

SHOGI



An English Player's Guide

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‘Sho-gi’ (with a hard ‘g’ as in “give”) is the traditional chess of Japan. Modern Shogi is approximately as old as modern European chess (about 500 years old). The game is probably derived primarily from Chinese chess, Xiangqi, but also has similarities to Thai chess, Makruk.

The English names and terms used in this guide are approximations based on their Japanese counterparts. Japanese names are given in the form of Romaji (Japanese sounded out in the English alphabet) alongside loose translations of their meaning.

Arrangement



The pieces are arranged symmetrically as shown above. Please note that there may be variations in the calligraphy used from one set to another. Smaller sets will often use simplified or alternative characters. By comparing the pieces in your set to those above, and those on later pages you will hopefully be able to familiarise yourself with the components of play.

Comparisons

Similarities to European Chess

Like other forms of chess, the objective of Shogi is to trap the opposing King in 'Check mate' where he is both in range of being taken and unable to move without being taken.

The two players alternate turns moving one piece at a time using the characteristic moves of each piece.

Some of these moves mirror their counterparts in European chess, others are similar and many differ.

Unique features of Shogi

Unlike European chess the opposing armies are not indicated by different colours, but instead using their shape, face opposing directions. Note that each piece always points towards the opponent.

All pieces, excepting the king and gold general may promote to receive an altered movement pattern. The promoted piece is flipped over revealing its alternate state often drawn in red calligraphy.

What makes Shogi truly unique among chess is this: on a player's turn to move, he may instead of moving one of his pieces on the board, chose to place one of the pieces he has captured back in play within his army.

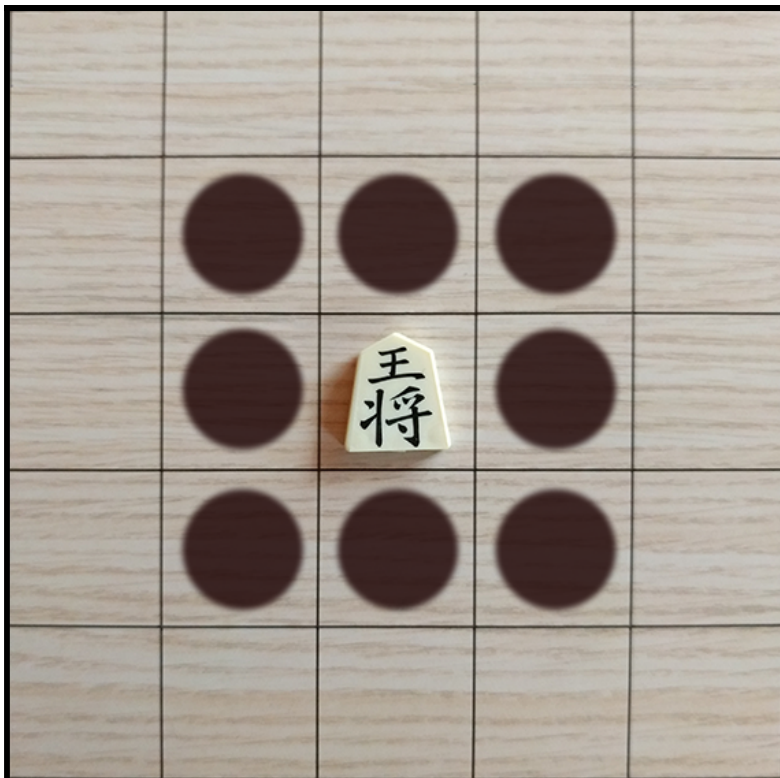
King

“O-Sho” and “Gyoku”

Jade General and Great General



The movement of the King in Shogi is identical to the King in European chess; one space in every direction. The player must move in such a way that their King is not put into ‘check’ (the King may not move into the path of an enemy piece). If your King is in ‘check’ and cannot be moved to safety, or shielded by another of your pieces, like in European chess you have lost the game (“check mate”).



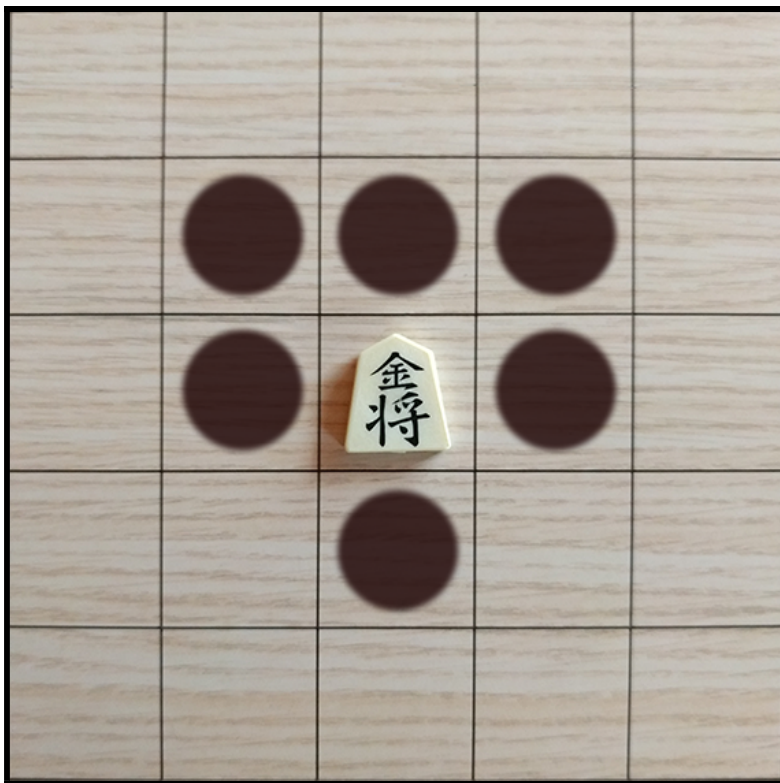
Gold

“Kin-Sho”

Gold General



The Gold can move one space in all directions except diagonally backwards as shown below.



Silver & Promoted Silver

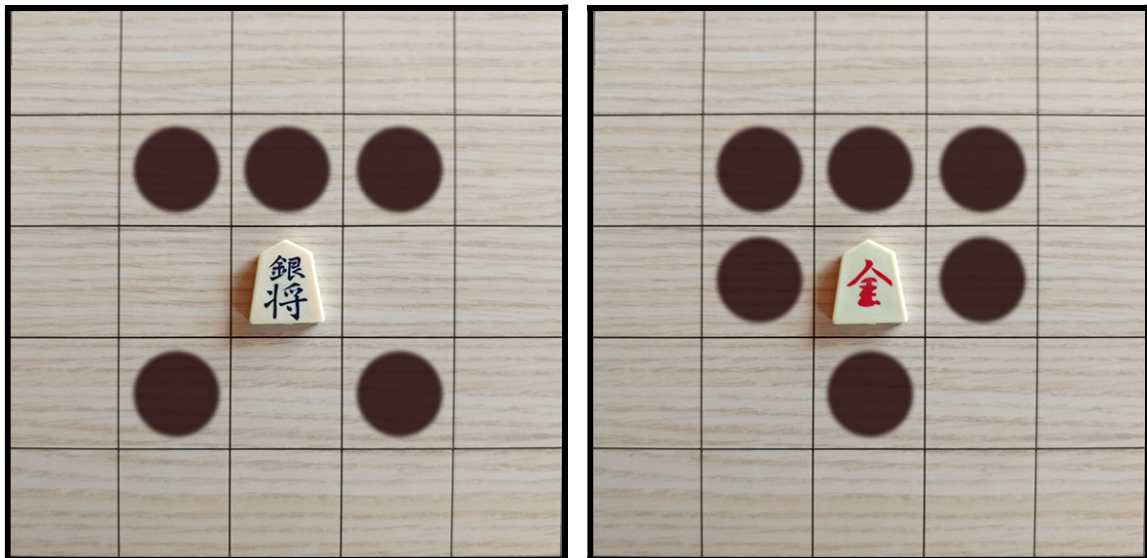
“Gin-Sho” and “Narigin”

Silver General



The Silver can move diagonally up to one space, or move one space forwards.

The Silver moves like a Gold once promoted.



Knight & Promoted Knight

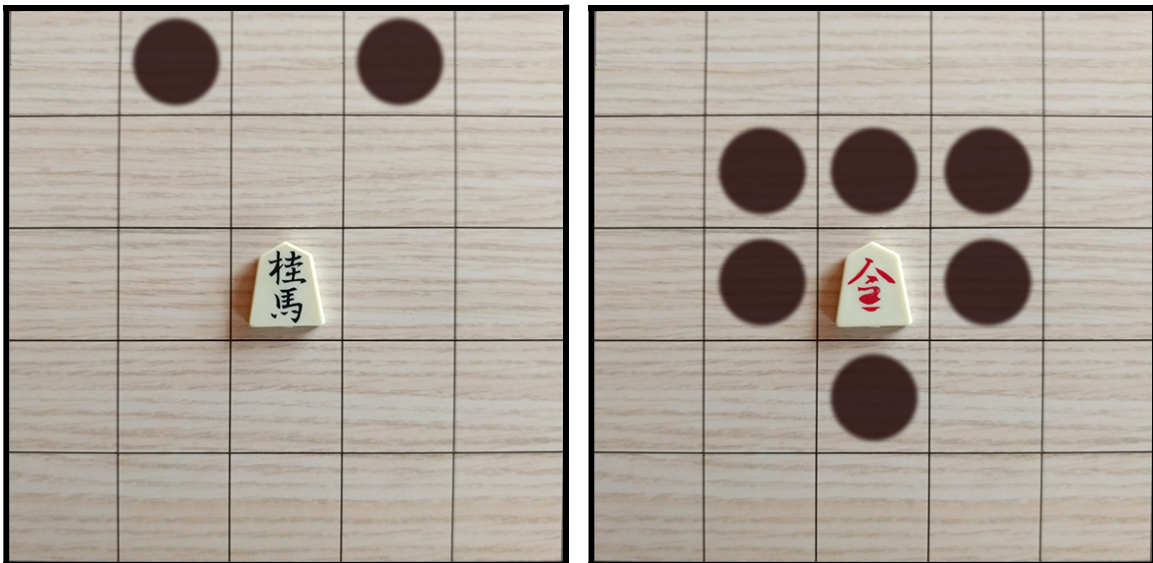
“Kei-Ma” and “Narikei”

Laurel Horse



The Knight moves two spaces forward and then one space to either side. This is similar to the movement of a Knight in European chess, however in Shogi the Knight can only move forwards. In Shogi like in European Chess, the Knight moves directly to its destination regardless of any pieces in its way (the Knight does not capture enemy pieces along its path, only the piece at its destination).

The Knight moves like a Gold once promoted.



Lance and Promoted Lance

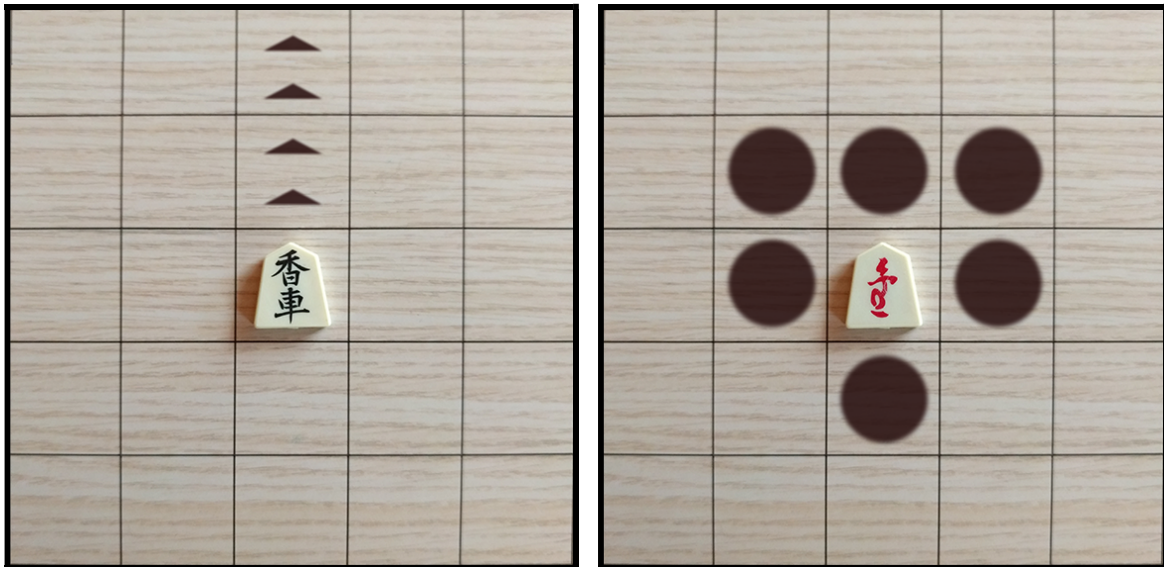
“Kyosha” and “Narikyo”

Fragrant Chariot



The Lance moves forwards as many spaces as desired, but can only move forwards until it is stopped by another piece or until it lands on an enemy piece.

The Lance moves like a Gold once promoted.



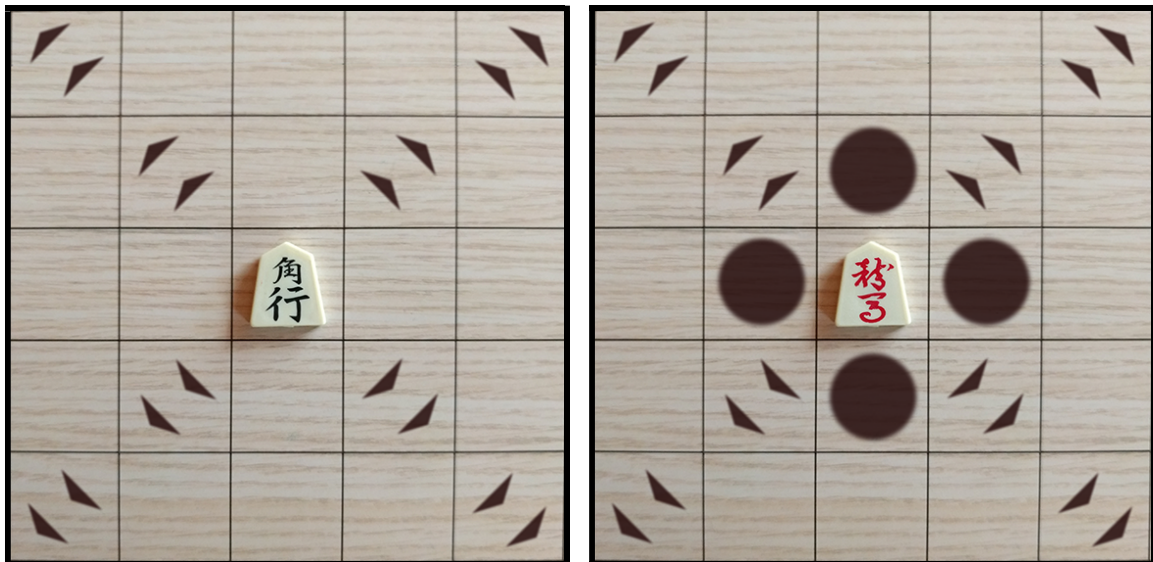
Bishop and Promoted Bishop

“Kaku” and “Ryuma”
Angle Go(er) and Dragon Horse



Like in European Chess the Bishop can move diagonally as many spaces as desired, but can only move until it is stopped by another piece or until it lands on an enemy piece.

The Bishop can also move one space in all other directions once promoted.



Rook and Promoted Rook

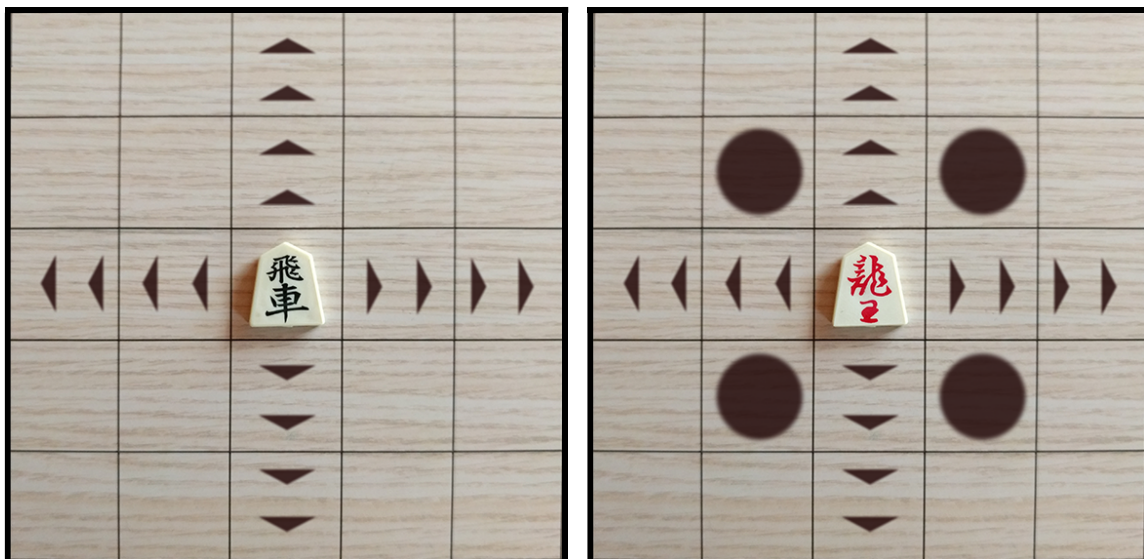
“Hisha” and “Ryu”

Flying Chariot and Dragon King



Like in European Chess the Rook can move forwards, backwards and to either side as many spaces as desired, but can only move until it is stopped by another piece or until it lands on an enemy piece.

The Rook can also move one space in all other directions once promoted.



Pawn and Promoted Pawn

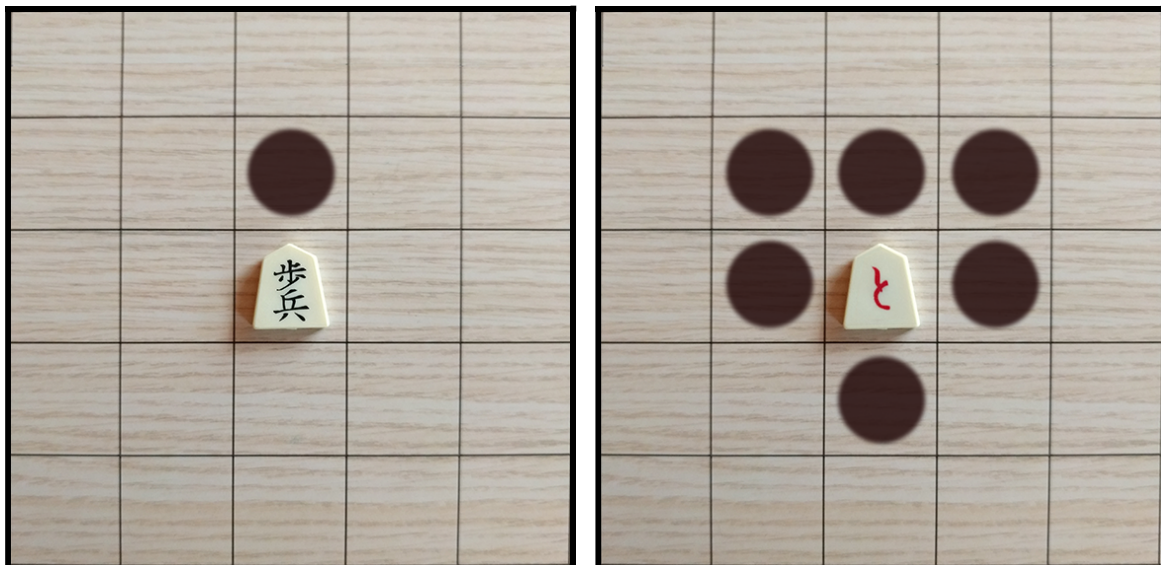
“Fuhyo” and “Tokin”

Foot Soldier



The Pawn in Shogi can only move one space forwards. Unlike European chess the Pawn only moves forwards to capture and does not move diagonally. Also unlike European chess, the Pawn cannot move two places on its first move.

The Pawn moves like a Gold once promoted.



Capture

A piece is captured, as is in European chess, when an opponent's piece moves upon a square that it occupies.

The person who captured the piece removes it from the board and places into their reserves on their right (or traditionally, onto a special platform called a 'koma').

Placing Captured Pieces

If a player has pieces previously captured in his reserves/koma, he may choose to place one of the captured pieces into play instead of moving a piece already in play.

Captured pieces can be placed on any vacant square of the board.

The piece is always placed 'non-promoted' side showing, even if it is placed into the promotion zone (described below). A piece placed in the promotion zone will promote on its next turn.

Promotion

The 7th, 8th and 9th rank (row) on the board are known as the promotion zone. These are the three ranks on the far side of the board in which the opponent's pieces are initially set up.

When a move is made on the board (not including the placement of a new piece), if the piece begins or ends its move within the promotion zone, the player may choose to promote the piece. The piece is then flipped over to show its promoted value.

Once promoted, a piece remains promoted until it is either captured or until the game ends.

Further Rules

The following rules concern placement of specific pieces and their conditions.

- A player may not place a Pawn onto a file (column) already occupied by one of their own Pawns. Only one Pawn per file! This rule does not apply to files occupied by a Promoted Pawn.
- A Pawn may not be placed to cause 'check mate' on the move it was placed.
- No piece can be moved (or placed) onto a square from which it has no possible future move. For instance, a Pawn, Knight or Lance cannot be placed onto the 9th rank. A Knight for the same reason cannot be placed onto the 8th rank. If a Pawn, Knight or Lance moves onto one of these ranks, it must be promoted so that it will have a possible future move from that square.

I hope that this guide will help to introduce Shogi to a larger audience.

Please don't be afraid to copy and share the guide.

Written and Uploaded by Arkoden, 2016