

## CHESSKI

*"Nobody ever won a chess game by resigning."*

—Old chesski saying, usually followed by a short laugh.

Chesski were created to be masters of strategy and war, to uphold their creators' ideals in the world. But as time moved on, the chesski grew tired of being merely the pawns in a grand game. Now they play their own.

### LIVING CHESS

Chesski are best described as living chess pieces with faces. Their heads and bodies are sculpted around a piece which best embodies their personality. They begin life as pawns, formed through the emotional connection of two Chesski. When the pawns reach the age of approximately 20, they "promote" into a knight, bishop, rook, or vizier depending on what kind of strategy they feel a greater connection to.

A chesski under a hood could pass themselves off as a human or strangely-crafted warforged, although this proves more difficult for knights and red chesski. Those interested in chess and strategy are likely aware of their existence, due to prayers and research into their gods, but otherwise their rarity means that the common folk know little to nothing of them. Those who do know of them and encounter them tend to ask their advice on strategy, whether within or without chess, so those who do venture far tend to find work as advisors or professional gamers.



### ROYAL COURTS

Chesski are born into a society ruled over by a king. Each chesski settlement is formed of a large castle known as a court, usually guarded by rooks. It is formed out of the same strange material chesski are made of, in the predominant color of the chesski of that area. Whenever the king dies, retires or has to leave their post (depending on the government in the area), a new ruler is chosen from the ranks of the others, either by popular vote, relation to the king or the will of that court's patron deity. That person, generally a queen, promotes for the last time and becomes king over their people. This generally means they remain in the court, though some kings do travel (whether they are allowed to or simply want to break free).

When a piece performed an exceptional achievement, they promote into a queen. Queens are the most powerful chesski, excluding the king, and have a range of abilities that others lack.

## FORMED BY THE GODS

Each colour of chesski piece was initially formed by each of their gods to contend with the chesski of each other. They are eternally battling with each other, and those chesski dedicated to serving their god are likely mistrustful of any other color of chesski. However, as time goes by, more and more chesski convert to a different one of their gods or even renounce them altogether.

While Chesski appear as metal, resin or wood, they are in fact formed out of a strange, divine material. Some chesski are more like constructed creatures (and thus count as the Construct type) but those presented here are Humanoid.

Fights between chesski are meticulously planned, and clashes that in any other fight would be chaotic are conducted in an orderly fashion. Analysts have noticed the similarities to a chess game, pointing again towards their inherent connection to the game.

## CHESSKI NAMES

Chesski tend to give themselves names similar to the races and cultures surrounding their court, choosing a gender. Despite the apparently gendered pieces of "king" and "queen", pieces tend to either choose a gender based on how they personally feel or remain neutral or fluid to better fit their androgynous nature.

## CHESSKI TRAITS

Your inherent strategy manifests itself in a variety of ways.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Intelligence score increases by 1.

**Age.** Chesski promote beyond pawn at around 20, depending on how mature they are. Their chassis tends to deteriorate as the years pass, with some even "growing" wrinkles or long beards naturally from the magical material to signify age. They typically live to around 150, although those promoted to king or queen can live until 300.

**Alignment.** Chesski tend to be lawful, due to their focus on strategy and rules, along with their firm government system. Those that follow a god lean towards that god's alignment.

**Size.** Chesski are about the size of a human, although queens and kings can tower at eight feet or above. Your size is Medium.

**Speed** Your base walking speed is 35 feet.

**Chess Masters.** You have proficiency in chess sets. Your proficiency bonus in them is doubled when you play a game with them.

**Color.** Choose black, red or white as your color. You gain an additional ability based on the color you choose, which is activated as a bonus action and lasts until the end of your next turn. Once you have used this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

- **Black:** You increase your AC by 2. If you are not targeted by an attack before this effect wears off, you regain your use of this feature.
- **Red:** You gain advantage on your next opportunity attack. If you do not perform an opportunity attack before this effect wears off, you regain your use of this feature.
- **White:** You gain advantage on your next saving throw. If you do not make a saving throw before this effect wears off, you regain your use of this feature.

## OPTIONAL RULE: CAPTURING ON A GRID

If you run combat on a grid, chesski may be required to move the way they do in chess: diagonally for a bishop or vizier, vertically or horizontally for rooks, and in an L-shape for knights. Queens can move in any direction. Knights that promote to a queen may still use their L-shape move as well as vertically and horizontally.

**Capture.** If you move at least 20 feet in a straight line before hitting a creature with a melee attack, that creature must make a Charisma saving throw with a DC equal to 8 + your Intelligence modifier + your proficiency bonus or have their speed reduced to 0 feet until the end of their next turn.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Intelligence modifier, and regain all expended uses when you finish a short or long rest.

**Languages.** You can speak, read and write Common and Chesski. The chesski language consists of a variety of abbreviations and equations, and evolved from a shorter form of Common used in the military.

**Subrace.** Three subraces of Chesski are found among the worlds of D&D: knights, bishops and rooks. Choose one of these subraces.

## BISHOP

Bishops act as priests and clerics, tending to focus on leading prayer, offerings and other worship to their court's patron deity.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Wisdom score increases by 2.

**Bishop Magic.** You know the *spare the dying* cantrip. When you reach 3rd level, you can cast the *goodberry* spell once with this trait and regain the ability to do so when you finish a long rest. When you reach 5th level, you can cast the *prayer of healing* spell once with this trait and regain the ability to do so when you finish a long rest. Wisdom is your spellcasting ability for these spells.

**Holy Attack.** On the turn you use your Capture trait, you may cause the captured creature to be smote with divine energy as a bonus action. If you do, they take 1d6 radiant damage and you cannot use this feature again until you finish a long rest.

## KNIGHT

Knights serve as the main military in chesski culture, with abilities keyed around combat and movement. They often ride warhorses into battle.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Strength score or your Dexterity score (your choice) increases by 2.

**Expert Maneuverers.** When using your Capture trait, you may change direction once while moving 20 feet, and may pass through other creatures' space.

**Standing Leap.** Your long jump is up to 25 feet and your high jump is up to 15 feet, with or without a running start.

**Knigh Weapon Training.** You have proficiency with the mace, spear, lance and longsword.

**Mounted Fighter.** You can use your Capture trait while mounted, and have advantage on an attack roll that could use that trait when you attack from a mount.

## ROOK

Rooks serve as guards in the chesski courts, as enduring as the towers they are modeled on.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Constitution score increases by 2.

**Castle.** As a reaction when a creature you can see within 30 feet of you would take damage from an attack, you can castle with them. You switch spaces with that creature, and the attack is instead directed towards you. If your Armor Class is high enough to avoid the attack, you take no damage as usual.

Once you have used this feature, you can't use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

**Tower of Endurance.** When you are reduced to 0 hit points but not killed outright, you can drop to 1 hit point instead. You can't use this feature again until you finish a long rest. Additionally, your armor class is always equal to 12 + your Dexterity modifier when you are not wearing armor.

## VIZIER

Viziers, sometimes known as ferzes, are the rarest of chesski, given that the piece they are modeled off is no longer used in most chess sets. They act as advisors and strategists, using cunning to manipulate the situation to their desire.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Intelligence and Charisma scores each increase by 1.

**Advisor and Negotiator.** You have proficiency in the Persuasion skill.

**Vizier Magic.** You know the *friends* cantrip. When you reach 3rd level, you can cast the *comprehend languages* spell once with this trait and regain the ability to do so when you finish a long rest. When you reach 5th level, you can cast the *zone of truth* spell once with this trait and regain the ability to do so when you finish a long rest. Intelligence is your spellcasting ability for these spells.

## VARIANT: PLAYING AS A PAWN

Pawns, being the children of the chesski, are naturally weaker. However, at your Dungeon Master's discretion, you may play a pawn with the following traits:

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Charisma score increases by 2, and your Strength score decreases by 2.

**Size.** Pawns are smaller than adult Chesski. Your size is Small.

**Slowest on the Board.** Your base walking speed is decreased by 10 feet.

**En Passant.** If an hostile creature moved through an area within 5 feet of you on its turn, provided it started its turn more than 5 feet away from you, your melee attacks against it have a reach of 10 feet until the end of your next turn.



# CHESSKI VARIANTS

Chess is an old game, and many different variations of it have risen up over the years. Following are various variants on the Chesski race inspired by some of these chess-adjacent games.

## DRAGONCHESSKI

Dragonchesski are members of the cheeki race modeled on the pieces of the game Dragonchess. If playing a dragonchesski, replace chess sets in the Chess Masters trait with dragonchess sets. Additionally, you consider various subraces of traditional chesski to represent different pieces:

- **Bishop:** Cleric
- **Knight:** Griffon, Hero, Paladin
- **Rook:** Oliphant
- **Pawn:** Dwarf, Sylph, Warrior
- **Queen:** Mage

## NEW SUBRACES

The following new subraces are available for a dragonchesski:

### BASILISK

Basilisks are some of the rarest dragonchesski. They tend to find work within their court as investigators or special forces, due to their unique ability to Capture from a distance, mirroring their monstrous counterpart's ability to petrify.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Constitution score increases by 2.

**Freezing Glare.** You may expend a use of your Capture trait as a bonus action to force an enemy that you can see to make a Charisma saving throw with a DC equal to 8 + your Intelligence modifier + your proficiency bonus or have their speed reduced to 0 feet until the end of their next turn. The enemy must be able to see you for this to work successfully.

**Intimidating Expression.** You have proficiency in the Intimidation skill. Your proficiency bonus in this skill is doubled when used to intimidate a creature that you have used your Freezing Glare trait on within the last minute.

### DRAGON

Dragons serve as warriors, alongside dragonchesski such as heroes and paladins. They are tall, imposing figures who can exhale a minor breath weapon akin to the beings they are modeled on.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Strength and Charisma scores each increase by 1.

**Minor Breath Weapon.** You can use your bonus action to exhale destructive energy in a 10-foot cone in front of you. When you use your breath weapon, each creature in the area of the exhalation must make a Dexterity saving throw. The DC for this saving throw equals 8 + your Intelligence modifier + your Proficiency Bonus. A creature takes 1d6 damage of a type determined by your color (see below) on a failed save, and half as much damage on a successful one. The damage increases to 2d6 at 6th level, 3d6 at 11th level, and 4d6 at 16th level.

### NOTE: CONFUSING NAMES

Many dragonchesski, as they are more inspired by the worlds around them, may cause some confusion. Dragonchesski who have the cleric, paladin or dwarf subrace should make it clear that this is a subrace, rather than a class or race. If this becomes too confusing, simply use the default names for those subraces on your character sheet.

## DRAGONCHESSKI COLORS

Color	Damage Type
Black	Acid
Red	Fire
White	Cold

**Extra Language.** You can speak, read and write Draconic.

## ELEMENTAL

By far the rarest dragonchesski subrace, elementals are born in a similar way to how other races produce genasi - the interference of an elemental being, most commonly a genie.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Constitution score increases by 1, and one ability score of your choice increases by 1.

**Elemental Ancestry.** Choose air, earth, fire or water as your Elemental Ancestry. This gives you one additional trait, and knowledge of one cantrip, as shown in the Elemental Ancestry table. Intelligence is your spellcasting ability for this cantrip.

## ELEMENTAL ANCESTRY

Color	Additional Trait	Cantrip
Air	Aquatic	<i>gust</i>
Earth	Fire Resistance	<i>meld earth</i>
Fire	Fire Resistance	<i>produce flame</i>
Water	Aquatic	<i>shape water</i>

**Aquatic (Air or Water)** You can breathe air and water, and you have a swimming speed of 30 feet.

**Fire Resistance (Earth or Fire)** You have resistance to fire damage.

Due to the similarity with genasi, any feat with the genasi race as a prerequisite that aligns with their ancestry may be taken by an elemental dragonchesski. However, if you take the Efrete Heritage feat this way as an elemental dragonchesski, replace the last ability it provides with the following:

- You have darkvision out to a range of 60 feet.

## THIEF

Thieves are sneaky, smaller chesski, often used as assassins or spies sent to help or hinder allied or enemy chesski courts. They often become rogues or rangers, slipping into the background, unseen in the shadows.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Dexterity score increases by 2.

**Hidden in Shadows.** You can attempt to hide even when you are only lightly obscured by a shadowy or otherwise darkened area. You have advantage on any attacks that could use your Capture trait if they hit when attacking from such a hiding place.

**Silent.** You have proficiency in the Stealth skill.

## CHATURANGI

Chaturangi are sometimes thought to be the oldest form of chesski, and are without a doubt based upon the oldest known form of the game, chaturanga. If playing a chaturangi, replace chess sets in the Chess Masters trait with chaturanga sets. Additionally, you consider various subraces of standard chesski to have different names:

- **Bishop:** Gaja
- **Knight:** Ashva
- **Rook:** Ratha
- **Vizier:** Mantri
- **King:** Raja
- **Pawn:** Padāti

Chaturangi do not have "queens" as such, but a piece taking the Queenly Might feat is considered to have gained additional experience and become more powerful because of it.

## SHOGKI

Shogki are a chesski-adjacent race based on the game of Shogi. All subraces found in standard chess are seen here. However, young shogki are occasionally born as a lance instead of a pawn, which has the statistics of the pawn subrace, although its Ability Score Increase trait is replaced with the following:

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Constitution score increases by 2, and your Strength score decreases by 2.

When a lance Promotes, it becomes a rook instead of any other piece. Shogki rooks cannot be promoted to from pawns, only from lances.

## NEW SUBRACE

The following new subrace is available for a shogki:

### GENERAL

Generals are commanding figures, often taking charge of troops on the battlefield. They begin as weaker, lower-status "silver generals", before promoting to "gold generals" once they gain more experience.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Charisma score increases by 2.

**Commanding.** You can cast the *command* spell once, and regain the ability to do so when you finish a long rest. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for this spell. Additionally, you have proficiency in the Persuasion skill.

**Retreat.** When you take the Dash action, you can take the Disengage action as a bonus action on that turn.

## XIANGKI

Xiangki were created in the image of pieces in the game xiangqi. When playing a xiangki, you consider various subraces of standard chesski to have different names:

Bishop: Gaja

- **Bishop:** Elephant
- **Knight:** Horse
- **Rook:** Chariot
- **Vizier:** Advisor
- **King:** General
- **Pawn:** Soldier

As with chaturangi, xiangki do not have "queens". A piece taking the Queenly Might feat is considered to have gained additional experience and become more powerful because of it.

## NEW SUBRACE

The following new subrace is available for a shogki:

### CANNON

Cannons act as ranged attackers in Xiangki military, using their unique abilities to battle enemies from the back lines of combat.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Dexterity score increases by 2.

**Cannonfire.** As an action, you can fire a spectral cannonball at an enemy. This is considered a ranged weapon attack, with a short range of 60 feet and a long range of 120 feet. On a hit, it deals 1d10 bludgeoning damage, and you can't use this trait again until you finish a long rest. You are proficient in this attack.

**Standing Leap.** Your long jump is up to 25 feet and your high jump is up to 15 feet, with or without a running start.

## ADDITIONAL FEATS

If your Dungeon Master allows the use of feats as described in chapter 6 of the Player's Handbook, a chesski character has access to the following special feats. If a feat requires a particular subrace, a character must also have that subrace in order to take the feat. Playing a variant on that subrace, such as a paladin or ashva, still allows for you to take the feat (with the exception of chariots, elephants, oliphants and rathas, who count as knights for this purpose).

### EXPERT CANNONEER

*Prerequisite: Xiangki (cannon)*

You have gained more expertise on your natural abilities to fire projectiles at your enemies. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Dexterity or Intelligence score by 1, up to a maximum of 20.
- Attacks made using your Cannonfire trait count as magical for the purpose of overcoming resistance and immunity to nonmagical attacks and damage.
- Your Cannonfire trait now deals 2d10 damage, instead of 1d10.

### DRACONIC WINGS

*Prerequisite: Dragonchesski (dragon)*

You have been upgraded to a gold general, and gain enhanced abilities on the battlefield. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Strength or Intelligence score by 1.
- You gain a flying speed of 30 feet. To use this speed, you can't be wearing medium or heavy armor.

### FORTIFIED TOWER

*Prerequisite: Chesski (rook)*

You have gained the ability to temporarily form a tower near you, similar to your shape. As an action, you can create a tower as if you used the *Daeurn's instant fortress* magic item, although creatures that appear within the fortress's space are shunted but take no damage. When created, you vanish and become part of the fortress. You are aware of any creatures within the tower, and can see and hear what they are doing. You can also communicate telepathically with any creature inside or within 10 feet of the fortress.

As an action while the fortress is active, you can create a manifestation of yourself at any area within the fortress. This manifestation has the statistics of a **specter**, although it keeps your alignment, languages, and Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma scores.

When you are manifested, you lose the ability to sense and communicate with anyone in the castle, instead only being able to see those near you as usual. If you are reduced to 0 hit points while manifested, the fortress vanishes.

The fortress lasts for 24 hours or until you dismiss it as a bonus action. It also vanishes if it takes enough damage to be destroyed. When it vanishes, you appear in your normal body at a random location within 10 feet of it. If the fortress was active for at least 6 hours, you gain the benefits of a long rest.

Once you have used this ability, you can't use it again until seven days have passed.

## GAME PRIEST

*Prerequisite: Chesski (bishop)*

You have become attuned to the divine forces that govern games, logic and strategy. As a ritual that takes 10 minutes, you can allow yourself and up to five other creatures of your choice within 30 feet of you to consider a particular strategy and be told by the Dungeon Master the results, as though you each cast an *augury* spell.

### GOLD STANDARD

*Prerequisite: Shogki (general)*

You have been upgraded to a gold general, and gain enhanced abilities on the battlefield. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Intelligence or Charisma score by 1, up to a maximum of 20.
- Your speed increases by 5 feet.
- As a reaction when a creature makes an ability check, attack roll or saving throw, you can allow them to roll a d4 and add the number rolled to the ability check, attack roll or saving throw they are making. Once you have used this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

### GRANDMASTER'S STRATEGY

*Prerequisite: Chesski (vizier)*

You have fully embraced your talents of skill and strategy. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Intelligence score by 1, up to a maximum of 20.
- When you hit a creature with an attack, you can add your Intelligence modifier to the damage of the attack. You can use this feature twice, and regain all expended uses when you finish a short or long rest.

### PROMOTION

*Prerequisite: Chesski (lance or pawn)*

You have promoted to an adult chesski. You lose all traits from being a lance or pawn and must instead choose another chesski subrace to gain traits from. You may choose to keep the lance or pawn Ability Score Increase trait and not to gain the subrace's. If you are a lance, you may only promote to a rook.

You may also take the Queenly Might feat or a feat unique to your subrace immediately.

### QUEENLY MIGHT

*Prerequisite: Chesski*

You have been promoted to a queen as a result of your excellent feats as an adventurer. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Constitution or Intelligence score by 1, up to a maximum of 20.
- Your speed increases by 5 feet.
- If you attack a creature and on the other side of it is a wall, ledge or similar obstruction, you have advantage on the attack.



## SUPREME MANEUVERABILITY

*Prerequisite: Chesski (knight)*

You have honed your natural abilities in battle. You gain the following benefits:

- When you use your Capture feature, you can cause the creature to be restrained instead of having its speed reduced.
- When you deal a critical hit with a weapon or hit with a weapon within Knight Weapon Training, you can add an amount equal to your level to the damage of the attack. Once you have used this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

## TURN TO STONE

*Prerequisite: Dragonchesski (basilisk)*

You have begun to manifest abilities more reminiscent of the beings you are modeled on. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Constitution or Intelligence score by 1, up to a maximum of 20.
- When you use your Freezing Glare trait, the target becomes incapacitated until the end of its next turn.

## OPTIONAL RULE: WARFORGED SIMILARITY

At your Dungeon Master's discretion, warforged components and other magic items and/or feats exclusive to warforged characters could also be used by chesski characters.

## TWILIGHT FIGHTER

*Prerequisite: Dragonchesski (thief)*

You have mastered the art of staying within the shadowy places of the world. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Dexterity or Intelligence score by 1, up to a maximum of 20.
- You may use the Dash action as a bonus action when you start your turn in an area of dim light or darkness, although any area not in dim light or darkness counts as difficult terrain for you on that turn.
- You have darkvision out to a range of 60 feet.

## CHESSKI GODS

Deity	Alignment	Suggested Domains	Symbol
Alyaran, chesski god of strategy	LN	Knowledge, Forge, Trickery	A black chess vizier
Grandmaster, chesski god of creation	LG	Knowledge, Forge, Life	A white chess king
Tarnarwa, chesski goddess of destruction	LE	Death, Knowledge, Forge	A red chess queen

## NEW BLESSING

The following blessing can be given to a chesski character through them being chosen as the next king of their court. In extremely rare circumstances, a non-chesski creature could be chosen as king. As king, a character is generally under obligation to remain at the court, and is therefore rather restricted in adventuring. Be cautious when giving this blessing to a player.

***Blessing of Chesski Kingship.*** You can use an action to call forth unintelligent constructs formed like chess pieces to aid you in battle. As an action, you summon 1d8 **quadrones** which follow your commands, although they have an Intelligence score of 1, appear like chess pieces of your choice and cannot speak. If given no instructions, they will do nothing. Once you have used this blessing, you can't use it again until 3 days have passed.

### CREDITS

Created by: [u/a2a3a2a3](#).

Theme: [Silver-Blue XGtE theme](#) by [u/AeronDrake](#).

Art: [Fire Tower](#) by [Pawel Hordyniak](#); [Practice 14](#) by [Senfeng Chen](#); and Chess Robot Series [White Knight](#) and [Black Bishop](#) by [Nishant Thelakkat](#).

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