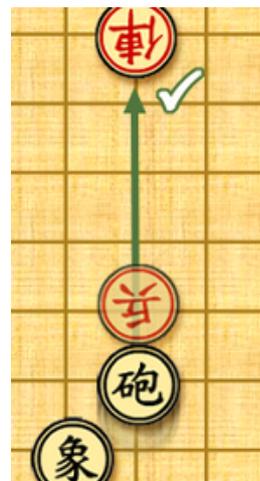
Cannon

Cannons are labelled 砲 🔊 *pào* ("catapult") for Black and 炮 *pào* ("cannon") for Red. The names are homophones, though sometimes 炮 is used for both Red and Black. The 石 *shí* radical of 砲 means "stone", and the 火 *huǒ* radical of 炮 means "fire". Both colours' pieces are normally referred to as cannons in English. The black piece is sometimes labelled 包bāo.

Each player has two cannons, which start on the row behind the soldiers, two points in front of the horses. Cannons move like chariots, any distance orthogonally without jumping, but can only capture by jumping a single piece, friend or foe, along the path of attack. The piece over which the cannon jumps is called the 炮臺 (trad.) / 炮台 (simp.) *pào tái* ("cannon platform" or "screen"). Any number of unoccupied spaces, including none, may exist between the cannon, screen, and the piece to be captured. Cannons can be exchanged for horses immediately from their starting positions.

The long-range threat of the cannon

Soldier

Soldiers are labelled 卒 🔊 *zú* ("pawn" or "private") for Black and 兵 🔊 *bīng* ("soldier") for Red. Each side starts with five soldiers. Soldiers begin the game located on every other point one row back from the edge of the river. They move and capture by advancing one point. Once they have crossed the river, they may also move and capture one point horizontally. Soldiers cannot move backward, and therefore cannot retreat; after advancing to the last rank of the board, however, a soldier may still move sideways at the enemy's edge. The soldier is sometimes called the "pawn" by English-speaking players, due to the pieces' similarities.

Approximate relative values of the pieces

Piece	Point(s)
Soldier before crossing the river	1
Soldier after crossing the river	2
Advisor	2
Elephant	2
Horse	4
Cannon	4½
Chariot	9

Xiangqi is a popular weekend activity in Beijing.

These approximate values[7] do not take into account the position of the piece in question (except the soldier in a general sense), the positions of other pieces on the board, or the number of pieces remaining.

Other common rules of assessment:

- A horse plus a cannon is generally better than two horses or two cannons.
- The chariot is not only the strongest piece, it is also generally stronger than any combination of two minor pieces (horse/cannon). When the relative values of both sides' pieces are approximately even, the side with more chariots generally has the advantage, especially when one side has a chariot and one side does not (Chinese: 有車壓無車). However, the chariot is not particularly strong in basic endgames: For example, chariot vs 2 advisors and 2 elephants is generally a draw, while if the offensive side instead has two horses or even three unadvanced soldiers it is a win.

- In the earlier stages, the cannon is stronger than the horse. In the endgame, the horse is stronger as an attacking piece, but the cannon generally has better defensive abilities.
- The values of soldiers vary in different stages of the game. In the opening and the middlegame, the initiative and mobility of pieces often require sacrificing soldiers. In these stages, soldiers closer to the middle file are generally more valuable, since they can effectively join the offence. With few attacking pieces on the board, soldiers have more power and can cross the river more easily. In this stage, advanced soldiers are generally less powerful, since soldiers cannot move backward. In basic endgames, three soldiers starting on the 7th rank are approximately equal to a chariot: they can force a win against 2 advisors and 2 elephants, or a horse/cannon plus 2 elephants, while instead a chariot cannot, and a chariot cannot force a win against three soldiers on the 7th rank when well-defended.

Notation

There are several types of notation used to record xiangqi games. In each case the moves are numbered and written with the same general pattern.

1. (first move) (first response)
2. (second move) (second response)
3. ...

It is clearer but not required to write each move pair on a separate line.

System 1

The book *The Chess of China* describes a move notation method in which the ranks of the board are numbered 1 to 10 from closest to farthest away, followed by a digit 1 to 9 for files from right to left.[8] Both values are relative to the moving player. Moves are then indicated as follows:

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[piece name] ([former rank][former file])-[new rank][new file]
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Thus, the most common opening in the game would be written as:
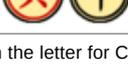
1. 炮 (32)–35 馬 (18)–37

System 2

A notation system partially described in *A Manual of Chinese Chess*[9] and used by several computer software implementations describes moves in relative terms as follows:

```
[single-letter piece abbreviation][former file]
[operator indicating direction of movement][new
file, or in the case of purely vertical
movement, number of ranks traversed]
```

The file numbers are counted from each player's right to each player's left.

In case there are two identical pieces in one file, symbols + (front) and – (rear) are used instead of former file number. Direction of movement is indicated via an operator symbol. A plus sign is used to indicate forward movement. A minus sign is used to indicate backward movement. A dot or period or equals sign is used to indicate horizontal or lateral movement. For a piece that moves diagonally (such as the horse or elephant), the plus or minus sign is used rather than the period.

Name	Abbr.	Pieces
Advisor	A	仕 士
Cannon	C	炮 砲
Chariot	R*	俥 車
Elephant	E	相 象
General	G	帥 將
Horse	H	傌 馬
Soldier	S	兵 卒
* for Rook, because using C would conflict with the letter for Cannon		

Thus, the most common opening in the game would be written as:

1. C2.5 H8+7

According to World Xiangqi Federation (WXF) notations for tandem pawns case when there are (tandem pawns) >=3 in a file, there is no need to specify the P for pawn. Instead, the position of the pawn in the tandem line is used as the first integer (with the front most pawn designated as 1). The second integer would be the file on which it was on. This would also solve the problem of two set of tandem pawns on two different files nicely.

Thus the notation to move the middle pawn (3 tandem pawns in a file) on the 5th file to the 4th file would be:

1. 25=4

In older books written in Chinese the system is the same, except that: the names of the pieces are written in Chinese; the name for the cannon on both sides is 炮; the name for the horse on both sides is 馬; forward motion is indicated with 進 (pronounced *jìn*); backward motion is indicated with 退 (*tuì*); sideways motion is indicated with 平 (*píng*); and numbers are written in Chinese either for both players or for just Black.

Thus, the most common opening in the game might be written as:

1. 炮二平五 馬8進7

System 3

This system is unofficial and principally used by Western players. It is similar to <u>algebraic notation</u> for Western chess. Letters are used for files and numbers for ranks. File "a" is on Red's left and rank "1" is nearest to Red. A point's designation does not depend on which player moves; for both sides "a1" is the lowest left point from Red's side.

[single-letter piece abbreviation][former position][capture indication][new position][check indication][analysis]

Pieces are abbreviated as in notation system 2, except that no letter is used for the soldier.

Former position is only indicated if necessary to distinguish between two identical pieces that could have made the move. If they share the same file, indicate which rank moves; if they share the same rank, indicate which file moves. If they share neither rank nor file, then the file is indicated.

Capture is indicated by "x". No symbol is used to indicate a non-capturing move.

Check is indicated by "+", double check by "++", triple check by "+++", and quadruple check by "++++". Checkmate is indicated by "#".

For analysis purposes, bad moves are indicated by "?" and good moves by "!". These can be combined if the analysis is uncertain ("!?" might be either but is probably good; "?!" is probably bad) or repeated for emphasis ("??" is a disaster).

Thus, the most common opening in the game would be written as:

1. Che3 Hg8

An example of a brief game ("the early checkmate") is:

1. Cbe3 Che8
2. Ch6? Cb4?
3. Cxe7+? Cexe4??
4. Che6# (see diagram)

Black is mated and therefore loses. Red's doubled cannons cannot be blocked, and the general cannot move off the e-file.

Gameplay

Because of the size of the board and the low number of long-range pieces, there is a tendency for the battle to focus on a particular area of the board.

Tactics

Xiangqi involves several tactics common to games in the chess family. Some common ones are briefly discussed here.

- When one piece can attack more than one enemy piece, they are *forked*.
- A piece is *pinned* when it cannot move without exposing a more important piece to capture. Only chariot pins exactly resemble pins in western chess; pins by other pieces in xiangqi take on many unique forms: Cannons can pin two pieces at once on one file or rank, horses can pin because they can be blocked, and generals can pin because of the "flying general" rule. In pins by horses and elephants, the pinning piece never attacks the pinned piece, while in a pin by a cannon, only one of the pieces is directly attacked by the cannon. A general can only pin pieces to the enemy general, and the pinning general can never capture the pinned piece, since that would place it in check from the enemy general.
- A piece is *skewered* when it is attacked and, by moving, exposes a less important piece to be captured. Only cannons and chariots can skewer.

Fork	Pin	Skewer

Red's horse (傌) at d5 forks black's soldier (卒) at c7 and chariot (車) at e7.

Black's cannon (砲) at e8 is pinned by red's chariot (伡) at e5.

Red's chariot (伡) at e5 is skewering black's general (將) at e8 and chariot (車) at e10. When the general moves sideways to avoid being captured, its chariot could be captured.

- A *discovered check* occurs when an attacking piece moves so that it unblocks a line for a chariot, cannon, and/or horse to check the enemy general. The piece uncovering the check can safely move anywhere within its powers regardless of whether the opponent has those squares under protection.
- A *double check* occurs when two pieces simultaneously threaten the enemy general. Unlike a western chess double check, a double check in xiangqi may be blockable, but capturing one of the checking pieces is insufficient to remove the threat (unless the general makes the capture). The only blockable cases are either a chariot and cannon on the same file as the general, with the chariot acting as a screen for the cannon, or two horses giving discovered check after another piece unblocks the attack from both. Double checks delivered by other means are not blockable.
- Unique to xiangqi is a *triple check*, which arises in four combinations. In the first case of a cannon, a chariot or soldier, and a horse, the horse moves to give check, uncovering a double check from the chariot and the cannon. In the second, rarer case of a chariot or soldier and two horses, the chariot moves to give check, uncovering a double check from the two horses. In the third case of two cannons and two horses, one cannon

may uncover a double check from the horses and act as a screen for the other cannon. Finally, a chariot or soldier can move to give check, uncovering a check from a horse while acting as a platform for a cannon to give another check. *Quadruple check* is also possible, arising with two horses, a chariot, and a cannon. Triple and quadruple check cannot be blocked.

Triple check	Quadruple check	Triple check, alternate position
Red's horse (傌) has moved from e5 to d7, giving check and exposing a double check from the chariot (俥) at e3 and the cannon (炮) at e2.	Red's chariot (俥) has moved from f9 to e9, giving check and exposing a triple check from the cannon (炮) at e7 and both horses (傌) at f8 and g9. Replacing the chariot with a cannon or removing a horse produces a triple check.	Red's chariot (俥) has moved from f9 to e9, discovering two checks from both horses (傌) at f8 and g9 and gives check itself.

Usually, soldiers do not support each other until the endgame, because from the initial position it takes a minimum of five moves of a soldier to allow mutual protection between two of them, and they are often prone to capture by other pieces.

Soldiers, horses, cannons and chariots can form up formations that protect each other. However, lining up chariots must be done with caution, as this risks losing one chariot to an enemy's inferior piece. Horses that support each other are called Linked Horses(Chinese: 連環馬), which is a relatively safe formation of the horses, though it can still be threatened with a soldier, a chariot plus another minor piece, or a piece blocking one of the horses thus making the protection one-sided.

It is common to use cannons independently to control particular ranks and files. Using a cannon to control the middle file is often considered vital strategy, because it pins pieces such as the advisors and elephants. The two files adjacent to the middle file are also considered important and horses and chariots can be used to push for checkmate there.

Since the general is usually safest in his original position before the endgame phase, attacking the general commonly involves forcing the general out of his original position with check or with threats. Thus, specific points and formations are very important in xiangqi.

For an attacking (Red) horse, the most fatal points are c9 and g9 (Chinese: 臥槽馬), especially since without proper defence a quick mate can follow with an extra chariot or cannon.

For a cannon, one of the most fatal formations is the exposed cannon (Chinese: 空心炮), where the cannon directly controls the middle file with no other pieces between the cannon and the general. This formation is particularly dangerous since the defensive side cannot move any piece in front of the cannon; while with an extra cannon joining the attack, mate can follow on the spot, and with an extra rook, the defensive side can mount a double check (with the rook in front of the cannon) followed by a windmill, often winning at least a piece afterwards. If the defensive side cannot chase the cannon away or capture it, it must move the general forward to avoid these threats, leaving the general vulnerable to attacks.

Another fatal formation, called the "cannon-controlled centroid horse" (Chinese: 炮鎮窩心馬, diagram at right), also requires particularly bad coordination of the enemy pieces. In the diagram, Black's "centroid horse" occupies the centre of the palace, blocking Black's own general and advisors,


Liang vs. Zhao, 1982

and being pinned to the general by the red cannon, cannot move. Black's cannon at e8 is also pinned to its own general; it too is unable to move and restricts the movement of Black's two elephants, making them unable to protect each other. Such a formation in the middlegame often produces deadly threats of smothered mates, while in the endgame, as in the diagram, Red's cannon cannot be chased away, rendering Black's general, advisors, cannon on e8, and horse all permanently unable to move. Even though Black is up a minor piece, Red has a clear win: The game concluded 41.Hg7 (forking the elephant and

Due to the pin of two pieces by the red cannon, Black's centroid horse has become a liability rather than an asset.

pinned cannon and creating a mating threat) Eg10 42.Hh9 Ci9 43.Hf8+ Cf9 (if not for the other black cannon, it is instant mate) 44.Hxg6, and Black resigned: Black's only active piece (the cannon on f9) is absolutely helpless to stop Red's horse and soldiers, which will soon invade the palace.

A common defensive configuration is to leave the general at its starting position, deploy one advisor and one elephant on the two points directly in front of the general, and to leave the other advisor and elephant in their starting positions, to the side of the general. In this setup, the advisor-elephant pairs support each other, and the general is immune from attacks by cannons. Losing any of the pieces makes the general vulnerable to cannon, and the setup may need to be abandoned. The defender may move advisors or elephants away from the general, or even sacrifice them intentionally, to ward off attack by a cannon.

Long sequences of checks leading to mate or gain of material are common both in chess compositions and in actual play. A skilled xiangqi player would often have to calculate several steps, or even tens of steps ahead for a forced sequence. In the diagram on the right, Black has an immediate mating threat which cannot be parried, forcing Red to check Black on every move. Although it requires 11 moves to mate, its general idea is clear: Induce a smothered check by sacrificing a chariot at the centre of the palace (e9), then force Black to open the centre file, enabling the Red general to assist the attack, and finally mate by facing generals.
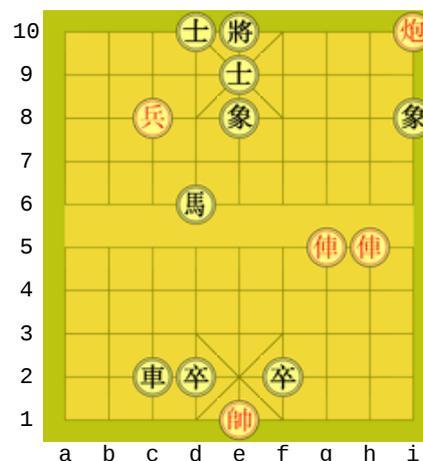
Red mates in 11

Solution: 1.Rh10++

- 1. ...Eig10 gets mated faster: 2.Rgxg10+ Af10 (Exg10 3.Rxg10#) 3.Rxf10+ Ge9 4.Rh9#.
- 1. ...Eeg10 gets mated immediately with 2.Rhxg10#

1. ...Af10

2.Rh9+ Afe9

3.Rg10++ Af10

4.Rg9+ Afe9

5.Rh10++

- Again both 5. ...Eig10 and 5. ...Eeg10 lead to faster mates.

5. ...Af10 6.Re9+!!

- A brilliant smothered-check inducing move. If 6. ...Gxe9 7. Rh9#

6. ...Adxe9

7.Rh9+ Eeg10

8.Rxe9+ (the chariot is untouchable with legal moves) Gd10

9.Re10+ Gd9

10.d8+ Gxd8

11.Rd10#

Note that if Red plays 4.Re9+? instead, Red cannot force a mate: 4. ...Adxe9 5.Rg9+ Eig10 and Red cannot play Rxe9+ on the next move because the chariot is then not supported by the general, and black can simply play Gxe9. The purpose of using the g-chariot to give check is to place the h-chariot on the h9 point, blocking Black's Eig10.
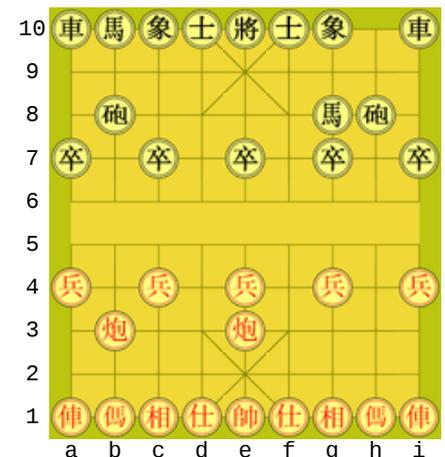
Openings

Since the left and right flanks of the starting setup are symmetrical, it is customary to make the first move on the right flank. Starting on the left flank is considered needlessly confusing.

The most common opening is to move the cannon to the central column, an opening known as 當頭炮 (trad.) / 当头炮 (simp.) *dāng tóu pào* or "Central Cannon". The most common reply is to advance the horse on the same flank. Together, this move-and-response is known by the rhyme 當頭炮，馬來跳 (trad.) / 当头炮，马来跳 (simp.) 🔊 *dāng tóu pào, mǎ lái tiào*. The notation for this is "1. 炮 (32)–35, 馬 (18)–37", "1. C2.5 H8+7", or "1. Che3 Hg8" (diagram at right). After Black's 1. ...H8+7 (Hg8) response, the game can develop into a variety of openings, the most common being the 屏風馬 (trad.) / 屏风马 (simp.) or "Screen Horses (Defence)" in which Black develops the other horse to further protect his middle pawn (...H2+3 or ...Hc8) either immediately on his second move, or later when Black transposes the game into this opening.

The most common opening pair of moves

Alternative common first moves by Black are developing either cannons (1. ...C8.5/1. ...Che8, or 1. ...C2.5/1. ...Cbe8); note that after either of these moves, taking the central soldier with the cannon (2. C5+4 or 2. Cxe7+) is a beginner's trap that impedes development and coordination of Red's pieces if Black plays correctly (for example, 1. Che3 Che8 2. Cxe7+?? Ade9 3. Hg3 Hg8 4. Ce5 Rh10 when Black develops the rook first, and the loss of Black's middle pawn actually enabled Black's horses to occupy the centre on the next moves).

Other common first moves by Red include moving an elephant to the central column (1. Ege3), advancing the soldier on the third or seventh file (1. c5), moving a horse forward (1. Hg3), and moving either cannon to the 4th or 6th (d- or f-) file (1. Chd3 or 1. Chf3). Compared to the Central Cannon openings, these openings are generally less restricted by theory.

General advice for the opening includes rapid development of at least one chariot and putting it on open files and ranks, as it is the most powerful piece with a long attack range. There is a saying that only a poor player does not move a chariot in the first three moves (Chinese: 三步不出車，必定要輸棋); however this is not to be taken literally, and is in fact often violated in modern Xiangqi games. Attacking and defending the centre, especially the central soldiers / central pawns, are common themes in the opening, hence the Central Cannon openings. Usually, at least one horse should be moved to the middle in order to defend the central soldier; however undefended central soldiers can also become "poisoned pawns" in the early moves, especially if the attacking side does not have an immediate follow-up to retain the pressure on the central file.

Middlegame strategy

Xiangqi strategy share common themes with chess, but have some differences:

- Occupying the centre is relatively less important in xiangqi, but controlling and attacking the middle file is still one of the vital themes. Since the middle file is often well defended, players would then seek to mount an offence on either of the flanks on the enemy side, especially when the defence of one flank is neglected.
- The significance of pawn formation in xiangqi and chess are different. In xiangqi, soldiers (pawns) are often pushed to avoid blocking their own horses, and it is uncommon for them to defend each other (in contrast with a western chess pawn chain). Successfully getting a soldier to cross a river as an attacking force can often tilt the scales of the middlegame by a large margin.
- In high-level play, the initiative is highly important, and a minor mistake can doom a game.
- Sacrifices are common in xiangqi, however they are more often tactical rather than positional. Usually, at most a minor piece is sacrificed for positional advantages, or a semi-tactical attack.
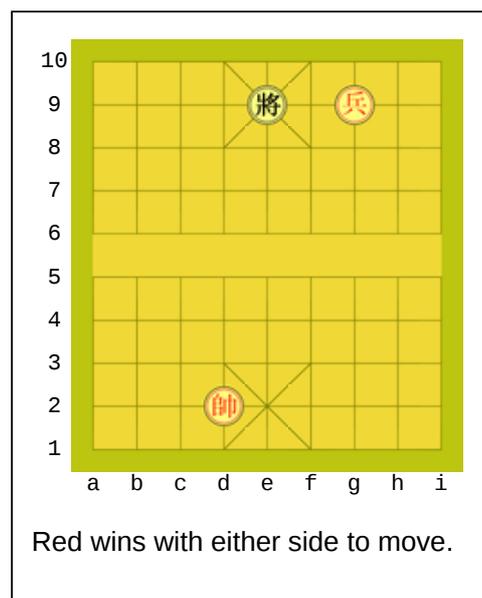
Endgame

Though xiangqi endgames require remarkable skill to be played well, there are a number of widely known book wins and book draws. Without a counterpart to pawn promotion, xiangqi endgames instead focus more directly on forcing checkmate or stalemate, and in this regard resemble pawnless chess endgames.

A general rule in xiangqi endgames for the advantageous side is that, when there's less material on the board, do not trade pieces easily, as with fewer attacking pieces on the board, defending is easier. Hence, if a certain type of endgame can transpose, by trading pieces, into another type of endgame which is a book win, then this endgame itself is a book win.

Zugzwang in xiangqi endgames

Inducing zugzwang is a crucial theme in winning simple endgames, and almost exclusively in simple endgames. In the general + soldier vs general endgame shown on the right, Red's first main goal is to occupy the middle file. Red wins with 1. Gd1, a waiting move, and Black is in zugzwang. Black must proceed with 1. ...Ge8, as 1. ...Ge10 instantly loses after 2. f9#. After 1. ...Ge8 2. f9 Gf8 3. e9 Ge8 4. d9 Gf8 5. Ge1, Red's general successfully occupies the middle file. The game would conclude with 5. ...Gf9 6. e9+, and regardless of Black's reply, 7. Ge2# (stale)mates Black and thus winning the game.

Red wins with either side to move.

Reciprocal zugzwang is possible, but very rare and usually seen in endgame compositions. In this endgame shown on the right, whoever moves loses, since when any of the two generals moves to an open d- or f- file, a mate in 1 is threatened with this move, while the player to move only helps the enemy general occupy one of the files. For instance, Red can only move his two soldiers if he is to move. Moving the f-(or d-)soldier allows the enemy general to occupy the f-file(d-file). Even if 1. fe9+ Gf10 2. d10, when Red threatens mate in 1, Black still mates immediately with either 2. ...fe2# or 2. ...f1#.
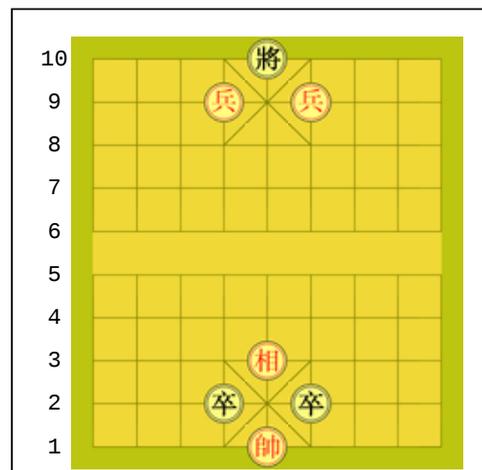
Reciprocal zugzwang: Whoever moves first loses.

Soldier (pawn) endgames

- A soldier, as long as it does not reach the opposite rank, wins against a bare general easily. With any extra defensive piece on the defensive side, it is a draw; however, soldier vs advisor requires skill to play well.
- Two unadvanced (i.e., on the 6th or 7th ranks) soldiers win against the following combinations: Two advisors, two elephants, a bare horse/cannon. Generally a draw against one advisor plus one elephant, or a horse/cannon plus a defending piece.
- Three unadvanced soldiers win against the following combinations: All 4 defensive pieces (2 advisors plus 2 elephants, Chinese: 士象全), a horse plus two advisors/two elephants, a cannon plus two elephants.
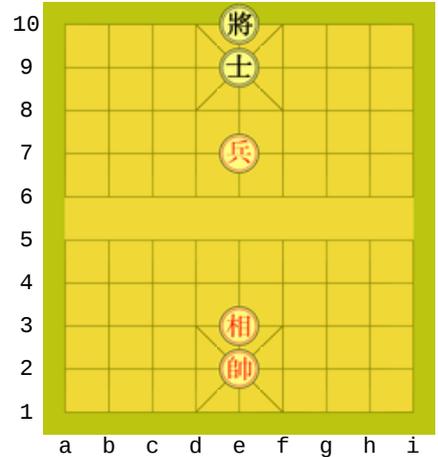
Red to play wins; Black to play draws.

Horse endgames

- A bare horse wins against a bare advisor, but not a bare elephant.
- A horse plus an unadvanced soldier wins against both combinations of 3 defensive pieces, or any combination of a minor piece plus a defensive piece except horse + elephant. This combination draws against all 4 defensive pieces.
- A horse plus an advanced soldier(on the 8th or 9th rank) draws against either combination of 3 defensive pieces, but defending requires precise positions.
- A horse plus a soldier on the 10th rank wins against two advisors, or one advisor plus one elephant. This combination draws against 2 elephants.
- A horse plus two soldiers can win against one minor piece + one advisor + two elephants. With an extra advisor on the defensive side, it is a book draw.
- Two horses win against all 4 defensive pieces, or any combination of a minor piece plus 2 defensive pieces except cannon + 2 elephants.
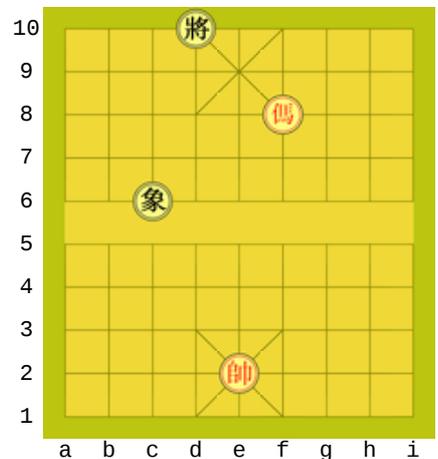
Red to play wins with 1. Hd7, preventing the elephant from getting to the opposite flank, and thus placing Black in zugzwang (1...Gd9 loses to the fork 2.Hb8+ while after 1...Ea8, 2.Hb8 puts Black in zugzwang again and the elephant is lost on the following move). Black to play draws with 1. ...Ee8.

Cannon endgames

- A bare cannon, or a cannon with elephants, cannot win against a bare general due to insufficient material. Cannons need defensive pieces for cooperation, especially the advisor.
- A cannon needs only one advisor to win against two advisors, or a single elephant. Meanwhile, even with all 4 defensive pieces, it is a book draw against two elephants, one advisor + one elephant, one soldier + one advisor, or any minor piece.
- A cannon with all 4 defensive pieces needs at least an extra soldier to win against 4 defensive pieces. A bare cannon with a soldier on the 6th rank wins against any combination of 2 defensive pieces.
- A cannon + 4 defensive pieces + 2 unadvanced soldiers generally draw against one minor piece + 4 defensive pieces. But if the defensive side lacks a single piece, it is a book win.
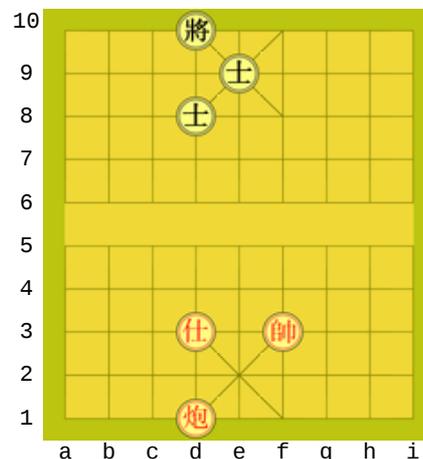
After 1. Ge3, Black must lose an advisor, since 1...Gd9 is met by 2.Ae2#. Note that after 1. ...Ge10 2. Cxd8, taking the cannon with Axd8 is illegal as the advisor is pinned to its general (the generals may not face each other on the same file).

Horse+Cannon endgames

This type of endgame is considered one of the more complex endgames. Commonly known book wins and book draws are:

- Horse + Cannon + 4 defensive pieces vs a minor piece vs 4 defensive pieces: A win if the minor piece is a horse (the attacking side does not need all 4 defensive pieces to win), a draw if it is a cannon.
- With the same combination of the two minor pieces and all 4 defensive pieces on both sides, one needs two extra soldiers for a book win.
- If both sides have 2 minor pieces and 4 defensive pieces, and the advantegeous side only has one extra soldier, then regardless of the combination of the two minor pieces, it is a book draw.

Chariot endgames

Single chariot endgames:

- A single chariot generally cannot win against 4 defensive pieces, but with 3 or fewer defensive pieces, it is a forced win.
- Chariot vs one minor piece plus 2 defensive pieces: A win if the 2 defensive pieces are not the same, or if the combination is horse + two advisors. If the defensive side has horse + two elephants, a specific defensive position is required to draw.
- Chariot vs one minor piece plus 3 defensive pieces: A draw.
- Chariot vs two minor pieces with no defensive pieces: A draw, but requires good defensive positions.

Chariot + soldiers (unadvanced):

- Chariot + soldier, with sufficient defensive pieces on his own side, wins against a chariot plus an advisor, a chariot plus two elephants, or a chariot plus a soldier.
- Chariot + soldier wins against any 2 minor pieces + 2 advisors. This combination also wins against horse + 4 defensive pieces, but not cannon + 4 defensive pieces.
- Chariot + soldier vs 2 unadvanced soldiers + 4 defensive pieces: If the offensive side has no defensive piece, it is a draw since the 2
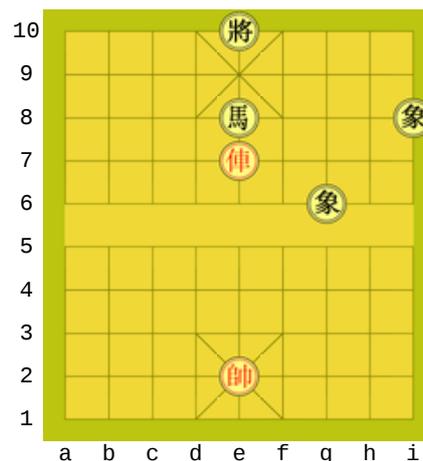
The ideal defensive position for chariot vs horse + 2 elephants. Other defensive positions, aside from this position's symmetrical variation, generally lose: If, instead, the elephant on g6 had been on g10, then Red to play wins, starting with 1. Rb7.

enemy soldiers can still be a formidable force. If the offensive side has one advisor, it is a win.

- Chariot + 2 soldiers cannot force a win against chariot + 4 defensive pieces. In this endgame, both attacking and defending require great skill.

Chariot + horse:

- A chariot plus a horse needs one advisor on his own side to win against a chariot plus two advisors.
- Chariot + horse vs chariot + two elephants: With enough defensive pieces for the attacking side, it is generally a win if the move limit is not taken into consideration.

Chariot + cannon:

- A chariot plus a cannon cannot win against a bare chariot, as long as the defending chariot occupies the middle file. However, with any extra defensive piece on the attacking side, it is a win.
- Chariot + cannon + 2 advisors would win against chariot + two elephants.
- Chariot + cannon + 4 defensive pieces vs chariot + 4 defensive pieces: Draw.

Two chariots:

- Two chariots vs chariot + 4 defensive pieces: A draw with good defensive positions.
- Two chariots vs chariot + minor piece + 2 defensive pieces: The only drawing combination is chariot + cannon + 2 advisors.
- Two chariots vs 2 minor pieces + 4 defensive pieces: A win if the 2 minor pieces are 2 horses.

History

A game called "xiangqi" was mentioned as dating to the Warring States period; according to the first-century-BC text *Shuo Yuan* (說苑/说苑), it was one of Lord Mengchang of Qi's interests. But the rules of that game are not described, and it was not necessarily related to the present-day game.[10] Emperor Wu of Northern Zhou wrote a book in AD 569 called *Xiang Jing*. It described the rules of an astronomically themed game called xiangqi or xiangxi (象戲/象戏). The word *xiàngqí* 象棋 is usually translated as "elephant game" or "figure game", because the Chinese character 象 means "elephant" and "figure"; it originated as a stylized drawing of an elephant, and was used to write a word meaning "figure", likely because the two words were pronounced the same.

For these reasons, Murray theorized that "in China [chess] took over the board and name of a game called 象棋 in the sense of 'Astronomical Game', which represented the apparent movements of naked-eye-visible astronomical objects in the night sky, and that the earliest Chinese references to 象棋 meant the Astronomical Game and not Chinese chess". Previous games called xiàngqí may have been based on the movements of sky objects. However, the connection between 象 and astronomy is marginal, and arose from constellations being called "figures" in astronomical contexts where other meanings of "figure" were less likely; this usage may have led some ancient Chinese authors to theorize that the game 象棋 started as a simulation of astronomy.

To support his argument, Murray quoted an old Chinese source that says that in the older xiangqi (which modern xiangqi may have taken some of its rules from) the game pieces could be shuffled, which does not happen in the modern chess-style xiangqi.[11] Murray also wrote that in ancient China there was more than one game called xiangqi.[12]

Xiangqi game pieces dated to the Song dynasty (960–1279)

An alternative hypothesis to Murray's is that xiangqi was patterned after the array of troops in the Warring States period. David H. Li, for example, argues that the game was developed by Han Xin in the winter of 204 BC-203 BC to prepare for an upcoming battle.[13] His theories have been questioned by other chess researchers, however.[14] The earliest description of the game's rules appears in the story "Cén Shùn" (岑順) in the collection *Xuanguai lu* (玄怪錄), written in the middle part of the Tang dynasty.

With the economic and cultural development during the Qing Dynasty, xiangqi entered a new stage. Many different schools of circles and players came into prominence. With the popularization of xiangqi, many books and manuals on the techniques of playing the game were published. They played an important role in popularizing xiangqi and improving the techniques of

play in modern times. A Western-style *Encyclopedia of Chinese Chess Openings* was written in 2004.[15]

Modern play

Tournaments and leagues

Although xiangqi has its origin in Asia, there are xiangqi leagues and clubs all over the world. Each European nation generally has its own governing league; for example, in Britain, xiangqi is regulated by the United Kingdom Chinese Chess Association. Asian countries also have nationwide leagues, such as the Malaysia Chinese Chess Association.

In addition, there are several international federations and tournaments. The Chinese Xiangqi Association hosts several tournaments every year, including the Yin Li and Ram Cup Tournaments.[16] Other organizations include the Asian Xiangqi Federation[17] and a World Xiangqi Federation,[18] which hosts tournaments and competitions bi-annually, with most limited to players from member nations.

Rankings

The Asian Xiangqi Federation (AXF) and its corresponding member associations rank players in a format similar to the Elo rating system of chess. According to the XiangQi DataBase, the top-ranking female and male players in China, as of June 2012, were Tang Dan and Jiang Chuan, with ratings of 2529 and 2667, respectively.[19][20] Other strong players include Zhao GuanFang (female), Xu Yinchuan (male), Lu Qin (male), and Wang LinNa (female).

The Asian Xiangqi Federation also bestows the title of grandmaster to select individuals around the world who have excelled at xiangqi or made special contributions to the game. There are no specific criteria for becoming a grandmaster and the list of grandmasters was fewer than a hundred people in September 1996. The titles of grandmaster is bestowed by bodies such as the AXF and the Chinese Xiangqi Association (CXA).[21]

Computers

The game-tree complexity of xiangqi is approximately 10^{150}; in 2004 it was projected that a human top player would be defeated before 2010.[22] Xiangqi is one of the more popular computer-versus-computer competitions at the Computer Olympiads.[23]

Computer programs for playing xiangqi show the same development trend as has occurred for international chess: they are usually console applications (called engines) which communicate their moves in text form through some standard protocol. For displaying the board graphically, they then rely on a separate graphical user interface (GUI). Through such standardization, many different engines can be used through the same GUI, which can also be used for automated play of different engines against each other. Popular protocols are UCI (Universal Chess Interface), UCCI (Universal Chinese Chess Interface), Qianhong (QH) protocol, and WinBoard/XBoard (WB) protocol (the latter two named after the GUIs that implemented them). There now exist many dozens of xiangqi engines supporting one or more of these protocols, including some commercial engines.

Variations

Blitz chess
Each player only has around 5–10 minutes each.

Manchu chess
Invented during the Qing dynasty. Red horses, cannons, and one of the chariots are absent, but the remaining chariot can be played as horses and cannons as well.

Supply chess
Similar to the Western chess variant Bughouse chess, this variant features the ability to re-deploy captured pieces, similar to a rule in shogi. Four players play as two-person teams in two side-by-side games. One teammate plays Black and other plays Red. Any piece obtained by capturing the opponent's piece is given to the teammate for use in the other game. These pieces can be deployed by the teammate to give him an advantage over the other player, so long as the piece starts on the player's own side of the board and does not cause the opponent to be in check.

Formation
Similar to Fischer Random Chess, one player's pieces are placed randomly on one side of the river, except for the generals and advisors, which must be at their usual positions, and the elephants, which must start at two of the seven points they can normally reach. The other player's pieces are set up to mirror the first's. All other rules are the same.

Banqi
This variation is more well known in Hong Kong than in mainland China. It uses the xiangqi pieces and board, but does not follow any of its rules, bearing more of a resemblance to the Western game Stratego as well as the Chinese game Luzhanqi.

Variations played with special boards or pieces

There are many versions of three-player xiangqi, or *san xiangqui*, all played on special boards.

San Guo Qi
"Game of the Three Kingdoms" is played on a special hexagonal board with three xiangqi armies (red, blue, and green) vying for dominance. A Y-shaped river divides the board into three gem-shaped territories, each containing the grid found on one side of a xiangqi board, but distorted to make the game playable by three people. Each player has eighteen pieces: the sixteen of regular xiangqi, plus two new ones that stand on the same rank as the cannons. The new pieces have different names depending on their side: *huo* ("fire") for Red, *qi* ("flag") for Blue, and *feng* ("wind") for Green. They move two spaces orthogonally, then one space diagonally. The generals each bear the name of a historical Chinese kingdom—Shu for Red, Wei for Blue, and Wu for Green—from China's Three Kingdoms period.[24] It is likely that San Guo Qi first appeared under the Southern Song dynasty (960–1279).[25]

San You Qi
"Three Friends Chess" was invented by Zheng Jinde from Shexian in the Anhui province during the reign of the Kangxi Emperor of the Qing dynasty (1661–1722). It is played on a Y-shaped board with a full army of xiangqi pieces set up at the end of each of the board's three wide radii. In the centre of the board sits a triangular zone with certain features, such as ocean, mountain, or city walls, each of which is impassable by certain pieces. Two of an army's five soldiers are replaced by new pieces called *huo* ("fire") pieces, which move one space diagonally forward. Two *qi* ("flag") pieces are positioned on the front corners of the palace; they move two spaces forward inside their own camp, and then one space in any direction inside an enemy camp.[25]

Sanrenqi
"Three Men Chess" is a riverless, commercial variant played on a cross-shaped board with some special rules, including a fourth, neutral country called *Han.* Han has three Chariots, one Cannon, and one General named "Emperor Xian of Han", but these pieces do not move and do not belong to any of the players until a certain point in the game when two players team up against the third player. At that point the third player gets to also control Han.[25]

Si Guo Qi
"Four Kingdoms Chess" is also played on a riverless, cross-shaped board, but with four players. Because there are no rivers, elephants may move about the board freely.[25]

Unicode

Xiangqi pieces were added to the Unicode Standard in June 2018 with the release of version 11.0.

They appear in the Chess Symbols Unicode block, which is U+1FA00–U+1FA6F:

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	A	B	C	D	E	F
Chess Symbols[1][2] Official Unicode Consortium code chart (https://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U1FA00.pdf) (PDF)																
U+1FA0x	🨀	🨁	🨂	🨃	🨄	🨅	🨆	🨇	🨈	🨉	🨊	🨋	🨌	🨍	🨎	🨏
U+1FA1x	🨐	🨑	🨒	🨓	🨔	🨕	🨖	🨗	🨘	🨙	🨚	🨛	🨜	🨝	🨞	🨟
U+1FA2x	🨠	🨡	🨢	🨣	🨤	🨥	🨦	🨧	🨨	🨩	🨪	🨫	🨬	🨭	🨮	🨯
U+1FA3x	🨰	🨱	🨲	🨳	🨴	🨵	🨶	🨷	🨸	🨹	🨺	🨻	🨼	🨽	🨾	🨿
U+1FA4x	🩀	🩁	🩂	🩃	🩄	🩅	🩆	🩇	🩈	🩉	🩊	🩋	🩌	🩍	🩎	🩏
U+1FA5x	🩐	🩑	🩒	🩓												
U+1FA6x	🩠	🩡	🩢	🩣	🩤	🩥	🩦	🩧	🩨	🩩	🩪	🩫	🩬	🩭		

Notes

1.^ As of Unicode version 13.0
2.^ Grey areas indicate non-assigned code points

Popular culture

The game appears in the early 17th-century novel *Jin Ping Mei*.[26]

See also

- List of world championships in mind sports
- National Peasants' Games
- Xiang Jing
- Xiangqi at the 2007 Asian Indoor Games
- Xiangqi at the 2009 Asian Indoor Games
- Xiangqi at the 2010 Asian Games
- Xiexiemaster
- World Xiangqi Championship

Notes

1. Xiangqi: Chinese Chess (http://www.chessvariants.com/xiangqi.html) at chessvariants.com
2. Chinese Chess Rules (http://www.clubxiangqi.com/rules/) at clubxiangqi.com
3. "Asian Chinese Chess Rules" (http://www.clubxiangqi.com/rules/asiarule.htm).
4. Heinrich, Sally (2007). *Key Into China*. Curriculum Press. p. 74. ISBN 978-1863666978.
5. 象棋简明规则 - 中国棋院在线 (http://games.sports.cn/server/xiangqi/2008-04-22/1442022.html) (in Chinese). Retrieved 27 May 2014.
6. *A History of Chess*, p.120, footnote 3 says that Ssǔ-ma Kuang wrote in *T'ung-kien nun* in AD 1084 that Emperor Wen of Sui (541–604) found at an inn some foreigners playing a board game whose pieces included a piece called "*I pai ti*" = "white emperor"; in anger at this misuse of his title he had everybody at the inn put to death.
7. Lau, H. T. (1985). "Values and Uses of the Pieces". *Chinese Chess* (https://archive.org/details/chinesechessintr0000lauh/page/28). Tuttle Publishing. pp. 28–30 (https://archive.org/details/chinesechessintr0000lauh/page/28). ISBN 0-8048-3508-X.
8. Leventhal, Dennis A. *The Chess of China*. Taipei, Taiwan: Mei Ya, 1978. (getCITED.org listing (http://www.getcited.org/pub/101996662) Archived (https://web.archive.org/web/20050226031808/http://www.getcited.org/pub/101996662) February 26, 2005, at the Wayback Machine)
9. Wilkes, Charles Fred. *A Manual of Chinese Chess*. 1952.

10. "Facts on the Origin of Chinese Chess" (http://www.banaschak.net/schach/origins.htm). Banaschak.net. Retrieved on 2011-10-01.

11. *A History of Chess*, p.122, footnote 12: "In the biography of Lü-Ts'ai. The Emperor T'ai-Tsung (627–650) was puzzled by the phrase 太子洗馬 *t'ai-tze-si-ma* ("the crown prince washes the horses") in the 周武帝三局象經 *Zhou Wudi sanju xiangjing* ("Zhou Wudi's three games in the Xiangjing"); "to wash the dominoes" means to shuffle them in modern Chinese; *ma* or "horse" is used for the pieces in a game. The phrase probably meant "the crown-prince shuffles the men". He consulted Yün-Kung, who had known the phrase as a young man but had forgotten it, and then Lü-Ts'ai. The latter, after a night's consideration, explained the point, and recovered the method of play of the astronomical game and the actual position."

12. *A History of Chess*, p.122: The 32nd book of the history of the T'ang dynasty (618–907) said that Wu-Ti wrote and expounded a book named *San-kü-siang-king* (Manual of the three xiangqi's).

13. This theory is propounded in *The Genealogy of Chess*

14. "A story well told is not necessarily true – being a critical assessment of David H. Li's "The Genealogy of Chess", by Peter Banaschak (http://www.banaschak.net/schach/ligenealogyofchess.htm). Banaschak.net. Retrieved on 2011-10-01.

15. "中国象棋开局编号——ECCO 2004" (http://www.xqbase.com/ecco/ecco_intro.htm). *xqbase.com*. Retrieved 16 February 2018.

16. Leary, Stephen; Bodlaender, Hans (20 September 1996). "rec.games.chinese-chess FAQ – 21 What are some of the top tournaments in the world?" (http://www.chessvariants.org/chinfaq.html#question21). The Chess Variant Pages.

17. Asian Xiangqi Federation (http://www.asianxiangqi.org/) homepage includes English translations of Asian tournament results, rules, etc.

18. World Xiangqi Federation (http://www.wxf.org/). Wxf.org. Retrieved on 2011-10-01.

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20. Staff (June 2012). "2012 First half(Male) Player Rating" (http://www.01xq.com/xqplayer/xqrating.asp). *01xq.com - Events Game Player Opening*. 01xq.com. Retrieved 4 June 2012.

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Further reading

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External links

- World Xiangqi League (http://www.xiangqi.com)
- Xiangqi Championships (http://www.01xq.com)
- Learn Chinese Chess in English (http://www.xqinenglish.com/) Rules, openings, strategy, ancient manuals
- An Introduction to Xiangqi for Chess Players (http://www.crockford.com/chess/xiangqi.html)
- Xiangqi, Chinese Chess (http://history.chess.free.fr/xiangqi.htm) Presentation, rules, history and variants, by Jean-Louis Cazaux
- Xiangqi (象棋): Chinese Chess (http://www.chessvariants.com/xiangqi.html) by Hans Bodlaender, ed. Fergus Duniho, *The Chess Variant Pages*