

# Variant Chess

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## PROGRESSIVE CHESS

Progressive chess is where the number of moves at each turn is increased (or sometimes decreased) according to a formula. The French expert on unorthodox games, Joseph Boyer (1895-1961), suggested the name progressive chess, and said it was known in France as Scotch chess because Znosko-Borovsky noted that he had seen it played when he visited Scotland in 1947. Ken Whyld says the game is also known as 'Blitzkrieg' (lightning war) because of the short, devastating nature of the play. Progressive chess can be broadly divided into two categories.

1) Ordinary chess rules apply except for the 'progressive formula' and various other particular conditions.

2) Chess variants played to a 'progressive formula', with maybe other particular conditions.

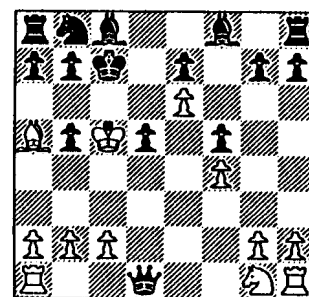
In category (2) any chess variant can be played as progressive chess, and many have been, for example Chinese chess or Shogi (see *VC4* p.42) and Chancellor chess. One motive for playing chess variants this way is for players to get the feel of a variant without the need for a long game.

I am going to address category (1) in this article.

Scottish chess is the basic form of progressive chess. White makes one move, Black replies by making 2 moves, White makes 3 moves...and so on. The number of moves a player has increases progressively until the game finishes. A player may not expose his own King to check during a series, and must get out of check with the first move of his series, or he is checkmated. When a player gives a check he loses any further moves in that series. If a player runs out of legal moves before making his allotted number of moves, the game is drawn, by stalemate.

Italian progressive, adopted by the Italian Heterodox Association (AISE) for its tournaments over many years,

incorporates a so-called *Italian mate* into Scottish chess: if the only move(s) to get out of check would put the opponent in check before his required number of moves is completed, the player in check is 'mated'. Here is an example from a game between A.Castelli and Paul Novak. White has just played his series 7, and Black is mated Italian-style - he can only avoid normal mate by playing b6, which checks the White King.



An en passant capture is allowed. If a pawn makes a double step, does not move further in the same series, and the square behind it is unoccupied at the end of the series, the opponent may capture it on the first move of the following series.

A draw can be claimed if 10 series pass without a capture or a pawn move, unless one side can demonstrate a forced win. This rule has the same motive as the 50 move rule in chess.

Italian progressive is very popular, especially in Italy where there have been championships held since 1973, and it has been a variant in both of the Heterodox Olympiads organised by AISE. I have used the AISE rules for the recent *Variant Chess* postal tournament.

English progressive was invented by an unknown English player. It is an event in the current 2nd. Heterodox Olympiad. The main difference between this and Italian progressive is that in each turn every mobile piece must have moved once before any can move a second time. As in Scottish chess, when a player gives a check he loses any further moves in that turn. A player may not expose his own King to check in any of his series of moves. If a player moves into a stalemate

position before completing his series, the game is a draw.

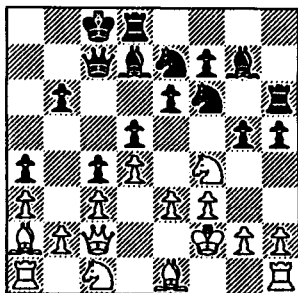
Multiple sequence moves (where pieces can move a second or more time) normally do not begin until well into the game, (perhaps series 10 or so). The game then can become complicated, in fact at times unbelievably complicated, and sometimes it has been said, unanalysable. In Michael Keller's *World Game Review* 10, Tony Gardner offers several tactical hints.

*It is quite legal to block or pin one's own units to end a sequence more quickly, gaining extra moves for prominent pieces. It is possible to move a unit twice in a row if you move it as the last move of one sequence, and the first move of the next. In the middlegame and endgame, placing your King on a file adjacent to an opposing pawn, where the pawn will give check when it advances, can end the opponent's turn early. Finally, be alert to the possibility of underpromotion to avoid a turn-ending check.*

Here is a game taken from *Eteroscacco*, with an instructive commentary.

J.J. McCallion - J. McCarty 0-1 (1989)  
(Notes by J.J. McCallion)

- 1.d4  
2.g6 Bg7  
3.e3 Bc4 Nd2  
4.d5 e6 a5 Bd7  
5.a3 Ba2 Nb3 Ne2 Bd2  
6.a4 b6 c5 Bb5 Nc6 Nf6 (*White's hopes of later blockading the queenside (to gain extra moves because of his immobile pieces) are thwarted by Black's 'a' pawn.*)  
7.f3 Kf2 Nf4 e3 Qc2 Be1 Ne1 (*Rather than castle, I prefer to have the King ready to be 'checked' by enemy pawns, thus abruptly ending the opponent's sequence. However although this variant is much 'quieter' than Italian progressive, one must not expose the King too much...*)  
8.e4 Nc7 Bd7 g5 Qc7 h5 O-O-O Rh6 (*White sees a way to win Black's Queen, and does not hesitate...*)



9.Qb1 Nb3 Kg1 Bg3 Nh3 e4 f4/ f5 Bxc7 (*Such blockades are typical of English progressive: White, with two moves left, can 'start' again.*)

10.cxb3 Kxc7 g4 Rhh8 Bh6 e5 Bb5 h4 Nh5 Nc6!! (*Black's response proves that White's 9th was stupidly greedy and lacking in positional insight. Black's 'Nh5' is especially good: if White plays Kf2 in the hope of being checked by the 'g' pawn, Black will avoid this by ...Ng3! After much analysis, I concluded that I had at least a very difficult game and could only make the best of a bad job.*)

11.c4 f6 Kf1 Rg1 Nf2 Qe1 Rd1 h3 g3 exd5 Bxb3 (*The black 'a' pawn is now released, thus forcing Black to use all his pieces in the sequence or check earlier!*)

12.axb3 hxg3 gxh3 Nxd4 Bd2 Nf4 e4 Rde8 Rh6 Bxc4+! (*Black's position is overwhelming! Clearly the end is near.*)

13.Nd3 Rxd2 Qc1 Rxg3 Kg1 a4 d6+ (*Black now reaps the rewards of his better judgement.*)

14.Kxd6 exd3 Bd5 Re2 Rxf6 Ng6 h2# (*Without a mate in sight, Black would of course play...Ke8 to force the 'd' pawn to check next time!*)

*An excellent example of the power of position: the white Queen survived, but was useless.*

There have been other varieties of progressive chess, some of which are quite interesting. I pick out **Scottish Modern chess**. The rules are the same as Scottish chess with one important exception. As in Scottish chess as soon as a player gives check he loses any remaining moves he may have in that turn: but also when a unit ends its move on an attacked square. However if a piece moves, exposing a shielded piece to attack, it doesn't end the turn. As Michael Keller says, this is a treacherous game. When a player becomes forced to put a piece on an 'attacked square' to remove a check, and thus loses his remaining moves, the other player can gain a big initiative which can be difficult to ward off. Here is a simple example:

1st Italian Chess Festival Venice 1990  
Played 'over-the-board'.

T.Sala - A.Castelli

- 1.e4  
2.e6 Qf6  
3.d3 Be3 Qf3  
4.Nc6 Ne5 g6 Nxf3+  
5.Kc2 Na3 c4 g4 Nxf3  
6.Bb4 d6 Bd7 Ba4 a5 Qxb2+  
7.Nd2//  
8.Qxa1 Qd1#

1.d4 is a bad move. After 2....e6 Bb4+ then 3. Bd2 (end of turn), 4.Nf6 Ne4 Qf6 Qxf2# (3.c3 or 3.Nd2 lose in similar

fashion.) 3.Qd2 and 3.Nc3 avoid immediate mates, but after 4.c6 Qa5 ~ White's game is very bad.

1.c4 2.c6 Qf6 is difficult to meet, eg.

- G.Scovero - A.Castelli  
AISE Grand Prix 1990  
1.e4  
2.e6 Qf6  
3.?? Bc4 Qc2 Nf3  
4.Qg6 Qxg2 Nf6 Qxh1+  
5.Qf1//  
6.Qxf3 Nc6 Nd4 Nxc2#

Both English progressive and Scottish Modern progressive have been regularly featured in the pages of *Eteroscacco*. There have been AISE championships in these variants since 1990.

Ian Richardson has devised a new and interesting form of progressive chess. This game originated in response to my challenge on page 59 of *VC12* asking readers to come up with a good and original game from: one chess set, five dice, and one doubling die.

#### DICEY DROPSY

By Ian Richardson

This is quite different from the usual dice games, such as those reported in *VC12*. It starts with an empty board, and the dice throws decide which pieces will be 'dropped' (in the Shogi sense). The player chooses the square for each drop, but the choice is restricted somewhat by the throw of the doubling die. This idea was prompted by the fact that the highest number on a doubling die is 64, the number of squares on a chess board. The game is divided into two parts: 1) dice throws and drops; 2) moves, with the usual aim of checkmate, without further use of dice. Both parts of the game are progressive. Now to the details: the description can be read in conjunction with the tables that follow.

This is a game for two. Equipment: a normal chess set and board; 5 dice of any type, and 1 doubling die (numbers on faces are 2,4,8,16,32,64). I use poker dice and a 'doubler' from a backgammon set. Before playing you must agree which piece is indicated by each face of a die, and decide who will be White.

White throws one die to decide which piece to drop, and the 'doubler' to decide which area of the board he can use.

- 2 - his first 2 ranks.  
4 - his first 4 ranks.  
8 - anywhere on the board.  
16 - his first 2 files on left.  
32 - his first 4 files on left.

64 - anywhere on the board.

Other restrictions: Pawns cannot be placed on ranks 1 or 8; Bishops must be on different coloured squares.

Black then does the same. Then White throws 2 dice, Black the same, etc. (see tables). There is plenty of scope for initiative in placing pieces (cf. 'Go'): for example, one can gamble on the opponent's King being restricted to the edge of the board (this happens in the sample game). A special rule is needed for the King: if it has not come up by throw 4, it must be dropped then (as in the sample game). Note that multiple checks are allowed: the ultimate aim is to checkmate the King at this stage - see the exercise at the end of the article.

White moves first, only once. His priority must be to get his King out of check, (if he cannot, and Black can, Black has won; if neither has, the game is drawn). Then Black moves - again only once. Then White moves twice, Black moves twice, etc., until one King is checkmated. The game will probably be short - it is intended to be a quick game.

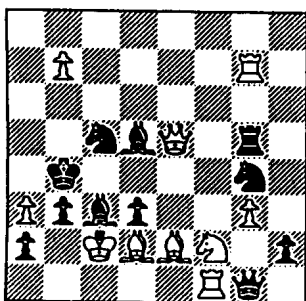
**Sample Game**

**Throws**

|               |    |           |    |
|---------------|----|-----------|----|
| White         |    | Black     |    |
| 1 - Q         | 64 | R         | 16 |
| 2 - B,N       | 2  | B,B       | 8  |
| 3 - K,Q,B     | 2  | P,N,Q     | 16 |
| 4 - P,P,B,R   | 8  | Q,B,B,P   | 64 |
| 5 - K,K,Q,R,P | 4  | B,B,P,P,N | 8  |

**Drops**

|                 |  |             |  |
|-----------------|--|-------------|--|
| White           |  | Black       |  |
| 1 - Qe5         |  | Rg5         |  |
| 2 - Bc2,Nf2     |  | Bc3, Bd5    |  |
| 3 - Kc2,Bd2     |  | Qg1,Ng4,Ph2 |  |
| 4 - Rg7,Pb7,Pg3 |  | Pb3 + Kb4   |  |
| 5 - Rf1,Pa3     |  | Nc5,Pa2,Pd3 |  |

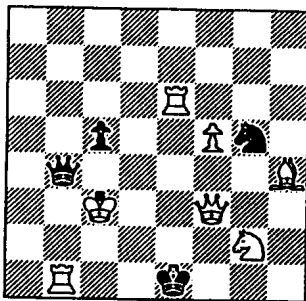


**Moves**

- 1.Kd1; Kxa3
- 2.Qxc3,b8(Q); Bb7,a1(Q)+
- 3.Qxa1 mate. (This ends the series as in English Progressive. It is not mate for Black.)

I think the game involves a good balance of luck and skill.

**Exercise**



In the above position Black is on his last throw: it is (Q,N) N,B,P,64. Where should he place the N,B,P so the white King cannot escape from check, but the black king can? There are 2 solutions.

**Solutions**

!! Nf2,Bc1,Pb3.     !!! Nd1,Bd4,Pf2.  
In both cases Black's King escapes by Kf1.

Dicey Dropsy has some similarities to a variant featured in *Eteroscacco53* from 1990. This is **Bosley Progressive chess**, named because it was invented by the New Zealander John Bosley.

The rules are the same as for Italian Progressive chess, with the following differences:

1) At the start of the game the board is clear of pieces.

2) Setting up the pieces.

Move 1. White commences by placing 7 of his pieces on the board. Black replies similarly.

Move 2. White places 5 pieces. Black places 5 pieces.

Move 3. White places 3 pieces. Black places 3 pieces.

Move 4. White places his King. Black places his King.

3) During 'setting up' players may place their pieces on any vacant squares, and in any order, with the following exceptions:

- the King may not be placed on the board until move 4.

- pawns may be placed only on the 2nd, 3rd, or 4th ranks.

- one Bishop must be placed on a white square and the other on a black square.

- the Queen must be placed on the board during move 1.

4) Once the pieces are in place, the game proper commences as for Italian Progressive chess, but White commences with a 3 move series.

This game does not seem to have been mentioned again in *Eteroscacco*. No games have been quoted.

Instead of the simple 1,2,3... progression, other sequences of move lengths have been tried. **Parallel Progressive** has 1,1,2,2,3,3,..., which according to Michael Keller gives White a large advantage; **Slow Scotch** has 1,1,1,2,2,2,3,3,3,... **Cyclic Progressive** sets a maximum move length and the sequences vary between 1 and the maximum. For example if the maximum is set at 6 (a good value) the sequences would run 1,2,3,4,5,6,5,4,3,2,1,2,... In **Very Scotch**, when a player's series is shortened by a check (intentional or involuntary) the opponent is allowed one more move than the player giving check just made; series length increases one per move thereafter until shortened by a check again.

There are I feel many interesting ideas in Progressive chess just waiting to be discovered by inventive minds. PC is a very popular form of variant chess. It is ideal for postal play. Games do not last too long; hopelessly lost games are not allowed to drag on. Postal Progressive chess can also be quite addictive.

**CIRCE PROGRESSIVE**

Rules as Italian Progressive Chess, except:

- 1) When a piece is captured it reappears on its starting square.
- 2) If that square is occupied, the piece is permanently removed from the board.
- 3) If replacing the piece gives check to one's own King, the capture is illegal.

2nd Heterodox Olympiad 1993-  
Annotations by Patrick Donovan.

Patrick Donovan - Roberto Cassano  
1.c3 (I have been trying this move out. The ideas are to give extra cover to the e1-a5 diagonal to make the King safer, and in some lines provide the King with a square on c2. In this tournament my 1.c3 has been successful several times.)  
2....c5 Qc7  
3.d3 Bf4 Kd2 (My King heads for c2.)  
4....Qc6 Qxg2 Qxf1 Qxd1+  
5.Kxd1(d8) Bxb8 Bc7 Bxd8 h4 (After capturing the Black Knight at b8 White can now plan Kc2 without worrying unduly about a line such as...Nc6...Na5...Nb3...Nxa1+)  
6....b6 Bb7 Bxb1 Kxd8(c1) Kc7 h5  
7.Kc2 Nf3 Bg5 Na3 Nc4 Nxb6(b7) Nxa8+ (My Knight on a8 is strong and Black was unable to find a good reply.)  
8....Kc8 b5 b4 bxc3 cxb2 Kb7 a5 bxa1(N)+  
9.Kc3 Kc4 Kb5 Nb6 Bf4 Nd2 Nb3 f3 Nb3xa5(a7) #

# THE ORIGIN OF JAPANESE CHESS

*Koichi Masukawa*

*(Editor: This article was translated into German and from this I have made an English version. I have also made use of rough notes on this topic which Mr. Masukawa made at the Chess Collectors meeting at Amsterdam 1993. I would like to thank Gabrielle Kuhn for her help in the translation, and most particularly to Peter Blommers for his expert assistance and for the many suggestions of his which I have incorporated. His notes in the text I have labelled PB).*

In 1993 I received very important information about the history of Japanese Chess (Shogi). This brought to light new discoveries. One is the excavation of the oldest known Shogi pieces from the ancient Kofuku-Ji Temple in Nara; another is an interpretation of some old Buddhist documents.

Before explaining the above, I want to briefly speak about how Shogi started.

### How Shogi started

In Japan Backgammon and Go have been played since the 8th century, but Shogi came from abroad several centuries later than Backgammon and Go.

After the death of Emperor Shomu (he reigned AD 724-749), his wife donated his many various goods to the Todai-Ji Temple, in order that his dead soul would be at ease. The catalogue of the property (AD 756) includes several game-boards of Backgammon and Go, which, it is written, Emperor Shomu was always happy to use. But nothing is written of Shogi boards and pieces. Today one can see these very magnificent game-boards (but no Shogi-boards) once a year in the exhibition of the Nara Provincial Museum.

In Japan's first encyclopaedia, the WAMYO-RUIJU-SHO (published AD 931-937), Backgammon and Go are written about, but there is nothing on Shogi. Perhaps during the first half of the 10th century, Shogi was not played.

Until today the first reliable record concerning Shogi is in the account from the 'SHIN-SARUGAKU-KI' (AD 1058-1064), which describes persons from famous families. Only the name of the game, Shogi, is written; no other details are given. Subsequently one can find the game of Shogi mentioned in diaries of the aristocratic court; for example, the 'CHO-SHU-KI', the diary of the Steward of the Empress, from 20th May 1129; the 'TAI-KI' of Yorinaga Fujiwara, from 12th September 1142; and the 'MEIGETSU-KI' of Teika Fujiwara 1199, 1205, and 1213; etc.. It is also written (1185) that Shogi was forbidden for Buddhist monks in the Jingo-Ji Temple.

At that time Shogi was more difficult than Backgammon and Go, because to play Shogi, one had to distinguish the ideogram on the piece. At that time almost all the population were illiterate, so only educated persons could

play the game, that is, the aristocratic court, high officials, Buddhist monks, and so forth.

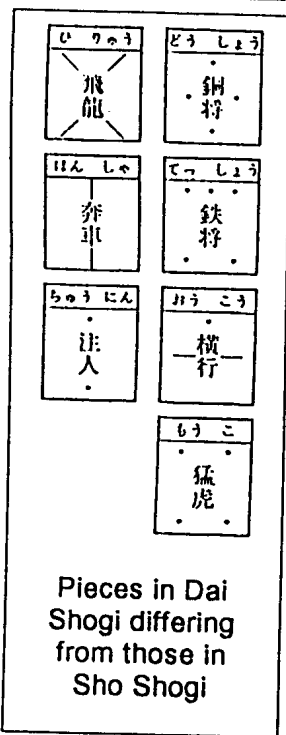
### Ni-Chureki

The ancient encyclopaedia, the 'NI-CHUREKI' (published AD 1210-1221), wrote about two kinds of Shogi. This was the first account which explained Shogi. The first kind is simply called 'Shogi' and is the small type, the other is 'Dai-Shogi' (Dai means big). The description, which applies to both kinds, is as follows: Shogi needs GYOKU-SHO (Jewelled General, King), KIN-SHO (Gold General), GIN-SHO (Silver General), KEI-MA (Horseman, Knight), KYO-SHA (Lancer, Spearman), and FU-HYO (Infantryman, Foot-Soldier); an account is also given of the movement of each piece. A piece moved into enemy territory (the last three ranks on the board) can be promoted. If the enemy King (GYOKU-SHO) is left alone on the board, that is a win for the other player (PB: in ancient Shogi there were no drops, hence a bare King could exist).

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 王 | 銀 | 金 | 馬 | 龍 | 飛 | 歩 | 歩 | 歩 | 歩 | 歩 | 歩 | 歩 |
| 王 | 銀 | 金 | 馬 | 龍 | 飛 | 歩 | 歩 | 歩 | 歩 | 歩 | 歩 | 歩 |
|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 歩 | 歩 | 歩 | 歩 | 歩 | 歩 | 歩 | 歩 | 歩 | 歩 | 歩 | 歩 | 歩 |
| 香 | 桂 | 銀 | 王 | 金 | 銀 | 桂 | 香 |   |   |   |   |   |
| 香 | 桂 | 銀 | 王 | 金 | 銀 | 桂 | 香 |   |   |   |   |   |

Dai Shogi is played on 13x13 squares (PB: This format is in fact just a deduction based on the other information given). The King stands in the middle of the piece-row, next to the KIN-SHO, then the GIN-SHO, then the DO-SHO (the Copper General), then the TETSU-SHO (the Iron General), then a piece which is not mentioned in the ancient text, but was the KEI-MA (Knight), then the KYO-SHA. An account is given of the actual movement of the DO-SHO and TETSU-SHO. There is also information on other pieces; for example the OU-KO (Horizontal-Gocr) is placed in front of the King, MOU-KO (Ferocious Tiger) in front of the Silver General, HI-RYU (Flying Dragon) in front of the Horseman (Knight), HON-SHA (Running Chariot) in front of the Lancer, CHU-NIN (Armed Coolie) in the middle of the infantry row; and the movements of these pieces. The last ten characters were not understood; maybe this was because of a mistake in the handwritten manuscript.

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|   |   |   |   |   |   | 注 |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 歩 | 歩 | 歩 | 歩 | 歩 | 歩 | 歩 | 歩 | 歩 | 歩 | 歩 | 歩 | 歩 |
| 奔 | 飛 |   |   | 猛 |   | 橫 |   | 猛 |   | 飛 | 奔 |   |
| 香 | 桂 | 鉄 | 銅 | 銀 | 金 | 玉 | 金 | 銀 | 銅 | 鉄 | 桂 | 香 |
| 香 | 桂 | 鉄 | 銅 | 銀 | 金 | 玉 | 金 | 銀 | 銅 | 鉄 | 桂 | 香 |



The previous explanation is not so full as one would like, but a rough outline can be drawn. And at least we are able to obtain very important information and meanings, e.g.:

(1) The description of Shogi is quite short. The 'NI-CHUREKI' writes about Backgammon and Go also. This section lists many masters over rather a long period of time who played these two board games. But there is nothing written about masters playing Shogi; just an account of how the game is played.

(2) The total number of Shogi pieces is not so clear, because the number of squares on the board is not obvious. From the above account of 'Dai-Shogi' it is stated that the 'King stands in the middle of the piece-row' - what

can we deduce from this? It shows, does it not, that the Dai-Shogi board had an odd number of files?

But how many files had the smaller (more normal?) Shogi? Did the Shogi board have an odd number or not? Is there the possibility of the game-board being the same type as the European board (8x8)? (PB: Because the NI-CHUREKI specifies that in Dai-Shogi the King is sitting in the middle, one can assume that in the smaller Shogi this was not so. And herein lies a clue to a possible 8x8 format (with a single Gold General as a Japanese counterpart of the 'minister', vizir etc. in Indian etc. chess). In Masukawa's Japanese books on the History of Shogi, he puts the pawns on the 3rd. rank.) See first diagram on page 100.

(3) Dai-Shogi had 13 kinds of pieces; altogether 68 pieces; it reveals evidence of the original Japanese chess.

Zogei-Sosho

This Dai-Shogi had soon disappeared. In a book of games, 'ZOGEI SOSHO' (AD 1443), there is written concerning the Dai-Shogi of that time, that it was just the name that was the same - but it was a different sort of game to that played earlier. It had different kinds and names of the pieces compared to the Dai-Shogi of the NI-CHUREKI.

From the middle of the 14th century Chu-Shogi came in. Chu means middle; the name was 'middle', but Chu Shogi has 22 kinds of piece; altogether 92 pieces; 12x12 squares, (See diagram on page 52 in VC12.) This was a greater number of pieces than in Dai Shogi. The interesting Chu Shogi was played for a long time - until the 19th century, (PB: It is unclear whether or not Chu-Shogi died at all. Oyama, in a 1970 Shogi Sekai article, promoted the game in public. Oyama was an ardent Chu-Shogi player. George Hodges, in his article about Chu-Shogi in 1976, claimed the game had always stayed alive.)

The 'ZOGEI SOSHO' writes about many other pieces, not just those for the three types of Shogi just mentioned. For

example the largest form of Shogi (Tai Shogi) had 93 kinds; altogether 354 pieces; 25x25 squares - probably this type was just for ornamental purposes. One can find exact information about the very large forms of Shogi from the piece-makers' price lists from AD 1590 till 1602 (see K.Masukawa's article in VC9). In the Middle Ages it was thought pleasant to create more kinds of Shogi, with more pieces. But it is doubtful whether these Shogis were actually played.

Out of all these experiments with different formats and forms, normal Shogi as it is played today evolved. One finally arrived at the most interesting form, Modern Shogi, which has 8 kinds of piece; altogether 40 pieces; 9x9 squares, with the special rule that captured pieces are not eliminated from the game, but are held in reserve by the capturer, who can, when a suitable occasion arises, drop them on to any square. The military commander Ietada Matsudaira gives a picture of the Shogi we know today in his diary of February 1587.

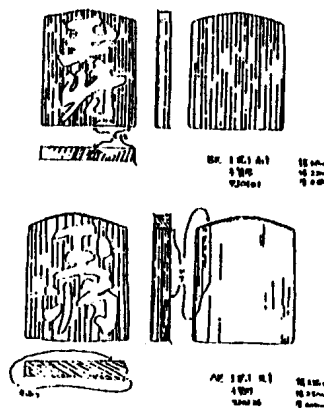
New Information

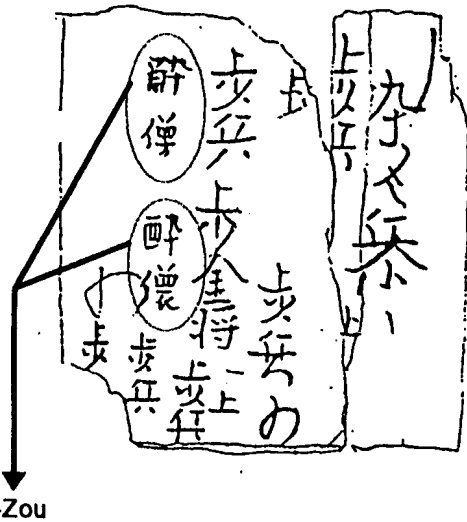
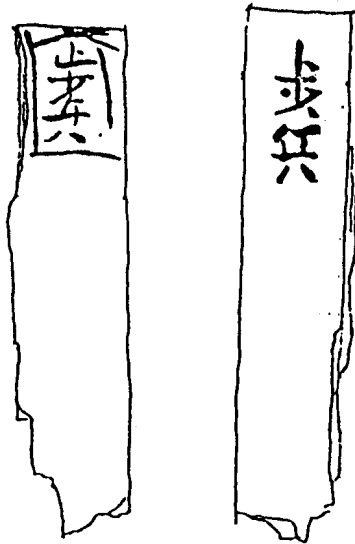
I now wish to come back to the new information of 1993. During building restoration ancient Shogi pieces were unearthed from the precincts of the ancient Kofuku-Ji Temple in Nara city. Nara in AD 710-780 was the capital city of the reigning emperor, and it was at this time that the Kofuku-Ji Temple was founded. Later this Temple became a great Feudal centre - up to the 16th century - with many buildings, many officers and workers, and further domains.

Since the excavation work of 1992, workers have found many Shogi pieces in a well, and also some half-finished articles with Shogi ideograms on them.

On the top surface of the pieces there can be read Gold General, Silver General, Foot-Soldier; and some impossible to decipher.

At the same time there were found several mixed-up separate chits of wood among the goods. On one of these chits of wood there is written the year of the emperor Tenki 6, which is AD 1058. In fact the date of the Shogi pieces is determined by this. Up to now these are the oldest known pieces in Japan.





Reliability is needed for this SUI-ZOU of the old Shogi type to see how it fits in with the explanation from the 'NI-CHUREKI'. It shows the existence of another type of Shogi. But where is the SUI-ZOU to be placed? It is not clear at present.

**Old Buddhist Document  
Futsu-Shodo-Shu**

The interpretation of an old Buddhist document, the 'FUTSU-SHODO-SHU' (AD 1297-1302) of Bishop Ryoki, also imparts important material about the history of Shogi. As Mr. Shinichi Sacki, Assistant Professor of the Japanese Literary Institute, has written in *Research into the History of Games No.11 (1993)*, the 'FUTSU-SHODO-SHU' is the standard anthology of the lectures of this particular Buddhist bishop. The contents of one chapter are recollections of each profession, and the Sho-Shogi player and the Dai-Shogi player are mentioned. Sho means small; Sho-Shogi is the same as 'Shogi' in the 'NI-CHUREKI'. Under Sho Shogi is listed the names of the pieces, e.g. Foot-Soldier, Gold General, Silver General, and Horseman. Under Dai Shogi is listed KYO-SHA (Lancer), HEN-SHA (Returning Chariot), HI-SHA (Flying Chariot, similar to a Rook), CHU-NIN (Negotiator or Courier), SHIN-I (Ferocious Wild Boar), and KEI-MA (Horseman).

We must give this explanation about Dai-Shogi close attention. There is nothing about the way of playing, and only a few of the pieces are written about. But HEN-SHA, HI-SHA and SHIN-I make their first appearance. In the Dai-Shogi of the 'NI-CHUREKI' nothing is written of these three pieces. Also CHU-NIN has the same pronunciation as a piece from the 'NI-CHUREKI' but the ideogram is different. As is well known, Japanese ideograms are all similar to Chinese, and when there is the need for another ideogram for the same pronunciation, there is another meaning.

Because of several Shogi documents in the 17th century, until today it was believed that the new pieces given in the previous paragraph were first used in the Dai-Shogi of a new type in the 15th century. But the truth shows that the 'new' Dai-Shogi was already being played at the end of the 13th century. Thus:

- 1) Dai-Shogi of the 'NI-CHUREKI' played until the end of the 13th century, had a very short life.
- 2) Dai-Shogi of the 'FUTSU' needed 29 kinds of piece; altogether 130 pieces; 15x15 squares - and at that time it was really played, although naturally not too much.
- 3) As previously mentioned, Chu-Shogi was quite big, possibly bigger than the Dai-Shogi of the 'NI-CHUREKI'. But if the Dai-Shogi of the 'FUTSU' (15x15 squares), was already being played in the 13th century, Chu-Shogi when it appeared would really be the middle type. So, at the beginning there existed the small type, after that the large type was invented, and after both these types the middle type (Chu-Shogi) was created. The 'FUTSU-SHODO-SHU' has cleared up a mystery.

**They show the following characteristics:**

- 1) The Shogi pieces were made from left-over wood that was normally used for other daily purposes.
- 2) The right and left sides of the 5-sided (pentagonal) pieces were very similar to those of later pieces.
- 3) On the reverse side of the Silver General there was not just written 'Gold', but 'Promoted Gold'. The elaborate instruction on the piece shows that the game was relatively unknown at the time.
- 4) The study of the writing on the pieces especially surprised the investigator. On one of the pieces the name SUI-ZOU (Energetic Person) is written. (*PB: this is the precursor of the 'Drunken Elephant'.*)

This was a wholly new discovery. Because both of the Shogis from the 'NI-CHUREKI' do not make use of this name, until now it was believed to be first used in Chu-Shogi in the 14th century. We must look back again and re-examine the history of Shogi, so as to throw light on its origins.

An arrangement:

About 1058 - Shogi with SUI-ZOU. Probably the small type.

About 1210 - Shogi of the small type without SUI-ZOU; and Dai Shogi 13x13 squares.

About 1300 - Shogi of the small type; and Dai Shogi 15x15 squares.

About the middle of the 14th century - Chu Shogi (one can find it mentioned in several documents).

About the middle of the 15th century - various Shogis, from small to big.

**Where did Shogi come from?**

Now I am going to talk about the origin of Shogi. Where did Shogi come from? Where is the birthplace of the first Shogi? Its most distant ancestors were born in fact in India. So which was the path, and which were the ways that Shogi came?

Very many people believe unequivocally, and without foundation, that Shogi came from China; because it is a geographical neighbour (if one includes the Korean peninsula), and was a cultural influence. In the 18th century it was reported, in the official *Players' Report of the Authority* by an officer of the Tokugawa Government, that Shogi came from China. This was in order to give Shogi and the Shogi player more prestige. Afterwards several Shogi books gave out the same story. As you know, Japan has obtained much culture and scientific knowledge from China. Until modern times, particularly in antiquity and the Middle Ages, almost everyone has, without qualification, held Chinese culture in high regard. It was at this time that many persons thought that Shogi came from China.

It is clear that Chinese chess and Japanese chess have some common characteristics, e.g. the pieces are flat. The greatest common factor is the recognition of the pieces by the ideograms.

However, as I have already written in my books *History of Shogi (Vol. 1 and Vol. 2)*, and as I recently told the *Chess Collectors' Institute General Assembly* in 1992 at Paris, there are quite a number of differences between Chinese chess and Japanese chess, e.g.

- 1) Chinese chess is played on the lines of the board, but Shogi is played on the squares.
- 2) Chinese chess has the so-called 'River' and 'Palace'. Japanese chess has neither.
- 3) In Chinese chess, the differentiation between friend and foe is by way of colour. Japanese chess pieces are not coloured.
- 4) Chinese pieces are round (Korean are octagonal). Japanese pieces are characteristically pentagonal.
- 5) On the Chinese chess pieces the writing is 'Singular' (one character). On Japanese chess pieces it is 'Binomial' (two characters) - emperor Genmei (*P.B. a woman*) in AD 713 instructed that place names must be changed to Binomial, so as to bring forth good luck -

sometimes the upper part is used as an epithet meaning joyous or precious.

- 6) There are gaps in the pawn line in Chinese Chess. In Japanese Chess the pawns are lined up next to each other.
- 7) The kind and number of the pieces are different between Chinese chess and Japanese chess.

These points of difference have been there throughout the long history of the two games.

According to the *History of Chinese Chess* by Li Song Fu, the present type of Chinese chess is from about the end of the 11th century, or the beginning of the 12th century. In the *Board Games in Ancient China* by Xu Jia Liang the same opinion is given. He writes that an early form of Chinese chess existed played on a board of 11x11 lines with 32 pieces, as is shown by the Legend of AD 762; but there is no material evidence for this. (*Ed.: I quote the chess historian Dr. Beauchamp: The first recorded description of the Chinese game is that contained in the HUAN KWAI LU or Book of Marvels, a collection of anecdotes attributed to Wu Sheng-ju who was a government minister in 847 AD. In this book there is an account of a supposed battle in AD 762 where movements of the army units are described in terms of chess moves.*) I have seen an old Chinese chess board and men from the beginning of the 12th century or so, in the museum at Xian in Shaanxi province. This wholly resembled present-day Chinese chess. Really, since the 12th or 13th century Chinese chess has not changed. The changes have only been in Japanese chess; and these have reflected the development of a characteristic Japanese culture.

If Japanese chess was passed on from China, Shogi would have been very similar to Chinese chess. But, as mentioned above, the pieces of Shogi were in existence in 1058. The form, name, and ideograms etc. from Kofuku-Ji are wholly different from those of Chinese Chess. From the 12th to the 13th century Japanese aristocrats from the court have played Shogi; and at the same time Chinese people have played Chinese chess.

**Another Parentage**

So, if Japanese chess was not passed on from China, we must seek another parentage. Fortunately H.J.R. Murray has given us important information (concerning Shogi he has given us much that is false!), e.g. the Pawn piece from Burma and Malaya was flat, (*Ed.: I have checked Murray and other references. Flat pawns are in Malayan and Thai chess - NOT Burmese chess. However this may not have been the case in the distant past.*); Thailand's Chess is very similar to the Shogi of 'NI-CHUREKI', apart from the use of solid pieces (statues) etc.. It is obvious that if Asia is roughly divided, it gives us North Asia and South Asia. Probably Shogi belongs to the South Asia region.

From ancient times the ocean current, called Kuro-Shio in Japanese, has flowed, and still flows today, from South-East Asia to Japan. The old Japanese envoys to China (from AD 630-894 approximately) regularly made



use of this current to return home, and a noted Chinese bishop came to Japan from ports in southern China using this ocean current (AD 753). There was a close connection between South China and Japan.

#### Concrete Example

I should also like to show a concrete example for the passing on of chess. The Ohara-Sanko-Kan Museum in Kobe-city has a few small wooden clothes boxes from South East Asia. On the boxes are carved chess boards or game boards. The dating of this art work is not clear, but it belongs to an early period.

When sailors embarked in a ship from an Indian or South-East Asian port, they loaded up quite a few planks, and during their free time on the voyage they made clothes boxes on board out of the planks. They carved out a playing board on the boxes, and during breaks played on this playing board. At the sale of the boxes in the ports of call, they could play the board games of their home with the natives. The sailors or tradesmen, and naturally also the merchants in the ports of call, had every opportunity to spread this alien board game. Probably chess was spread in this way. Japan, rich in islands, has a theory of the so-called 'Silk Road of the Sea'; and this 'road' would not only have brought ceramics and porcelain, but also chess.

If chess came through this region from South China to Japan, was there not a large possibility that identification of the pieces by way of ideograms would have been learnt from the Chinese? In fact the use of Chinese ideograms as a way of transmitting the written word had been passed on from China (at that time Korea was a colony of China) to Japan very much earlier - by the 3rd or 4th century. Perhaps when chess came to Japan later, the ideograms would shortly afterwards have been marked on the pieces.

The passing on of chess through South East Asia to Japan was not done all at once, but extended over a long period of time. The start was possibly modest, and the game may be referred to as Proto-Shogi. It is not clear if solid pieces were used, and although one can speculate, there is no material evidence. But it seems that the publisher of the

encyclopaedia in the city of the emperor, Heian, (present-day Kyoto), in the 10th century, had received no information about Proto-Shogi in the outlying regions. Finding out about Proto-Shogi will from now on become an important theme of research.

#### My Opinion

Today my opinion is as follows: concerning the introduction of chess, I conjecture that Shogi came from the Indian estuary region, through South East Asia including the coast from South China to Japan. After the 10th or 11th century when Shogi had taken root, the use of written ideograms on the pieces, so that their types could be identified, had already spread.

May I add something extra? I have already written that the characters on the stones are binomial. It is rare that the character on top adds any relevant information. Thus if one takes away the adjective there is left the following underlying structure: from the left side, Chariot, Horse, General, General, and King - and Soldiers in the front row. H.J.R.Murray said, 'the Elephant has four legs and a long trunk'. A movement of the Silver General is 5-directional; thus the piece 'Elephant' and Silver General can be said to be the same, (*Ed. In support of this, in Thai chess and Burmese chess the piece occupying the 'Bishop square' has the exact move of the Silver General. The piece is called Khon in Thai chess, and Sin in Burmese chess - Sin means Elephant.*) This makes the Japanese arrangement of the pieces, Chariot, Horse, Elephant, General, and King.

*Peter Blommers: The earliest mention of a Sui-Zou (Drunken Elephant) in literature dates from 1350. So the piece discovered antedates its first mention by 300 years! Accordingly this is a HUGE discovery for Mr.Masukawa. 'Drunk Elephant' versus 'Energetic Person' is of no relevance here.*

*The Drunk Elephant in 'small-Shogi-before-drops' sat in front of the King, just as is the case in Tori Shogi (although the name of the piece was changed into a bird-name to be in line with the general theme in Tori Shogi (Tori means bird)). Its use and introduction (especially when compared to its use in Chu and larger Shogi where it can promote to a reserve King) is still intriguing and a topic for future research.*

**THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CHESS VARIANTS** by D.B.Pritchard 384 p. Price £21.99 (post free on orders up to 1.3.95)

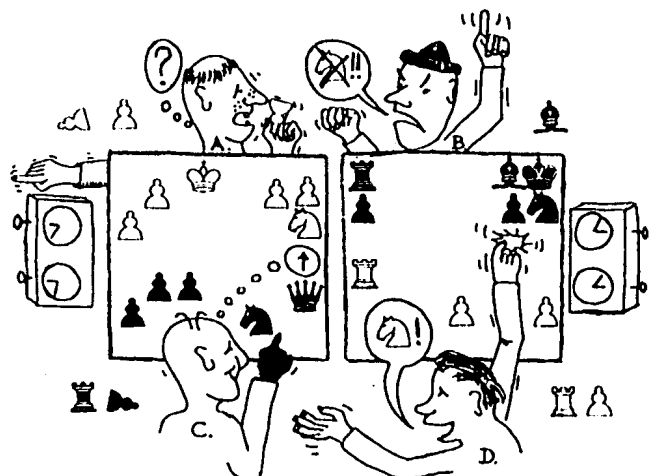
I wrote in VC9 that 'the world was waiting' for this book. It has now arrived. And a wonderful production it is! It is a joy to open and look at, and (with a few exceptions) the illustrations and diagrams, of which there are many, are clear and of good quality.

But it is the sheer amount of information that makes the book so important. It has been collected over many years and now put down on paper (good quality paper) for all to see. And the overwhelming bulk of this information will be totally new to readers I am sure. 1450 variants are explained. These include 100 FICs, 65 regional variants, 160 commercial games etc. etc..

The book needs a full and considered review - I hope to produce one for the next issue. Thoroughly recommended!

Available only from Games & Puzzles, PO Box 20, Gollalming, Surrey GU9 4YP, UK. (Mastercard / Visa / Amex accepted.)

Sent by Jens Nielsen. Tense moment at Double Bughouse (p.113).



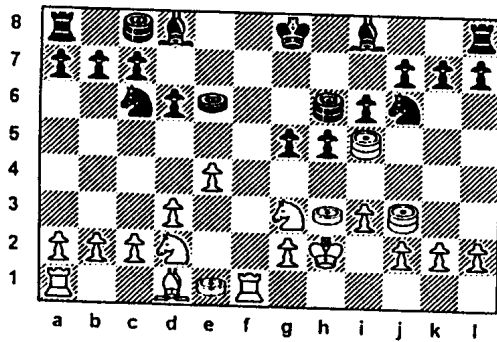


MODERN COURIER CHESS

The Fers (♖) moves 1 square diagonally; the Courier (♗) is a monochrome Knight (on e3 it can leap to a1, a3, a5, e5, e7, e9, e1, e1). An unmoved Fers has the option of a Courier's leap on to a vacant square. An unmoved King may take a double step to a vacant square provided it can be seen as 2 legal single moves, and he is not in check. Starting Array: RNCBFQKFBBCNR.

Steve Harvey - Paul Byway  
Waltham Abbey January 1993  
Annotated by Paul Byway

1.Cj3 e5 2.e4 Nj6 3.Ce3 (This would seem to be a natural developing move according to chess theory; but Fe3 looks equally reasonable.) 3.... Nc6 4.i3 g6 5.Ni2 Fe6 6.h4 h5 7.Fh3 (A development of the minor pieces which was pioneered by Steve on first acquaintance with MCC; but in this position he could have won the 'e' pawn.) 7.... d6 8.f4 exf4 (Giving up e5 and gaining a tempo.) 9.Bxf4 Ch6 10.Bg3 Ff6 11.d3 i6 12.Nd2 Fe5 13.Cg5 f6 14.Ci5 g5 (Rather lighthearted. 15.Cxk7 Rk8 16.Ci5 Rkx2 17.Ck3 leads to horrible complications: incidentally a good example of just how mobile a Courier can be.) 15.Kh2 Ff4 16.hxg5 (A serious mistake: in MCC the Bishop is a major piece.) 16.... Fxg3+ 17.Nxg3 fxg5 18.Qxf8+ Cxf8 19.Rf1 Ch6



(Threatening 20....Cf4+ forking King and Knight. In the opening a Courier may be worth nearly as much as a Knight, but seriously declines in value as the endgame approaches.) 20.Fe3 Ce8 21.Cxh5 (Two pawns for a Courier may be a fair exchange. Black generously offers three instead!) 21.... ixh5 22.Nxh5 Nxh5 23.Bxh5 Bg6 24.Bxj7 Rj8 25.Bi6+ Bh7 26.Bxh7+ Kxh7 27.j4 Cg6 28.Nf3 g4 29.Ng5+ Bxg5 (With his King feeling uncomfortable Black gives up material to complete development and simplify into a won ending. In the event he runs considerable risks.) 30.Cxg5 Raf8 31.k3 Rxf1 32.Rxf1 Rf8 33.Rxf8 Cxf8 34.i4 (It is surely correct to offer the Fers for three connected passed pawns.) 34.... k6 35.Kg3 gxh3 36.gxh3 Nb4 37.i5 Nxc2 38.h4 Nb4 39.h5 Ci8 40.d4 Nxa2 41.k4 Ci6 (Now 42.lxi6 Kxi6 43.Kh4, would give White excellent chances.) 42.i3 Ff7 43.j5 Cxk4 44.lxk4 kxj5 45.kxj5 Ch8 (Planning to break the pawn phalanx with another piece sacrifice, and set up a blockade on the white squares. In MCC endings the colour control of the remaining pieces is frequently of crucial importance.) 46.j6 Cxj6 47.ixj6 Ki8 48.h6 Fg6 49.Kh4 (White is now lost because of the widely spread black pawns. Even 49.e5 dxe5 50.dxe5 Nb4 51.e6 Nd5 52.e7 Nf6 fails.) 49.... Nb4 50.Ki5 Kj7 51.e5 dxe5 52.Cxe5 (52.dxe5 must be better.) 52.... c6 53.Fd2 i5 54.Kj5 i4 55.Kk4 Kxj6 56.Kx14 Ki6 57.h7? Kxh7 58.Kk4 Nd3 59.Ce5 Nxc5 (The

simplest.) 60.dxc5 Kg7 61.Fc3 Kf6 62.Fb4 Ke5 63.Fa5 Kd5 64.b4 Kc4 65.Kj5 Kb5 66.Ki6 b6 67.cxb6 axb6 68.Kh6 bxa5 69.bxa5 Kxa5 70.Kxg6 c5 Resigns.

AVALANCHE CHESS

By Paul Novak

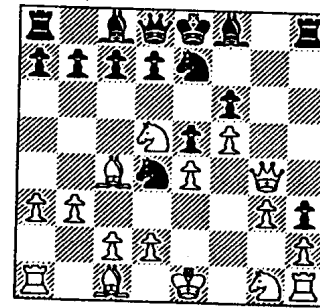
After a normal move you move an opponent's pawn one square towards you (no captures) - unless it is impossible. Check may be given with either or both halves of your move, but must be removed with the first part of the move. No e.p. capture. The owner of a pawn chooses its promotion regardless of who moved it to the 8th rank. If every legal pawn push puts you in check, you lose (self-mate).

The following game of Avalance chess was the first I or my opponent had ever played:

Paul Novak - Patrick Donovan

Eastbourne 1989, 30 minute game.

1.e4/f6 e5/f3 2.f4/g6 h5/g3 3.Bc4/g5 Nc7/f5 (Although he didn't tell me about it until some months later, Patrick had seen before he moved that White was threatening 4.Bd5/b6! winning the Ra8 (for if 4....Nc6, 5.Bxc6/d6+). It wasn't until years later I realised that if Black does nothing, he can answer 4.Bd5/b6 with Bc5 and then c6, or if White takes the Rook, Bd4/b3.) 4.Nc3/g4! Nbc6/a3 (4....d5/h3 is a good idea so that if 5.Na4/d4, ~/h4 secures the g4 pawn; but after the text move, 5.hxg4/d4! looks like a strong sac. I had a moment of inspiration here and saw the line 5.Qxg4/h4 Nd4/h3 6.Nd5/b6 Nxd5/h3 7.exd5/a6! Nxc2+/a4 8.Kd1/a5 Nxa1/b4 9.d6/h5, when after Rh6 Black must push d3 allowing White Bxh6 and winning.) 5.Qxg4/h4 Nd4/h3 6.Nd5/h3



6....Nxd5/b4 (If 6....Rh6, not 7.Qh5+? Ng6; but 7.d3 is good for White.) 7.exd5/a6 Nxc2+/a4 8.Kd1/a5 Qc7/b5 9.Kxc2/b6 Kd8/d3 10.Bf4/e4! Qb4/d4 11.Bxc7+/e3! Resigns. (After Ke8/d6, 12.Qg6/e2 mates just in time; Kxc7/d6 is self-mate.)

Entry details of the Xiangqi UK Championship is given on page 116. Regarding this the latest Chinese Chess Newsletter reports:

'Who is going to be the hero....this is anybody's guess. Great players always appearing from the horizon, for example, Mr.Chan Fazu, then the hot favourite Ms.Guo Shulong, the Star of Thailand David Young, the King of Cross Palace Cannon Mr. Kwok Wai Leung, the 'Old Venerable' Mr.Tsang, the Dragon of Hong Kong Mr.Li Tak Kuen, the Strongman of North-East Mr.Wang, etc. Further, many unknown players are secretly training day & night, with intention of bursting into the chess scene, thus making their names known in all lands under the sun!'

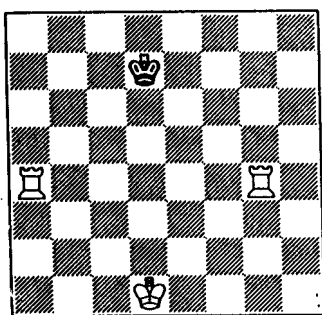
Beware 'Ancient Chess Editor from the South!' Day and night....

**PROBLEM PAGES**

By *Stefanos Pantazis*

A large number of friends new to VC join us to provide entertainment for the Christmas season: Vladislav Buňka, Alexander Zolotarev, E. A. Vaulin, Nikolay Vasyuchko, Jorge Kapros and company, Pavlos Moutecidis, and Bernard Rothmann. So pull up your armchair and join your cat(s) by the fire. No doubt puss will be able to provide some sensible advice if you get stuck...

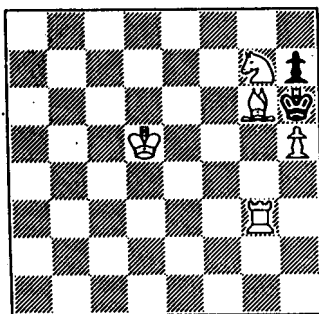
69. Edgar HOLLADAY



Stalemate in 5. (Try)

We start with an asymmetric minimanner. White stalemates Black (against any defence) in five moves. Edgar comments: "Simple setting with not-so-simple play."

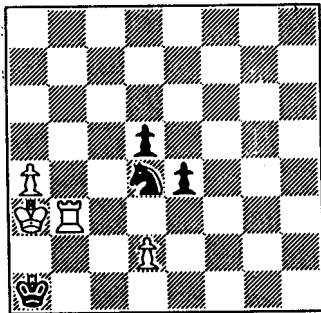
70. Vladislav BUŇKA



Series helpmate in 12 with set mate; (b) wK→e5, Series h≠11.

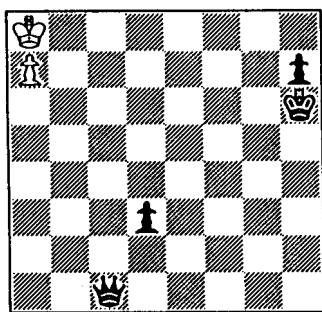
The first of our two series-movers is a Black-to-play position with an immediate mate for White, but some manœuvring is needed before another mate becomes possible. 71 resembles a duplex: Black's series allows White to mate in one, while White's series of moves forces Black to mate.

71. György BAKCSI & László ZOLTÁN



Series helpmate in 11. (b) Series selfmate in 9.

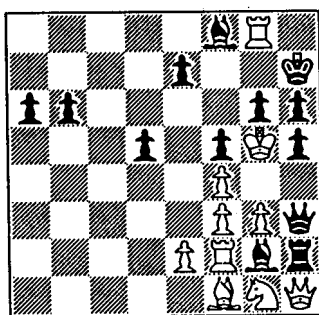
72. Paul RĂICAN



Selfmate in 10; Maxi. [Set mate]

Paul's 72 also has an immediate mate. In a *Maxi* (or *Maximumber*) Black is constrained to play his longest legal move. (Distances are calculated between the centres of the squares.)

73. Alexander ZOLOTAREV & Nikita PLAKSIN



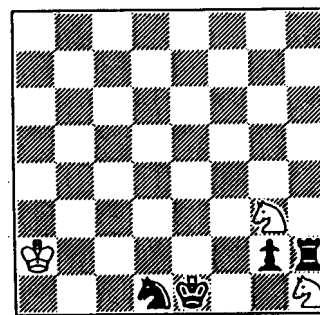
Legal mate?

The question in the stipulation of 73 is somewhat rhetorical. The solver is supposed to find if and, more importantly, *how* this position could arise. If the composers' intention is sound, you should be able to discover the exact fate of three of the four

missing white pawns. (The Ceriani or Frolkin theme.)

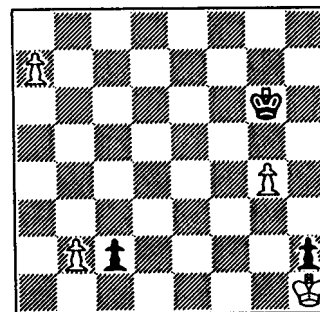
Charming Circe celebrated her silver anniversary last year, and, unlike some of her siblings born in that *annus mirabilis*, she has more than fond memories to offer us... (Captured units are reborn on their game array squares, if vacant. The colour or file of the capture square determines the specific square.) In the first two problems the sides cooperate to reach mate or stalemate, while in George's miniature White plays 11 consecutive moves forcing Black to mate with his next move.

74. E. A. VAULIN



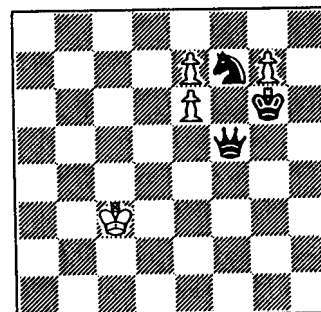
Helpmate in 2; Circe, Two solutions.

75. Erich BARTEL



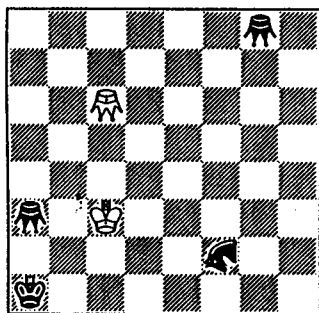
Helpstalemate in 3; Circe, (b) wKh1↔bKg6.

76. George P. SPHICAS



Series selfmate in 11; Circe.

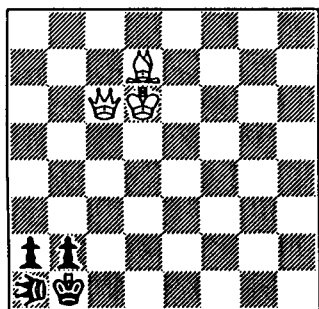
77. Nikolay VASYUCHKO



Series helpmate in 23;  
Nightriderhopper f2, Grasshoppers.

A *Nightriderhopper* is related to the Nightrider as the Grasshopper to the Queen. It moves on Nightrider lines by hopping over the first man it meets (the *hurdle*) to the next square beyond: if a piece (of either side) was on e4 or d6, the NHf2 could jump to d6 or c8 respectively.

78. Pavlos MOUTECIDIS  
(after Zdeněk Libiš)

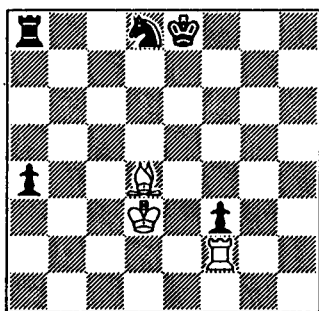


Reflexmate in 2; Amazon a1.  
Two solutions and tries.

Pavlos feels that the original version of 78, which appeared in a recent *Problemist*, did not make good use of the material's possibilities. The *Amazon* is a Q+S combination piece. A *reflexmate* is similar to a selfmate, but either side has to give mate whenever able to do so on the move.

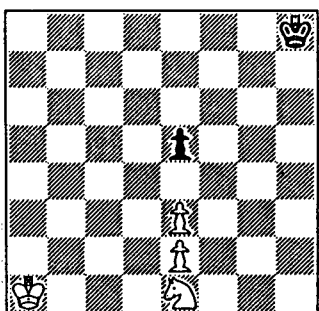
Our next two originals feature chess variants that will be new to most readers. *Inflation* or *Descent Chess* is fairly easy to explain, but its history is complex. Each moving unit (except Ks & Ps) loses value, with pieces transforming in the sequence Q→R→B→S→P. (Knights moving to the promotion rank do not become pawns, nor do promoting pawns transform before moving again.)

79. Ernesto ALTINIER, Albo DESTÉFANI † & Jorge M. KAPROS



Helpmate in 3; Inflation (or Descent) Chess. Try and Solution.

80. Bernard ROTHMANN



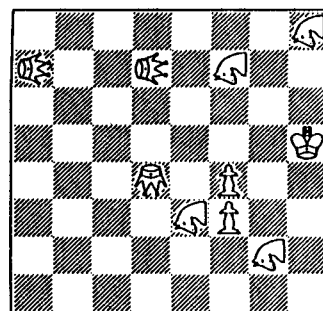
Helpmate in 5; Plus Chess.

In 79 an apparent second solution fails for subtle reasons! The variant was introduced by Otto Dehler as 'Aufwertungschach'. It was an explicit comment on the hyperinflation of the Weimar Republic (see *Neue Leipziger Zeitung* 21/ii/1926; *Funkschach* iv/1926 p. 208, 241; *feenschach* 1987 p. 90, 94). It was revived by German-born US composer Maxwell Bukofzer in the *FCR* (xii/1940, p. 118). It was invented independently (as 'Descenso') by Virgilio Fenoglio in 1974. Initially only the white pieces were subject to inflation, but further problems by Argentine composers extended the rule. (In the 1926 version pieces transformed *after* the opponent's next move, while in Bukofzer's problem pawns also transformed to immobile blocks.)

*Plus Chess* is a new genre invented by the composer, which emphasizes the importance of the central squares d4-d5-e4-e5. Any unit on one of these squares can move or give check as if it was placed on any other unoccupied central square (in addition to its normal powers). For example, a R on d4

standing on an empty board controls a-h4, a-h5, d1-8, and e1-8. Some new effects are possible; e.g. with wKb1, Re4, bKh5, Be5, the R & B are mutually pinned.

81. Aubrey W. INGLETON



Series selfmate in 13; Circe.  
All units are Neutral. Maos e3, f7, ...  
Kangaroos a7, d7.

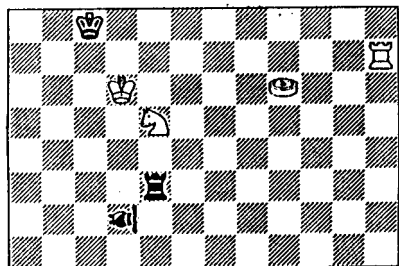
A *Neutral* man can be taken as white or black at the discretion of the side moving. Neutral pawns promote to neutral pieces. When a neutral man is captured by White it is reborn as if it were black, and vice versa. The rebirth square for a fairy piece is the promotion square on the file it is captured. The *Mao* moves to the same squares as a knight, but instead of leaping, it takes one orthogonal and then one diagonal step. Thus Me3 could go to f5, but it cannot then return to e3. The *Kangaroo* is similar to the Grasshopper, but leaps over *two* units landing to the next square beyond. (The two hurdles may have vacant squares between them.) KAA7 can move to g7 or f2.

Trying to mate a neutral King has been compared to playing football with a single set of goal-posts for both teams. To avoid scoring an own goal a piece that moves differently if it is White or Black must be used to check (or mate) the King. Of all the units in 81 only that very fairy piece, the pawn, has this property. (There are other pieces like the Hunter family, or Shogi men, which share this property, but I have never seen them used to hunt the neutral King...)

We conclude with another of Paul's Modern Courier Chess studies, based on a *Mansuba* attributed to as-Suli. (The date must be that of the manuscript—probably MS. 'Abd-al-Hamid I, quoted as AH in Murray—

since as-Suli flourished in the first half of the 10th century.) The *Fers* moves one square diagonally in any direction (= (1,1)-leaper). Paul describes it as "a good old-fashioned king hunt". It should not prove too hard, so the only hint I will give is that the main line ends with mate on the 10th move.

82. Paul V. BYWAY  
after As-Suli (~ 1140)



White to play and win; *Ferses* d2, i6.

**Correction:** Aubrey Ingleton suggests the following resetting of 51: wKc7, Tiger g1; bKg8, Te4. Helpmate in 3 1/2; two solutions. This will be part of our solving ladder, so please test it again. Recall that the *Tiger* leaps over a hurdle to any distance beyond, but in *any* direction, not just Q-lines! For example, the *Tiger* on g1 could move to c7.

## Solutions to originals in VC 14

59 Michel Olausson.

- (a) 1.d1=S h8=B 2.Sc3 Bxc3=  
(b) 1.d1=B h8=Q 2.Bxb3 Qc3=  
(c) 1.d1=S b8=R 2.Sb2 Rxb2=  
(d) 1.h1=B b8=S 2.Bxc6 Sxc6=  
"Curious coupling of two black underpromotions with white AUW."  
(A. Ingleton) Pawns-only miniature.

60 Branko Koludrović.

- 1.c2xQb1 & 1.c1=R Qd3≠  
1.c1=S Qc2≠  
-1.c2xSb1 & 1.c1=S Sc3≠  
1.Kc1 Re1≠

Interestingly, more than one solver went for a B promotion, hoping for

## THE RETRO-EXCELSIOR

The retro-Excelsior theme (see L. Ceriani "32 Personaggi e 1 Autore", pp. 342-7) includes three factors of the pawn movement that have to be made exact: path, captures and promotion.

more than the position could deliver...

61 Sergey Tkachenko.

- 1.c4 d6 2.c5 Kd7 3.c6+ Ke6 4.cxb7  
c5 5.bxc8=R c4 6.Rc5 c3 7.Rg5 c2  
8.Rxg7 cxb1=R 9.Rxh7 Rxc1  
10.Rxh8 Rxa1

Pseudo-Platzwechsel of a1/h8 rooks. "I like this kind of Retros, especially when they are not too difficult, but this one was too easy!" (A. Ettinger) "It took me a while to realize that the white promotion to R was on c8 and not on h8." (I. Richardson)

62 David Dana-Bashian.

1.d1=B axb8=S 2.e1=R hxg8=Q≠  
Unfortunately the bSs were needed for soundness. "Eine fein motivierte AUW, but see Henning Müller, Die Schwalbe vi/1988: wKa1, Pc7,g7; bKe8, Bd7, Pd2,h2. Horizontal Cylinder, h≠2: 1.d1=B c8=S 2.h1=R g8=Q≠" (E. Bartel) Müller's version is more economical and ends with a model mate.

63 Torsten Linß.

1.nPf1=nS nPf8=nR 2.nRxf6  
(nPh8=nQ) nQxh5 (nPd1=nB)≠  
"A fine neutral AUW of the Ks+4Ps form and promotions only (twice passive)." (EB) "Very cunning." (AI) A solver paid me the compliment of assuming that Couscous Circe was an illiterate spelling for *Circé Coucou*, but in fact the two are slightly different. (The distinguishing factor is who decides on the type of rebirth promotions.) The French pun, quite in the fairy chess tradition (the Nightrider and the Edgohog spring to mind), is understandable if one recalls how common North African restaurants have become in France.

64 Edgar Holladay. D=Dragon

- (a) 1.— Kc3 2.Kb5 Dc4+ 3.Ka4 b3≠  
(b) 1.— Kc4 2.Kb6 Dc5+ 3.Ka5 b4≠  
(c) 1.— Dd5+ 2.Kb5 Dc3+ 3.Ka5 b4≠  
(d) 1.— b4 2.Kb5 Dc4+ 3.Ka6 b5≠  
"Four mates by the wP with two nice chameleon echoes." (AE)

65 George P. Spiccas.

- 1.a8=R 2.Rxa2 (a7) 3.bxa7 4.a8=Q  
5.Qxf3 (f7) 6.gxf7 7.f8=S 8.Sh7  
9.Kh8 10.g8=B 11.Qxh1+ (Ra8)

Rxg8 (Bf1)≠

"The best in this issue." (P. Răican) "A neat AUW with nice Circe effects." (AE) (One solver claimed a try as a cook, so this was quite tricky as well.)

66 Erich Bartel. C = Camel,

Z = Zebra, GI = Giraffe.

- (a) 1.Zxe4 (c7) c8=nZ 2.Cxc4 (b7)  
bxc8=nGI (nZe7)≠

1.Cxc4 (b7) b8=nC 2.Zxe4 (c7)  
cxb8=nN (nCc7)≠

- (b) 1.Zxe4 (c7) b8=nZ 2.Cxc4 (b7)  
bxb8=nN (nZb7)≠

1.Cxc4 (b7) c8=nC 2.Zxe4 (c7)  
cxc8=nGI (nCc7)≠

"Doubled fairy AUW with fantastic construction." (AE) "Ingenious but very repetitive." (AI)

67 Ulf Hammarström.

- 1.c5 (Ia4) f4 (Ia6) 2.c4 f5 3.c3 f6  
4.c2 f7 5.c1=S (Ia4) f8=S (Ia6)≠  
[5.c1=R? f8=S+ 6.Rd1!  
5.c1=B? f8=S+ 6.Bd2!]

"A nice variation of the \$100 theme." (EB) Probably the first sound version of the task using the Imitator.

68 Ian Shanahan.

The solution of the correction was given in our last issue (computer tested using Chloe). The earlier cooks were of the type: (a) with bB→f5: 1.Qd1 5.Kc1 6.Bb1 8.f1=S 9.Sd2 10.a1=S 11.Sc2 Sd3≠  
(b) with bB→d7: 2.f1=S 3.Sd2 4.Qf1 5.Ba4 6.a1=R 8.Re2 9.Bd1 11.Ke1 Sd3≠

### LADDER Scores:

|                  |     |               |
|------------------|-----|---------------|
| Maximum          | 104 | (= 47+34+23), |
| A. W. Ingleton   | 86  | (= 33+30+23), |
| P. Răican        | 73  | (= 19+31+23), |
| E. Bartel        | 67  | (= 23+26+18), |
| I. G. Richardson | 60  | (= 19+26+15), |
| A. Ettinger      | 55  | (= 0+32+23),  |
| M. A. Ridley     | 31  | (= 6+17+8),   |
| M. Olausson      | 21  | (= 0+21+0),   |
| V. Krivenko      | 17  | (= 0+17+0).   |

[Includes E. Bartel's score for VC 13.]

Send your solutions, originals and comments to:  
710 Dobson St. #2,  
Evanston, IL 60202 (USA).

Especially interesting—amongst the 70,688,912 theoretical possibilities—is the case of a diagonal path where each pawn move is a capture of an identical figure resulting in a promotion of the same type. The thematic piece in the

orthodox A is a rook. Circe and its variants are particularly fruitful with this theme: B shows the theme with a Bishop and C with the Knight, while D employs a fairy piece. Two final examples, E & F given in notation, have the R & Q as thematic units:

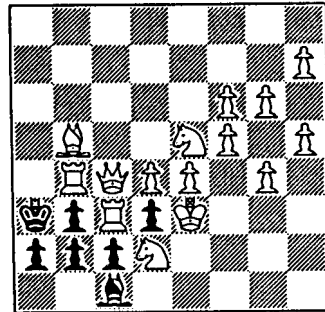
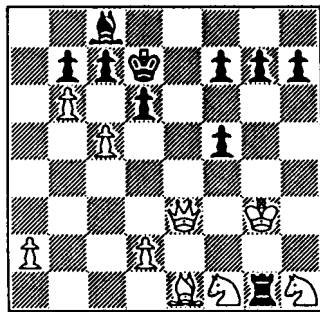
E. N. Plaksin & A. Kornilov, feenschach 1982: 1s3B2 /bRr1P3/kprP2p1/8/Brp5/rp4P1/QK5p/rS6 (9+13). Last 9 moves? Monochrome Circe.

F. N. Plaksin, Chessics 1982: 3qkbs1/1pPp2pp/4p1p1 /6K1/5p2/P7/SPRP4/1SB3q1 (9+12). Last move? Promotion Hydra Circe.

N. Plaksin

A. Nikita Plaksin  
3rd Prize, Europe Échecs 1980

B. Nikita Plaksin  
5th HM, feenschach 1979



Minimum number of moves by the bK?

Last 9 moves?

Circe

**Solutions:**

A. (dedicated to R. Diot) One move, Ke8-d7, is sufficient: The promoted bP [=bRg1] came from a7 capturing 6 units on black squares. Thus wBf1 was captured on f5. Because of the position of the Be1, the unit captured on f2 was not a pawn. Similarly, the capture of a pawn on e3 would leave Black short of pawn moves to retract. Thus all missing white Ps were promoted on e8 to Rs (a S-promotion would force the bK to move when departing though f6). Retract: 1.— f2xRg1=R+ 2.Q--e3 e3xRf2 3.c4 d4xRe3 4.b5 c5xRd4 5.Re8 b6xRc5 6.e7-e8=R a7xRb6 7.f6xYe7 etc. (Y = unspecified unit)

B. Retract: 1.Sf1-d2 d2xBc1=B+ 2.Kf3-e3 e3xBd2 (Bc1) 3.Bc1-d2 f4xBc3 (Bc1) 4.Bc1-e3 g5xBf4 (Bc1) 5.Bc1-f4 h6xBg5 (Bc1) 6.Bc1-g5 g7xBh6 (Bc1) 7.h3xg4 (g7) g5-g4+ 8.g2xh3 h4-h3 9.Bf8-h6 h6xg5 (g2) etc. [The judge, A. Hazebrouck, remarked: "Si le rétro-Excelsior est assez facile, la suite est ardue et adroitement justifiée."]

C. Last move: f2xSg1=S+. To account for the (present or captured) 18 white men the two missing wPs promoted on f8. The North box cannot be unlocked until the wPs unpromote, hence only Ss can get to f8 via d7. So the path of the bP is a7xSb6xSc5xSd4xSe3xSf2xSg1=S.

D. (U = Ubi-ubi) 1.Ub8xUb1 c2xUb1=U (Ub8)+ 2.Uc8-b1 d3xUc2 (Uc8) 3.Ud8-c2 e4xUd3 (Ud8) 4.Ue8-d3 f5xUe4 (Ue8) 5.Uf8-e4 g6xUf5 (Uf8) 6.Ug8-f5 f7xUg6 (Ug8) 7.Re4xf4 (f7) f5-f4 8.Uf8-g6 g6xUf5 (Uf8) 9.Ug8-f5 f7xUg6 (Ug8) 10.e2xf3 (f7) f4-f3 etc.

E. Retract: 1.Kc3-b2 b2xRa1=R 2.Kd4-c3 c3xRb2 3.Ke5-d4 d4xRc3 4.Kf6-e5 e5xRd4 [4.— c5xRd4? 5.~ retrostalemate] 5.Kg7-f6 f6xRe5 6.Kh8-g7 g7xRf6 7.f2xg3 (g7) f4xRg3 (Ra1) [7.— h4xRg3 (Ra1)? 8.~ retrostalemate] 8.Rd2-b2 g5xf4 (f2) 9.Qc2-a2 Ra1-a3 etc.

**DEFINITIONS:**

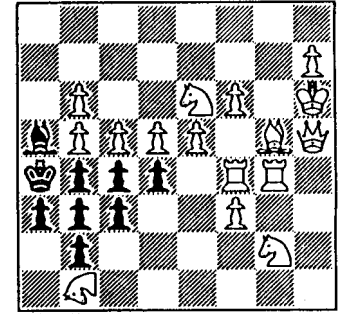
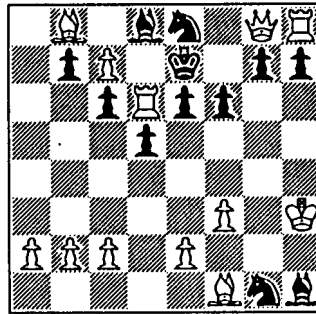
*Promotion Hydra Circe:* (invented by G. Balbo 1979) After a pawn promotion, a clone of the promoted piece appears on the appropriate game array square if empty.

*Ubi-ubi:* (invented by F. Hoffmann 1971) Makes any number of S-moves in succession (in any direction). A capture can only take place at the last S-leap.

*Monochrome Circe:* A combination of *Monochrome Chess* and *Circe*. All legal moves must be between squares of the same colour. (Pawns or a promoted Q can change square colour through rebirth.)

C. Nikita Plaksin  
Chessics 1981

D. Nikita Plaksin  
feenschach 1982



Promotion Hydra Circe  
Path of bPa7?

Last 10 moves?  
Ubi-ubi b1

F. After the Q-promotion is retracted, all four missing wPs must unpromote on f8. Since e7-e6, Bf8 out, and f7xBg6 took place before the promotions, Knights cannot escape from f8, so all promotions were to Queen. Nine wQ captures, including an Excelsior.

**REVISION: 1991-92 AWARD**

Only one cook claim has been received for our 1991/92 tourney award published in VC 14, but sadly it involved one of the top ranked problems. Paul Răican was alone in spotting this cook to George Sphicas' Second Prize (124), and so wins one year's subscription to the *US Problem Bulletin*. [The position was: wKa1, bKd8, nBg1 & nPs a2, a3, a5, b7. Series selfmate in 14, Circe.]

Cook: 1.Kxa2 (a7) 2.b8=nB 3.a8=nR 4.Rxa5 (a7) 5.Rc5 6.a8=nR 7.Ra7 8.Rb7 9.cRc7 10.bBa7 11.Kxa3 12.aBb6 13.Ba5 14.Rxb7 (Ra8)++ Rxa5 (Bc1)≠

124 will have to come out of the award, and Peter Wong's 96 becomes the new Second Prize. I hope George will be able to correct this fine problem, so that it can compete in our current tourney.

Note: Regarding the proposed Really Bouncy Bishop (see p. 93 of VC14) it is worth pointing out:

- (a) The logic of conventions is in the eye of the beholder. One could equally well argue that since pieces move on square centres, this is where the reflection should occur.
- (b) A piece like the RBB already exists: the *Cardinal*, which like the Archbishop is restricted to a single reflection.
- (c) George Jelliss had proposed calling this type of piece a *diffracting Bishop*, but the name never gained currency. (The terminology from physics seems inappropriate.)
- (d) The knight can be treated in the same manner; a RBS on d1 would control b1, b2, c2, c3, e2, e3, f1, f2.

## KRIEGSPIEL, OR CHESS IN A BLACKOUT

By I.A.Hulf

Kriegspiel, or War-game if you prefer the English translation, has many attractions for the chess-player. The element of luck that plays a large part in it gives hope to the weaker player and at the same time allures his more skillful opponent with the prospect of devising some diabolical trap guaranteed to produce mate inside a dozen moves.

This article is intended to serve merely as an introduction to Kriegspiel for those who have no previous acquaintance with the game and no attempt is made to dive into its deeper aspects.

### Rules

The rules of play are quite simple. Three boards with complete sets of men are placed in a line with two screens erected between them so that each of the two players, who sit at opposite ends, has a board of his own, equipped with a full set of 32 pieces, and can see only this one board. Each player keeps upon his board the correct position of his own men. His opponent's men he can shift and place as he wishes, following deductions he may make in the course of the game. The basis for these deductions is provided by the umpire who sits at the middle board. His function is to make each move upon the middle board in accordance with the moves made by the players themselves and to inform them of capture, checks and whether the moves they try to make are possible or not by reason of the position on the centre board. A player can 'try' any move and if it is not possible the umpire will answer 'no' or 'not a move'. To save trying captures with all the pawns each time, it is permissible to ask the umpire 'any pawn captures?' (abbreviated to 'any?'), to which the umpire will answer either 'no' or 'try'. On being told to 'try', a player must try at least one capture with a pawn. If desired he can go on trying the whole lot until the capture is made. Captures are announced as taking place on the square in question. An en passant pawn capture is simply announced as 'capture on e3', but if it follows an injunction to try, its nature may be evident.

The only other information given is the nature of a check. This is briefly described as either 'check on the rank' or 'ranker'; 'check on the file' or 'filer'; 'check on the long diagonal' or 'long'; 'check on the short diagonal' or 'short'. Check by a Knight is

announced as such. The length of the diagonal refers to the number of squares on the two diagonals which intersect at the square on which the checked King stands. The checking player cannot always be sure of the position of his opponent's King as there are often two positions which would give a check on the 'long' or 'short'. The checked player always knows the diagonal but may not be able to determine the direction of the check.

### Method of Play

The method of play can be followed by watching a game in the middle board and listening to the questions and answers that pass between players and umpire.

White plays 1.e4, the umpire announces 'White has moved'. Black plays 1...d5. White tries Pxd5. The umpire announces 'capture on d5' or more rudely 'that's gone', pushing the said piece with his finger. (This sort of thing is usually reserved for pieces that deserve to be captured through negligence.) Black plays 2...Qxd5; announced by the umpire as 'recaptured', and White plays 3.Bc4.

There are several small points which deserve comment here. White did not ask 'any?' on his second move as he half expected 1...d5. To ask would confirm to Black that he had played a pawn at first. Not asking leaves the possibility of a capture with a Knight to confuse Black. Similarly the answer 'no' to the attempt 2.Pxf5 before Pxd5 would tell Black of an advanced pawn. Black for his part assumes a pawn capture but so far cannot tell whether it is the 'e' pawn or the 'e' pawn. He can make a partial test with 3...Qc6, and if a check is announced then the 'e' file is open. This is risky as White might have played 3.Bc4. If no check is called he may assume the 'e' file to be closed by the pawn but the test is incomplete inasmuch as White may have played 1.e4 and 3.Bc2.

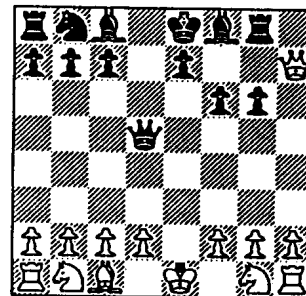
However, Black now plays 3...Qd8 making a mental note that so far he does not know which pawn captured his pawn on d5. It is better for the Queen to retire along her own file, to guard against 3.Qg4, followed by 4.Qxc8, which would be mate if the black Queen had left her own file.

White asks 'any?' not really expecting a pawn capture but loath to miss a chance of deceiving his opponent in the belief that his third move had been made with a pawn, gets the answer 'no', and plays 4.Qf3 with obvious intentions. Black asks 'any?', 'no', and plays 4...f6. White now tries 5.Qxf7, the umpire says 'not a move' and to test whether the 'f' pawn has moved he tries, 5.Bxg8. 'Capture on 'g8'. Black replies with

5...Rxxg8, his mind now at rest about his opponent's pawn position; the umpire again announces the move as a 'recapture'.

Now 6.Qh5+, 'Check on the short diagonal', and Black answers with 6...g6 7.Qxh7 and White is a pawn to the good.

By now Black should have the white position set up accurately. The two moves of the Queen might be deduced from the answer 'no' to the attempted 5.Qxf7. White on the other hand does not know where the black Queen is, neither can he be sure of the position of the kingside pawns. Black plays 7...Qd5 covering the Rook.



White tries 8.Qd3 with a negative result. He contemplates 8.Qxg8 but realises that Black may have played 7...Rg7 in which case 8...Kf7 would detect the presence of the Queen, and suddenly realises that the gain of the pawn has become embarrassing. He makes for possible safety with 8.Qh3 but Black, accurately following his opponent's thought, tries 8...Kd7 and when the umpire says 'no', swoops on the Queen with 8...Bxh3 9.Nxh3, and Black tries Qxh1 before playing 9...Qxg2, with a probably won game.

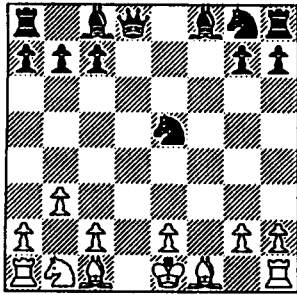
The example has been given in detail as an introduction to the game. It is rarely that such continuous contact is maintained between the opposing forces and without this it is obviously impossible to follow all one's opponent's moves. By keeping count of the number of moves made on each side in the opening the probable position can be judged when exchanges begin. The best opening strategy therefore is to push forward as far as is compatible with safety and try to engage the enemy early in the game. The other alternative is to make a concerted attack upon some particular spot regardless of the consequences:

### Another Example

1.d4 d6 2.(a.n.) f4, (a.n.) f6 3.(a.n.) Nf3, (a.n.) Nc6 4.(a.n.) b3, (a.n.) c5 5.(a.t.) dxe5, fxe5 6.fxe5 dxe5 7.Nxe5 Nxe5 8.(Kd2 'no!') Qxd8+, Kxd8.

In this notation attempted moves are in brackets - a.n. means 'any?' with the answer 'no'; and a.t. 'any?', 'try'.





No matter what the opening moves were, White, by trying 8.Kd2, is sure of the black position except that a pawn may have recaptured last on e5 instead of the Knight. In the number of moves made, no other explanation of the black position is possible. White can now continue with 9.Bb2 and follow it up with 10.e4. He then tries 11.e5 and, if it is obstructed, proceeds with 11.Nd2 12.Rd1 and e5 again. If the obstruction persists then e5 is most likely to be occupied by a pawn. The advance of the King may be necessary to establish its identity beyond doubt.

**The Opening**

The opening abounds in prepared traps, double check being particularly effective.

The following is an example of a prepared double check resulting in mate: 1.c4 d5 2.(a.t.) cxd5, Qxd5 3.Nc3 (Qxh1 'no!'), Qd8 4.(a.n.) Nb5, (a.n.) f5 5.(a.n.) Qa4, (a.n.) Nh6 6.(a.n.) Nd6++ and mate! Black has been following the line of defence adopted in the former game, anticipating a king-side attack.

White's last move is naturally a shot in the dark and it would be sounder for him to have played 6.Nxc7 with a double check followed by 7.Nxa8. If Black had played 5...c6 the whole plan would have failed and the Knight would have been lost without compensation, but 5...Nc6 followed by 6.Nxc7+ would not have been so serious as there is little difference in value between a Knight and a pawn in Kriegspiel.

Concerted attacks on a particular spot often gain pawn or piece.

1.d4 d5 2.(a.n.) e3, (a.n.) Nf6 3.(a.n.) c3, (a.n.) e6 4.(a.n.) Bd3, (a.n.) Nbd7 5.(a.n.) Qc2, (a.n.) c5 6.(a.t.-tries all except dxc5) Nf3, (a.t.) cxd4 7.exd4 Nb6 8.h4 (a.n.) Bd7 9.(a.n.) Ng5, (a.n.) Rc8 10.(a.n.) Nxb7, Nxb7 11.Bxb7 Rxb7 12.Qxb7, and gains a unit.

**Certain Moves**

Certain moves normally follow each other. For instance if there are exchanges on g(b)5, Rxb(a)8 is usually attempted at once to ascertain if the rook file is clear. After f3 it is customary to play Kf2 or

another piece to that square as otherwise a N may slip in undetected. The fianchettoed Bishop usually attempts to reach a(h)8 as soon as it gets in position. Much can be learned by what the umpire tells the other fellow. A host of 'noes' preceding each move often denotes the presence of the King in the firing line. Three 'noes' in rapid succession when the only advanced unit is a pawn on g4 for example, and there are no 'anys', suggests a Rook or Queen on the 'g' file, and so on.

Although the asking of 'any' becomes more of a habit than anything, there are many occasions when it is preferable not to ask but to attempt the capture first. In this way a passed pawn may be obtained without one's opponent suspecting it! Also, following the umpire's invitation to 'try', a capture can be made by a piece instead of a pawn, with misleading effect.

When checked by anything but a Knight, always try a move by your King in the direction you suspect the checker to be. He may be unsupported and you may capture him. The discovery of the position of the opposing King should be the signal for an attack upon him. It is surprising what pretty mates can be obtained with a little practice and a lively imagination. The problemist has an advantage over the ordinary chess-player in this department.

**The Endgame**

As the pieces disappear from the board the position of both sides becomes evident. The end-game is usually fairly accurate but there are certain peculiarities. The odd pawn always wins against the lone King as there is no such thing as 'opposition'. (The only exception to this is a pawn on the rook's file.) The Queen cannot win against a Rook or minor piece except by luck, and two Bishops, or a Knight and a Bishop, cannot give mate. Rook and King can mate the opposing King, but it requires practice.

**The Umpire**

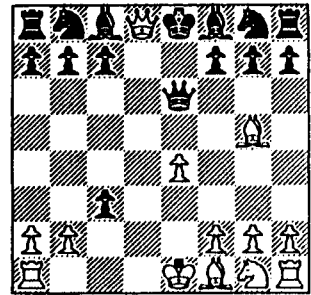
The umpire, needless to say, needs a sharp eye; he must not overlook discovered checks or pins. To say 'try' when a pawn is pinned, and then to retract it, is to give the whole game away. He must make his announcements without modulating his voice. If the players like to express surprise when Bxd8 does not result in a capture, that is their lookout. Some umpires adopt a comic vein which is calculated to entertain the spectators rather than the players. Remarks like 'Black has captured a -- square' or 'try' when a pawnless player accidentally asks 'any?' are instances.

The spectators must maintain absolute silence until the game is over. Then there

is usually a super-inquest, both players trying to explain what was going on in their minds and everyone demonstrating what should have been done.

The following game, played at the National Centre shortly before its destruction, was reported in a chess column under the heading 'Blitzkriegspiel!'.

Sir.R.Robinson - R.H.S.Stevenson  
1.c4 e5 2.(a.n.) c4, (a.n.) d5 3.(a.t.) cxd5 Qxd5 4.(a.t.) Nc3 Qe6 5.(a.n.) (Proving that a black pawn has not moved to d5) d4, (a.t.) exd4 6.Bg5 dxc3 7.Qd8 #!

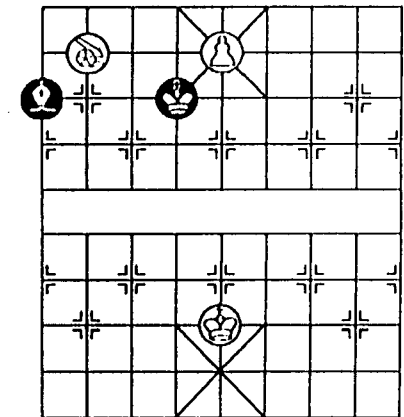


If you would enjoy playing Kriegspiel do not take it too seriously. Light-hearted games in the spirit of the above are most enjoyable to players and spectators alike. The player who tries to get every piece and pawn protected two or three times produces a most dreary form of game.

David Li of Bethesda, Maryland, USA, has written *Kriegspiel - Chess Under Uncertainty*. This is reviewed on page 113.

Mr.Li also sends details of a Kriegspiel Tournament which was to have been held in Washington, USA, on November 4-6th with a prize fund totalling \$2540. However the *Washington City Paper* reports that 'Li's grand vision foundered; not one person registered for the November tournament.'

**Chinese Chess**



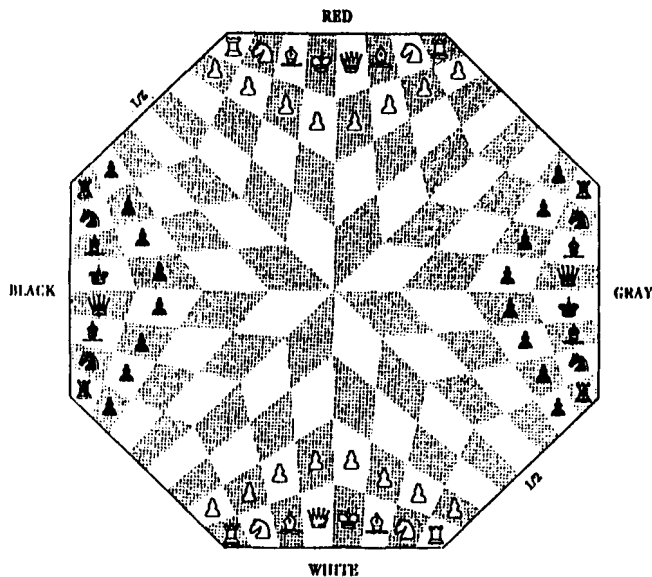
Red to play and win. Solution nex time.



## FOUR HANDED CHESS

TWO GAMES ON THE MARKET

### DOUBLES CHESS



Doubles Chess is a game for 4 players - 2 teams of 2 players. Teammates sit opposite each other. To win one team must checkmate or capture, both of the opponents' Kings. A checkmated player loses just that turn, but continues to play when his team is down to one King. Your King can be physically captured. This can happen when opponent (1) can discover check from a piece of opponent (2), who has the move before you do. A player whose King is captured does not lose a turn.

There are options for playing with 2 or 3 persons.

#### Nice Looking

The board is nice-looking and the merging of 2 normal boards together is original and well done. One advantage over the Shalmot board (VC14), is that the length of the files and ranks are of a reasonable size. However the Queen still seems too powerful a piece - for instance from one of the central squares it commands 35 squares. The movement of the Knight and Bishop are difficult to visualise when they are away from the edge squares.

Pawns move and capture as normal, but the path of the pawn is always to the end square of the closest opponent, from whence it promotes as in normal chess. If the pawn captures outside its sector, its promotion path is still to the end square of the same opponent it was heading for at the start of the game.

Larry Evans calls Doubles Chess 'the best four-handed version I ever saw....' My verdict: 'Too complicated piece movements, difficult to play.'

Send to: Doubles Chess, 1040 Grant Road, Suite 155-145, Mountain View, CA 94040, USA. Suggested retail price is \$29.

### FOUR ZONE CHESS

This game is part of a package of 3 games which can be played on the Four Zone board. The other two games are Wipe Out and Draughts. There are 4 sets of chess pieces, each set comprising 14 pieces - 13 on the board and the Queen placed outside the board. See diagram. The pieces are discs, not 'statues'.

#### Rules

The game can be played by 2,3, or 4 players. If played by 4 each player can play separately, or there can be 2 sets of pairs playing each other. If the latter, the winning pair of players is the first to checkmate one of the other two players, or to force a stalemated opponent's pieces to be removed from the board, (when a player is stalemated his King is removed but he continues playing.)

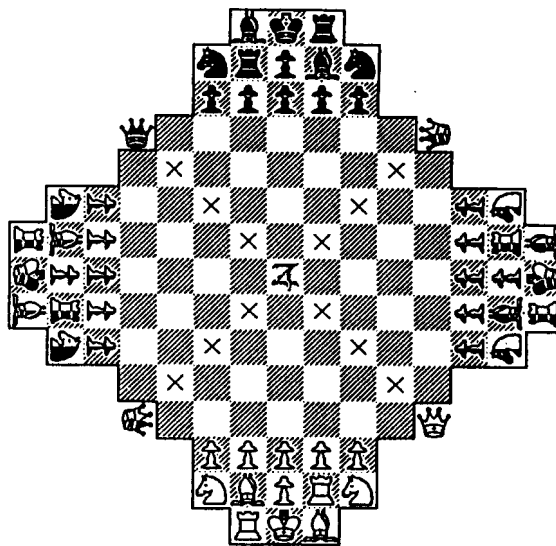
The playing board has 4 zones of 29 playing squares each, and 12 yellow playing squares, (marked in the diagram by X), in between the 4 zones.

The centre square has a special function. This is the promotion square. Pawns reaching it can be promoted either to a Queen, or to a lost piece. Promoted pieces, or pawns that are unable to be promoted, must leave the centre square on the following move, (unless the player has to get out of check).

Apart from the pawns, the other pieces move as in normal chess, but cannot enter the centre square, cannot move over the centre square, and cannot give check across the centre square.

Pawns are different. They move as in normal chess within their own zone, (including the initial 2-move option), but once they leave their own zone they cannot move back into it, nor enter the centre zone. However outside their own zone they gain enhanced powers. There the pawn can move as a King, although can only take diagonally, (as a Ferz, both backward and forward).

There is no castling or en passant capture.



In the rule book Rooks are called Castles and Knights are shown as old-fashioned KN instead of N. However appearances can be deceptive - the rules are well laid out and take up less than four and a half pages.

#### Balance Better

The game is most interesting too. Compared to Shalmot, (see VC14), the balance between major and minor pieces is better, as the *one* Queen only comes into play after promotion. The Rooks and Bishops are still pretty powerful though, despite the 'dead' centre square.

The two pawns on the central file are the only ones that can promote without capturing, and are therefore especially valuable. The enhanced powers of the pawns when they leave their own zone is a neat and original idea. It is not mentioned in the rules, but to make a King/Ferz I put a blank draught piece over the pawn (it fits neatly) giving the appearance of a 'Draughts King'.

I also like the way the game is brought to a conclusion with 4 players playing as 2 pairs. Checkmating *one* of the opposing Kings is a simple target to aim for. One does not have to worry about what to do with the first checkmated player's pieces when *both* the Kings have to be checkmated. Games are over quicker too.

#### Plays Well

The game plays well. An obvious plan is to push the central pawn directly to the promotion square; opponents can prevent this by Bishop and Knight, but the Rooks (pieces difficult to develop quickly) can become exposed to attack. However Rooks appear no more powerful than Bishops (in fact maybe less so). As only one pawn can be promoted at a time, and the promoted piece has to spend another move vacating the central square, pushed pawns can expose themselves to danger as they await their turn to promote. The transformation from a pawn into a King/Ferz makes for interesting play - this promotion is easier to achieve, and the piece

is quite strong too. Critical decisions need to be made fairly early in the game, and co-operation between partners is important.

The plastic discs are fairly thin, but seem reasonably strong. Because the pieces are discs there may be some difficulty in distinguishing other players' pieces (especially the black, green and red ones). I feel that with practice players can become used to them. Solid pieces could be used from other games (e.g. 'complete' edition version of Shahmot; or Doubles Chess), but as there need to be 4 different coloured sets, this could be an expensive option.

This is the best FHC game commercially available at the moment. Those who wish to venture into FHC should try Four Zone Chess. There is also the added bonus of Four Zone Wipe-Out and Four Zone Draughts!

Send to: Four Zone Games, Estate House, Evesham Street, Redditch, Worcestershire B97 4HP. The price is £25.99.

## BOOK REVIEWS by David Pritchard

To receive two books, each on a single variant and within a few days of each other as I did recently, is hardly a commonplace event. Books on single variants are rare indeed. As an investment they have, without exception, proved gilt-edged; though, as the financial people warn, past performance may not be a guide to future profit.

Both, I stress, are proper books; well produced and with handsome flexi-covers. They are essential to anyone interested in the variants concerned and to chess book collectors I can also recommend them as a modest investment.

**SIAMESE CHESS - HOW TO PLAY - HOW TO WIN** by John F. Manson Jr. & Todd Hoover - 200 pp many diagrams.

You might be forgiven if, like me, you thought from the title that this was a book about makruk (Thai chess). It is not: it is about Double Bughouse. Clear? Perhaps you know the game as Bughouse or Simultaneous Chess or Double Speed or Double Fire or New England Chess or Tandem Chess or even some name I've never heard of.

Siamese Chess (Siamese twins is presumably the link to the title?) is a variant for two teams each of two players. Teams sit side by side facing each other. The arrays are as for chess. One player of each team is white, the other black. Play is as in chess but when a capture is made by one player the pawn or piece is passed to the partner who may then introduce it into play on his board at any time and on any vacant square instead of moving. (Understandably, no pawns on 1st or 8th ranks.) The first mate decides the match. The game is usually played to a fast time limit and has proved a popular diversion at BCF congresses.

So how is it possible to fill 200 pages intelligently on so slight a variant? Well, the authors appear to have done so without much difficulty. The skill, apart from that required for normal play, is to monitor partner's position and if he wants, say, a knight to deliver a smothered mate you gladly surrender your queen for one and pass it over - checking of course that the mate is still on and it is your partner's turn to move (he meanwhile is marking time until you pass the desired piece). A less reputable, but wholly legitimate way it would seem, is to communicate your mutual needs in a prearranged verbal code.

This throws up an interesting feature of the variant and explains why it should be played to a fast time limit. If you are losing, you simply don't move hoping your opponent will either win or pass you the piece you have been waiting for before your flag falls.

Space does not allow further discussion of the contents which concentrate on the tactical and strategical differences between chess and Bughouse. One chapter in particular might justify the cost of the book: The Fourteen Most Common Mistakes in Siamese Chess. Games scores, openings and (fairly easy) exercises make up an attractive book.

A statistic I've never been able to come to terms with (could you?) is that one U.S. chess club lays claim to 75 Double Bughouse teams. If true, then on this evidence alone Siamese Chess should find a responsive market.

Write to: Farnsworth Enterprises, 4606 Jones Creek Rd., Box 223 D, Baton Rouge LA 70817, U.S.A. - \$19.95 +\$5 postage.

**KRIEGSPIEL - CHESS UNDER UNCERTAINTY** by David Li - 144 pp illustrated.

At first I admit to being a bit put off by the awkward subtitle and more so by the fact that rook is spelt throughout as rock - an extraordinary mistake. That said, the book is well written and the large, crisp diagrams are a treat.

The game as described here has one or two rules that differ from those we are familiar with, particularly as regards the umpire's responses, but this is of no great import. Anyway, the author suggests that the information imparted by the umpire could be sensibly adjusted to the players' experience, which is good advice.

The book claims to be the first one on kriegspiel and this seems likely as Cayley's *Kriegspiel*, or *War Chess* (1905) is, I believe, only a booklet although I have never seen it, whilst Anderson's *Are There Any?* (1960) is a collection of problems.

*Kriegspiel - Chess under Uncertainty* is aimed at the beginner rather than the serious player but the author also has good advice for the experienced even though he occasionally labours the obvious. A feature of the book is the very full annotations which follow almost every move and the lessons to be learnt which conclude each game. (Li's book has another claim to fame: all the games are between professors!)

This is the work of an enthusiast rather than an authority. The author claims it is also a learning device (his discipline is information systems) in which he discusses techniques of gathering intelligence, building models of the opponent's position, jamming his information network and making decisions on imperfect data. An entertaining introduction to the game.

Write to: Premier Publishing Company P.O. Box 341Z67 Bethesda Maryland 20827 U.S.A. - £12, post free, sterling cheques accepted.

## GAMES WORKSHOP

### HURRICANE CHESS

From Harold Bohn (*Sooke, Canada*)

I should like to offer a fascinating new chess variant I recently developed.

**Hurricane Chess** was inspired by the classic war strategy board game 'Axis & Allies', and is based on a simple idea - players can move their entire army in a turn, instead of taking turns moving one unit at a time. More realistic? You must move at least one piece, and each piece may move only once per turn; so in a turn you can make from 1 to 16 moves. If you give a check that ends your turn. If you are in check, you must escape on the first move of your turn. Any en passant capture you wish to make can also be done only on the first move of your turn. You cannot expose your King to check at any time, even if you can get out with a subsequent move before the end of your turn. (*Ed: Castles is both a King and a Rook move.*)

That's all there is to it. It's tempting to assume White would have an overwhelming advantage with the first turn, but it is difficult to prove this. It might seem nightmarishly complex at first, but it isn't once you try a few games and get a grasp of the different principles it operates on. Since a game would usually only last 5 or 10 turns, it is probably much simpler than normal chess. The opening phase of the game is accomplished on the first turn, and on the second turn you can blast right into the middle game and glorious carnage. It's fun experimenting with different opening set-ups; it doesn't pay for White to be overly ambitious....

*Editor: Interesting. As Mr. Bohn says, 'it might seem nightmarishly complex at first, but it isn't once you try a few games'. This has similarities to English Progressive Chess (VC12), and provokes the idea that maybe the opening phase of English Progressive could be speeded up by making the progressive sequence 1,3,5,6,7,8,...etc.*

### ARMAGEDDON CHESS

Also from Harold Bohn.

**Armageddon Chess** (or 'All hell breaks loose from the sky and rains down on the board chess')

If you want a truly original and nightmarish chess variant, how about combining Hurricane and Chessgi? In addition to being able to move all your

pieces, all the pieces you captured on your previous turn could be dropped back on the board to fight on your side! (*Editor: Chess for real men!?*)

### SHOGI VARIANTS

From Peter Blommers (*Liolland*)

Shogi variants are not limited to differing formats. Fairy forms exist on the normal shogi board also. One is strangely called "**Korean Shogi**": all pieces move as the piece immediately behind it in close contact. If the square to the rear is empty the piece moves as itself. In order to avoid the Rook pawns and Bishop pawns moving as Rooks and Bishops on move one, all pawns on the second and eighth files, (ie. those in front of the Rooks and Bishops), are pushed forward one space at the start.

There are also Shogi variants that are not Shogi or chess. These are with the NAME Shogi in it and using Shogi equipment, but with different rules. **Mawari Shogi** (going-round Shogi) is a race game at the edge of a Shogi board. Four Golds act as dice and the pieces promote after each round. **Tobi Shogi** (jumping Shogi) seems to be a draughts game, and **Furi Shogi** (swinging Shogi?) is the use of Shogi pieces as dice - for gambling perhaps?

Most enjoyable is **Blind Shogi**, which is Kriegspiel Shogi. The drops are fantastic in this game. The handing over of captured pieces by the referee is hilarious at all times. And the best fun is when the referee writes the moves down: then one can see what really happened. I saw tears of joy with this game with the players.

There are two Chinese chess variants. These games were played at the Japanese Shogun's court but were not Japanese games proper. One is a game on the Go board with seven armies. This is referred to as **Shogi-of-the-Seven-Kingdoms**, (interestingly, the Japanese use the word "shogi" as a generic term for "chess-type game"). The other, ("**Wide Chess**"), is also played on the Go board according to George Hodges, but on an 11x11 board according to a Chinese Chess Dictionary (in Chinese). The 11x11 Chinese Chess variant seems to have had Lance-type corner pieces; and that makes the connection with Shogi again interesting.

### THAI CHESS

This tends to be a neglected eastern variant. It is assumed to be too slow for modern tastes. **Ernest Park** (*New York, USA*) has been asking for the rules.

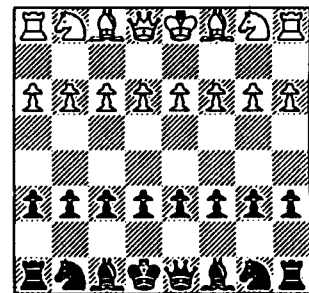
| Piece | Equivalent |   |
|-------|------------|---|
| Rua   | Rook       | moves as a Rook.  |
| Ma    | Knight     | moves (leaps) as a Knight.  |
| Khon  | Bishop     | moves 1 square at a time either diagonally or straight ahead.       |
| Khun  | King       | moves as a King.  |
| Met   | Queen      | moves diagonally 1 square at a time.                                |
| Bia   | Pawn       | moves and takes as a pawn. It has no double-step on its first move. |

Pawns (Bias) promote on the 6th rank to a Queen (Met).

The game is won by checkmate; stalemate is a draw.

David Pritchard tells me that first move options for the King and Queen, given by so many authorities, can no longer be exercised in modern Thai chess.

Here is the initial piece arrangement. Black moves first. The Thai board is unchequered, but a normal board can of course be used.

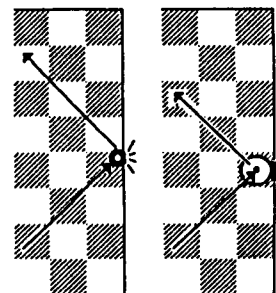


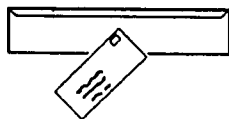
### REALLY BOUNCY BISHOP

From Jens Nielsen (*Denmark*)

(*Editor: Re. letter from Bob Newman in Games Workshop VC14*)

The logic about bouncing depends on the size of the bouncing piece. (*See also p.109*)





## LETTER BOX !

### Variants of Chess

From Peter Blommers (*The Hague*)

Replying to George Jelliss in VC14, I would like to note that George Hodges's distinction between Variants of Chess and Chess Variants concerns the use of the word 'chess' in different senses: 'chess' as generic concept versus 'chess' as the name of a game. My proposal would be to distinguish between these taxonomic layers by means of lower-case/upper-case discrimination. Accordingly, a 'chess variant' would be any game with Kings, Pawns, mate-concept, and pieces with different types of movement. And a 'variant of Chess' or a 'Chess-variant' a game like Chancellor Chess or Courier Chess (but not Tori Shogi or three-handed Chinese Chess).

#### Mao

Commenting on George Jelliss's letter (VC14), I would like to note that the term 'Mao' is not correct in connection with the Chinese Knight. The Chinese Knight is 'Ma' in Chinese. 'Mao' is best remembered as the 20th-century criminal who mass-killed sparrows and nearly obliterated Chinese Chess as a reactionary pastime.

#### Personal Notes

Concerning my personal notes in VC14 I hasten to add that my personal opinion (in spite of the title) was not stated there. Personally I don't believe that chess was the mind-product of a single individual. On the contrary, I believe that not only chess but all great traditional games evolved at the hands of a series of anonymous persons. And I believe that the strengths of these games are to be sought in this circumstance. I left out my personal opinion in my notes because I was well aware that my own pet ideas were irrelevant there.

### Promotion of Xiangqi

From C.K.Lai (*Editor of Chinese Chess Newsletter, and Vice Chairman of Study Commission, World Xiangqi Federation*)

I have read David Woo's letter (VC14) with interest. In the long history of the development of the game of Xiangqi, and of its promotion and propagation in Asia and now in every part of the world, it is inevitable that different people, groups and organisations, should do, and will continue

to do, things more or less differently, in their own way, (reacting and adapting to different circumstances and to a multitude of other factors). This is indeed understandable, given the great complexity of the subject matter (Xiangqi) itself. For example, some people will tell you that Xiangqi or any other form of chess is only a game, to be looked at (or be ignored?) and/or played (or kicked out?) when one has leisure and in the mood, while for some other people, Xiangqi is a very serious thing, it is life and death itself! How are we going to reconcile these opinions?

Anyway, if we are keen to internationalise and share the joy of the game of Xiangqi, maybe it is more rewarding and productive to encourage people to try every effort, individually and collectively, with a mind and in an atmosphere of respect, understanding, friendship, and co-operation.

### Problem Pages

From Ernest Park (*Brooklyn, NY, USA*)

I find your problem section not consonant with the rest of the publication. If you must have it, then please explain or give reference to endgame books, such as Dickins's books. How about illustrating Plachutta interference, double Novotny etc.? I must admit your problems turn me off. There are problem bulletin publications. Why must we have it in our publication? After all your periodical is called Variant Chess, not the British Chess Problem Bulletin!

*Editor: The Fairy Problems section has always been an integral part of the magazine - and will remain so. There have been complaints in the past that the percentage of space devoted to problems was too large. I believe that the present 4 pages out of 16 gives a reasonable balance (the 5th page in VC14 was due to the belated 'Problems Award').*

*Dickins's A Guide to Fairy Chess is a marvellous introduction to the field if one can get hold of it. The former editor of VC, George Jelliss, will be bringing out a Guide to Variant Chess which, among other things, will explain the terms used in fairy problems. Anyway the Problems Editor does explain terms in his column - and very well too.*

### Vinciperdi

From Michael Muff (*St. Paul, MN, USA*)

I am writing a book involving the theory and complete analysis of Losing Chess

(also Vincipierde (*sic*) and other namesakes). I have demonstrated a forced win for Black in 19 of the 20 possible first moves for White. The move for which I have not demonstrated a conclusive win is 1.b3. (I still favour Black here). However the stalemate-equals-draw rule in Vinciperdi (*Editor: compared to the NOST rule that the person stalemated wins*) represents a significant enough difference to possibly change some of my endgame evaluations from wins to draws.

The analysis has been scrupulously reviewed by myself and a host of masters. Among these are FM Ed Zelkind, five time Minnesota State Champion, NM William Harrison, a member of a recent Pan Am Collegiate championship team, and NM Leo Stefurak, who was one of Minnesota's strongest players before moving to California.

### Mad Mate

From David Pritchard (*Godalming, Surrey*).

Mad Mate is the non-proprietary version of Neo-chess marketed by 3M in America in 1972. It was played by a number of grandmasters, Petrosian, Spassky, and Larsen in particular, among them. The game was developed by Alex Randolph (the Kasparov of games inventors incidentally) following residence in Japan during which he became proficient at Shogi. The pieces are shaped like rather elegant cotton reels with the symbol of each piece at either end in contrasting colours. Thus when a capture is made the piece is simply turned over ready for re-entry, avoiding the confusion that almost invariably arises if the game is played with two ordinary chess sets. A few beautifully-crafted Mad Mate sets were subsequently manufactured in Germany.

In the mid-1970s I demonstrated the game to the head of a UK games company. He was (briefly) ecstatic, declaring that he would market the game as 'chess' since it would certainly replace the traditional game. A more sober appraisal took several days to manifest itself and the game was never produced here.

### Super-pawn

Your mention of the Super-pawn highlights a problem of the CV jungle: the same name coming up again and again in different contexts. It might be an idea, in the case of common names of pieces and games, to identify the subject by giving the name of the inventor in brackets after it.

# NEWS

## CHINESE CHESS EVENTS

### UK Chinese Chess Open Championship 1994

This will take place on Saturday 10th December 1994 at Fo Kuang Temple, 84 Margaret Street, London W1 7HD. The tournament will be a 5 round 'Swiss'. The rate of play will be 45 minutes per player to complete all his moves. Play starts at 11am (registration 10.30) and the finish will be around 8pm. First prize £100 + trophy. Entry fee £10. (*Editor: The 1st prize has gone up from £40 to £100; but it is a pity that the entry fee has had to be doubled to accommodate this!*)

Send entries to C.K.Lai, 12 Lagan House, Sumner Road, London SE15 5RB. (Closing date 4th December).

### European Championship - Xiangqi

C.K.Lai is European Champion and the UK won the team championship, at Amsterdam in October. As C.K.Lai says: 'the whole of Europe's Xiangqi fraternity was shaken! What a performance!'

## CHINESE CHESS IN FINLAND

14 players all told took part in the second Jarvenpaa Open Xiangqi tournament on August 20-21 (the largest Xiangqi event ever in Finland). Separate swiss tournaments took place on each day. The joint winners of the first tournament were Nguyen The Nhan from Vietnam (but shortly to become a Finnish citizen), and Jouni Tolonen. Nguyen The Nhan also won the second tournament: equal second were Raimo Lindroos and Jukka Tuovinen, a most promising young player.

Because of the lively Raimo Lindroos Chinese Chess is going from strength to strength in Finland. There are 23 players on the current grading list, of which only 2 appear to be of oriental extraction; three Xiangqi masters visit in November.

For details of Xiangqi activities in Finland contact Raimo Lindroos, Ahokuja 2, FIN-04430 Jarvenpaa, Finland.

## BOUND VOLUMES

Soft-back bound volumes of issues 1 to 8 of *Variant Chess* are now obtainable. Single copies of these issues are no longer

available. The price (including postage) is UK-£10; Europe-£11; Worldwide-£11 (Surface mail), £12.50 (Airmail).

Contact: G.P.Jelliss, Unit 6, Mercatoria Business Centre, 100-102 Norman Rd., S.Leonards on Sea, E.Sussex, TN38 0EJ.

## SHOGI NEWS

### EVENTS

19th November 1994 - Bracknell Shogi Tournament. 3 round 'Swiss'. Also 5x5 Shogi side event.

Contact: Vincent West, 31 Simons Close, Tilehurst, Reading, Berks, RG3 6GA.

The 11th British Shogi Championship, held in March, was won jointly by Les Blackstock, Anthony Fedder and Tony Hosking. Following play-offs Les Blackstock has emerged 'Champion'.

London Shogi Club meets at the East-West Centre (Room 20 2nd floor) 188 Old Street, EC1 (near Old Street tube) - Tuesdays from 7pm.

Reading Shogi Club meets at the ICL Sports and Social Club, 53 Blaygrove Street - first working Monday of every month from 8pm.

### 2nd HETERODOX OLYMPICS

Based on the percentage scores of the results so far obtained, the leading teams at present are 1) Ukraine 76.8%, 2) Italy 175.3%, 3) England 67.4%. (*Will the Italian domination be broken?*)

Leading scorers in the sections are:

Circe Progressive - Patrick Donovan (England) 13/14

Mutation Progressive - Angelo Mapelli (Italy 1) 11/11

Triplets Chess - Alessandro Castelli (Italy 1) 6/8

English Progressive - Alessandro Castelli (Italy 1) 8/8

Italian Progressive - Jaroslav Gadzinskij (Ukraine) 11/12

Balanced Marseillais - Alessandro Castelli (Italy 1) (*again*) 5 1/2 out of 7.

Vinciperdi - Peter Wood (England) - 10 1/2 out of 11.

Avalanche Chess - insufficient results.

## 'VARIANT CHESS' POSTAL TOURNAMENTS

### Italian Progressive Chess

### English Progressive Chess

Entries are invited for postal tournaments in the above variants. UK residents only. Newcomers to these interesting and popular variants are encouraged to 'have a go'. Free entry for subscribers to *VC*, £2 for

non-subscribers. Closing date for entries 24th December, with games to commence on 1st January 1995. Write to the editor.

## CHANGED ADDRESSES

### *BRITISH SHOGI FEDERATION*

Membership Secretary: M.Brewer, 11 St. Donatt's Road, New Cross, London SE14 6NU.

### *NOST* (Knights of the Square Table)

Write to Ronleigh Dale, NOSTmaster, 700 South Shafter Avenue 101 Shafter, CA 93263-2643, USA.

## BCCA v ITALY POSTAL MATCH

This match (see *VC13*) is now finally underway - from 1st October. The final 8 boards of this 68-board match are devoted to chess variants. The Italians, as might be expected, have fielded a strong 'variant team'. David Pritchard has another tough struggle in prospect against Deumo Polacco at Italian Progressive.

## SOLUTIONS OF PROBLEMS IN

### VC14

#### 1) Chinese Chess (page 96)

White mates by 1.Cf7+ Rxf7 (If 1....Kc0, 2.Rg0+ wins easily, eg. 2....Bxg0 3.Rxc0#; or 2....Gf0 3.Rxf0+ Ke9 4.Rc9#) 2.Rxc0+ Bxc0 3.Rg0+ Kf9 4.Rf0+ Gxf0 5.Nh0 #

#### Losing Chess (page 95)

White wins by 1.Rd6! g4 2.Rf8 ~ 3.h8(R) ~ 4.h7 g4 5.Ba2 b1(-) 6.Bxb1 Bb2 7.Ba2 Bxa3 8.Bg8 Bxd6 9.f7 Bxf8. White is now stalemated, which wins for him under the NOST rules.

## PLEAS

### SUPER-CHESS

David Pritchard writes: An early Superchess was invented by the mystic Charles Hoy Fort (1874-1932). A photograph showing the inventor and (part of) the board was published in a recent book (*Living Wonders, Mysteries and Curiosities of the Animal World* by John Mitchell and Robert Rickard - Thames and Hudson, 1982). The same photograph appeared in *Doubt*, the Fortean Society's journal, in the 1930s, there described (surely incorrectly) as 'Super-checkers'. Apart from the game having a very large board and a lot of pieces, I have not been able to get any other information on it. It is not mentioned, so far as I can trace, in any of Fort's books, apart from the above reference, in *Doubt*. I end with a common plea: can any reader help?

Reader Toby Howes wants to hear of anyone who does play, or might be willing to play or experiment with, a game or two of 3D or Space Chess.