

David Kent has provided a thoughtful alternative way of taking this book. It deserves careful consideration. David sees the book as a zen koan. I think this is a fascinating idea.

William Cobb

I have just received *Zone Press Park* and so far have read the first 50 pages or so. I will definitely read the whole book, but it will be relatively slow going. I am a bit disappointed in the review on your web-store.

I understand where the review was coming from, but O Meien is not offering us a textbook of problems and answers. Rather he is trying to evoke/provoke an experience in the reader -- wisdom instead of knowledge. I think he should be listened to as one should "listen to" an enigmatic Zen Master. Learning Zen Buddhism is not academic memorizing of facts (or positions). It is rather a search to find the experience of realization. O Meien sounds like a Zen Master, as well as a Go Master.

If you have never experienced that kind of "teaching", this book will seem quite crazy... like a Zen koan... seemingly full of contradictions, or contradictory ways of seeing. Looking at the infinite, many different descriptions may be useful, and may seem inherently logical, but the only correct model of the infinite universe is the infinite universe itself. So a good teacher of Buddhism/meditation has to lead the student past all (some) of the limiting walls or simplistic models of the universe.

O Meien could give simple(?) stories or definitions, but they would all be limiting, encouraging a simplistic view of his infinity. He credits us with the possibility of more awareness. Truly a Zen book.

David Kent

## 1 What is a Zone?

Q At this point, we would like to hear about what a zone is.

A *Yakiniku* [Korean BBQ] on a skewer is good. I haven't eaten *yakiniku* for a while. You know, I can relax in this private room at the *yakiniju* restaurant and so I appreciate the sincerity of the editor.

Hey Rookie! The last time I let you order the same way and at the very end we requested stone roasted *yukke bibimbab* after which if I let someone else do the work I can eat a normal portion, so I'm going to let you do the cooking. Make sure that you don't burn the meat.

By the way, did you see Matsui's homerun yesterday? [Hideki Matsui, aka "Godzilla," of the New York Yankees baseball team.]

Q Sensei, don't you think that it's about time that we got down to work?

A On boy, when I see that happy look on your face I get weak in the knees.

Q If you suddenly get weak in the knees, it's going to be a problem for me.

A Trying to explain a zone just by itself is difficult.

A zone and a press are like the heads and tails of coins, the author of a book and a writer, you and I have a relationship that cannot be severed.

So when the editor-in-chief says that we should immediately take up the zone, now the press becomes lonely, lonely to the point of crying.

Q The editor-in-chief suggested that separating the two would make them more easily understood and he got the okay from Sensei.

Do you mean that you cannot just talk about a zone?

A It's unavoidable, so just this once, be patient with me in regards to the press.

As the word zone indicates, it's a sphere within the go board. I use the word zone with two meanings.

#1 In a favorable (unfavorable) fight, one proceeds with a judgment as to the extent of the zone.

#2 Due to the moves that are played, a sphere is influenced and that determines the moves that are played.

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If you ask why I have decided upon these two, it is because other than these two reasons, I can see no other relationship.

Q Wait a moment, please. I'm having a hard time writing this down.

A Please take your time making your notes. In any event, that's all for today. I really want to go and eat salted tonhue right away.

Q When you say that's all, do you mean we're finished already?

A Well, I said the only things that I wanted to say.

Asking about the things that you don't understand is your job.

Eating *yakiniku* is my job. Whether the *namul* has come first, beer is the *joseki*.

Q The editor-in-chief made me promise that absolutely no alcohol would be served. Here comes our oolong tea.

A At this point I don't know which one of us is the Sensei.

Q As a writer, I ask questions. Since you are the Sensei, I ask you to please answer.

First, the conclusion last time was that the zone press was infinite and a "rule of thumb" and "words."

And then, for zone. . . It is the "relationship of the position of stones between each other." This is good, right?

A There's no mistake about it.

Q Then, is a zone a "rule of thumb" or a "word" or both?

A Zone press is a single entity in one body and performs the roles that are assigned.

A zone is principally a matter of judgment about the surface of the board, an analysis that is called for and the press is based on that judgment so that the next move is selected on that basis.

Now, to answer your question, "zone" has the strong meaning of a "rule of thumb," while the press may be said to place more relative importance on "words."

## Area 5

### The Center Position and Overlap Points

#### 1 The Center Position

A This is a splendid *shabu-shabu* restaurant, isn't it? This one is very happy. Well, are we going to have today's special?

Q Don't be unreasonable.

S When we eat, please remember that we have a computer with us.

Q For today's theme, it's another strange phrase I've never heard of.

A Not keeping respect for the author in mind is a failure of yours as a writer.

Since a zone press has infinite objectives, the infinite ways of doing things can put one into a quandary. Today we will examine two of the most fundamental tricks of craftsmanship.

Q Those are the center position and overlap point, right?

A At the time when one thinks about a move for a zone press, these become the two axis points.

Q When you say two axis points, does one consider both simultaneously while playing?

A That is done in the majority of cases, but putting the focus on one or the other makes it easier to understand.

It's like with *shabu-shabu*. Should it be meat or vegetables? No, maybe *ponzu* citrus sauce or *gomadare* sesame seed sauce is the better way to put it. When one takes the meat out of the hopped, there are pieces of vegetables stuck to it, or when *gomadare* and *ponzu* sauces get mixed, the question is which is the basic ingredient, after all?

S My friend mixes the *gomadare* and *ponzu* sauces right from the start, so there are people who do that.

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A Let's leave that aside. Seeing a game in terms of a zone press, when making a move...

There are only two elements, "creating a zone" or "conducting a press"—

That will be made clear in a moment, but in "creating a zone" or "conducting a press," in counterpoint to each of the front sides, each also has a reverse side.

In short, "disruption in creating a zone" and "avoiding the conducting of a press."

During the course of the explanations up to now, for the sake of convenience, we have just taken up the phenomenon of the front side, but it goes without saying that the reverse side possesses the same relevance.

The way of thinking is the same, but the execution is the opposite.

In most cases, one or the other will play the principal role. Very often there is something of an intermingling of the two, but for the time being we'll disregard that.

Q The explanation has gotten quite complicated. Let me summarize it.

"Moves can be classified into two major divisions, those that place the importance on a zone and those that place the importance on a press." Is that right?

A It's been a while since you've done your job. Putting the matter this way makes it simple,...

a) in board positions where the importance is placed on a zone, it is the "center position" and

b) when the importance is placed on a press, it is the "overlap point."

This is the fundamental way of thinking.

So, let's first go ahead and talk about the "center position."

To create a zone on the right, Black plays 1 ("A" is also good) in **Diagram 1** and this is the center position.

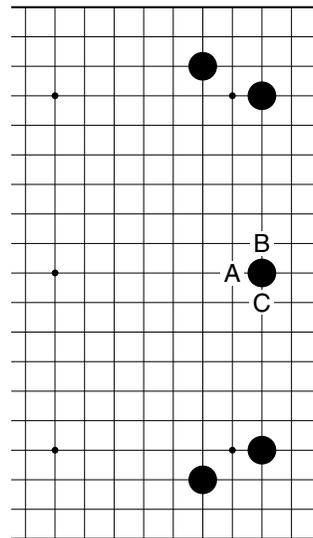


Diagram 1

Q Anyone would know that.

A I always say this, but why one plays this way is the question.

While black 1 is not played at “B” or “C” can be immediately answered by unexpectedly few players.

S When speaking of the exact center, it somehow gives one a good feeling, doesn't it?

A I guess. That's one way of putting it, I suppose. A zone is...

—A sphere that is affected by the influence of moves

...and if that is the case, by occupying the exact center of it, when countering the opponent's next moves, the opposite side can be preserved.

The “center position” of a zone can be occupied by a move to preserve what will be what one has already determined to be the biggest zone, and that is why the move is made.

If White invades with 2 in **Diagram 2**, Black jumps into the center with 3 and 5, which preserves the right side as the biggest zone.

If black 1 is shifted from the exact center as in **Diagram 3**, the opponent will enter the widest side and to that extent the zone becomes small.

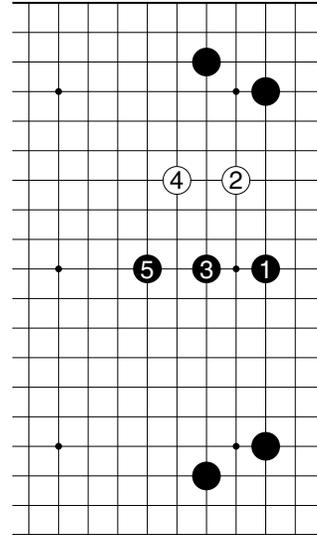


Diagram 2

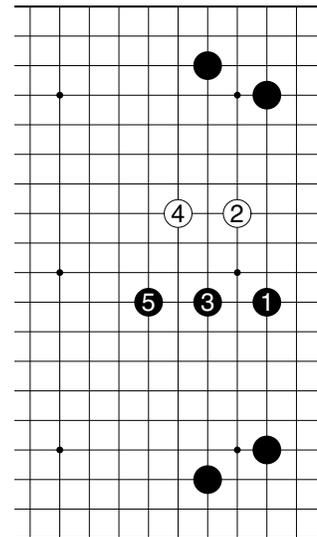


Diagram 3