

if those squares are occupied.

15. If a player has captured both enemy kings, he may demand the release of his ally's king, to be replaced on the board as above.

16. If a pawn reaches an unmarked square at the end of the board, it is promoted to whatever piece started on that file, be it a horse or an elephant. This may only be done if a pawn has already been lost; otherwise a pawn may not move to the end of the board.

17. If, however, the player has

only a boat and a pawn left, then the pawn becomes "privileged", and on reaching any square at the end of the board, may promote to any piece at the choice of its owner.

Ending the Game

18. A partnership wins the game if their forces are the last remaining on the board.

19. If only kings are left on the board then the players are said to have fought to an "honourable peace", and the game is drawn.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The reader can learn more about this fascinating game from the following books:

Bell, R. C. *Discovering Old Board Games*, pp. 21-24. Aylesbury: Shire Publications, Ltd., 1973.

Murray, H. J. R. *A History of Chess*, pp. 57-59 & 68-77. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1913.

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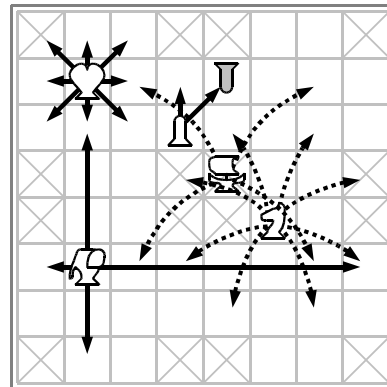
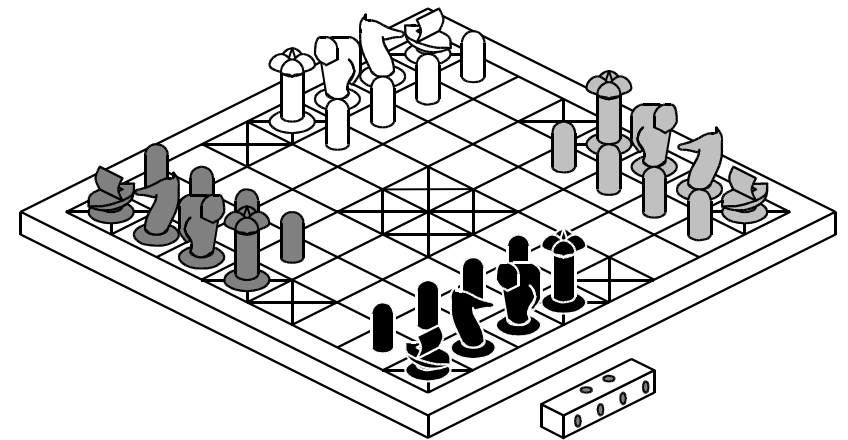


Illustration 3: moves of the pieces.

FOUR-HANDED INDIAN DICE CHESS

by Damian Walker



Board Games at  CYNNINGSTAN
Traditional Board Game Series
(Second Edition)
Leaflet #23

INTRODUCTION & HISTORY

Once considered as the original game of chess, this four handed Indian variant is now thought to be a later development. It has been extremely long-lived, however, being seen at various times from the elev-

enth until the twentieth century, more recent variants being played without dice. With modern worldwide communications, it is gaining a new lease of life.

HOW TO PLAY

The rules of the traditional dice game are not altogether certain, and some variants are very complex. The rules given here are a combination of the simplest and most elegant ideas put forward by chess historians.

Starting the Game

1. The game is played on an 8x8 square board with some squares marked as shown in Illustration 1.

2. Four players play as partnerships, red and yellow against green and black. Partners sit opposite each other.

3. Each player has a king, an elephant, a horse, a boat and four soldiers, set out as shown in Illustration 2.

4. Movement is controlled by a

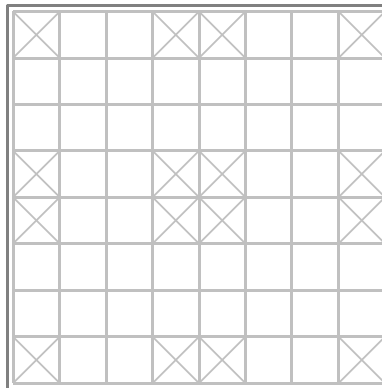


Illustration 1: the empty chess board.

single 4-sided die bearing the numbers 2, 3, 4 and 5.

5. Players roll the die, he who rolls the highest goes first and takes the number as his first roll. Play then moves clockwise around the board.

Moving the Pieces

6. The player whose turn it is rolls the die, unless he has already done so as described in rule 5.

7. If a 2 is rolled, the boat may move; if 3, the horse; if 4, the elephant; if 5, the king or a pawn. If movement of the indicated piece is impossible, the turn is lost.

8. The pieces move as shown in Illustration 3, and described in the following paragraphs:

(i). the boat moves two squares diagonally, jumping over any intervening piece;

(ii). the horse moves one square diagonally then one square horizontally or vertically away from its starting point, jumping over any intervening piece;

(iii). the elephant moves horizontally or vertically as far as its owner wishes, though it may not jump over other pieces;

(iv). the king moves one step in any direction, horizontally, vertically or diagonally;

(v). the pawn moves one step forward, unless it is capturing, as described in rule 11.

Capturing Enemies

9. If a king, elephant or knight, in its normal course of movement, lands on another player's piece, that piece is captured and removed from the board. Kings may be captured like any other piece, and a player may capture his ally's pieces.

10. A boat may likewise capture other players' pawns, or boats, but not their elephants, knights or

kings.

11. A pawn captures another player's pawn or boat by moving forward diagonally one space. It may not capture elephants, knights or kings.

12. If a player's boat comes to rest beside the other three boats, those other boats are all captured and removed from the board. This is called the "triumph of the boat".

13. If a player lands his king on his ally king's starting square, then he has "gained a throne"; he takes control of his ally's army. Thereafter, he may use his roll to move an ally's piece, or vice versa. This does not count if an enemy throne is gained; that enemy may continue to move as normal.

14. If one player from each partnership has captured the other enemy's king, e.g. if black has captured red's king and yellow has captured green's king, then the capturing players may agree to an "exchange of kings". The captured kings are then returned to their owners, and placed on their starting squares, or as near as possible

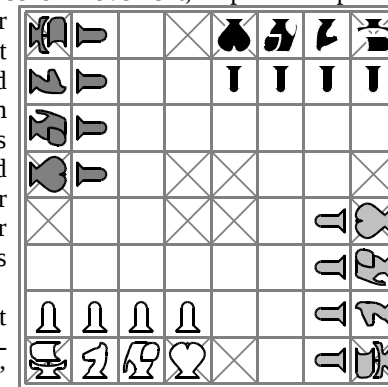


Illustration 2: pieces set out for play. From the bottom left the white pieces are the boat, horse, elephant and king, with the pawns lined up in front.