

A Brief Introduction to Shogi



Roger Hare
January 2021

This is work in progress and will be updated periodically. For the current version, please see Eric Cheymol's [Shogi page](#), or contact me at rjhare@tutanota.com

Please also feel free to send feed-back to rjhare@tutanota.com

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This release (January 2021) contains additional material about 'Shogi Etiquette' (p. 61). Footnote has been updated to record another sad bastard offering a badly out-of-date copy of the file (p. 6). Change Log and Download information added (currently not visible to raders).

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Acknowledgments.

It would not have been possible to create this document without input and helpful comments received over many years from folks too numerous to mention here. In many cases, I am sorry that I have lost contact with these folks. My apologies.

Although they may not realise it, Pieter Stouten and Reijer Grimbergen have provided more than a little help due to their occasional, but helpful comments over the years.

I must also acknowledge the permission granted by the editors of the Dutch Shogi magazine '81', for allowing me to include the sample game on pages 79-107.

Readers who have commented so far include: Dave Brandl, Dave Dyer, Andrew Logan, Nicolás Murillo, Simon Mueller, Langley Rock, Efrem Rubio, Ivan Tarrieu, KhauTú, Nathan Woolgar, **km0010**. Thank you for your comments which have allowed me to improve the document.

Thanks are also due to Eric Cheymol for generously agreeing to host this document on his web site.

I am indebted to Reddit user **couchtomato87** for his entertaining remarks relating to my efforts to increase the size of the 'international shogi community' (p. 211).

These comments caused me much amusement at the time – and continue to do so!

Any errors or schoolboy howlers included here are entirely my responsibility! If you detect any such blunders, please let me know.

Editing, Copying, Translation.

This modest effort is 'edit-protected' to discourage the making of unauthorised extracts – such extracts defeat the purpose of the document. The quality of the document (such as it is) is degraded. Of course, determined (but very, very sad) individuals will always be able to overcome these fairly basic restrictions and produce 'pirated' extracts from the document.¹

Please follow the spirit in which these restrictions have been made, and **do not extract portions of the document.** It is flattering to have ones work regarded as being worthy of such treatment, but I prefer that it be done with my agreement. I am **always** open to suggestions, and happy to co-operate, particularly in respect of translations. **Of course, sharing the whole document with other Shogi players is encouraged!**

A Spanish translation is now available – the first of many, I hope. Please contact me at rjhare@tutanota.com if you are interested in undertaking a translation – I can offer nothing in return except long hours and no pay – but just think of the glory!!!

¹ I am aware of three web sites which have simply copied the document in its entirety and simply host these 'pirated' copies of the document. Two are in the U.S.A. (San Diego, and San Francisco). All are unauthorised, and are now very badly *out of date*. I have no problem with this *per se*, but it is possible that you could be charged for downloading from these sites (I can not work out the 'business model' for these sites). Do not go there – this document is, and always will be, *free*. Do *not* pay for this document. The versions in my Dropbox archive, and on Eric Cheymol's web site are the **only** authorised up-to-date versions.

Foreword.

What follows is an update and expansion of what was originally published on my Shogi web pages in the early 1990s. Those simple pages were, I believe, the first Shogi web pages in the world, and thanks to the generosity of the organisers of shogi.net they still exist as a historical curiosity at:

<http://www.shogi.net/rjhare/>

Amazingly (to me, at least), I still get the occasional query about these very old web pages by electronic mail!^{2,3}

That 1990s effort was really an exercise in learning to use HTML and the graphics facilities in a programming language which I was using at the time. It was not a serious attempt to give a full description of Shogi, and I regarded the project as 'finished'. However, some time in 2012, I realised that there was very little Shogi material freely available for personal computers, e-book readers and similar devices (including Windows PCs, the Amazon Kindle, Apple Macintoshes and iPads, Android tablet computers, etc.).^{4,5} Accordingly, I have re-cast my original web pages in PDF format which is (I

2 For anyone who is interested, a PDF version of these web pages with modified diagrams is available at: <https://www.bromsgrove-abstract-games.org.uk/shogi.pdf>. This was produced in 2003 (updated 2010) by the Bromsgrove Abstract Games Club.

3 Those web pages must have meant something to some-one – I occasionally come across citations to the web pages in the References section of research papers published in academic journals related to AI and games programming.

hope) suitable for all devices which have a 'reasonable' screen size⁶ and which are capable of reading such files.

I have updated and added to what I originally published on the internet; in particular by adding diagrams from a modern diagram generator,⁷ and screenshots from the Shogidokoro⁸ computer program. Somewhat arbitrarily, I have used the two types of diagram in different parts of this document.

I have also added short sections on openings, castles, shape and strategy, *tsume-shogi*, proverbs, Shogi variants and computer Shogi in order to give a wide-ranging, but brief, coverage of as many aspects of Shogi as seemed sensible.

I have included some complete game scores which can be played through by those in possession of a Shogi set or a Shogi program and interested enough to do so. Please remember, this document is a brief introduction only – anyone seriously interested in learning more

4 At the time, all I could find were 1) A re-hash of a very old book which contained errors which had not been corrected in the 2nd edition (indeed, they had been added to!); 2) A poor translation of what appeared to be a child's introduction to Shogi.

5 A *Comprehensive Shogi Guide in English* by Miles Yebisu (2016) is currently available from Amazon as a Kindle-only document – it too looks like a questionable translation of a Japanese original. The claim in the accompanying blurb that “This is the most comprehensive and practical shogi guide book ever existed.” is, of course, complete nonsense!

6 **Warning:** It may be difficult or impossible to use this document on some 'smartphones', or tablet computers with very small screens. There will be no 'small screen' edition of this document.

7 See <http://wormz.free.fr/kifugen/>

8 Shogidokoro is described in the section on Computer Shogi – page 171.

about Shogi really should consult the books in the bibliography (p. 187) – I would strongly recommend *Shogi for Beginners* by John Fairbairn, and *The Art of Shogi* by Tony Hosking. For an excellent comparison of Shogi with International Chess, see *4 Great Games*,⁹ also by Tony Hosking. *Shogi* magazine published in the U.K. by the late George Hodges from 1978-86 is a valuable archive of Shogi material in English (see Bibliography, p. 187).

Some of the other books published by The Shogi Foundation consist largely of annotated game records – these are extremely useful.

I have introduced Japanese terms and names where this seemed relevant (shown in *italics* – these forms are known as *Rōmaji*), but I hope I have not used them in such a way as to obscure matters for the English speaking reader. I have also used the Japanese (Chinese?) *kanji* to illustrate Shogi pieces throughout the document.

There are no illustrations of 'Westernised' Shogi pieces in this document, nor will there ever be. I make no apology for this – any serious student of Shogi will need to get to grips with the fact that this is a Japanese game, and learning to read the *kanji* on Shogi pieces is a part of learning how to play Shogi.

⁹ The other games which make up the *4 Great Games* in this book are Go and Chinese Chess.

Technical notes: I used Open Office¹⁰ to prepare the document in PDF format as this is likely to afford the greatest portability across devices.¹¹ The document should be easily readable on Windows PCs, Android tablets, Apple iPads and e-book readers such as Kindles. Whichever PDF reader you elect to use,¹² it will almost certainly have a 'View Bookmarks' facility which will display a Table of Contents at the side of the display window, allowing easy navigation through the document. The 'hand-crafted' (partial) Table(s) of Contents are provided for the benefit of anyone who chooses to print the document,¹³ but they **are** 'active', and clicking on a page number from within a PDF reader will navigate you to the desired page. Most of the photographic illustrations were captured using the camera application on an Asus tablet computer running the Android operating system. Any post-production processing of illustrations and board diagrams has been done using GIMP.¹⁴

10 The version available from the [PortableApps](#) web site.

11 I chose PDF because it is *portable*! Dedicated formats for different e-book readers are too **device-specific**! Life is far too short to waste time converting documents from one e-book format to another – which is awkward in any case. For example, masochists with too much time on their hands may care to try to convert a PDF document to other formats using software such as [Calibre](#) ([PortableApps](#) version) – it is possible, and I have tried it briefly, and for my purpose, the result is *unusable*. In particular, the carefully formatted layout is not preserved, diagrams seem not to scale properly, and text 'objects' such as tables, footnotes, etc. are 'mangled'...

12 I no longer use the ubiquitous Adobe Reader – it takes *far* too much space! There are other, better (in my opinion) PDF readers available. For example, Sumatra, Foxit Reader and PDF-Xchange Viewer/Editor. I use the versions available from the [PortableApps](#) web site. Sumatra is particularly good – being both *small* and *fast*.

13 Try printing 4-up, double sided to save paper...

14 Gnu Image Manipulation Program – the version available from the [PortableApps](#) web site.

Note that all software used to create this document, or mentioned in the document, is free and comes without any 'guarantee'. I cannot be responsible for any loss/damage caused by use of these programs by other persons. This disclaimer includes the use of 'public' web sites such as WikiPedia, YouTube, etc.

If you have any issues with this document, suggestions, comments or corrections, please contact me at rjhare@tutanota.com – I will **always** consider any suggestions carefully, and make necessary changes – it may take some time, but it **will** happen.

Finally, for lovers of Japanese wood-cuts, the image on the cover page is *Accomplishments of Four Courtesans – Shogi and Go Players* by Chikashige Morikawa (active *ca.* 1869-82).

Roger Hare
January 2021

Introduction to Shogi.

Shogi is one of the forms of chess which is generally thought to have developed from the game Shaturanga or Shatranj. It is the Japanese form of the game which is known in the West as 'Chess' – more correctly, 'International Chess'. Shogi is the Japanese form of the game. Shogi is **not** a variant of International Chess – it is a **different** form of the game. There are other such forms of the game, for example: Chinese Chess (*hsiang ch'i*), Korean Chess (*tjyang keui*), Burmese Chess (*sittuyin*), Tibetan Chess (*chanadraki*), Malay Chess (*chator*), Mongolian Chess (*shatara*), etc.

Further information regarding the history of Shogi is referenced in the Bibliography (p 191).

Shogi is similar to International Chess in that it is played between two players ('Black' and 'White'), and that the object is to checkmate the opponents King.

Shogi is also very different from International Chess (hereafter called simply Chess).

Here are a few of the differences:

- There are several variant forms of Shogi, played on anything from a 7x7 board to a 25x25 board. The most common form is the 9x9 version described in this document – Shogi.

- Most Shogi pieces may be promoted under certain circumstances. The effect of promotion is that the piece concerned acquires different or increased powers.
- Some forms of Shogi allow captured pieces to be re-entered or 'dropped' by the capturing player. This includes the 9x9 form described in this document.
- In Chess, handicapping is regarded as being difficult to set up, whereas in Shogi, it is really quite easy – indeed, there is a vast literature describing handicap Shogi.
- In Chess, the Pawns capture by moving diagonally. This means that the Pawns can protect one another, giving rise to the concept of 'Pawn chains'. In Shogi, Pawns capture by moving straight ahead, so this concept does not exist, and the strategies underlying the use of Pawns is completely different.
- In Chess, it is possible to position the Knights within the opponents territory on protected squares where they are difficult to dislodge. This concept does not arise in Shogi.
- In Shogi, there is no 'composite' castling move – castles are built up slowly, move by move (p, 63).

The bulk of what follows describes the usual 9x9 form of Shogi...

Shogi is played by two players, Black (or *Sente*) and White (or *Gote*). As in Chess, the object is to checkmate

the opponents King. Black plays first except in handicap games where White (conventionally the handicapped player) plays first.

At the start of a game, each player has 20 pieces, namely one King (*Gyoku* 玉, or *O* 王), one Rook (*Hi* 飛), one Bishop (*Kaku* 角), two Gold Generals (*Kin* 金金), two Silver Generals (*Gin* 銀銀), two Knights (*Kei* 桂桂), two Lances (*Kyo* 香香), and nine Pawns (*Fu* 歩歩歩歩歩歩歩歩歩).¹⁵ The Gold and Silver Generals are usually simply referred to as Golds and Silvers respectively.

Most pieces may promote when they enter or leave the promotion zone or when moving entirely within the promotion zone. Promotion is not usually compulsory – in some cases, *not* promoting may be advantageous. However, in a few cases, promotion *is* compulsory, usually when not promoting means that the piece concerned has no further legal moves.

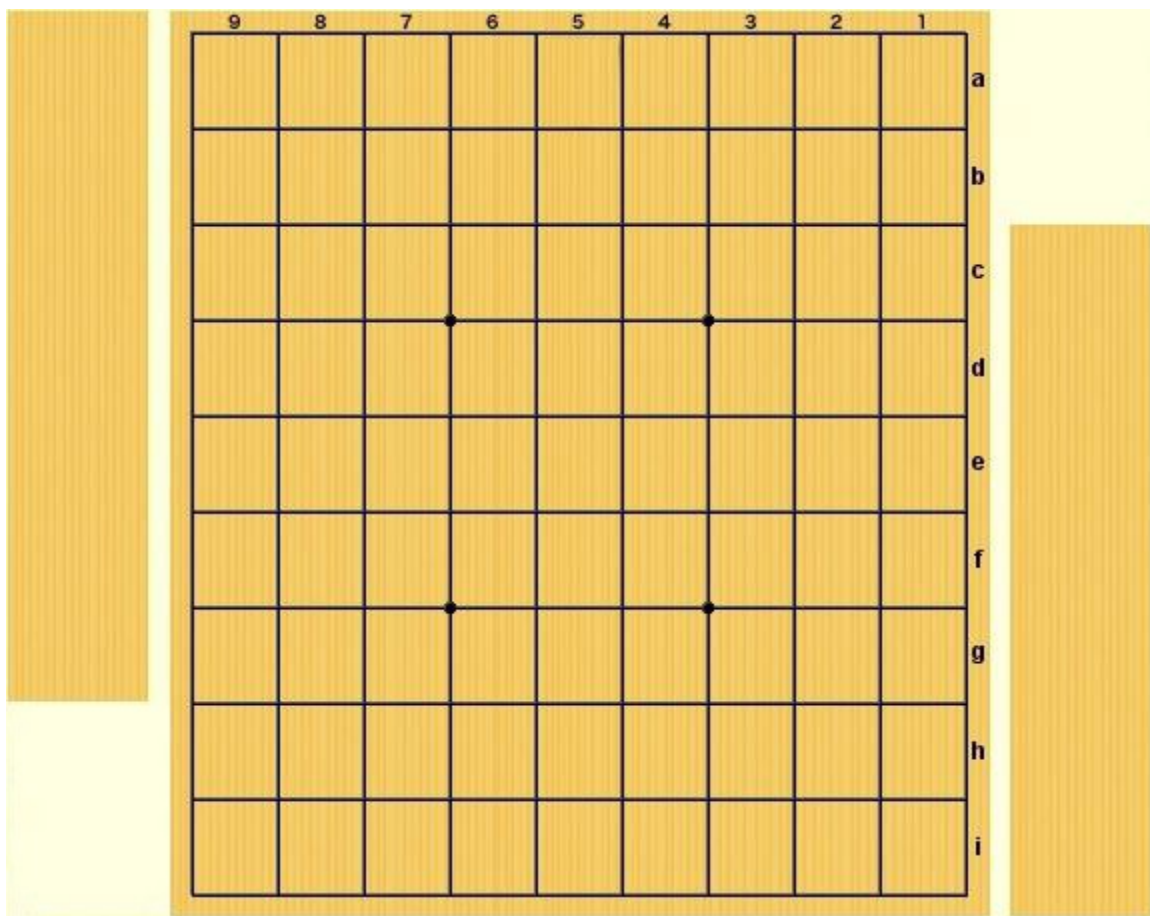
Captured, or 'in-hand' pieces may be re-entered, or 'dropped' (in their unpromoted status) on the capturing player's side.

¹⁵ Note the two different forms of the King – very briefly, *O* tends to be used by the more experienced player (though this seems not to be a hard and fast rule for amateur players, at least). Some diagrams/sets have two *Gyoku* or two *O*, rather than a *Gyoku* and an *O*. It's a little confusing, and probably doesn't matter... Also, the Japanese have alternative names for the pieces – eg: *O* or *Osho*. I have usually used the shortest/simplest form.

In diagrams, Black always plays ‘up’ the board and White ‘down’ the board.

This is what the empty board looks like in this partial screenshot from the Shogidokoro program.

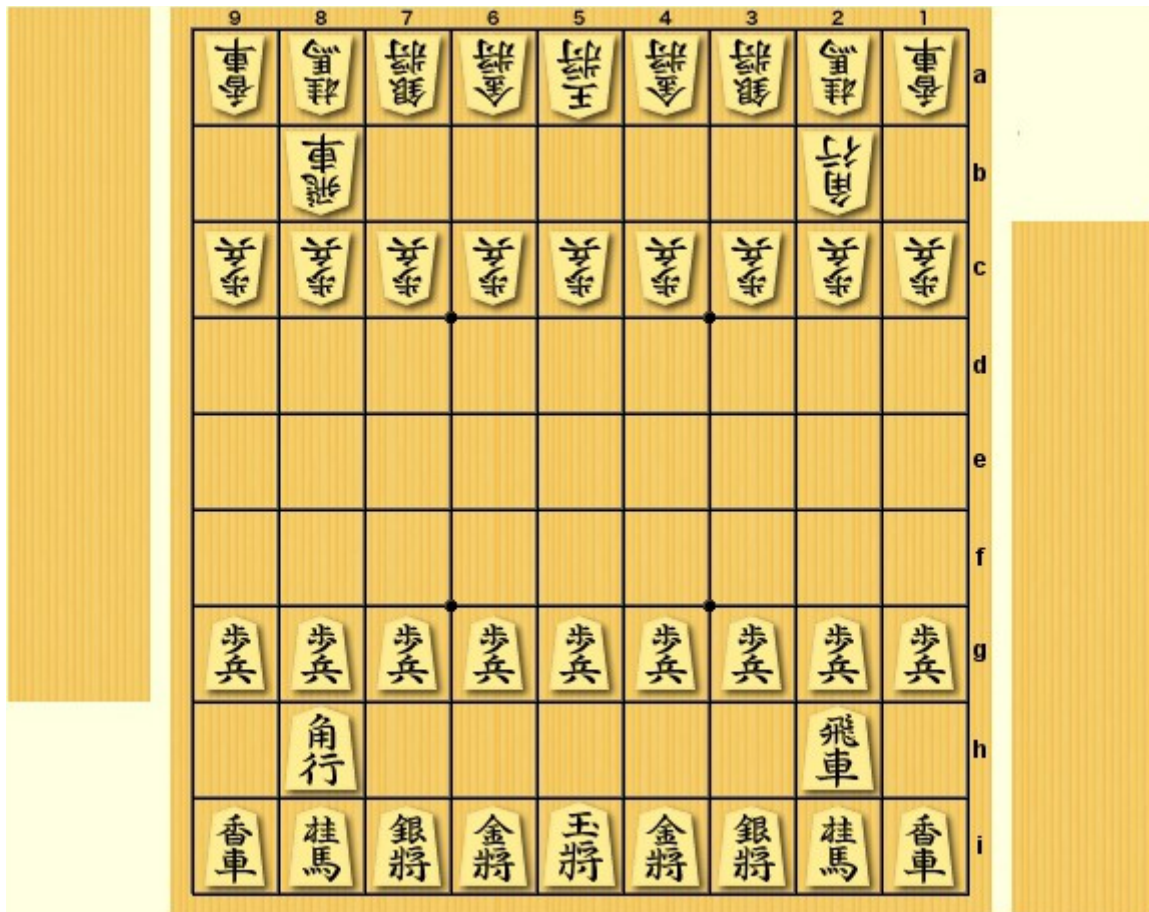
White



Black

Here, in another partial screenshot from the Shogidokoro program is the board with the pieces in place, and correctly oriented according to the direction of play at the start of a game.

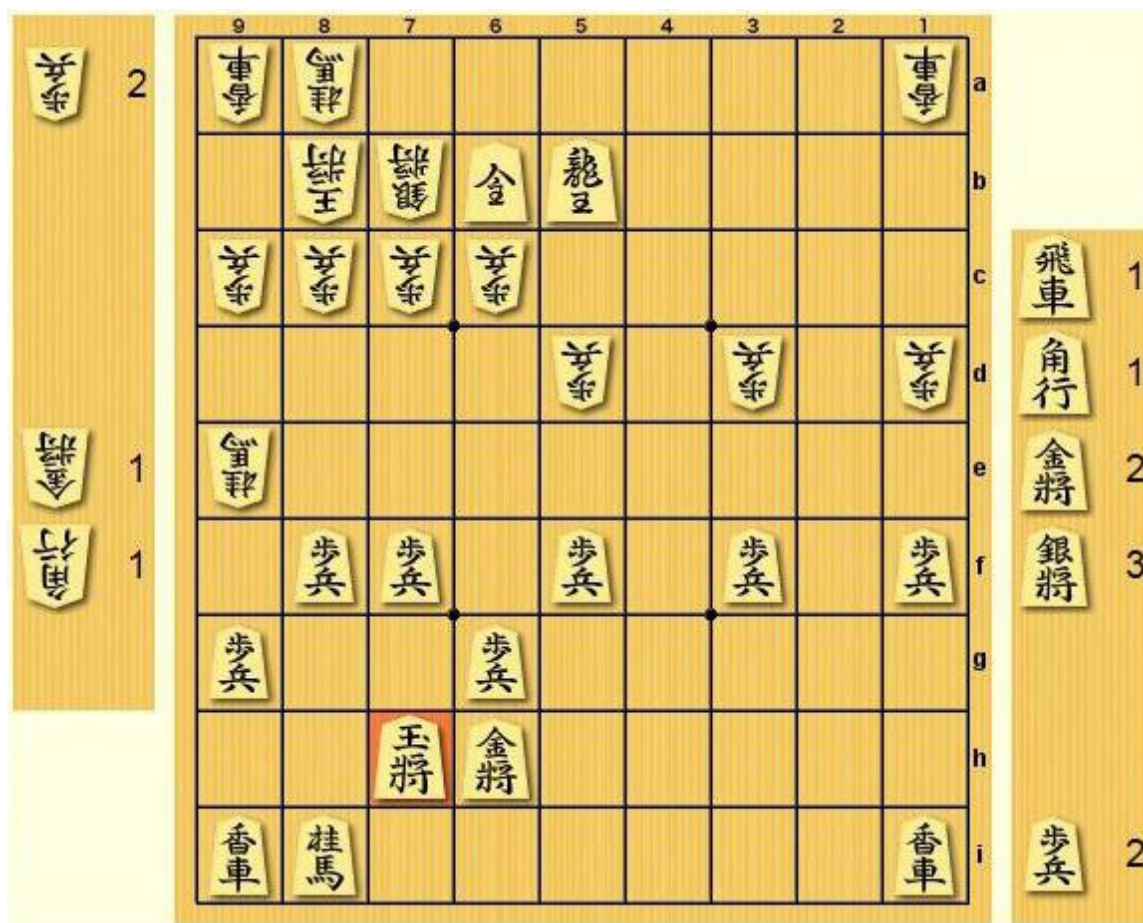
White



Black

Finally, here is a screenshot showing the board at the end of the demonstration game described on p. 104 *et. seq.*

White



Black

Note the captured (in-hand) pieces on the side tables (*komada* or *komadai*¹⁶), and the promoted pieces on 5b and 6b. The square highlighted in **red** indicates the last piece moved – in this case, *Sente's* King.

¹⁶ Like the names of the pieces, some Japanese terms appear in slightly different forms in translation, according to which book you are reading. I have usually used the first version I encountered. For a comprehensive list of Japanese terms, see – <http://www.shogi.net/shogivocab/> (Hans Geuns) and http://www.shogi.net/arc/shogi-l/shogi_terms.txt (Reijer Grimbergen).

More about the Shogidokoro program (and other Shogi programs) later (p. 171), but from now on we will use both line diagrams and screenshots to illustrate play.

The Shogi Board and the Shogi Pieces.

The board (*shogi-ban*) is 9 'squares' by 9. In fact, the 'squares' are slightly larger in the vertical direction than the horizontal. The illustration below is of a traditional shogi board, which traditionally would be made of *kaya* wood:¹⁷



The circular points (*hoshi*) are to mark promotion zones and to enable you to visually divide the board up easily.

A board like this will be about 5 *sun*¹⁸ thick, and the actual playing grid will be about 12 *sun* by 11 *sun*.

¹⁷ How I wish I had a board like this!

¹⁸ A Japanese 'inch' – about 3cm...

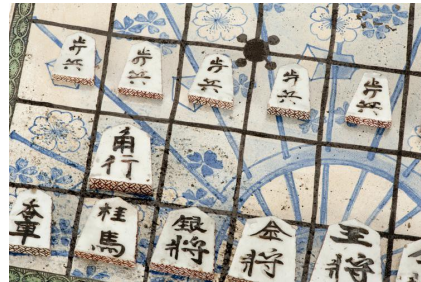
A board like this will probably be signed on the base, and have a carved recess in the centre of the base. This is supposed to affect the acoustic qualities of the board, leading to a satisfying 'clunk' when pieces are placed on the board.

The following illustration is of my own vintage 2 *sun* board before restoration/cleaning.



This (medium quality) board dates from the 1950s, is unsigned and has no 'acoustic recess'.

Shogi equipment can be very exotic. Here are a few illustrations of some wonderful traditional boards:



Left: A set in the collection of the Horniman Museum, made entirely from porcelain and dating from c.1780. **Centre:** Detail of pieces. **Right:** A set from the Meiji period, comprising a lacquered and decorated board and porcelain pieces.



Left and Right: Two vintage lacquered and decorated boards.

Traditional boards like those shown above can be very expensive, but don't despair, there are many cheaper alternatives.

The porcelain Shogi pieces (*koma*) shown in the illustrations at the top of the page are rather special, but the pieces are also usually made of wood – typically

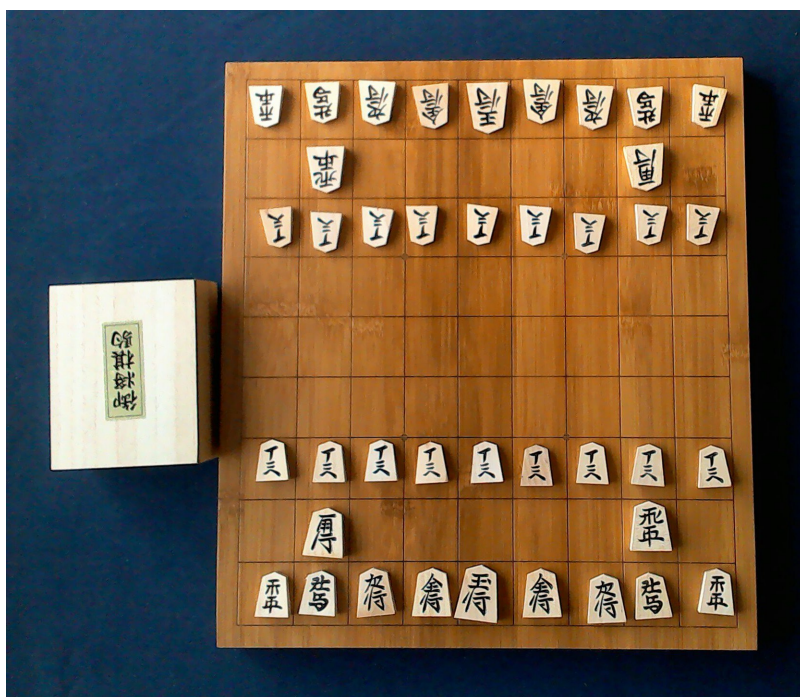
boxwood. The cost will depend on the style of pieces, but nice wooden pieces can be bought quite cheaply.

To give an idea of the variety of boards and pieces which are available, here are a few more illustrations of Shogi equipment from my own small collection:

First, a good quality 1 *sun shin-kaya* table-top board and wooden pieces with incised *kanji*:



A good quality bamboo table-top board (about 0.7 *sun*), and wooden pieces with incised *kanji*. Note the calligraphic style of the pieces as compared to that of the pieces on the previous page:



The pieces are 5-sided, wedge-shaped and effectively pointed. In play, the piece points in the direction of its play (ie: Black or White). The pieces in the preceding illustration are laid out in the start position (see also the start position diagram on p. 37). There is no difference between Black's pieces and White's pieces because captured pieces can be re-entered on the opposing side after capture.

In an actual game, the direction in which a piece points indicates which side it is on. Black's pieces occupy the nearest 3 ranks and point 'up' the board and White's pieces occupy the furthest 3 ranks and point 'down' the

board. The zone occupied by Blacks pieces is Whites promotion zone and *vice versa*.

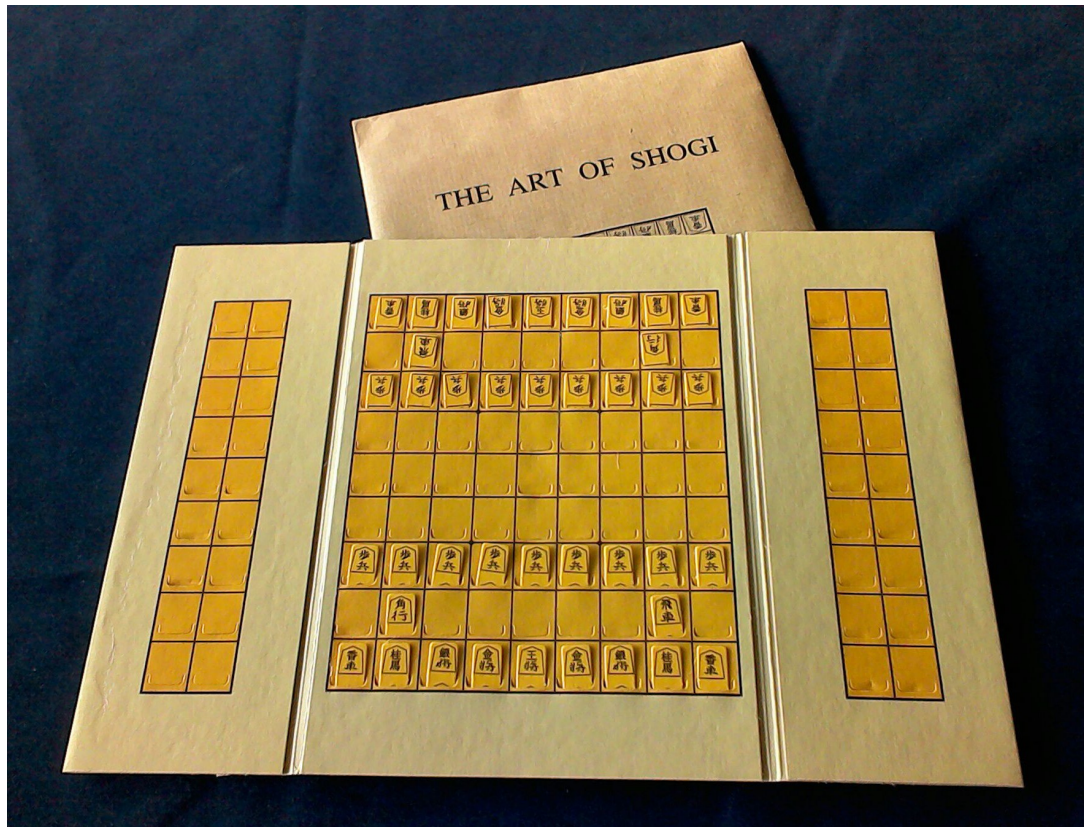
A modern 'budget' set. The one-piece board is a 'table-top' board made from veneered MDF, and is about 1/2-*sun* thick. The pieces are plastic:



A set with folding board and magnetic pieces:



A cardboard set with slots to hold the (thin) card pieces:

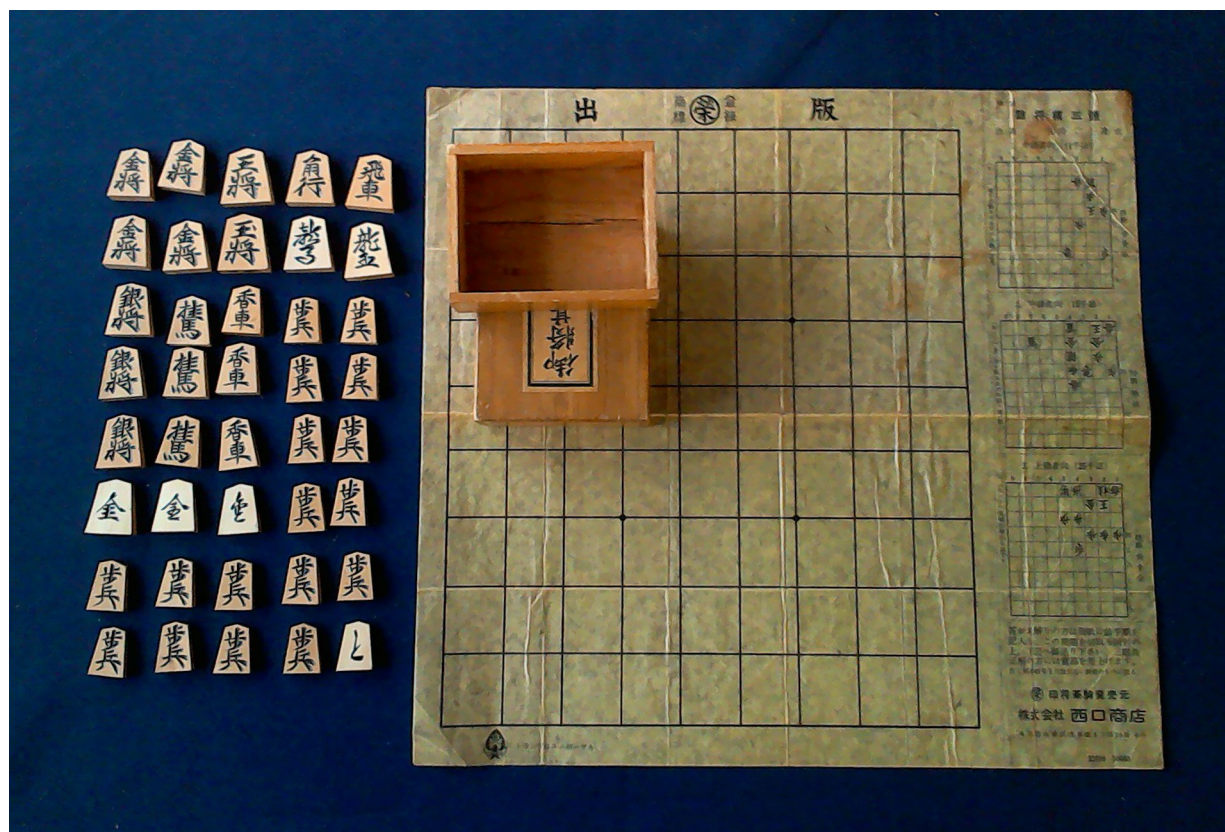


A tiny plastic pocket set with holes and a transparent lid to hold the pieces securely:



Some of the previous illustrations are of boards and pieces which were bought as separate items.

The next illustration shows such a set of wooden pieces and the accompanying wooden box.



These pieces often come with a paper board, carefully folded and inserted in the box. With care, the paper board can be used for a long time – the paper board in the illustration is 50 years old! These are the same pieces as on p. 22. Note the different calligraphic style of the pieces when compared to those on p. 23:

More about Shogi pieces:

Typically, each piece is marked with two *kanji* arranged vertically in order that the piece can be identified. This can be seen in the previous illustrations, but here is an illustration of a single piece which makes this clear (The piece is a King, as it happens):



In Shogi diagrams, only the upper of the two *kanji* is used to identify the pieces, so the King is identified with a 王 or 玉 (see later for more about representation of pieces in diagrams).

Partly because of this, sets are also available with pieces which display only the upper of the two *kanji*, rather than both, as described on the previous page. Pocket sets of which a variety are available will often have one

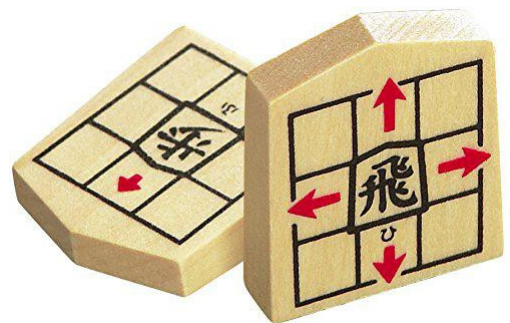
kanji pieces, as can be seen in the preceding illustrations.¹⁹

Those pieces which do promote have separate *kanji* on the other side, so that when a promotion is allowed, the promotion is signified by merely turning the piece over. Some sets have the *kanji* for the promoted piece marked in red rather than black.

Shogi pieces come in many different calligraphic styles and quality.

The *kanji* may be applied to the pieces in several different ways, for example, simply printed onto the surface of the piece, or for better quality pieces, different 'engraving' techniques may be used, with an incised character being filled with lacquer, and either polished to give a flat surface, or leaving the lacquer to stand proud of the surface.

It's also possible to get 'hybrid' Shogi pieces. The pieces on the right are 1-*kanji* pieces with a graphic showing the move of the piece. Sometimes, there is a single graphic below the *kanji*.



The pieces here are the Rook and Pawn from a 'learning' set. The move of each piece is clearly shown.

¹⁹ Some of Hidetchi's videos referred to elsewhere in this document also use single *kanji* pieces.

These 'hybrid' pieces are great for those who are a little unsure about learning the *kanji*, and need a little reassurance as they learn Shogi. The 'hybrid' pieces are a far better option than the childish 'alternative' pieces touted by those who are too idle to learn the *kanji* themselves. **Don't** be put off by claims that *kanji* are too difficult for Westerners to learn – it's nonsense. There are none of these bogus 'alternative' pieces featured in this document.

Shogi sets are available from various sources (see p. 183 for a list of suppliers).

Care and Maintenance of Shogi Equipment.

Look after your Shogi equipment!

Never leave a board and pieces set up for long periods in a location exposed to bright sunlight. The result will be a playing surface with rather nice piece-shaped silhouettes in a different colour to the rest of the board! I don't know of any reliable way to fix this.

Never apply any kind of 'permanent' coating to even medium-quality boards and pieces. This means clear lacquers or varnishes of **any** and **all** kinds.

So much for the **don'ts**, now for the **dos**:

If you are fortunate enough ever to acquire a 'vintage' board and pieces which require a little restoration or refurbishment, consult an expert before doing anything which may be irreversible.

Modern boards and pieces of medium-good quality can be treated occasionally with a little polish. I recommend using a good quality oil-based polish. Just dampen a duster with the polish and wipe the board and pieces with the moistened duster – no need to rub hard. An alternative is to use a good quality beeswax-based polish. Don't use silicone-based polish...

Budget quality Shogi boards and sets are often made of either softwood or veneered MDF. This sort of kit is perfectly fine – I have at least five boards and four piece sets in this bracket. It's often the case though, that the grid markings on the board, and the *kanji* on the pieces are simply surface-printed, using some sort of 'ink'. In time, such images can become scuffed and worn.

It's simple to avoid this, and to increase the life and durability of such kit:

Simply apply several coats of a modern clear 'varnish'. I prefer a 'satin' finish, but gloss or matt is just as good – it's a personal choice. Use a water-based product, and the coating will dry in about 30 minutes (and the brushes are easy to clean!). Apply several coats over a

couple of days, and you will improve the appearance of your Shogi set and greatly increase its life.

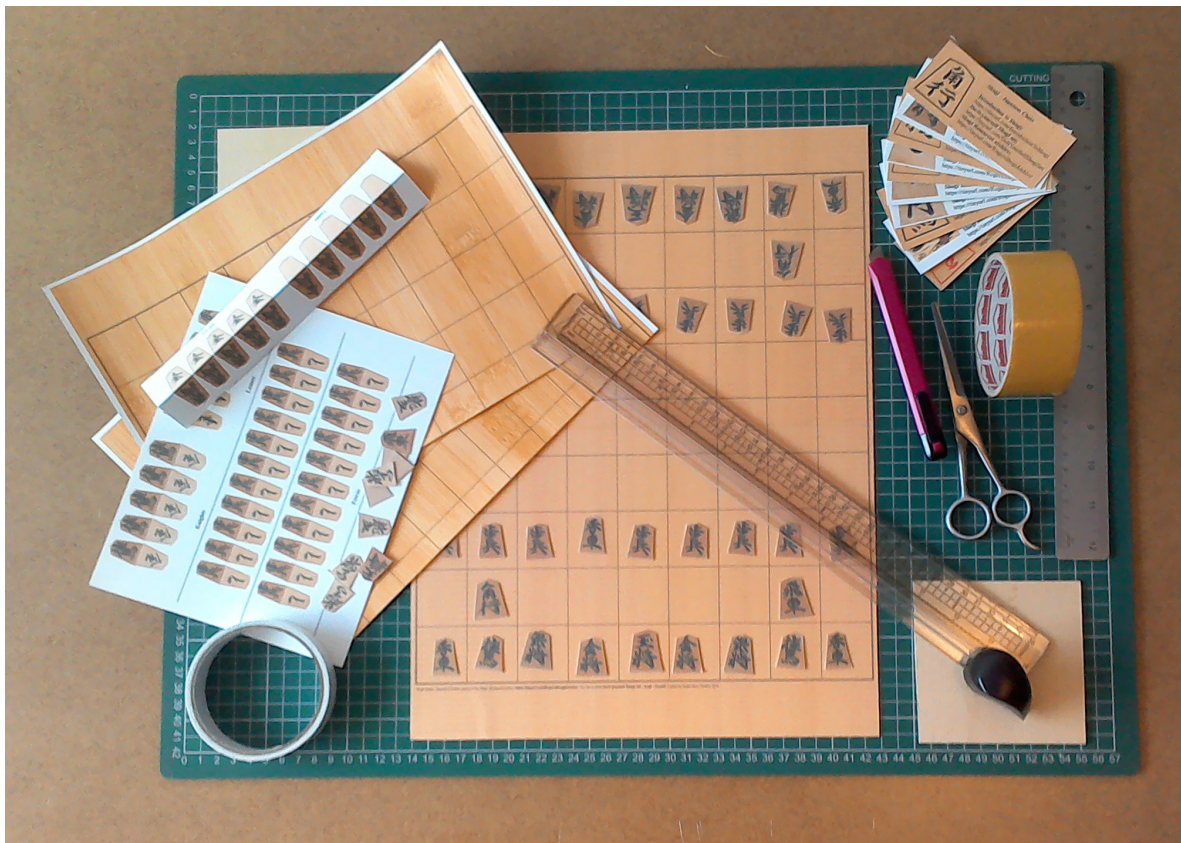
Use a 1½"-2" brush for the board, and a ½" or ¼" brush for the pieces (an alternative if you don't have a small brush is to use a tightly rolled piece of cotton wool).

The pieces are a little fiddly. The best approach is to hold them at the base with a pair of tweezers (as used by stamp collectors), and carefully apply a fine coating to the face of the piece. Let them dry, turn the pieces over, and repeat on the other side...

It's cheap too! A 250ml tin of varnish will do for 3-4 board and piece sets.

Make your own Shogi set:

It's also quite easy to make your own simple board and pieces and *komadai*. The illustration below shows a full-size 'wood-effect' set I made for a Shogi demonstration at a 'Japanese Culture Day' using a set of templates which I created for this purpose.



You can see the finished set, the pieces and *komadai*, plus the paraphernalia necessary to make the set – piece and board templates, double-sided adhesive tape, knife, scissors, etc. Top right are the small information cards I give away at Shogi events.

To make this set, I used 210 gsm card and my small ink-jet printer. You will get better quality if you use a laser

printer. The pieces are made by creasing and sticking the strips 'back-to-back' using double sided adhesive tape, then cutting to shape with a pair of *sharp* scissors.

The board can be made more durable by sticking it to heavy duty mounting card and trimming to shape with a *sharp* knife.

If your printer won't accept card, you can use paper (80 gsm). You can use glue – **beware** – if you do use glue, the glue will probably 'bleed' through the paper and cause the colours to run.

The templates, and instructions on how to use them to make a Shogi set can be found in the Appendix to this document (p. 207). Further templates to make a small Shogi set (and a Tori Shogi set) are available from my Dropbox Shogi archive:

<https://tinyurl.com/RogersShogiArchive>²⁰

Download the file of your choice:

DIY Shogi set.pdf (needs A3 printer)

DIY Shogi set - small.pdf

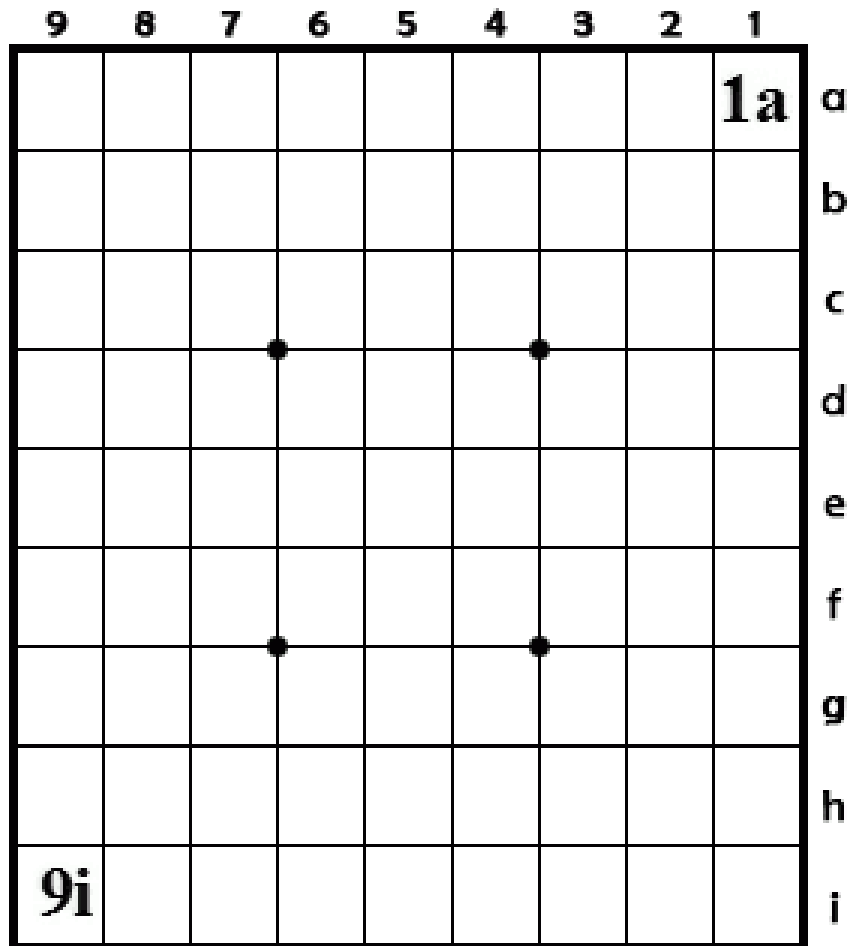
DIY Tori Shogi set.pdf

Print your chosen file, and follow the instructions.

²⁰ Full URL is: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/2wicm2bnw5lv3t0/AADyepK_y_3e819UAbwJJoza?dl=0

Shogi Diagrams.

In Shogi texts, the board and pieces are represented diagrammatically. The empty board looks like this:



The board is divided into 9 ranks (designated a-i), and 9 files (designated 1-9). The dots mark the boundaries of the promotion zones and make for easy orientation. The letters and numbers allow identification of squares for recording moves. For example: the top right square is 1a, the bottom left is 9i, and so on. As we will see shortly, Black plays 'up' the board, and White plays 'down' the board.

In diagrams the pieces are represented using the upper of the two *kanji* on the actual pieces. In game scores, the pieces are represented by a single letter, like this:

玉	飛	角	金	銀	桂	香	歩
K	R	B	G	S	N	L	P

These are the Black pieces, reading from left to right **K=King**, **R=Rook**, **B=Bishop**, **G=Gold**, **S=Silver**, **N=kNight**, **L=Lance**, **P=Pawn**.

The White pieces look like this:

玉	飛	角	金	銀	桂	香	歩
K	R	B	G	S	N	L	P

In fact, they are exactly the same as Black's pieces, but they are just 'upside-down', because White's pieces point 'down' the board rather than 'up'.

As indicated earlier, most pieces may promote and the promotions are as follows:

Rook to Dragon (<i>Ryu</i>)	Bishop to Horse (<i>Uma</i>)
Silver to Gold (<i>Narigin</i>)	Knight to Gold (<i>Narikei</i>)
Lance to Gold (<i>Narikyō</i>)	Pawn to Gold (<i>Token</i>)

In diagrams, the promoted pieces are represented by the *kanji* on the reverse side of the actual piece. In game scores, by the same letter as the unpromoted piece but prepended with a '+', thus:

龍	馬	金	金	竜	と
+R	+B	+S	+N	+L	+P

Above, are the Black promoted pieces, from left to right, promoted Rook, Bishop, Silver, Knight, Lance and Pawn.

The promoted White pieces look like this:

龍	馬	金	金	竜	と
+R	+B	+S	+N	+L	+P

Once again, White's pieces are exactly the same as Black's, but are merely pointing in the opposite direction.

Sometimes, the *kanji* for the promoted pieces are shown in **red** – both on the pieces themselves, and in diagrams.

From the empty board to the full board – at the start of play, the board looks like this, with the pieces oriented according to the direction of play:

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂	香	a
	飛						角		b
步	步	步	步	步	步	步	步	步	c
			●			●			d
									e
									f
步	步	步	●	步	步	步	步	步	g
	角						飛		h
香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂	香	i

With (from Black's point of view) nine Pawns on the third rank, Bishop and Rook on the eighth and second files of the second rank, and Lance, Knight, Silver, Gold, King, Gold, Silver, Knight, Lance on the first to ninth files of the first rank.

Sometimes, the diagrams in books will have Japanese characters (*kanji*) for the rank markings – so the board at the start of a game will look like this:

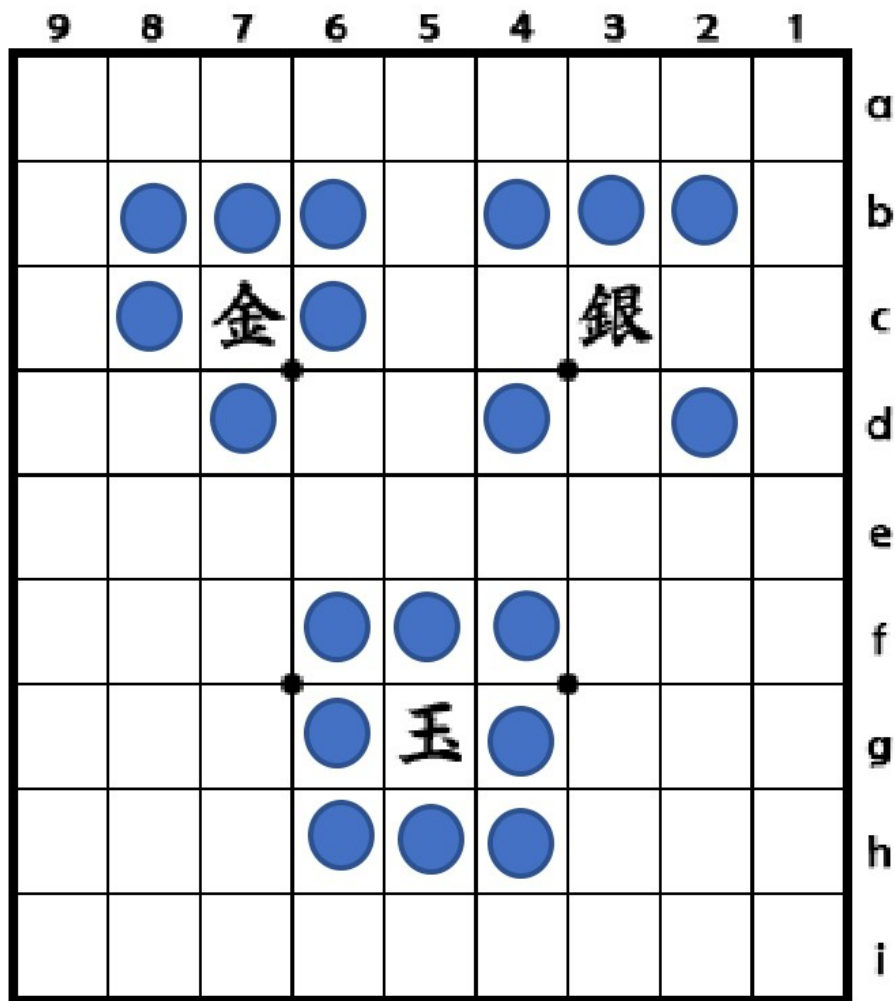


No problem! In this case, the top right square is 1一, the bottom left is 9九, and so on.

This is for illustration only. Usually, the alphanumeric form of the diagram is used in this document.

Moves of the Shogi Pieces.

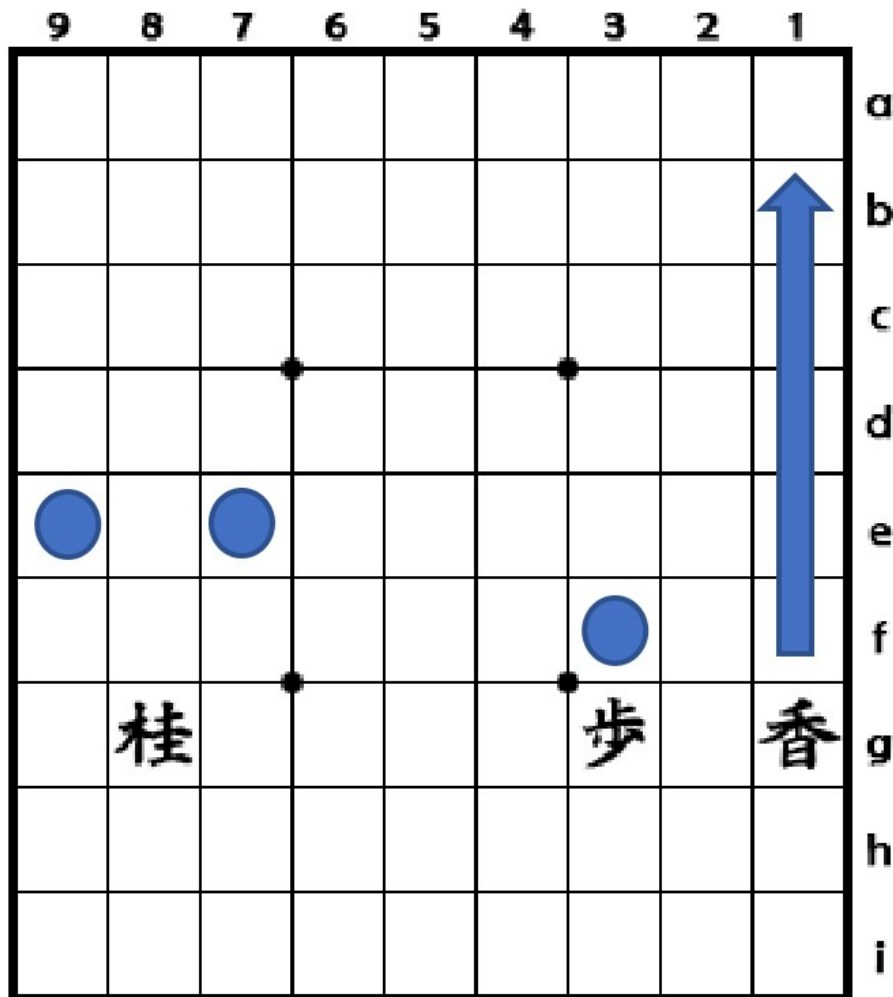
The pieces, their moves and their promoted moves are shown in the following diagrams: From left to right: Black Gold, Black King and Black Silver



Gold: one square forward, diagonally forward, left, right or backwards

King: one square in any direction

Silver: one square forward, diagonally forward, or diagonally back



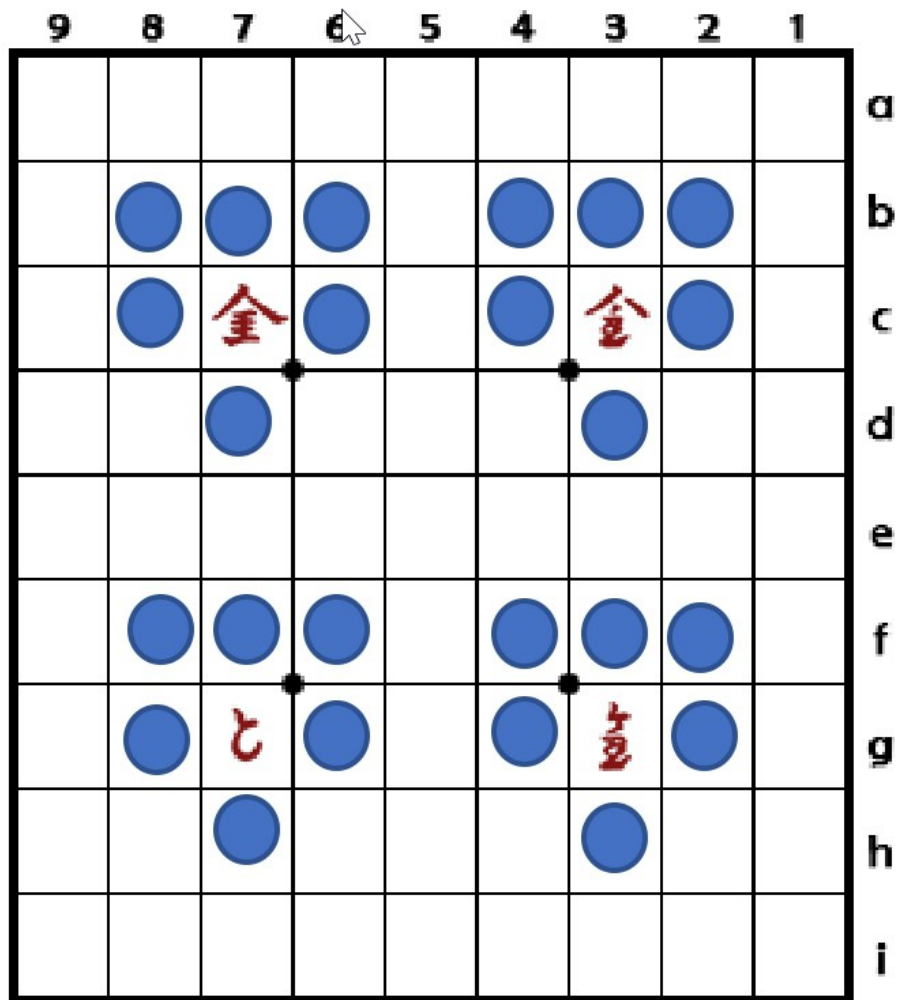
From left to right: Black Knight, Black Pawn and Black Lance.

Knight: two squares forward, followed by one square left or right – the Knight is the only piece which may 'jump' over other pieces.

Pawn: one square forward

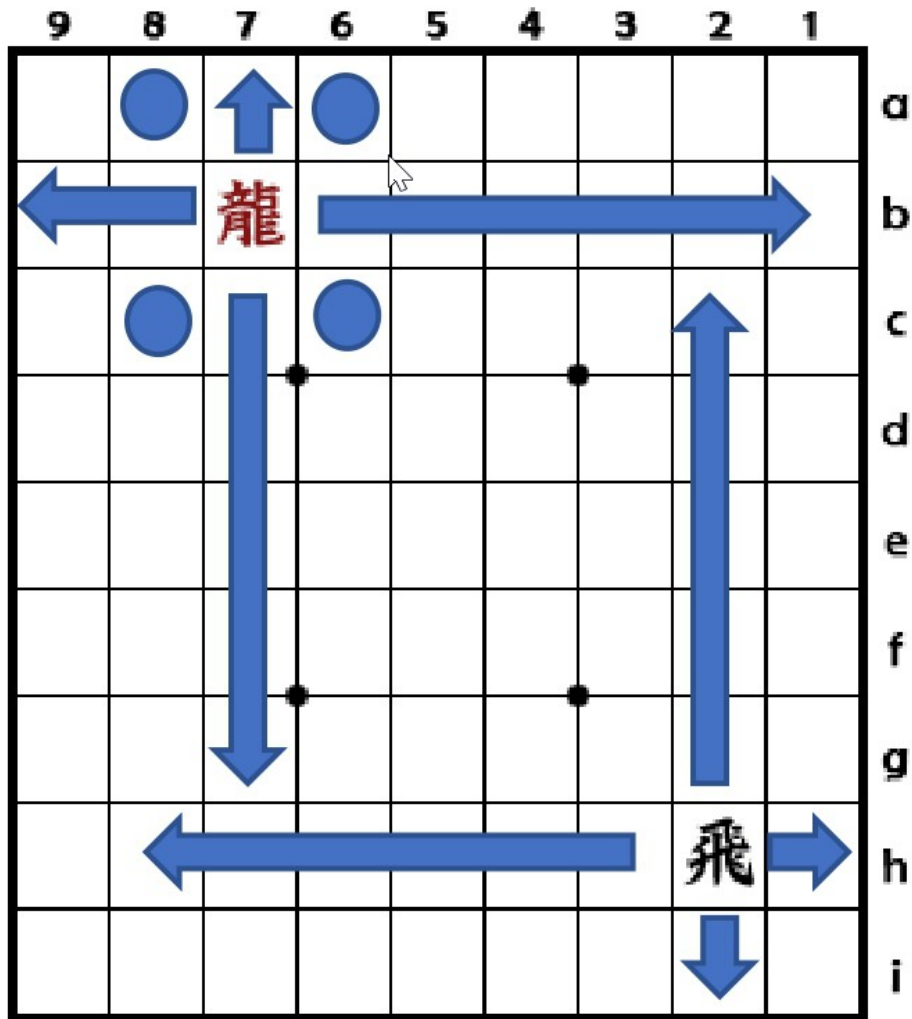
Lance: any number of squares forward

The Knight, Pawn and Lance may not move backward.



Clockwise from top left: promoted Black Silver, promoted Black Knight, promoted Black Lance, and promoted Black Pawn

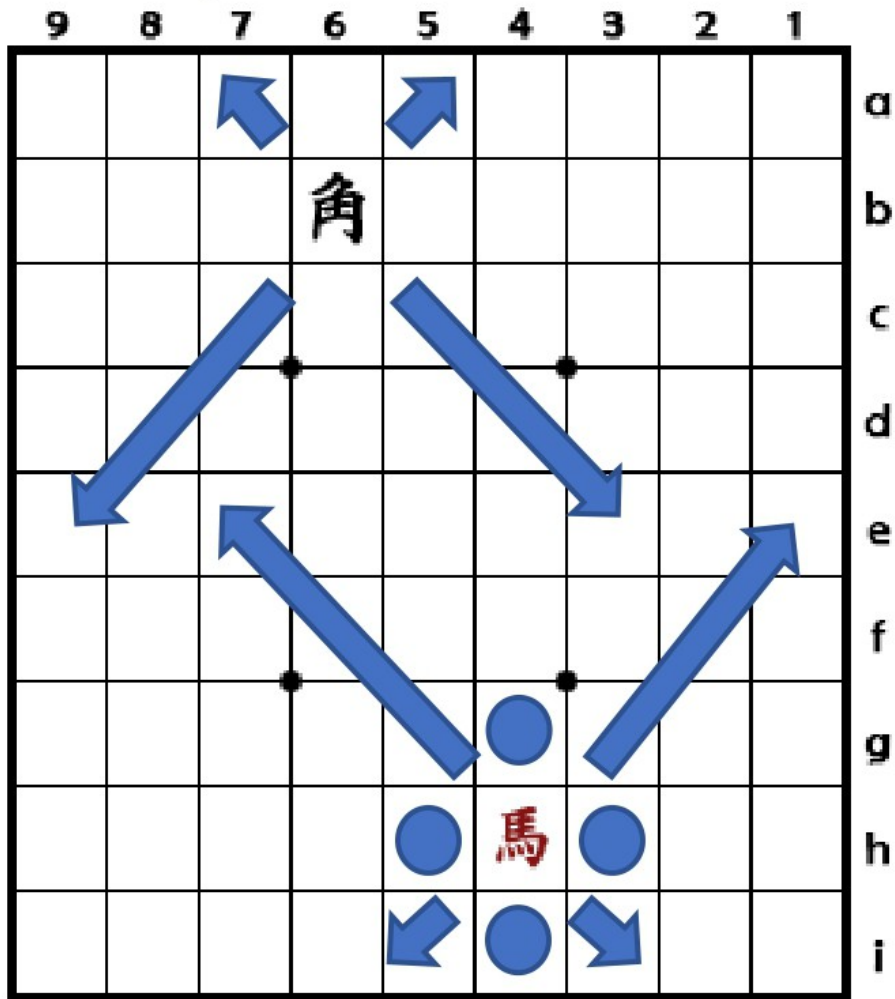
All: one square forward, diagonally forward, left, right or backwards – exactly like a Gold. The *kanji* for the different pieces are different so that the original status of the piece can be determined.



Left to right: promoted Black Rook and Black Rook.

Rook: any number of squares left or right, forwards or backwards

Promoted Rook: as Rook plus one square diagonally in any direction



Left to Right, Black Bishop, promoted Black Bishop.

Bishop: any number of squares diagonally

Promoted Bishop: as Bishop plus one square left, right, forwards or backwards

Clearly, White's pieces move in the same way, but 'down' the board.

Shogi Notation.

The system of notation described here is very largely that used by the late George Hodges in the magazine *Shogi* which he published in the U.K. between 1978 and 1986.

Each square on the board is identified using a grid-based system.²¹ Numbers are used across the top of the board from right to left (1-9) and letters down the right hand side from top to bottom (a-i). Thus, any square can be given an exact designation. The file reference is given first, followed by the rank reference.

For example, 1a means the square at top right, 9i means the square at bottom left, 6f means the square to be found on the 6th file and at the 6th rank down from the top of the board.

Each piece is given an identifying letter thus: **K=King**, **G=Gold**, **S=Silver**, **N=kNight**, **L=Lance**, **B=Bishop**, **R=Rook**, **P=Pawn**.

'x' indicates 'captures', eg: Rx2c – Rook moves to 2c and captures whatever piece is on 2c

'*' indicates 'drops', eg: L*8f – Lance drops at 8f

'+' indicates 'promotes' or 'promoted', eg: P2c+ – Pawn moves to 2c and promotes, or:

+P2c – promoted Pawn moves to 2c

²¹ Commonly referred to as 'algebraic' – it is **not** – it is 'alphanumeric'.

- '=' indicates 'does not promote', eg: N3c= indicates Knight moves to 3c and does not promote
- 'Δ' indicates 'intending', eg: R2cΔR3cΔR3h – Rook moves to 2c, intending a move to 3c on the next move then to 3h after that
- '~' links two moves by the same player without showing the intervening move by the other player, eg: R2c~R3c~R3h – Rook moves to 2c followed by Rook moves to 3c followed by Rook moves to 3h
- '!' indicates a good move, eg: R3h! – this is a good move – note that a check is not always necessarily a good move
- '?' indicates a questionable move, eg: P*3f? – this is a questionable move.

Where there are two similar pieces which could move to the same square, then the starting square of the piece to be moved needs to be given. For example, at the start of a game, both of Black's Golds could move to 5h. Should the Gold at 4i move to 5h this would be described with G4i-5h. If the Gold at 6i moves to 5h, this is described as G6i-5h.

Where alternative or variant sequences of moves are discussed (eg: in Shogi textbooks), additional symbols may be used to indicate whether a sequence of moves favours one player or another:

±	favours Black
±±	strongly favours Black
∓	favours White
∓∓	strongly favours White
//	neutral – does not favour Black or White

Note that there is no provision in the notation scheme for indicating that a move is 'check' – Shogi players are expected to be alert enough to notice that they are in check!²²

Moves are sometimes numbered in pairs as in Chess, but in this document they are numbered individually. This is because moves are numbered individually by the Shogidokoro program (described later). This is a very useful program for playing through situations and saving them for later study, so I have elected to adopt the numbering system used there. Some websites (eg: Reijer Grimbergens) also present games with moves numbered individually. Japanese texts tend to number moves individually, but sometimes do not number moves at all, simply prepending a ♜ or ♠ to indicate whether a move has been made by Black or White.

²² Similarly, in a 'live' game, check is not usually announced – this rule is often relaxed when novice players are participating in a game.

In diagrams, moves are recorded by showing the piece as having moved in the diagram, and in the game record by using the notation described above. So, as his first move, Black might play P-7f, and the diagram would look like:

after one move

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂	香	a
	飛						角		b
歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	c
			●			●			d
									e
		歩							f
歩	歩		●	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	g
	角						飛		h
香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂	香	i

And in the game record the move would appear as:

1 P7f

Note that the dash is often dropped.
I have done this here.

White's response might be: 2 G3b in which case the diagram would look like this:

after 2 moves

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
a	香	桂	銀	金	玉		銀	桂	香	
b		飛					金	角		
c	步	步	步	步	步	步	步	步	步	
d				●			●			
e										
f			步							
g	步	步		●	步	步	步	步	步	
h		角						飛		
i	香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂	香	

and the moves so far would be represented in the game record as:

1 P7f 2 G3b

These are the first two moves in the first part of a very 'artificial' game designed to show in the game record most of the features described above.

Here are the first 20 moves:

1 P7f	2 G3b	11 S3h	12 +B3c
3 P5f	4 P3d	13 K4h	14 +Bx9i
5 Bx2b+	6 Gx2b	15 N7g	16 +B8i
7 R7h	8 B*5g	17 B*6i	18 L*9d
9 G6i-5h	10 B2d+	19 K3i	20 Lx9g+

Referring back to the section on notation (see p. 44), note the use of:

The appended '+' indicating promotion (moves **5**, **10**, **20**).

The 'x' to indicate capture (moves **5**, **6**, **20**).

The '*' to indicate a drop (moves **8**, **17**, **18**).

The starting square in ambiguous moves (move **9**).

The prepended '+' to indicate a promoted piece (moves **12**, **14**, **16**).

This is only a 'made-up' game for illustrative purposes, but this is what the board diagram would look like after these 20 moves:

after 20 moves



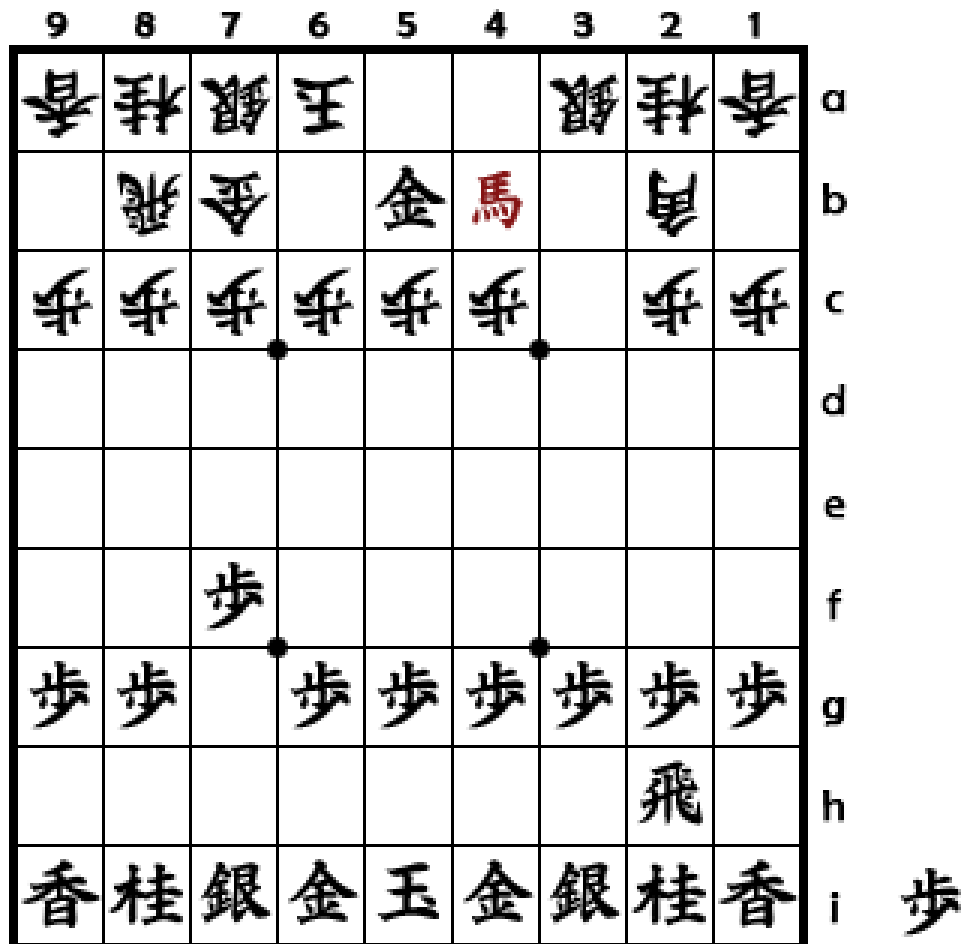
Note the promoted pieces on 9g and 8i, and the captured piece displayed at the side of the board.

Now, two very short complete games to 'consolidate' familiarity with the notation system:

The first is the Shogi equivalent of the 'Fools Mate' in Chess:

1 P7f	2 G7b	5 +Bx4b	6 K6a
3 Bx3c+	4 G4b	7 G*5b	mate

After ▲G*5b



The second is another very short (and unlikely) game:

- | | | | |
|-------|-------|----------|---------|
| 1 P7f | 2 P8d | 9 P5e | 10 Px5e |
| 3 P5f | 4 P5d | 11 Bx5e | 12 P2e |
| 5 R5h | 6 S4b | 13 Bx7c+ | mate |
| 7 P1f | 8 P2d | | |

After ♠Bx7c+



Can you come up with a shorter game which results in *Sente* achieving mate?

Yes:

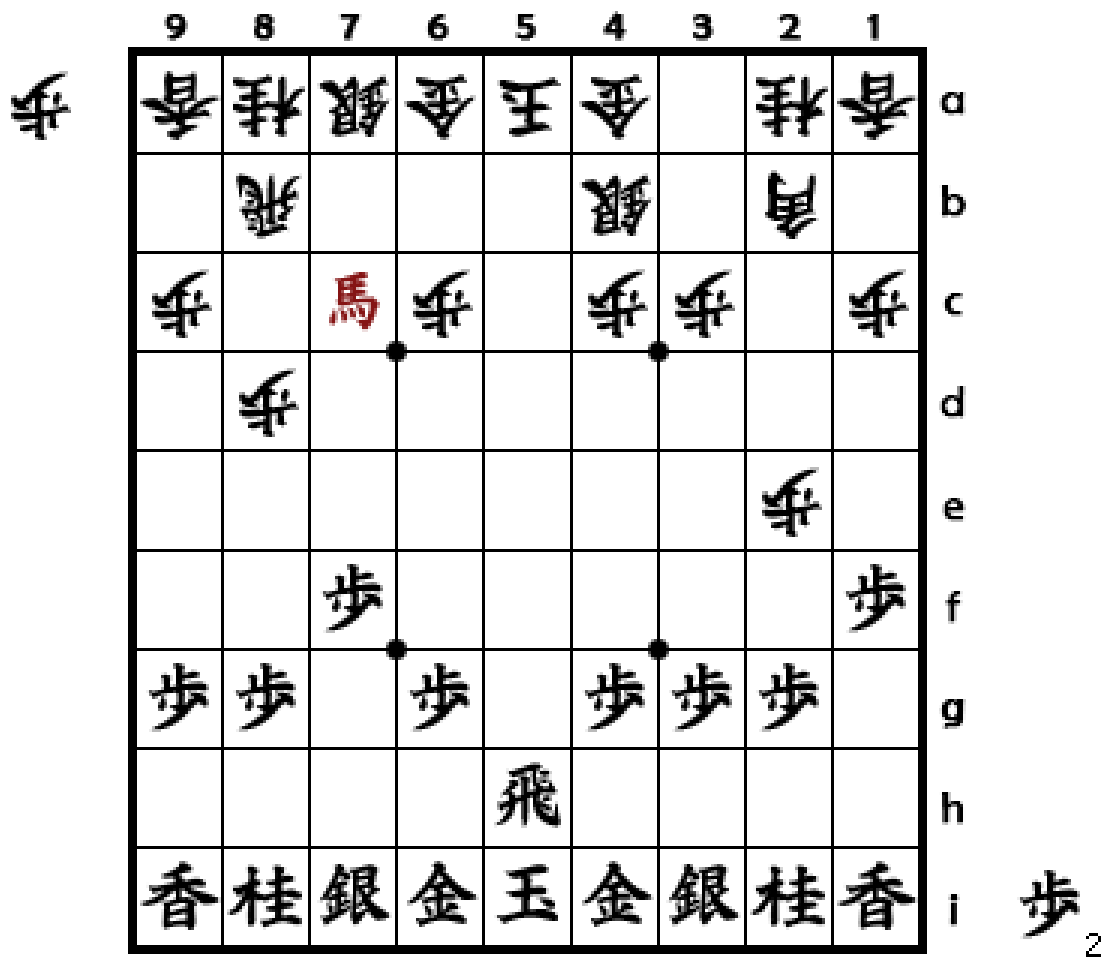
1 P7f
3 P5f
5 R5h

2 P8d
4 P5d
6 S4b

7 P5e
9 Bx5e
11 Bx7c+

8 Px5e
10 P2d
mate

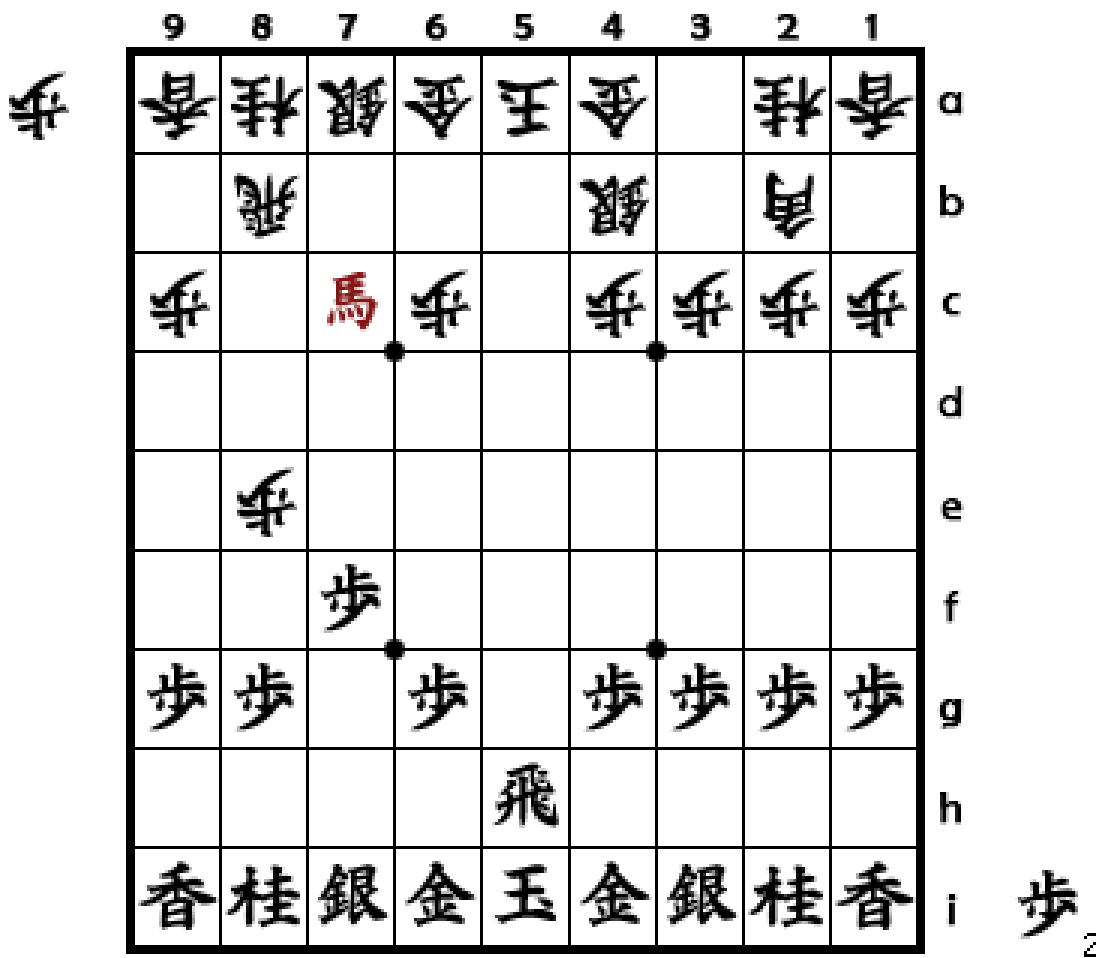
After ♠Bx7c+



or:

- | | | | |
|-------|-------|----------|--------|
| 1 P7f | 2 P8d | 7 P5e | 8 Px5e |
| 3 P5f | 4 P5d | 9 Bx5e | 10 P8e |
| 5 R5h | 6 S4b | 11 Bx7c+ | mate |

After ♠Bx7c+



I'm sure that you can create other short games along the same lines. If they do nothing else, these short games help you familiarise yourself with the notation system...

For more about Shogi notation, see page 134.

The Rules of Shogi.

The rules of Shogi are really quite simple – certainly, they are no more complicated than those of (International) Chess. They are however, different.

The Players.

Shogi is a game for two players ('Black' and 'White'). In diagrams, Black traditionally plays 'up' the board, White 'down'. Black plays first.

The Object of the Game.

The object of the game is as in Chess, to checkmate the opposing King. In general, check is given by threatening the King with capture. The threatened player may escape check by moving the King, by capturing the threatening piece, by moving a piece between the threatening piece and the King, by dropping a piece between the threatening piece and the King. Checkmate is achieved when the King cannot escape. A game may end in two other ways – a player may resign if their position is seen to be hopeless, or, a draw may occur. Draws are rare in Shogi. There is no stalemate in Shogi.

Moves & Capture.

Moves of the individual pieces are described elsewhere, but (fairly obviously) a player may not move a piece onto another square if it is already occupied by another of that player's pieces. If the square is occupied by a piece belonging to the other player, the move is legal

and the other player's piece is captured. Once a piece is captured, it reverts to its unpromoted state (see below for details of promotion), and is retained by the capturing player, *in full view of the opponent*.

The capturing player may drop a captured piece as an alternative to a move (see below for details of drops). With the exception of the Knight, no jumps are allowed in any move.

Promotion.

Most pieces (Pawn, Lance, Knight, Silver, Rook, Bishop) may be promoted on reaching the promotion zone (the furthest away three ranks of the board). Pieces are promoted by turning them over so that their promoted characters (*kanji*) are visible. Pawn, Lance, Knight and Silver promote to Gold. Rook and Bishop have their powers enhanced by being allowed to move one square in a diagonal (Rook) or orthogonal (Bishop) direction. Note that promotion is not mandatory, and there are some strategic situations in which it may be disadvantageous to do so.

Note however, that when a piece would no longer have a valid move after the current one, it *must* promote – that is, when a Lance or Pawn reaches the last rank, or when a Knight reaches either of the last two ranks. Once promoted, a piece may not be 'unpromoted'. Finally, remember that although the discussion above assumes that promotion takes place (or not) when a piece first

enters the promotion zone, in fact, a piece may be promoted in the course of a normal move as it enters or leaves the promotion zone, or as part of a move entirely within the promotion zone.

Remember, pieces may not 'un-promote'.

Drops.

A player may elect to 'drop' a captured piece instead of moving a piece. This is one of the features which makes Shogi so different from Chess. Basically a piece may be dropped anywhere on the board with the provisos that:

- It is forbidden to have more than one *unpromoted* Pawn on the same file;
- A Pawn may not be dropped to give direct checkmate;
- A piece may not be dropped where it does not have a legal move (ie: a Lance or Pawn on the last rank, or a Knight on either of the last two ranks);
- A piece may not be promoted as it is dropped – a dropped piece may only be promoted after it has actually moved.

Handicapping.

In Japan, players are graded. There are in fact two grading systems, one for professional and one for amateur players. The amateur scheme goes from about 15 *kyu* (beginner) to 6 *dan*. An amateur 6 *dan* is about equal to a professional 4 *dan*. Shogi allows for a handicapping scheme when the difference in grades of the two players is known:

- 1 grade – the stronger player plays *Gote* and forfeits left Lance (on 1a) before play starts;
- 2 grades – play a 2 game series. 1st game as above, in the second game the stronger player plays *Gote* and forfeits Bishop;
- 3 grades – the stronger player plays *Gote* and forfeits Bishop;
- 4 grades – the stronger player plays *Gote* and forfeits Rook;²³
- 5 grades – the stronger player plays *Gote* and forfeits Rook and left Lance;
- 6 grades – play a 2 game series. 1st game as above, in the second game the stronger player plays *Gote* and forfeits Rook and Bishop (also known as Two Piece Handicap);
- 7 grades – the stronger player plays *Gote* and forfeits Rook and Bishop.

23 Known as Rook Handicap. A sample Rook Handicap game is included at page 144.

Conventionally, *Gote* is always the handicapped player, and once the handicap pieces have been removed from the board, *Gote* makes the first move.

Other handicaps are:

- 4 piece handicap – the stronger player plays *Gote* and forfeits Rook, Bishop, and both Lances;
- 5 piece left handicap – the stronger player plays *Gote* and forfeits Rook, Bishop, both Lances and left Knight;
- 5 piece right handicap – *Gote* forfeits Rook, Bishop, both Lances, and right Knight;
- 6 piece handicap – *Gote* forfeits Rook, Bishop, both Lances, and both Knights.

Handicap games are often set up between amateurs and professionals – for example, the 'Meijin Game' takes place every autumn between the amateur and professional champions (*Meijin*). The professional gives the amateur a Bishop.

In Japan, there is a vast literature covering handicap play, and some of the books in the bibliography (p. 187) discuss handicapping in a little more detail, but we won't say more about the subject in this introductory document.²⁴

²⁴ See: <http://eric.macshogi.com/shogi/handicap/handicap.html> a series of notes by Larry Kaufman for much more about handicap play.

Repetition – Sennichite.

If the same game position occurs more than three times consecutively in a game (*sennichite*), the game is declared a no-contest. The same position means: same players turn, same disposition of pieces on the board *and* in hand.²⁵ If a repeated position occurs as a result of repeated checks, the player giving check must not do so a fourth time otherwise that player forfeits the game.

Draws.

Draws are rare in Shogi. They arise from two situations: firstly when the *sennichite* situation arises (see previous paragraph), and secondly when both Kings have advanced so far that they are in their promotion zone. This is known as an 'Entering Kings' (or *nyugyoku*) situation and an impasse is declared because most Shogi pieces move backwards (now necessary to achieve a mate) inefficiently. The impasse is resolved by a piece counting exercise (*jishogi*) which may result in a draw being declared.

²⁵ For a more detailed illustration of *sennichite*, please look at the two sample games on page 154 *et. seq.*

Illegal Moves.

There are a few moves which are illegal in Shogi:

- In hand Pawns may not be dropped on to a file on which there is already another unpromoted Pawn belonging to the in-hand side.
- In hand pieces may not be dropped onto a square from which no further legal moves are possible – so, a Lance or Pawn may not be dropped on the last rank, a Knight may not be dropped on either of the last two ranks.
- In hand Pawns may not be dropped so as to give checkmate with the drop.
- A piece must promote when it makes a move to a position from which there are no more legal moves – for example, when a Lance or Pawn moves to the last rank, or a Knight moves to either of the last two ranks.
- A player may not make a move which leaves that player's King in check.

A player making any of the above illegal moves forfeits the game immediately.

Etiquette.

Shogi has a set of informal 'rules' which dictate how players should behave. From the novices point of view, the most important of these is probably that check is not normally announced, so it is each player's responsibility

to make sure they are not in check when making a move. That being said, this rule is often relaxed in games involving novice players.

Shogi does not have a 'touch-and-move' rule like Chess. Players sometimes will adjust the position of pieces within their squares so that the whole board looks 'aesthetically pleasing'. This is in accord with the whole 'ambiance' of Shogi. Promoted pieces may even be picked up so that the player can determine the unpromoted status of the piece (strictly this should not be necessary, of course). This handling of pieces without actually moving should of course, not be overdone. Picking a piece up and replacing it in the wrong position is an illegal move, and the player concerned immediately forfeits the game.

Shogi Openings and Castles.

Openings.

In Shogi, as in Chess, there are a variety of different openings – usually these fall into one or other of two groups – Ranging Rook (*Furibisha*) and Static Rook (*Ibisha*). The clue is in the name – Ranging Rook openings are ones in which the Rook is moved from its original file (usually to file 5, 6, 7 or 8 from *Sente's* point of view); Static Rook openings are those in which the Rook is used on its original file (file 2 in the case of *Sente*).

There are many variants of both Ranging and Static Rook openings, with names like 'Spearing the Sparrow', 'Wrong Diagonal Bishop', etc. There are too many of these to discuss even briefly in a short introductory document, but at least some study of openings is essential in Shogi (just as in Chess).

Castles.

In Shogi, there is no move which corresponds to the composite 'castling' move of Chess. Instead, castles must be built up step-by-step, and the first part of any game, before moving into the middle game often (usually) is taken up with each player constructing a castle to defend the King.

The choice of castles available to a player is often decided by which sort of opening has been chosen.

In this short introduction, only two castles will be briefly described – one for use with Ranging Rook openings, one for use with Static Rook openings.

As with openings, there are many different types of castle,²⁶ and many variants of the basic forms. Many castles use three of the four generals in their construction – often two Golds and a Silver.

Also, different castles may be used according to whether a game is 'Double Ranging Rook', 'Double Static Rook', 'Ranging Rook vs. Static Rook' or 'Static Rook vs. Ranging Rook'.

²⁶ The glossary (p. 165) lists a selection of 15 different types of castle. This selection may be regarded as a starting point for further study. My personal list of castles includes over 100 different castles and variations. There are many more.

The (Gold) **Yagura** (often simply called the 'Fortress') castle is used with Static Rook openings.

Gold Yagura (*Kin Yagura*)

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
		歩	歩						f
歩	歩	銀	金	歩					g
	玉	金	角						h
香	桂								i

For Black (or *Sente*) the sequence of moves to achieve this castle may typically be:

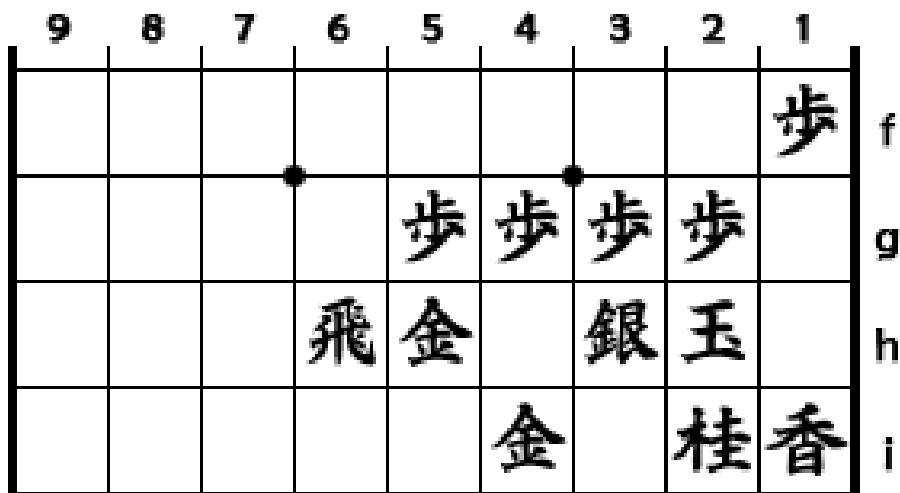
▲P7f~▲S6h~▲S7g~▲G7h~▲K6i~▲G5h~▲B7i~▲P6f
 ~▲G5h-6g~▲B6h~▲K7i~▲K8h

In some instances, *Sente's* 5th file Pawn might be advanced to 5f – there are many variations in Shogi castles.

The Gold Yagura is so called because there is a variant of the Yagura which uses two Silvers and one Gold general – the Silver Yagura (*Gin Yagura*).

The **Mino** castle is used with Ranging Rook openings.

Mino (*Minogakoi*)



The diagram above shows a Mino castle from *Sente's* point of view, but if *Gote* elected to play a Ranging Rook opening with a Mino castle, the sequence of moves to achieve this castle might typically be:

△P3d~△S4b~△P4d~△S4c~△R4b~△K6b~△K7b~△K8b
 ~△S7b~△P9d~△G4a-5b

and, the resulting castle will look like this:

Mino (*Minogakoi*) – from *Gote's* point of view

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
a	香	桂		金						
b		玉	銀		金	飛				
c		歩	歩	歩	歩					
d	歩									

In the case of the Mino castle, note that, the Rook must be moved away from its original position before the castle can be constructed – it is a Ranging Rook castle (this is the 5th move in the sequence above).

If both *Sente* and *Gote* slavishly follow the sequences of moves outlined above, in order to build their respective castles then, after a total of 23 moves, the game record will look like this:

1 P7f	2 P3d	13 B7i	14 K7b
3 S6h	4 S4b	15 P6f	16 K8b
5 S7g	6 P4d	17 G5h-6g	18 S7b
7 G7h	8 S4c	19 B6h	20 P9d
9 K6i	10 R4b	21 K7i	22 G4a-5b
11 G5h	12 K6b	23 K8h	

and, remembering that the *castles are not built in isolation from all the other pieces on the board* (as is

usually shown in diagrams), the *whole board* will look like this:

Castle-building – position after 23 moves

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
a	香	桂		金				桂	香	
b		玉	銀		金	飛		角		
c		歩	歩	歩	歩	銀		歩	歩	
d	歩					歩	歩			
e										
f			歩	歩						
g	歩	歩	銀	金	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	
h		玉	金	角				飛		
i	香	桂					銀	桂	香	

Sente's Yagura and *Gote's* Mino castles can easily be seen.

However, this is an ideal-world picture. In practice, it is unlikely that either player will be allowed to build his castle without some form of intervention from the other player – either a direct attempt to disrupt the building of the castle, or an attack in some other part of the board. The player under attack will be forced to take some defensive or retaliatory action, thus disrupting the

castle-building process. For example, consider the position after 2 moves in the above scenario:

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
a	香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂	香	
b		飛						角		
c	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩		歩	歩	
d				●			●	歩		
e										
f			歩							
g	歩	歩		歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	
h		角						飛		
i	香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂	香	

Both *Sente* and *Gote* have moved their Bishop's Silver Pawn one square forward. The effect of this is to leave the leading Bishop diagonal 'open'. This allows either *Sente* or *Gote* to initiate a 'Bishop exchange' thus disrupting the castle building process. In this example, the Bishop's diagonal remains open until the move 5 S7g closes off the diagonal. This is not the place to discuss the strategy of exchanging Bishops early in the game,²⁷ but it does illustrate the fact that the castle

²⁷ Briefly, the early exchange of Bishops gives both players a powerful 'in-hand' piece early in the game, which can then be used to make attacks; either on the other players castle, or elsewhere on the board.

building process need not slavishly follow the 'recommended' line.

In the case of both the Mino and Yagura castles, note that the fortress is positioned away from the area where the Rook may be found. This is because in later stages of the game, much action may be centred in the area of the Rook. It is a good idea to keep the vulnerable King away from such areas! Indeed, this is the basis of the Shogi proverb *Keep the Rook and King apart*, which is discussed in a little more detail on page 101.

During the opening stages of a game, it is also quite common to move the Pawns on 9g (*Sente*) or 1c (*Gote*) forward by one square. This is to provide an escape route for the Bishop if it is attacked from another direction.

A few general points about openings and castles:

- This introductory example shows a Yagura castle being used as part of a Static Rook opening, and a Mino castle being used as part of a Ranging Rook opening. This is a fairly common approach, but please remember, there are a vast range of opening/castle combinations.
- It is perfectly reasonable to use Mino or Yagura castles with either Static Rook or Ranging Rook openings.

- It is perfectly reasonable to choose the castle to be used depending on the opening being played by the opponent.
- It is perfectly reasonable to choose a castle because of its particular strengths – for example the Yagura is good in defending against attacks from above while it is (relatively) weak against attacks from the side.

No more about openings and castles in this brief introductory document, but the literature dealing with castles and openings is vast – study of openings and castles is more or less *de rigeur* for serious Shogi players.

Shape, *Tesuji*, Forks, Pins and Skewers.

The examples of various Shogi tactics and concepts given here are very simple, illustrating the *principle* of the technique. Please remember that in a real-game situation, there may be ways to avoid an impending disaster – by interposing or dropping a piece for example.

Shape.

The concept of 'good' shape (*kokei*) is in part about positioning one's pieces so that they are mutually supporting. It is also possible to have 'bad' shape (*akukei*), a position in which ones pieces do not support each other, or in which one piece blocks the movement of another. Shape is about utilising the potential (*aji*) of ones pieces to the best effect.

For good shape:

1. There should be an overall balance between the attacking or fighting pieces.
2. The attacking pieces should all be working together.
3. The King should be on the opposite side to his Rook because the King should be kept safely away from the action likely to be centred around the Rook.
4. The Pawns, (the vanguard of the attack) should be arranged in such a way that they can be properly utilised and also allow other pieces to work properly. For example, it is common to advance Pawns on the odd-numbered files because this allows the Bishop to move freely.

Consider 'bad' shape first:

Figure 1 – Bad Shape – *Akukei*

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
香	桂					角	桂	香	a
	飛				銀	金	玉		b
歩	歩	歩	歩		金	銀	歩		c
			●	歩	歩	歩		歩	d
							歩		e
歩		歩	歩	歩		歩			f
角	歩	銀			歩	銀		歩	g
		金			金	玉	飛		h
香	桂						桂	香	i

In Figure 1, consider *Sente's* position first. The King is in a poor position. Because of its proximity to the Rook it is bound to get involved in skirmishes and it should be moved at least some distance away.

In addition, unless the Bishop on 9g is pulled back to 7i it is not working in collaboration with the Rook on 2h and the Silver on 3g against *Gote's* King.

Sente's shape is bad.

In *Gote's* case there are too many pieces around the King. *Gote* has no attack going and his defensive forces include the Bishop and both Silvers.

Gote's shape is bad.

Now, 'good' shape:

Figure 2 – Good Shape – *Akukei*

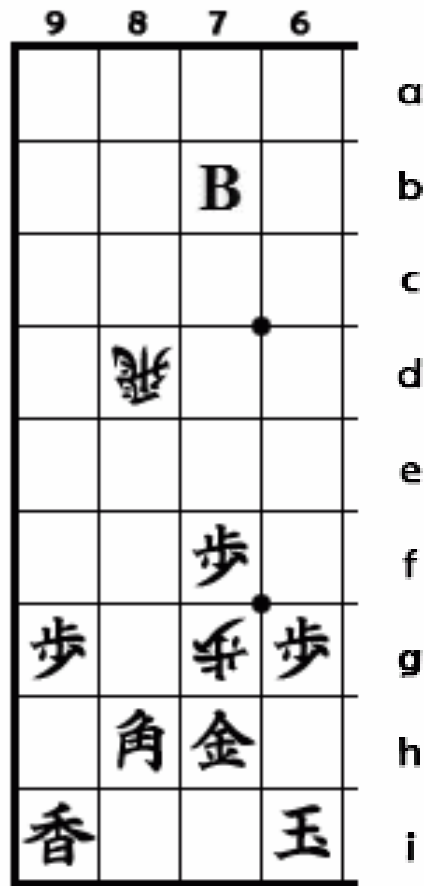
	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
a	香	桂						桂	香	
b		飛				角	金	玉		
c			銀	歩		金	銀			
d	歩		歩		歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	
e		歩		歩						
f	歩		歩		歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	
g		歩	角	銀		金	桂	銀		
h			飛				金	玉		
i	香	桂							香	

Fig. 2 shows much better shape than Fig. 1. This is because both Kings are well-protected on opposite sides to their Rooks, and in each case a Rook, Bishop, Silver and Knight are working together. The Golds and Silver surrounding each King are not restricted in their movement. Both *Sente* and *Gote* have 'good' shape.

Tesuji.

A *tesuji* is a clever move, or sequence of moves. There are a multitude of *tesuji*, and only one single-move example is presented here. It is not a completely 'simple' example, such as might reasonably be expected in an introductory document – there is an element of cleverness and subtlety about it, and there are apparent alternative moves to the move which comprises the *tesuji*. This is quite deliberate – it is intended that the reader should gain an insight into the importance of *tesuji* by seeing an example which is not wholly simple. At the same time, I hope that it is not so complicated as to discourage the novice player.

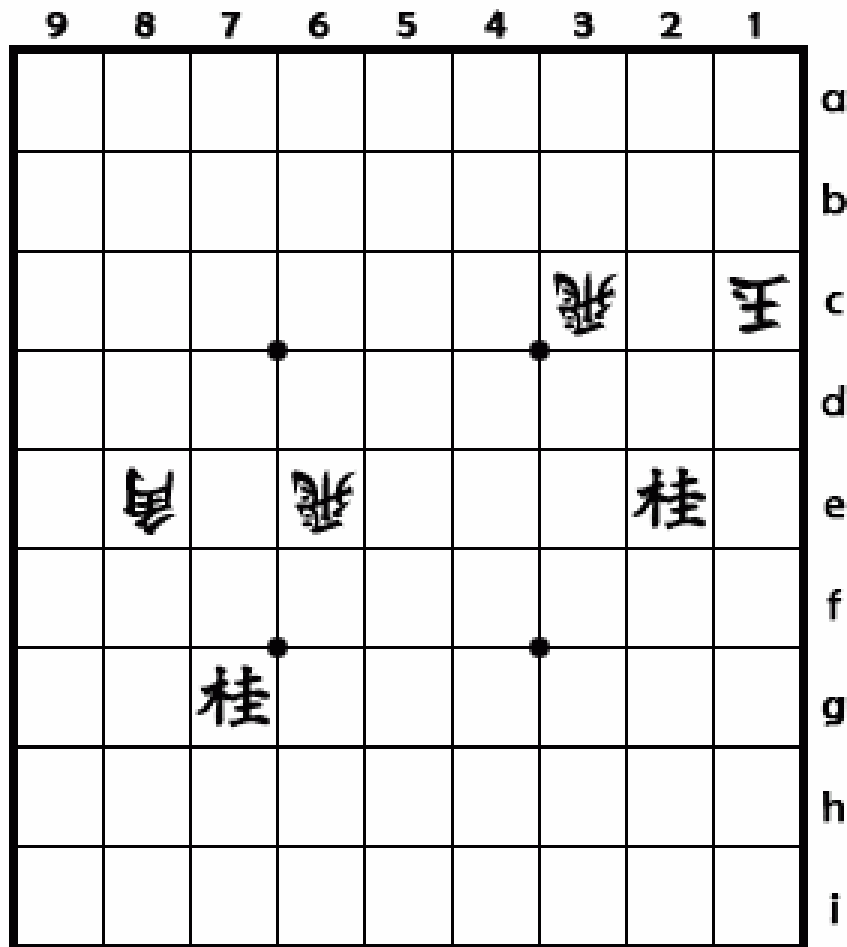
△P*7g



It is often good to drop a Pawn at a point commanded by two or three pieces. In this case the Pawn drop at 7g threatens to take the Gold. If *Sente* answers with ▲Gx7g, *Gote* captures the Bishop. If *Sente* answers with ▲Bx7g, *Gote* invades with R8i+ and promotes his Rook. Promoting the Rook in this way at the cost of a single Pawn is a good example of a sacrifice *tesuji*.

Forks.

A fork arises when one of a player's pieces attacks **two** of the opponent's pieces at the same time. As the opponent cannot save both pieces, the attacking piece is guaranteed to capture one of the opposing pieces.



On the left, the situation is clear *Gote* must lose either the Rook or the Bishop. By moving the Bishop to 7d or 7f, or the Rook to 7e, he can recoup part of the loss by capturing the Knight.

On the right, *Gote* has no choice but to move the King (because it is in check). By moving the King to 2b, 2c or 2d, he can capture the Knight after the Knight has captured the Rook, but this is a losing exchange as far as *Gote* is concerned he has lost a Rook and his King has been forced to move.

Pins.

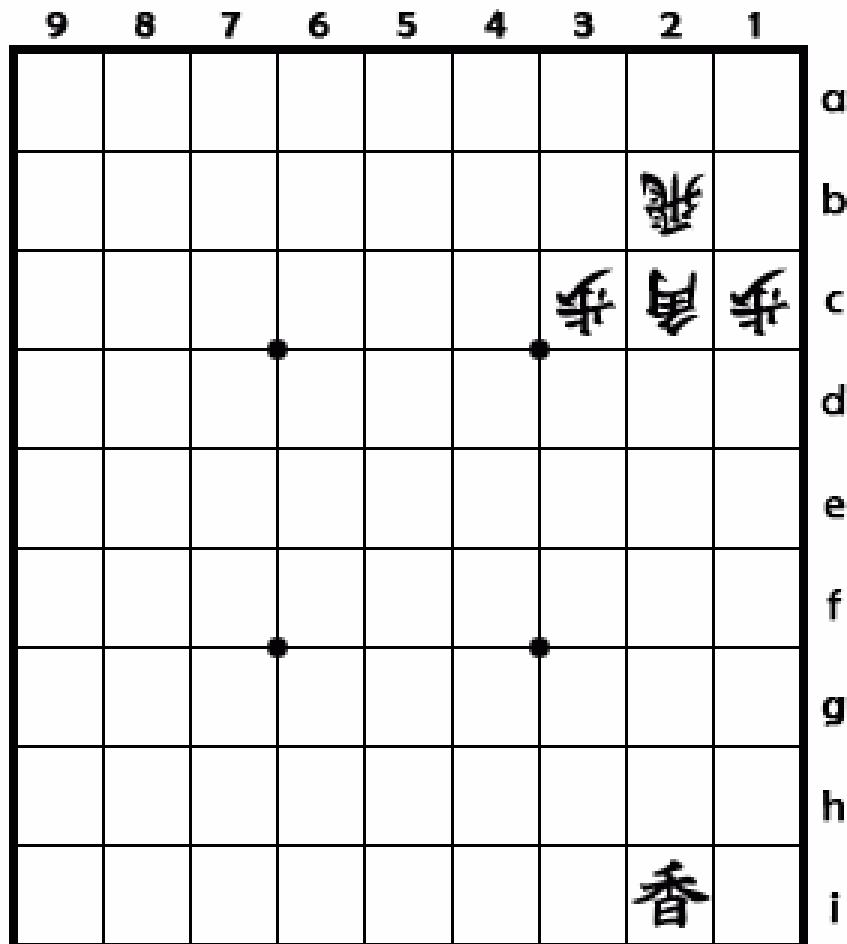
The term pin is used to describe a situation where one of the long-range pieces (Rook, Bishop, Lance) has **two** of the opponent's pieces in its path (often a stronger piece behind a less valuable piece).

There are two main types of pin:

- Where the first piece is being defended by another piece, making it impossible to capture immediately, and:
- Where the first piece is in front of the King.

The example of a the first kind of pin shown here is in fact one of two major Lance *tesuji*.²⁸ In this example the Lance has been dropped at 2i pinning the Bishop and Rook.

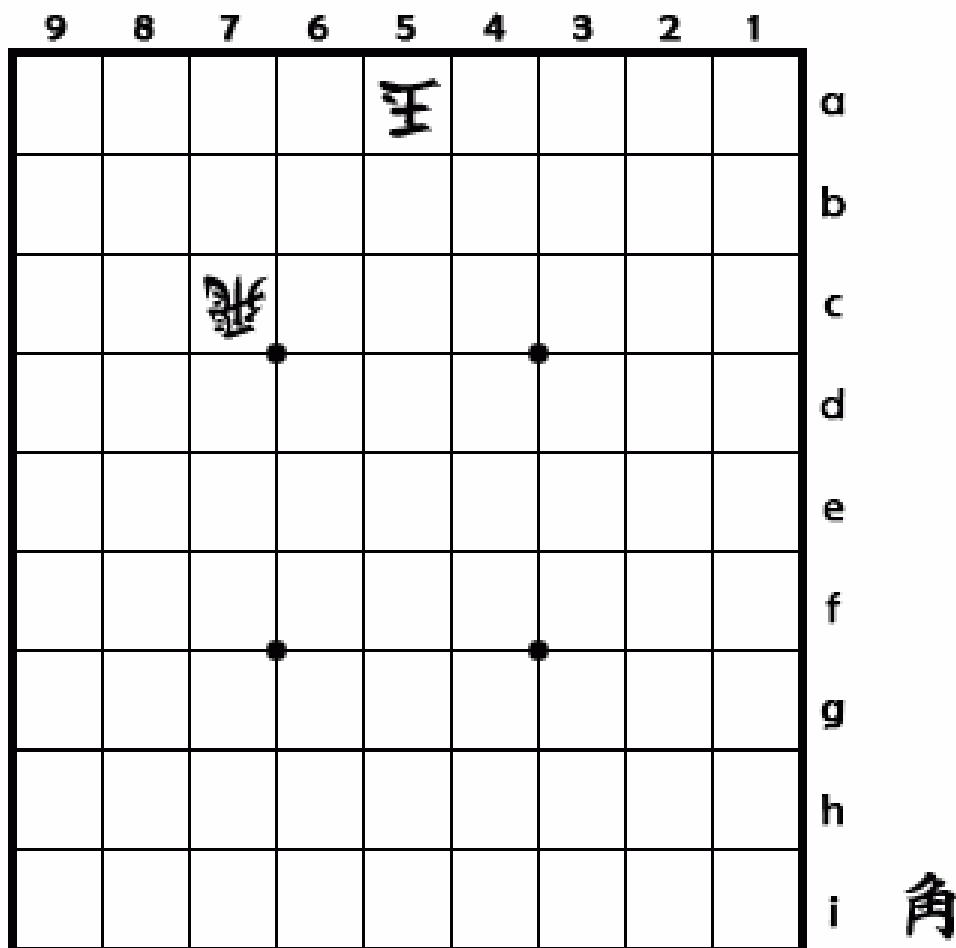
The Pin (1)



²⁸ This particular *tesuji* does not occur very often in good games because it is so easy to spot but it is important because it is frequently a powerful *threat*.

In this example of the second type of pin, dropping the Bishop on 8d traps the Rook as it cannot move without leaving the King in check – an illegal move

The Pin (2)

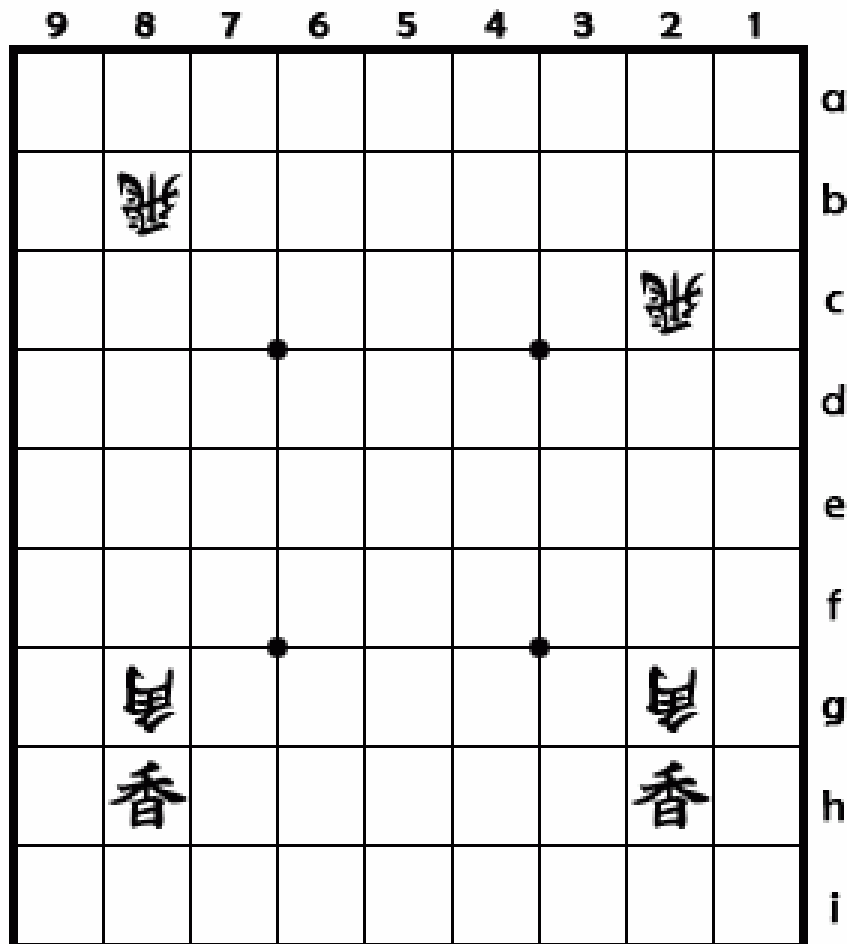


Dropping the Bishop on 9e would not work because *Gote* could move a piece to 8d (or drop an in-hand piece), thus breaking the pin.

Skewers.

The skewer (sometimes called 'spear') describes the situation where one of your long-range pieces attacks one of the opponent's pieces which is, in its turn, in front of another of your opponent's pieces. When two of the opponent's pieces are skewered in this way, one of those pieces is certain to be captured.

The Skewer (1)

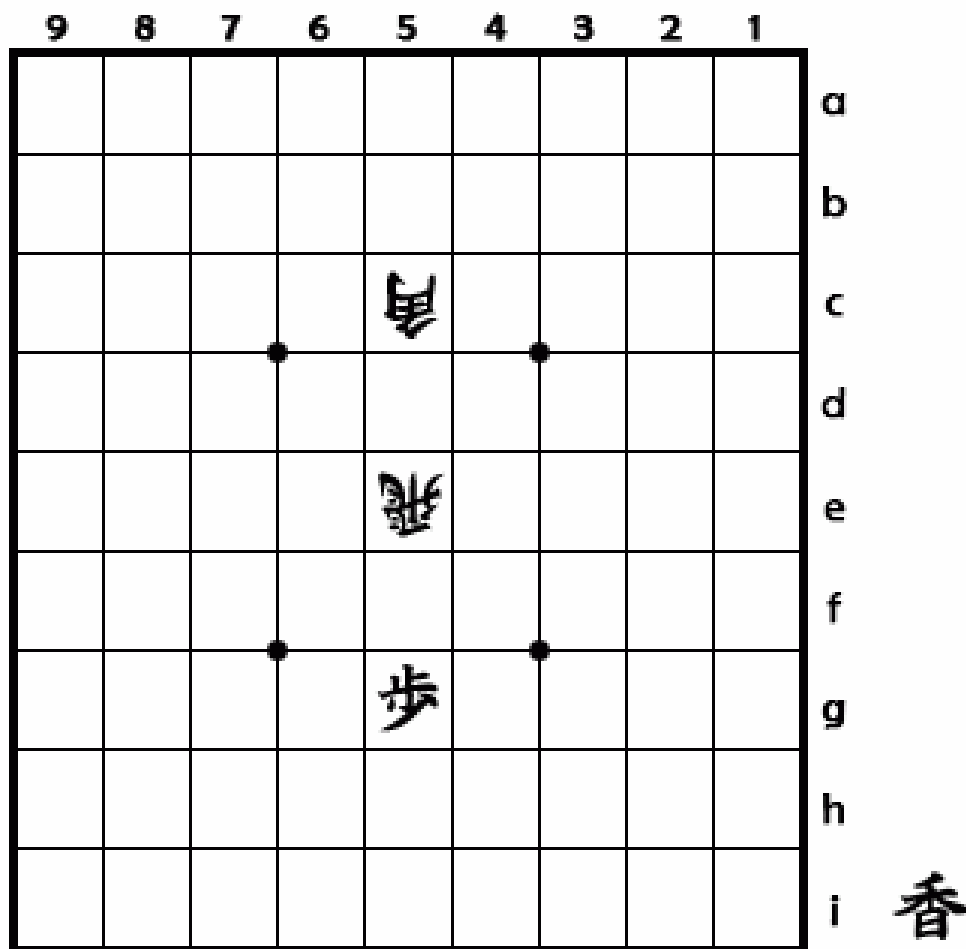


In the left hand side of the diagram, *Sente's* Lance skewers *Gote's* Rook and Bishop. If *Gote* tries to save his Bishop, then *Sente* can take the Rook with ♠Lx8b+.

If *Gote* doesn't respond to the skewer, then ♠Lx8g captures the Bishop.

At the right hand side of the diagram, the situation is not quite so clear-cut – *Gote* can save the Bishop but if he plays ♖B4e, he will lose the Rook (♠Lx2c), but be able to capture the Lance with ♖Bx2c.

The Skewer (2)



Can *Sente* skewer both pieces even if the Rook is in front of the Bishop? The answer is yes: with the help of the Pawn on 5g, *Sente* can play ♜L*5f and skewer the Rook and Bishop. Even though *Gote* can play ♞Rx5f, ♜Px5f takes the Rook back, so *Sente* has still succeeded in capturing one of the pieces. If *Gote* lets the Rook escape, ♜Lx5c+ takes the Bishop.

Shogi Problems.

Shogi problems are of several types, which are briefly described here:

***Tsume-Shogi* – Mating Problems.**

Tsume-shogi are to Shogi what mating problems are to International Chess – there are a few differences but it would not be stretching a point too far to describe *tsume-shogi* as Shogi mating problems.

Tsume-shogi are an important part of Shogi, particularly if you can't find opponents very often – they allow you to practice on your own.

The rules for *tsume-shogi* are really quite simple – here they are:

1. The attacking side is always Black, the defending side White.
2. Black has only the pieces shown on the board, plus those in hand. White is deemed to have all other pieces (except the Black King) available for dropping.
3. As Black is attacking, the Black King is not shown on the board.
4. Black has first move, and all moves must be check. White may defend by moving the King, taking the

checking piece, or by interposing a piece, either by a normal move or by a drop.

5. The 'best' move must always be made by each side. What this means is that Black must always make the move which will lead to the shortest exchange of moves before mating and White must make that move which delays the mate for as long as possible, with the proviso that obviously futile defensive drops are not permitted.
6. In the final position, when White is checkmated, Black should no longer have any pieces in hand.
7. Moves are counted individually (in the Japanese fashion), ie: Black's first move is 1, White's first move is 2, etc. Move numbers are sometimes not shown in solutions.
8. *Tsume-shogi* are often displayed as taking place at the 'upper right hand corner of the board.

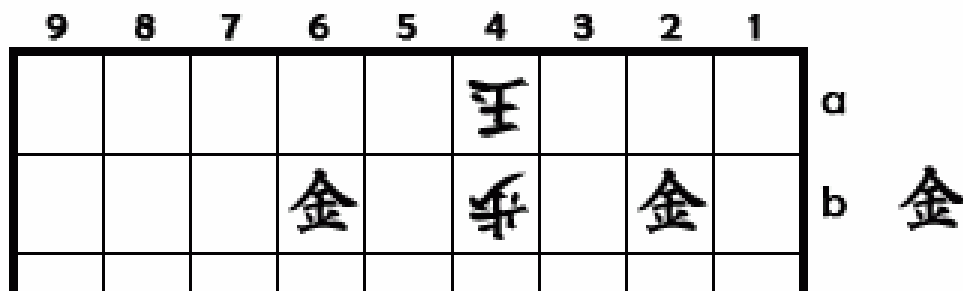
Another way at looking at the *tsume-shogi* problem is as follows:

The reason that Black must check on every move, eventually forcing checkmate is because he himself is in danger of being checkmated by White **on the next move**. The only way out of this impasse is for Black to initiate an unbroken series of checks himself, culminating in checkmate – hence the *tsume-shogi* problem.

The reason for this somewhat lengthy explanation will, I hope, become clear later.

Now, let's look at a few *tsume-shogi* problems:

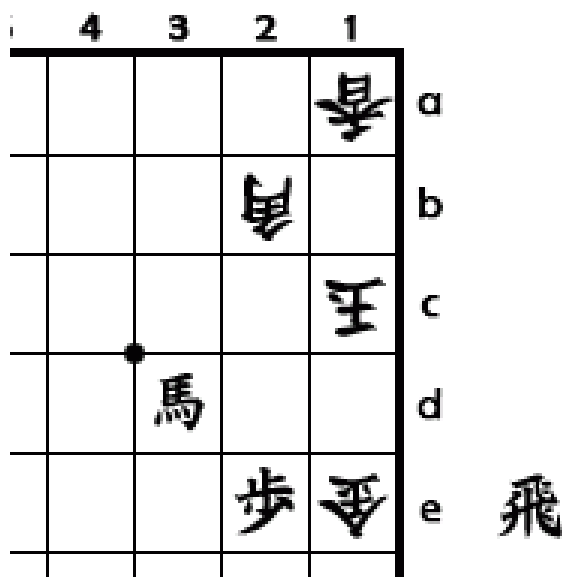
Here's a '1-mover' – the solution is on the next page:



Remember, *Gote* holds in-hand, all pieces not shown.

Solution to problem on page 90: G*3b or G*5b (the position is symmetrical).

Next, a simple '3-mover':²⁹



Try to solve the problem only by studying the diagram. If you prefer, set the problem up on the board or in the Shogidokoro program. Try and solve the problem before looking at the solution (on the following page).

Remember, *Gote* holds in-hand, all pieces not shown.

²⁹ Sometimes, the problem may be presented in written form, like this:

Black: +B3d, P2e In hand: R

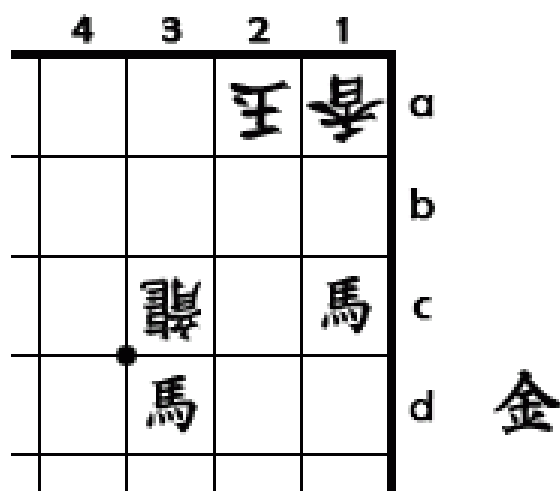
White: K1c, B2b, G1e, L1a

but the diagrammatic form is more usual.

Solution to problem on page 91: R*1b, Lx1b; +B2d

Notice that the moves are not numbered, but it should be obvious that Black moves first, followed by White, followed finally by Black.

Here's another '3-mover':



Again, try to solve the problem only by studying the diagram. If you prefer, however, set the problem up on the board or in the Shogidokoro program. Try to solve the problem before looking at the solution (on the following page).

Remember, *Gote* holds in-hand, all pieces not shown.

Solution to problem on page 92: +B4c, X*3b; G*3a

Solution: +B4c, +Rx4c; G*2b

Solution: +B4c, +R3b; G*3a

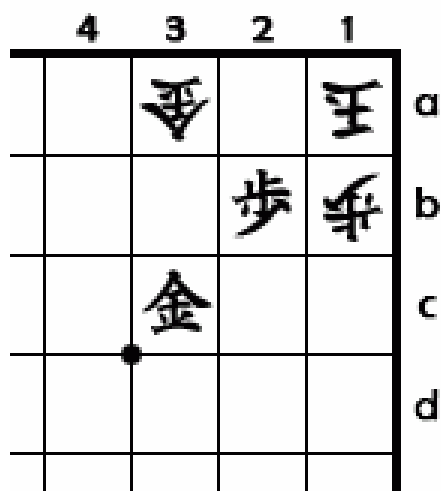
Hold on, there are **three** solutions here – what's going on?

Not all *tsume-shogi* problems are 'perfect', some have more than one solution. Strictly this means that they are not *tsume-shogi*, but the situation seems to be so common that you can probably safely ignore it.³⁰ The two extra solutions above were generated respectively by the Lesserkai and Spear engines running within the Shogidokoro program.

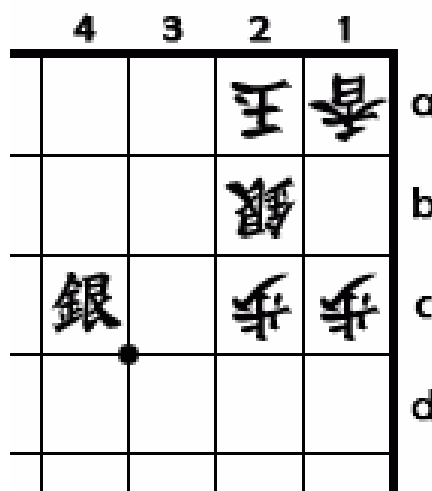
The 'X' in the first solution means that White can drop *any* piece on square 3b.

³⁰ However, be aware that hard-core Shogi purists regard **any** problem with more than one solution as worthless.

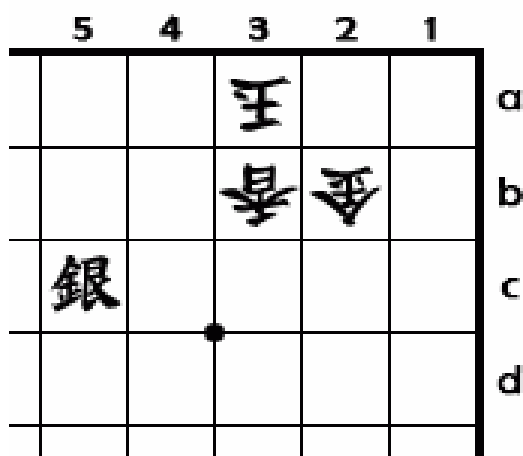
Here are a few more *tsume-shogi* – this time (as is usual) the number of moves is not given – solutions are on the following page:



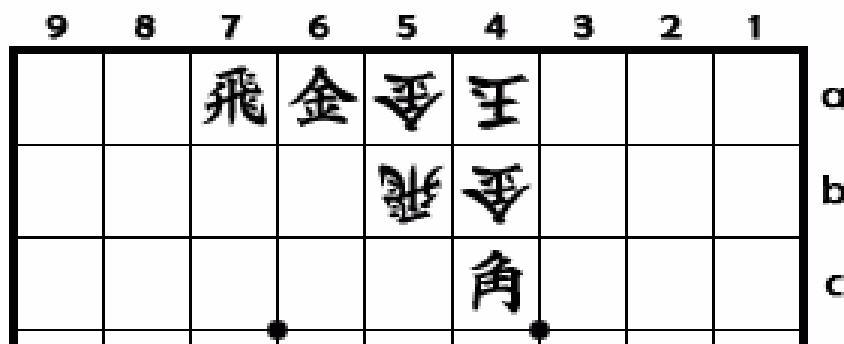
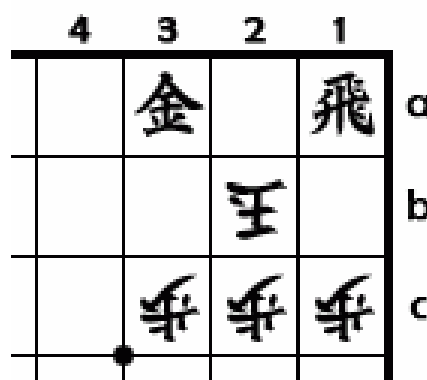
金



銀
金



飛
金



Solution to problems on page 94:

Top left: G*2a, Gx2a; Px2a+, Kx2a; G*2b

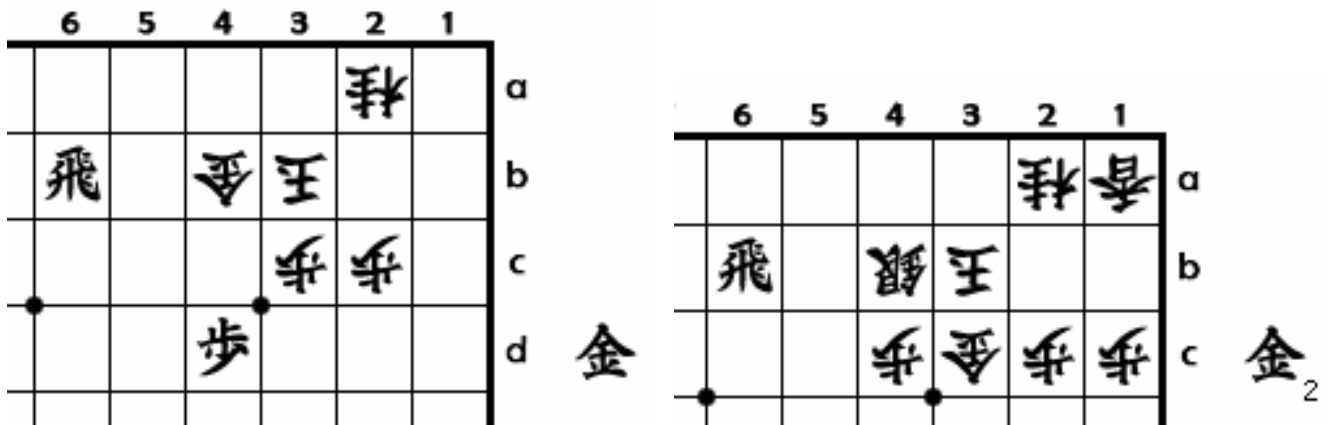
Top right: G*3b, K1b; S*2a

Centre left: R*4a, Kx4a; G*4b

Centre right: R2a+

Bottom: Gx5a, Rx5a; Rx5a+, Kx5a; R*6a

Three more to try – try and solve the problems before you look at the solutions (on the following page).



Solution to problems on page 95:

Top left: Rx4b+, Kx4b; G*4c, K5a; G*5b

Top right: G*2b, K4a; G*5b

Bottom: G*2b, Kx2b; Rx4b+, Gx4b; N*3d, K3a; G*2b, K4a; Nx4b+, Kx4b; G*5b – 11 moves is difficult for a novice!

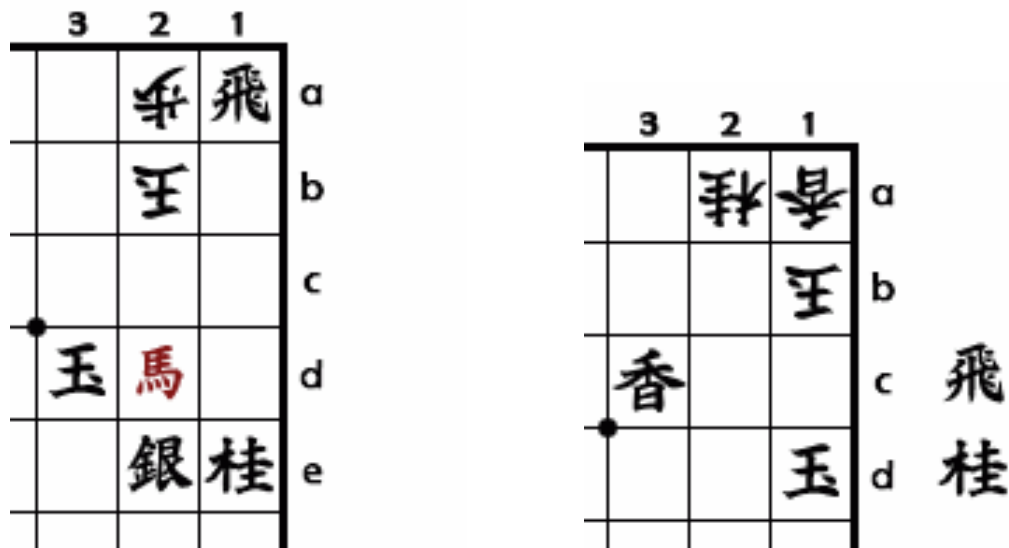
There are alternative solutions to some of these problems.

Solving *tsume-shogi* is an important part of learning about the endgame. You should study and solve as many as you can. Most of the books listed in the Bibliography include at least some *tsume-shogi*, and you should find several sites on the internet which feature *tsume-shogi* problems.

Two Kings Tsume-shogi.

I only recently became aware of a modified form of *tsume-shogi* problem – 'Two Kings' in which both Kings are on the board (*sougyoku*). For such problems, the rules are modified: *Sente's* King may take part in the attack, and *Gote* may retaliate by checking *Sente's* King.

Here's a couple of simple examples:



As usual, the solutions are at the top of the following page.

Remember, as with normal *tsume-shogi* problems, *Gote* holds in-hand, all the pieces not shown.

Solution to Two Kings problems on page 97:

Left: R1b+, Kx1b; +B1c, K1a; N2c

Left: R1b+, K3a; +R4b

Right: R*1c, Nx1c; N*2d; K2a; L3b+

The alternative solution to the left-hand problem was generated automatically by the Shogidokoro program.

Chohen Tsume-shogi.

Tsume-shogi problems come in all shapes, sizes and lengths. *Chohen Tsume-shogi* are long problems – longer than 50 moves or so.

The record as far as I am aware is a 941 move problem! Here is the starting position:

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
		♞	♚					♙		a
		♞	♚			♞	♚			b
	♞		♞	♚	♞		♙			c
			♞	♚	♞		♙	♞		d
		♞	♚	♞			♚	♞		e
			♞	♞	♙	♚	♚	♚		f
						♚	♚	♚	♚	g
	♞		♞			♚	♚	♚		h
									♚	i ♙

No solution given here, but if you can solve this one, you are probably don't really need to read this introductory document!

***Hisshi* Problems.**

Hisshi problems are a little different from *tsume-shogi* problems. In order to understand the difference, consider the second of the descriptions of *tsume-shogi* problems given earlier (p. 89). In a *hisshi* situation, Black is in danger of being checkmated by White not on the next move, but **on the next move but one**. So, Black has at least one move which need not be check before he finally delivers checkmate. This is the essence of the *hisshi* problem – it is the same as the *tsume-shogi* problem except that some of Black's moves need not be check.

Several of the books listed in the Bibliography (p. 187) include at least some mating problems. Both *Shogi for Beginners* and *The Art of Shogi* have a small selection. *Shogi* magazine has many selections of *tsume-shogi* and *hisshi* problems spread across the 70 issues of the magazine.

Shogi Proverbs.

Shogi is blessed with a rich selection of proverbs which convey very pertinent points about playing the game. Here is a small selection – with very(!) brief explanations. You will find a large selection of proverbs with detailed examples of their use/significance at:

<http://www.shogi.net/kakugen/>

The King is the most important piece on the board (if your King is checkmated, you **lose!**), so here are a couple of proverbs dealing with the King:

Keep the Rook and King apart

The Rook is an attacking piece. The King must be defended at all costs! Therefore it makes sense to keep the King away from a piece around which much action may be expected.

A sitting King is a sitting duck

Leaving the King on its starting square is potentially dangerous – if only because it is on the same set of diagonals as the opponent's Bishop and therefore liable to attack from that piece. Moving the King away from its start square and into a defensive castle as part of the opening (see p. 63), is almost *de rigeur* in Shogi. And a few dealing with some of the other pieces:

Knights fork

The Shogi Knight, threatening only two squares, may seem weak to the player of International Chess. However, its ability to fork, heightened by drops makes it a devastating tool in the hands of the good player.

Without Pawns the game is lost

There are many proverbs associated with Pawns, many of which are connected with sacrificing Pawns. This one reminds us that lack of Pawns may be fatal. There is a common term *fugire* ('out of Pawns') used to describe a state in which a player has no Pawns in hand, and fewer than the original nine Pawns on the board. This is considered to be a serious condition, which is sometimes not compensated for even by winning a (Pawn) exchange.

Silvers before Golds

In Shogi it is generally best to move the Silvers before you move the Golds.

The proverb has the *additional* meaning that it is usually best to position the Silvers in front of the Golds. See Fig. 2 p.76 – if the positions of the Silvers and Golds on 3b & 3c (*Gote*) and 3h & 2g (*Sente*) were interchanged, the shape would be much worse.

L*8f is joseki

Centuries of experience have shown that the best place (from *Sente's* point of view) to drop a Lance is 8f. This

type of move rarely occurs to converts from western chess but it has become a standard part of the Shogi player's repertoire.

A Game for Beginners.

This game was first published in issue 64 of the Dutch Shogi Association magazine '81', and also in the DSA beginners booklet. It is reproduced here with the permission of the copyright holder. The game was annotated by Pieter Stouten, (and later by the editor of the Gnu Shogi web pages who made some minor changes). I too have corrected one or two very minor typographical errors.

The editor of the Gnu Shogi web pages recommends that you use gnushogi/xshogi to play along with this game, but it is perfectly easy to do so using Shogidokoro or ShogiGUI.

What follows is (more or less) the English translation of the notes which were published in the Dutch Shogi magazine '81' and in the Dutch Shogi Association beginners booklet. *“It has proven to be a very useful game to explain some basic principles of Shogi. Also, it is a rather straightforward game compared to professional games where in most cases very diffuse middle game fights take place.”* (Pieter Stouten, 14th May 1990).

I have however made some slight changes in the presentation of the game as follows:

- I have changed the move numbers in the original text to reflect the fact that this document (and Shogidokoro) use the Japanese numbering system.
- The alternative move sequences are given with the move numbers 'greyed-out', and the text highlighted in grey. You may safely skip these pages on a first read-through, though study of the alternative lines is very instructive after considering the line(s) actually played.
- I have also added diagrams, for both the main and alternative lines.
- I have added a few further comments as footnotes, in order not to violate the copyright of the original author.

I hope these changes make the explanations and analyses clearer.

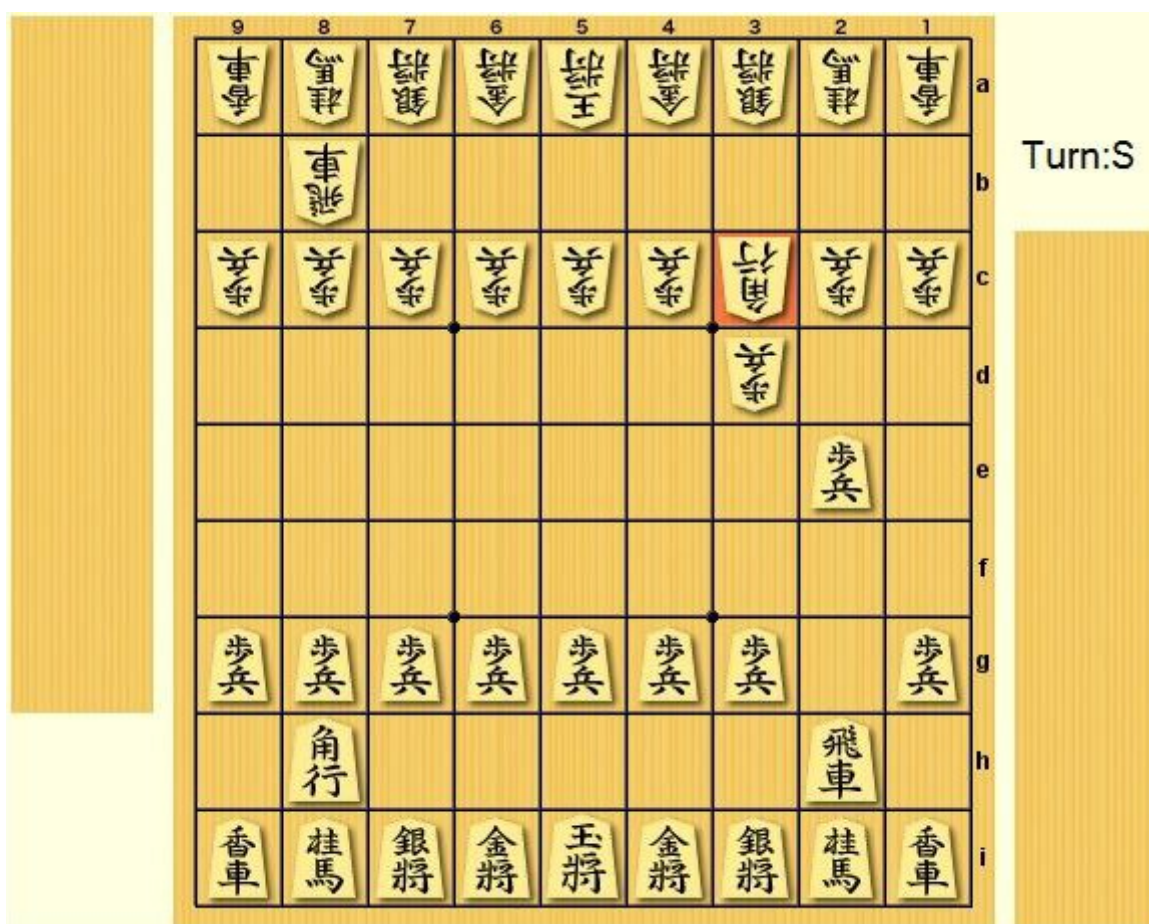
Sente: Michael Trent (1-dan). *Gote*: David Murphy (2-dan).

1 P2f

2 P3d

| 3 P2e

4 B3c

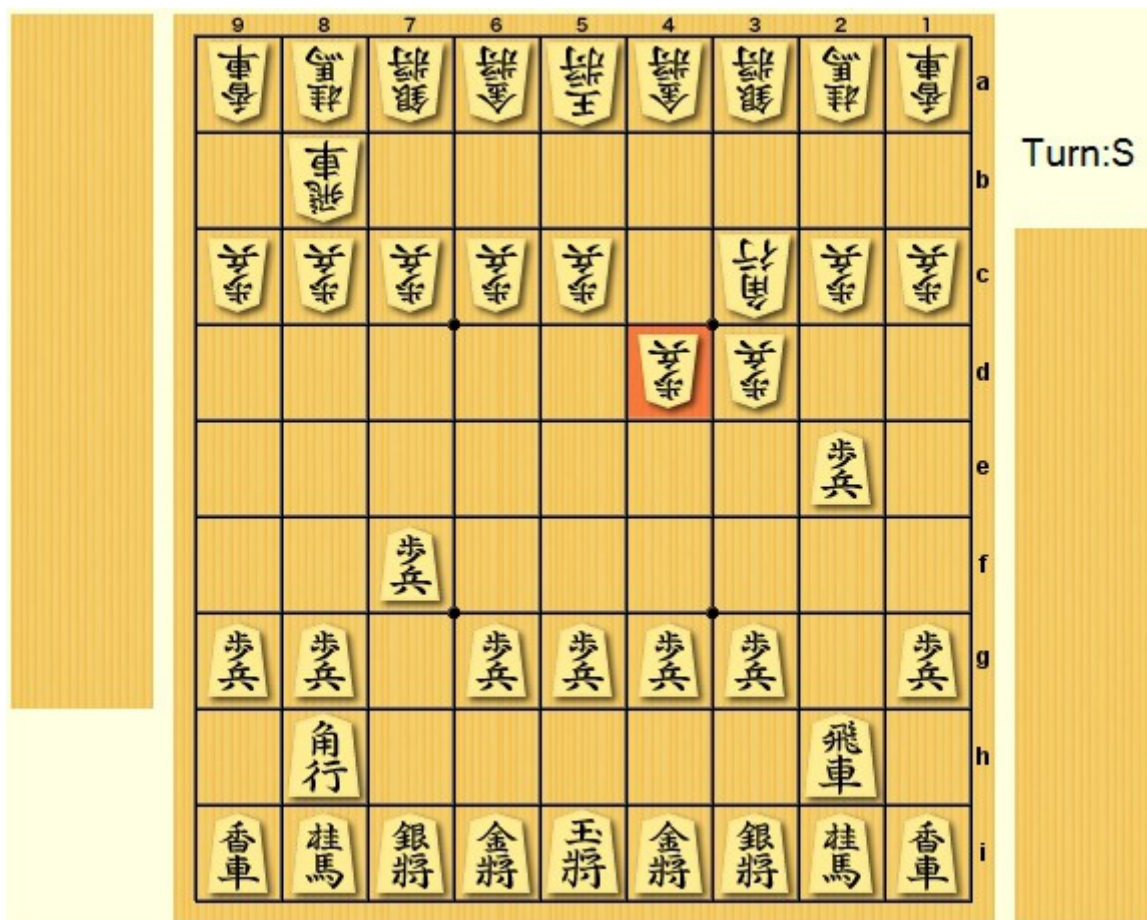


Up to 4 B3c

4 B3c by *Gote* is necessary, as otherwise *Sente* can exchange Pawns: 5 P2d, 6 Px2d; 7 Rx2d thus getting a Pawn in hand and opening up his Rook file.

5 P7f

6 P4d



Up to 6 P4d

6 P4d by *Gote* closes the Bishop diagonal again. *Gote* plans to play Ranging Rook (the Rook goes to 5b, 4b, 3b or 2b; a defensive strategy) and in that case would be better to avoid an exchange of Bishops. One of the reasons to avoid such an exchange is that he will have problems developing his pieces without leaving holes for Bishop drops by *Sente*.³¹

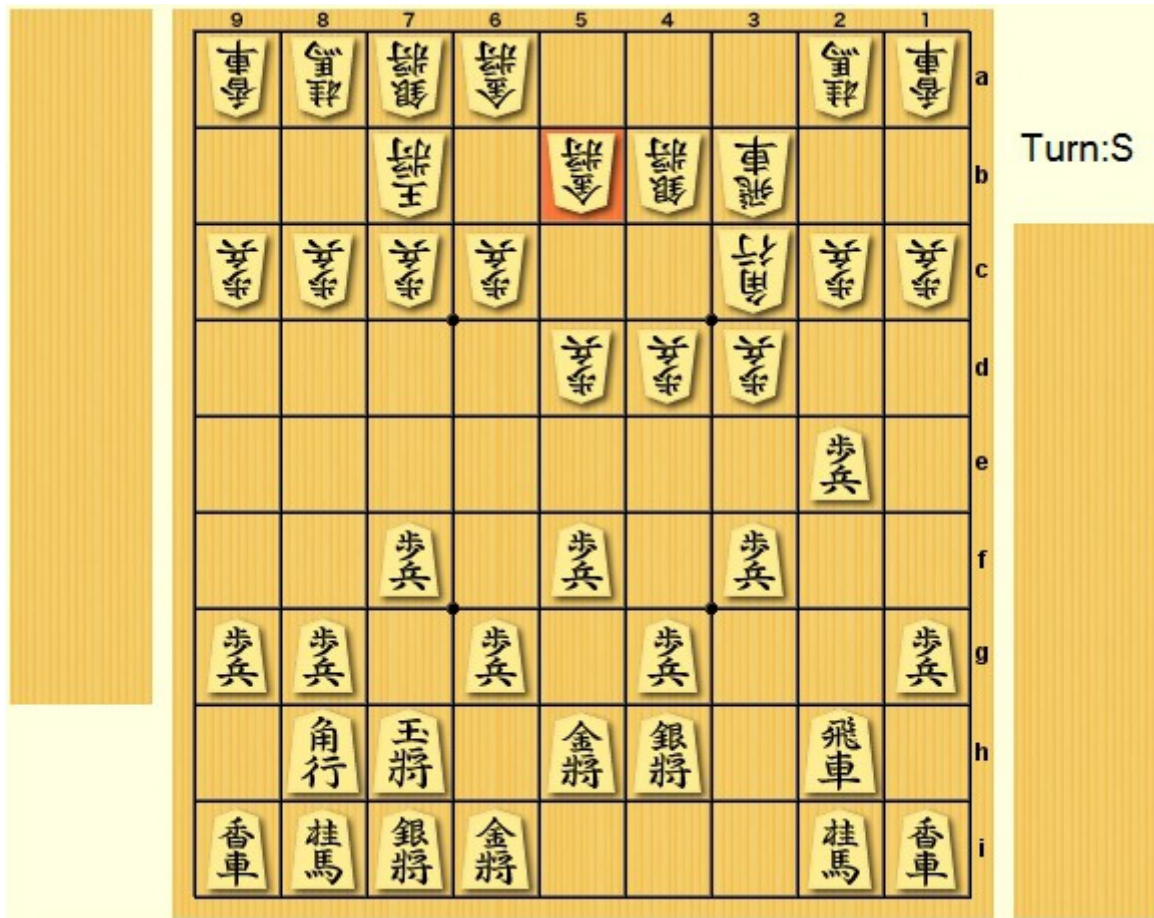
³¹ According to modern Shogi theory this comment could be regarded as questionable, and the Ranging Rook side should probably accept a Bishop exchange.

13 K7h
15 P5f

14 K7b
16 P5d

17 G4i-5h

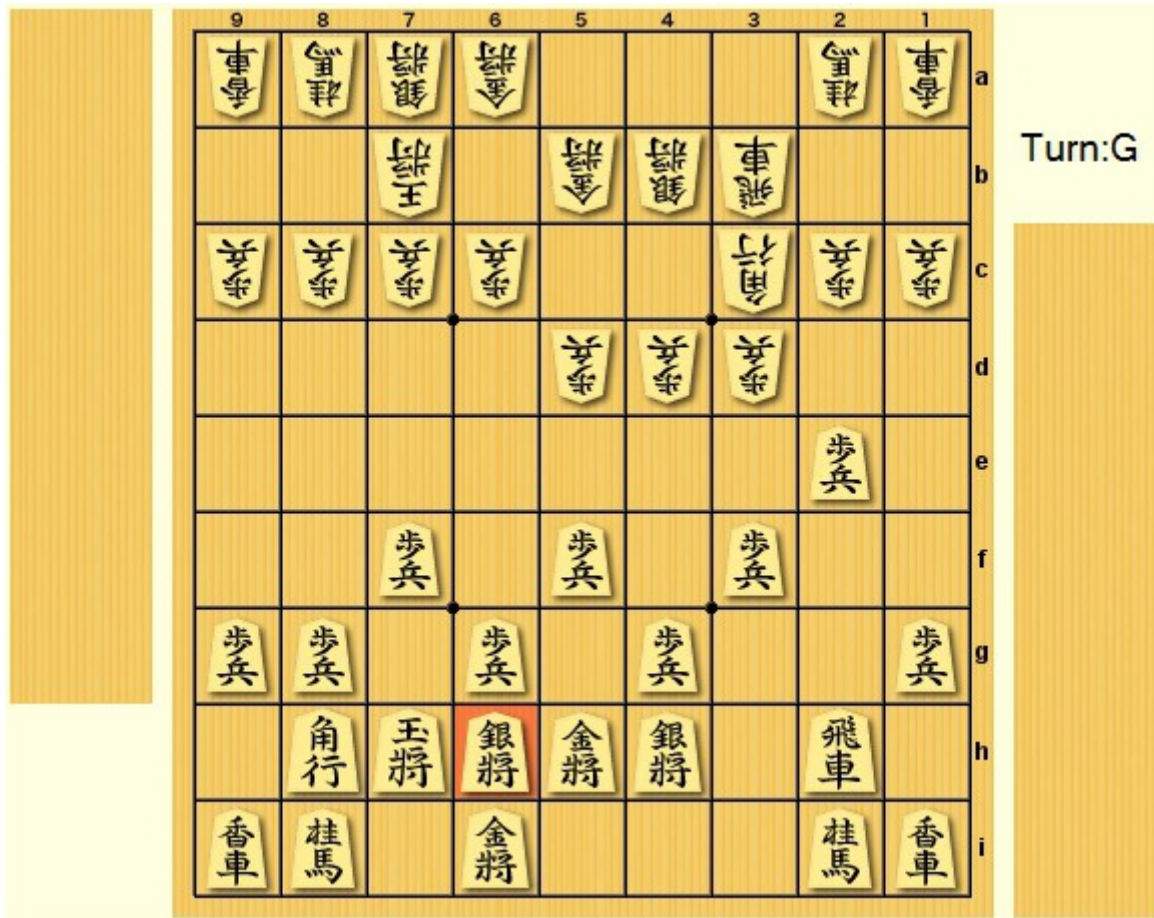
18 G4a-5b



Up to 18 G4a-5b

Both players use their second Gold to build their castle.

19 S6h



Up to 19 S6h

In itself this move is not bad. However, it will become clear that *Sente* plans a quick attack and in that case it is wiser to omit this move.³²

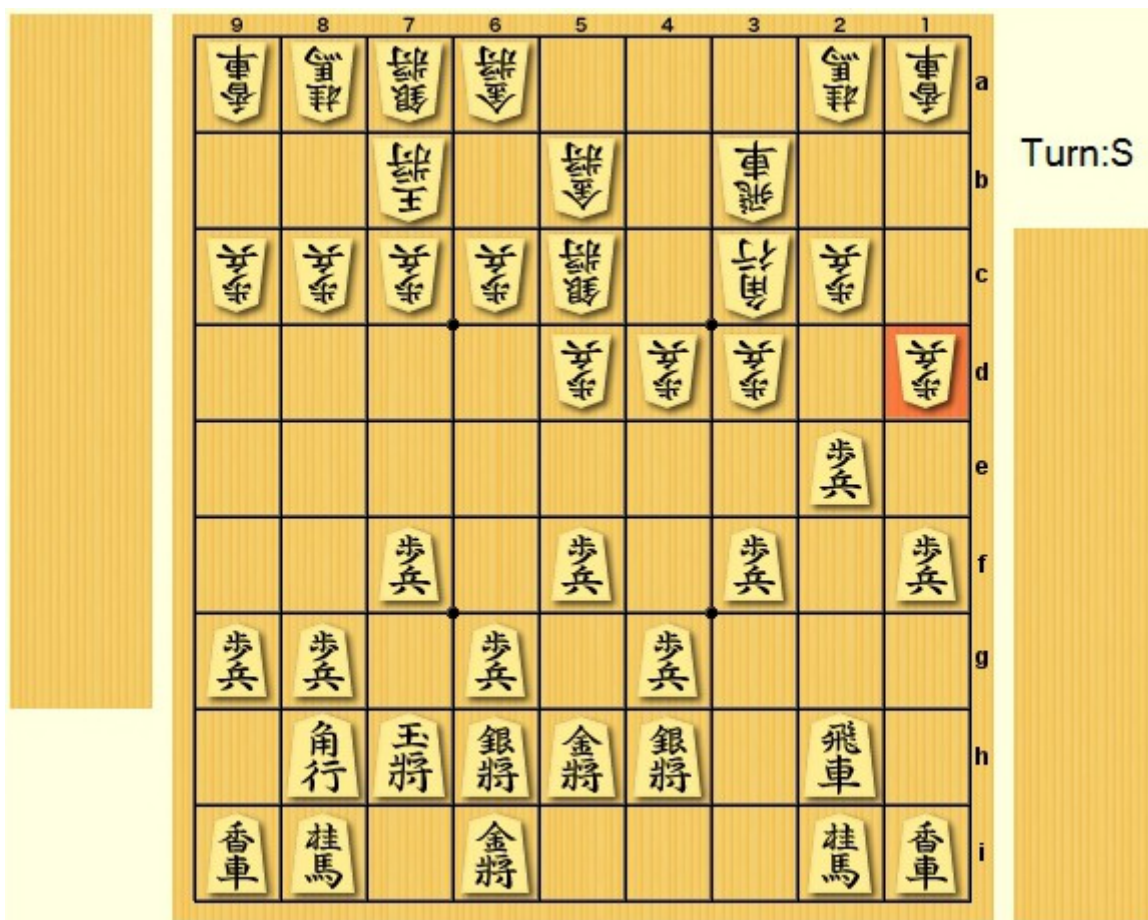
³² Bear in mind however that S6h is a staple of many quick attacks in Static vs. Ranging Rook games because it gives better protection of the right side.

19 ...

20 S5c

| 21 P1f

22 P1d



Up to 22 P1d

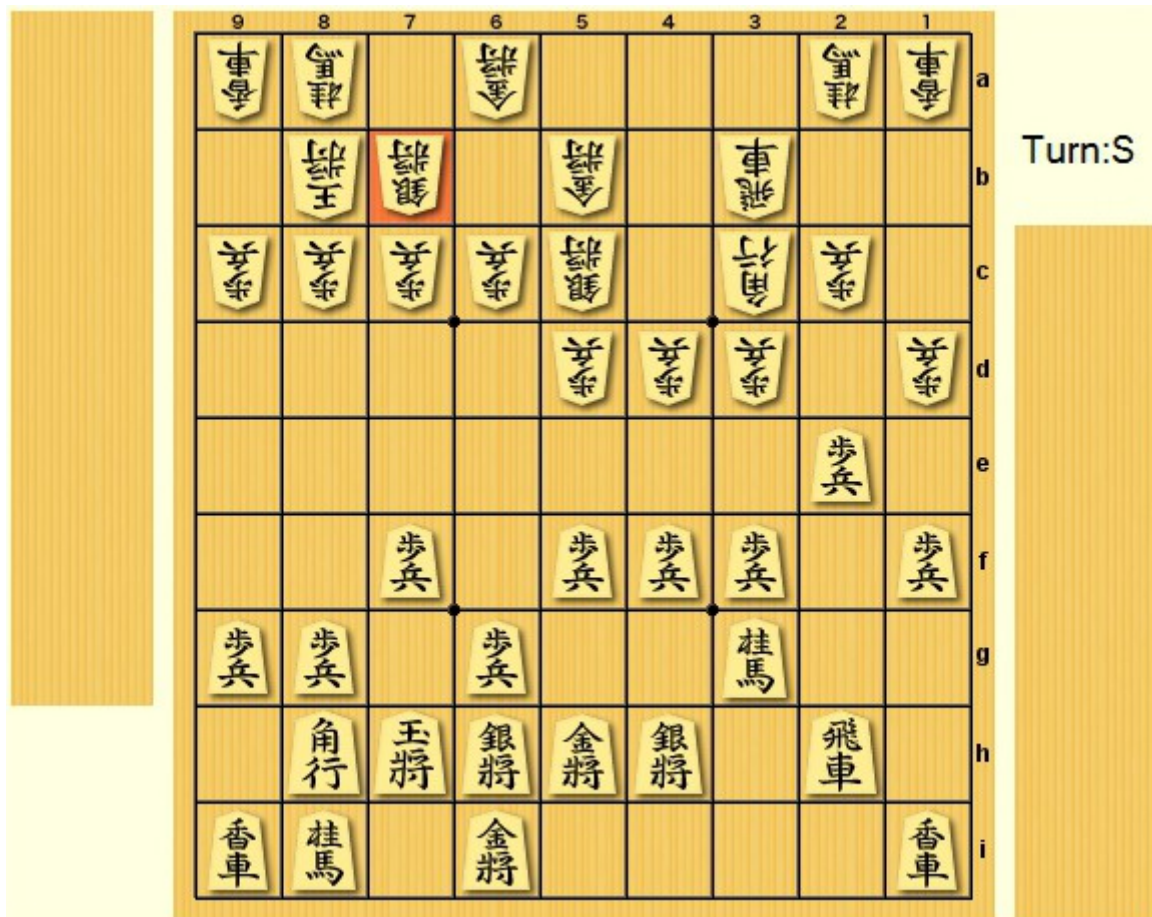
The advance of the edge Pawns must be timed very well. The remark at *Sente's* 19 S6h applies here too: this move is good if *Sente* wants to play a slow game, because it eliminates a future $\triangle B1e$.

23 P4f

24 K8b

| 25 N3g

26 S7b

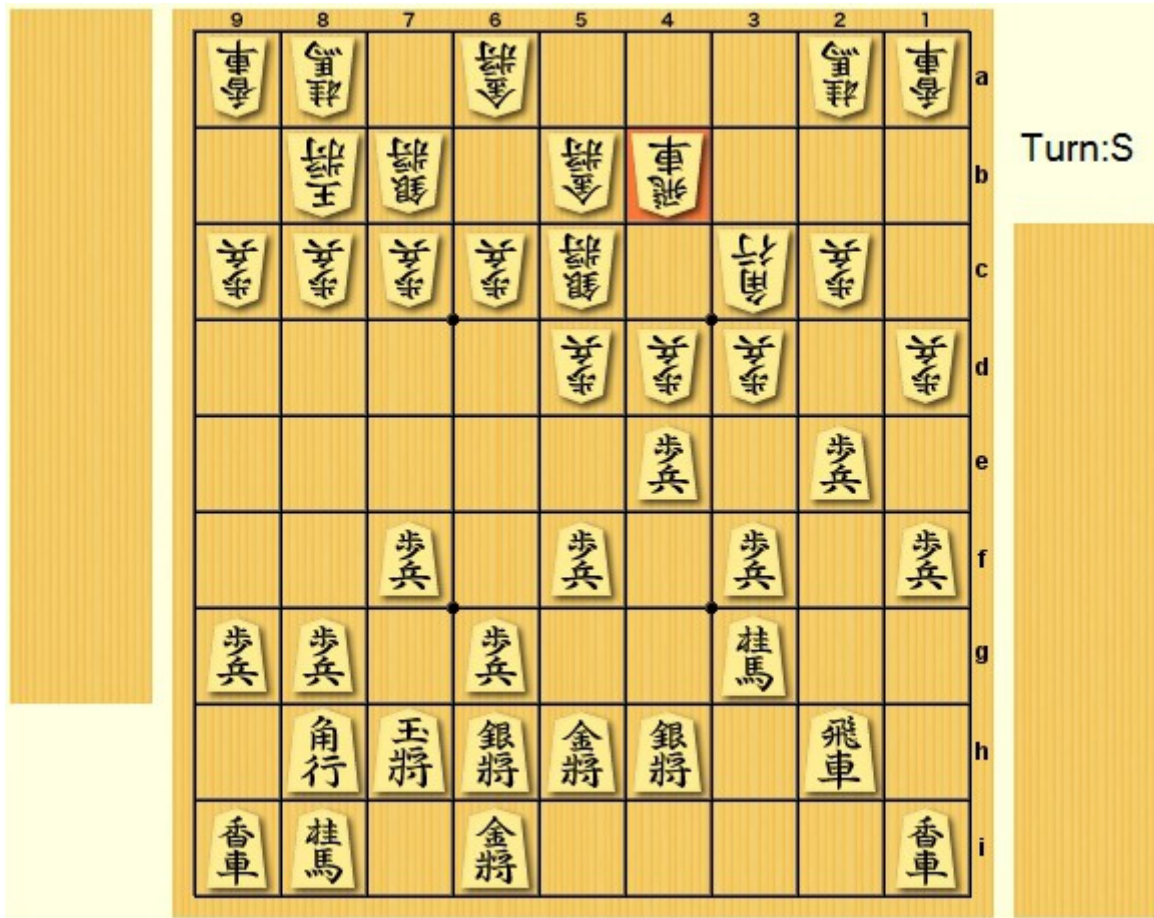


Up to 26 S7b

Sente develops his Knight in order to start an attack over the second, third and fourth files. *Gote* strengthens his King's position and awaits the attack. He aims at a counterattack as soon as *Sente* has broken through into *Gote's* camp. Probably *Gote's* breakthrough will take place later, but he has good compensation in the form of a stronger castle. This theme occurs very often in Static Rook versus Ranging Rook games.

27 P4e

28 R4b

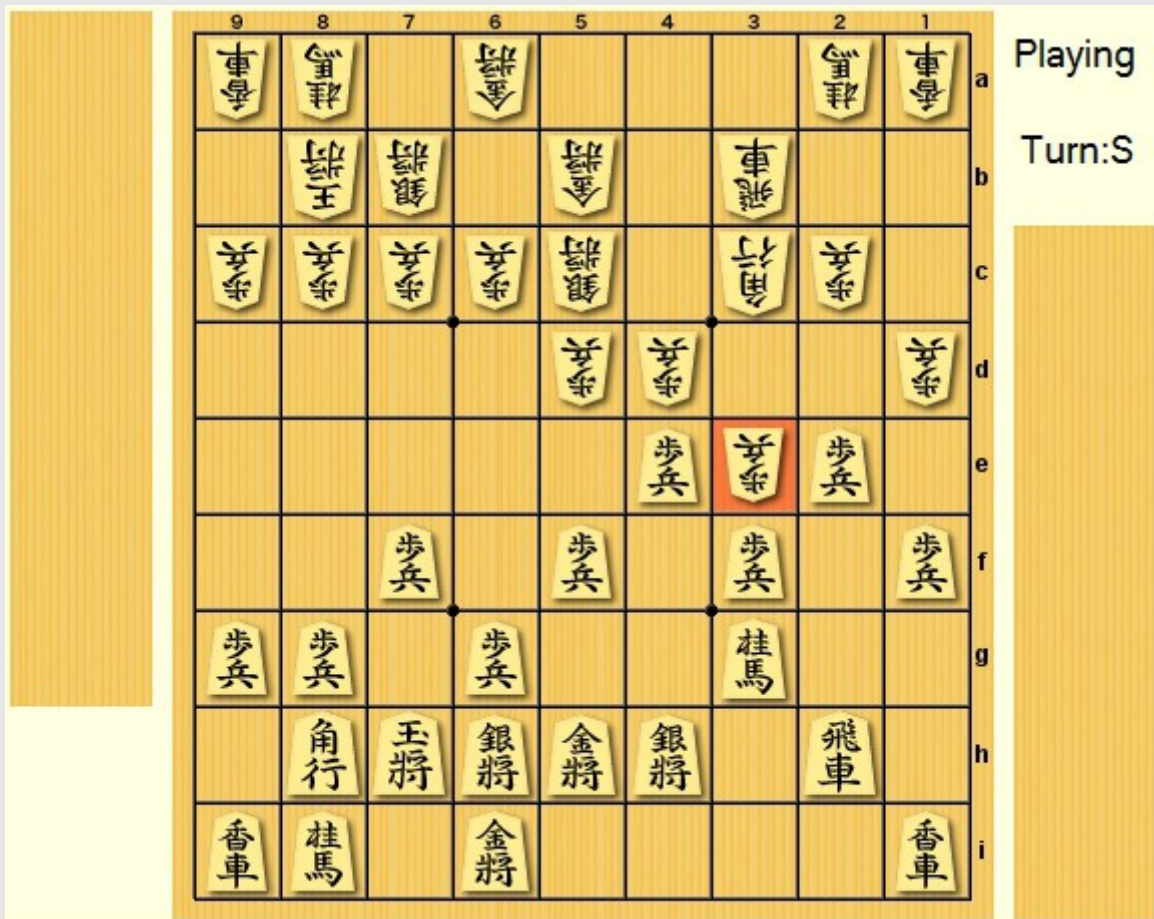


Up to 28 R4b

Sente starts his attack and *Gote* puts up a very passive defence. His Rook has a hard task now to penetrate *Sente's* position. Moreover, he blocks his own Bishop.

Alternate line:

It seems much better for *Gote* to start a counter-attack with 28 P3e, later to be followed by \triangle B2b, \triangle B5a or \triangle Bx4d in order to use his Rook more actively.³³



Alternate line – up to 28iP3e

³³ Alternatively, it could be argued that *Gote's* P3e is bad: *Sente* can take it and *Gote* has no good continuation, B2b loses to P2d and B5a loses to P4d. The move actually played – R4b looks like the correct move.

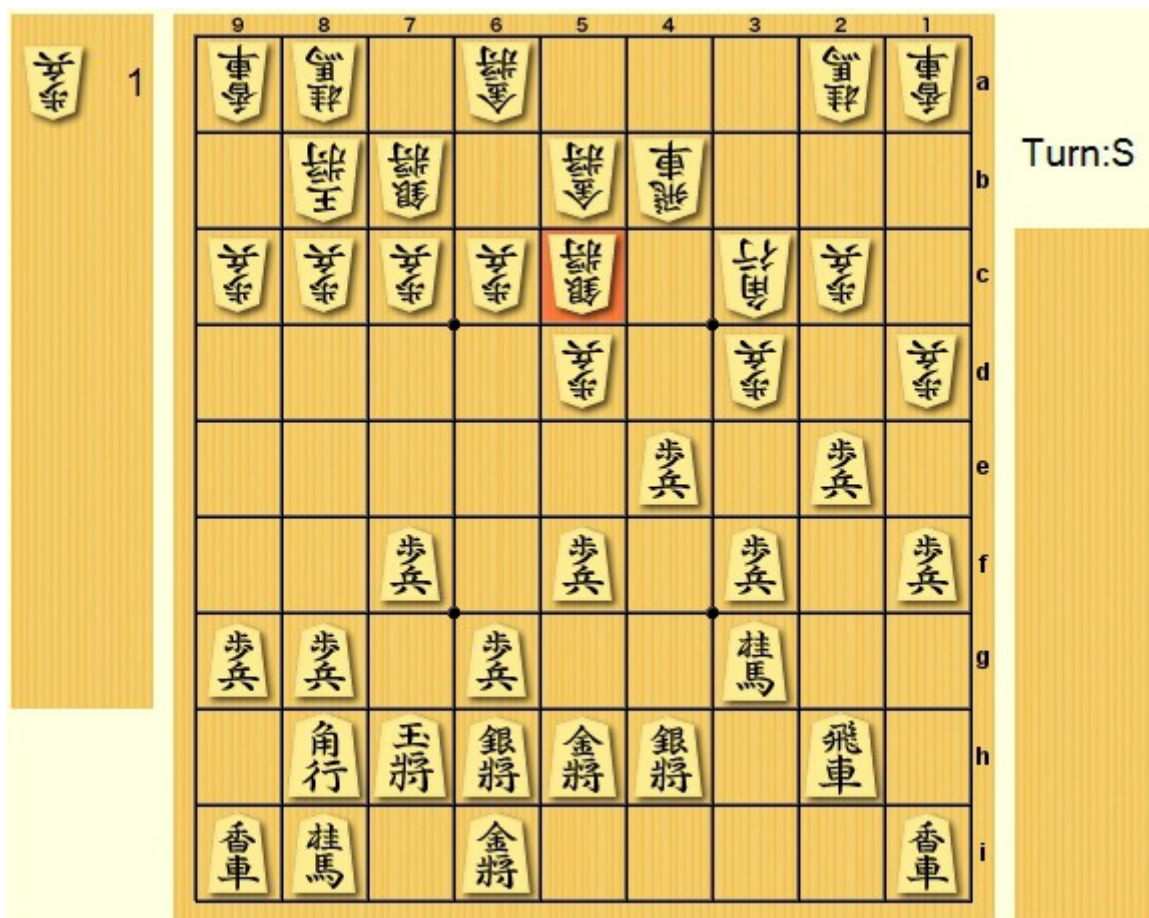
Main line continued:

29 Px4d

30 Sx4d

| 31 P*4e

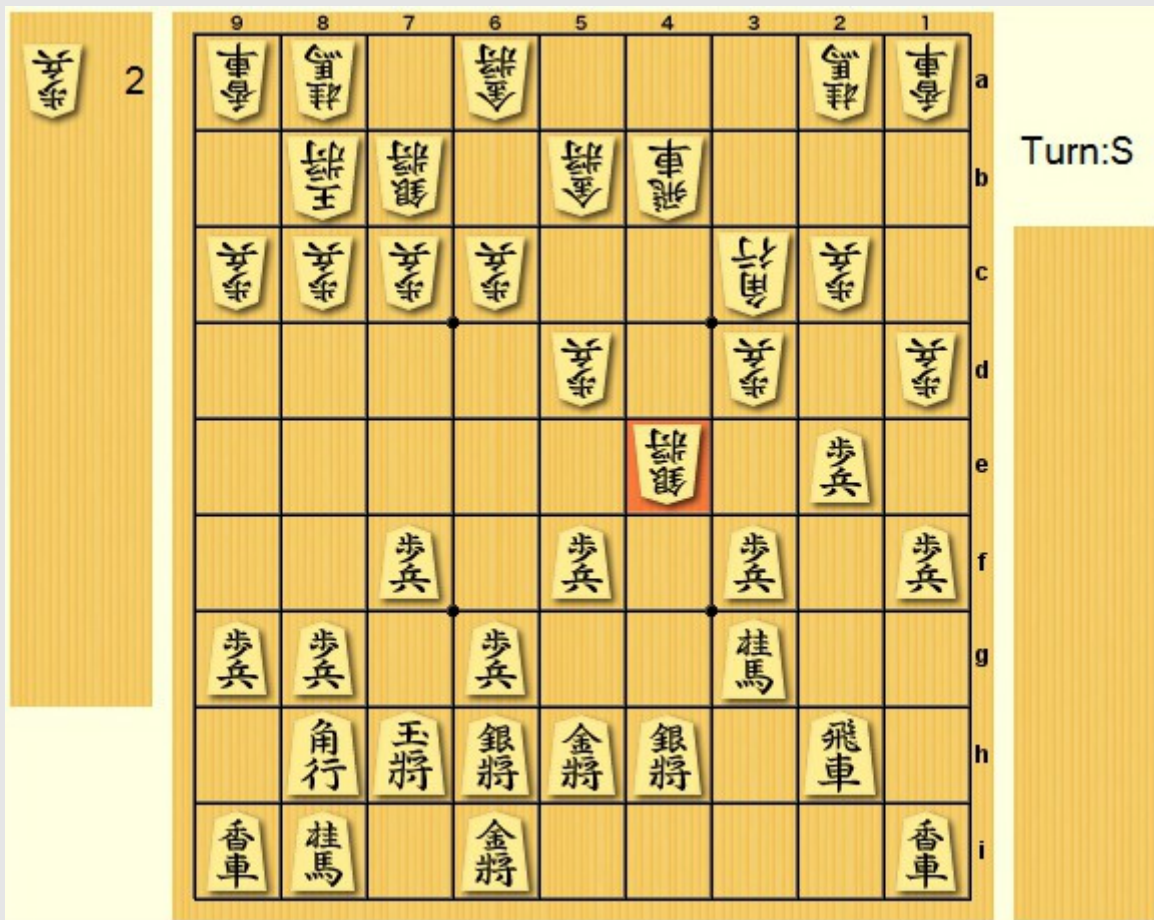
32 S5c



Up to 32 S5c

Alternate line:

32 Sx4e is more active.

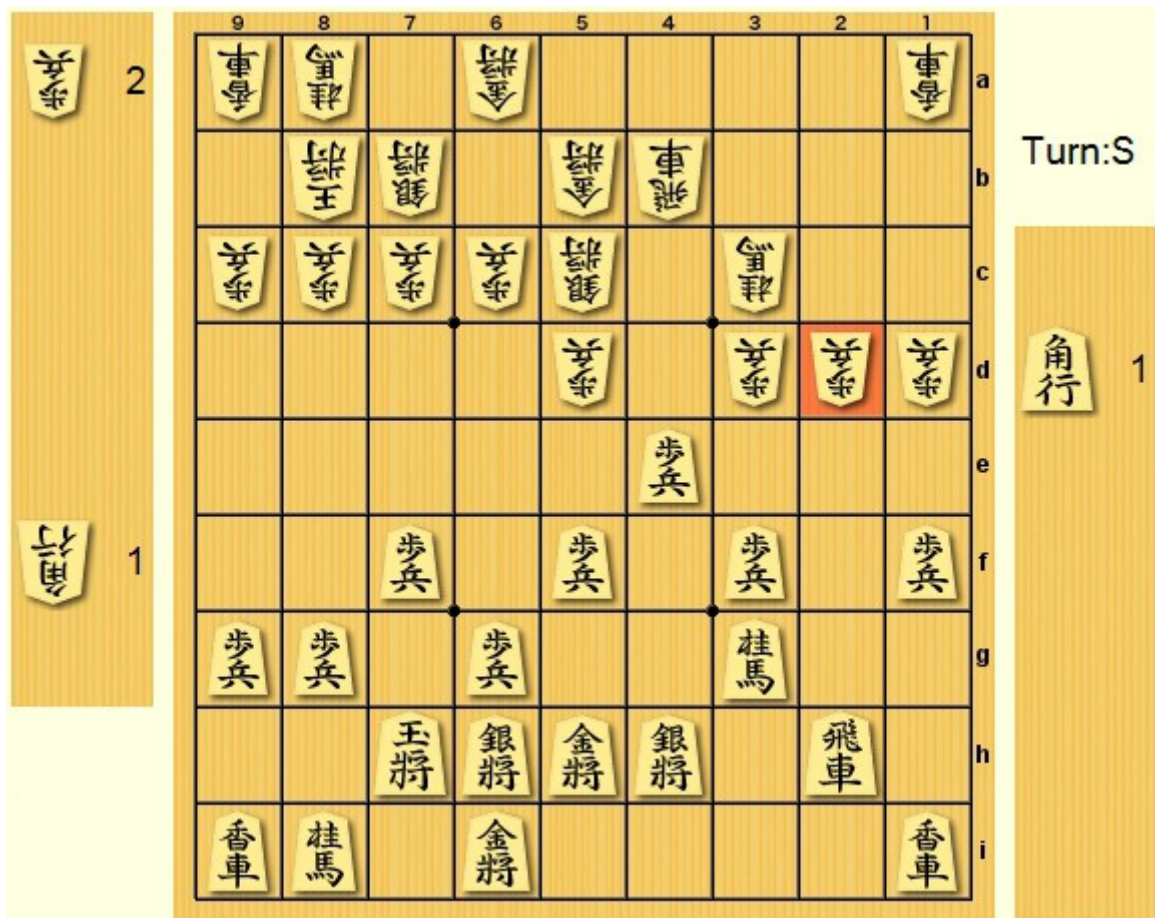


Alternate line – up to 32 Sx4e

A Silver general is normally more valuable than a Knight, but *Gote* gets two Pawns in hand and *Sente* none, while the Knight might come in handy for *Gote* too.

Main line continued:

33 Bx3c+ 34 Nx3c | 35 P2d 36 Px2d

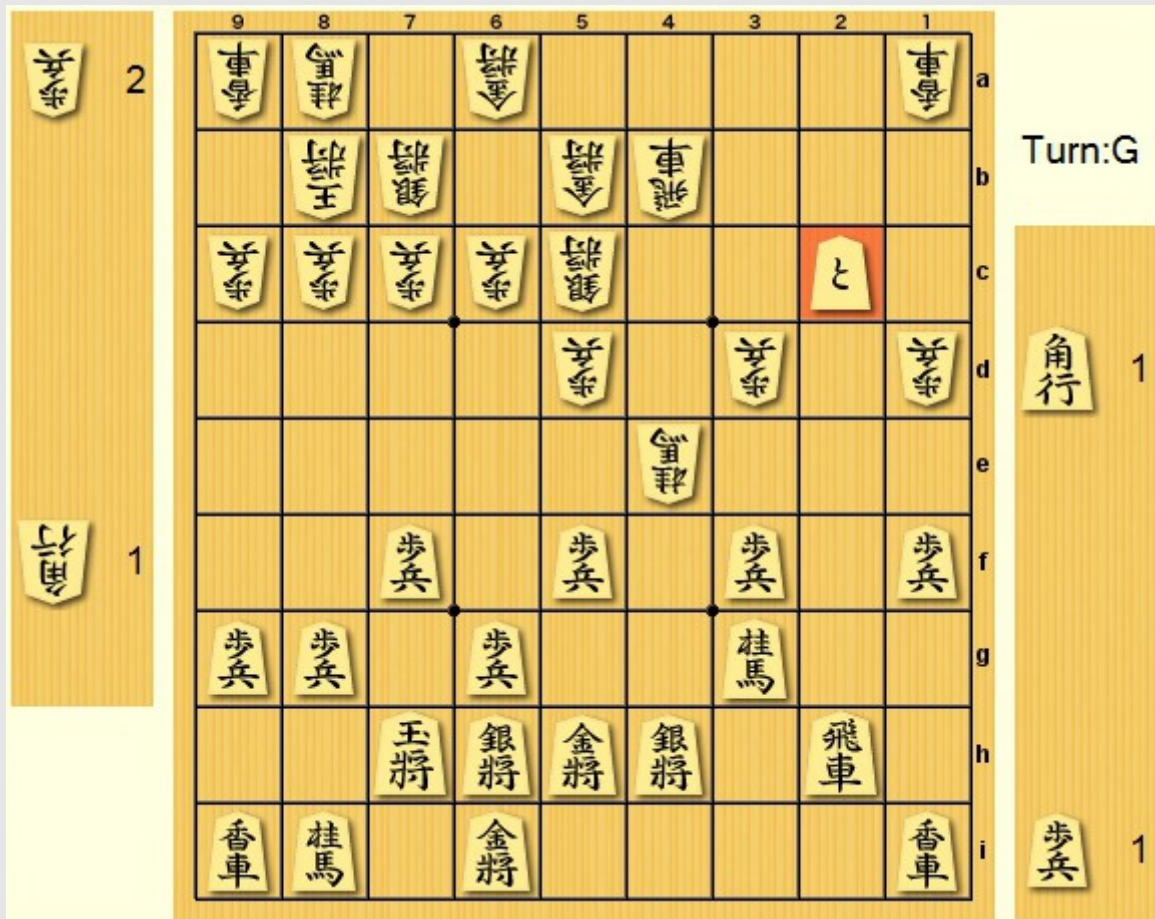


Up to 36 Px2d

Sente threatens to break through and *Gote* has to consider taking the Pawn on 2d or starting a counterattack with 36 Nx4e:

Alternate line:

If he chooses the latter move, **36** Nx4e, *Sente* can play **37** Px2c+ followed by ♠+P3c.³⁴



Alternate line – up to **37** Px2c+

The disadvantage is *Sente's* *token* (promoted Pawn) that *Gote* will get in his camp; the advantage is that it will cost *Sente* two more moves to promote his Rook. Because *Gote* did not trust that the result after engaging in a *semeai* (mutual attack) with **36** Nx4e would give a positive result, he captured the Pawn on 2d. Making the right decision in moments like this often makes the

³⁴ *Sente* really should take *Gote's* Knight before promoting the Pawn, Nx3g+ by *Gote* is just too devastating!

difference between a win and a loss: miss one attacking chance and you will be forced to defend the whole game until the unavoidable defeat; on the other hand, an unsound attack can destroy all *aji* (potential, meaning possibilities, threats) without getting anything in return.

Main line continued:

37 Rx2d

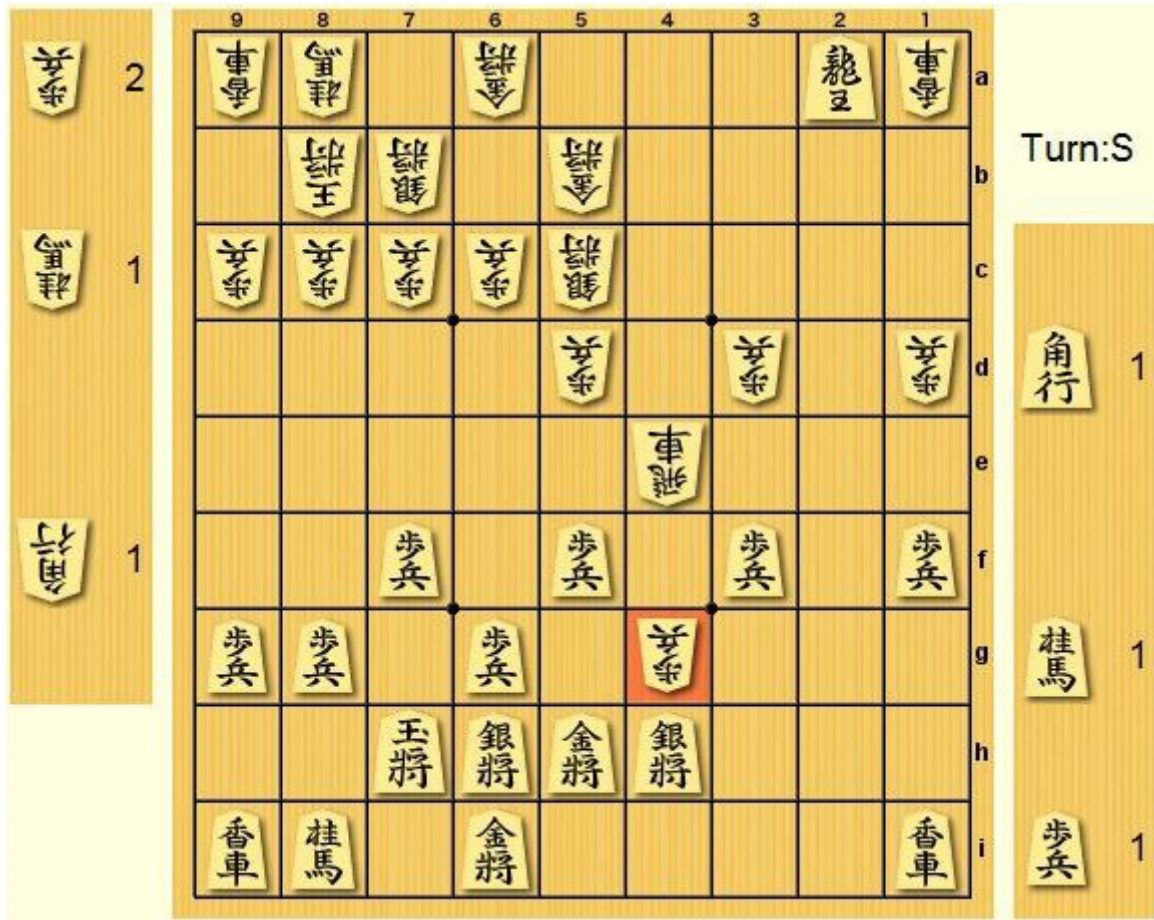
38 Nx4e

41 R2a+

42 P*4g

39 Nx4e

40 Rx4e



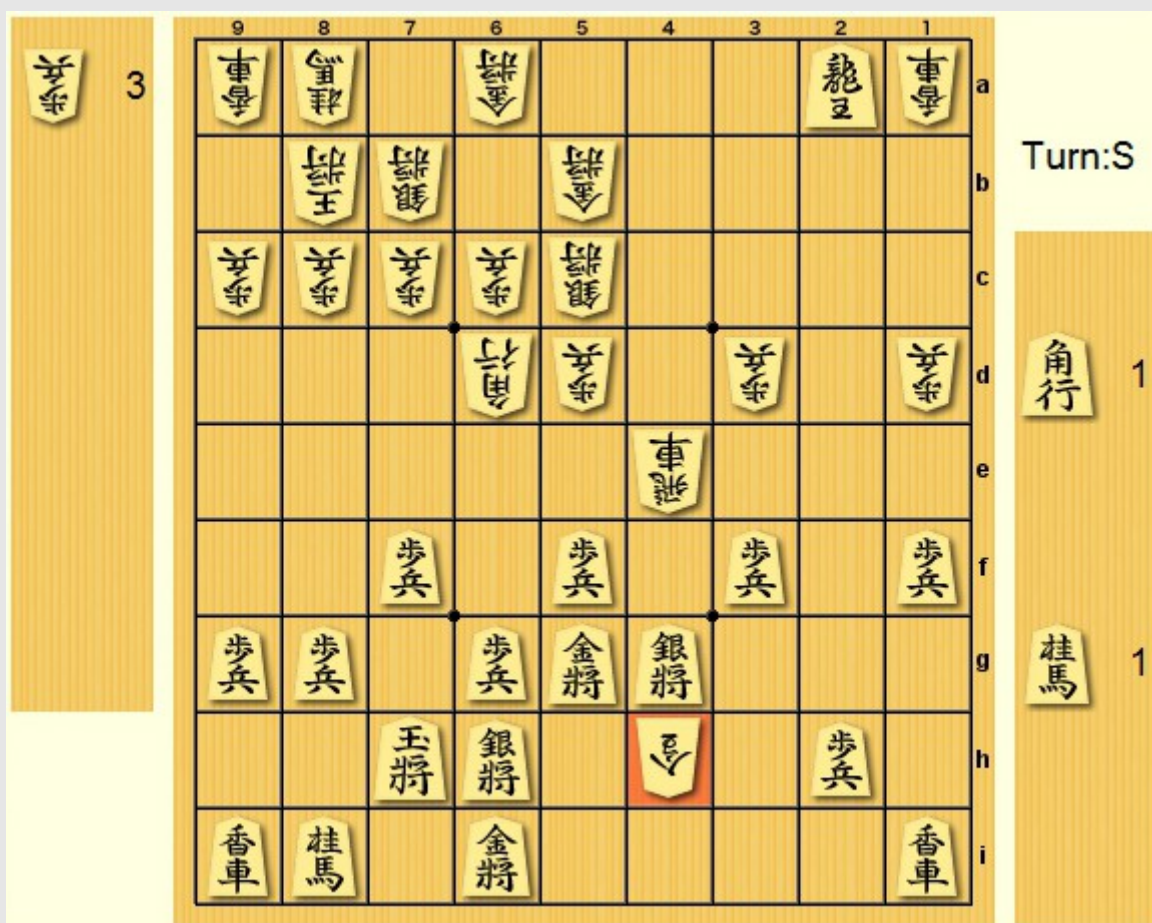
Up to 42 P*4g

Now it becomes clear why *Sente's* 19 S6h was not good. Had this move been omitted, then *Gote* would not have had the time to play 26 S7b and after 41 R2a+ the Gold on 6a would hang. Thus *Sente* would have kept *sente* (here, *sente* means initiative).³⁵

³⁵ Not necessarily a sound argument for why a move is bad. If it wasn't played it would just have forced the players to adapt and play differently.

Alternate line:

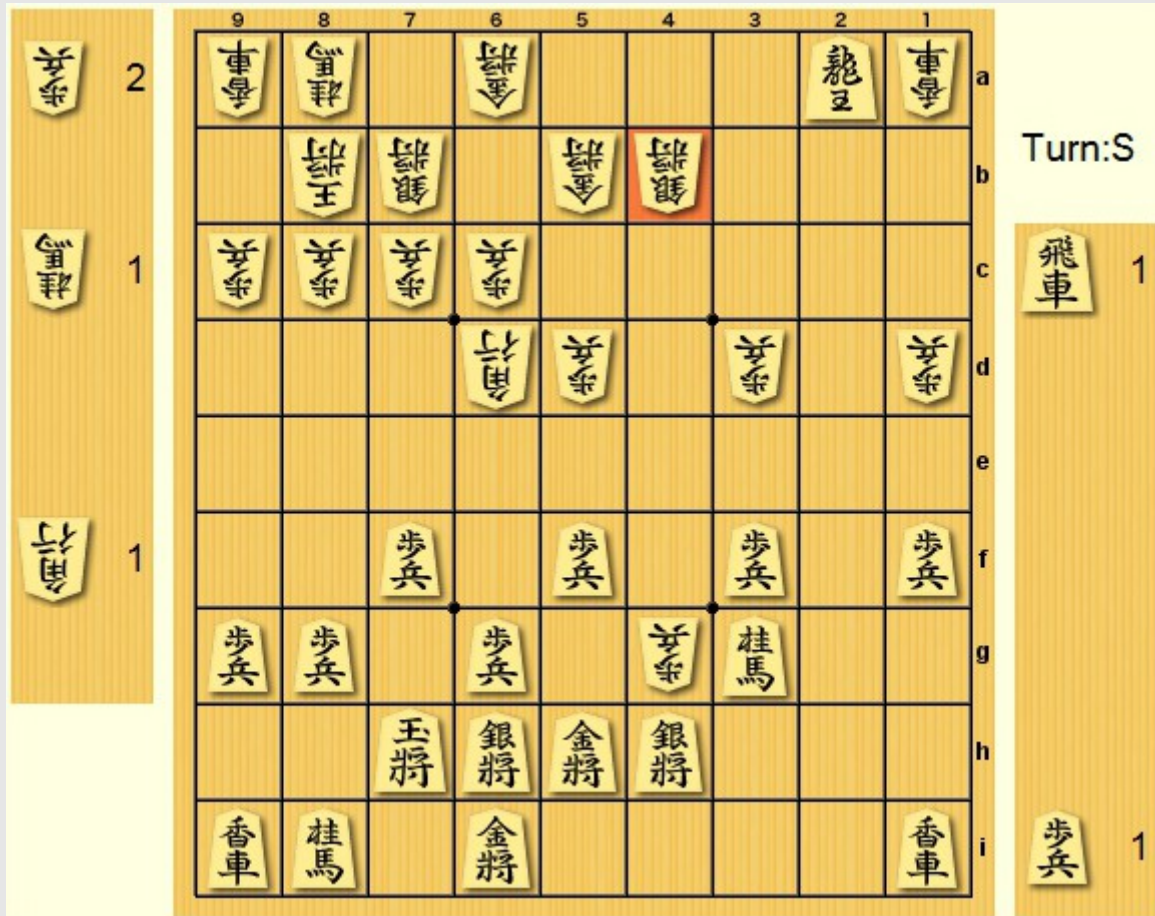
Instead of 42 P*4g, 42 B*6d is a very good move, because after 43 P*2h *Sente* does not have a Pawn in hand anymore and he is being threatened with the annoying 44 N*4f; 45 G5g, 46 N3h+; 47 S4g, 48 +N4h also.



Alternate line – up to 48 +N4h

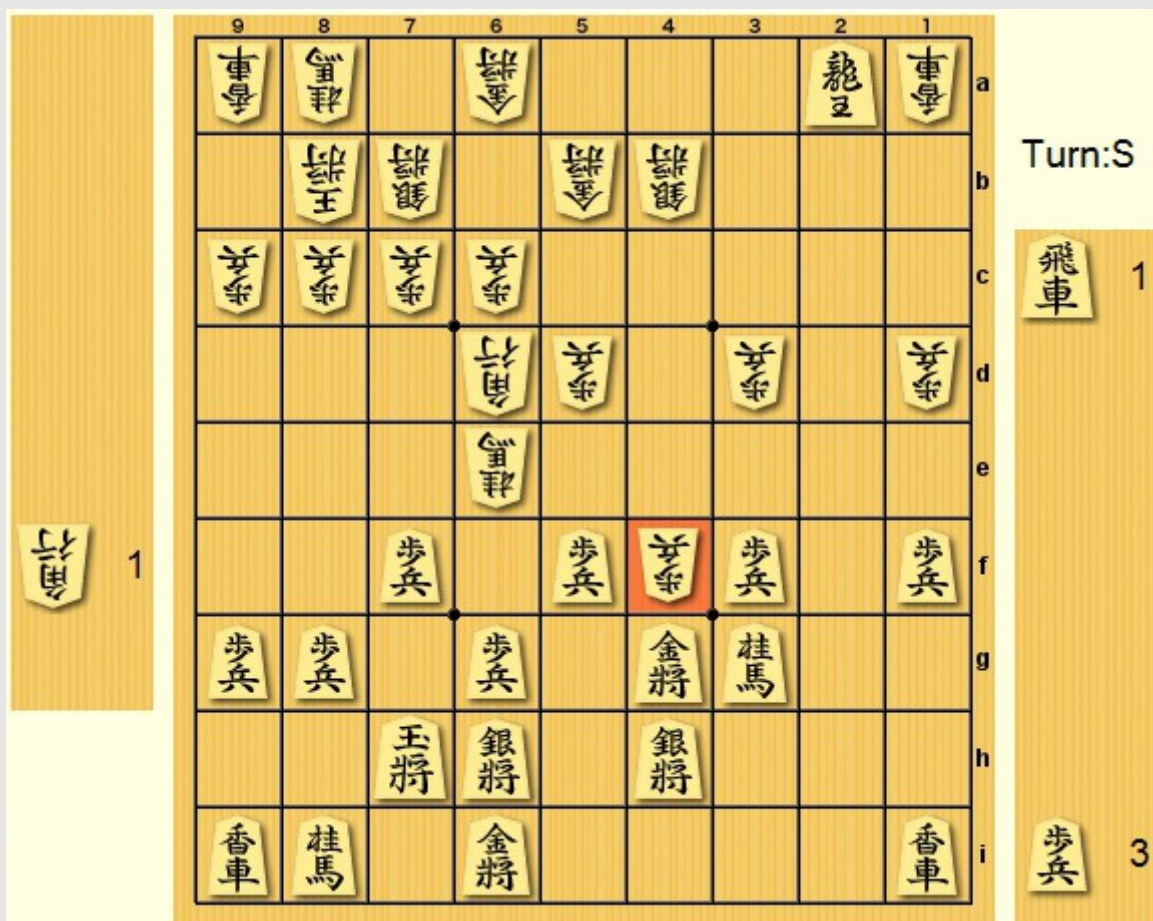
Alternate line:

Sente can also counter 42 B*6d with 43 N*3g. *Gote* would then reply with 44 R4b; 45 B*3c, 46 P*4g; 47 Bx4b+, 48 Sx4b.



Alternate line – up to 48 Sx4b

Gote's Rook has played its role and instead of spending moves on saving it *Gote* starts to scatter *Sente's* defences by successive Pawn drops on the fourth file: 49 Gx4g, 50 P*4f; 51 G5g, 52 N*6e; 53 G5h, 54 P4g+; 55 Gx4g, 56 P*4f.

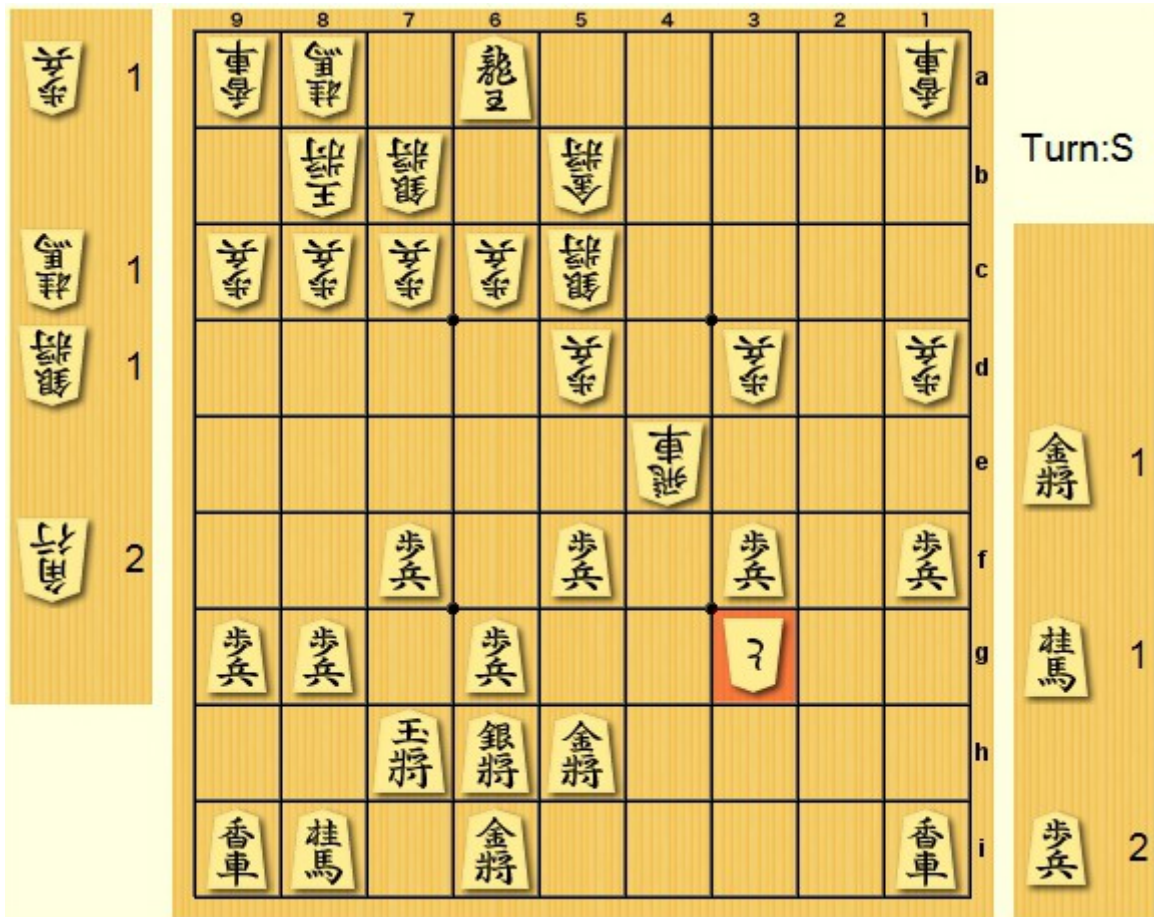


Alternate line – up to **56 P*4f**

This analysis was provided by Kato Hifumi, 9-dan professional (the highest regular grade). Destroying the coherence of the enemy pieces (their shape) by dropping Pawns is one of the most important Shogi techniques. With the actual move **42 P*4g** *Gote* missed a good chance.

Main line continued:

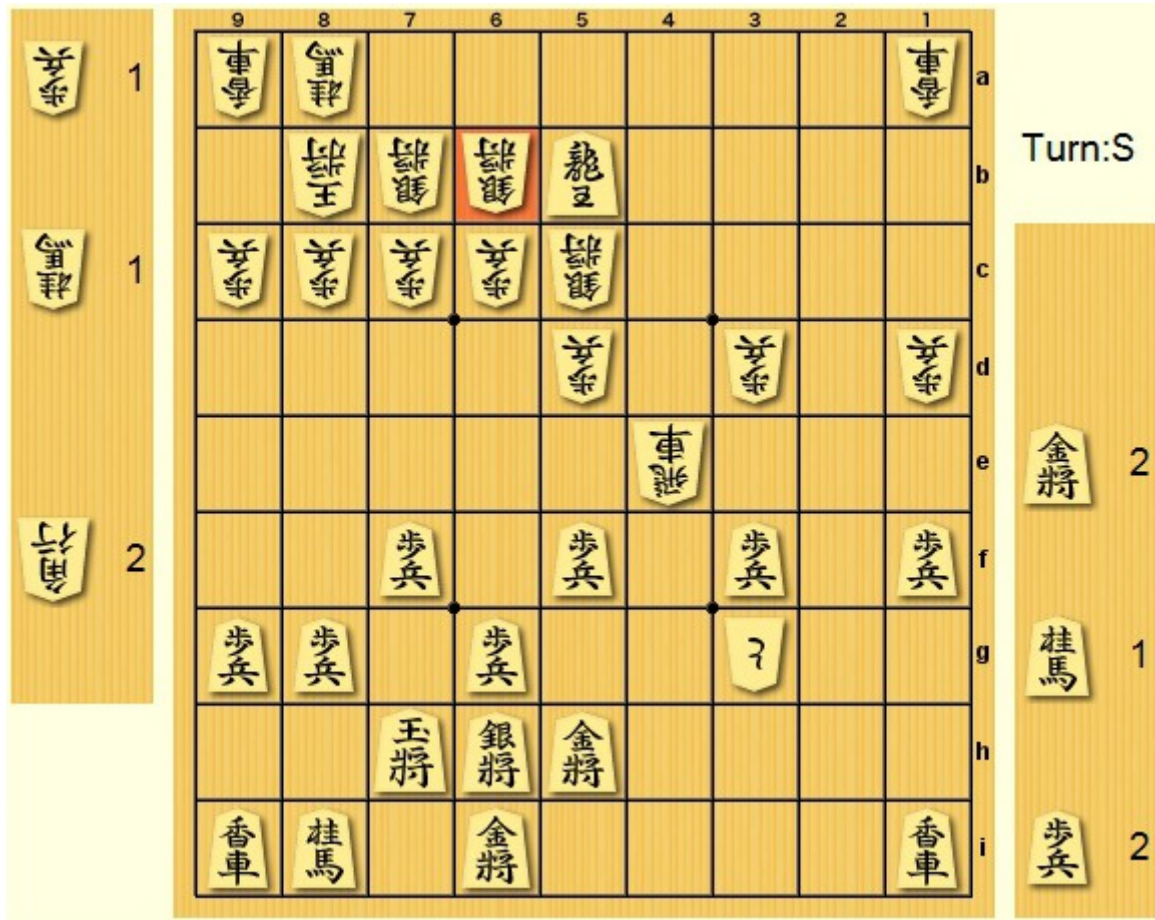
43 Sx4g 44 P*4f | 47 +Rx6a 48 +Px3g
 45 B*3g 46 Px4g+



Up to 48 +Px3g

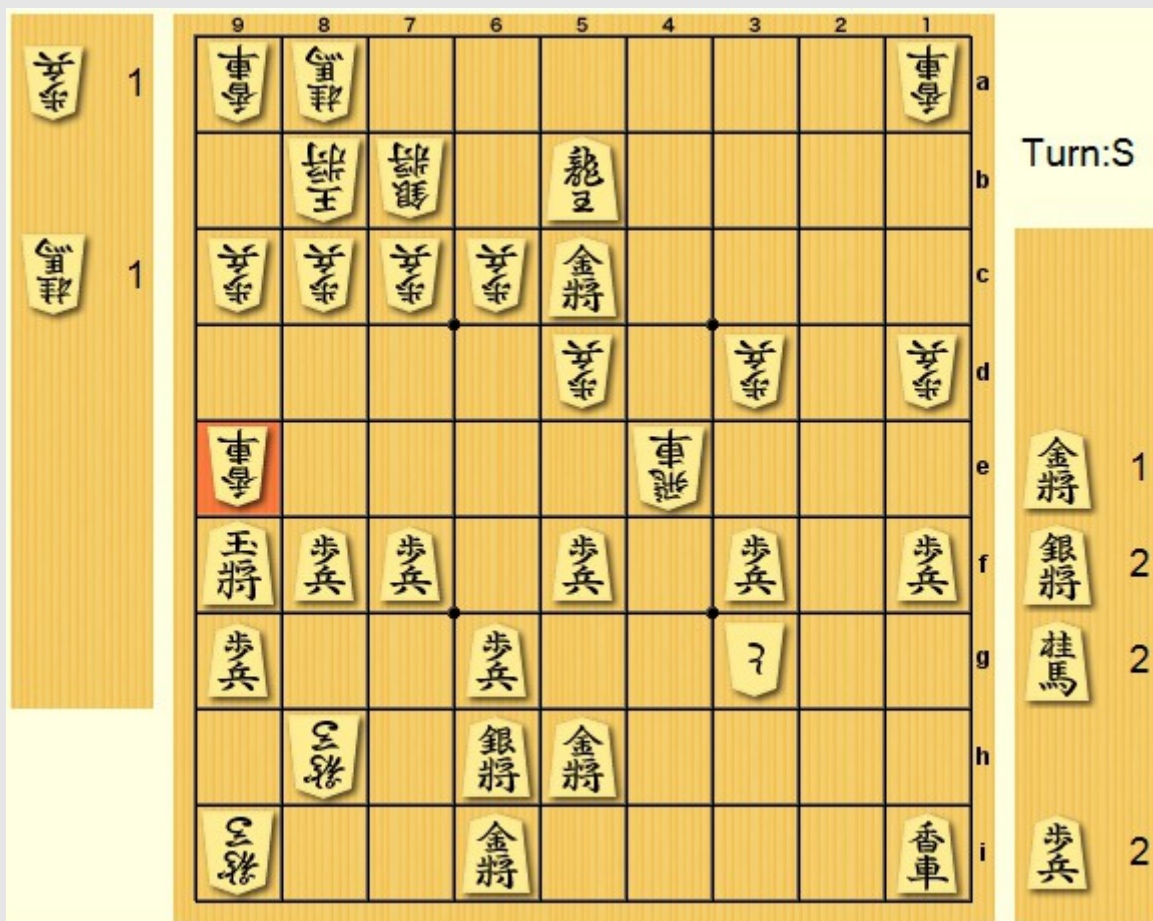
45 B*3g seems pointless, but a closer look reveals that it is actually quite mean. On move 48 *Gote* cannot capture *Sente's Ryu* (dragon or promoted Rook) with his Silver: 48 Sx6a; 49 N*7d, 50 K7b; 51 G*8b mate. By attacking the front of *Gote's* castle and threatening to mate him there, *Sente* has the chance to break down *Gote's* defences from the side.

49 +Rx5b 50 S*6b



Up to 50 S*6b

Gote is one move quicker, however. He has the following beautiful *tsume* (mating sequence where every move is check): 54 N*8f; 55 Px8f, 56 S*8g; 57 Kx8g, 58 B*9h; 59 K7h, 60 Bx8i+; 61 K8g, 62 +B8i-8h; 63 K9f, 64 L*9e mate.



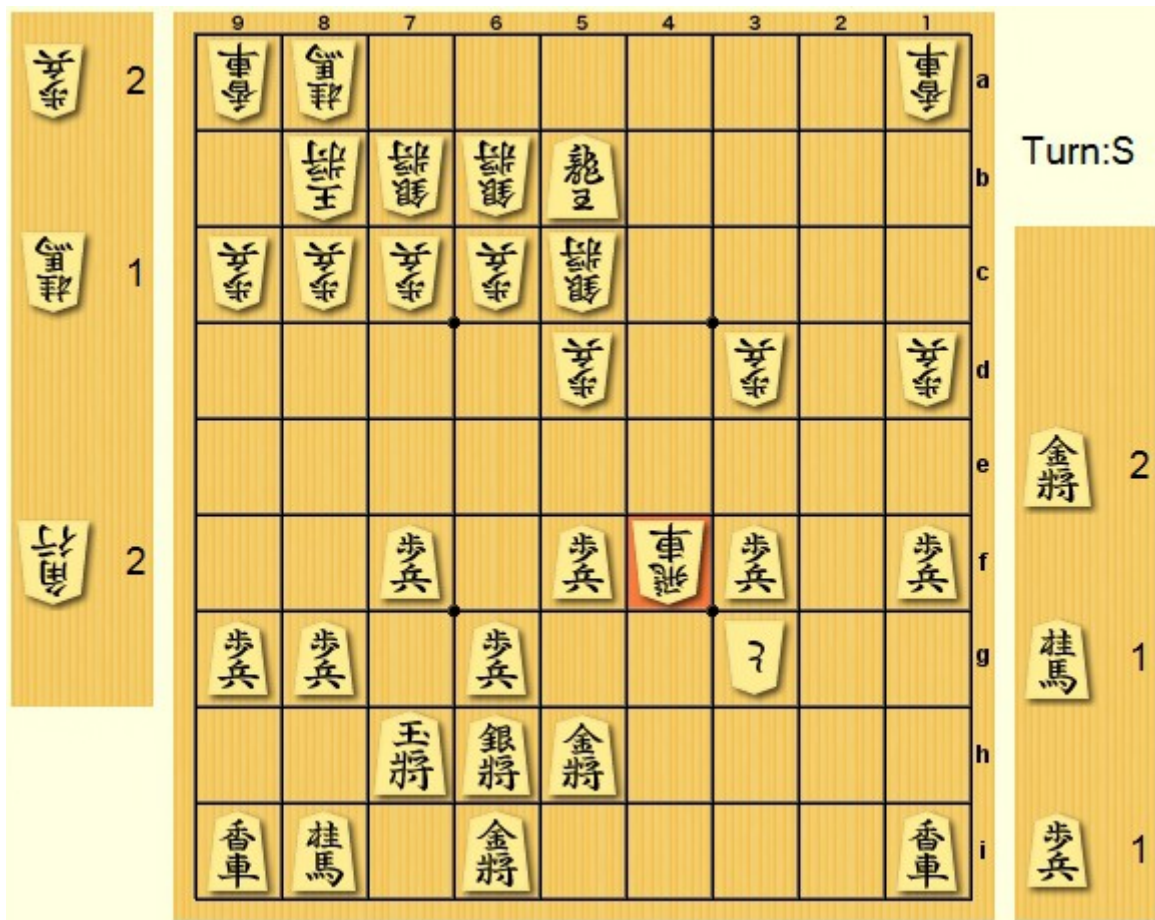
Up to 64 L*9e mate

This illustrates the sharpness of Shogi: one move can make the difference between winning and losing.

Main line continued:

51 P*4f

52 Rx4f

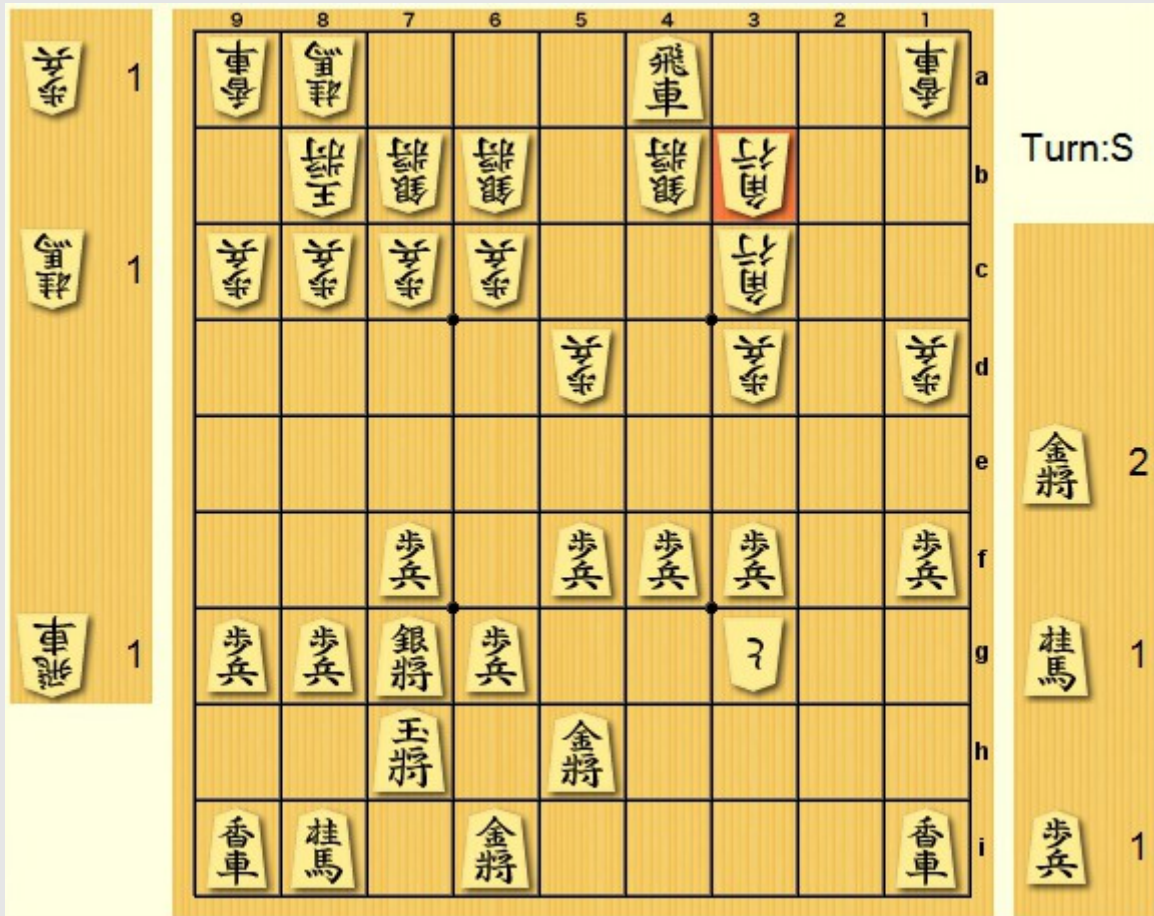


Up to **52** Rx4f

This move eliminates *Gote's* last chances.

Alternate line:

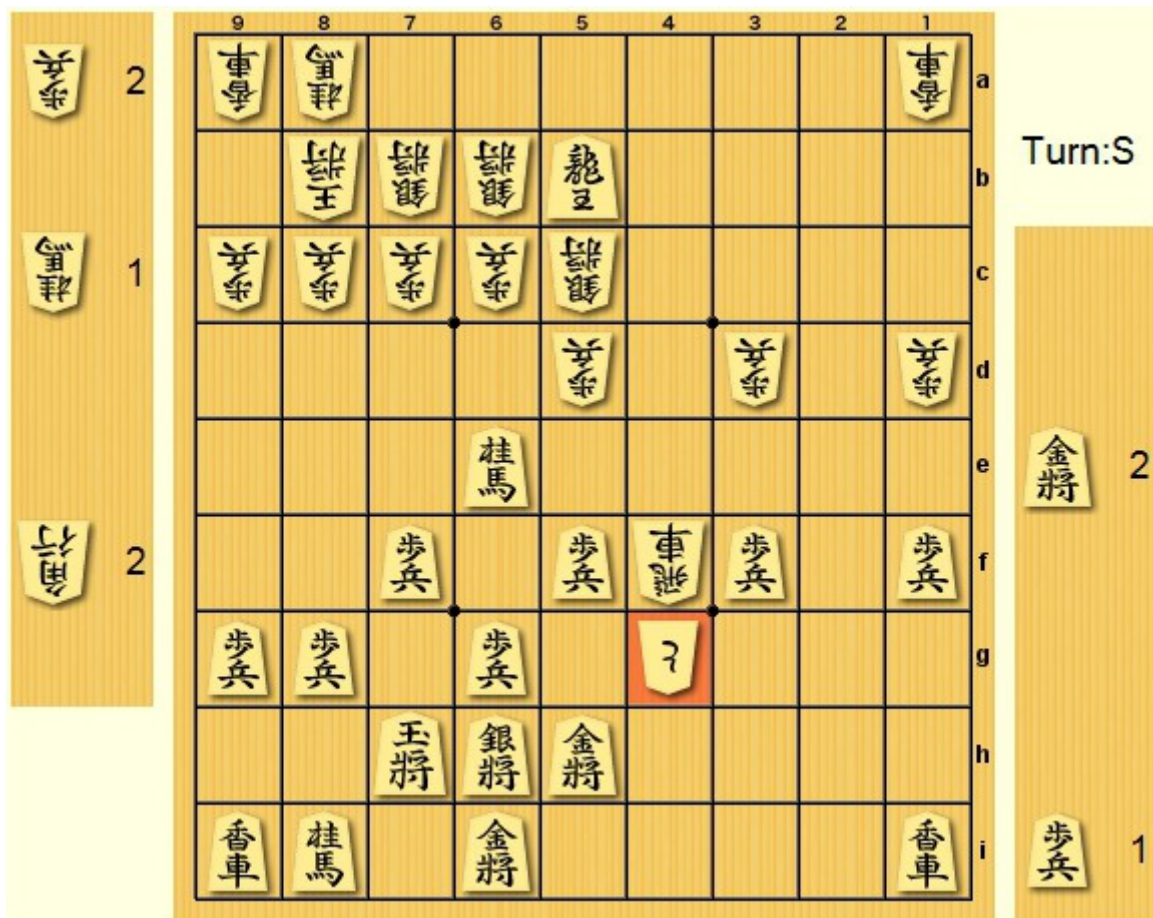
52 R4b; 53 +Rx4b, 54 Sx4b; 55 R*4a seems annoying, but after 56 B*3c; 57 S7g, 58 B*3b *Gote* wins the Rook and with his *token* on 3g there still is some hope.



Up to 58 B*3b

Main line continued:

53 N*6e 54 +P4g



Up to 54 +P4g

Gote cannot defend anymore,³⁶ so he starts a desperate attack. *Sente* does not lose the right track, however.

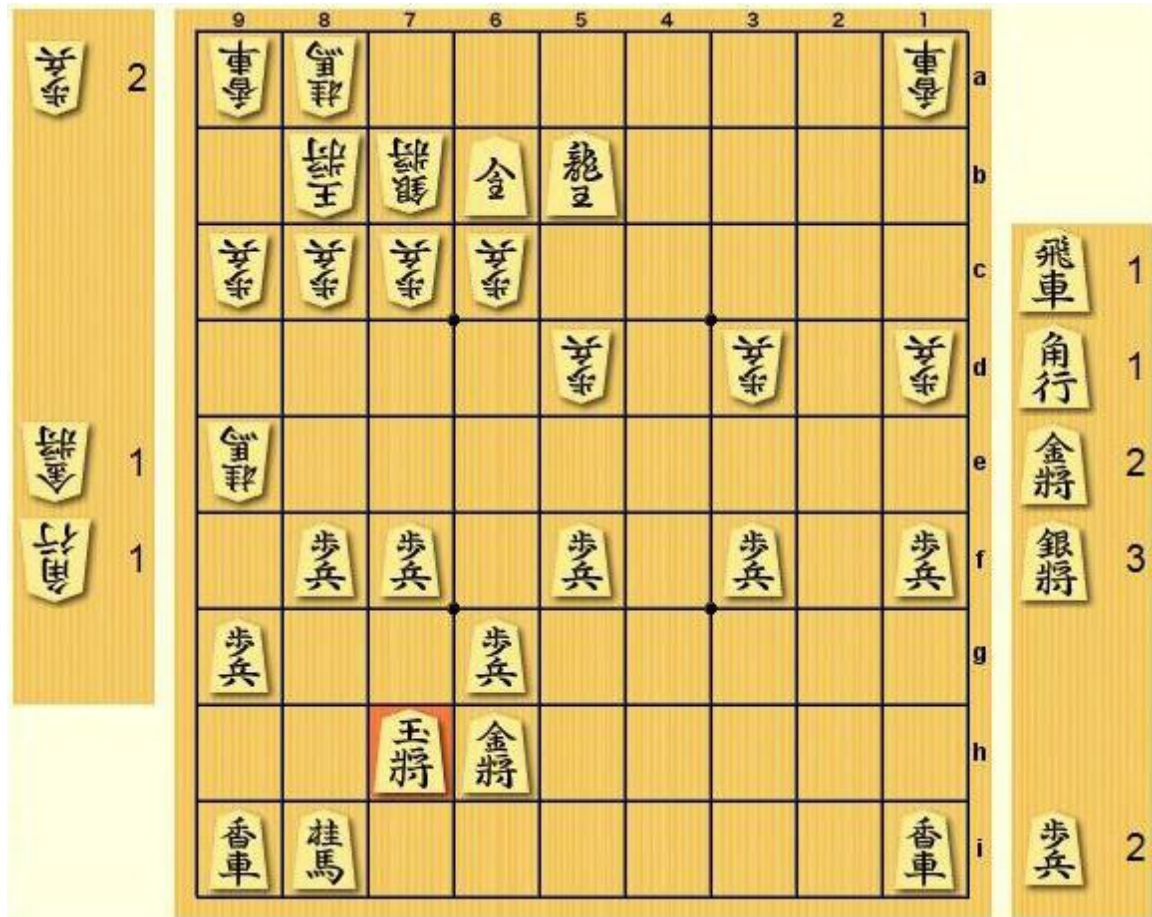
³⁶ After 53 N*6e *Gote* still has a chance with moves like B*4d or B*2f.

55 Nx5c+
 57 +Nx6b
 59 Gx6h
 61 Px8f
 63 Gx6i

56 +Px5h
 58 +Px6h
 60 N*8f
 62 B*6i
 64 R4h+

65 N*6h
 67 Gx6h
 69 Kx8g
 71 K7h

66 +Rx6h
 68 S*8g
 70 N*9e
 72 Resigns



Up to 71 K7h

Gote resigns here, because after 72 B*8g; 73 K7g his attack has petered out.

Here, for convenience is the whole game without commentary, as played:

1 P2f	2 P3d	37 Rx2d	38 Nx4e
3 P2e	4 B3c	39 Nx4e	40 Rx4e
5 P7f	6 P4d	41 R2a+	42 P*4g
7 S4h	8 R3b	43 Sx4g	44 P*4f
9 P3f	10 S4b	45 B*3g	46 Px4g+
11 K6h	12 K6b	47 +Rx6a	48 +Px3g
13 K7h	14 K7b	49 +Rx5b	50 S*6b
15 P5f	16 P5d	51 P*4f	52 Rx4f
17 G4i-5h	18 G4a-5b	53 N*6e	54 +P4g
19 S6h	20 S5c	55 Nx5c+	56 +Px5h
21 P1f	22 P1d	57 +Nx6b	58 +Px6h
23 P4f	24 K8b	59 Gx6h	60 N*8f
25 N3g	26 S7b	61 Px8f	62 B*6i
27 P4e	28 R4b	63 Gx6i	64 R4h+
29 Px4d	30 Sx4d	65 N*6h	66 +Rx6h
31 P*4e	32 S5c	67 Gx6h	68 S*8g
33 Bx3c+	34 Nx3c	69 Kx8g	70 N*9e
35 P2d	36 Px2d	71 K7h	72 Resigns

10 Shogi Maxims.

There are many things to remember when first starting to play Shogi. It's easy to become confused and even demoralised. Here are ten pieces of advice from a professional player which should be remembered above all others in order to ensure rapid improvement at the outset of a Shogi career.

1. Attack with Rook, Bishop, one Silver, Knights and Pawns.
2. Defend the King with the other three Generals.
3. Keep the King and Rook on opposite sides.
4. Remember, Pawns are useful.
5. If you are behind, don't succumb – fight back.
6. Develop your pieces.
7. With each move, aim at a good follow-up.
8. Remember you can sacrifice.
9. Mate by surrounding the King.
10. After a game, reflect on it.

More about Shogi Notation.

The system for recording Shogi games used in this document was outlined in the section on Notation (p. 44). Unfortunately however, it's not quite as simple as that! According to which books you read, there are other systems – they are just as easy to follow as the one I've outlined, but they *are* different.

Some books use an entirely numeric system – for example, the books published by the Shogi Foundation.

Some (Japanese) books, for example, those published in the *At a Glance* series use *kanji* and piece symbols to represent moves. The (bi-lingual) books of the *Man to Man* series use a hybrid system.

Here are the first 20 moves (in Western terms, 10 moves) from the example on p. 49 as they might appear in different publications:

As they appear in this document:

1 P7f	2 G3b	11 S3h	12 +B3c
3 P5f	4 P3d	13 K4h	14 +Bx9i
5 Bx2b+	6 Gx2b	15 N7g	16 +B8i
7 R7h	8 B*5g	17 B*6i	18 L*9d
9 G6i-5h	10 B2d+	19 K3i	20 Lx9g+

In some other documents:

1 P-7f	2 G-3b	11 S-3h	12 +B-3c
3 P-5f	4 P-3d	13 K-4h	14 +Bx9i
5 Bx2b+	6 Gx2b	15 N-7g	16 +B-8i
7 R-7h	8 B*5g	17 B*6i	18 L*9d
9 G6i-5h	10 B-2d+	19 K-3i	20 Lx9g+

In books from the Shogi Foundation:

1 P76	G32	6 S38	+B33
2 P56	P34	7 K48	+Bx99
3 Bx22+	Gx22	8 N77	+B89
4 R78	B'57	9 B'69	L'94
5 G(69)-58	B24+	10 K39	Lx97+

The Shogi Foundation books use an entirely numeric system, and the moves are numbered in pairs. This might seem like a bit of a pain, but these books are so good that it is worth becoming familiar with this slightly different system.

As might be seen in some Japanese/English publications, eg: the Man-to-Man, Nekomado or At A Glance series:

▲ P76	△ G32	▲ S38	△ +B33
▲ P56	△ P34	▲ K48	△ +Bx99
▲ Bx22+	△ Gx22	▲ N77	△ +B89
▲ R78	△ B*57	▲ B*69	△ L*94
▲ G(69)-58	△ B24+	▲ K39	△ Lx97+

or:

▲ P-7f	△ G-3b	▲ S-3h	△ +B-3c
▲ P-5f	△ P-3d	▲ K-4h	△ +Bx9i
▲ Bx2b+	△ Gx2b	▲ N-7g	△ +B-8i
▲ R-7h	△ B*5g	▲ B*6i	△ L*9d
▲ G6i-5h	△ B-2d+	▲ K-3i	△ Lx9g+

or even:

▲歩7f, △金3b; ▲歩5f, △歩3d; ▲角x2b+, △金x2b;
▲飛7h, △角*5g; ▲金6i-5h, △角2d+; ▲銀3h, △馬3c;
▲4h, △馬x9i; ▲桂7g, △馬8i; ▲角*6i, △香*9d;
▲玉3i, △香x9g+

For a complete description of Japanese notation, see:
http://81dojo.com/documents/Notation_System

The message is, be aware of the differences, but don't be panicked by them – it's fairly easy to do the mind-shift

from one system to another, and you only have to do it when it's necessary, of course.

Some More Sample Games.

Here, to be played through are a few more sample games (without comments). As usual, the moves are numbered individually to make it easier to play through using the Shogidokoro program (my personal favourite). Of course, you can also play through the games with an actual board and pieces.

The first game is well-known to Shogi players. It is the earliest known game score, from a game between two players of the Edo period in 1607.

The second game is The Edo Castle Game from 1856.

There follows a few handicap games – three Rook Handicap, two Bishop Handicap games and one Lance Handicap game. These games illustrate the fact that (unfortunately) Shogidokoro is 'off by one' when recording move numbers in handicap games. This is not an insurmountable problem though.

The remaining games are random games including a few played by the Shogidokoro program using the Lesserkai engine and Reijer Grimbergen's Spear engine.

Two of the Shogidokoro games are of interest because they illustrate the occurrence of a *sennichite* situation –

that is a draw caused by repetition of the same moves three times³⁷ – draws are rare in Shogi.

Only a few games are given here, but several of the books listed in the bibliography (p. 187) include sample games, often with extensive commentary. *Shogi for Beginners* has a well-commented game for beginners, plus another 17 games. *The Art of Shogi* includes approximately 30 games (including a selection of handicap games, from which new players can learn much!). The relatively brief description of Shogi in *4 Great Games* includes 3 complete games. *Shogi* magazine includes a large number of sample games spread across the 70 issues of the magazine.

Some of the other books published by The Shogi Foundation are largely made up of annotated and commented games. These are well worth studying.

³⁷ As stated elsewhere, *sennichite* is declared when the same game position occurs more than three times consecutively in a game – when this happens, the game is declared a no-contest. The same position means: same players turn, same disposition of pieces on the board *and* in hand.

Game 1: Ohashi Sekai (*Sente*) vs Honinba Sansa (*Gote*)
[1607]

1 P7f	2 P3d	53 N3g	54 P*6e
3 S4h	4 P4d	55 R2i	56 P7e
5 P4f	6 S4b	57 Px7e	58 Gx7e
7 S4g	8 S4c	59 P*7f	60 G7d
9 P3f	10 R4b	61 R6i	62 S6d
11 R4h	12 B3c	63 Nx6e	64 Nx6e
13 P1f	14 P1d	65 P*6f	66 P8e
15 P2f	16 K6b	67 Px8e	68 P*7g
17 K6h	18 K7b	69 G7i	70 N*7e
19 K7h	20 S6b	71 Px7e	72 Sx7e
21 G4i-5h	22 P5d	73 P*7f	74 P*8f
23 P5f	24 S5c	75 K9h	76 P9e
25 S6h	26 P6d	77 Px7e	78 Gx7e
27 P6f	28 G4a-5b	79 S*7f	80 Gx7f
29 S6g	30 G6c	81 Sx7f	82 Px9f
31 P9f	32 P9d	83 Px6e	84 S*7h
33 P8f	34 P7d	85 P*9b	86 Lx9b
35 K8g	36 K8b	87 N*8d	88 B5a
37 G7h	38 G7b	89 N*7d	90 K8c
39 N7g	40 P8d	91 Nx9b+	92 Kx9b
41 R3h	42 R3b	93 Bx7g	94 Sx6i+
43 P2e	44 B5a	95 Gx6i	96 P*7e
45 R2h	46 R2b	97 P*9c	98 K8a
47 P6e	48 N7c	99 Bx8f	100 Px7f
49 Px6d	50 Gx6d	101 G*9b	102 K7a
51 P4e	52 B3c	103 B5c+	104 K6a

105 L*6d	106 P*6b	121 S*6b	122 Bx6b
107 +Bx4c	108 N*5b	123 Sx6b	124 Gx6b
109 K8g	110 R*8i	125 Nx6b+	126 Kx6b
111 K7h	112 P7g+	127 B*5c	128 K7c
113 Kx7g	114 Rx6i+	129 G*8d	130 K7b
115 S*5c	116 S*6f	131 P*7c	132 K6a
117 K8f	118 +R8i	133 Lx6c+	Resigns.
119 K9e	120 P6c		

This game is included – with comments – on pp. 67-70 of *The Art of Shogi* by Tony Hosking.

Note that **133** Lx6c+ is not check-mate, but *Gote* realises that check-mate is inevitable in the next few moves, and resigns immediately. This is common practice in Shogi games.

Game 2: Amano Soho (*Sente*) vs. Ito Soin (*Gote*) [Edo Castle Game, 1856]

1 P7f	2 P3d	53 Px8f	54 P7e
3 P2f	4 P5d	55 Px7e	56 Sx4e
5 P5f	6 S6b	57 Bx4e	58 S4d
7 S4h	8 G3b	59 B1h	60 S*5f
9 G7h	10 S5c	61 Sx5f	62 Px5f
11 P2e	12 S6d	63 Rx5f	64 S*5e
13 P2d	14 P1x2d	65 R5h	66 Sx6f
15 Rx2d	16 R5b	67 P*6g	68 P*7g
17 K6i	18 K4a	69 Nx7g	70 Sx7e
19 R2h	20 P*2c	71 G6h	72 P*7f
21 Bx2b+	22 Sx2b	73 N6e	74 S6d
23 PS6h	24 P5e	75 S*5c	76 G6b-5c
25 Px5e	26 Sx5e	77 Px5c+	78 S4dx5c
27 P*5d	28 P7d	79 Nx5c+	80 Sx5c
29 B*5c	30 B*4d	81 Bx6c+	82 S*7g
31 Bx4d+	32 Sx4d	83 P*2d	84 Px2d
33 B*1h	34 PG4b	85 P*2e	86 B*3c
35 S5g	36 K3b	87 P*5e	88 Sx7h+
37 S5f	38 G6b	89 Gx7h	90 G*7g
39 R5h	40 S2b-3c	91 S*4e	92 R6a
41 P6f	42 P1d	93 +B7d	94 Px2e
43 PK7i	44 P8d	95 Sx3d	96 B2d
45 G5i	46 P8e	97 S*4f	98 G3c
47 B2g	48 R5a	99 Sx3c+	100 Kx3c
49 S4e	50 P*5e	101 S*3e	102 N*8g
51 S6g	52 P8f	103 Gx8g	104 Gx8g

105 Sx2d	106 Kx2d	109 B*4f	110 K4d
107 S3e	108 Kx3e	111 G*3d	112 Resigns

This game is included – with comments – on pp. 70-73 of *The Art of Shogi* by Tony Hosking.

Game 3: Kurokawa (*Sente*) vs Nakahara Makoto (*Gote*)
[1972 Amateur/Professional Meijin game]

This is a Rook handicap game and illustrates the 'Subway Rook' system.

1 ...	2 P3d	47 R4i	48 B1e+
3 P7f	4 P4d	49 P8f	50 P2e
5 P4f	6 G4a-3b	51 P8e	52 P2f
7 S4h	8 S4b	53 Px2f	54 +Bx2f
9 S4g	10 S4c	55 R8i	56 P4f
11 S5f	12 P5d	57 P8d	58 Px8d
13 P4e	14 Px4e	59 Rx8d	60 P*8b
15 Bx2b+	16 Gx2b	61 R8i	62 N4e
17 Sx4e	18 P*4d	63 P*8c	64 Px8c
19 S5f	20 N3c	65 B*6e	66 P*3g
21 R4h	22 G3b	67 G4h	68 K6b
23 S7h	24 K6b	69 Bx8c+	70 P*2h
25 K6h	26 G5b	71 +B6e	72 Px2i+
27 S7g	28 K7b	73 Rx8i+	74 P3h+
29 K7h	30 S6b	75 Gx3h	76 K5c
31 P7e!	32 S5c	77 +R2a	78 N*8f
33 P6f	34 P3e	79 K7i	80 +Bx3f
35 G3h	36 P4e	81 +Rx3b	82 Sx3b
37 G6h	38 P2d	83 +Bx3b	84 P*8g
39 S7f	40 S5c-	85 Sx8g	86 Nx5g+
41 N7g	42 P5e	87 N6e	88 K6b
43 S4g	44 P3f	89 Sx8f	90 +Nx6h
45 Px3f	46 B*5i	91 Kx6h	92 R*6i

93 K7g	94 G*8g		101 K*8e	102 +Rx8g
95 K7f	96 Gx8f		103 P*8f	104 P*8d
97 Kx8f	98 R8i+		105 Kx8d	106 +Rx8f
99 P*8g	100 S*8e		107 Resigns...	

This game is included – with comments – on pp. 212-221 of the PDF version of *Introduction to Handicap Play* by Larry Kaufman – available at: <http://eric.macshogi.com/>.

Game 4: Eric Cheymol (*Sente*) vs. Yoshiharu Habu (*Gote*) [22/5/2002] Rook handicap.

1 ...	2 P3d	43 N7g,	44 S5c-4d
3 P7f	4 P4d	45 R4i	46 P5e
5 P4f	6 G3b	47 S4g	48 P2d
7 S4h	8 S4b	49 R8i	50 P6d
9 S4g	10 P5d	51 P8e	52 B*5d
11 S5f	12 S4c	53 R8f	54 G6c
13 P4e	14 Px4e	55 P6f	56 P1f
15 Bx2b+	16 Gx2b	57 Px1f	58 P4f
17 Sx4e	18 P*4d	59 S5h	60 P3f
19 S5f	20 G3b	61 P6e	62 Px6e
21 K6h	22 K6b	63 P*6d	64 Gx6d
23 K7h	24 K7b	65 P8d	66 Px8d
25 R4h	26 N3c	67 Rx8d	68 P7d
27 S6h	28 S6b	69 Px7d	70 P*8c
29 S7g	30 S5c	71 P7c+	72 Kx7c
31 P7e	32 G5b	73 B*5a	74 K6c
33 S7f	34 P3e	75 Rx8c+	76 K5b
35 G3h	36 P9d	77 B8d+	78 P6f
37 P9f	38 P1d	79 +R8b	80 P*7b
39 G6h	40 P1e	81 +Rx8a	82 Bx7f
41 P8f	42 P4e	83 +Rx7b	84 Resigns

This game is included – with comments – on pp. 222-226 of the PDF version of *Introduction to Handicap Play* by Larry Kaufman – available at: <http://eric.macshogi.com/>.

Game 5: Eric Cheymol (*Sente*) vs. Hideyuki Takano (*Gote*) [26/10/2000] Rook handicap.

1 ...	2 P3d	53 P8e	54 G3b-4c
3 P7f	4 P4d	55 P9e	56 Px9e
5 P4f	6 G3b	57 P*9d	58 Nx5g+
7 S4h	8 S4b	59 Bx5g	60 P5f
9 S4g	10 S4c	61 B3i	62 S5d-5e
11 S5f	12 P5d	63 Lx9e	64 P*9b
13 P4e	14 Px4e	65 P8d	66 Px8d
15 Bx2b+	16 Gx2b	67 P*8e	68 P4e
17 Sx4e	18 P*4d	69 Px8d	70 P*8b
19 S5f	20 G3b	71 N*8c	72 P4f
21 K6h	22 G5b	73 S5h	74 P7d
23 K7h	24 K6b	75 Nx9a+	76 Px7e
25 R4h	26 N3c	77 S8e	78 N7c
27 S6h	28 K7b	79 S7d	80 P5g+
29 S7g	30 S6b	81 Bx5g	82 P7f
31 P7e	32 S5c	83 P8c+	84 K6b
33 S7f	34 P3e	85 +Px7c	86 Sx7c
35 G3h	36 P9d	87 Sx7c+	88 Kx7c
37 P9f	38 P2d	89 N6e	90 K6d
39 G6h	40 P2e	91 Rx8b+	92 Kx6e
41 P8f	42 S6d	93 +R8d	94 S*7g
43 B*6f	44 G5c	95 K8g	96 G6d
45 N7g	46 B*1b	97 L*6f	98 S5ex6f
47 R4i	48 P5e	99 Px6f	100 K5d
49 S4g	50 S5d	101 S*6e	102 K5c
51 R8i	52 N4e	103 P*5d	104 K4b

105 Sx6d	106 Px6d	115 P5c+	116 Kx5c
107 Kx7f	108 Sx6h+	117 N*4e	118 K5d
109 Bx6h	110 B7h+	119 +Rx6d	120 Kx6d
111 P*4d	112 +Bx6h	121 S*6e	122 K5e
113 Px4c+	114 Kx4c	123 G*5d	124 Resigns

This game is included – with comments – on pp. 227-229 of the PDF version of *Introduction to Handicap Play* by Larry Kaufman – available at: <http://eric.macshogi.com/>.

Game 6: Larry Kaufman (*Sente*) vs. Makota Chuza (*Gote*) [19/10/2002] Bishop Handicap.

1 ...	2 S6b	31 G*4e	32 P*6g
3 P7f	4 P5d	33 Sx6g	34 Sx5g+
5 P6f	6 P6d	35 Gx5d	36 +Sx6h
7 R6h	8 S5c	37 G6ix6h	38 Bx9i+
9 P9f	10 R6b	39 R*8b	40 N*6b
11 B9g	12 G4a-5b	41 Rx8a+	42 Nx5d
13 N7g	14 K4a	43 +Rx6a	44 P3d
15 S7h	16 K3b	45 +R5b	46 G*4b
17 P6e	18 Px6e	47 +Rx5d	48 L*5b
19 Nx6e	20 S6d	49 +Rx3d	50 P*3c
21 Bx6d	22 Rx6d	51 +R2e	52 Lx5h+
23 S*5c	24 Gx5c	53 Sx5h	54 R*8i
25 Nx5c+	26 S*6f	55 P*6i	56 G*7g
27 G4i-5h	28 B*4d	57 L*2f,	58 Gx6h
29 +Nx5d	30 Rx5d	59 Kx6h	60 Rx8g+

The game will end in *sennichite* a few moves later.

This game is included – with comments – on pp. 278-282 of the PDF version of *Introduction to Handicap Play* by Larry Kaufman – available at: <http://eric.macshogi.com/>.

Game 7: Larry Kaufman (*Sente*) vs. Hirotaka Nozuki (*Gote*) [26/4/2003] Bishop Handicap.

1 ...	2 S6b	49 Nx5c+	50 Sx5c
3 P7f	4 P5d	51 P5e	52 Px5e
5 P6f	6 P6d	53 S6e	54 N*6d!
7 R6h	8 S6c	55 S*3b	56 G5d
9 S7h	10 S4b	57 S4c+	58 Gx6e
11 K4h	12 S5c	59 Rx6e	60 S*5d
13 S3h	14 P7d	61 G*5b!	62 K7c
15 K3i	16 P8d	63 R6f	64 Sx4c
17 P6e	18 Px6e	65 Gx5c	66 S*8e
19 Rx6e	20 K6b	67 B5i,	68 S3b
21 R6h	22 P*6d	69 P*6e	70 Nx7f
23 S6g	24 P4d	71 P8f	72 Sx8f
25 G6i-5h	26 G3b	73 Rx7f	74 S7e
27 S6f	28 P3d	75 Rx7e!	76 Px7e
29 K2h	30 N3c	77 N*8f	78 G8c
31 P1f	32 P1d	79 S*8e	80 N9c
33 P5f	34 G4c	81 S*7d	82 Gx7d
35 P9f	36 P8e	83 Sx7d	84 K8d
37 B9g!	38 G7b	85 Gx6c	86 P7f
39 N7g	40 P9d	87 B4h	88 P*6f
41 P*6e	42 P8f	89 Bx6f	90 S*7e
43 Bx8f	44 Px6e	91 P*8e!	92 Nx8e
45 P*6d!	46 S6cx6d	93 S7c=	94 Resigns
47 Nx6e	48 P*6c		

This game is included – with comments – on pp. 283-290 of the PDF version of *Introduction to Handicap Play* by Larry Kaufman – available at: <http://eric.macshogi.com/>.

Game 8: Larry Kaufman (*Sente*) vs. Shoshi (*Gote*)
Lance Handicap.

1 ...	2 P3d	47 B7g	48 S5d
3 P7f	4 P4d	49 R6i	50 P4e
5 R7h	6 S4b	51 P9e!	52 Px9e
7 P7e	8 S4c	53 P*9d	54 B4d
9 K4h	10 B3c	55 Lx9e	56 P*9b
11 K3h	12 R2b	57 P5f	58 N3c
13 S6h	14 P2d	59 P6e	60 Bx7g+
15 P7d	16 Px7d	61 Nx7g	62 B*4d
17 Rx7d	18 S8b	63 N8e	64 B7g+
19 K2h	20 P2e	65 P5e!	66 Sx5e
21 G3h!	22 K6b	67 B*5a	68 S4d
23 L1h	24 G4a-5b	69 Px6d	70 Sx6d
25 K1i	26 G7b	71 Rx6d!	72 Gx6d
27 P6f	28 S7c	73 P*7c	74 Nx7c
29 R7i	30 P*7d	75 Nx7c+	76 Gx7c
31 S6g	32 P6d	77 N*8e	78 +Bx9e
33 G5h	34 G5b-6c	79 S*7a!	80 Kx7a
35 S2h	36 K7a	81 Nx7c+	82 +Bx7c
37 G5h-4h	38 K8b	83 Bx7c+	84 R2b
39 P9f	40 P9d	85 P*6b	86 R*7b
41 S7f	42 P2f	87 G*6a	88 K8a
43 Px2f	44 Rx2f	89 +Bx6d	90 S*8b
45 P*2g	46 R2d	91 B*6c	92 Resigns

This game is included – with comments – on pp. 297-310 of the PDF version of *Introduction to Handicap*

Play by Larry Kaufman – available at:
<http://eric.macshogi.com/>.

Game 9: Lesserkai 1.3.3 (*Sente*) vs Lesserkai 1.3.3 (*Gote*)

This short game is interesting because of the draw caused by the *sennichite* situation which arose.

1 P7f	2 P3d	23 G5h	24 S6b
3 Bx2b+	4 Sx2b	25 G6g	26 G4c
5 B*4e	6 G6a-5b	27 B3f	28 P8d
7 Bx3d	8 G3b	29 P6e	30 S2d
9 P6f	10 S3c	31 S6f	32 S3e
11 B7h	12 P5d	33 B2e	34 S2d
13 S8h	14 K4b	35 B3f	36 S3e
15 B4e	16 P5e	37 B2e	38 S2d
17 G7h	18 K3a	39 B3f	40 S3e
19 S7g	20 P4d	41 B2e	42 S2d
21 B5d	22 K2b	43 B3f	44 <i>sennichite</i>

It is move **31** S6f which gives rise to the position which is subsequently repeated 3 times: (**35** B3f, **39** B3f, **43** B3f), leading to *sennichite* being declared at move **44**.

Game 10: Lesserkai 1.3.3 (*Sente*) vs Lesserkai 1.3.3 (*Gote*)

Here is another game leading to *sennichite* being declared. This time, the sequence of moves leading to *sennichite* occur in two different parts of the board, so the moves are not only highlighted in gray, but are illustrated in some detail on the following page using screenshots from Shogidokoro:

1 P7f	2 P8d	25 G5h	26 G3b
3 P2f	4 P8e	27 S5f	28 P7e
5 B7g	6 P3d	29 Px7e	30 Sx7e
7 S8h	8 G3b	31 P*7f	32 S6d
9 G7h	10 S4b	33 N3g	34 P5d
11 Bx2b+	12 Gx2b	35 S4e	36 K5c
13 S7g	14 S7b	37 S5f	38 K4b
15 S3h	16 S3c	39 S4e	40 K5c
17 P4f	18 K4b	41 S5f	42 K4b
19 S4g	20 S8c	43 S4e	44 K5c
21 P3f	22 S8d	45 S5f	46 K4b
23 P9f	24 P7d	47 <i>sennichite</i>	

Fig.1 After 34 P5d

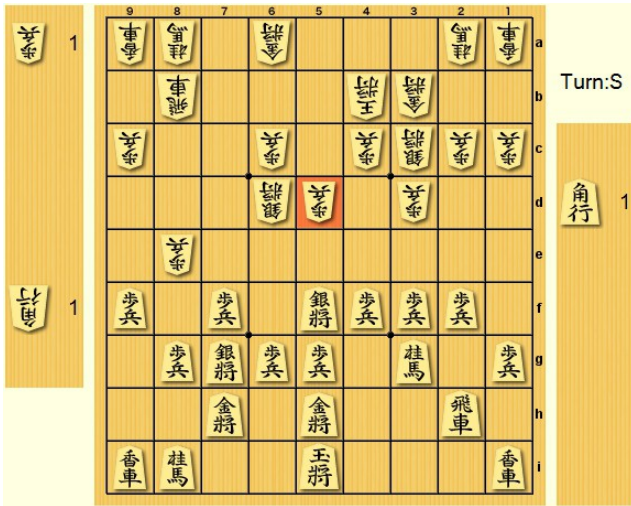


Fig. 2 After 38 K4b

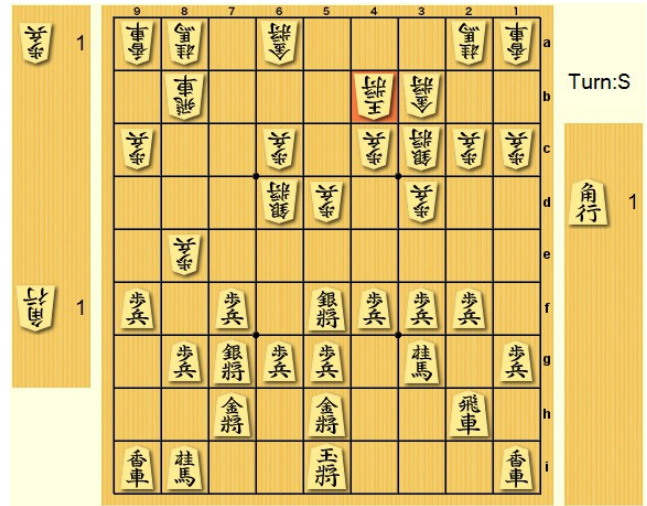


Fig.3 After 42 K4b

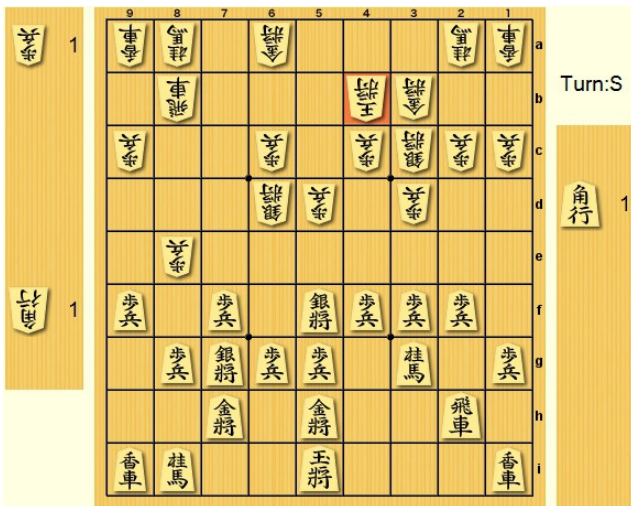
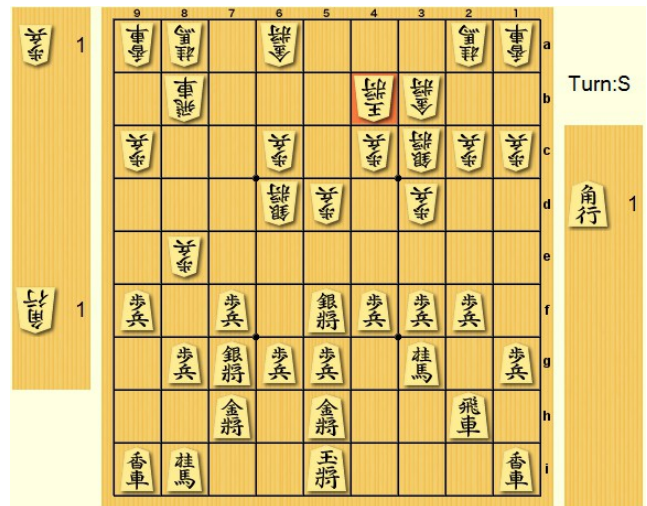


Fig. 4 After 46 K4b



Figures 1-4 clearly show 4 exactly similar positions. After Fig. 4, *sennichite* is declared.

Game 11: Lesserkai 1.3.3 (*Sente*) vs Lesserkai 1.3.3 (*Gote*)

1 P2f	2 P8d	43 L1h	44 B3i+
3 P2e	4 P8e	45 B*4g	46 P3d
5 P9f	6 G4a-3b	47 P4e	48 S3c
7 P2d	8 Px2d	49 R5f	50 +B2h
9 Rx2d	10 P*2c	51 B3h	52 +Bx3h
11 R2f	12 P1d	53 Sx3h	54 B*6e
13 S3h	14 S6b	55 B*7a	56 Bx5f
15 G7h	16 P6d	57 Px5f	58 R7b
17 R3f	18 S6c	59 B2f+	60 R*4f
19 P7f	20 K4a	61 B*6a	62 Rx2f
21 B7g	22 P7d	63 Bx7b+	64 R2h
23 S8h	24 G5b	65 +Bx8a	66 Rx3h+
25 G5h	26 S4b	67 R*7b	68 G6b
27 K6h	28 S7b	69 Rx7c+	70 Gx7c
29 B5e	30 S7c	71 +Bx9a	72 S*4g
31 S7g	32 K3a	73 L*4h	74 Sx4h+
33 P9e	34 B1c	75 G5g	76 R*6i
35 R1f	36 K2b	77 Kx6i	78 +R4i
37 S2g	38 P5d	79 K6h	80 +R5i
39 B4f	40 Bx4f	81 Resigns	
41 Px4f	42 B*2h		

Game 12: SpearCSA2008v1.4 (*Sente*) vs Lesserkai
1.3.3 (*Gote*)

1 P2f	2 P8d	25 S3g	26 G6b
3 P7f	4 P8e	27 P6f	28 P6d
5 B7g	6 P3d	29 N1g	30 P2d
7 S8h	8 G3b	31 P2e	32 G2c
9 G7h	10 Bx7g+	33 B*4a	34 G1d
11 Sx7g	12 S4b	35 Bx5b+	36 S8c
13 S3h	14 S7b	37 +Bx5c	38 B*6i
15 P1f	16 S3c	39 P1e	40 Gx1e
17 P3f	18 K4b	41 Px2d	42 S4b
19 K6i	20 K3a	43 P2c+	44 K3a
21 K7i	22 K2b	45 G*3b	46 Resigns
23 K8h	24 P4d		

Shogi Variants.

There are many variants of Shogi. Some are 'historical', some are modern 'inventions'. In the web pages I produced in the early 1990's, I described several Shogi variants.³⁸ In this short section of this document, I have dealt briefly with just three of these historical variants.

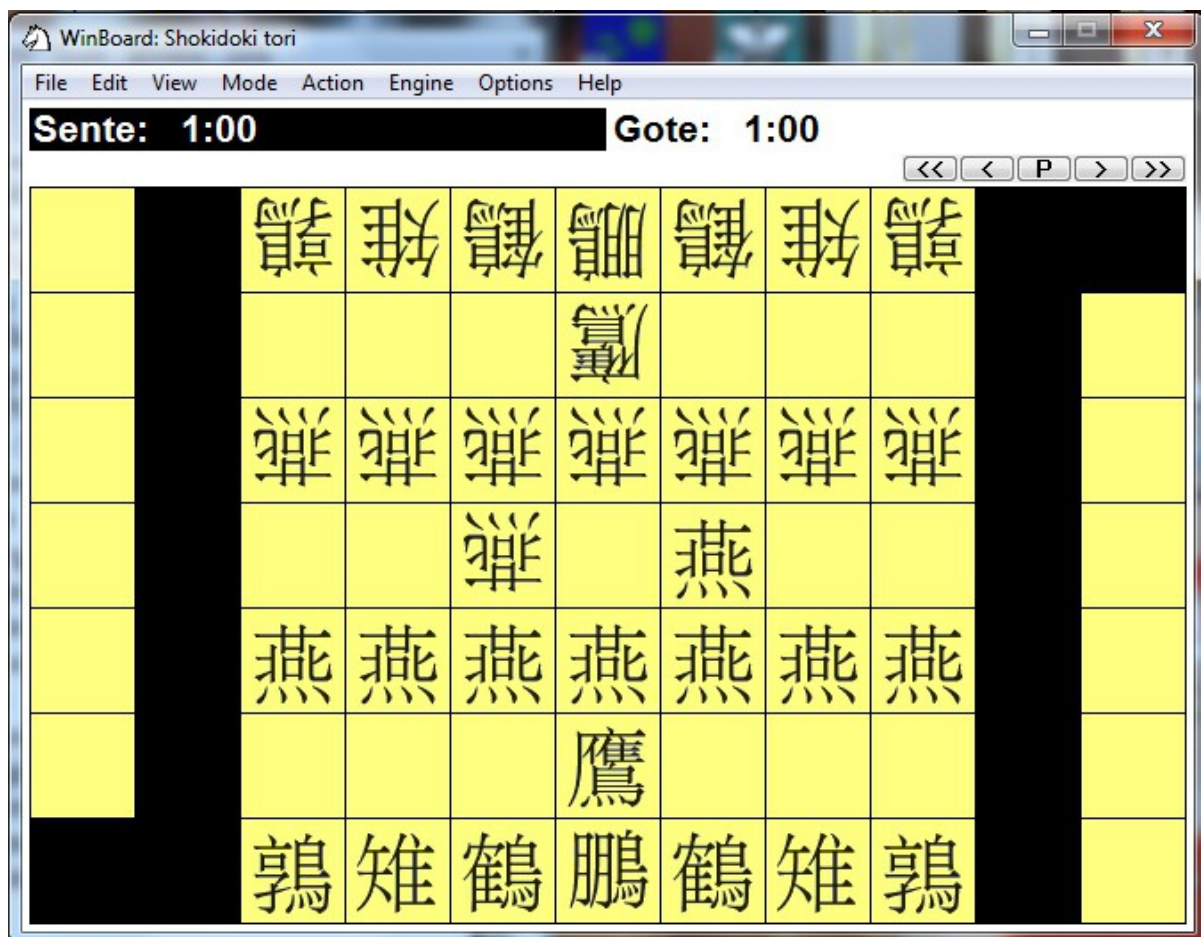
The diagrams are screenshots from the Winboard Alien Edition package which has facilities for playing several variants of Shogi (including standard Shogi). It is available for downloading as a zipped package from:

<http://hgm.nubati.net/ShogiVars.html>

³⁸ All these descriptions were based on the leaflets published by the late George Hodges. As far as I know, these leaflets are still available.

Tori Shogi.

Tori Shogi (or 'Bird' Shogi) is so called because all the pieces are named after birds. It is played on a 7x7 board and is the only historical variant of Shogi which is played with drops. The smaller size of the board makes for fast, close-quarters action, and short games. The (Winboard Alien Package) screenshot shows the board at the start of a game.



The 'Quails', the pieces in the four corners move differently according to whether they are a 'Left Quail' or a 'Right Quail'. The 'Left' and 'Right' Quails are marked differently, though this is not shown in the Winboard implementation.

See: *The Way of Tori Shogi*, Dave Brandl and Bill Croke, 2013.

<http://www.torishogi.com/>

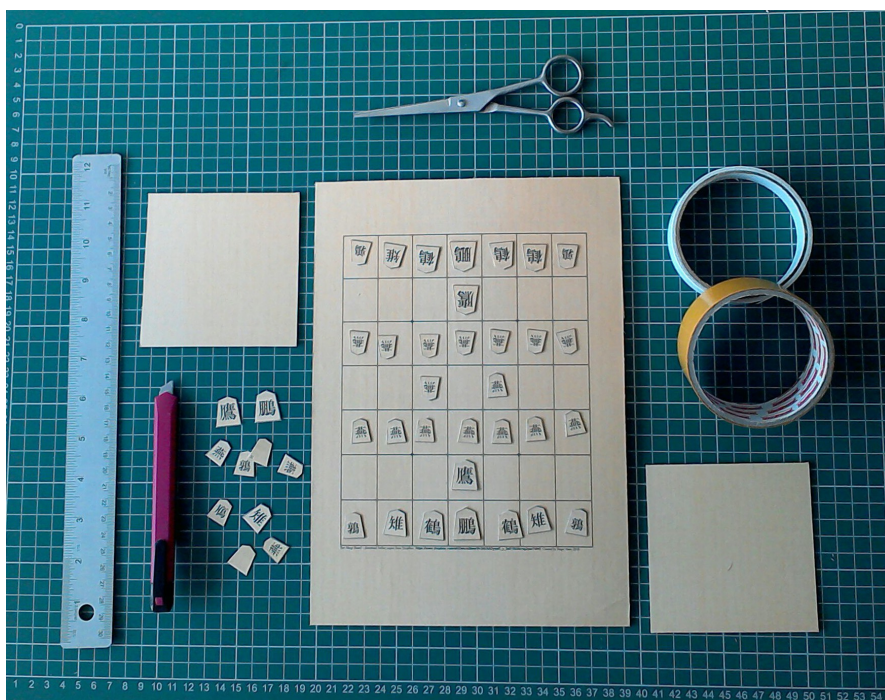
There are some sample pages from the book at:

<http://www.youblisher.com/p/686453-The-Way-of-the-Tori-Shogi/>

Templates, and instructions on how to use them to make a Tori Shogi set (and a Shogi set) are available from my Dropbox Shogi archive::

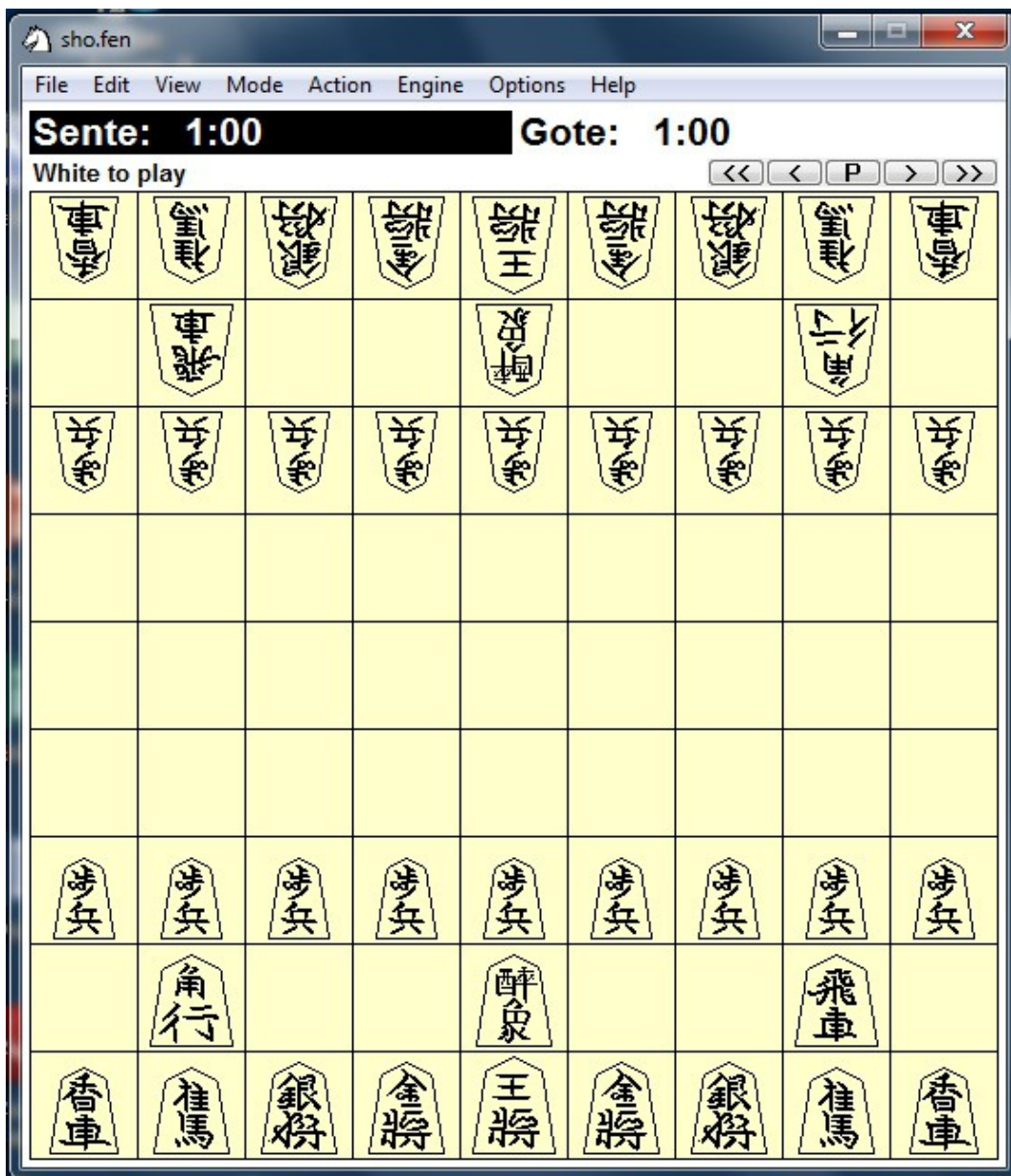
<https://tinyurl.com/RogersShogiArchive>

Download the file: **DIY Tori Shogi set.pdf** Print the file and follow the instructions:



Sho Shogi.

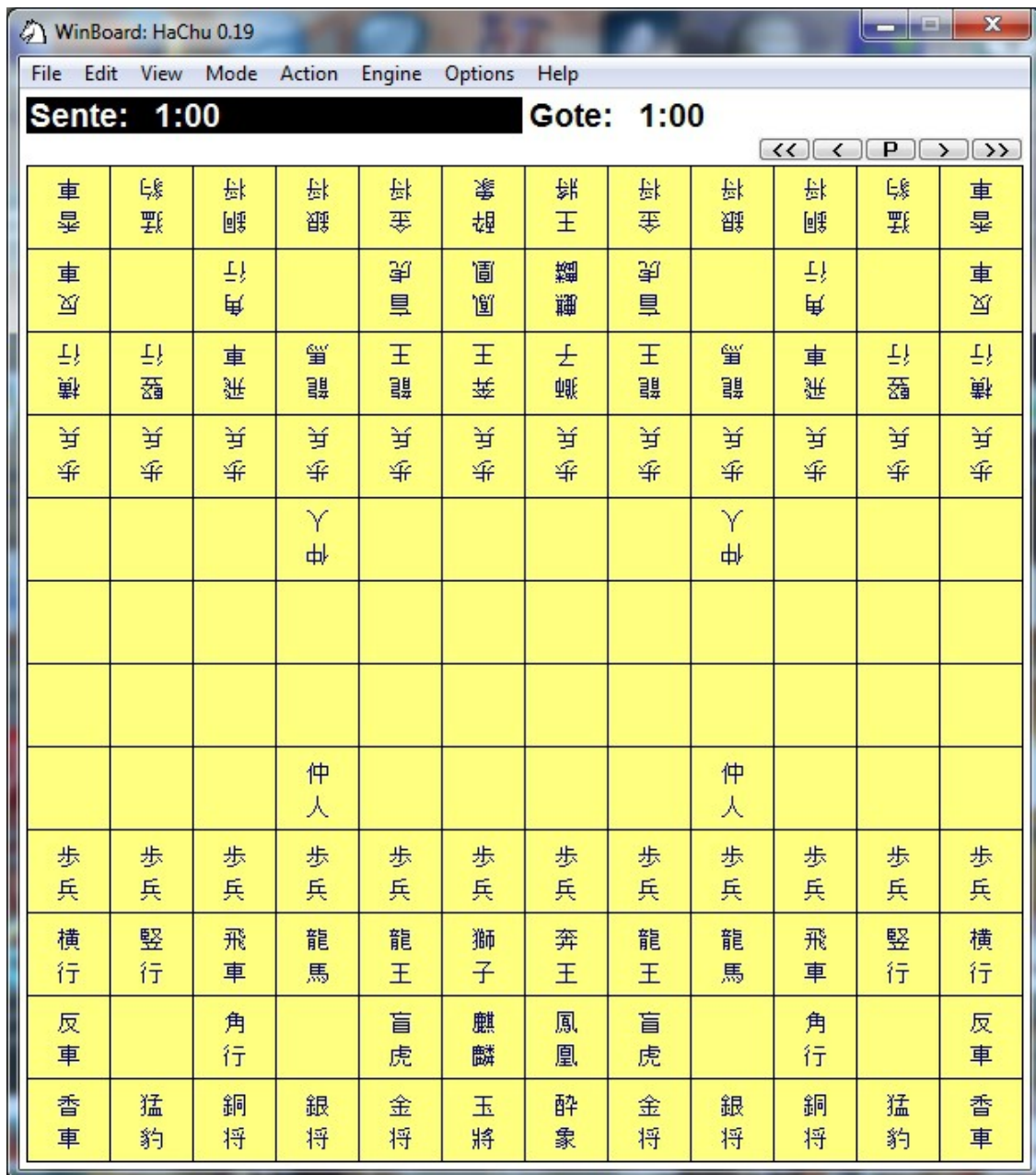
Sho Shogi is similar to standard Shogi, but it is played without drops, and with two extra pieces – the 'Drunk Elephants' located on squares 5b and 5h. At the start of play, the board looks like this (Winboard Alien Packages screenshot):



The extra 'Drunk Elephant' pieces, which promote to a 'Prince' can be purchased separately from the Nekomado Online Shop.

Chu Shogi.

Chu Shogi (or Middle Shogi) is played on a 12x12 board. The screenshot shows the board at the start of play (Winboard Alien Package).



Other Shogi Variants.

There are other Shogi variants, varying in size from a 15x15 board to a 25x25 board. Some of these are described in *The Great Shogi Games* by George Hodges.

There are even 4-handed and 3-handed Shogi variants. These are modern variants and are not described here.

(Incomplete!) Glossary of Shogi Terms.

I have shown the Romanised form (*Rōmaji*), (in a few cases, the *kanji*) and the commonly-used Western term – literal meanings are usually not given.

Shogi Pieces

In this case, the *kanji* are shown also.

<i>Sente</i> (先手)	Black
<i>Gote</i> (後手)	White
<i>Gyoku</i> (玉將)	Black King
<i>O</i> (王將)	White King
<i>Hi</i> (飛車)	Rook
<i>Ryu</i> (龍王)	Dragon (promoted Rook)
<i>Kaku</i> (角行)	Bishop
<i>Uma</i> (龍馬)	Horse (promoted Bishop)
<i>Kin</i> (金將)	Gold
<i>Gin</i> (銀將)	Silver
<i>Narigin</i> (成銀)	Promoted Silver
<i>Kei</i> (桂馬)	Knight
<i>Narikei</i> (成桂)	Promoted Knight
<i>Kyō</i> (香車)	Lance
<i>Narikyō</i> (成香)	Promoted Lance
<i>Fu</i> (歩兵)	Pawn
<i>Token</i> (と金)	Promoted Pawn

Piece quality

In ascending order:

<i>kaki-goma</i>	<i>kanji</i> are painted directly onto the surface of the piece, usually with lacquer
<i>hori-goma</i>	<i>kanji</i> are inscribed into the pieces and lacquer is applied
<i>hiriume-goma</i>	<i>kanji</i> are inscribed into the pieces and lacquer is applied until it is flush with the surface of the piece
<i>moriage-goma</i>	<i>kanji</i> are inscribed into the pieces and lacquer is applied until it stands proud of the surface of the piece

Shogi Openings and Attacks (*joseki*)

Note that the same term is sometimes used to describe both an opening strategy (*joseki*) and a castle (*gakoi*).

<i>Ibisha</i>	Static Rook
<i>Aibisha</i>	Double Static Rook
<i>Furibisha</i>	Ranging Rook
<i>Aifuribisha</i>	Double Ranging Rook
<i>Yagura</i>	Fortress
<i>Sō yagura</i>	Complete Fortress
<i>Kata yagura</i>	Incomplete/Half Fortress
<i>Aiyagura</i>	Double Fortress
<i>Shikenbisha</i>	4th file Rook
<i>Ai/Sankenbisha</i>	Double/3rd file Rook
<i>Nakabisha</i>	Central Rook

<i>Mukaibisha</i>	Opposing Rook
<i>Hineribisha</i>	Twisting Rook
<i>Chikatetsubisha</i>	Subway Rook
<i>Tatefu</i>	Rook on Pawn
<i>Bōgin</i>	Climbing Silver
<i>Bōkin</i>	Climbing Gold
<i>Aigakari</i>	(Double) Wing attack
<i>Kakugawari</i>	Bishop exchange opening
<i>Kakutōfu</i>	Bishop's Head Pawn, <i>a.k.a.</i>
<i>Kakutōfuzuki</i>	Bishop's Head Pawn Push
<i>Sujichigai-Kaku</i>	(primitive) Parallel Bishop
<i>ai/Yokofudori</i>	Double/Side Pawn(capture)
<i>Ukibisha</i>	Floating Rook
<i>Sodebisha</i>	Sleeve Rook or Sidestepped Rook or Sideways Rook or Right 3rd file Rook
<i>Suzumezashi</i>	Spearing the Sparrow
<i>Koshikakegin</i>	Reclining Silver
<i>Tsunogin</i>	Horn Silver (Central Rook)
<i>Gatchangin</i>	Clanging Silvers

Shogi Castles

<i>Gakoi</i>	Castle – generic term
<i>Yagura</i>	Fortress
<i>Gangi</i>	Snow Roof Fortress
<i>Ginyagura</i>	Silver Fortress
<i>Kinyagura</i>	Gold Fortress
<i>Anaguma</i>	Bear in the hole
<i>Minogakoi</i>	Mino
<i>Taka mino</i>	High Mino

<i>Gin kanmuri</i>	Silver Crown
<i>Kata mino</i>	Incomplete Mino
<i>Funagakoi</i>	Boat
<i>Hayagakoi</i>	Quick Yagura
<i>Edo</i>	Quick Castle/Wall Castle
<i>Kanigakoi</i>	Crab
<i>Kinmusou</i>	Gold Excelsior which is the same as:
<i>Nimaikin</i>	Twin Gold
<i>Hishigakoi</i>	Lozenge Castle

General Shogi Terms

<i>Aji</i>	potential
<i>ajikeshi</i>	erasure/loss of potential
<i>akukei</i>	bad shape
<i>atsumi</i>	thickness
<i>boyomi</i>	countdown of time
<i>shogi-ban</i>	the Shogi board
<i>fugire</i>	with no Pawns in hand
<i>furigoma</i>	Pawn-tossing (ritual to decide who plays <i>Sente</i> ; one player throws five pawns and if a majority of five land face up, he is <i>Sente</i>)
<i>hisshi</i>	brinkmate problems
<i>hoshi</i>	the four circular dots which divide the board into 'camps'. Sometimes known as 'the four stars'
<i>igyoku</i>	sitting King
<i>jishogi</i>	game deadlocked by <i>impasse</i> (ie: both Kings have entered the enemy

<i>joseki</i>	camp and cannot be mated), leading to a piece count to decide the winner established principles of Shogi, 'standard' opening sequences
<i>kakugen</i>	Shogi proverbs
<i>kakukokan</i>	Bishop swap or exchange
<i>karanari</i>	empty promotion, ie: promoting without a capture
<i>katachizukuri</i>	making one's position look as good as possible before resigning
<i>kifuzu</i>	'thorn-in-the-flesh' Pawn
<i>kokei/ryoku</i>	good shape
<i>koma</i>	the Shogi pieces
<i>komada</i>	side table for the storing of captured ('in-hand') pieces
<i>komafukuro</i>	piece bag
<i>komahako</i>	piece box
<i>kuraidori</i>	Vanguard Pawn
<i>kuzushi</i>	castle-destroying techniques
<i>narisute</i>	promotion sacrifice
<i>nifu</i>	having two unpromoted Pawns on the same file (which is illegal)
<i>nimaigae</i>	exchanging one piece for two pieces
<i>nozoki</i>	peeping (Bishop)
<i>nyugyoku</i>	entering King(s)
<i>nyūjō</i>	the process of castling
<i>ougyoku</i>	Two Kings mating problem
<i>okiritesuji</i>	shepherding finesse
<i>onigorosho</i>	demon slayer
<i>otebisha</i>	Rook-and-King fork

<i>sabaki</i>	development resulting from exchange of pieces
<i>semeai</i>	mutual attack: attacking race
<i>sennichite</i>	endless repetition
<i>shitate</i>	the junior (less experienced) player in handicap games. (a.k.a. <i>Sente</i>)
<i>shōgi</i>	Shogi, General's chess
<i>sujichigai-Kaku</i>	wrong-diagonal Bishop
<i>tanegoma</i>	seed piece
<i>tarashi/tarefu</i>	the act of dangling a Pawn; <i>tarefu</i> is the dangled Pawn
<i>tataki</i>	striking Pawn
<i>teikijin</i>	promotion zone
<i>tesuji</i>	sequence of 'clever' moves
<i>tonshi</i>	sudden death by checkmate while pursuing checkmate yourself
<i>tsume-shogi</i>	mating problems
<i>uwake</i>	the senior (more experienced) player in handicap games. (a.k.a. <i>Gote</i>)
<i>yoseai</i>	a position from which a final kill can be administered

Computer Shogi.

Shogidokoro.

There are quite a few Shogi programs around. For the English speaker, the best free one (in my opinion) is Shogidokoro.

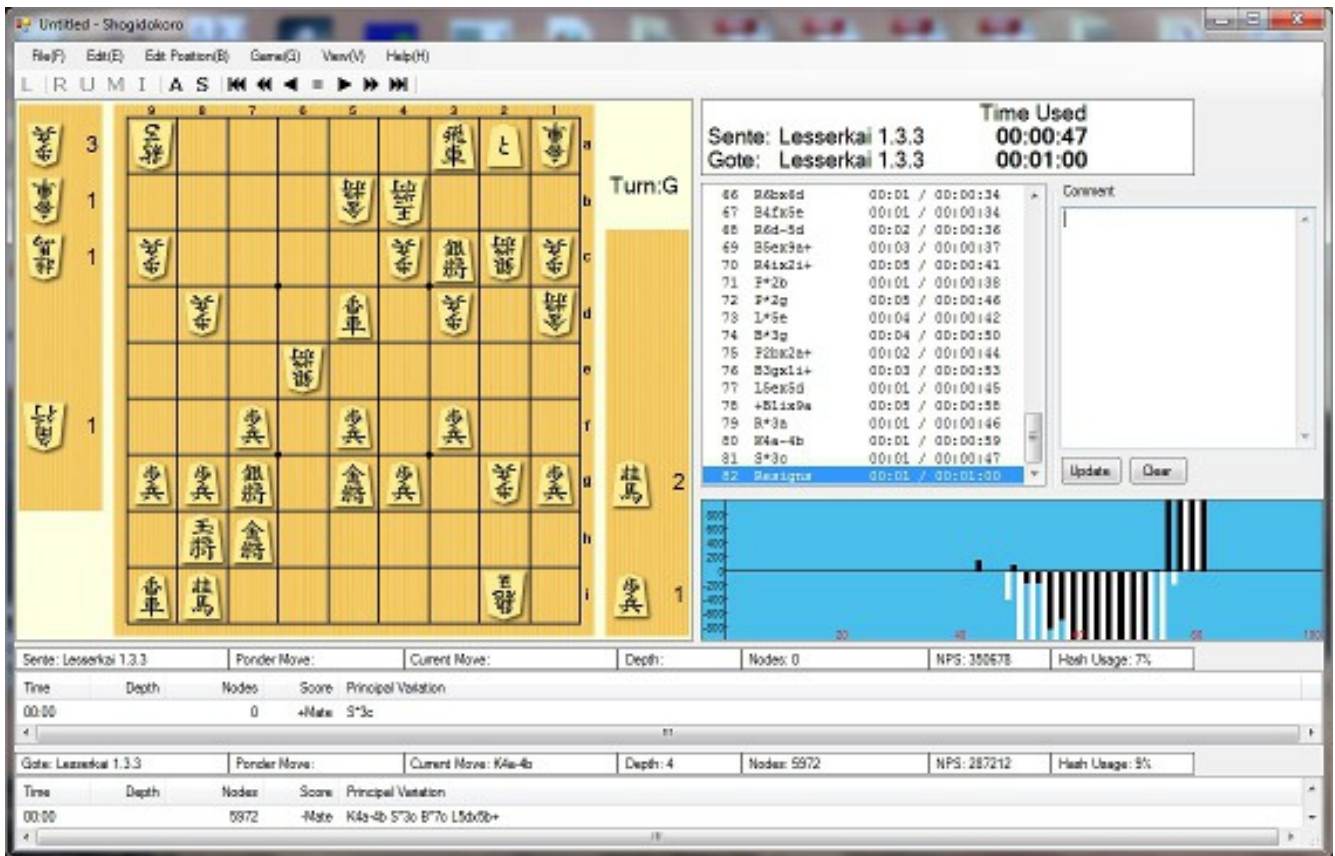
Shogidokoro is not itself a Shogi program, but rather a scaffolding/interface which allows the incorporation of Shogi game playing engines, the playing and recording of games³⁹, and the display of the board and game statistics. You can even choose your own style of calligraphy on the pieces!⁴⁰ Users can play against the computer, against another human player, or set the program to play against itself using the engine(s) loaded into the program. The program has the facility to play using time limits (*boyomi*), and you can also set up and solve *tsumeshogi* problems. It is also possible to set up and play handicap games.

The following page shows a screenshot showing what the Shogidokoro program looks like in action.

You can see the board and the *komada* at the side with the in-hand (captured) pieces displayed. It is also possible to see the time taken for both Black and White moves, and that it is *Gote's* (White) turn to move next.

³⁹ Games can be saved using different formats, including ones which use simplified *kanji* for recording the moves.

⁴⁰ Including pieces with single *kanji*, red promoted pieces, and 'Westernised' pieces.



The game record is in the centre, and to the right of this is an area for making notes to be saved with the game. The remainder of the display is given over to the display of various statistics, search trees, etc. This display is typical of a modern Shogi program.

Shogidokoro can load previously saved games, and using the tape-recorder style buttons on the display, (|<<<<<<■>>>>>>|) it is possible to play through the games on either a single-move or continuous basis.

The Shogidokoro program numbers moves individually. This is why in this document, I have usually numbered moves in this way – to facilitate the easy and unambiguous playing through of game situations using the program.

Shogidokoro is downloadable from the following website:

<http://shogidokoro.starfree.jp/download.html>

The site may appear in Japanese or English (depending on how your browser is configured). The download link is the 3rd from the top of the page (ダウンロード in Japanese).

Shogidokoro comes with one engine – Lesserkai – this will need to be installed before use. Reijer Grimbergens web site contains instructions for downloading Reijers Spear engine. See:

<http://www.cloud.teu.ac.jp/public/CSF/grimbergen/research/SPEAR/spearmain.html>

Spear can be found at the 'Available releases' section. Other engines must be searched for on the internet (try 'Shogi engines' in your search box).

Some of the diagrams in this document were created using screenshots from the Shogidokoro program.

Shogidokoro is, as far as I know, available for Windows platforms only.

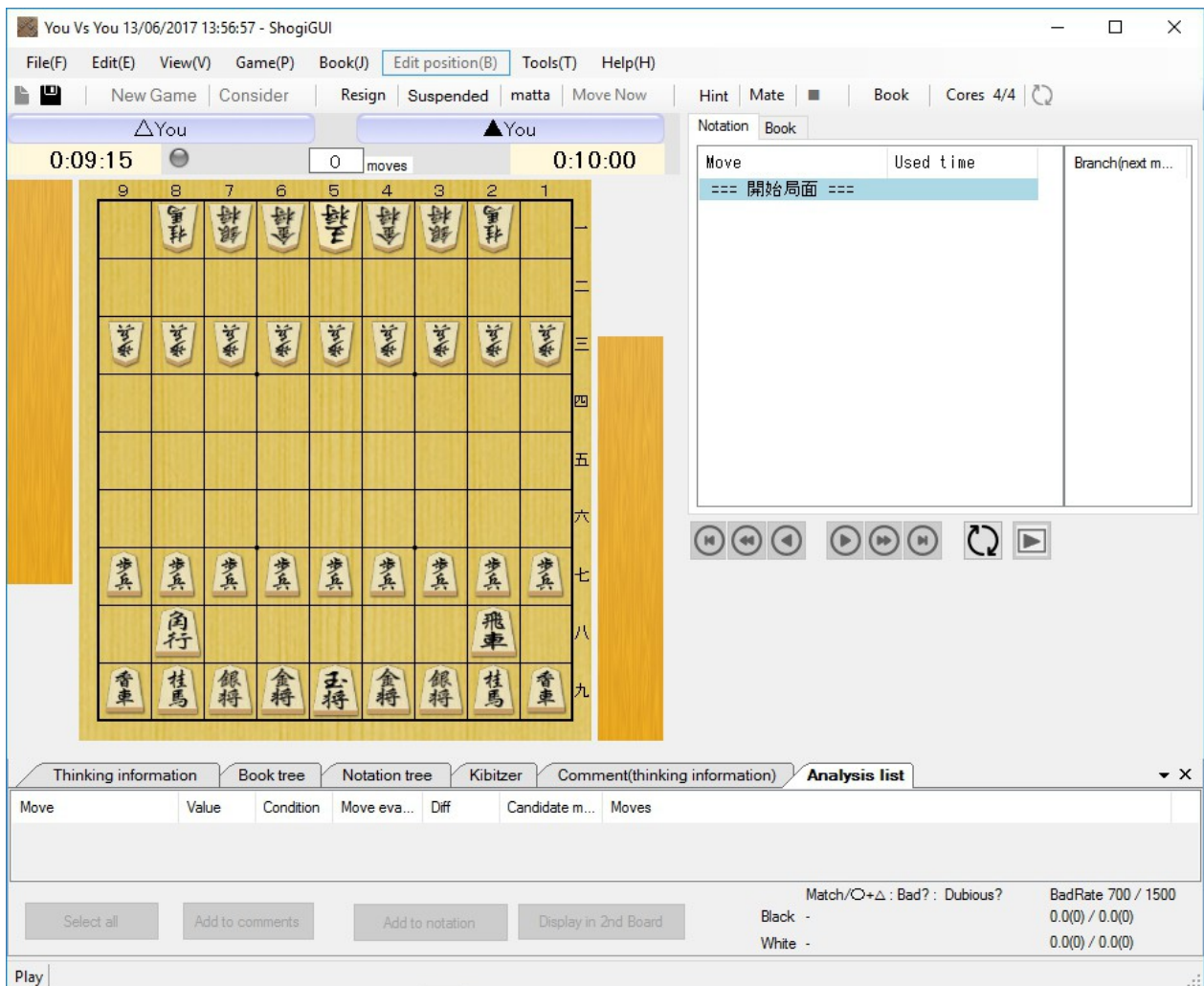
In principle, Shogidokoro can be run on other architectures/operating systems using the WINE emulation system – see: <https://www.winehq.org/>. I

haven't tried this myself, but the only reports I have (June 2020) are that the WINE system itself does not work on the most recent versions of the MacOS operating system (Catalina 10.15). On Linux, the Shogidokoro menus do not display correctly – whether the program works is doubtful.

For more about Shogidokoro, and computer Shogi in general, see the Wikipedia page 'Computer Shogi'.

ShogiGUI.

ShogiGUI is similar in some ways to Shogidokoro, as the screenshot below illustrates:



This screenshot shows the position at the start of a two-piece handicap game (*Gote* gives up the two Lances at the start of the game).

The display is similar to Shogidokoro – you can see the board, the *komada* for storing captured pieces, the move window, etc. However, ShogiGUI is more flexible and powerful than Shogidokoro:

- The notation used to record moves in the 'Move' window can be changed
- ShogiGUI can display 'hints' as to the next best move
- ShogiGUI has powerful game analysis features.⁴¹
- Game engines can be 'fine-tuned'.

ShogiGUI can be downloaded from:

<http://shogigui.siganus.com/>

The interface of the program as downloaded is entirely in Japanese, but it can be converted to English (or German),⁴² although much of the fine detail in the display is still in Japanese. With some determination, there is no reason why the non-Japanese speaker should not use ShogiGUI, even if not all of its features are fully exploited.

The program comes with one pre-installed game engine (GPSFish), and like Shogidokoro, other engines can be downloaded and installed – I have successfully installed Lesserkai.

ShogiGUI seems better at setting up *tsume-shogi* problems than Shogidokoro.

41 See: <http://shogibond.nl/how-to-analyze-your-games-using-a-shogi-engine/> for a description of how to do this.

42 See: <http://shogibond.nl/shogi-school/artikelen-van-hideaki-takahashi/gui-introductie/> or: <http://shogibond.nl/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/GUI-Introduction.pdf> for details of how to configure the program. I also have a copy of this PDF file.

Versions exist for use on Android computers (Japanese language only – seems to be a completely different interface to the Windows version).

In principle, ShogiGUI can be run on other architectures/operating systems using the WINE emulation system – see: <https://www.winehq.org/>. I haven't tried this myself, but the only reports I have (June 2020) are that the WINE system itself does not work on the most recent versions of the MacOS operating system (Catalina 10.15). On Linux, the program does not display correctly.

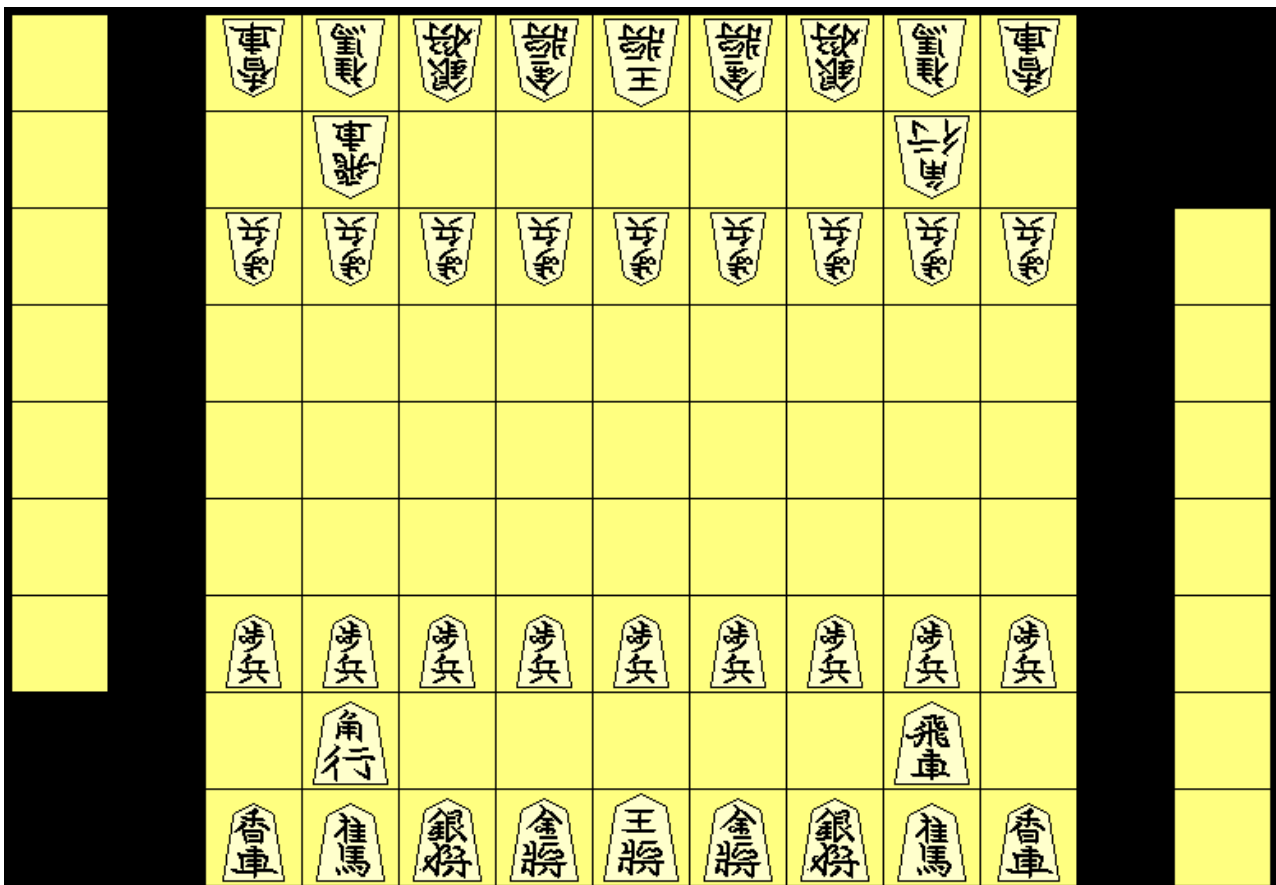
Winboard (Alien Package).

Also available for Windows machines is a Winboard package developed by H.G.Muller. This package can be downloaded from:

<http://hgm.nubati.net/WinBoard-Chu.zip>

and when unpacked gives access to several Shogi variants: Chu Shogi, Dai Shogi, Sho Shogi, Shogi and Tori Shogi. Once you have unpacked the program, simply click on the Black Knight's head icon to start up the program. You have the choice of using Western-style pieces or pieces with Japanese-style *kanji*.

The screenshot shows the position at the start of a game:

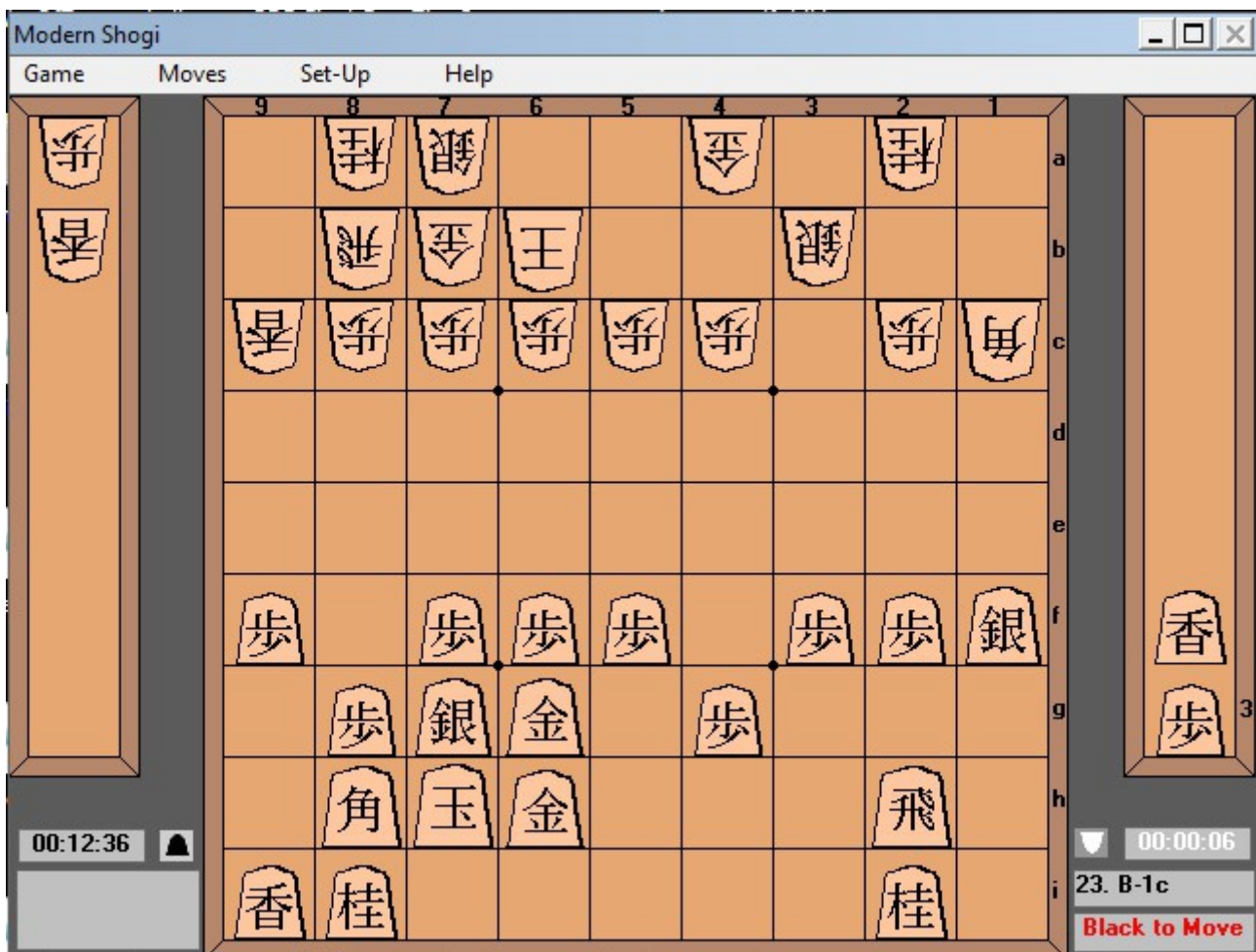


Steve Evans Shogivar Program.

This Shogi variant software has been around since the 1990's. Originally available as a 32-bit PC implementation written in Visual Basic (you will need a very old PC, or 32-bit emulation plus the VB Library files to run this), it is now also available as a Linux port maintained by H G Muller. Downloadable in either form from:

<http://www.users.on.net/~ybosde/>

The screenshot shows the position several moves into a human vs. computer game:



Phil Holland's Shogi Variants Program.

For those interested in the Shogi variants, a variants program can be downloaded from Phil Hollands web pages:

<http://www.hollandnumerics.demon.co.uk/SHOGI.HTM>

Simply click on the Shogi Software icon, and download and unpack the SHOGIV41.ZIP file.

You will also need to download the file MSAFINX.DLL as well.

This program has only a text-based display.

BCMGames/BCMShogi.

Development of this program was 'frozen' by the author in ~2012. I had difficulty finding a version of the program which worked when downloaded and installed, though I finally tracked one down. As the program has not been updated since 2012, I have not given a download link here.

Shogi Game File Formats.

Unfortunately, most of the computer programs described above use **different** formats for storing game records – a real can of worms!!!

There is some overlap – for example, Shogidokoro will handle `.CSA`, `.KIF`, `.Ki2` and `.PSN` formats (`.PSN` is the default). ShogiGUI will handle `.CSA` and `.KIF` formats (`.KIF` is the default).⁴³

Winboard uses `.PGN` and `.GAM` formats to store games.

Phil Hollands program uses `.SHO` format to store games.

Steve Evans program appears to be unable to save games.

It doesn't matter what these files look like, but it is clearly not possible to load the same game file into different programs – except in the case of Shogidokoro and ShogiGUI (`.CSA` or `.KIF` format).

To avoid problems, you should pick a program and stick with it – I use Shogidokoro as it is able to handle more formats than any other program.

⁴³ `.KIF` and `.Ki2` formats are possibly best avoided as they both use Japanese characters.

Shogi programs on other architectures and operating systems.

Shogidokoro is a Windows PC program, as is ShogiGUI (for English speakers). On Unix/Linux systems, gnushogi/xshogi is available, as is Xboard (a Unix/Linux version of WinBoard).

On Mac OS machines there are some Shogi programs available. For tablet computers, there are programs available for the Apple iPad and for Android systems (including ShogiGUI, p. 175).

I can't comment on any of these as I don't have any experience with these programs.

Shogi Equipment.

Moderate quality Shogi equipment is available *via* numerous suppliers on Amazon/eBay.

Rakuten in Japan seem to be a Japanese version of Amazon, and supply Shogi equipment – customer reviews of the company seem to be 'mixed'.

For better quality equipment, you need a specialist trader. A short list follows. I have equipment/books from, and have dealt satisfactorily with those marked with a *:

* **The Shogi Foundation** – Shogi books:

<http://www.shogifoundation.co.uk/>

* **Czech Shogi Federation** – suppliers of Shogi equipment, books and other Shogi equipment. The basic Shogi set includes a set of **very nice** hybrid pieces :

<http://shogi.cz>

* **Aobo Shop** – suppliers of Oriental board games, puzzles and books:

<http://en.aobo-shop.com/>

* **G. F. Hodges** – Shogi equipment, variants, books, etc. Supplier of *Shogi* magazine as a PDF download.

Tel: +44 (0)1234 211 286

E-mail: George.hodges@talk21.com

* **Kurokigoishi Shop** – suppliers of Oriental board games, including Shogi (**Masters** may be able to supply in the U.K.):

<http://shop.kurokigoishi.co.jp/en/category/10>

* **Masters Traditional Games** – suppliers of Oriental board games, including Shogi:

<https://www.mastersofgames.com/>

* **Nekomado Online Shop** – suppliers of books and Shogi equipment:

<http://shop.nekomado.com/>

Schaak en Go winkel het Paard – suppliers of books and Shogi equipment:

<https://www.schaakengo.nl/goshop-keima/shogi-889416/>

Yutopian Enterprises:

<http://www.yutopian.com>

Ohishi-Tengudo Corporation – suppliers of high quality Shogi equipment:

<http://go.tengudo.jp/english/shogi.html>

Kiseido – suppliers of high quality Shogi equipment:

http://www.kiseidopublishing.com/shogi/shogi_equipment.htm

Tendo Sato Kei Shoten – suppliers of high quality Shogi equipment:

<http://shogi-koma.jp/index.html>

Horikoshi – suppliers of high quality Shogi equipment:

<http://www.shogi-horikoshi.com/>

The Shogi Game Store – suppliers of high quality Shogi equipment:

<http://www5b.biglobe.ne.jp/~goban/english@shogi@version.html>

Japanese Games Shop – suppliers of books and Shogi equipment:

<http://japanese-games-shop.com/>

[no longer trading?]

* **Pentangle Puzzles and Games** – suppliers of Shogi, Go and Xiang-chi equipment:

<http://www.pentangle-puzzles.co.uk/>

[no longer trading?]

Please note that I have no connection with, or financial interest in any of the organisations listed above. The information provided is based on the latest information I have from these organisations. For fuller information please contact the organisations direct.

Downloadable and printable Shogi sets.

If you want to 'do-it-yourself', I have created a set of templates for a simple Shogi board and pieces. These templates can be downloaded from:

<https://tinyurl.com/RogersShogiArchive>⁴⁴

Download the file:

DIY Shogi set.pdf

When making a Shogi set with these templates, I recommend using double-sided adhesive tape to make the board and pieces. You can also make a laminated board if you have access to a laminating machine.

You can use glue⁴⁵ – if you do, use good quality glue to stick the pieces and board to good quality mounting card. Trim the board, if desired, with a craft knife, and use sharp scissors to cut the pieces to shape, and you can make a very acceptable set. Try not to get air-bubbles/wrinkles when you offer the templates to the card. I use a rolling pin to flatten the templates to the card and to squeeze out excess glue.

⁴⁴ This is a DropBox folder. The full URL is:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/2wicm2bnw5lv3t0/AADyepK_y_3e819UAbwJJoza?dl=0

⁴⁵ See http://www.edenworkshops.com/Bookbinding_Adhesives.html for a serious discussion of what sort of glue to use. I use PVA craft glue or 3M PhotoMount. Don't use cheap glue – it can be difficult to apply evenly, and will bleed through the paper template and 'stain' the set...

Bibliography and other Shogi resources.

Items in my possession, or consulted by myself have been given a 'star rating' – maximum 5 stars – this is of course, entirely subjective, you may think differently!

Books.

Better Moves for Better Shogi, Teruichi Aono, (trans. John Fairbairn), Man to Man Books, 1983, 2377-906053-2732. ★★★★★

Guide to Shogi Openings, Teruichi Aono (trans. John Fairbairn), Man to Man Books, 1983, 2377-906052-2732. ★★★★★

Tsume Puzzles for Japanese Chess, T Gene Davis, 2011, 146369055X. ★★★★★★

Shogi – How to Play, John Fairbairn, The Shogi Association, 1979. ★★★★★★ (rare)

Shogi for Beginners, John Fairbairn, The Ishi Press, 1989, 4-87187-201-7.⁴⁶ ★★★★★★

Habu's Words, Y Habu, The Shogi Foundation, 2000, 0 9531089 2 9. ★★★★★★

Masters of Shogi, Y Habu & Tony Hosking, The Shogi Foundation, 978 09531089 4 7. ★★★★★★

⁴⁶*Shogi for Beginners* is available in PDF format from at least one paid-for e-book service on the internet. The monthly subscription rate is more expensive than buying the book outright. Seems like a no-brainer to me...

4 Great Games, Tony Hosking, The Shogi Foundation, 1998, 0 9531089 1 0. The games are: Chess, Shogi, Go and Xiang ch'i. ★★★★★

The Art of Shogi, Tony Hosking, The Shogi Foundation, March 1997. ★★★★★

Classic Shogi, Tony Hosking, The Shogi Foundation, 2006, 0 9531089 3 7. ★★★★★

Ending Attack Techniques, Takashi Kaneko (trans. Tomohide Kawasaki), Nekomado, 2012, 978-4-905225-03-4. ★★★★★★

Storming the Mino Castle, Takashi Kaneko, (trans. Richard Sams), Nekomado, 2013, 978-4-905225-05-8. ★★★★★★

Joseki at a Glance, Madoka Kitao (trans. Tomohide Kawasaki), At a Glance Series, 2011, 978-4-9052-2501-0. ★★★★★★

Edge Attack at a Glance, Madoka Kitao, (trans. Tomohide Kawasaki), At a Glance Series, 2012, 978-4-9052-2502-7. ★★★★★★

Sabaki at a Glance, Madoka Kitao (trans. Tomohide Kawasaki), At a Glance Series, 2013, 978-4-9052-2510-2. ★★★★★★

Ending Attack at a Glance, Madoka Kitao (trans. Tomohide Kawasaki), At a Glance Series, 2014, 978-4-9052-2513-3. ★★★★★★

Japanese-English Shogi Dictionary, Tomohide Kawasaki (a.k.a. Hidetchi), 2013, Nekomado, 978-4-9052-2508-9. ★★★★★

Japanese Chess: The Game of Shogi, E. Ohara and Lindsay Parrott. Has received a very poor review on Amazon.com.

First Step To Shogi, Space Sano, Oyama Memorial Museum, 1995.

Shogi – Japan's Game of Strategy, Trevor Leggett, Charles E Tuttle Company, 1966. Re-published as *Japanese Chess*, 2009, 978-4-8053-1036-6. **Avoid this one!** Truly awful diagrams, the notation system is a mess, contains at least one major/vital error and the advice given is usually highly suspect. ★★★★★

The following items contain articles or chapters of greater or lesser depth pertaining to Shogi and/or Shogi variants. The star rating reflects both the quality and quantity of material on Shogi:

Board and Table Games from Many Civilizations, R C Bell, Dover, 1979, 0-486-23855-5. ★★★★★

Games Ancient and Oriental and How to Play Them, Edward Falkener, Dover, 1961 (originally published 1892), 486-20739-0. Of historical interest, but like many early publications, contains mistakes. ★★★★★

Chess Variations, John Gollon, Charles E Tuttle Company, 1985, 0-8048-1122-9. ★★★★★

The Great Shogi Games, George Hodges, The Shogi Association, 1978. ★★★★★ A description of Shogi variants larger than 15x15 squares. (rare)

A History of Chess, H J R Murray, Skyhorse Publishing, 2012 (originally published 1913). Of historical interest, but like many early publications, contains mistakes. ★★★★★

The Encyclopaedia of Chess Variants, David Pritchard, available as a PDF from <https://www.jsbeasley.co.uk>. Contains a small amount of Shogi material of mixed quality. ★★★★★

Oriental Board Games, David Pritchard, Know The Game Series, 1977, 0-7158-0524-X. By the same author as *ECV*. **Avoid this one!** The same awful diagrams as Leggett, there is no notation system, contains many errors, and the advice given is usually highly suspect. ★★★★★

New rules for classic games, R. Wayne Schmittberger, Wiley, 1992, 0471536210. Reputed to contain a good description of the rules of Chu-Shogi – I haven't seen this one myself.

The History of Shogi.

The history of Shogi is outlined in the April 1999 issue of the Japan Foundation Newsletter. This can be found here:

https://web.archive.org/web/20151105233924if_/http://www.jpf.go.jp/j/publish/periodic/jfn/pdf/jfn26_5.pdf

The Wikipedia article 'History of Shogi' is also of interest:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_shogi

Three short articles from Variant Chess magazine:

Masukawa, K., *A Brief Introduction to the History of Japanese Chess*, Variant Chess No. 9, Jan-Mar 1993, pp 4-7.

Masukawa, K., *Oldest Shogi Men Discovered*, Variant Chess No. 10, Apr-Jun 1993, p 21.

Masukawa, K., *The Origin of Japanese Chess*, Variant Chess No. 15, Oct-Dec 1994, pp 100-104.

Magazines.

Here, the star rating reflects both the quality and quantity of the Shogi content.

The late George Hodges published *Shogi* magazine from 1978-1986. A complete run of the 70 issues of the magazine is now available as a paid-for zipped

download. To get details of how to access these magazines, go to:

<https://tinyurl.com/ShogiPriceList>

and use the contact details you will find there.

This is a very valuable archive of Shogi material in English. ★★★★★

In the UK, The British Shogi Federation (BSF) published a magazine – *Shoten* – on a quarterly basis. I have numbers 38-61 inclusive. ★★★★★

In the USA, The Ishi Press published a quarterly magazine, *Shogi World* in the late 1980s-early 1990s. I have numbers 1-9 inclusive. ★★★★★

Variant Chess magazine was published in the U.K. From 1990 to 2010. Contains several Shogi-related articles of mixed quality. Diagrams usually show rather silly 'westernised' forms of the pieces. Available as a single 1200 page download, or as individual issues from <https://www.jsbeasley.co.uk>. ★★★★★

Other Literature.

Zen Culture, Thomas Hoover

Heihō Kadensho (A Hereditary Book on the Art of War),
Yagyū Munenori

Go Rin No Sho (A Book of Five Rings), Miyamoto
Musashi

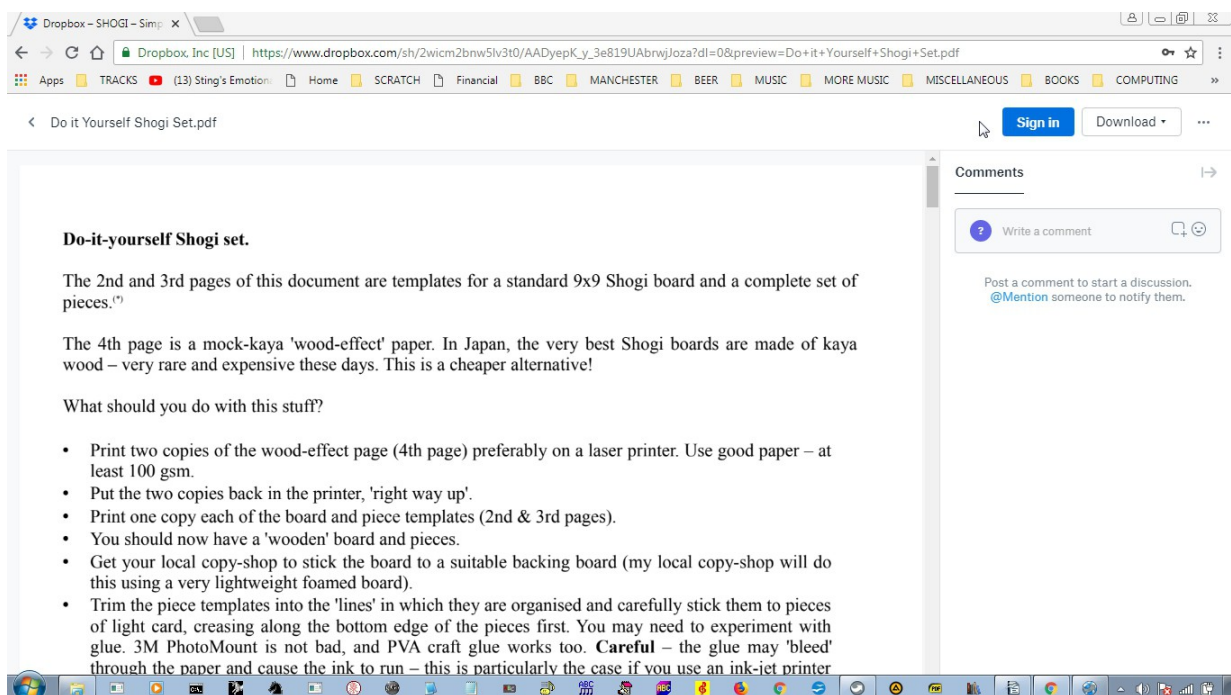
Shogi on the Internet.

Dropbox Archive.

In October 2018, I created a Dropbox archive of Shogi material. This is located at:

<https://tinyurl.com/RogersShogiArchive>⁴⁷

When you connect to this shared folder, you should see a list of the contents of the folder – simply click on the required item and then on the Download button which should be visible at top right. Then click on 'Direct download' and select the location for the file.



If you do not select an individual document and simply click the Download button when the DropBox page first appears, you should get a zipped download of all the

⁴⁷ The full Dropbox URL is::

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/2wicm2bnw5lv3t0/AADyepK_y_3e819UAbwJJoza?dl=0

documents in the folder (*warning* – this may be a large download).

There is a wide range of Shogi related material here, including: a README file; paper templates for DIY sets for Shogi and some of the Shogi variants; plus a selection of edited digests of articles from magazines (including *Shogi* magazine) which cover many aspects of Shogi including Openings, Castles and castling, Shogi proverbs, *tsume-shogi*; other oriental board games; etc. Please browse and help yourself – that's what it's there for.

Copyright material is included with the permission of the copyright holder – where I have been able to contact the copyright owner.

Please explore this resource and let me have feed-back – this will help me improve the archive.

Google Drive Archive.

There is now an experimental 'mirror' of the Dropbox archive:

<https://tinyurl.com/GoogleShogiArchive>

If there are any problems with this, please let me know.

Wikipedia.

There is a great deal of information about Shogi on Wikipedia (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia>).

The entry-level Shogi listing is at:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shogi>

The Shogi information on Wikipedia is widely dispersed. This is not a criticism, but an observation – this is just the way Wikipedia works. The information is an *extremely* valuable resource. You will need to start Wikipedia and then enter the Shogi term in which you are interested into the Wikipedia search box. Try 'Shogi opening', 'Shogi castle', 'Shogi tesuji', etc.

If you understand Japanese, you are laughing! [Japanese Wikipedia](#) has a wealth of articles on Shogi.

If you do not understand Japanese, the English language pages mentioned above are very good – they are not direct translations of the Japanese pages, but there is usually an English page corresponding to each Japanese page, and the information on each page is pretty much the same.

Internet fora and Web sites.

Internet fora come and go – unfortunately. Websites which are largely information-only tend to be a little more permanent. Those listed below are available at the

time of writing (see front cover for date). Traffic is low on the first four internet fora. The remaining URLs are basically information-only web sites.

Google Groups Shogi-L group. Based (I think) on the original Shogi-L 'newsgroup' which flourished in the 1990's:

<https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/shogi-l>

81Dojo World Shogi Forum:

<https://system.81dojo.com/en/forums>

There is also a Reddit Shogi forum:

<https://www.reddit.com/r/shogi/>

BoardGameGeek has a Shogi forum:

<https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/2065/shogi>

Shogi.net. Contains teaching information, Shogi variant web pages, etc. Not very active:

<http://www.shogi.net/shogi.html>

Shogi.net proverbs pages. Contains list of Shogi proverbs and explanatory notes and diagrams illustrating the proverbs 'in use':

<http://www.shogi.net/kakugen/>

Reijer Grimbergen's web page. Contains download instructions for Shogidokoro and for the Spear engine, plus some archived games:

<http://www2.teu.ac.jp/gamelab/>

Eric Cheymol's web page. Contains Larry Kaufman's handicap notes plus some archived games:

<http://eric.macshogi.com/>

A modern Shogi diagram generator – used for many of the diagrams in this document:

<http://wormz.free.fr/kifugen/>

British Shogi Federation/Shogi London web pages:

<https://shogilondon.blogspot.com/>

http://www.kittywompus.com/shogi/other_uk_shogi_events/

Defunct web sites.

81 Square Universe. Disappeared *ca.* 2015. Contained active mail fora, lessons, videos, etc. Was a good place to find out more about WinBoard, amongst other things:

<http://81squareuniverse.com/>

Playing Shogi on the Internet.

I'm not really familiar with playing Shogi 'live' (or otherwise) *via* the internet – I'm an 'across-the-board' player, but I have listed a couple of sites where this is possible:

Shogi Playground Live.

This site allows play without any formal registration, subscription, or divulging of personal information. It appears to do this by allowing a player to start a game, and allocating a unique URL to that game, which the player then shares with the opponent. The site is minimalist in its presentation, while at the same time being flexible enough to allow personalisation of boards and pieces in the display. The site is here:

<https://live.mogproject.com/>

and the documentation here:

<https://mog-playground-docs.readthedocs.io/en/latest/>

81 Dojo.

Besides a Shogi forum (p. 197), the 81 Dojo web site also hosts an interactive Shogi application:

<https://81dojo.com/en/>

Videos.

In February 2020, lady professional Karolina Styczyńska (5-*dan*) inaugurated a series of videos entitled 'Road to Shodan'. The first four of these can be seen at:

<https://youtu.be/bmH2hqRyR8A> (Weak King falls easily)

<https://youtu.be/nrS3WnnWA6Qv> (Fighting Anaguma)

<https://youtu.be/VOXX67hAHuM> (Beating your rival)

<https://youtu.be/lfExOhAJmsw> (Fooling the opponent)

Typically, these themed videos last approximately 40 minutes – highly recommended.

The whole series, which also includes an Introduction to Shogi, a discussion of Shogi notation, plus analyses of some professional games is available on the Shogi Harbour channel:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRnXG7CkKfEN6IINKcO_uBg

In mid 2019, Chess Grandmaster Matthew Sadler and Women's International Master Natasha Regan produced an introductory Shogi video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=At6KWe7bCbg>

This lasts about 45 minutes and is an excellent introduction to the game.

The second video in this series is at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eu6kRSkjp64>

Another good source of Shogi videos is Hidetchi's YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/HIDETCHI>

The channel includes a useful series of 40 short video films teaching the basic aspects of Shogi. Also included are series relating to Shogi Openings, Famous Shogi Games and Tsume Shogi.

Connect to YouTube and enter 'hidetchi shogi lessons' into the search box and you should see the teaching videos listed.

There is a lot more Shogi material on YouTube.

Afterword.

This is the end of the *Basic Introduction to Shogi* – where do you go from here?

Get hold of some of the books mentioned in the text, and in the bibliography, and take your study of Shogi further.

To get you one step further down the road, here are a few suggestions for castles you might adopt in any of the four types of game. These castles are named only, no detail is given, accompanying strategies (*joseki*) are not mentioned and *Gote's* possible response not given. Neither the middle game or end game are mentioned. All of these topics are left as an exercise for the student.

Double Static Rook:

Sente plays Crab or Gold Yagura

Static Rook vs. Ranging Rook:

Sente plays Boat or Anaguma

Ranging Rook vs. Static Rook:

Sente plays Mino, High Mino, Silver Crown or Anaguma

Double Ranging Rook:

Sente plays Kin Musou (Peerless Golds) or Right Yagura, and less frequently Mino or Anaguma

This gives us a basic set of castles to 'learn' – here they are in what is (possibly) the best order in which to learn them:

Gold Yagura (*Kin Yagura*)

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
		歩	歩						f
歩	歩	銀	金	歩					g
	玉	金	角						h
香	桂								i

Mino (*Minogakoi*)

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
								歩	f
				歩	歩	歩	歩		g
			飛	金		銀	玉		h
					金		桂	香	i

Boat Castle (*Funagakoi*)

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
		歩		歩					f
歩	歩		歩						g
	角	玉		金					h
香	桂	銀	金						i

Right Yagura (*Migi Yagura*)

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
				歩	歩	歩			f
					金	銀	歩	歩	g
						金	玉		h
							桂	香	i

Crab Castle (*Kanigakoi*)

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
歩		歩		歩					f
	歩		歩						g
		金	銀	金					h
香	桂		玉						i

High Mino (*Taka Mino*)

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
				步	步	步		步	f
			●		金	桂	步		g
						銀	玉		h
					金			香	i

Silver Crown (*Gin Kanmuri*)

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
				步	步	步	步	步	f
			●		金	桂	銀		g
						金	玉		h
								香	i

Bear in the hole (*Anaguma*)

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
			●		步	步	步	步	g
						金	銀	香	h
						金	桂	玉	i

Peerless Golds (*Kin Musou*)

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
								歩	f
			●	歩	歩	歩	歩		g
				金	金	玉	銀		h
							桂	香	i

You will also learn that there are relationships between the castles. For example, Crab castle can evolve into Yagura; a natural progression is to move from Mino to High Mino to Silver Crown. There are many such evolutionary developments in Shogi castles.

Of course, *Sente* will vary the castle used depending on the castle chosen by *Gote* – again learning all this material is left as an exercise for the student.

Appendix A – A do-it-yourself Shogi set.

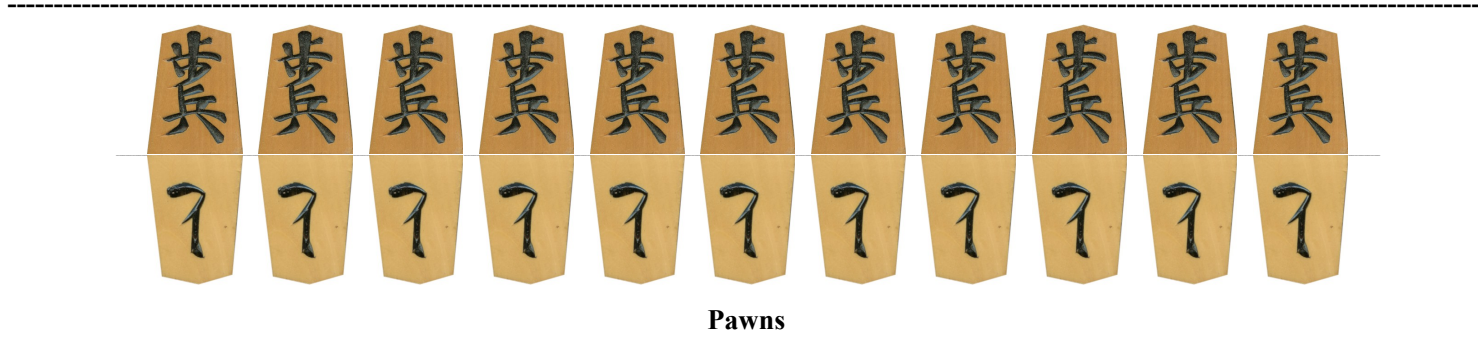
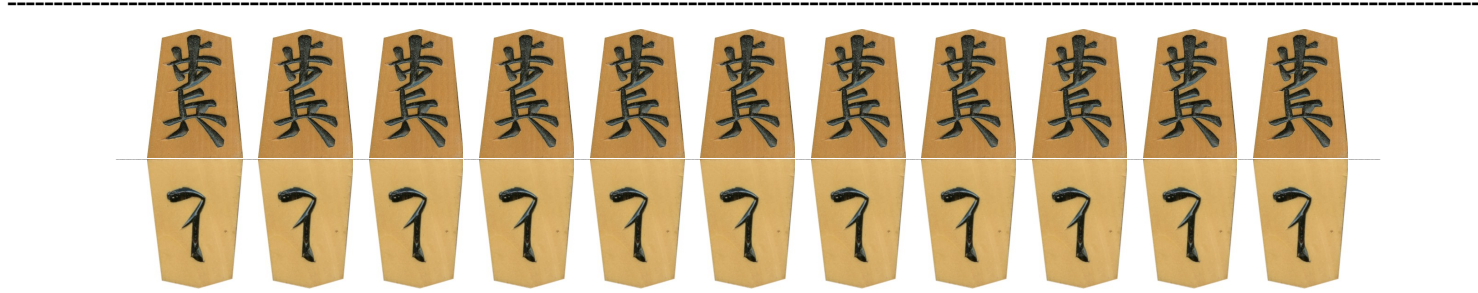
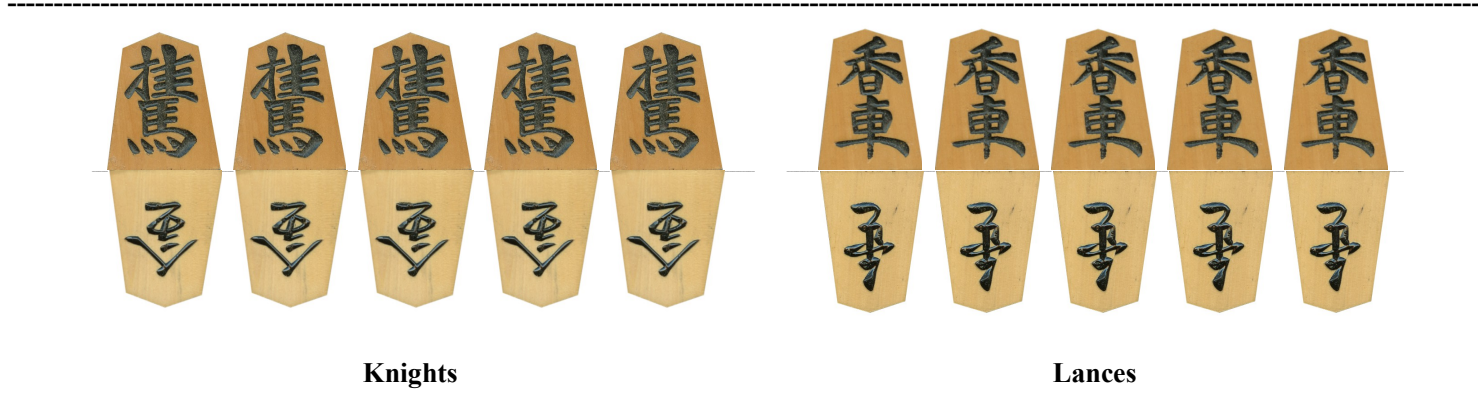
To make a miniature Shogi set. Optional steps are shaded:

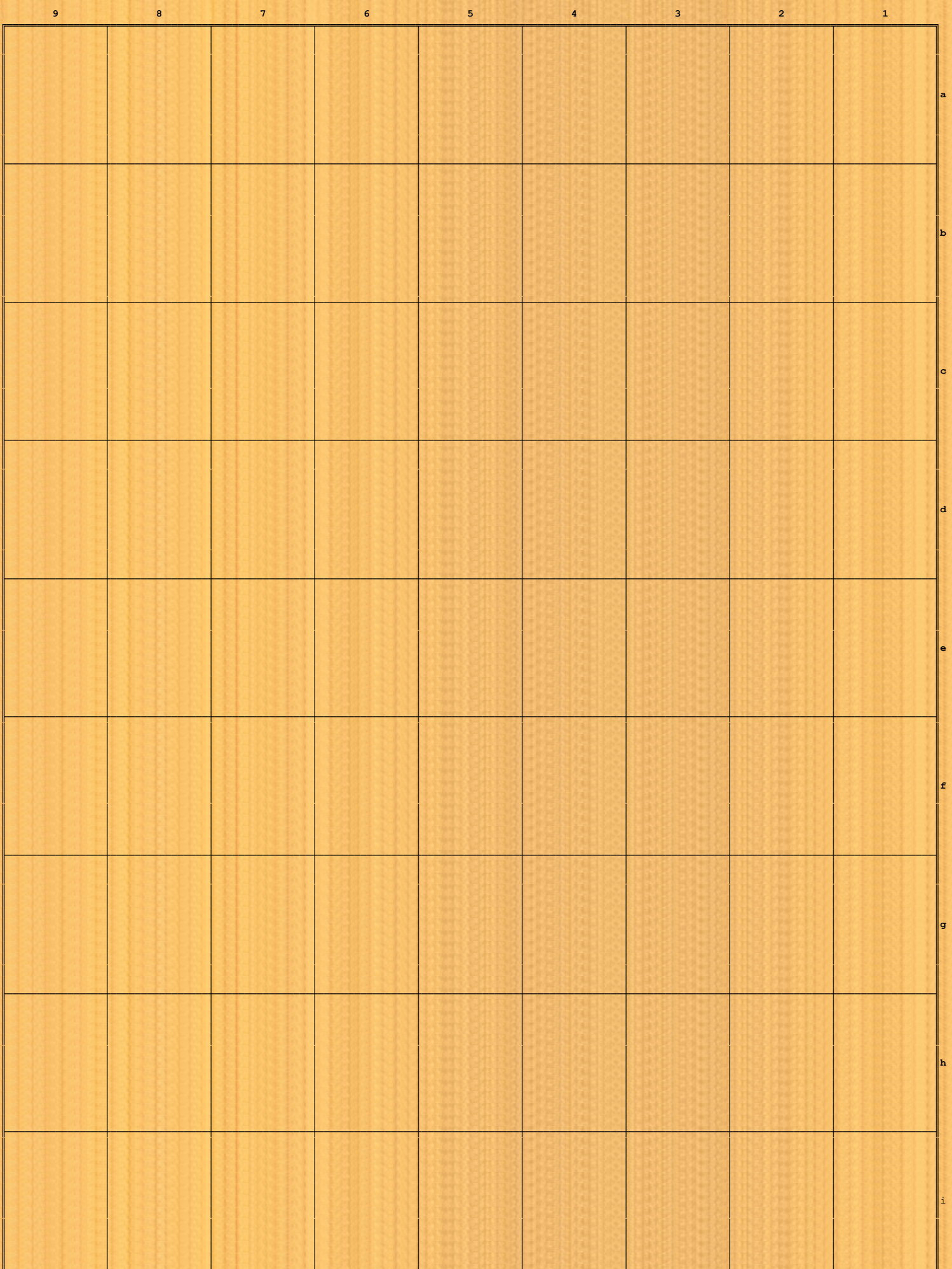
1. Print the next two pages on to 160-210 gsm white card.
2. Cut the piece templates into the strips in which they are arranged. Lightly score the strips along the dividing line joining the bottom of the pieces. Now fold firmly, and carefully stick the folded strips together 'back-to-back' using double-sided adhesive tape. Carefully cut out the pieces with sharp scissors
3. To get a more robust board, optionally stick the board to heavy-duty mounting card – use double-sided adhesive tape. Trim the board to size with a sharp (craft) knife.
4. With a little care, using *good quality* materials, you can produce a very effective Shogi set. I *strongly* recommend using double-sided adhesive tape for this project. You can use glue, but **beware** – if you *do* use glue, and use thinner paper/card, the glue will probably 'bleed' through the paper and cause the ink to run.

You can find more do-it-yourself sets in my Shogi Dropbox archive: <https://tinyurl.com/RogersShogiArchive>. There are several options, including a full-size set, and sets with several different piece styles.

Do use good quality materials. In the U.K, you can buy wide (Unibond brand, 5m x 38mm) double-sided adhesive tape (for the board) from B&M stores; narrow (8m x 18mm) double-sided adhesive tape (for the pieces) from The Works stores; and white mounting card and white 160-210 gsm card from Hobbycraft stores.

Shogi Pieces – a wooden set from approx. 1968. There are a few spares!





Appendix B – The Last Word – What the Critics say

A few comments from readers of the Introduction, and users of materials in my Shogi archive (see below):

...the pdf download of "A Brief Introduction to Shogi" appears to be exactly what I was looking for...

...This is awesome...

...Great Archive! The quality of the PDF documents is superb!...

...amazing! Appreciate that you share your work...

...I really appreciate this!...

...Thank you, what a great resource...

...thank you for making so much content available in a very readable PDF format...

...What an absolutely fantastic resource you have posted. With emphasis, **thank you**...

...Thank you...It's a great resource...

...thank you for the fantastic document you have produced, and for making it readily available...

...Fabulous resources...congratulations on your splendid work...

...Thanks a lot for your archive! It's been a great resource...

My Shogi archive can be found at:

<https://tinyurl.com/RogersShogiArchive>

And, finally, on a page all of its very own, my **all-time favourite** – from one of the self-appointed and patronising 'elite' who produce Komic Kuts Kiddie Kartoons as an alternatives to real Shogi pieces because they think that Shogi *kanji* are 'too hard for Westerners to learn'. I guess this is my Shogi 'Badge of Shame'? If it is, I shall wear it with pride! Thank you **couchtomato87** – I hope you enjoy the privilege of having the **very last word** in the 'book':

...Oh brother. It's because of people like **captbirdseye** that the international shogi community is as small as it is today...