

Part 4

Regional and historical games

[We now proceed to games which developed independently of modern chess: the shatranj tradition, the xiangqi tradition, the shogi tradition, and other games which had or still have a significant regional currency. These are of course not ‘variants’ of orthochess in the normal sense of the word; indeed, in the case of shatranj, it is orthochess itself which is the variant and shatranj which is the parent game. But chess players who are interested in variants of the normal game are naturally interested also in the other forms that became established, and it is entirely appropriate that these games be covered here.

Most of the book so far has been personal and immediate: David possessed the game, or had played it, or had a copy of its rules, or had communicated with its inventor at no more than one or two removes. The present chapters are much more derivative, and there is little in them that cannot be found with more direct authority elsewhere. However, David believed he had sources for Burmese Chess, and to some extent for Indian Chess, which gave information not previously in print in the West. It will be appreciated that what appears here is a very selective account of an immensely complicated subject, and readers seeking further detail should refer to more specialized works.]