

THE PLAYERS: AKABOSHI INTETSU

Intetsu was the star pupil of Inoue Genan Inseki. He was born in 1810, in Kikuchi District in what is now Kumamoto Prefecture. His child name was Sentaro but in 1821 he went to Edo to enrol at the Inoue school, and was given the amusingly appropriate name Insei (amusing only to us: the characters differ from those for “trainee professional”). He earned the name Intetsu, one dear to the Inoue family through its associations with Hattori Intetsu then Genan himself, when he became 3-dan at age 18 (here and below, by the Oriental count).

Intetsu seems to have been a rather earnest young man. There is a story about him in *Zain Danso* when he played Ito Matsujiro on four stones. Ito, later Ito Showa, has a rather benign, avuncular image through his position as Shusaku's mentor and steward of the Honinbo family. However, various stories suggest he was a crusty, maybe even boorish, person. In this game, Ito stood up at one point to go to the toilet. As he did the hem of his kimono was about to sweep across the board. The young Akaboshi, who probably should have had his head down in a bow, alertly leapt across to guide the kimono away from the board.

The incident actually impressed Ito, who later mentioned it to Genan, and said, "A snake may be an inch long but has it in mind to swallow a man. In this boy's art there is such a lively spirit. Later generations will truly fear him. Yet he is genial and well behaved. He is indeed remarkable. You must teach him well."

Intetsu belonged to the generation that succeeded the Tenpo Four, which included Ito Showa—he was nine years younger than him. Within that generation he was considered the one likely to reach Meijin by the shortest path. He embodied the expectations not just of Genan himself, but of the whole Inoue school. Nevertheless, a more realistic appraisal is that he was a great talent rather than a genius. It seems he was aware of this himself, and to compensate for reaching 3-dan at the relatively—compared with the likes of Ogawa Doteki—late age of 18 in 1827, he threw himself into study to the extent that he reached 7-dan by the age of 25 in 1834. That astounding achievement almost certainly also took a fatal toll on his health.

We don't know what it was, but he discovered something between the ages of 24 and 25 which led to a marked improvement and maturity. At age 25 he was therefore regarded effectively as Genan's heir. In that year, 1834, he played Honinbo Jowa twice on Black. In both cases the games were left unfinished when he had an unassailable lead (these games are in the Go-GoD database). Sekiyama Sendayu commented, “Although he is 7-dan, he

is already close to 8-dan and is a rare jewel of the Inoue school.” It should also be noted that Intetsu was ahead of Genan in a series of games at Black handicap, though just before the Matsudaira event, Intetsu resigned against Genan in a game at the mansion of Toda Unemenosho, sometime Jisha Bugyo (Commissioner for Shrines and Temples and so responsible for the Godokoro). There is speculation that this loss was deliberate, though quite to what end it is hard to see. Perhaps the conspiracy theorists also believe Intetsu was Elvis.

Intetsu then became wrapped up in Genan's intrigues to dethrone Jowa as Meijin Godokoro, and was obliged to play Jowa in the Matsudaira Go Tournament. Genan's thinking was that if a Meijin lost in a public game to a mere 7-dan, he would have to resign. Instead Jowa found a series of brilliant moves and beat Intetsu. The intense effort did for Intetsu and he vomited blood shortly after the game. He succumbed fatally a couple of months later, on the 29th of the eighth month in 1835, to (presumably) tuberculosis. He was still only 25.

Yet in that short life he managed to publish two books. One was *Shudan 50 Zu* (50 Diagrams of Hand Talk [=go]), a collection of practical tesuji problems, virtually all of which are “there is a move inside” type. We might better call these encroachment problems. The task of the attacker is to encroach on an existing territory. This is an unusual genre and the book's examples are sometimes quite staggering. It was published in 1835.

The other was *Kifu Genran*, “Glimpses of the Mysterious in Go Diagrams”. This was first issued in 1833 (Tenpo 4) but an edition of the same name was issued in 1846 though this time incorporating *Shudan 50 Zu*. The original *Genran* contains twelve tsumego, five ladder problems, and two large-scale puzzles. It appeared in a single volume of just fourteen pages. The consolidated version of course has sixty-nine positions.

One of the large-scale problems was a reworking of a problem by Honinbo Dosaku. Intetsu knew of this because it was in the still secret *Igo Hatsuyoron* compiled by the Meijin Inoue Inseki and jealously guarded by the Inoue family. Dosaku's version was called “Fragrant bait dangled before the fish”. The point of it is that Black ends up capturing seventy-two stones, yet all his stones die. It is shown below (it also appears in Hayashi Genbi's *Gokyo Shumyo* incidentally).

THE “THREE BRILLIANCIES” GAME

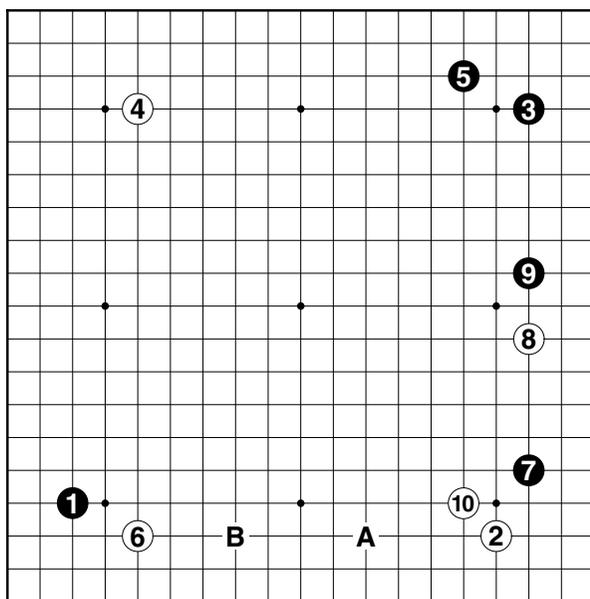
White: Honinbo Jowa, 9-dan, Black: Akaboshi Intetsu, 7-dan

Handicap: -B-

1835-08-13, 15, 18 and 21 (Tenpo 6 VII 19, 21, 24 and 27)

Played at the Edo mansion of Lord Matsudaira of Suo. The first adjournment was after 59 moves, the second after 99 moves and the third after 172 moves.

This is a game famous not just because of its historical significance but in its own right. It has many of what the Japanese call *tedokoro* 手所—fights where there are many plausible moves and accurate reading is essential, and also further branching points that require deep study. It is, in sum, a very difficult game. I shall therefore be giving considerable detail.



1 - 10

The takamoku at (4) was a very popular way for White to try to take the game to Black in no-komi days.

The three-space low pincer, which appears twice in this game ((8) and (11)), was also very popular (though it's perhaps even more popular nowadays, which may surprise you).

(9), on the third line, was certainly in the classical mould, but was actually something of a departure from the more usual choices of A and B.

Surprising as it may seem, the alternative of ① in Diagram 1 for ⑩ was effectively not known then. It had occurred in a little known game in Nagoya in 1826 (little known despite ending a quadruple ko!) but otherwise it post-dated this game by a few years, after which it became common, of course. Although Black has the often exercised option of ignoring White (as in the game), he can also continue with something like this diagram, seeking an early fight.

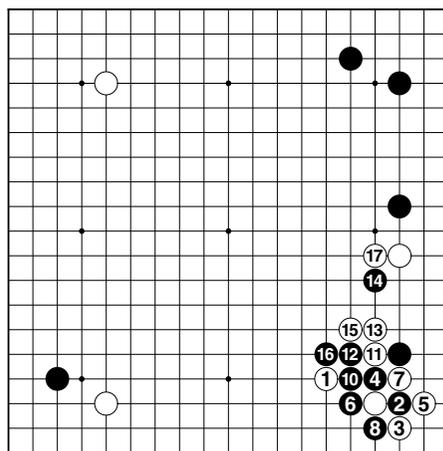
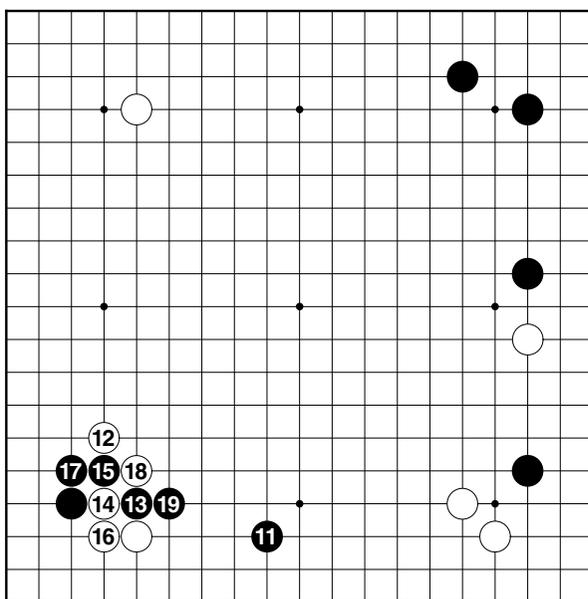


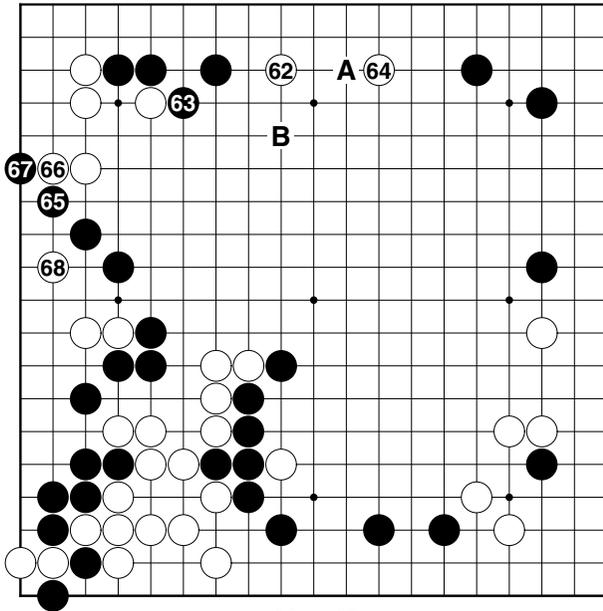
Diagram 1 (⑨ at ②)



11 - 19

With ⑪ we are, strangely enough, already on new ground, even though the position appears to have many of the hallmarks of a classical game.

⑫, the so-called taisha (big diagonal) response to the pincer, was then still relatively new, dating from the end of the 18th century, but popular, being much researched. Since Black almost never wimped out by playing a move on the left side (for example, at ⑮ or ⑰), Jowa would be reasonably certain that Intetsu would answer at ⑬ and start one of the many long lines this joseki is famous for. Both players would also be aware of the strong possibility that their opponent might also have a new move prepared. In



62 – 68

⊙62 and ⊙64 are not terribly significant in themselves, but they do signify that the game has already become close, although Black still leads. ⊙63 also shows a slight sign of dispiritedness. Knowing he is going to play at ⊙63 anyway, he ought to have created momentum for it by pinching at A first, forcing White B. This would be natural for a modern player. If not dispirited, Intetsu perhaps simply overrated his own position, but if so he is relying too much on solid plays. It's rather like in chess where a good way to lose is to play for a draw.

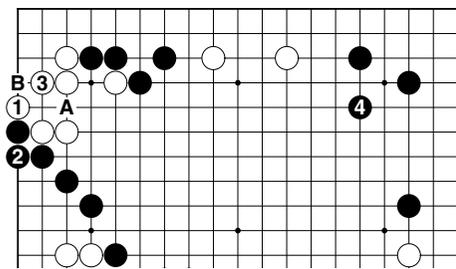


Diagram 27

⊙65 and ⊙67, which some regard as downright bad because of ⊙68, are intended to eliminate in sente the aji of the two stones in the centre left, as in Diagram 27 (⊙3 can be at A). Black can then take the big point at ⊙4, which would make the game difficult for White. The reason Black assumed his ploy was sente was that if White omits ⊙1 in

the diagram, Black B leaves the White corner group floating.

Jowa, however, balked at this submission and came up with his first brilliancy: ⊙68. Actually, not everyone believes it is necessarily a brilliant move. It was Shuho who first stuck a “!!” label on the move—“a move that will resound through the ages”—because it adds various kinds of aji to existing aji and gets sente. In fact, he also thought it was the decisive move of the

game. Obviously anything might be better than Diagram 27, but, leaving aside the tactics, conceptually it is still an astonishing idea—at least to us. Creating taste (*aji*) by adding salt and *then* adding monosodium glutamate (which is the famous condiment *Aji no Moto* in Japan) perhaps raises eyebrows less over there.

Recall that the first day’s play ended at 59. We are not many moves on yet. We are still well within the limits of what Jowa might have looked at on the following “rest” day, especially if we accept the old dictum that “Jowa could see 150 moves ahead.” Readers of a squeamish disposition should skip to the next paragraph now, but according to the *Zain Danso*, Jowa retreated to his room alone and sat before a go board, endlessly trying out variations. A member of the family would occasionally bring in a bowl of rice gruel and set it down beside him, but he exchanged nary a word. He remained absorbed in the game well into the night. However, at long last he rose with a shout: “Good!” Since Jowa had a loud voice, the rest of the family were alarmed and came rushing to see what had happened. What greeted them was a foul stench and the sight of Jowa’s garments below the waist soaking wet.

The *Zain Danso* was largely based on testimony of players based in the Kansai area, which of course meant people loyal to Genan and his pupils (but was compiled soon enough after for some to have actual memories of the time). It will therefore be of no surprise that Intetsu meanwhile was poetically portrayed as, “Sitting by a solitary candle, unaware of the passage of the night. He sat at a go board, as if floating on a skiff down an inky river, unconscious of the waning moon.”

If Black tries at once to exploit White’s neglect of the corner and then thinks he can cruise, he will receive a nasty shock—Diagram 28. Apart from White living, Black has to worry about the cut at A (or at least accept that its presence means White does not have to worry too much about being thin in the upper left). In other words, he would have to use 3 somewhere on the left, and so would end in *gote* instead of the expected *sente*. There is also the possibility that White might omit 2 and live at once on the left, reasoning that the corner group could find a way to escape to the centre.

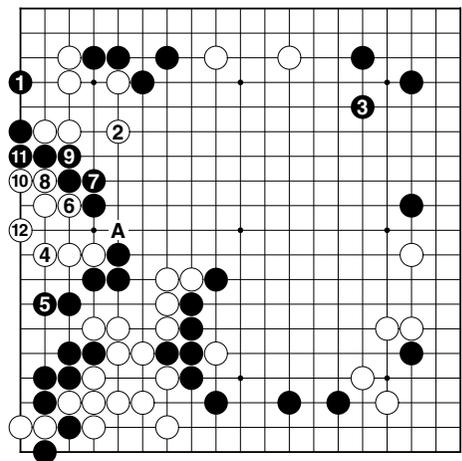


Diagram 28

The so-called lottery referred to is that the Nihon Ki-in tried to give all players a share of glory by choosing which games were passed to newspapers. But the newspapers wanted the plums. Although five players had been prepared to stand out as the juiciest plums, there was actually much more to this than money. Face was a factor.

The Nihon Ki-in had come about through Okura's help and great efforts, yet shortly after it had been created, relations between Okura and some senior players, or between some players and Honinbo Shusai, and between Okura and Shusai, had not been all that good.

Okura was the scion of a zaibatsu family and a businessman. Yet he had been educated in Cambridge and was a very cultured man. He took a deep interest in the arts and received tuition in writing Chinese poems and calligraphy. He also had a notion that go players needed to be educated and made sure the young players were.



The bust of Baron Okura Kishi-chiro that has pride of place in the Nihon Ki-in vestibule

This included Segoe, Kosugi Tei, and Iwamoto being summoned to his mansion in Kojimachi for lectures on Chinese poetry, though the young players were more interested in the Chinese meal afterwards—Okura had brought over a personal chef from China. He also took these young players on a trip with him and his son to Kyushu in 1925. One of Okura's companies made cars and so the trip involved touring the island by car. To make sure they didn't shirk their lessons, the Chinese poetry teacher was brought along too.

There was an element of hoping to improve the standard of go through education in Okura's paternalistic actions, but the main impetus apparently was the long term goal of boosting go by promoting the social status of go players. The senior players, however, didn't see it quite that way. They were basically jealous. We can infer that Okura may have actually had harsh words at the merger conference for the senior players and they had started simmering even then. Takabe was one of the senior players, but he didn't just simmer—he exploited the situation.

Immediately after the process of setting up the Nihon Ki-in was put on a

firm footing and photos of the merger conference had been taken, Takabe got Okura's approval to set off for Korea and Manchuria to promote go. Earlier, after the death of Honinbo Shuei, when the succession quarrel between Tamura and Karigane arose, he had allied himself with the Tamura faction and succeeded in making him the 21st Honinbo, Shusai. However, immediately after that he crossed over to the Continent. To a great degree the ambience on the Continent suited him—perhaps because he was a big fish in a small pond there, but as a schemer himself he obviously felt at home in the salons of the warlords.

When Takabe spoke to Okura about his new Manchuria trip, Okura was probably anxious about the embryo that was to become the Nihon Ki-in and he knew how much of a nuisance the scheming Takabe could be in Japan. He was therefore relieved to say yes. In fact, according to Yasunaga Hajime, later chief editor at the Nihon Ki-in, Okura even made sure Takabe went by giving him generous travel expenses. No fool, Takabe probably saw through this, and casually asked whether he could also pick up expenses—"some petty cash" from the Dalian branch of the Okura Group for promoting go.

Okura, in turn probably realising he'd been outfoxed, thought for a long while before giving up on a way out, and said, "All right". A few days later he got a phone call from the Dalian office which made it sound as if Takabe had turned up with a wheelbarrow to collect the "petty cash".

Okura was furious and made it plain to his Dalian underling that petty meant very petty. He declared Takabe completely untrustworthy. In Takabe's world, however, Okura probably became the villain and the subsequent *Hochi Shinbun* business was very possibly a way of getting back at him after his brief trip to China.

Karigane, Suzuki, Takabe, Kato, and Onoda adopted the name Kiseisha for their little band of entertainers. It was provocative. In fact the name came from Ota Masataka, vice-president of the *Hochi Shinbun* (and Rotary Club member—it would have been nice to be a fly on the wall at the monthly Rotary meetings with Nihon Ki-in board member and Rotarian founder Yoneyama Umekichi). The new grouping was an association (*sha*) calling for the rectification of go (*kisei*). On 25 October, the *Hochi Shinbun* cranked up the propagandist machine by announcing that it would start a win-and-continue tournament for the Kiseisha, which held its opening ceremony on 16 November 1924.

This state of affairs continued for about two years until 1926, but the In-

Diagram 5 shows why ㉔ is necessary. This tactic doesn't work if △ is at A in the diagram.

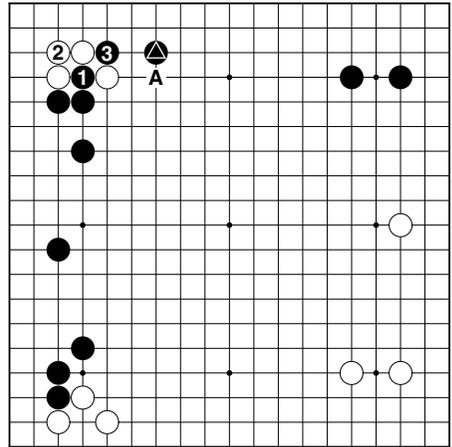


Diagram 5

Nevertheless, even Karigane himself later decided that a better move for 15 was 1 in Diagram 6.

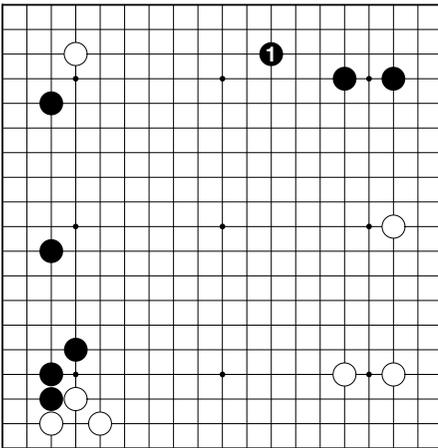
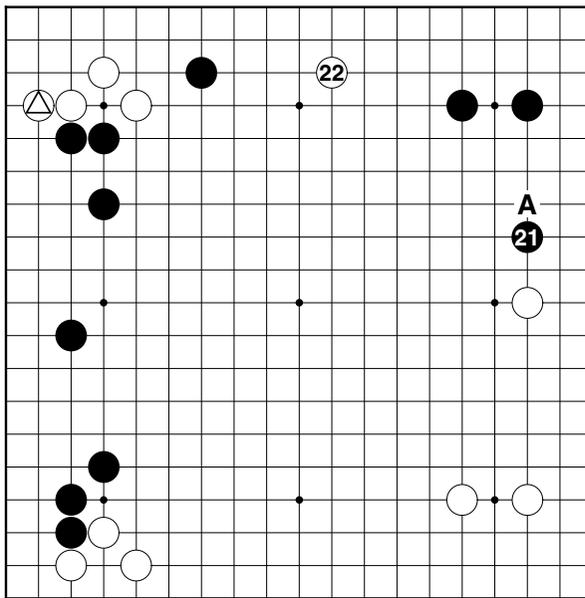


Diagram 6



21 - 22

The thinking behind ㉔ (△) was to make miai alternatives of ㉔ and A.

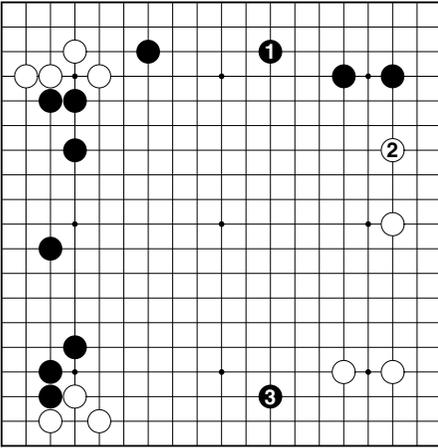


Diagram 7

① in Diagram 6 is such a good point that it can also be considered for ②¹ with the continuation in Diagram 7 being one scenario.

As ① of Diagram 7 is much tighter vis à vis the corner, White will possibly try to overconcentrate Black, as in Diagram 8.

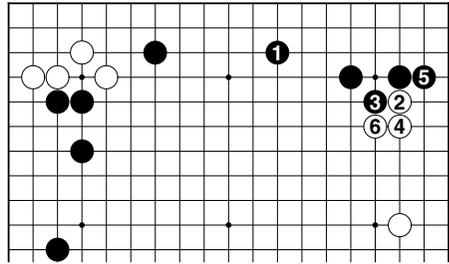


Diagram 8

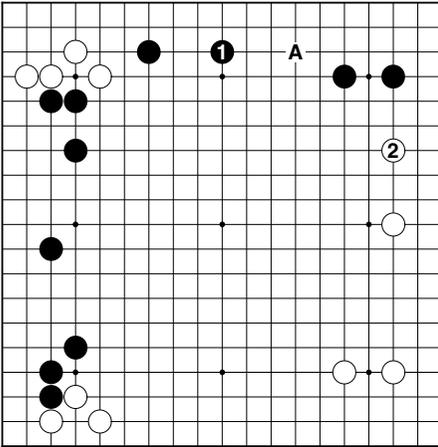


Diagram 9

②¹ at ① in Diagram 9 is another possibility considered at the time, but ② was deemed too good for White because it has a good follow-up in the invasion at A.

Shusai was a little in two minds about ②² (at A in Diagram 10) although others saw it as inevitable, since otherwise Black would play around there—for example, if White jumps to ① in Diagram 10. In this case Black's game becomes very easy with no komi. However, this was a judgement of players of that era. For a more modern view of a Black response to this ①, see Diagram 18 on page 68.

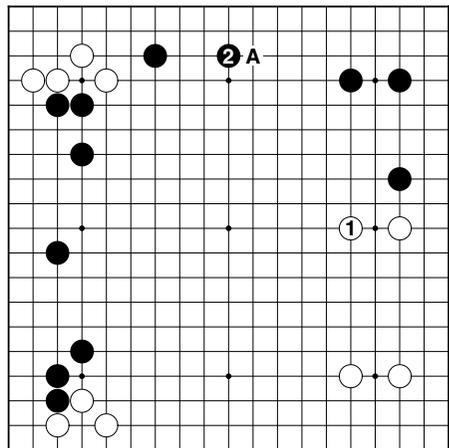


Diagram 10

Shusai chose ②② (at A in Diagram 11) in the end because it leaves Black an unsatisfactorily narrow checking move (*tsume*) at ③, and also because it is the most flexible move for White, although ① in Diagram 11 has to be considered, too.

Still, it is probably expecting too much to assume Black will jump to ② and allow White to make a comfortable sofa on the upper side. More likely Black will check as in Diagram 12. Even though this puts his lone stone on the left in some jeopardy, he can extricate it easily enough as shown. Note that ⑥ is important.

Diagram 12

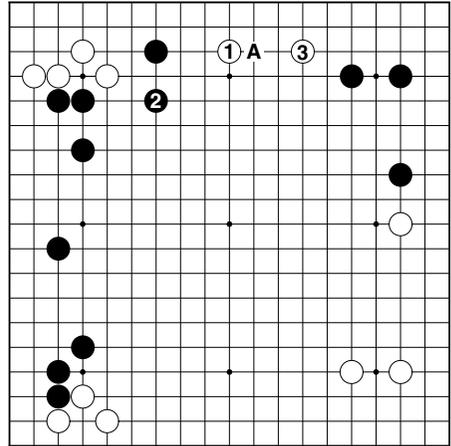


Diagram 11

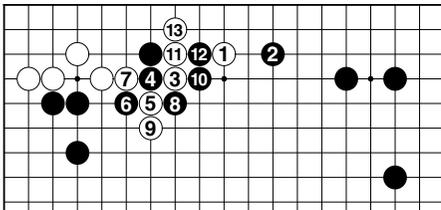
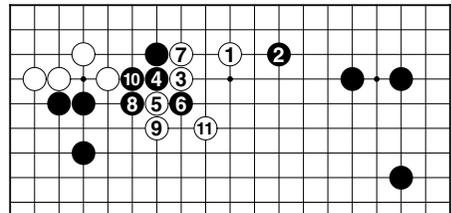


Diagram 13

If ⑥ of Diagram 12 is at ⑥ in Diagram 13, White can indeed cut at ⑦ and take a huge corner.

Black has other approaches, of course. ⑥ in Diagram 14 is not bad for him.

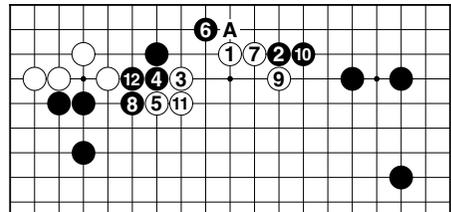


Diagram 14

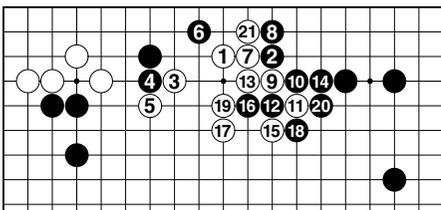


Diagram 15

⑦ in Diagram 14 is better than A, but it does leave Black the option of trying ⑧ in Diagram 15. However, since this leaves Black subject to a squeeze and with a conundrum about how to use his stones on the upper left as *aji*, he would surely take a more prudent course.

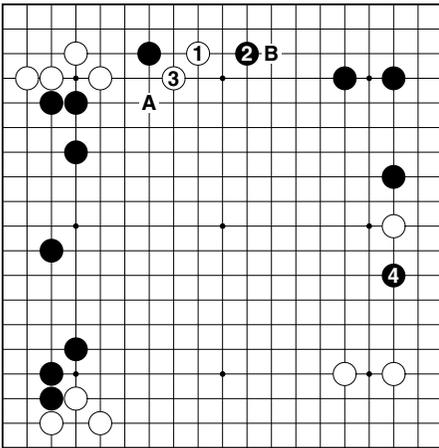


Diagram 16

A further move to look at for ② is to edge one step yet further with ① in Diagram 16. Black will still check, at ② (Black is even less likely to do him the favour of jumping to A here—White would then play B), and White will block at ③. This may leave White feeling more in his comfort zone, but it is an undeniably narrow way of playing that would seem to take no account of the lack of komi. Black would both take the initiative on the right with ④ and create an expansive looking position.

It is unlikely that the move ever occurred to Shusai, but a modern player would certainly entertain, and might prefer, a higher move for ②, such as ① in Diagram 17.

In this scenario White spoils the upper side somewhat for Black and takes the initiative on the right, knowing that if Black padlocks the upper right somehow, he can turn to A.

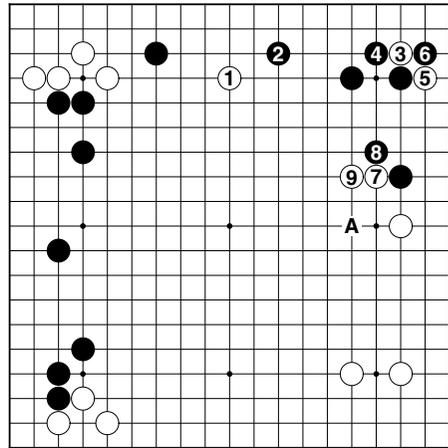


Diagram 17

For yet another type of modern player, the territorial one, ① in Diagram 18 is a possibility. This will probably mean switching the focus then entirely to the lower side, for example as shown.

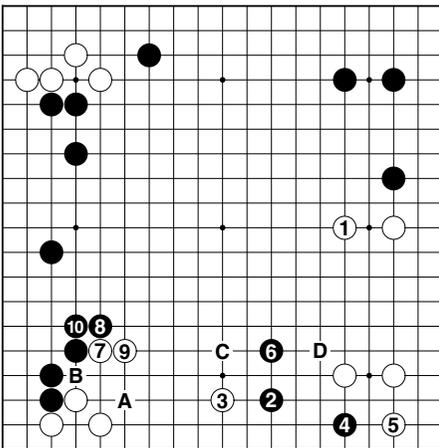


Diagram 18

There are a couple of points of advanced technique in Diagram 18. One is that, in this case, the fairly standard trick of creating *choshi* or momentum with Black interposing Black A-White B before ⑩—

