

FURTHER INFORMATION

The following books will be of interest to readers wishing to know more about this race game.

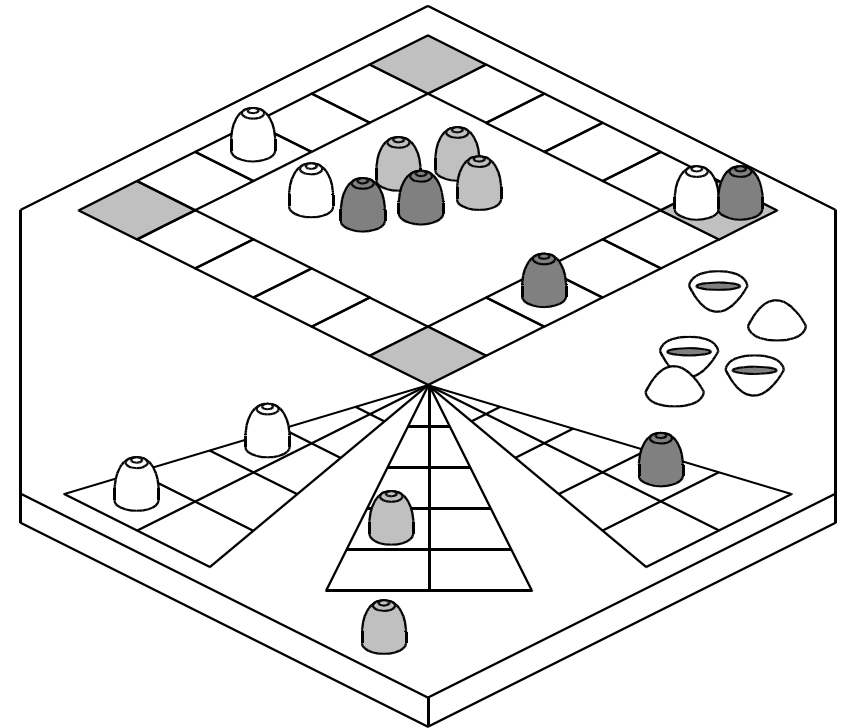
Bell, R. C. *Board and Table Games from Many Civilizations*, vol. 2, pp. 3-5. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1979.

Botermans, J. et al. *The World of Games*, pp. 157-158. New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1989.

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KERALA

by Damian Walker



INTRODUCTION & HISTORY

The origin of *Kerala* is mysterious, at least as far as Western accounts of it are concerned. English language accounts are descended from that of R. C. Bell, who knew only

that the game comes from somewhere in the former British Empire. Due to its resemblance to other Asian race games, it is most likely of Asian origin.

HOW TO PLAY

While the historical background of the game is obscure, the rules are very clear and playable.

Starting the Game

1. Kerala is played on a square board illustrated in Illustration 1, with a track around its perimeter, and two or three approach routes, one dedicated to each player.

2. Two or three may play, each having five pieces of his own shape or colour. These start the game off the board.

3. The moves of the pieces are dictated by five cowrie shells which act as dice.

4. Players decide at random who starts the game.

Moving the Pieces

5. A player in his turn will first

throw the cowrie shells.

6. A piece off the board may be entered according to one of the following throws:

(i). one mouth up allows a piece to advance one square onto the board;

(ii). no mouths up allows a piece to advance five squares onto the board;

(iii). other throws do not allow a piece to enter the board.

7. Alternatively, a piece already on the board may advance around the route shown in Illustration 2, and described in rule 10, according to the following scores of the same throw:

(i). one, two, three or four mouths up allow a piece to move by the corresponding number of squares;

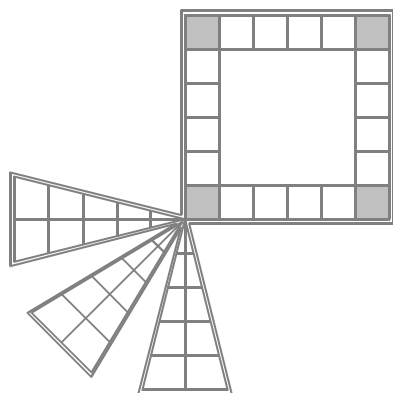


Illustration 1: the empty kerala board.

(ii). no mouths up allow a piece to move by five squares;

(iii). five mouths up allow a piece to move by ten squares.

8. A player rolling 5 (that is, no mouths up) is granted another turn. A player can continue to throw and move as long as he throws five.

9. If a throw cannot be used, it is lost. If that throw is a 5, then the extra turn is also lost.

10. The player's route is as follows:

(i). onto the board and up that player's approach route;

(ii). onto the corner square and around the perimeter in a clockwise direction;

(iii). off the perimeter and into the middle at the square indicated in Illustration 2;

(iv). back onto the perimeter at the indicated square and around the perimeter again, up to the corner square,

(v). back down the player's approach route and off the board.

11. A player must get all five of his pieces to the centre before any

can leave it for their second circuit around the perimeter.

Capturing Pieces

12. If a piece lands on an enemy piece that is on its way to the centre, the enemy piece is taken from the board and must start its journey again.

13. If a piece lands on an enemy that is on its way from the centre, the enemy is returned to the centre.

14. If a piece lands on a friendly piece, that piece suffers the same penalty as described in rules 12 and 13.

15. A piece sat on one of the marked squares is safe from attack; such a square may at once hold one piece per player.

Ending the Game

16. The first player to take all his pieces around the board wins the game.

17. Play continues after this, as the runners up fight for second place.

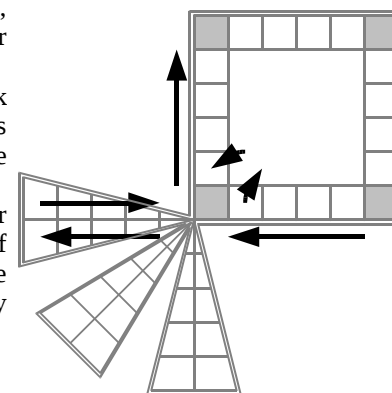


Illustration 2: the direction of play. Each player enters from his own approach route.