

4711

The Game of

# Twenty-Seven Chinamen

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## *Directions for Playing*

The game may be played by two people, and the object of each player is to "capture" all of his opponent's TWENTY-SEVEN MEN.

The board is placed between the players so that the two rows of squares face each player. The row nearest to each player is known as that player's "front row" and the other row is known as that player's "back row."

Each player has TWENTY-SEVEN MEN, or playing pieces of a color.

At the beginning of the game, each player places one MAN in each square of his front row and two MEN in each square of his back row except in the last square on the left hand side of that row in which he places no MAN and in the next to the last square on the left hand side of that row in which he places only one MAN directly as is indicated by the representations of MEN on the playing board.

As is also indicated by the MEN on the playing board, the direction of movement in the front row on each side

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is from left to right and in the back row on each side it is from right to left, so as to complete a circuitous path or route on both sides of the playing board.

The players alternate in their moves, and after the first player has been decided upon, he may move according to the following rules:

The first player chooses any square in his back row which contains more than one MAN from which to start his first move, and he begins the game by picking up all the MEN in that square and dropping them one at a time in each of the succeeding consecutive squares to his left until all the MEN in his hand have been distributed. If the last MAN drops into a square that is occupied, the player continues the move by picking up all the MEN in that square, including the one just dropped therein, and disposing of them one at a time as before. His move must continue in this same way until the last MAN in his hand falls into an empty square, and his first move may extend around the course, into the front row, or even farther, in a route as indicated by the MEN themselves.

If this empty square into which the last MAN falls is in the back row and if it has opposite it a square in the opponent's back row containing one or more MEN, the player captures these MEN and at once removes them from the board. If there are one or more MEN in the corresponding opposite square of the opponent's front row, they must also be taken. Furthermore, he must select another pair of opposite squares in his opponent's two rows from which to remove any

MEN that they contain. In making his choice, he is at liberty to pick out any other pair of opposites, whether both are occupied or empty, or whether one is occupied and the other is empty.

A MAN in the front row can not be moved until he has been played upon by a MAN from the back row.

A move can not begin from a square holding a single MAN if the player has a square containing more than one MAN. When a move does begin from a square containing a single MAN, it can not be played into an occupied pocket.

The winner is the player who captures all of his opponent's MEN and brings them to his own "Home," which is indicated on the board by a circle containing the Chinese equivalent for the word "Home."

The loss of MEN during the earlier part of the game is not necessarily as great a disadvantage as in most games, because so much depends on the final move, in which there is the chance for a brilliant display of skill.

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