

MERIDIAN

At the beginning of the eighteenth century Queen Wu Wei decided that it was prudent, since it could not be avoided, to let some of the powerful European commercial companies establish garrisoned enclaves on the islands of the Southern Archipelago. But in order to restrain their well known belligerence and avidity, she had them agree to a number of unusual rules and conditions, of which the most unusual one was to divide the archipelago into imaginary North-South strips, which she called “meridians”, with the provisions that each company could establish only one enclave in each strip. In this game each player represents one the powerful commercial companies and the rules of the game are very similar to those that had been devised by Queen Wu Wei.

Contents

- a **board**, printed on both sides.
- **4 sets of 13 cards**; 10 are numbered 1 to 10, 3 show multiple numbers, 1-2-3, 4-5-6-7, 8-9-10; each set a different color.
- **4 sets of 20 tower-pieces** in the 4 different colors. Notice that these pieces can be stacked to form towers of different heights.

Preparation

- Both sides of the board show a number of islands with cities situated along 10 “meridians” (vertical strips numbered 1 to 10). On one side there are 5 cities on each strip (used when 2 or 4 are playing), on the other side 4 (when 3 are playing). Capital cities are indicated by a yellow dot and the picture of a city; other cities by a reddish dot.
- Each player chooses a color and takes the corresponding sets of 13 cards and 20 tower-pieces.
- Each player shuffles his deck of cards, then picks the 2 top cards of his deck and turns them face up.

Aim of the game

Your aim is to take over islands by establishing more garrisons in their cities than your opponents.

The garrisons

A tower indicates the presence of a garrison. Players can build towers of different heights, but their height does not affect the value of their garrison. All garrisons in ordinary cities are worth 1, those in capital cities 2.



How to play

- Play in turn clockwise. First move is decided by lot.
- When it is your turn, choose one of your 2 face up cards: the number on the card indicates the meridian on which you may place a tower. When you play a card with multiple numbers, choose a meridian corresponding to one of the numbers on the card and place your tower on it.
- Four rules govern the placing of towers and the consequent establishment of garrisons:
 1. Towers can have heights of 1 or more pieces, but the first tower placed on a meridian must be at least **2 places** high.
 2. All towers on a meridian must be of different height.
 3. A shorter tower may **not** be placed on a meridian above a taller tower and conversely a taller tower may **not** be placed below a shorter one (above means toward the “top” of the board: the edge opposite the bottom which has the strip of meridian numbers; below is forward the bottom of the board).
 4. A player can have only one tower on a meridian (or two in a 2-player game).
- Limited only by these 4 rules, you may place a tower on any vacant city of the meridian you choose. Furthermore, if space permits, you may **displace** an opponent’s tower by occupying its place and “pushing” it upwards if the tower you place is shorter, or downwards if the tower you place is taller. The displaced tower in turn may then displace the next tower, etc. But this procedure is not allowed if the space is not sufficient, that is, if the last tower would be pushed off the board.

Example. It is Orange’s turn, who decides to enter a tower on the meridian shown. Since there are already towers of 1, 3 and 4 pieces on this meridian, he must place either a 2-tier tower (**fig. A**) or one of at least 5 pieces (**fig. B**).

Fig. A. Orange can place a 2-piece tower in two ways, either by simply occupying the vacant space with move 1, or with move 2, by displacing the grey 1-piece tower and pushing it downwards. Move 3, pushing the brown tower upwards, is not allowed because it would push the black tower off the board, and move 4 is not allowed because a taller tower can never be below a shorter one.

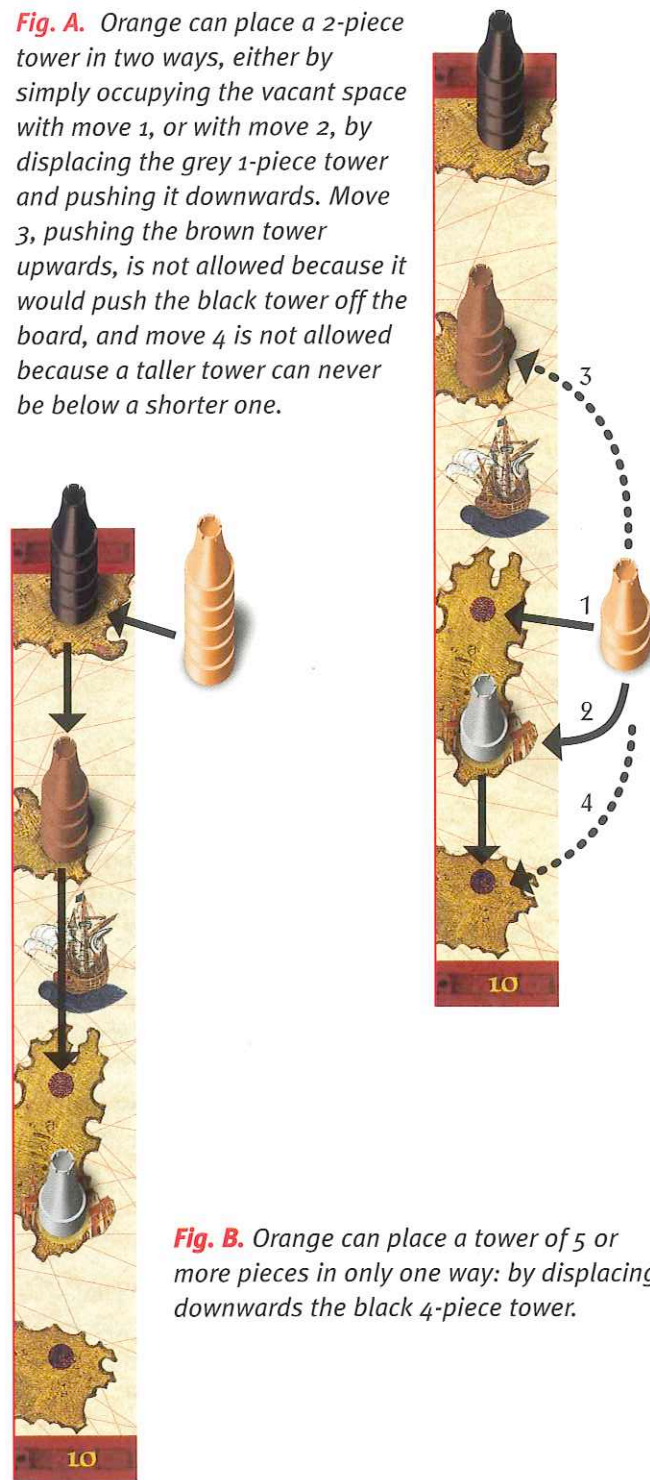


Fig. B. Orange can place a tower of 5 or more pieces in only one way: by displacing downwards the black 4-piece tower.

Watch out! If you choose a meridian on which you already have a tower (which can happen, since you play 13 times on 10 meridians), you may remove that tower and either a) save the recovered tiers for a future move, or b) place on that meridian a new tower of a different height and/or in a different location.



fig. C. Orange has chosen a meridian in which he has already a 4-piece tower. He removes it from the board, forms instead a 2-piece tower and place it by displacing the grey 1-piece tower downwards. The 2 orange pieces he recovered are put aside for later use.

- When you have completed your move, discard the card you used face up (all discarded cards must remain visible) and turn up the next card of your deck. Your turn is then over and it is the next player's turn.
- **Option not to play.** After you have chosen a meridian, you may elect **not** to place a tower on it. In that case simply discard the card as above.
- If you don't have sufficient pieces left (because they were used in prior turns), discard a card without playing.

End of game

The game ends when all the cards have been played. At this point you first determine who took over which islands. An island is taken over by the player who established most garrisons on it (that is, towers, regardless of their height), keeping in mind that

garrisons in ordinary cities are worth 1 and in capital cities 2. In case of a tie, the island is not assigned. Next, add up the number of cities in each island that was taken over, scoring 1 point for each city (for scoring purposes, capitals score 1 point like any other city). Player with highest total wins. In case of a tie, winner is the player with most tower-pieces left in hand.

Fig. D. shows an end situation in which we must determine which players took over which islands. Island "A" has 3 cities, therefore is worth 3 points, but no one gets it because the situation is a tie (Black and Grey have each 1 garrison there). Island "B" is also worth 3 points and goes to Brown who has the only garrison on it. Island "C" has 4 cities, is worth 4 points, but is not assigned because although Orange has garrisons in 2 cities, Black has a garrison in the capital, which counts double, there is therefore a tie. And finally island "D" which is worth 5 points goes to Grey who has garrisons in 2 cities, one of which is the capital and counts double, while Black has garrisons in only 2 ordinary cities.



Important. To make scoring easier, after you have determined which player has taken over which islands, remove from the board all towers from islands where there is a tie, and all towers but one - naturally of the color of the player who conquered it - from the other islands.

The game for 2 players

The only difference is that each player plays with two colors (therefore with 40 tower-pieces and 26 cards) and may place towers of both colors as if they were of only one color. Each player may place up to two towers on each meridian. If you choose a meridian on which you already have one or two towers, you may remove or replace one of them as in the standard game.