

The theme of this book is sabaki. The time that sabaki comes into play is when one is weak. In go it is an ironclad rule that in weak positions initiating a frontal assault for a strong fight will not produce a good result. For that very reason judgment about strength and weakness is essential. Another way of putting it is “whole board evaluation of sabaki”, and for readers who aim at going from the lower dan ranks into the upper echelons, this is the most essential thing, without doubt.

To that point, my principal purpose in this book is to show how to think fundamentally about sabaki and to make judgments about it, using concrete techniques.

So in this book I have taken up sabaki plays that everyone can use in their own games, utilizing a question and answer format. Various positions are offered for the reader to evaluate. Based on those judgments, one can determine which fundamental skillful finesse to use. I would be most gratified if the reader would answer those questions that I pose as if they were coming up in a real game.

Nevertheless, there is no need to think too long about them. One can ponder for a minute or two, respond intuitively; or it would be fine to consider it the do-or-die moment in the game and think long and hard. The point is that while the reader is confronting problems that often appear in games and demand sabaki, the reader will also develop the habit of discerning the balance of strength and weakness, understanding “whether to discard stones or move out with them” and see the path to greater skill.

In that way, I hope that the reader will enjoy the problems while challenging oneself.

Yoda Norimoto 9 dan

The important thing is to understand that in weak positions one must lightly play sabaki. If one makes a mistake in that judgment, one will cede the attack to the opponent, and the attacking initiative will pass into the adversary's hands, with no attacking chances for oneself.

That is, the correct way to think is to deal with weak positions by lightly making sabaki. In this situation, the correct application of sabaki from the initial phases is the problem.

Diagram 5.

I often see amateur games where the preconditions of sabaki are mis-handled.

For example, white 1 through 7 are symptomatic.

This is a game between amateur dan players, and you can see where white mistakenly plays 1 through 7 to lay the foundation for sabaki.

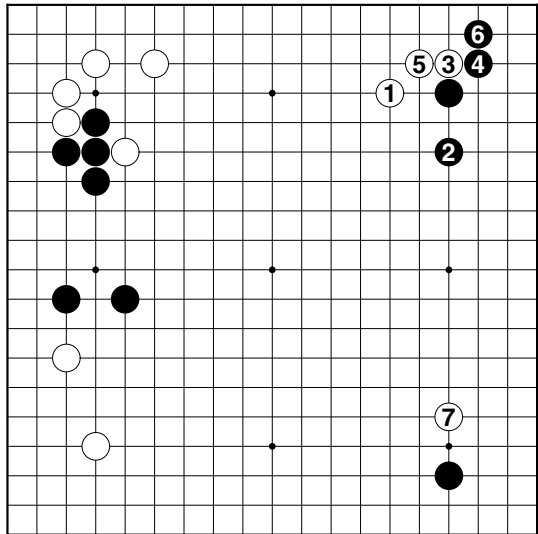


Diagram 5

But the initial idea itself was faulty.

Here, supposing that white wants to attack the lower right corner, the options are not limited to playing white 1 at 7, or playing 1 and then, without making the forcing moves at 3 and 5, playing 7.

But consider that following white 7 . . .

Diagram 6.

If black pincer at 1, white would come under a one-sided attack.

Play would proceed to black 5, upon which black would gain the early advantage.

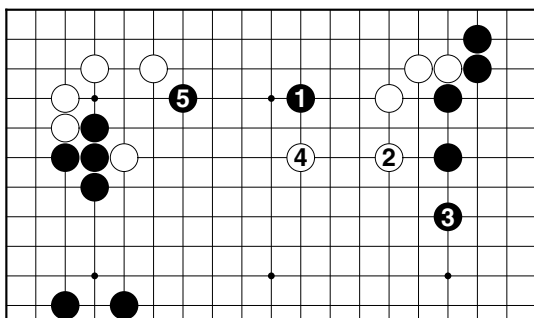


Diagram 6

Diagram 7.

Next, white sets up an attack with 1 and 3, and if white plays 1 at 4, black would answer at "a".

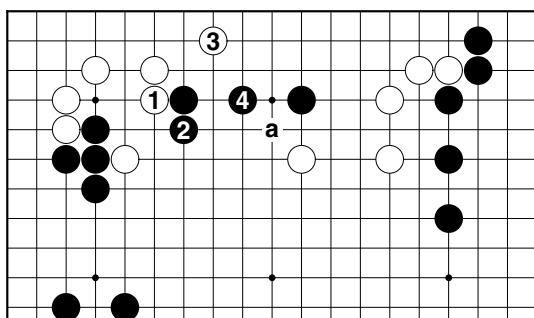


Diagram 7

Diagram 8.

Consequently, white might use 7 in Diagram 5 to make the defensive play at 1 here or at a similar point.

This is vital to defend the weakness of the white group.

One lightly makes sabaki to defend a weak group.

That is the same kind of thinking.

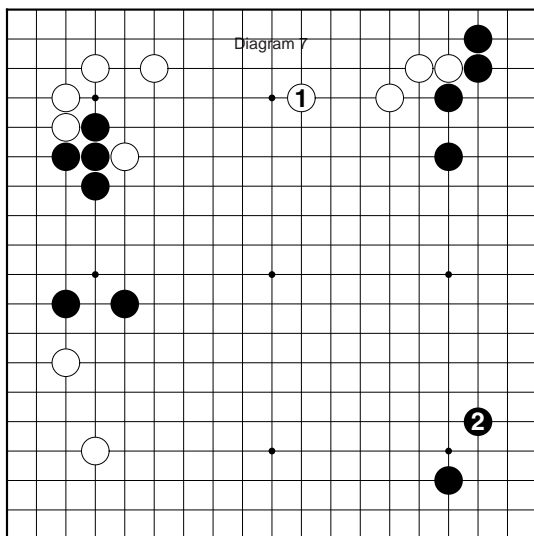
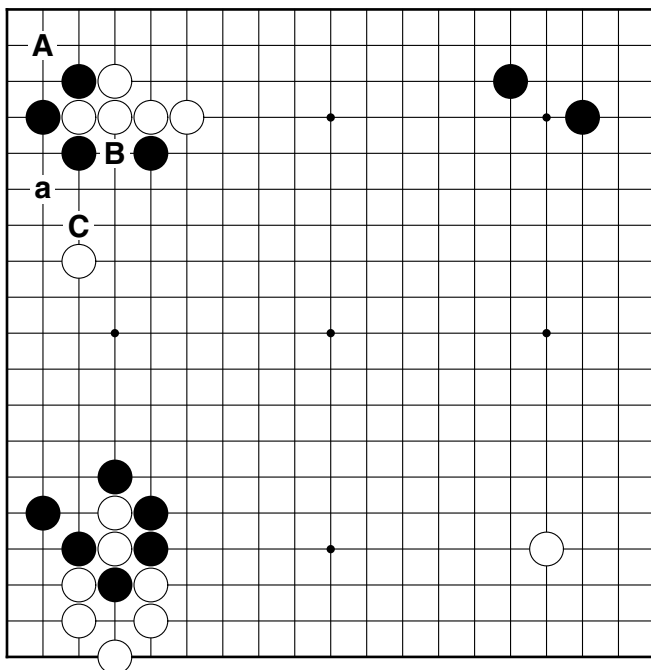


Diagram 8

The Policy of Lightly Making Sabaki

Problem 53 — Black to Play



Problem 53

It is obvious that the hanging connection of black "a" does not work out well.

Therefore, the three other ways of playing, black "A", "B" and "C" should be examined.

Here the policy of lightly making sabaki is best.

In so saying, readers with sharp intuition will perhaps realize what is the only move to be played next.