

THE LITERARY SOURCES OF INDIAN CHESS AND RELATED BOARD GAMES

by Andreas Bock-Raming*

Among all Indian board games it is the game of chess which has so far received the greatest scholarly attention. However, nearly all the books and articles written in the past on the rules of Indian chess are based on relatively few indigenous literary sources. These are above all two Sanskrit texts from the 15th and 16th centuries A. D. which both describe the rules of four-handed chess played with dice. The first is entitled *Tithitattva* and was composed by a certain Raghunandana. It was edited and translated for the first time by the Indologist Albrecht Weber (1872:59-89). The second is the *Caturangadṛpikā* ** ascribed to a certain *Sūlapāni* which was made accessible to scholarly research by Manomohan Ghosh (1936). The four-handed dice chess which is also mentioned by the Arabic traveller and scholar *al-Bīrūnī* in the eleventh century A. D. was evidently quite different from the two-handed chess as we know it today. Each of the four players had a boat, a horse, an elephant, a king and four pawns only. The aim of the game was not to checkmate the king, but to capture as many prisoners as possible.

For the rules of two-handed chess, we have another Sanskrit text called *NTtimayūkha* which was composed between 1600 and 1700 by a certain *NTlakāṇṭha*. It was Weber again who published it in 1873, together with a German translation and detailed annotations. These three texts, the *Tithitattva*, the *Caturangadṛpikā* and the *NTtimayūkha* along with a few others ¹ are the only Indian literary sources on which most investigators have founded their sometimes far-reaching assumptions about the origin and the rules of Indian chess.

Our knowledge of the primary literary sources of Indian board games other than chess is even more scanty. The most detailed information about these games is contained in books by H. J. R. Murray (1952) and R. C. Bell (1960). The latter describes chess and its variants as well as the following board games which are played to the present day in India: *Pachisi*, *Thaayam*, *Tablan*, *Pallanguli* and several others. However, both Murray's and Bell's descriptions of these games are nowhere based on primary texts, but only on secondary sources. Also the important article by W. N. Norman called *The Indian Games of Pachisi, Chaupar, and Chausar* is not based on a critical investigation of primary sources, but only on the translation of a Persian text, namely the *Āṭin-i-Akbārī* composed in the 16th century A. D. by *Abū'l Faẓl Allāmi*, the minister and chronicler of the Mughal ruler Akbar.

Strictly speaking, however, textual sources for Indian board games are not at all that scarce. Scholars have been unaware of the fact that there is a considerable body of texts written not only in Sanskrit, the classical cultural language of India, but also in

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** The author is not responsible for the absence of diacritical marks in the Sanskrit texts. (de Voogt, Ed.)

¹ E.g. the 5th chapter of the *Kāvyaśāmkāra* composed by Rudraṭa (2nd half of the 9th century A.D.); for the details of this text see H. Jacobi, *Über zwei ältere Erwähnungen des Schachspiels in der Sanskrit-Litteratur*. In: ZDMG 1896:50. p. 227-233 = *Kleine Schriften*, p. 540-546.

modern Indian language. These texts can be divided

The first group consists only in such a small number of specimens which consequently have never been printed in board games. To the second group are preserved in manuscript form.

Therefore, the number of specimens is twofold. We should not forget those which have been printed but which have been largely neglected. These should be edited and translated. I think the publication of these specimens will improve our knowledge of related board games.

The aim of this study is to provide specimens of the first group which have been published in printed form for research.

The first of these texts is an encyclopaedic work in verse form. This metrical Sanskrit text reigned at the beginning of the 16th century A.D. far which mainly gives a description of some minor variants like the existence of this game for a very long time. The annotated German translation 'Journal' (Bock-Raming, 1993) quite recently by a co-author dealt in great detail with the game on several other occasions. According to the Ms., the game was played by the minister in the middle of the 16th century. The horses and in the corner of the board. The footsoldiers (cf. diagram) the king, the knight and the elephant in the four diagonal directions. The chariot aslant to the king. The foot soldier takes a square where it was in chess, it was never a square where it was in chess, it was check-mated and the whole, there can be no war. The names of the army into elephants, chess game is evident from the *vyūha*, which in Indian chess the names of specific

² Edited by Shrigondekar in Vol. II: Baroda 1939, G.O.

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modern Indian languages which deal with the rules of chess and related board games. These texts can be divided into two groups:

The first group comprises texts published some time ago in printed editions, but only in such a small number of copies that they never had a wide circulation and consequently have never reached the attention of scholars concerned with research into board games. To the second group belong texts which have not been printed so far and are preserved in manuscript form in Indian libraries.

Therefore, the aim of future investigations of Indian board games should be twofold. We should try to give a reliable translation and interpretation of those texts which have been printed, but which, on account of the above-mentioned reasons, have been largely neglected so far. Furthermore, those texts which up to now have not been printed should be edited as soon as possible and subsequently furnished with an annotated translation. I think the accomplishment of this twofold aim would lead to a considerable improvement of our present knowledge of the history and development of chess and related board games.

The aim of this article is give a short survey of the most important and interesting specimens of the first group of primary literary sources, that is texts which have been published in printed editions, but so far have never or rarely been the subject of scholarly research.

The first of these texts is a passage on two- as well as four-handed chess in an encyclopaedic work bearing the title *Mānasollāsa* (=Ms.)² which means 'Joy of the mind'. This metrical Sanskrit text is attributed to the South Indian ruler Somesvara who reigned at the beginning of the 12th century A.D. It is the oldest literary source known so far which mainly gives a detailed description of the rules of two-handed chess, but also of some minor variants like the four-handed game. Although chess historians have known of the existence of this important text since the end of the last century, it has been neglected for a very long time. After I re-discovered it by chance in 1992, I have prepared an annotated German translation which will presumably appear this year in the 'Indo-Iranian Journal' (Bock-Raming, forthcoming). Another German translation has been submitted quite recently by a colleague of mine, Ms. Syed of Munich (1994). As I have already dealt in great detail with the contents of the Ms. in the above-mentioned translation and on several other occasions, it will do here to recapitulate only the most important points. According to the Ms., two-handed chess is played with the following pieces: a king and a minister in the middle on the first row, next to them two elephants followed by two horses and in the corners of the board two chariots. The second row is occupied by eight footsoldiers (cf. diagram 1). The king, the two horses and the footsoldiers move the way the king, the knight and the pawns do in modern chess, while the minister moves one step in the four diagonal directions, the elephant in any of the four cardinal directions and the chariot aslant to the next but one square. All the major pieces capture as they move. Only the foot soldier takes a piece that is positioned at either angle in front of it. As in modern chess, it was never allowed to take the opponent's king. If the king was placed on a square where it was in danger of being taken, it had to move and if that was not possible it was check-mated and the game was finished. Considering the chess text of the Ms. as a whole, there can be no doubt that the Indian two-handed chess was conceived as a game of war. The names and the moves of the pieces symbolize the division of the old Indian army into elephants, chariots, cavalry and infantry. Furthermore, its symbolism as a war game is evident from the fact that the arrangement of the chess pieces is repeatedly called *vyūha*, which in Indian texts dealing with the conduct of war means 'battle array'. Even the names of specific arrangements of the chess pieces, e.g. in various opening positions

² Edited by Shrigondekar in 3 volumes: Vol. I: Baroda 1925 (repr. 1967), Gaekwad's Oriental Series 28; Vol. II: Baroda 1939, G.O.S. 84; Vol. III: Baroda 1961, G.O.S. 138.

which may be adopted optionally instead of the normal initial position, are technical terms for such battle arrays and have their place in Sanskrit texts on the conduct of war.

Probably even more interesting than the Ms.'s description of chess is another passage in the same work (Ms. 5,634-712ab) describing a game which in many respects resembles our modern backgammon. So far, it is the only Indian literary source which gives us detailed information about the form of the game-board, the pieces and the dice as well as the rules for playing this game. The size of the game board as well as that of the pieces is given in the Indian measure *angula* which literally means 'finger's breadth' and approximately corresponds to 3/4 inch or 1.9 cm (cf. Michaels 1978). For the game board, the Ms. prescribes a length of 48 a. which is equivalent to 91.44 cm and a breadth of 20 a. which is equivalent to 38.1 cm. Interestingly enough, the text also gives a measure of height, namely 20 a. which is 38.1 cm. The question is how to interpret this detail. Possibly, it means that the game board did not lie directly on the ground but was placed on a table or something like that. Furthermore, the text says that the game board should be equipped with 24 points - in Sanskrit they are called *grha-s* which means 'houses' -, each of them 4 a. that is 7.6 cm wide and 9 a. that is 17.1 cm long. According to the Ms., these points were not triangular as they are in modern backgammon, but were rounded off towards the middle of the board. They were arranged in two rows, each row being divided into two groups of 6 points. From these details we can draw the conclusion that at the time of the Ms. the Indian backgammon board was very similar to the kind of board we use today. The modern backgammon board too has 24 points, the 12 points of each row being divided into two sections, namely the inner and outer tables of each of the two players. However, the Ms. does not give us any clue whether the points on the board were painted in two alternating colours on a board of a third colour as it is the case with today's backgammon boards.

Backgammon as is attested in the Ms was played with altogether 30 pieces - in Sanskrit they are called *sāra-s* -, 15 white ones for the first player and 15 coloured ones for the second. With respect to the size of the pieces, the Ms. prescribes a height of 3 a. that is 5.7 cm and a width of 2 1/2 a. that is 4.7 cm. The pieces are said to have the shape of a female breast.

A very interesting point in the Ms.'s description of what is known today as backgammon concerns the initial positions of the pieces on the board. It is generally known that in modern backgammon at the beginning of the game the pieces are positioned in the way shown in diagram 2 on page 11. In the Indian backgammon, however, 6 different initial positions were allowed, two of which I have illustrated in diagrams 3 and 4 (for the sake of simplicity, I have retained in these diagrams the conventional terms White and Black, although the Indian text speaks, as I have already mentioned, of white and coloured pieces). Of special interest is the second example illustrated in diagram no. 4, where all pieces of one colour, e.g. Black, are placed on the 7th point of the outer table of Black.

Besides the game board and the pieces, dice were necessary for playing the game. They were either prismatic or cubical in form. The prismatic dice named *pāśaka* in Sanskrit are described as being as long as a forefinger and consisting of ivory, as also the cubical dice.

Another important point in the Ms.'s description of backgammon-rules concerns four specific ways or tactics to play the game. The best way of playing was called *gama* in Sanskrit and seems to have been very similar to what is called 'running game' in today's backgammon, when one of the players tries to bring his pieces to his home inner table as quickly as possible. The second way of playing was called *cara* which evidently had two aims: to move one's pieces to the home inner table, but also to check the moves of the opponent, e.g. by leaving some of one's own pieces in the opponent's inner table in

order to hit a blot which game was called *vibara* barring the opponent's possibility to react to *pratibandha*, as it is called. Thus far the game dates back to the beginning

Further important games date from much on two-handed chess concerns Hariharacatur scholar and poet at 1497 to 1540 over the already mentioned, however, was not played that is 196 squares a greater number of chess each side, namely a chariots, 4 elephants, sword-bearers, 4 spears equipped with instruments the specific opening would be used on the each party belong for partake in the game. the horse or knight commander of the army in any direction. The it was only allowed four cardinal directions and diagonally, but if soldiers moved like the spear-bearer was allowed vertically. Contrary to the usual initial position possibility of choosing much older Ms., are from Sanskrit texts of to 8. The first formation'. It looks like *vyūha* which means 'invincible', the 'invincible' placed on rows 2 to 'thunderbolt-formation' separated by the lines. Still later than these sources for the rules composed by a certain lived as a scholar at the of jewels of pleasure

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order to hit a blot which means to capture a single piece. The third way of playing the game was called vibandha which literally means 'obstruction' and was primarily aimed at barring the opponent on several successive points. The opponent on his part had the possibility to react to the formation of such a block by building a 'counter-block', a pratibandha, as it is called in Sanskrit.

Thus far the relevant passages on chess and backgammon from the Ms which dates back to the beginning of the 12th century A.D.³

Further important, but hitherto largely unknown printed texts on Indian board games date from much later times. From the 16th century we have a very interesting text on two-handed chess which is part of a much larger work on politics and military concerns Hariharacaturanga. It was composed by a certain Godāvaramisra who lived as a scholar and poet at the court of the Indian ruler Pratāparudra. The latter ruled from 1497 to 1540 over the kingdom of Orissa which is situated at the gulf of Bengal. As already mentioned, the chess-passage of the H. deals with two-handed chess which, however, was not played on the usual board with 64 squares, but on a board with 14x14, that is 196 squares altogether. Due to the enlargement of the board, there was also a greater number of chess pieces in this game. As a rule, it was played with 32 pieces on each side, namely a king, a crown prince, a minister, a commander of the army, 4 chariots, 4 elephants, 4 horses as well as four different kinds of foot-soldiers, namely 4 sword-bearers, 4 spear-bearers, 4 archers, and 4 so-called machinists, that is soldiers equipped with instruments intended for hurling stones and other missiles. Depending on the specific opening position chosen at the beginning of the game even more pieces would be used on the board. Furthermore, and much to my surprise, the H. says that to each party belong four army musicians which were placed outside the board and did not partake in the game. The text prescribes the following moves for the pieces: the king and the horse or knight moved as in modern chess; the crown prince, the minister and the commander of the army moved orthogonally or diagonally any number of vacant squares in any direction. The elephant moved to any square forwards, but if it moved backwards, it was only allowed to take one step diagonally. The chariot moved one square in the four cardinal directions. The sword-bearer, if it moved forwards, took one step vertically and diagonally, but if it moved backwards, only one step vertically. The rest of the foot-soldiers moved like the sword-bearer, with the exception that, if they moved forwards, the spear-bearer was allowed to take two, that archer three and the 'machinist' four steps vertically. Contrary to the rules of modern chess, in the H. the game did not start from the usual initial position of the pieces on the first two rows. Instead, the players had the possibility of choosing between ten different opening positions which, as already in the much older Ms., are called vyūha-s = 'battle array' and whose specific names are taken from Sanskrit texts on the conduct of war. I have illustrated four of them in diagrams 5 to 8. The first formation is called sākṣaṭa-vyūha in Sanskrit which translates as 'cart-formation'. It looks roughly like a triangle. The second one is called ardhacan-drākṛti-vyūha which means 'crescent-shaped formation'. The third formation is called durjaya-vyūha, the 'invincible formation' in which all 32 pieces plus two additional elephants are placed on rows 2 to 5. Finally, the fourth formation is designate as vajra-vyūha, the 'thunderbolt-formation' in which the archers, 'machinists', chariots and elephants are separated by the lines e and j from the rest of the pieces in the centre of the board.

Still later than the H. described above are some more important Indian textual sources for the rules of playing chess, e.g. the so-called Vilāsamānimañjarī which was composed by a certain Tiruvengadācārya at the end of the 18th century. Tiruvengadācārya lived as a scholar at the court of king Najirao II. The V. which literally translates as 'row of jewels of pleasure' is an extensive work of about 273 pages and in its main part

³ For further details of the Ms.'s passage on 'backgammon' see Bock-Raming (1995).

describes in 300 ornate Sanskrit stanzas 100 chess problems and their solutions. Another important passage of this book deals with the rules of two-handed chess, distinguishing between a North Indian, South Indian, and European mode of playing chess. Although the V. is a very important source for the later development of Indian chess, so far it has not gained the attention it deserves. The same holds true for the hitherto completely neglected Bālakahitabuddhi-baṅkṛtāna which translates as 'game of intelligence suitable for children'. It is an anonymous work of only 7 verses which, though not quite convincingly, has been estimated by S.Y.Wakankar (1986:299) to have been composed even earlier than the Mānasollāsa, that is between the 10th -12th centuries A.D.

Finally, there is an Indian text which is of great importance for research into chess as well as other Indian board games. It is the *Kṛtīdākaśāstra* (=KK.), an encyclopaedia of games which was written in 1871 by *Harikṛṣṇa*, a resident of Aurangabad⁴. So far only two other scholars have taken notice of the KK: C.P. Bhatta (1995) in his recent work entitled: *Origin and Genesis of Chess* and S.I. Iyer (1982) in his book on Indian chess. The KK, not only deals with the rules of two-handed chess and its variants on boards with 100, 144 or even 196 squares, but it is the first Indian text that describes the games of *Chaupar* and *Pachisi* as well as a considerable number of other board games.

The rules of Chaupar and Pachisi as described in the KK. agree on the whole with those attested by Murray and in other secondary sources. The board, embroidered on a piece of cloth, consists of four arms, each containing 3x8 cells, and is arranged to form a cross with a central enclosure. On each arm, four cells called *hamsapāda* in Sanskrit are crosscut. Most probably, men standing on them are immune from capture which, however, is not stated explicitly in the text. The game may be played with either three or with two oblong dice or with seven cowrie shells. When played with three dice, the faces show the numbers 1 and 6, 2 and 5; when two dice are used, they show the numbers 1 and 6, 3 and 4. Each player has the same number of men which are coloured red, black, yellow, and green. Men can be doubled and are immune from capture. Consequently, only single pieces can be taken. Special rules obtain for the moves of the pieces. When two of the dice show the same number and the player has two men doubled, they may be moved together by the doublet. For example, if two of the dice show the number 2 and the third one the number 5, the player can move 2 pieces over 4 spaces, provided the 2 pieces stand together on one field; but he is allowed to move them only 2 fields forwards, if he should prefer doing so. Additionally, he can move a single piece over 5 spaces according to the number on the third dice. Similar rules hold, if a player throws 2 ones, 2 threes and so on. In case each of the dice shows a different number, doubled pieces are not allowed to move at all, only a single man may be moved forwards according to the total number of pips.

In the rest of the present article, I want to give the reader an idea of the vast variety of other board games described in the KK. which mostly can be classified either as hunting games or as race games. An interesting specimen of the second category is the *karmapatṭakhelanam*, as it is called in Sanskrit. Literally, this word translates as 'game on the board (revealing one's) karma'. The term karma is a typically Indian notion which means that the actions a human being performs in the course of his present life inevitably determine his lot in his future existence. Good actions will lead to his rebirth on a higher level of existence, e.g. as a god, bad actions to his being reborn on a lower level, e.g. as an animal. Now, the game I am talking about is reputed to reveal to the player how the total of his actions will affect his next life. The cloth on which the game is played shows 500 squares which represents various possible conditions of existence in an ascending

4 The full title of this work is: *Kṛtādhāusalyam. Bhāṣā-tīkā-sametam. Sṛī-mad-brahmajyotiśārṇava-mahāgranthakāra-sṛīmad-Aureṅghabāda-nagarānīvaśī-sṛīmad-Harikṛṣṇa-Venkaṭarāma-pāṇḍitavarye-viracitam. Kṣemarāja Śrīkṛṣṇadāśa-sreṣṭhīṇa Mumbayyūṇ śvaktīye 'Sṛīvenkaṭeśvara' (sṭīm) mudranālaye mudrayitvā prakāśitam. Saṁskṛta 1957, Sake 1822.*

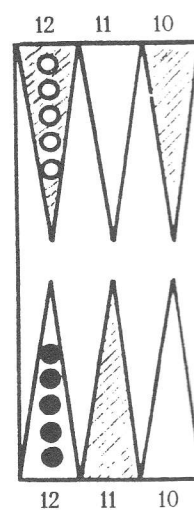
$$Ch = Cha$$

H = Hors

E = Eleph

Initial position and

Outer Table



Outer Table

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Mānasollāsa: Initial position ("vyūha") of the chess pieces

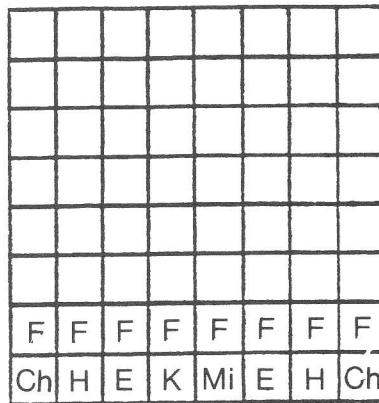
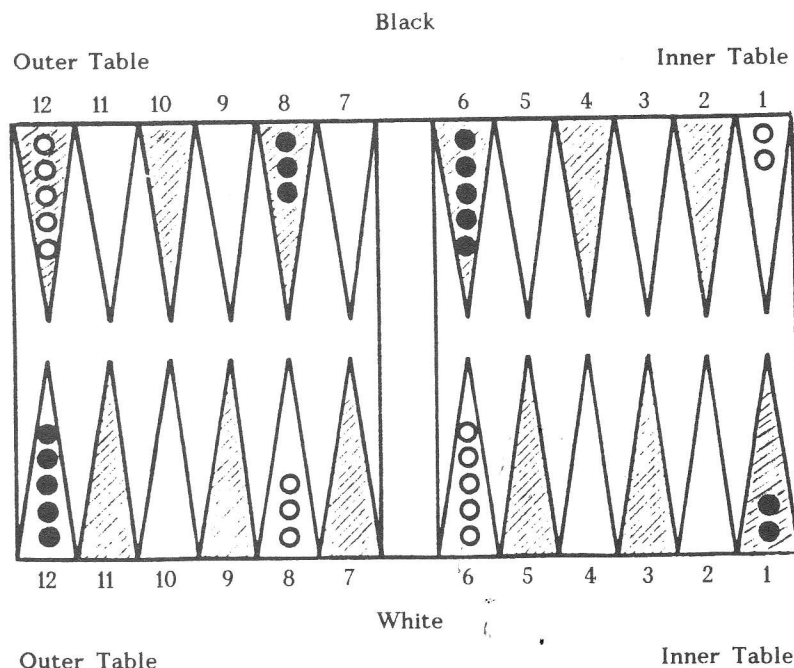


Diagram 1

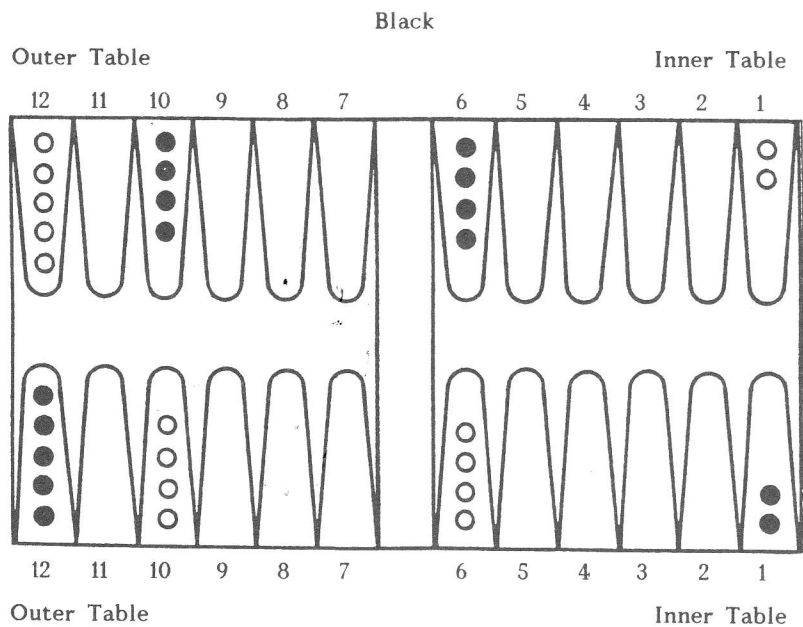
Ch = Chariot
H = Horse (=Knight)
E = Elephant
K = King
Mi = Minister
F = Footsoldier

Initial positions of the pieces in modern Backgammon (Diagram 2) and according to the Mānasollāsa (Diagrams 3 and 4)

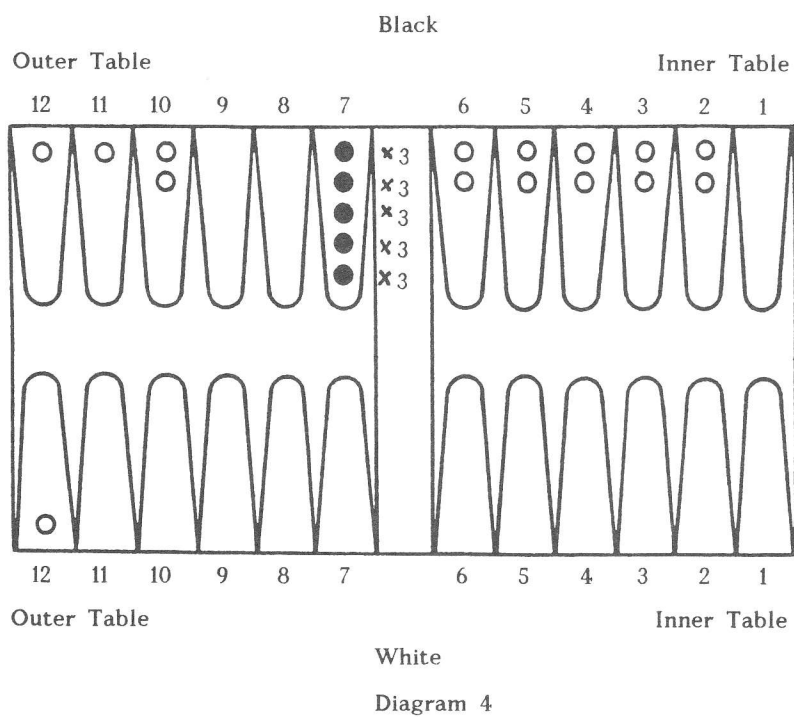


White

Diagram 2



White
Diagram 3



Harihara

7	
6	
5	
4	
3	
2	
1	

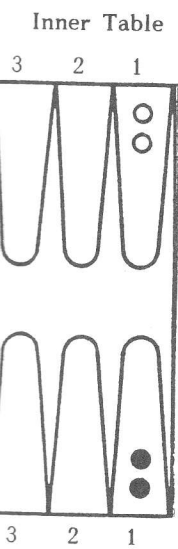
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Ch = C
H = H
Co = C
Cr = C
K = K
Mi = M

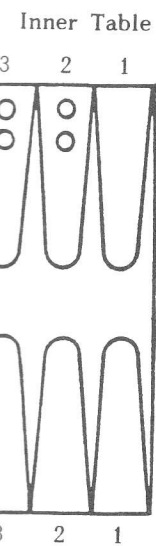
7	Sw
6	A
5	
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a

Diagram



Inner Table



Inner Table

Hariharacaturāṅga: Initial positions of the chess pieces (White)
(Diagrams 5 - 8)

7						Sp	Sp								
6						Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma						
5			Sw	Sw						Sw	Sw				
4			A	A	E	E	E	E	A	A					
3			Sp									Sp			
2			Ch	H	H	Co	Cr	K	Mi	H	H	Ch			
1		Ch											Ch		
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	

Diagram 5: *śakaṭa-vyūha* ("cart-formation")

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Ch = Chariot | Sp = Spear-Bearer |
| H = Horse | A = Archer |
| Co = Commander of the army | E = Elephant |
| Cr = Crown Prince | Sw = Sword-Bearer |
| K = King | Ma = "Machinist" |
| Mi = Minister | |

7	Sw														Sw
6	A	Sp											Sp	A	
5		Ma	Sw									Sw	Ma		
4			A	Sp								Sp	A		
3				Ma	H	Ch	Ch	Ch	Ch	H	Ma				
2					H	E	E	E	E	H					
1						Co	Cr	K	Mi						
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	

Diagram 6: *ardhacandrākṛti-vyūha* ("crescent-shaped formation")

7														
6														
5				Sp	Sp	Sw	Sw	Sw	Sw	Sp	Sp			
4				H	H	A	A	A	A	H	H			
3			E	E	Ch	Ch	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ch	Ch		
2				E	E	Co	Cr	K	Mi	E	E			
1														
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n

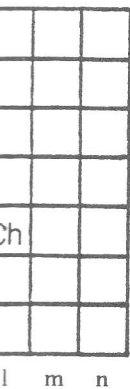
Diagram 7: *durjaya-vyūha* ("invincible formation")

Diagram 9: C

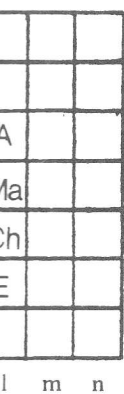
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Diagram 8: *vajra-vyūha* ("thunderbolt-formation")





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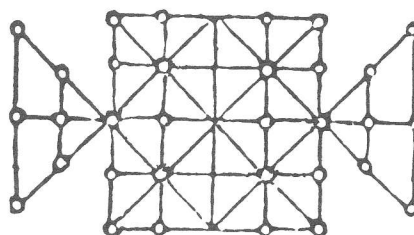


Diagram 9: Game board for the "game played with small stones on a cemetery"
(*śmaśānadyūtakaṅkarīkrīḍā*)

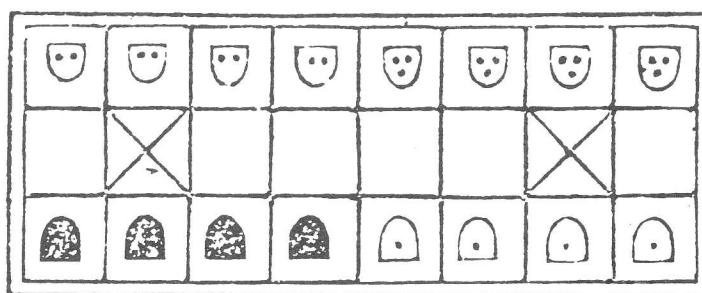


Diagram 10: "Game (on a board with) 24 squares"
(*caturviṃśatikōṣṭhakātmikī krīḍā*)

scale. In addition to the 500 squares, the cloth also shows a ladder and a snake. The game may be played by 2 or 4 participants who by turns throw six cowrie shells. The pieces move on the number of squares indicated by the number of shells that happen to fall upside down. If a player arrives at the base of the above-mentioned ladder he is allowed to continue to move further upwards; if, however, he happens to come to the mouth of the snake he has to move downwards to the tip of its tail. In case he succeeds in advancing through all 500 squares to the top, this means that he will be released from transmigration in his future existence.)

Furthermore, the KK. also gives the rules of a number of war- or battle-games belonging to the group of *Alquerque*-games, that is games with the leap capture and moves along the marked lines of their boards. One of these war games is called *smasānadyūtākankarīkrīdā* which translates as 'game played with small stones on a cemetery'. For some unexplained reason, this game must not be played at home, but only in lonely places like a cemetery or a forest. Diagram 9 which I have reproduced from the KK. gives an illustration of the board used for this game. According to the instructions in the KK., it is made in the following way: first, a square is drawn with charcoal or chalk on a stony ground. Then, within the square, two sets of three parallel lines are drawn, of which one intersects the other at right angles. By interconnecting the central points of the four sides of the square by four more lines a smaller square is obtained which is enclosed in the first one. Furthermore, two triangles which are subdivided into four spaces each are attached to the right and left sides of the first square. On the points of intersection of all lines except on those on the vertical middle line are the pieces which have the same name as the pawns in Indian chess: foot-soldier. The game proceeds with 32 soldiers, 16 white ones for the first player, 16 red ones for the second one. The vertical middle line from where the game begins is called fighting place. When one of the players places a piece on the line in the centre, it must be protected by another piece of the same colour behind it. If that is not the case, it is captured by the opponent. The player who has four pieces left has won the game. The KK. also records some variants of this game. Either, the two triangles attached to the right and left sides of the square are enlarged so as to consist of 8 spaces each; or, in addition to the triangles on the right and left sides, two more are attached to the lower and upper sides of the square as well as four additional ones at each of its corners. This variant is said to be played in Allahabad in the North-East of India.

A game very similar to the 'cemetery game' is recorded by Bell in the first volume of his book *Board and table games from many civilizations* (p.50f), as 'The sixteen soldiers'. Bell states that this game is played in Ceylon and different parts of India. The players move alternately and all pieces can move in any direction along the lines of the board, orthogonally or diagonally, to the next point of intersection. A capture is made by jumping over an enemy piece on to a vacant point beyond and any number of pieces may be captured in one move by a series of jumps. The player capturing all the opposing soldiers wins.

Related in character to the war-game I have just described is a kind of running-fight game called *caturvimsatikosṭhakātmikīkrīdā* = 'game (on a board with) 24 squares'. As one can see in diagram 10 which is likewise a reproduction from the KK., these 24 squares are arranged in three rows of eight squares each. The game is played by two people, each of them having 8 white and 8 red 'soldiers' respectively which are placed on the squares of the player's back row. The row in the centre remains vacant. It is called the fighting place, evidently, because it is only there that the pieces of the enemy may be captured. Like the afore-mentioned 'cemetery-game', the possibility of capturing is given if a piece stands alone with no other piece of its own colour behind it. The moves of the pieces are restricted to one step in all four directions; only in the first move may each soldier of the two opposing parties take two steps at a time, a rule which

reminds us, of course, of the game where four pieces left has

The 'game' recorded by Bell is said to be still played in Mahārāṣṭra where the game is played on a board of a certain colour which at the end of the game the pieces may capture the opponent's base determined by the colour. It is not allowed to move in the right side, from the left side, so on.

Concluding the clearly demonstrated in the 19th centuries for the means a new approach historians have made the origin of the game in the form of four-hundred is still a matter of fact of further investigation transformations of the KK. will become in

- Bell, R.C. 1960 *Board and table games from many civilizations* 1969 [revised edition]
 Bhatta, C.P. 1994. *The game of caturvimsatikosṭhakātmikīkrīdā*
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The 'game on the board of 24 squares' is evidently similar to a running-fight game recorded by Bell (1960:I.87-89). The game described there is called *Tablan* and is said to be still played in the South-West of India, which means not very far from *Mahārāṣṭra* where the KK. was composed. According to Bell, the board on which the game is played consists of 4 rows of 12 squares and each player has 12 pieces of his own colour which at the beginning of the game are positioned on the players' back rows. The pieces may capture enemy pieces on the two central rows, or when displaying them on the opponent's back row. Unlike in the KK., however, the moves of the pieces are determined by the throw of four painted dicing sticks. Furthermore, the pieces are not allowed to move in every direction, but must move on the first row from the left to the right side, from there on to the second row where they move in the opposite direction and so on.

Concluding this article it seems necessary to point out that the example of the KK. clearly demonstrates the especial relevance of comparatively late texts from the 18th or 19th centuries for our knowledge of Indian board games. The evaluation of such texts means a new approach to research into Indian board games. So far, especially chess historians have mainly, if not exclusively, been dealing with questions pertaining to the origin of the game and the like. E.g., the question, whether in the beginning chess took the form of four-handed chess which later developed into two-handed chess or vice versa is still a matter of debate. Without doubt, problems like these are important and worthy of further investigation. But in order to trace the full range of developments and transformations of chess and other board games the careful examination of texts like the KK. will become indispensable.

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* Dr. C. Panduranga Bha

¹ Tylor: War in Anci

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² See his commentary o