

About this Booklet

How to Print:

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

Do not print Page 1 (these instructions).

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

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

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

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Winning the Game

The game is won, as in other forms of chess, by putting the opposing king into a position of being threatened with capture (check), and unable to move to safety – checkmate (Mongolian: *Mat*). However, in Shatar, some very peculiar restrictions apply:

When the king is threatened by a queen, rook or knight, it is called *Shak*. When threatened by a bishop, it is called *Tuk*; and when threatened by a pawn, it is called *Tsod*. These all correspond to what we call “check,” and the threatened player is obliged to move so that his King is no longer under attack.

But in order to win the game, the attacking player must use *Shak* (check by queen, rook or knight), either in the final checkmating move, or in the series of checks that leads directly to checkmate.

To make matters more peculiar, the *final* move, which delivers checkmate, can not be made by a knight – or the game is drawn.

Drawing the Game

There are a few ways the game can end with no winner:
if a king is checkmated with a knight giving the final check;
if there is no “*Shak*” check given in the final checkmating sequence;
if one player is left with only a king, and no other pieces;
if both players agree that no win will be possible.



Background

This pamphlet was compiled with the help of H. J. R. Murray's *A History of Chess*, D.B. Pritchard's *Encyclopedia of Chess Variants*, and the following web sites:

<http://history.chess.free.fr/shatar.htm>

<http://www.geocities.com/kisslook/eng/mongeng.html>

<http://www.geocities.com/Colosseum/Field/2900/shataren.htm>

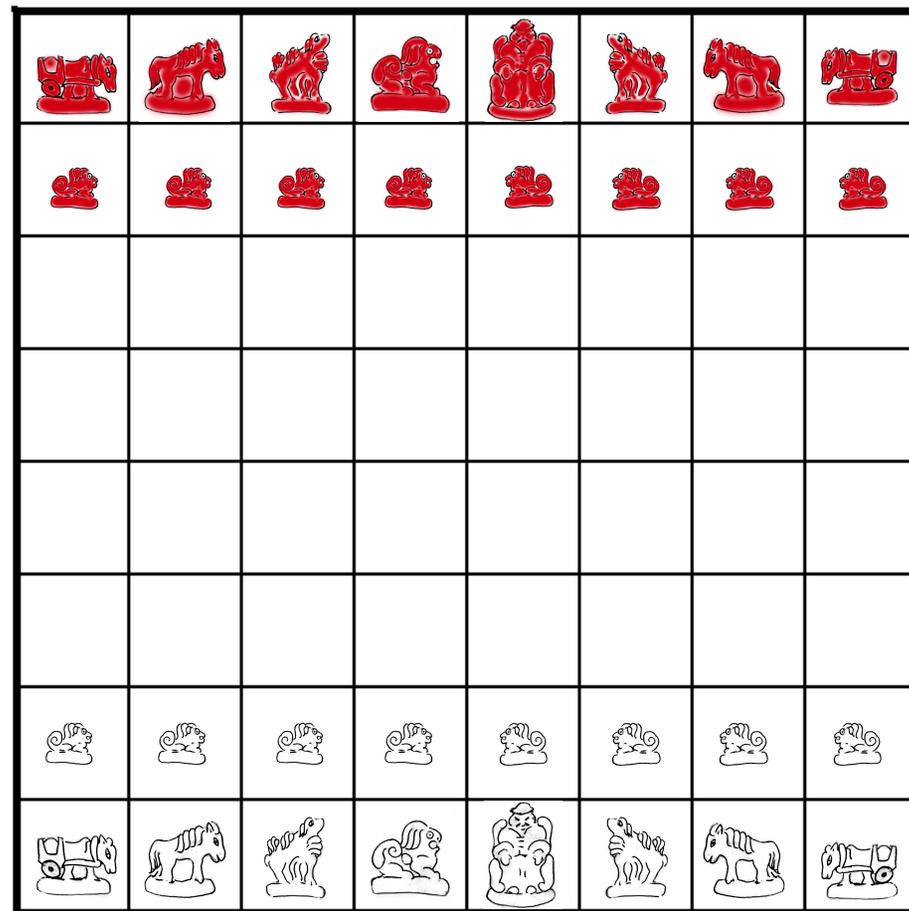
Further information

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Shatar



Mongolian Chess

The traditional chess of the Mongols

For information about Chess Variants throughout the world and free copies of this booklet, visit www.AncientChess.com

Shatar

It was probably during the 13th century raids against the Arabs that the Mongols first adopted the game of chess. The Mongol game, *Shatar*, takes its name from the Arabic *Shatranj*. Since that time, Mongolian chess has followed a unique pattern of evolution, mixing ancient, modern and characteristically Mongolian influences.

The Pieces



The Shatar playing pieces show an unusual degree of artistic originality. The piece which corresponds to our chess king – **Noyon** – is usually depicted by a prince seated on a throne. But the queen – **Bers**, meaning “snow panther” –



may be depicted as a mythical lion, a tiger, a snow panther or a bull. The piece corresponding to the western bishop is a two-humped camel – **Teme**.



And the piece corresponding to our knight is, not surprisingly, a horse – **Mori**. But a great deal of creative latitude is given to depiction of the Mongol rook –



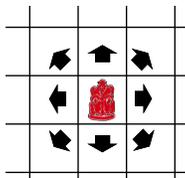
Tereg, which means “cart.” This piece may be represented by a horse-drawn cart, a portable tent, a cart wheel, a karmic wheel, an Asian swastika, a yin-yang symbol, a



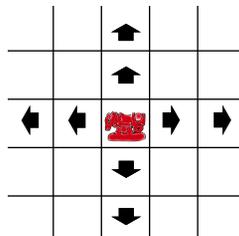
truck, an automobile, or even a bunch of flowers or peacock feathers. The pawn – **Fu**, meaning “child” – is always smaller than the other pieces, and it can look like just about anything. It can be a smaller mythic lion, a soldier, a smaller horse, a chicken, a rabbit, or just about any small person or animal.

The Moves

The moves of the Mongolian chess pieces are an interesting combination of modern, ancient and uniquely Mongolian.

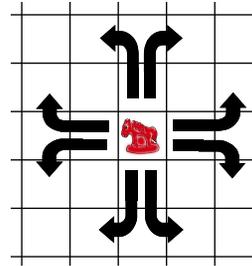


The **King (Noyon)** moves one space in any direction.

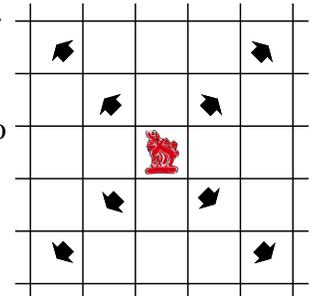


The **Rook (Tereg)** moves as many squares as it wishes forward, backward, left or right, until it reaches another piece or the end of the board. Exactly like our western rook.

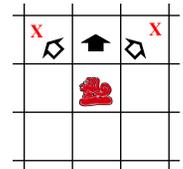
The **Bishop (Teme)** moves just like our western bishop: any number of squares diagonally, as long as its path is clear of other pieces.



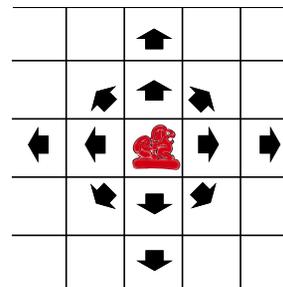
The **Knight (Mori)** also moves like its western counterpart: two spaces forward, backward, right or left, plus one square at a right angle. It can not be blocked by another piece.



The move of the **Pawn (Fu)** is like that of the ancient pawn. It moves one square forward when not capturing, but captures by moving one square forward/diagonally. Unlike the modern western pawn, it has no option of moving two squares on its first move – *except* in the opening move of the game (described below). When the pawn reaches the far end of the board it **promotes**, becoming a Queen (Bers).



The **Queen (Bers)** has a move very rarely seen in the wide world of chess. It may move like a rook, as far as it likes along any clear path, forward, backward, left or right. Or it may move like a king, one space in any direction.



All pieces **capture** by landing on the square of an opposing piece, and removing the enemy piece from the board. Only the pawn has a special move for capturing (shown above). All others capture using their normal moves.

How the Game is Played

The pieces are arranged as shown on the front of this booklet, in the same configuration as modern western chess. The two kings must face each other directly across the board. Either player may make the first move. The first player must start by moving the pawn which stands in front of his queen forward two spaces, and the second player must reply by doing the same, so that the two queen pawns face each other. After that initial mandatory opening, the players take turns, alternately moving one piece at a time.