

FURTHER INFORMATION

Information on this game in printed works is scant. Botermans (see below) has the most complete information, but still lacks some detail. Books that mention the game include the following.

Bell, R. C. *Board and Table Games from Many Civilizations*, vol. i p. 42. New York: Dover Publications, Inc. 1979.

Botermans, J. et al. *The World of Games*, pp. 35-37. New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1989.

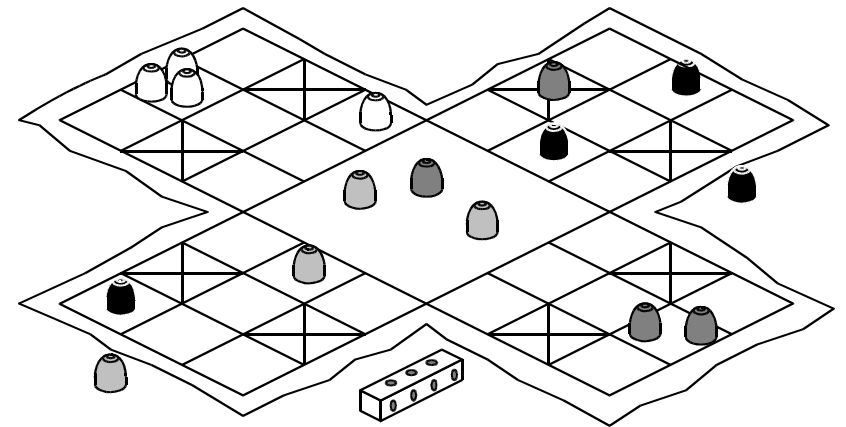
Murray, H. J. R. *A History of Board-Games Other Than Chess*, p. 36. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952.

Parlett, D. *The Oxford History of Board Games*, p. 43. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

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T'SHU-P'U

by Damian Walker



INTRODUCTION & HISTORY

T'shu-p'u is a race game played on a small cross-shaped board. It is a Chinese version of the various cross-shaped race games played in India, and is very old. It is a partnership game, where four players compete in two teams of two.

Some Chinese sources claim

that the game was introduced in about 2300 B.C., but the game is not really this old. A more recent Chinese source, dated to the Sung dynasty (A.D. 960 to 1279) says the game was introduced to China from India between A.D. 220 and 265. It was popular until about A.D. 1000.

HOW TO PLAY

There is some disagreement among various books about exactly how t'shu-p'u is played. As the game is a member of the Indian *chaupar* family, some rules of *chaupar* have been adopted when it is unclear how the rule should stand in t'shu-p'u.

Setting up the Game

1. T'shu-p'u is played by four players in two teams. Red and green players oppose yellow and black. The members of each team sit opposite one another.

2. The board is a cross with one large square in the centre, and the

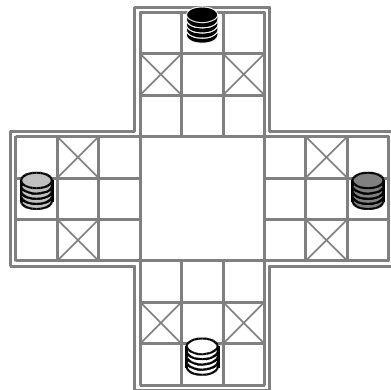


Illustration 1: t'shu-p'u with the pieces set out for play.

arms formed of nine squares, arrayed three by three. Squares in the edges of each arm are given cross-cut markings: see Illustration 1.

3. Each player has four pieces of his own colour, starting on the central square of his end of the cross as shown in Illustration 1. There are two four-sided dice, numbered 1, 3, 4 and 6.

4. Players decide by agreement or at random who starts the game. Play then proceeds clockwise around the board.

Moving the Pieces

5. A player begins his turn by throwing the two dice. He then

moves one or two of his pieces around the edge of the board in an anti-clockwise direction indicated in Illustration 2, according to the throw of the dice:

- (i). one piece can be moved around the course the total number of squares shown on the two dice;
- (ii). alternatively, the value shown on each die can be used to move a separate piece by the indicated number of spaces.

6. The central square may only be entered by an exact throw.

Capturing Enemies

7. If a player lands his piece on a square occupied by one or more enemy pieces, those pieces are *hit* and taken into their owners' hands.

8. A player cannot land on a cross-cut square if there are any enemy pieces upon it.

9. All players

may land on the central square without hitting or being hit by enemy pieces.

10. A player with a piece in hand may re-enter it onto the board via the starting square, according to the throw of the dice on his own turn:

- (i). for instance, with a throw of 1 the piece is placed on the starting square;
- (ii). with a throw of 3 the piece is advanced to the first cross-cut square in its course, and so on.

Winning the Game

11. During his move a player may use a throw of 1 to bear a piece off from the central square. It has then completed its course and is removed from the game.

12. A team wins all of its pieces have been borne off the board.

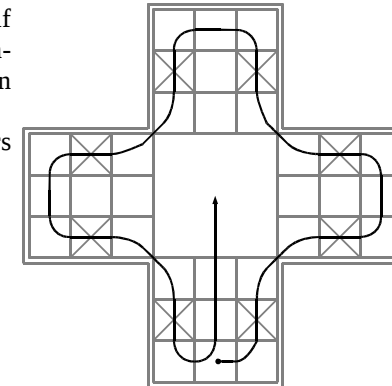


Illustration 2: the point of entry and direction of movement for the south player. Other players' paths are rotated so the point of entry is at their own side of the board.