

# About this Booklet

## How to Print:

This booklet will print best on card stock (110 lb. paper), but can also be printed on regular (20 lb.) paper.

**Do not print Page 1** (these instructions).

First, have your printer **print Page 2**.

Then load that same page back into your printer to be printed on the other side and **print Page 3**.

When you load the page back into your printer, be sure that the top and bottom of the pages are oriented correctly.

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To contact the creator of this booklet, please go to the “contact” page at [www.AncientChess.com](http://www.AncientChess.com)

# Xiangqi

象棋

The **object** of this game is to force capture of the enemy Governor/General (King). This may be by checkmate (he is under attack and has no means of escape) or by stalemate (he is not under immediate threat, but there is no legal, safe move).

Except for the Cannon/Catapult (see previous page), a piece **captures** by using its normal move, and landing on a point occupied by an enemy piece. The captured piece is removed from the board and the capturing piece takes its place. The Cannon/Catapult also takes the place of its captured piece, but must use one intervening piece, as shown on the previous page.

When the Governor/General (King) is being threatened with capture, he is said to be in “**check**,” and the player must move in such a way that the Governor/General is no longer threatened. If he can not, he has lost the game.

It is not allowed to give **perpetual check**, or a perpetual attack. If the game is repeating its position, the player forcing the repetition must do something else.

There is a special rule about the Governors/Generals. The two may **never face each other**, on the same line across the board, with no intervening pieces between them. It is said that they may not “see” each other. This becomes important, especially in the end game, as the position of one Governor/General limits the movements of the other, and can “protect” a piece invading the enemy fortress.

The **River**, which creates a space between the two sides of the board, is generally ignored — as if it were filled in with lines, completing a board of 9 x 10 points. It only effects the moves of the Elephants, who can not cross it, and the Foot Soldiers, who gain more power of move after crossing it.

In tournament play, to **begin** the game, Red moves first.

## Background

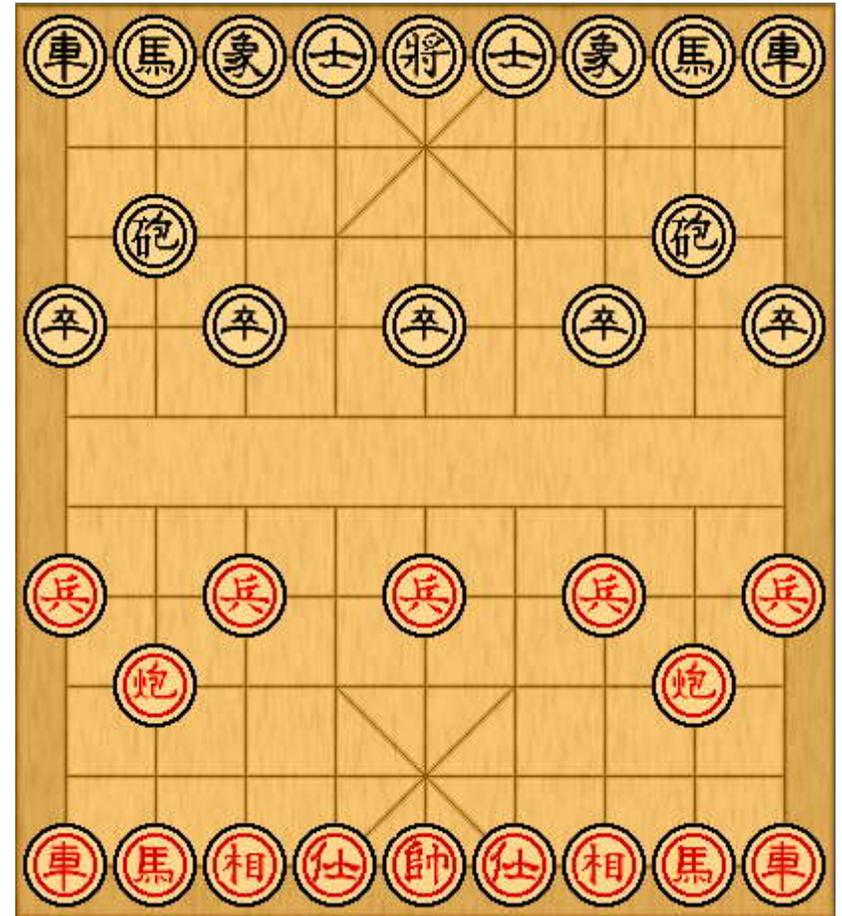
This pamphlet was compiled with the help of H. J. R. Murray’s great traditional tome *A History of Chess* (1913); David Li’s new, radically provocative *The Genealogy of Chess* (1998); and Sam Sloan’s very interesting and instructive *Chinese Chess for Beginners* (1992)

## Further information

For more information about Xiangqi, and other chess related games throughout the world, visit our web site:

[www.AncientChess.com](http://www.AncientChess.com)

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“shiang chi”

## Chinese Chess

### The Traditional Chess of China

For information about Chess Variants throughout the world and free copies of this booklet, visit [www.AncientChess.com](http://www.AncientChess.com)

# Xiangqi

Pronounced “shiang chi” or “she-ong-chee,” sometimes translated as “the elephant game.” This form of chess has been played for many centuries throughout China. Although only beginning to become widely known in the west, Xiangqi is probably played by more people than any other board game in the world – including the familiar western “international” chess.

## Arrangement

The pieces are arranged symmetrically, as shown on the front of this pamphlet. Note that some pieces on the Red side bear different characters than their counterparts on the Black side. They are the same pieces – with the same power – on each side. But names on the Red side are subtly more noble than those on the Black side. It’s a fair match, but you could say the Reds are the “good guys.” The set you play on may have slightly more or less variation between the two sides, and may be of colors other than Red and Black. Not to worry; it’s still the same game.

## The Pieces

Here are the pieces, their approximate Chinese pronunciations, names translated into English, and equivalents in our more familiar western chess:



“Jiang” and “Shuai”  
Governor / General  
(King)



“Shi”  
(Senior) Counselor  
(Queen — but very different)



“Shiang”  
Minister / Elephant  
(Bishop — also quite different)



“Ma”  
Horse  
(Knight)

“Chuh”  
Chariot  
(Rook)

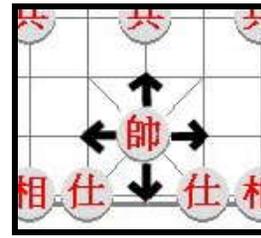


“Pao”  
Cannon / Catapult  
(No Equivalent)



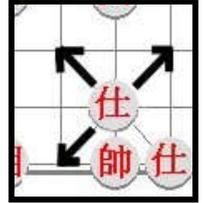
“Ping” and “Tzuh”  
Foot Soldier  
(Pawn)

## The Moves

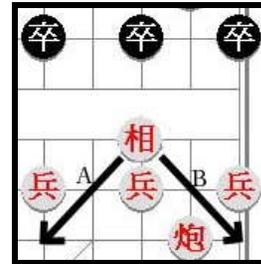


Unlike most other forms of chess, the Chinese game is played on the points of intersecting lines, rather than on the squares of the board.

The **Governor/General** (left) moves one space at a time left, right, forward or backward. He is confined to the nine point fortress, on his side of the board.

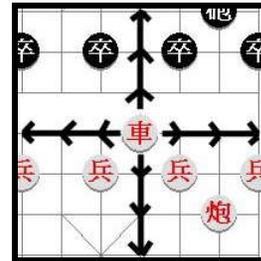
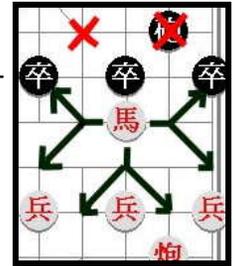


The **Counselor** (right) is also confined to the fortress. He moves one point diagonally.

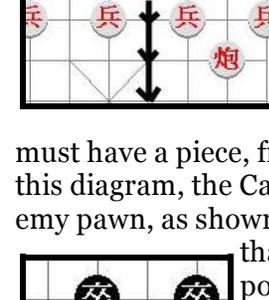


The **Minister/Elephant** (left) moves exactly two points in any diagonal direction. This piece *can* be blocked by another piece on the intervening square (A and B in diagram) and is not allowed to cross the river, which runs between the two sides of the board.

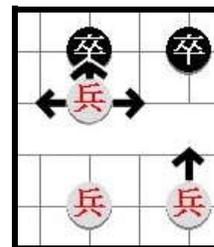
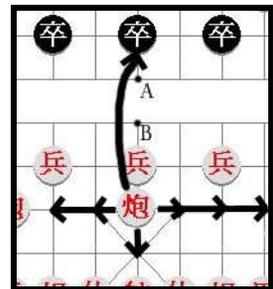
The **Horse** (right) moves first one point along the horizontal/vertical lines, and then one point diagonally. Similar to the knight in western chess, but this horse can be blocked by an intervening piece. The horse in the diagram *can not* move to the points marked by the red X’s; it is blocked by the Black pawn.



The **Chariot** (left) moves exactly like the rook in western chess: as many spaces as it wishes horizontally or vertically, until it meets another piece or the edge of the board.



The **Cannon/Catapult** (right) is a peculiar piece. It moves exactly like the Chariot (or rook) when not capturing. But to capture, it must have a piece, friend or foe, in line to jump over. In this diagram, the Cannon/Catapult can capture the enemy pawn, as shown. It can not, however, move beyond that pawn, or to the unoccupied points A or B.



The **Foot Soldier** (left) moves one point forward. After it crosses the river, it may also move to the right and left, but never backward. Unlike the pawn in western chess, this piece captures just as it moves normally (see diagram). It does *not* promote upon reaching the far end of the board.