

Basic SHOGI Rules

By Djuro Emedji

The author of Shogi program GShogi available at www.shogimaster.com

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Shogi is the Japanese variant of chess, very similar to international chess, probably with the same origin. There are many kinds of shogi, but the present document is only talking about the modern, aka standard, shogi.

Game

Shogi is a board game for two players (conditionally saying „black“ and „white“), with a board of 9 x 9 squares (actually rectangles), each player has 20 pieces. The black player moves first, i.e. begins the game.

The goal of the game is, like in other kinds of chess, to capture (to mate) opponent's king.

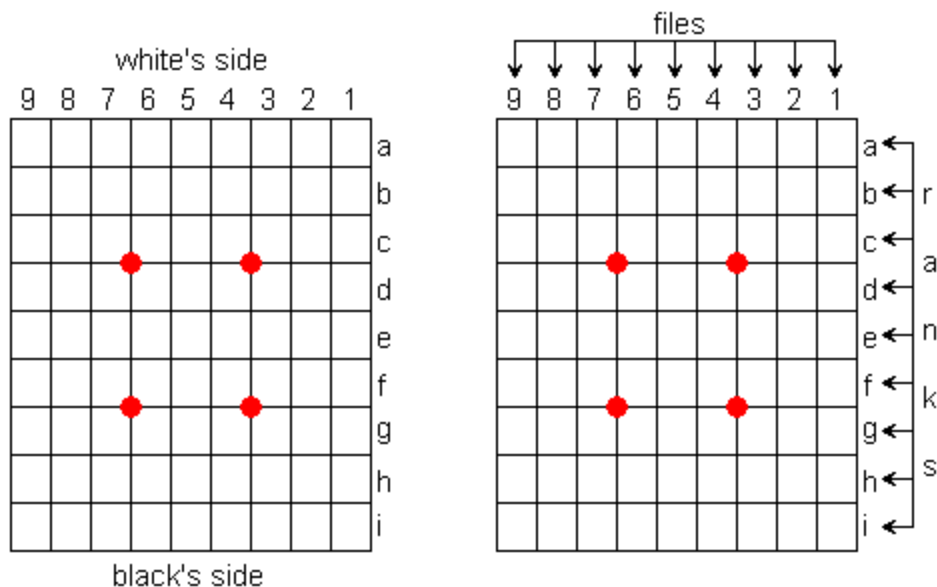
There are some big differences between shogi and chess, main of them are the next two:

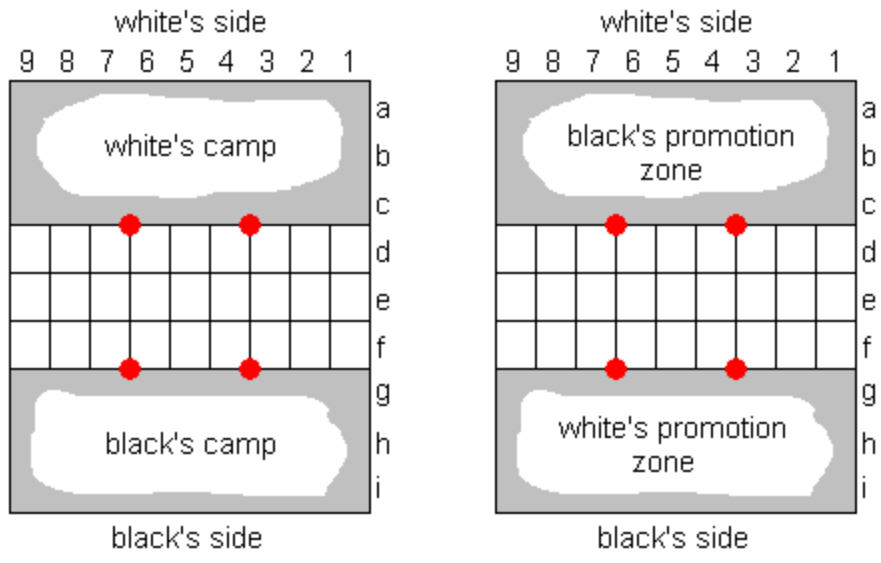
- captured pieces are not inactive to the end of the game (like in chess), they are „in the hand“ of the capturing player, which can, instead of moving a piece on the board, put the captured piece back in the game, this time, of course, on his/her own side; this kind of „move“ is called „dropping the piece“ or shortly „drop“
- most of the pieces (only a pawn in chess) can, under the circumstances, promote and become stronger.

Board

A shogi board has 9 x 9 fields of the same color, so there are the nine vertical and the nine horizontal rows. The vertical rows are called files and are marked with number 1 to 9, from the right side to the left side. The horizontal rows are called ranks and are marked with letters **a** to **i** from the top to the bottom. Each field is identified with a number-letter combination: so, the right top field is **1a** and the left bottom field is **9i**. In the middle of the board, there are four marks, which visually divide the board into three parts (each of them is three ranks high). The top side is the white's side; the bottom side is the black's side.

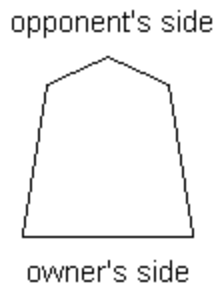
Hope the next pictures can help explain:





Pieces

At the beginning of the game each player has 20, flat tablets in a form of a wedge-shaped pentagon, pieces: 1 king (K), 2 gold generals (G), 2 silver generals (S), 2 knights (N), 2 lances (L), 1 rook (R), 1 bishop (B) and 9 pawns (P). The pieces of the both sides (opponents) are of the same shape and color and only by the orientation (a piece is pointed towards the opponent) is defined whom the piece is belonging to:



As mentioned earlier, most of the pieces, except the king and the gold general, can, or sometimes have to, promote. If a regular move, on board move (not a drop), begins or ends in a promotion zone, a piece can promote. If a piece is „only forward mover“, like a knight, lance or pawn, and a move ends in a rank from which it cannot move forward, the piece has to promote. After the promotion the piece is turned over (upside down, downside up), so the side with the promoted symbol becomes the upper side.

A promoted piece stays promoted until it is captured.

Promotions of pieces:

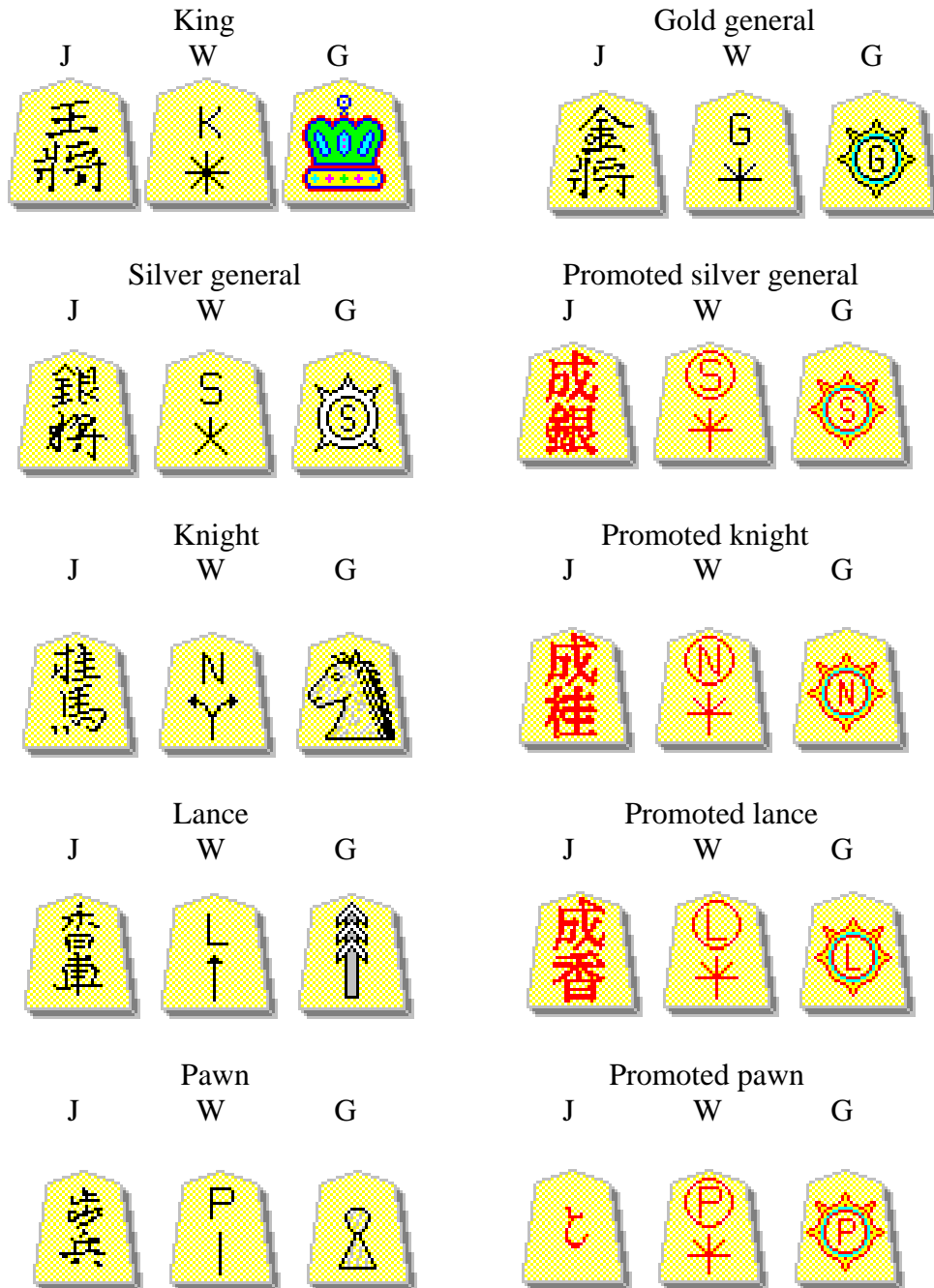
unpromoted piece	promotion	promoted piece
(K) king	does not promote	
(G) gold general	does not promote	
(S) silver general	promote	promoted silver general
(N) knight	promote	promoted knight
(L) lance	promote	promoted lance
(P) pawn	promote	promoted pawn
(R) rook	promote	promoted rook
(B) bishop	promote	promoted bishop.

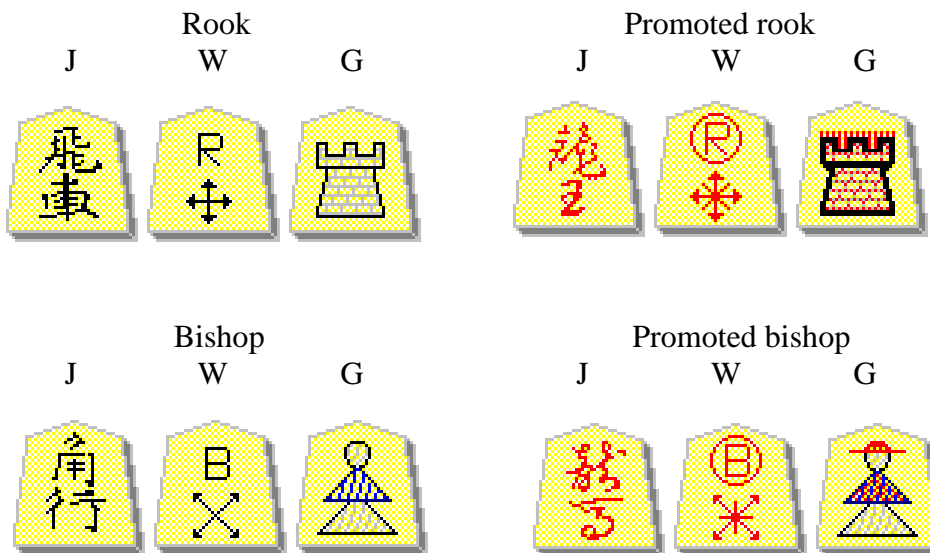
Symbols

The original Japanese pieces have kanji characters written on the top of both sides. Most of them, the only exception is the promoted pawn, have the symbol composed of two characters. There are also some westernized sets, their symbols are mostly composed of the first (the second by the knight) letter of their name and sometimes of some symbol which tries to explain the piece's movements. Some shogi playing programs also sometimes have their own symbol set.

Legend:

J japanese symbol
 W westernized symbol
 G gshogi symbol





Starting position

The next three pictures are showing the basic starting position, with three different symbol sets:

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
車	馬	銀	金	王	金	銀	馬	車	a
	車						角		b
卒	卒	卒	卒	卒	卒	卒	卒	卒	c
									d
									e
									f
歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	g
	角						車		h
車	馬	銀	金	王	金	銀	馬	車	i

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

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

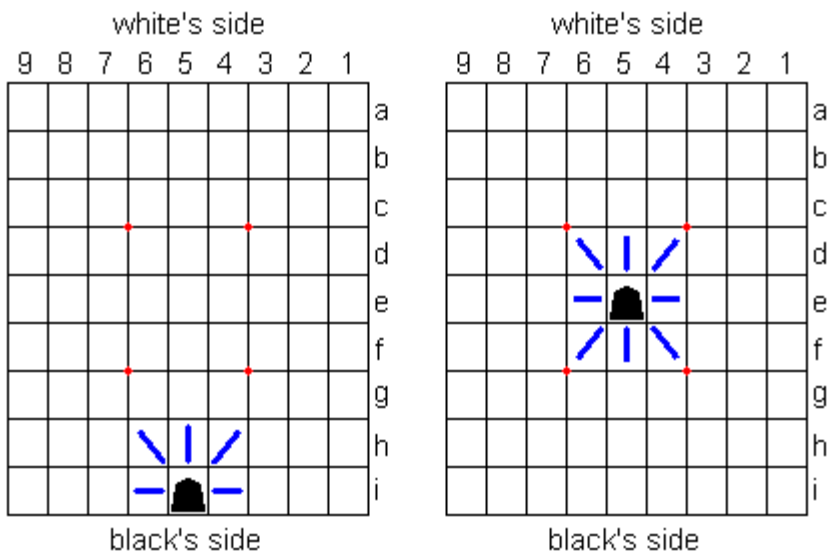
Movements and capturing

On any field there could be only one piece at a time, so a player must not move a piece to the destination field, on which a piece of his/her own already is. If there is an opponent's piece on the destination field, then the moving player captures that piece and it becomes the player's „in the hand“ piece and the player can activate it later, putting it back in the game. All the pieces capture in the same way they are moving. The captured pieces stay on the right side of the player, outside the board and have to be visible to both players all the time (of course, it is the best if captured piece could be placed on a special stand for that purpose, so called „komadai“). A knight is the only piece which can jump over a piece; other pieces can not jump, so they can move only over free fields, only the destination field can be occupied, but only by the opponent's piece. The move has to be wholly on the board (over board's fields). A player must not make a move after his/her own king is in check; in case of such move the player, which made that move, loses the game. So, if we summarize, pieces have to be moved only according to the rules, only regular moves are allowed, the player which made an irregular move loses the game immediately.

In the continuation, it is described how some piece can be moved (possible moves). The pictures are made only for the „black“ side, the white side pieces move in the same way (only the direction is different).

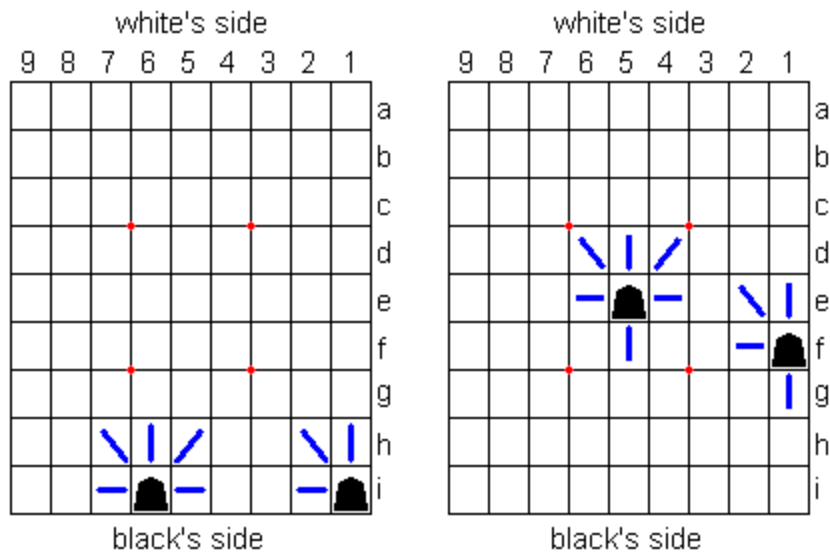
King

can move one field in any direction, orthogonally or diagonally. Thus, from a given position, it can make up to 8 different moves:



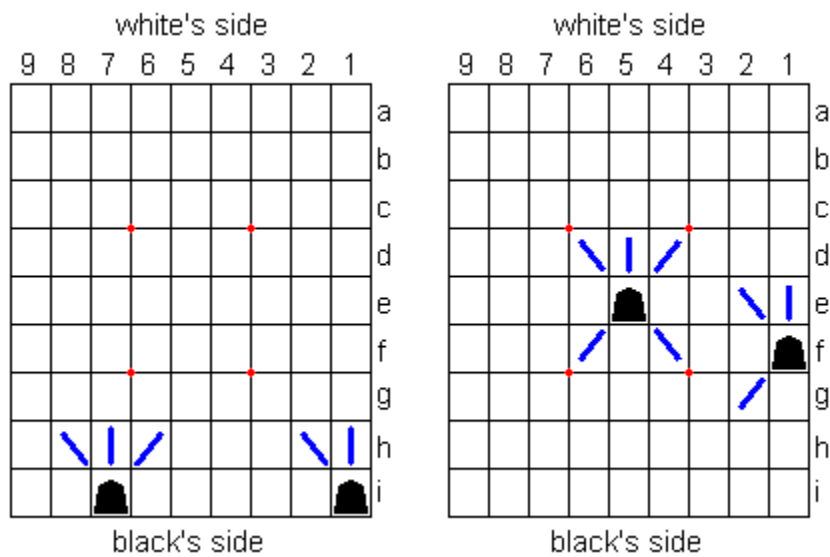
Gold general

can move one field orthogonally or diagonally forward. Thus, from a given position, it can make up to 6 different moves:



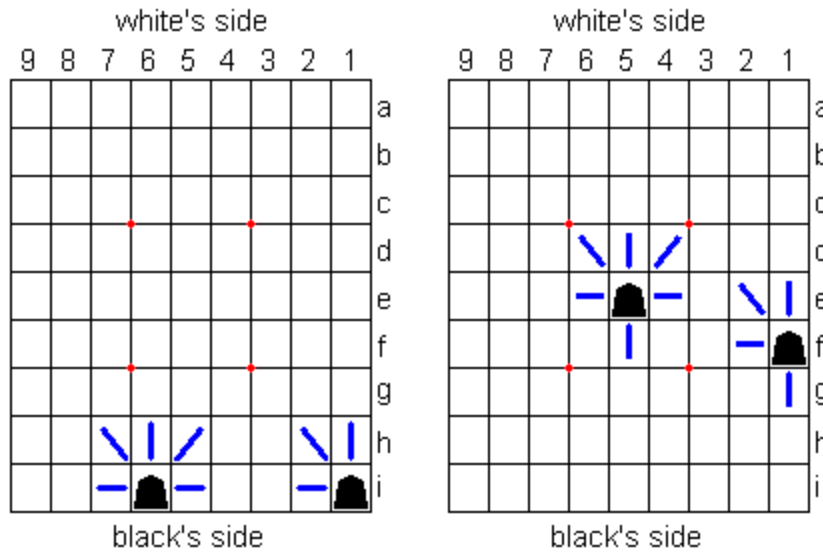
Silver general

can move one field diagonally or forward. Thus, from a given position, it can make up to 5 different moves:



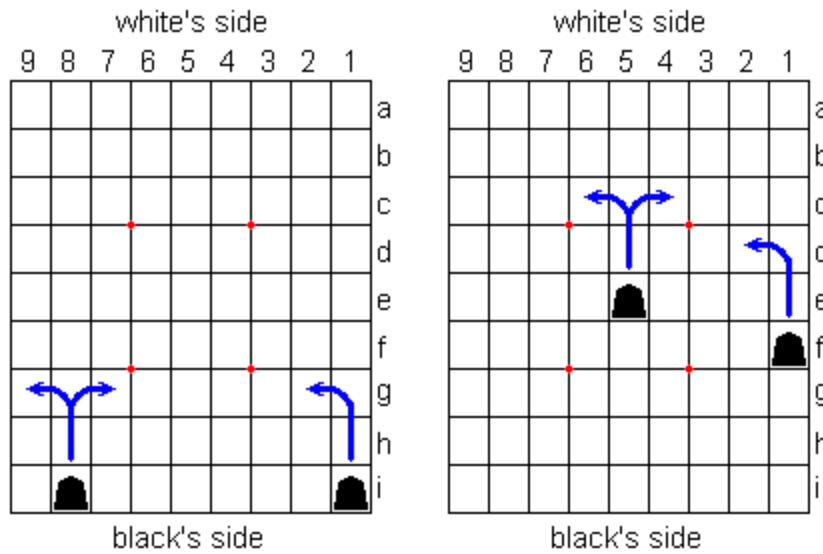
Promoted silver general

moves like the gold general, can move one field orthogonally or diagonally forward. Thus, from a given position, it can make up to 6 different moves:



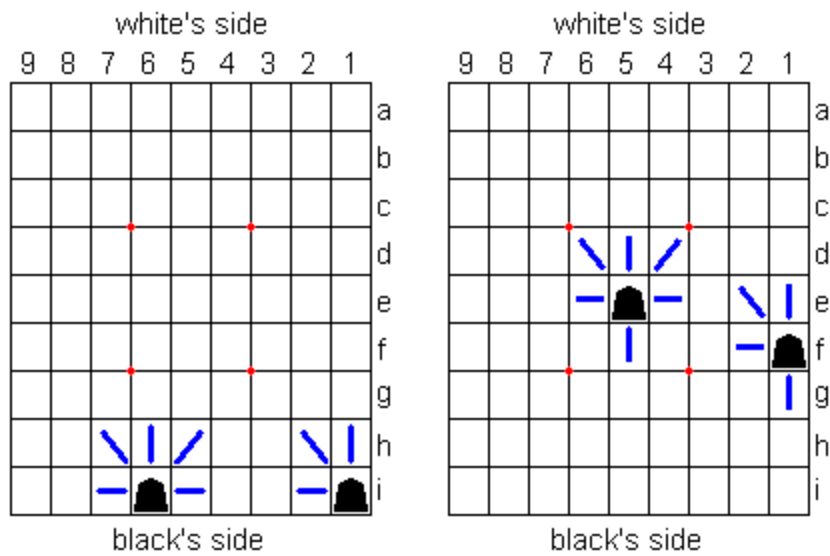
Knight

jumps in the L-shape, jumps to the destination field which is two fields forward and one field left or right. Thus, from a given position, it can make up to 2 different moves:



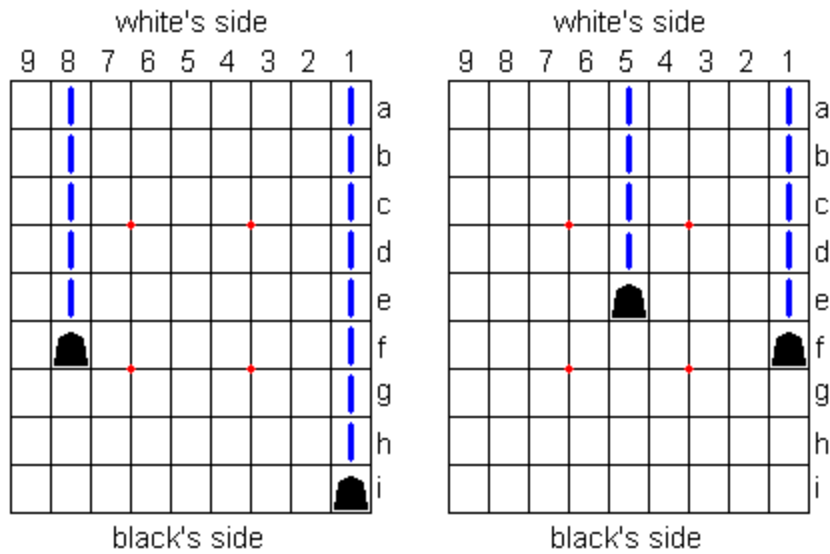
Promoted knight

moves like gold general,
can move one field orthogonally or diagonally forward. Thus, from a given position, it can make up to 6 different moves:



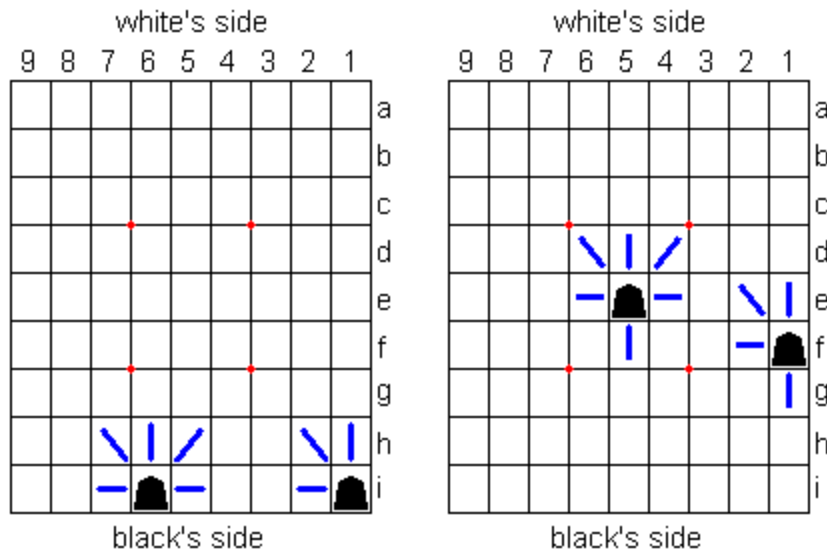
Lance

can move any distance forward. Thus, from a given position, it can make up to 8 different moves:



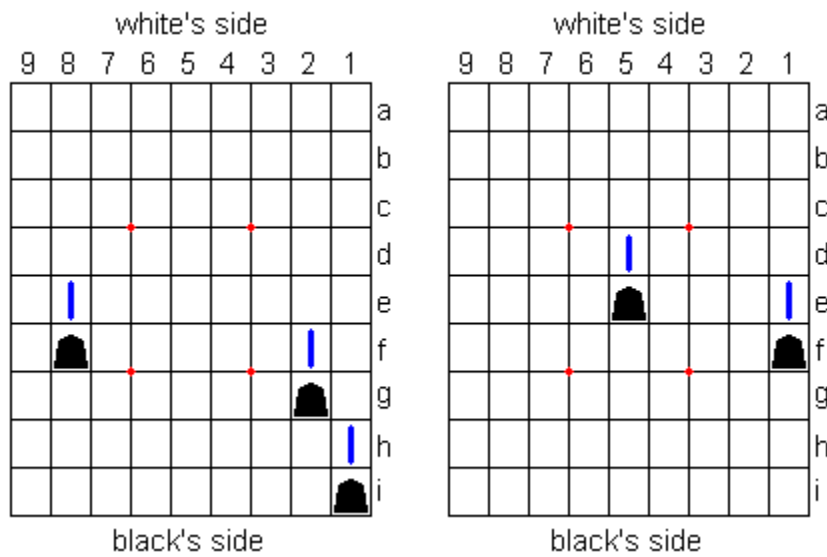
Promoted lance

moves like gold general,
can move one field orthogonally or diagonally forward. Thus, from a given position, it can make up to 6 different moves:



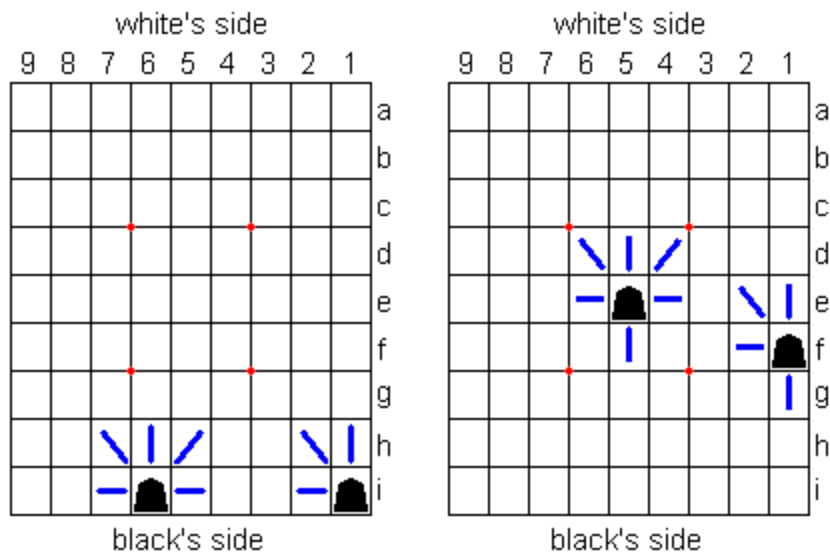
Pawn

can move one field forward. Thus, from a given position, it can make up to 1 different move:



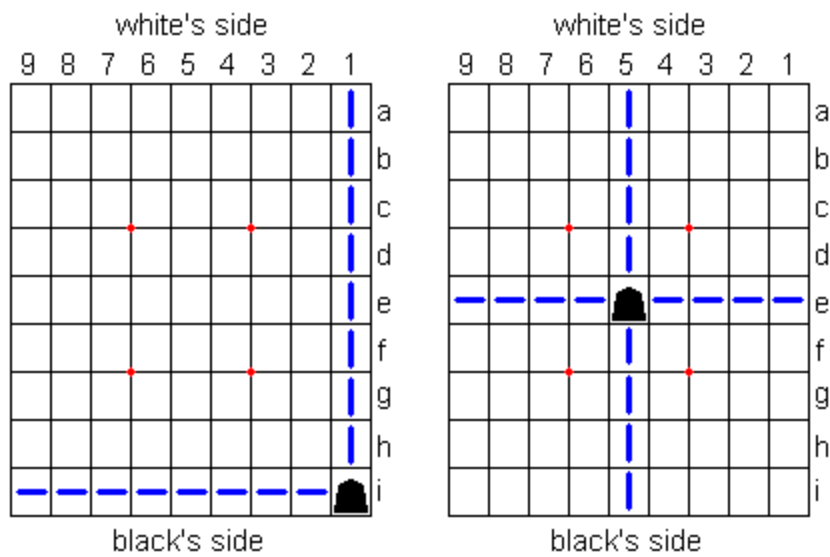
Promoted pawn

moves like the gold general, can move one field orthogonally or diagonally forward. Thus, from a given position, it can make up to 6 different moves:



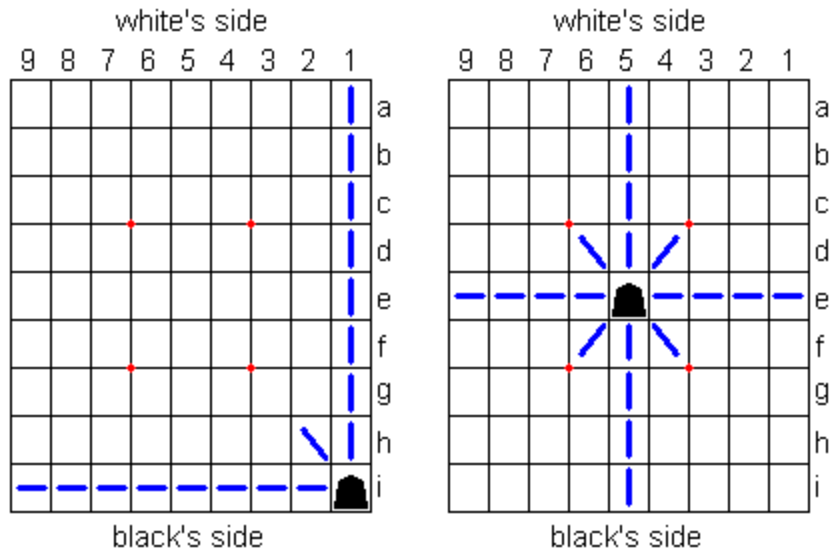
Rook

can move any distance orthogonally. Thus, from a given position, it can make up to 16 different moves:



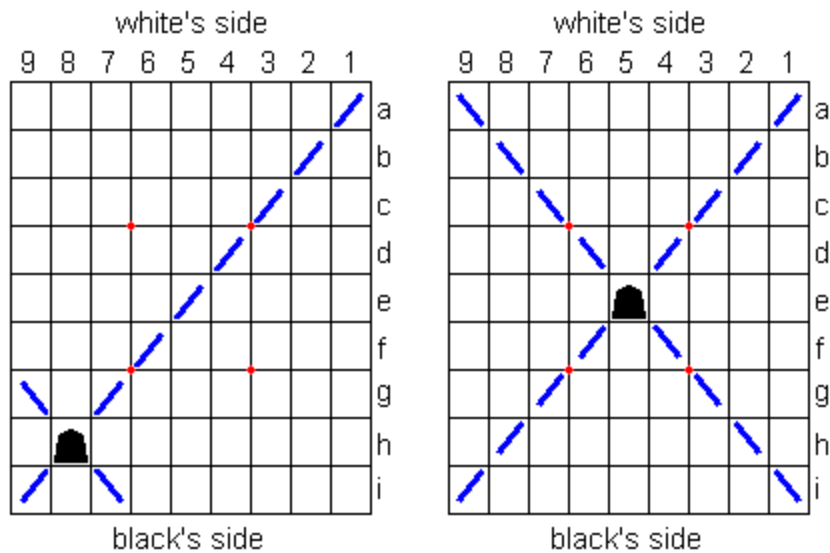
Promoted rook

can move any distance orthogonally or one field diagonally. Thus, from a given position, it can make up to 20 different moves:



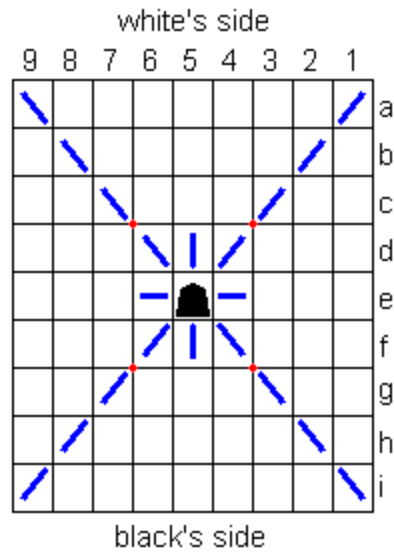
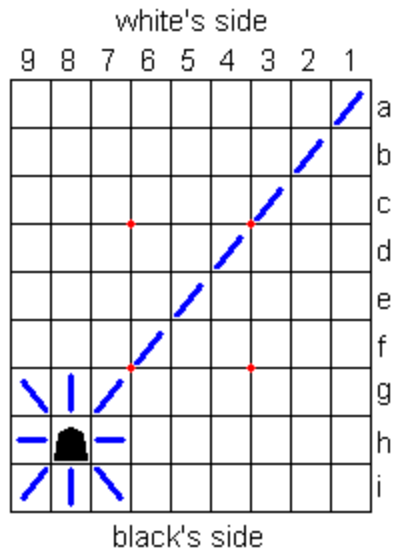
Bishop

can move any distance diagonally. Thus, from a given position, it can make up to 16 different moves:



Promoted bishop

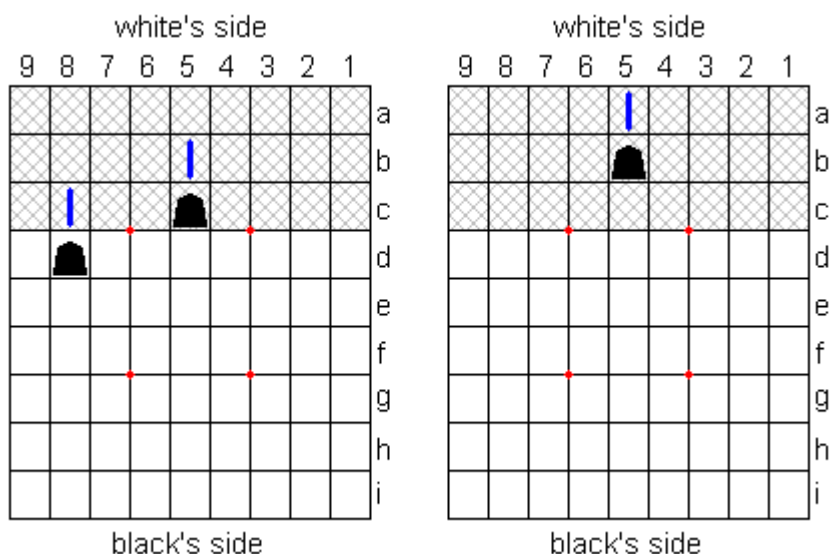
can move any distance diagonally or one field orthogonally. Thus, from a given position, it can make up to 20 different moves:



Promotion

As already mentioned, most of the pieces, except the king and the gold general, can, or sometimes have to, promote. For the rook, the bishop and the silver general, a promotion is not mandatory, but in the “normal” shogi game, not the problem solving shogi, there is no reason not to promote the rook and/or the bishop, because the rook and the bishop do not change their old way of moving, they only get some new possibilities. For the silver general a situation is slightly different, because this piece changes it's way of moving; there are some strategic situations in which it may be better not to promote. Three other pieces, which also can promote, the knight, the lance and a pawn, can move only forward, so, sooner or later, they could be on the rank from where they cannot move anywhere. In such situation, that piece has to promote to keep the moving capabilities.

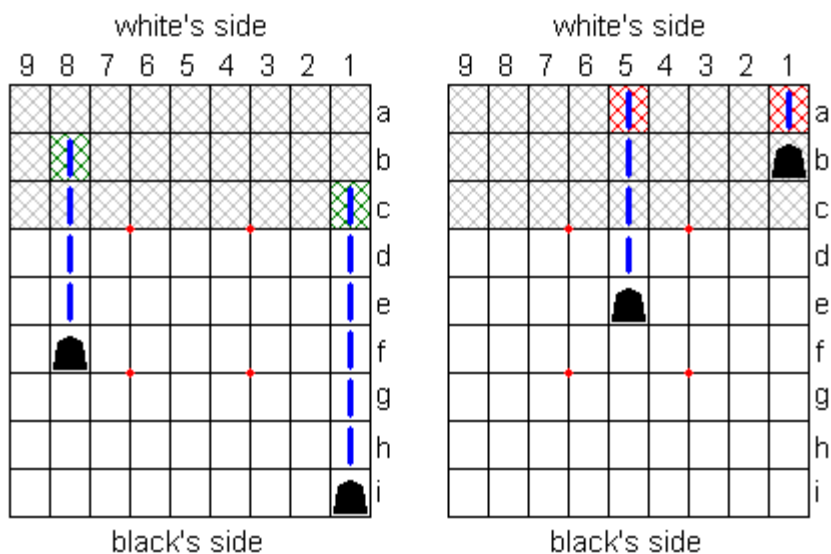
The next pictures are illustrating the pawn's promotions:



the pawns on the left picture can, but do not have to, promote, because they can still move without the promotion. The pawn on the right picture has to promote, in order to keep the moving capabilities.

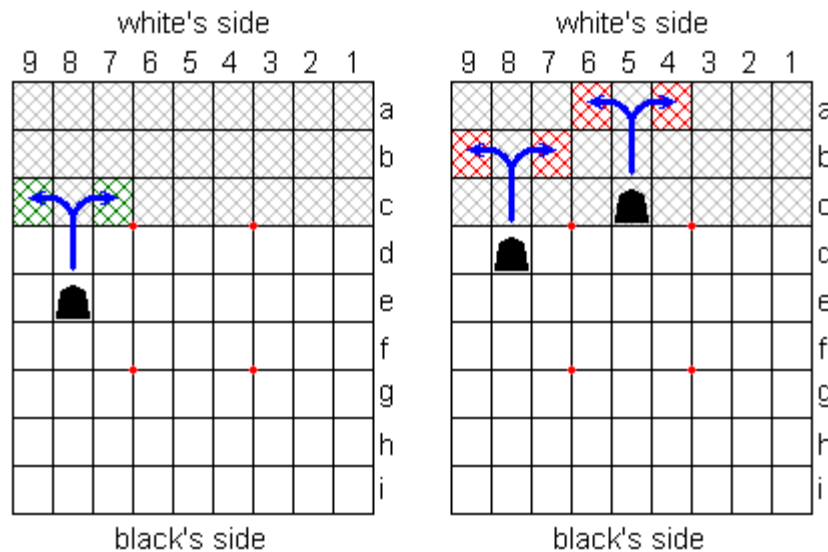
Of course, it has to be noted, in the “normal” shogi game there is no reason not to promote a pawn.

The next pictures are illustrating the lance's promotions:



the lances on the left picture can, but do not have to, promote, because they can still move without the promotion. The lances on the right picture, where destination fields are on the last rank, have to promote, in order to keep the moving capabilities.

The next pictures are illustrating the knight's promotions:



the knight on the left picture can, but does not have to, promote, because the piece can still move without the promotion. The knights on the right picture have to promote, in order to keep the moving capabilities.

Drop

Instead of moving a piece on the board, a player can use some of the earlier captured, “in the hand” pieces and put it back in the game, dropping it on an empty field on the board. There are only a few rules about the drops:

- after a move, the king of the player who is making the move, must not be in the check, this is also a general rule
- a piece is dropped as unpromoted
- a piece is always dropped on an empty field, there is no capturing with the drops
- after a drop, a piece stays unpromoted, there is no promotion with the drop, even if the destination field is in the promotion zone, for the promotion piece has to be moved wholly on the board
- a piece must not be dropped on the rank from which it cannot make a legal move, so the knights cannot be dropped on the last two ranks, the lances and the pawns cannot be dropped on the last rank
- a pawn must not be dropped on the same file on which there already is an unpromoted pawn of the same side
- checkmating the opponent's king by dropping a pawn is not allowed, of course, attacking the opponent's king with a pawn drop is ok if the opponent's king can escape a capture
- checkmating the opponent's king by dropping any piece other than a pawn is allowed (it is very welcome indeed).

End of the game

In shogi there is no stalemate; if a player, whose turn it is, cannot make a regular move, after which his/her king is not checked, the player loses the game (it differs from chess).

Usually the game ends when one of the kings is checkmated. If one of the players wishes, in case he/she thinks his/her position is hopeless or something else, he/she can resign the game. A draw cannot be offered. A draw with the agreement is not allowed. Normally, draws are very rare in shogi, only about 1 to 2 % of professional games end in a draw. There are two reasons for a draw:

- a position (including the pieces "in the hand", by the type and by the number of) has occurred for the 4th time with the same player to move (it is called "sennichite"), but there is a restriction, that the move must not check the opponent's king; in case the repeated move is a check move then the player, who is making that move, loses the game; so, if we resume, perpetual checks in the same positions are not allowed (there is no such thing like „forever check“ in chess)
- both players have their kings in the promotion zone (or cannot be prevented from moving their kings there) and kings are so protected they cannot be checkmated; in that case the players may decide to count the values of their pieces as follows: the king does not count, the rook and the bishop count as 5 points, all other pieces count 1 point; if both players have at least 24 points the game is in a draw (it is called "jishogi"); if one of the players has less than 24 points then this player loses the game; of course it is always possible some player refuses to count pieces (he/she thinks he/she can still mate the opponent or get some more material or something else) in such a case the game ends and the pieces are counted after one player has all of his/her pieces protected in the promotion zone.

Of course, the game also ends if one of the players made an irregular move, in such a case the player making that move, loses the game.

Notation

In order to record the game there also have to be some rules about the notation. The moves are represented with an abbreviation of a piece name followed by the destination field identification (e.g. P2f). If the representation is ambiguous then the starting field is given too (e.g. P2g-2f). A capturing is indicated by an „x“ (e.g. Px3c or P3dx3c). A drop is indicated by ' (apostrophe) or by * (asterisk) (e.g. G'5f or G*5f). Because of a possible confusion between asterisk for a drop and an „x“ for a capturing, sometimes an apostrophe is a better choice. A promotion is indicated by + (plus sign) behind the move (e.g. R2b+). A promoted piece is represented by + (plus sign) in the front of the piece identification (e.g. +R2a). If a piece could have promoted but had not it is represented by = (equal sign) behind the move (e.g. R2b=).

The abbreviations for the pieces identification are:

K	king		
G	gold general		
S	silver general	+S	promoted silver general
N	knight	+N	promoted knight
L	lance	+L	promoted lance
P	pawn	+P	promoted pawn
R	rook	+R	promoted rook
B	bishop	+B	promoted bishop.

In the international recording, the moves for black and white are recorded in pairs (e.g. 1. P2f P2d), but according to Japanese style of writing each player's move is numbered separately (e.g. 1. P2f 2. P2d).

Openings

An opening is a beginning stage of a game in which the players try to evaluate their position, to make the defending formations, to protect the own king and to prepare an attack to the opponent's king. To make playing shogi easier for the beginners there are a few openings for the example.

#1

1.P2g-2f P3c-3d	2.P2f-2e B2b-3c	3.P7g-7f P4c-4d
4.S3i-4h R8b-3b	5.P3g-3f S3a-4b	6.K5i-6h K5a-6b
7.K6h-7h K6b-7b	8.P5g-5f P5c-5d	9.G4i-5h G4a-5b
10.S7i-6h S4b-5c	11.P1g-1f P1c-1d	12.P4g-4f K7b-8b
13.N2i-3g S7a-7b		

#2

1.P2g-2f P3c-3d	2.P2f-2e B2b-3c	3.P7g-7f P4c-4d
4.S3i-4h S3a-4b	5.P5g-5f S4b-4c	6.S4h-5g P5c-5d
7.B8h-7g G4a-3b	8.K5i-6h S7a-6b	9.S7i-7h S6b-5c
10.P6g-6f P7c-7d	11.S7h-6g K5a-4a	12.G6i-7h R8b-5b
13.P3g-3f N8a-7c		

#3

1.P7g-7f P3c-3d	2.P2g-2f P4c-4d	3.S3i-4h S3a-3b
4.P5g-5f R8b-4b	5.K5i-6h K5a-6b	6.K6h-7h S7a-7b
7.S4h-5g G4a-5b	8.B8h-7g K6b-7a	9.K7h-8h S3b-4c
10.L9i-9h S4c-5d	11.P6g-6f K7a-8b	12.K8h-9i P6c-6d
13.S7i-8h P7c-7d	14.G6i-7i G5b-6c	

#4

1.P7g-7f P3c-3d	2.P2g-2f P4c-4d	3.S3i-4h S3a-4b
4.P5g-5f S4b-4c	5.K5i-6h P3d-3e	6.K6h-7h R8b-3b
7.P2f-2e B2b-3c	8.G4i-3h K5a-6b	9.G3h-2g K6b-7b
10.P3g-3f B3c-4b	11.P3fx3e R3bx3e	12.G2g-2f R3e-3a

#5

1.P7g-7f P3c-3d	2.P2g-2f P4c-4d	3.S3i-4h S3a-3b
4.P5g-5f R8b-4b	5.K5i-6h K5a-6b	6.K6h-7h S7a-7b
7.G4i-5h K6b-7a	8.P9g-9f P9c-9d	9.S4h-5g G4a-5b
10.S7i-6h K7a-8b	11.P5f-5e S3b-4c	12.P2f-2e B2b-3c

#6

1.P2g-2f P3c-3d	2.P7g-7f P4c-4d	3.S3i-4h S3a-3b
4.P5g-5f R8b-4b	5.K5i-6h K5a-6b	6.K6h-7h S7a-7b
7.G4i-5h K6b-7a	8.P3g-3f G4a-5b	9.S7i-6h P9c-9d
10.P9g-9f K7a-8b	11.P2f-2e B2b-3c	12.P1g-1f P1c-1d

#7

1.P7g-7f P3c-3d	2.P2g-2f P4c-4d	3.S3i-4h S3a-3b
4.P5g-5f R8b-4b	5.K5i-6h K5a-6b	6.K6h-7h S7a-7b
7.G4i-5h K6b-7a	8.P9g-9f P9c-9d	9.P8g-8f S3b-4c
10.K7h-8g G4a-5b	11.S7i-7h P6c-6d	12.P2f-2e B2b-3c
13.S4h-5g K7a-8b	14.S5g-6f G5b-6c	

#8

1.P2g-2f P3c-3d	2.P7g-7f P4c-4d	3.S3i-4h S3a-4b
4.G4i-5h S4b-4c	5.K5i-6h P5c-5d	6.P5g-5f P8c-8d
7.S7i-7h S7a-6b	8.P2f-2e G4a-3b	9.P2e-2d P2cx2d
10.R2hx2d P*2c	11.R2d-2h S6b-5c	12.S7h-7g P7c-7d
13.P6g-6f P6c-6d	14.K6h-7h G6a-5b	

#9

1.P2g-2f P8c-8d	2.P2f-2e P8d-8e	3.G6i-7h G4a-3b
4.P2e-2d P2cx2d	5.R2hx2d P*2c	6.R2d-2f S7a-7b
7.P1g-1f P1c-1d	8.S3i-3h P9c-9d	9.P9g-9f P3c-3d
10.P7g-7f K5a-4b	11.K5i-6h P8e-8f	12.P8gx8f R8bx8f
13.P*8g R8f-8b		

#10

1.P7g-7f P8c-8d	2.S7i-6h P3c-3d	3.S6h-7g S7a-6b
4.S3i-4h S3a-4b	5.P5g-5f P5c-5d	6.G6i-7h G4a-3b
7.K5i-6i K5a-4a	8.G4i-5h G6a-5b	9.P6g-6f S4b-3c
10.B8h-7i B2b-3a	11.P3g-3f P4c-4d	12.G5h-6g G5b-4c

#11

1.P7g-7f P8c-8d	2.S7i-6h P3c-3d	3.S6h-7g S7a-6b
4.S3i-4h P5c-5d	5.P5g-5f S3a-4b	6.G6i-7h G6a-5b
7.K5i-6i G4a-3b	8.G4i-5h K5a-4a	9.P6g-6f P7c-7d
10.P3g-3f P5d-5e	11.S4h-5g S6b-5c	12.P2g-2f S5c-5d

#12

1.P2g-2f P8c-8d	2.P2f-2e P8d-8e	3.G6i-7h G4a-3b
4.P2e-2d P2cx2d	5.R2hx2d P*2c	6.R2d-2f S7a-7b
7.P1g-1f P1c-1d	8.P9g-9f P3c-3d	9.S3i-3h P6c-6d
10.R2f-3f G3b-3c	11.S3h-2g S7b-6c	12.G4i-3h P4c-4d
13.R3f-2f G6a-5b	14.S2g-3f G5b-4c	

#13

1.P2g-2f P8c-8d	2.P2f-2e P8d-8e	3.G6i-7h G4a-3b
4.P2e-2d P2cx2d	5.R2hx2d P*2c	6.R2d-2f S7a-7b
7.P1g-1f P1c-1d	8.S3i-3h P3c-3d	9.P7g-7f P8e-8f
10.P8gx8f R8bx8f	11.P*8g R8f-8b	

#14

1.P7g-7f P8c-8d	2.S7i-6h P3c-3d	3.S6h-7g S7a-6b
4.P5g-5f P5c-5d	5.S3i-4h S3a-4b	6.G4i-5h G4a-3b
7.P6g-6f K5a-4a	8.G5h-6g P7c-7d	9.G6i-7h G6a-5b
10.B8h-7i S4b-3c	11.K5i-6i B2b-3a	12.B7i-6h P4c-4d

Games

For the end, there are two complete games.

#1

1.P7f P8d	2.P2f P8e	3.B7g P3d	4.S8h G3b
5.G7h Bx7g+	6.Sx7g S4b	7.S3h S7b	8.P4f P6d
9.S4g S6c	10.G5h P1d	11.P1f P9d	12.P9f G5b
13.P3f K4a	14.S5f S5d	15.K6h P4d	16.P6f P7d
17.K7i K3a	18.N3g N7c	19.P2e P6e	20.Px6e P7e
21.P2d Px2d	22.P'2e Px2e	23.Px7e Nx6e	24.Sx6e Sx6e
25.Rx2e B'4c	26.P'2b P'2d	27.Px2a+ Kx2a	28.Rx2d P'2c
29.R2h P'7f	30.S6h S6f	31.N'5f P8f	32.Px8f P'8h
33.Nx4d Px8i+	34.K6i S'7g	35.Nx3b+ Bx3b	36.N'4d Sx7h+
37.K5i N'2d	38.Nx3b+ Kx3b	39.K4i N'4d	40.S5i N4dx3f
41.R2e +S6i	42.P'3c Sx3c	43.N4e N'4a	44.P'3g +Sx5i
45.Gx5i P'4d	46.Px3f Px4e	47.B'6e S'5d	48.Bx5d Px5d
49.B'6d B'4g	50.G4h Bx3f+	51.G'3a K2b	52.Gx4a N'5c
53.S'3a K2a	54.P'2b K3b	55.Bx8b+ +Bx2e	56.N'4d Sx4d
57.R'4b K3c	58.Rx4d+ Kx4d	59.N'5f	white resign.

#2

1.P7f P8d	2.S6h P3d	3.S7g S6b	4.P5f S4b
5.S4h P5d	6.G4i-5h G3b	7.P6f K4a	8.G6g G5b
9.B7i S6b-5c	10.P2f P6d	11.P2e R6b	12.G7h P6e
13.Px6e Rx6e	14.P'6f R6a	15.P3f S6d	16.P2d Px2d
17.Bx2d P'2c	18.B4f P4d	19.B3g P4e	20.K6i K3a
21.S5g S4c	22.K7i P9d	23.P9f G5b-4b	24.P1f P5e
25.P4f Px5f	26.Sx5f Px4f	27.Bx4f P'5e	28.S4g P'4e
29.B6h P'6e	30.P'2d Px2d	31.P'2e Px2e	32.P'2d B4d
33.Px6e Sx6e	34.P'6f S6e-5d	35.Rx2e P'2b	36.N3g N9c
37.R2h N8e	38.P'4f Nx7g+	39.G6gx7g Px4f	40.Sx4f S'5f
41.P'4e B5c	42.K8h P'6e	43.Px6e P'6f	44.Gx6f S5dx6e
45.Gx6e Rx6e	46.P'6f R6c	47.Sx5e G'6g	48.P'5d Gx7h
49.Kx7h G'6g	50.K8h Gx6h	51.Px5c+ Rx5c	52.P'5d Sx5d
53.S'4d Sx5e	54.Sx5c+ B'7i	55.K9h Gx5c	56.B'8f P'5b
57.R'6a P'4a	58.Bx6h Bx6h+	59.Rx6h B'4f	60.G'5a K4b
61.Gx4a K3c	62.N'2e Kx2d	63.G'1e K2c	64.P'2d K1b
65.G4b Bx6h+	66.Rx2a+		white resign.

Gshogi

Gshogi is a shogi playing program. After the start it automatically starts the new game. Main menu opens by clicking with the right mouse button on the empty field or outside the board. All the options and settings are accesible through the menu.