



Intermediate Riichi Strategies

By Feng



About the Slides & Content

These slides were done for a 2-hour workshop on Riichi Mahjong Strategies and then altered to increase readability in the absence of a presenter.

The content covered targets at skill level from 1dan to 6dan and assumes that readers **have already read Daina Chiba's Riichi Book 1** and is rather familiar with block method.

The content taught are put together from various books mainly written by Hirasawa Genki, knowledge that I've acquired directly from Tsuchida Kousho and his youtube videos, as well as from my own experience.

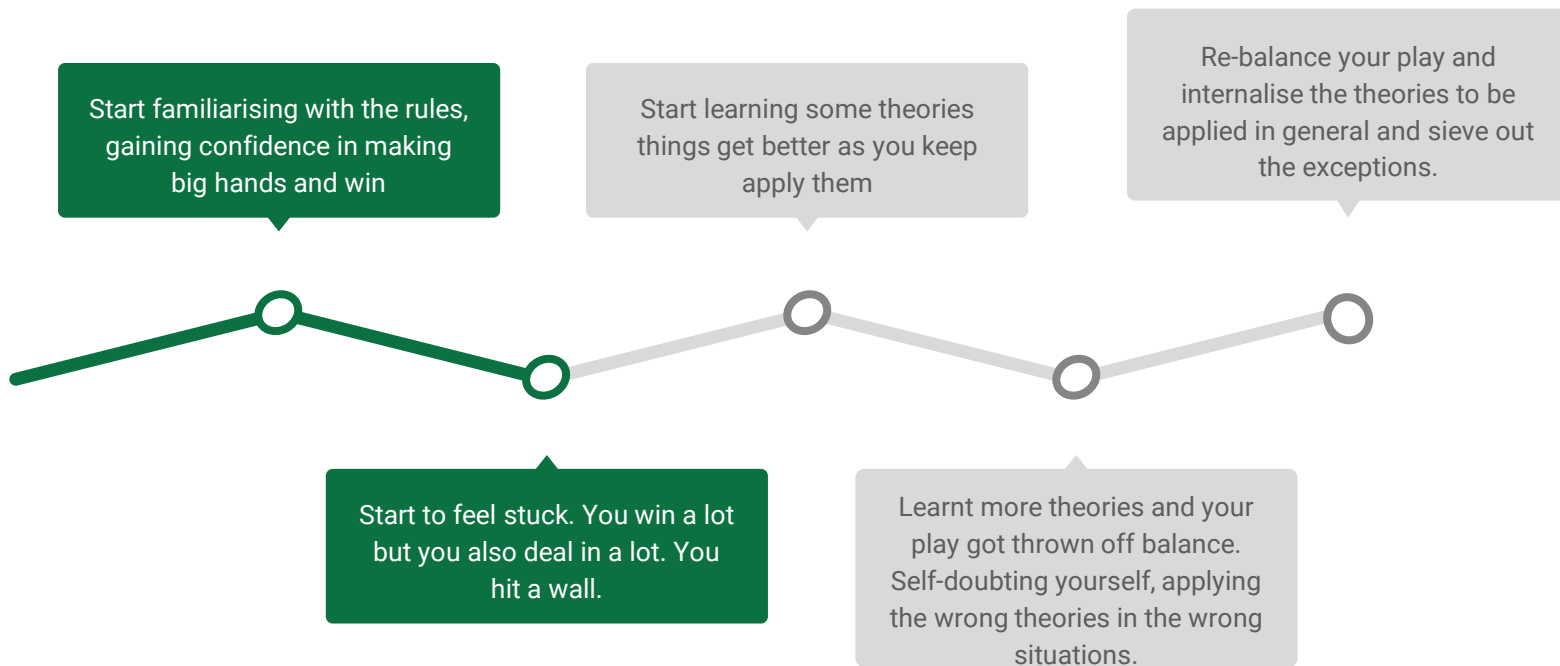
Author's Message

These slides were done on Dec 2018 but never shared with the rest of the world because I am not confident enough to share these content as a guide. Some of them may be controversial or disagreed by other experienced players. I decided to publish this mainly because of fellow players in Osamuko Facebook Group has convinced me to let the community decide what's good and what's bad.

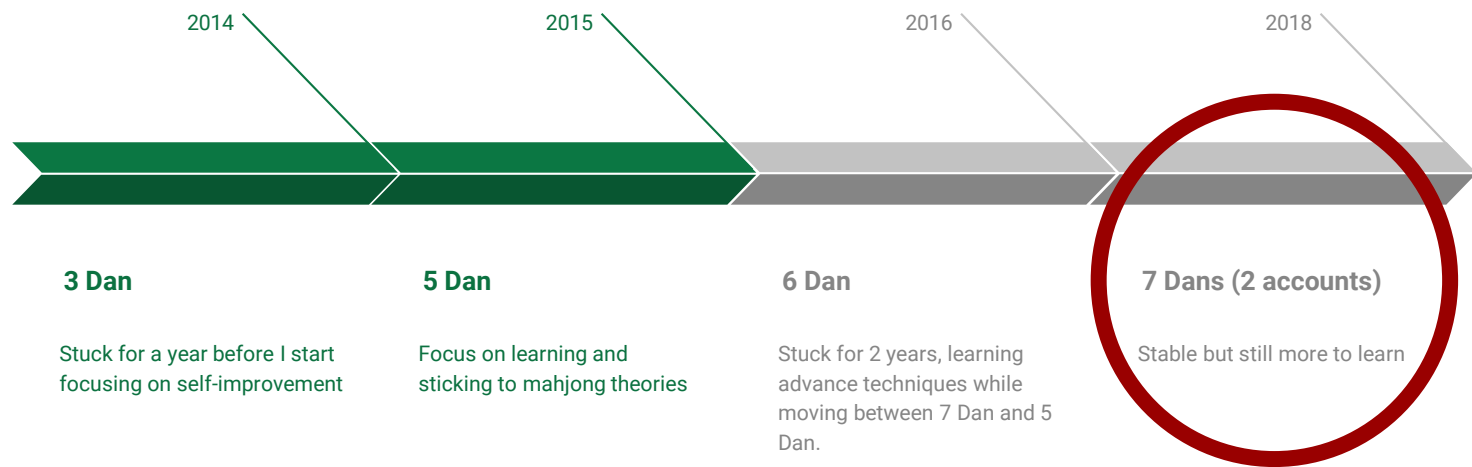
I hope with this, we all make better progress in our games. It is not easy to balance everything that are taught here, especially when analogue plays are introduced but do always prioritise digital reasoning whenever in doubt.

If you're here, you have started your Riichi journey....

Ups & Downs Journey of a Riichi player

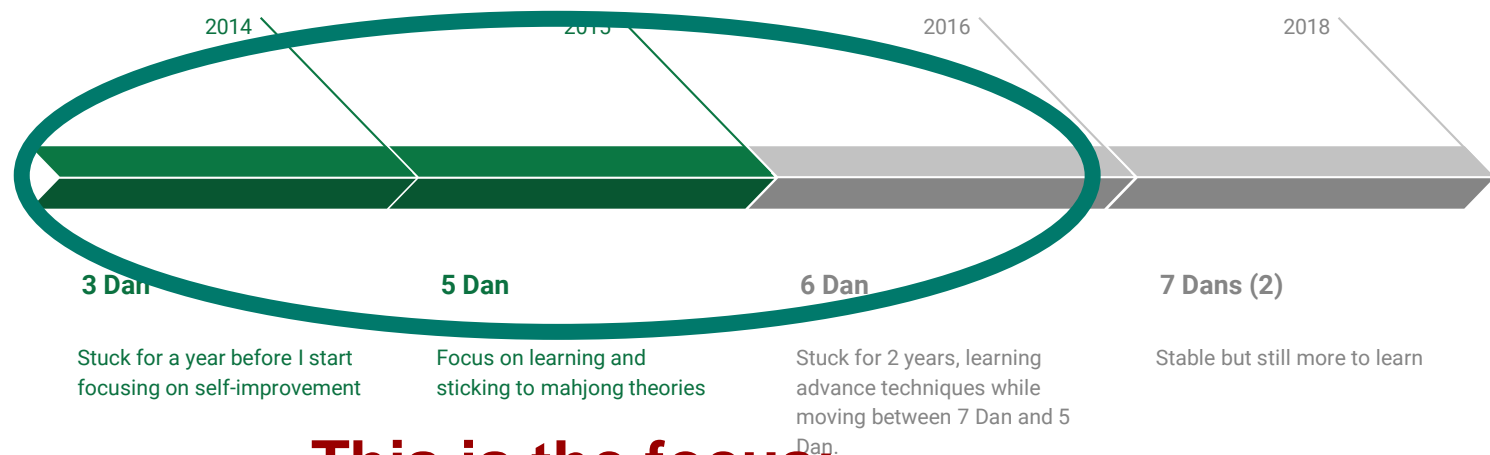


Feng's Journey



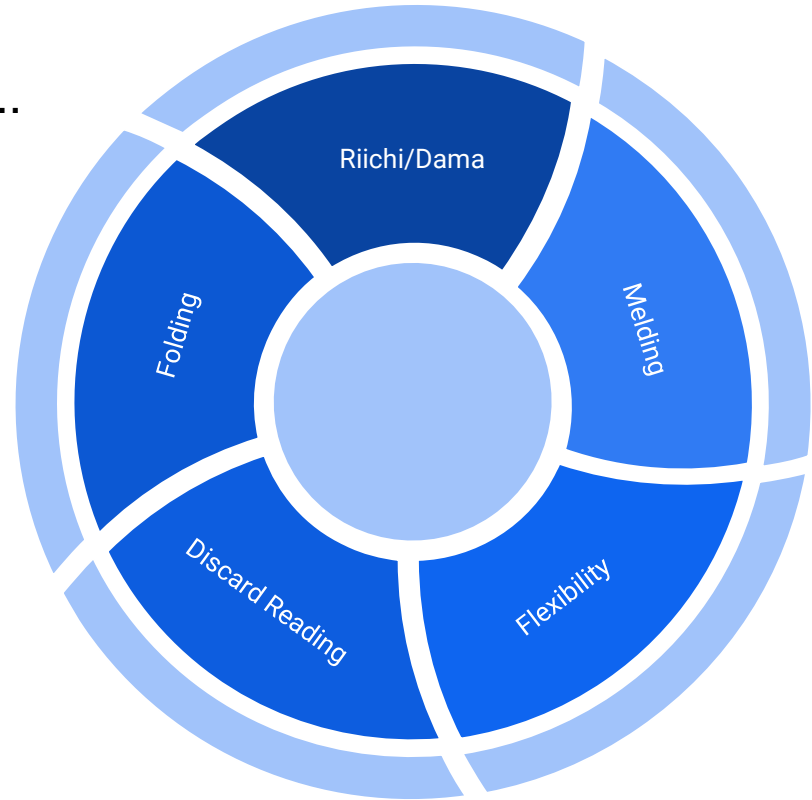
**Being a 7 Dan is
NOTHING. This is
NOT the focus.**

Feng's Journey



**This is the focus:
PROGRESSION & IMPROVEMENT**

To be a good player, you will need....



These will all be slightly covered



Cognitive Biases

4 Common Cognitive Bias to avoid

1. Optimism/Pessimism Bias - Focus only the benefits but ignore the risks, vice-versa
2. Confirmation/Choice Supportive Bias - Selectively pick reasons that is justifiable for the decision made

4 Common Cognitive Bias to avoid

3. Hindsight/Outcome bias - Justifying your decision based on results that happen to support your decision even though there was no way to know the results when you are making your decision.

4. Self-Serving Bias - Refuse to admit your own shortcoming and blame it on other things to justify your decision made

Examples

Optimism Bias: *“This tile is dangerous, but I think it can pass.”, “If I Riichi and tsumo and hit ura-dora, I can get Baiman!”*

Pessimism Bias: *“I’m scared to riichi only to be chased by others which then I would draw dora and deal in.”*

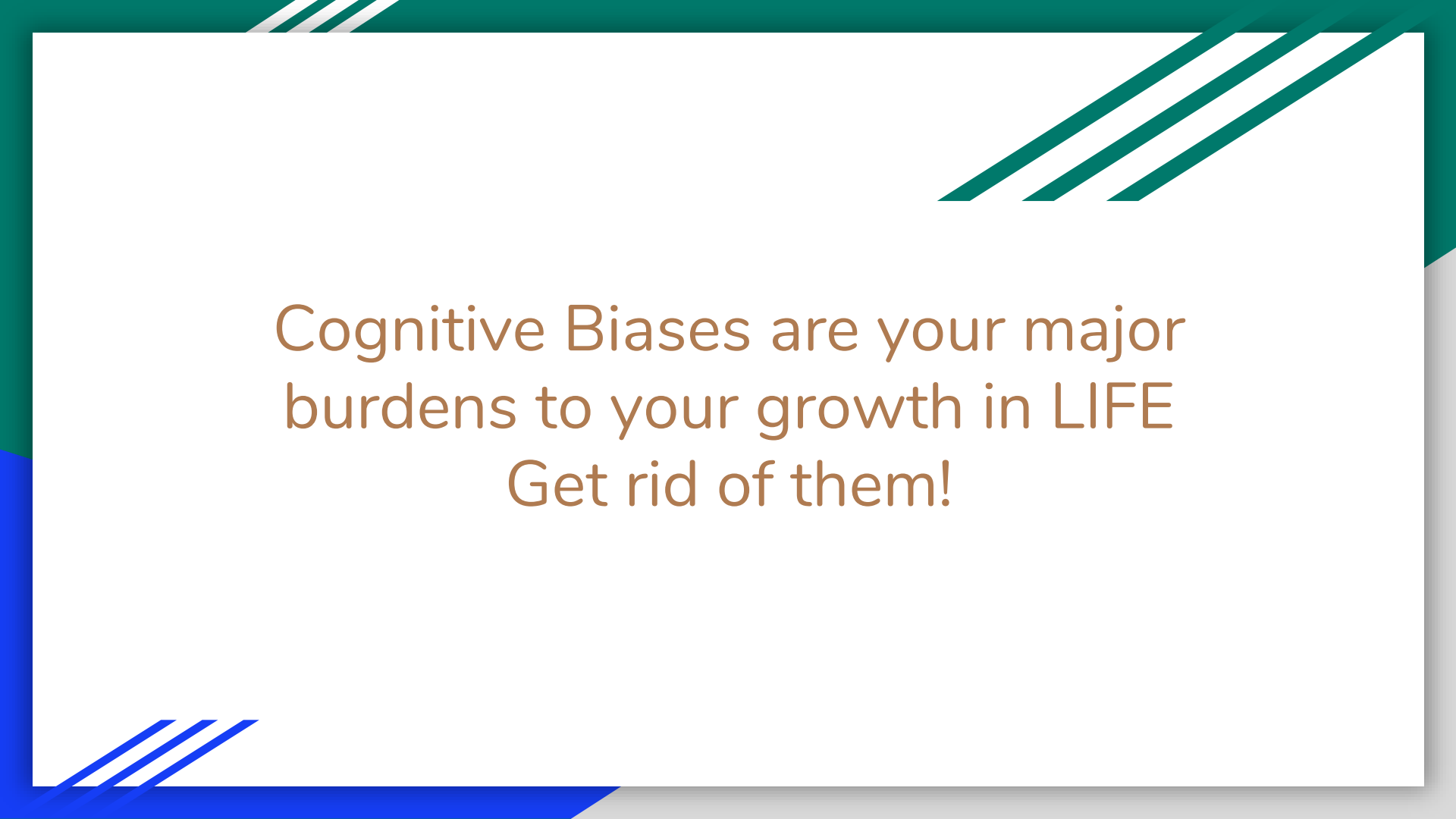
Choice Supportive Bias: *“I chose to Riichi because I want to pressurise other players to fold.” or “I oikake riichi on hell wait jhai because if anybody draws it, they will definitely throw it.”*

Hindsight/Outcome Bias: *“I knew you were waiting on this tile, so I didn’t discard.”*

Self-Serving Bias: *“I Riichi-ed first, but I dealt into a chinitzu after that. I’m so unlucky.”, “Riichi, Ippatsu, Tsumo, pinfu, tanyao, dora x2!. I’m so unlucky when I couldn’t win a single hand.”*

Disclaimer

The quotes can be arguably true when taken out of context but they are also quotes that tend to have biases. Not saying that all people who say such things exhibit biasness



Cognitive Biases are your major
burdens to your growth in LIFE
Get rid of them!



3 Fundamentals of a Win



1. Getting good hand shapes with eventual tenpai that can wait for as many tiles as possible.
2. Able to be flexible in opening or riichi the hand
3. Not dealing in



Understanding what are
good hand shapes (Point 1)



Ryanmen Ranking – Not all 2-sided waits are the same



A - Class
69.46%
Win rate



B - Class



C - Class
60.85%
Win rate

Penchan/Kanchan Ranking for Tenpai

Best



Waiting on 2/8 which is more difficult for players to use. Even with suji trap, players will think its cheaper to get away with it.



Require 1 Suji-trap to make it work. 3/7 are easily utilised by players. Players who are pushing might still discard it from 3456 or 4567 shape.



Require Naka Suji-trap to make it work. Players won't discard 4/6 from 4567 or 3456 shape.



Naka Suji-trap of 2/8 being discarded is even more difficult than 1/7 or 6/9. Players won't discard 5 from 2345 or 5678 shape. In Aka-ari, aka 5 will not be discarded.

Worst

Kanchan Ranking for building hands



OR



This kan-chan is best because it will always give you a B-class ryanmen upon improvement and has the flexibility for your hand to easily move towards tanyao whenever needed. It also incorporate red 5 doras easily.



OR



This kan-chan is best mainly for menzen hands and able to give A-class or C class ryanmen.



OR



Weakest kan-chan for menzen hand-building as there's only 1 kind of tile to improve the shape

Penchan/Kanchan for Building Hands



Penchan is so bad, its worth is sometimes, as much as a lone middle tile...
But which is better? Lone middle tile or Penchan?

Penchan/Kanchan for Building Hands



Penchan is so bad, it worth as much as a lone middle tile...
But which is better? Lone middle tile or Penchan?



標準形(七対国士を含む)の計算結果 / 一般形

打 [五] 摸 [七 [五] [七] [七] 13枚]

打 [七] 摸 [五 [五] [七] [七] 13枚]

Penchan/Kanchan for Building Hands

Penchan is so bad, it worth as much as a lone middle tile...

But which is better? Lone middle tile or Penchan?



標準形(七対国士を含む)の計算結果 / 一般形

打 [五萬] 摸 [七萬 四萬 八萬] 13枚]

打 [八萬] 摸 [五萬 七萬 四萬] 13枚]

Answer: Depends on value. If this hand has 2 dora, then a penchan riichi is still worth it despite lousy wait, hence discard 5m. If this hand has no dora, having good shape upon riichi is prioritised, hence discard 89m.

Middle Lone tiles Comparison



Best for 1-shanten menzen hand. Gives A & B class Ryanmen.



Best for Tanyao. Secure Tanyao set and gives B & C class Ryanmen.



Best for any Menzen hand. More tiles to utilise to create Ryanmen.

Pairs

Best

Decent for menzen
pinfu, good for tanyao
and toitoi. Most
flexible.



Best to have when
doing pinfu. Good
Riichi shanpon wait.
Good to pon for
toitoi/chanta



Good for Tanyao and
with good ryanmens
but difficult to pon.



Good for Menzen and
with good ryanmens
but difficult to pon.

Worst

Ryankan



NEVER Discard these shapes unless you have a new ryanmen to replace them.
Discarding any 1 of them risk Furiten.



If you're forced to choose...fix best kanchan (13/79) for tenpai and set up the early suji-trap. Hence, discard 5p here.

If the 3 9m is 8m instead, discard 9p to move towards tanyao.

Ryankan (Tenpai) – Which wait to take?



Discard 5p and Riichi



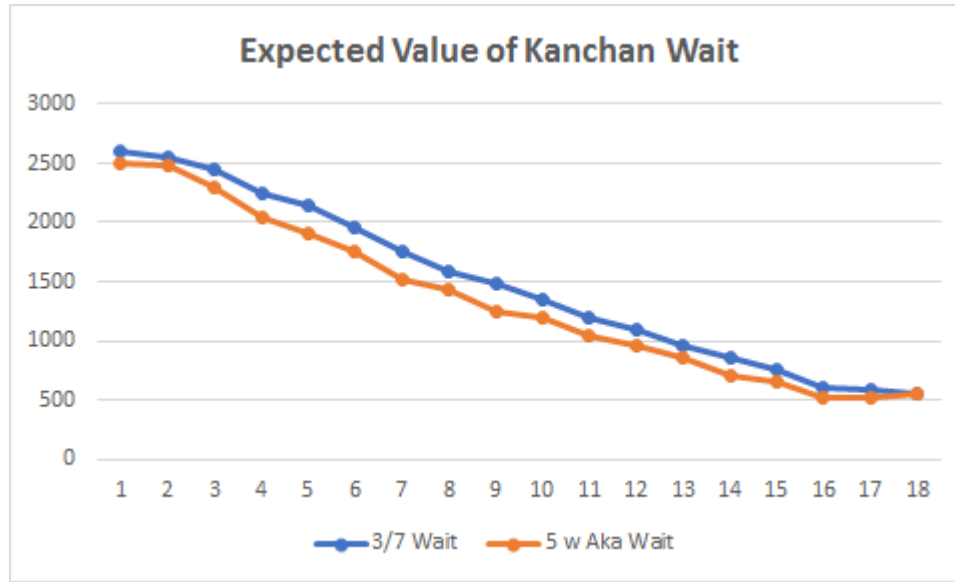
Discard 6m and Riichi. If is 468m, discard 4m and Riichi



If 1s was discarded before, discard 7s and riichi. If 9s was discarded before, discard 3s and riichi.

If your hand need value, discard 5s. Draw 124689s, Furiten/Suji-trap Riichi.

Ryankan (Tenpai)



Even if everyone know
this is textbook answer,
the expected value is
still higher!

Do not deviate from this

Ryankan VS other kind of shapes



- Usually in most cases, discard 9p and move towards tanyao.
- **Exception:** 1shanten for pinfu, take ryankan

FAQ: But Ryankan has 8 tiles of efficiency. Discarding 9p leads to 6 tiles of efficiency, so why is discarding 9p better? Is it just because of Tanyao?

Answer: Every hand requires a pair to win, by taking shapes like 557, the tile efficiency also includes the other pair you have. This makes the actual tile efficiency to be 8, not 6! Not only that, depending on this other pair you have, there are more tiles available to form Ryanmen! Let's take a look at what you should do depending on your other pair.

Ryankan VS other kind of shapes



6m in both cases. 2m and 8p are good wait and pon material. Having 2m pair helps 3s to form Ryanmen.



2m in both cases. 2m and 8p are good wait and pon material. Having 2m pair helps 3s to form Ryanmen.

Ryankan VS other kind of shapes



2m, try to form ryanmen around 3s.



If aiming for menzen: 6m. This is to possibly get pinfu and/or winning on suji trap.

If aiming for open hand: 2. Pon material is always better than Chi material when intending to open hand.

Ryankan VS other kind of shapes



Menzen: Take Ryankan as it has highest outs for converting to Ryanmen

Open/Tanyao: Discard 7s, 3/7s, 3s respectively to retain pon material



N/A
(Situational)

3/7s
More tiles for
Ryanmen

N/A
(Situational)

1.5 Blocks (4tiles)

Best



Double Ryanmen for B/C
Class Ryanmen for Tanyao



Double Ryanmen for A/B
Class Ryanmen for Menzen



Double C Class Ryanmen



Possibly gives 1 penchan

Worst

1.5 Blocks (4tiles)

Best



Double Ryanmen with possible best Tanyao Sanmenchan shape



Lower chance of Sanmenchan



Able to form 1 more Ryanmen only but with good nobetan wait for Menzen

Worst

1.5 Blocks (5tiles)

Best



Worst

If you need a pair + sequence, the first one is fastest, while the 2nd ensure pinfu and the 3rd although has a good ryanmen, only can accept 134m.

Common wrongly application of 5 blocks



標準形(七対国士を含む)の計算結果 / 一般形

打 7m 摸 [1p, 2p, 3p, 4p, 5p, 6p, 7p, 8p, 9p, 10p] 22枚

打 1p 摸 [2p, 3p, 4p, 5p, 6p, 7p, 8p, 9p, 10p] 20枚

打 2p 摸 [3p, 4p, 5p, 6p, 7p, 8p, 9p, 10p] 20枚

The 5 block method will advocate discarding 7m. It gives the highest tile efficiency.

Many players who first learn 5 blocks will apply it in this manner, resulting in a poor flexibility and bad tenpai shape

Important Point about Block method

1. ONLY FIX YOUR RYANMEN AS 1 BLOCK.
2. Other shapes are blocks WAITING to be replaced by another block.
3. Most hands do not have enough Ryanmen, hence most of the time, we always fix the ryanmen blocks but looking out for a 6th block to replace the weaker block.

Thinking in 6 blocks is more common



標準形(七対国士を含む)の計算結果 / 一般形

打 7m 摸 [1p, 2p, 3p, 4p, 5p, 6p, 7p] 22枚

打 4p 摸 [1p, 2p, 3p, 4p, 5p, 6p, 7p] 20枚

打 1p 摸 [1p, 2p, 3p, 4p, 5p, 6p, 7p] 20枚

By default, think of your hand in 6 blocks.

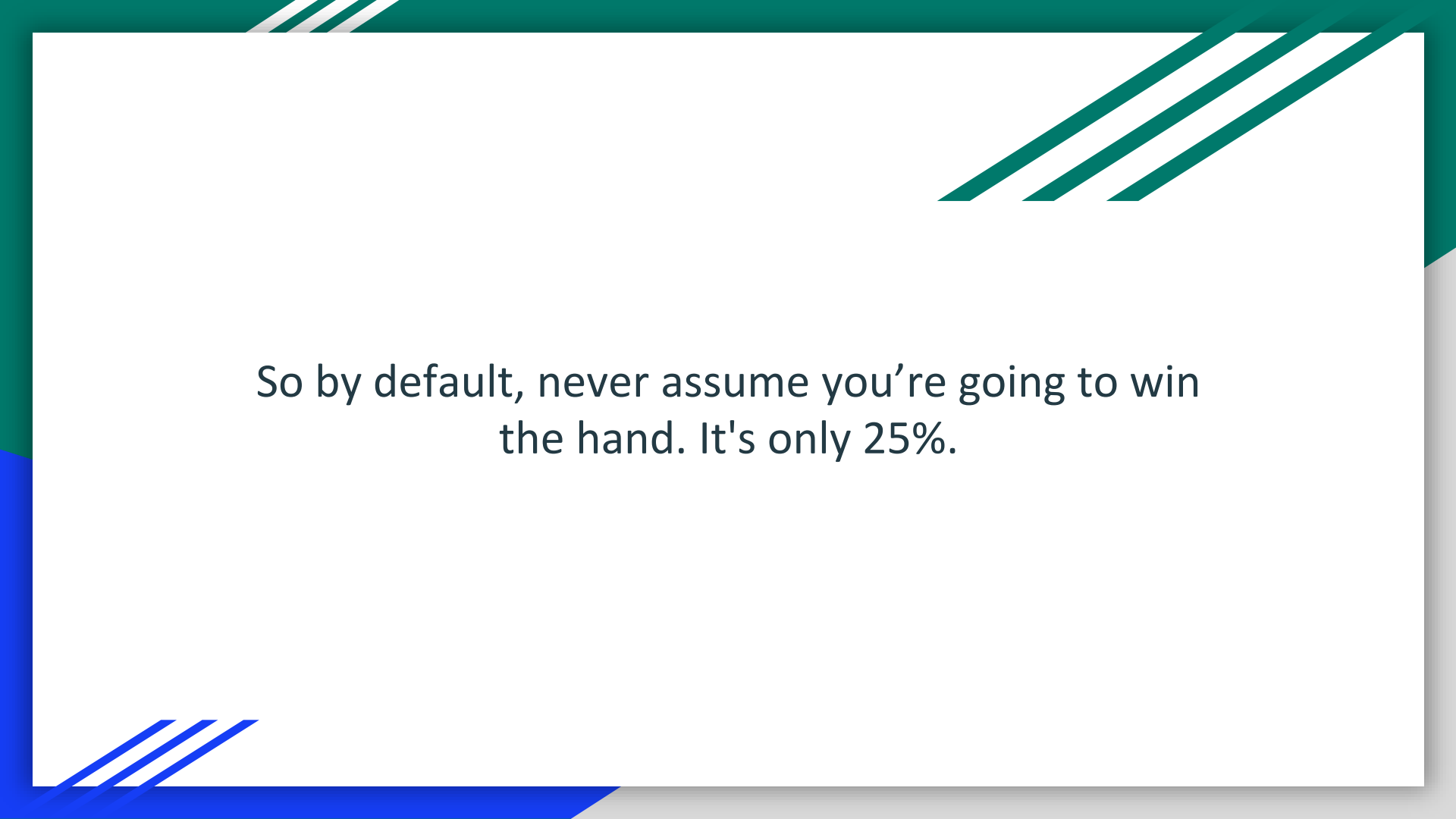
Discard 4p here and try to form a new block around 7m as your backup block to replace your bad shape.



The Default Mode in Riichi Mahjong - Attack or Defense?

What is your winning rate before you even see
your starting hand?

<25%



So by default, never assume you're going to win
the hand. It's only 25%.

Average shanten starting hand

[14枚(親)の場合]

向聴	パターン数	総組合せ数	確率	備考
和了形	16873619	12859078207674	1/330530	天和の確率
聴牌形	2133064968	2966241795738948	1/1433	ダブル立直確率
一向聴	35934777211	99154452630748356	2.3%	
二向聴	130938507660	828714358375292670	19.5%	
三向聴	121685916468	1867404976243926528	43.9%	
四向聴	33290266817	1211948980271480832	28.5%	
五向聴	2496505635	233501763289743360	5.5%	
六向聴	24592122	6601397483077632	1/644	
合計	326520504500	4250305029168216000	100%	総組合せ数 = ${}_{136}C_{14}$

※平均向聴数 = $13413711220546219200 + 4250292170090008326 = \text{約} 3.156$

20% = full force attack mode.

70% = Not sure, depends on draws (Most common starting hand)

5% = Shitty hand

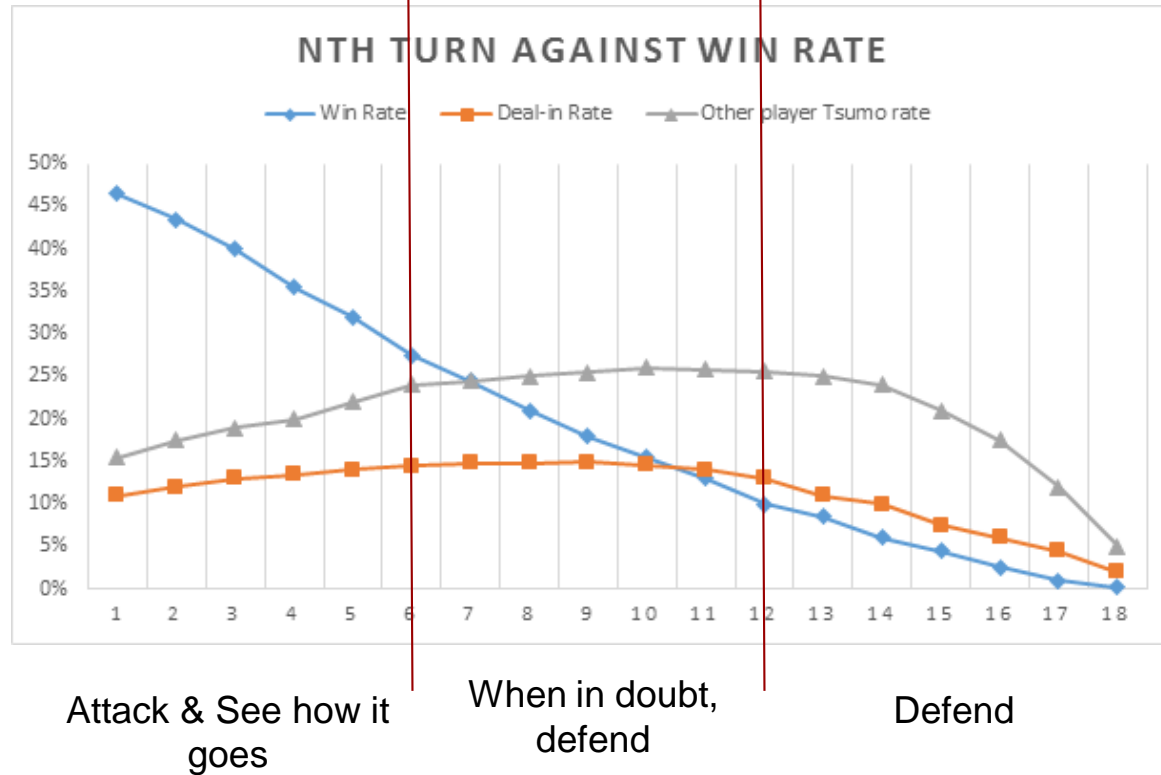
5% = Give up. Fate Sealed.



**What's the course of action you
should take by default as the
game goes?**

1st Row

2nd Row

3rd Row





When to attack, when to
semi-attack, when to defend
with some attack?

Attacking with 13 tiles (FULL OFFENSE)



2 shanten hand, decent shape. 1 kanchan is fine. yaku/dora found.

Don't waste time, go all out.
Safe tiles are for losers.

“Attacking” with 12 tiles (Sakigiri)



At 1shanten good shape, you usually have a redundant yet dangerous tile. Get rid of them. Having 1 most useless tile (safest) is actually useful now.

Attacking with 12 tiles



There are 2 bad shapes here though the hand is at 2 shanten.

Discard 7m here and keep 1 safe tile.

Attacking with 12 tiles (Exception)



If 3 dora = Attack, discard Pei

If 2 dora in Aka-nashi = Attack, discard Pei

Attacking with 12 tiles (Exception)



Do not keep safe tile at the expense of discarding ryankan when your hand is 2shanten.

Risk of totally ruining winning the hand is too high.

Attacking with 11 tiles (Default & Advance)

**3shanten/4shanten hands with good/poor shapes.
Many lone tiles.**

- NEVER CHASE TENPAI **BLINDLY**. Move away from riichi nomi in terms of planning. (Can't help it if it does come naturally in the end)
- Fix ryanmen, focus on good hand shape **FIRST**.
- Early discarding penchan is fine, especially when your hand shape is still in a mess. You have many other lone middle tiles to replace it easily
- Do not keep any lone 1/9 tiles.
- Discard 1/9 from 124 or 689 shape.



How to play Shitty Hands? (4/5-shanten)

General concept

1. Do not think of winning first, neither should you think of giving up. A low win rate is still a CHANCE!
2. Make minimizing risk, able to defend at anytime you want the highest priority.
3. There's little to lose when it is a hard-to-win hand, you can afford to aim for far-fetched high value hands.
4. Hide the fact that you have a shitty hand. If possible, scare your opponents.

Step 1: Identify the kind of shitty hands you have (4 kinds)

1. “Normal” lousy hand that doesn’t show any obvious pattern.
2. 4-5 tiles of a suit + 3-4 lone honour tiles. All bad shape and lone middle tiles.
3. 3 pairs of middle tiles with bad shape
4. 2 pairs of easy-to-pon tiles with lousy shapes and lone honour tiles

Step 2: Identify the dora

When deciding a direction for bad hand, ALWAYS choose the direction that can utilise dora.

Example: DO NOT FORCE a chantan/junchan when the dora is 4/5/6. Forcing chanta/junchan is effective when terminal/wind tiles are dora.

Type 1: “Normal” lousy hand that doesn’t show any obvious pattern



Focus on forcing out ryanmen, get rid of penchan.
Push towards tanyao (BUT DO NOT MELD) and focus on
good shape while keeping safe tiles.
Attack with 10 tiles.

Type 1: “Normal” lousy hand that doesn’t show any obvious pattern (II)

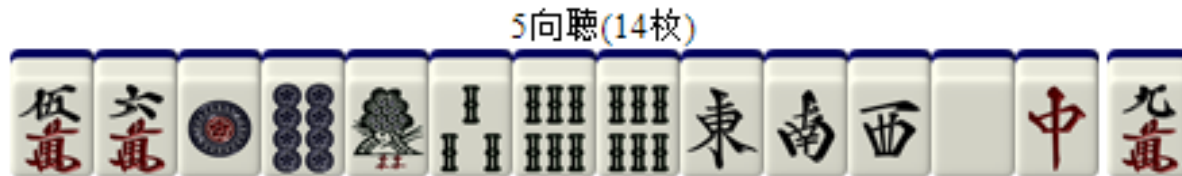


Discard 2m here first to fix your pair then do not keep any pairs in middle tiles. Eg: discard 5m if that's your next draw.

Move towards Pinfu and focus on good shape while keeping safe tiles.

Attack with 10 tiles.

Type 2: 4-5 tiles of a suit + 3-4 lone honour tiles. All bad shape and lone middle tiles



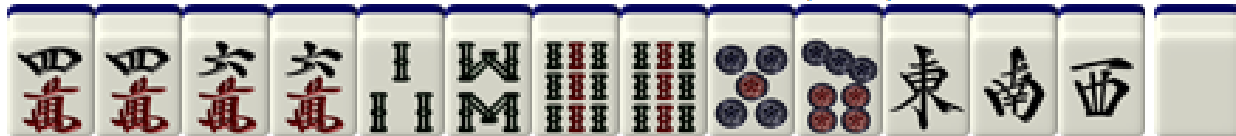
Pon 6s, chi 2s, force honitsu but never pon away the only pair of honours.

If have two suits, pick the one that you can pon.

This is to pressure your opponent, bluffing them to fold while you can always defend against any remaining attacker (usually left with 1)

Type 3: 2-3 pairs of middle tiles with bad shape

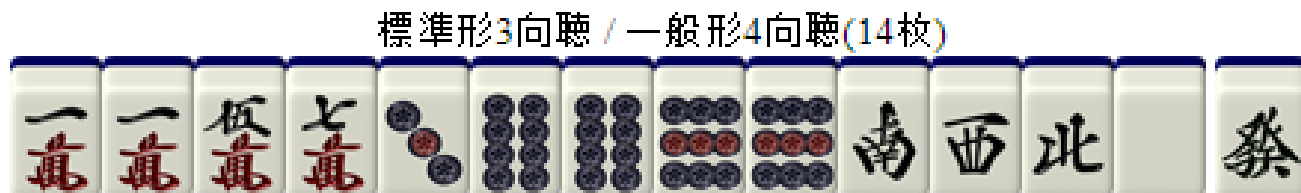
標準形3向聴 / 一般形4向聴(14枚)



Shapes like 4466, 6688 are extremely bad shape for opening hand or stay menzen for a normal hand.

Aim straight for chiitoe

Type 4: 2 pairs of easy-to-pon tiles with lousy shapes and lone honour tiles




Whether you discard 57m/3p doesn't matter. What matters here is to quickly pon 2 sets out.

Pressurise your opponents, slow down their hands, don't let them discard honour tiles so easily.


Summary

- Always prepare yourself an escape path when you want to call with a lousy hand
- Be more decisive in making scary-looking melds and high value hands
- Make a GAME PLAN and put up some fight!



Push-Pull

To what extent should I
push, should I fold?



Understanding the conditional probability of your winning rate

For simplicity sake...let's assume

Being the only attacker with 2 sided wait = 100% win rate

If your opponent riichi, with 2 sided wait,

You chase with 2 sided wait = 50% win rate

You chase with 1 sided wait = 33% win rate

Just simply considering how many players you are intending to fight against, your win rate will **GREATLY CHANGE**

Understanding the expected value of your hand



If discard 5s riichi, this hand is worth 8k but with a kan-chan wait of 4 tiles.

What do you think is the EV value of discard 8s riichi relative to discard 5s riichi?


Understanding the expected value of your hand




Assuming Tsumo rate at 40%,

$$(0.6 \cdot 2.6k + 0.4 \cdot 5.2k) \cdot 2 = 7.28k$$

Despite having 2 han less, having a ryanmen over kanchan means double win rate and therefore double the EV!



But things are not so simple.
What about the deal in rate
reduced from having a higher win
rate?



EV against a player's Riichi

We assume other 2 players are able to fully defend. Therefore the tsumo rate, ron rate and deal in rate will be divided by these 2 players.

Player A

Same hand, waiting on 47s for Riichi tanyao. Forsake SSK.

EV: $0.67(0.5 \cdot 2.6k + 0.5 \cdot 5.2k + 1k) - 0.33(0.5 \cdot 8k + 0.5 \cdot 2k + 1) = 3.28k - 1.98k =$

1.3k

Player B

Similar hand but different suit. Waiting on 7p for SSK.

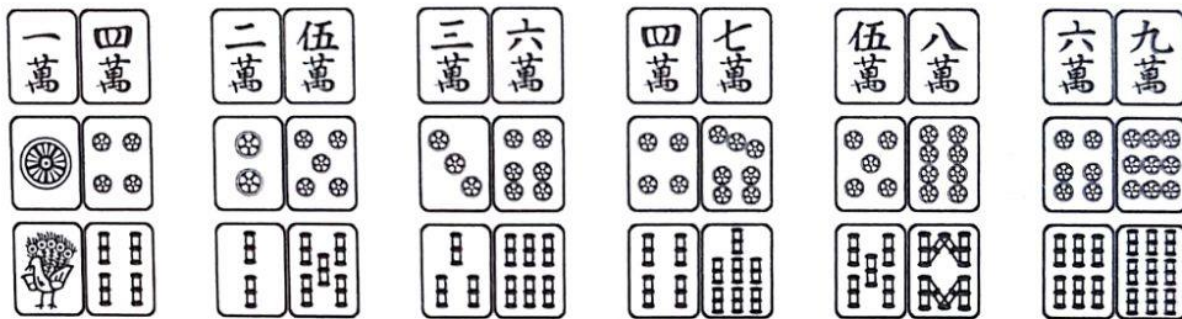
EV: $0.33(0.5 \cdot 8k + 0.5 \cdot 8k + 1k) - 0.67(0.5 \cdot 2.6k + 0.5 \cdot 1.3k + 1k) = 3k - 1.98k =$

1.02k

Good wait still triumph!

1. Avoid joining 3-corner battles
2. Worship double sided wait.
3. It takes **more than 2 han** for a 1 sided wait to be better than 2 sided wait in a 1-to-1 battle

Assessing the risk you will be taking



合計 18 本

Assuming that your opponent is on a 2 sided wait, there are 18 kind of possibilities that your opponent can win in total.

Assessing the risk you will be taking

- Any non-suji 1-3 and 7-9 you pushed, your deal in rate is **1/18 (5.56%)** .
- If is 4/5/6, non-suji, your deal in rate is **1/9(11.1%)**. It doubles because 456 can lead to two kinds of win.



Riichi's Discard Pool

Compounded Risk



If you decide to push, what's your risk here?

You need to discard 2p + 4s to reach tenpai.

Deal in rate of 2p = $1/13$, followed by 4s = $2/12$

Answer: $1 - (12/13 * 5/6) = 23\%$

Risk Threshold Guide

- Good players have around **10-12%** deal in rate. So if you are risking more than such probability without any potential reward, it is better to fold.
- When dealing with dealer's, the benchmark should be at **8%** deal in rate.



Exercise

2向聴(14枚)



John drew 7p after encountering a non-dealer Riichi. He assessed the risk of this 7p, which is 7.7% deal in rate. This is lower than Feng's suggested 10-12% deal in rate for Non-dealer. The risk is low so pushing this 7p is justifiable.

Do you agree with John's decision? Why?



No. Don't be like John.



Do not confuse push-pull
situations with defence.

Push-pull vs Defence Situations

Push-pull situation means it is neither good to fold nor push because there is a decent chance of reaping BENEFITS. (No pain no gain)



Using suji, one-chance, some extent of discard reading and pushing mathematically low risk tiles.

Defence situation means you discard the safest tile (genbutsu) FIRST.

Applying push-pull concept in defence situations only give you **pain with no gain.**

Ironclad rules of pushing your hand against riichi

1. 1 shanten (NON-NEGOTIABLE)
2. Before turn 10
3. Confirm eventual good shape (If is bad wait, Mangan required)
4. Have at least 3-han, including riichi
5. Have too few safe tiles (2 or less)



Melding (Calling)

Why do we meld?

1. To speed up the hand
2. To improve hand shape
3. To get rid of bad shape
4. To show opponents tiles (Covered half previously)
5. To break Ippatsu and/or shift haitei
6. Not wanting to draw tiles (Advance)
7. To stop certain players from drawing (Not covered)

1. Speed up - Can melding slow your hand? Yes



1. If you have many bad shapes, melding from ryanmen usually slow down your hands.
2. If you meld the good shape first, your win rate might also be lower due to eventual bad hand shape

1. Speed up - Matching tenpai speed



If 2m/4m was discarded, do you chi?

Answer: Depends on the turn and the danger level you can assess

1. Speed up - Matching tenpai speed



Turn 9, if 2m/4m was discarded, do you chi?

If you know certain player (especially dealer) is/near tenpai or it is already at turn 12, meld to match tenpai speed to prevent their win by winning first!

2. Improve hand shape via melding (Kuinobashi)

If you call a set out to create better shapes in your hand,
you can call to speed up your hand.



Chi 3m or 7m



Chi 4s



Chi 5p

4. Show opponent tiles

標準形1向聴 / 一般形3向聴(14枚)



Usually with 5 pairs, chii-toitsu is more preferred. And having 3 or more pairs of middle tiles is not advisable for toit-toi.

In this case, if you pon 4m, showing opponents that tiles like 6m or 2m becomes harder to be used, they are more likely to discard for you.

Hence, only pon from 4m, 6m, 4s to move towards toitoi.

Pon from 2m or 9p is **TABOO!**

5. To break Ippatsu and/or shift haitei

Conditions in Melding JUST to break Ippatsu

1. Your hand is a clear fold
2. It should be a chi and the chi **doesn't use your safe tiles**
3. You have 13 tiles
4. You still have 3 tiles (100% safe) to defend

If the conditions are not met, **don't be a hero.**

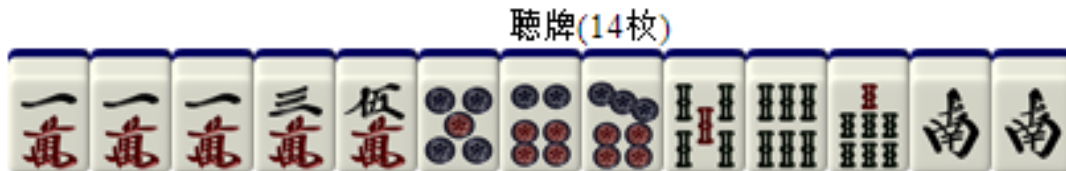
5. To break Ippatsu and/or shift haitei

Order of Priority to prevent the player from taking Haitei

1. Whoever has the highest value hand and is tenpai
2. Oya's Riichi
3. A player's Riichi
4. Your closest rival in terms of position (South round only)

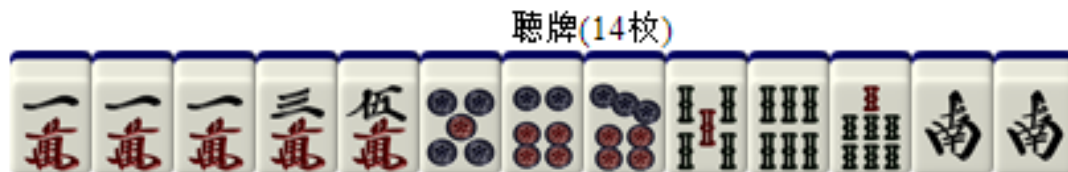
If the conditions are not met, **don't be a hero.**

6. Not wanting to draw a tile



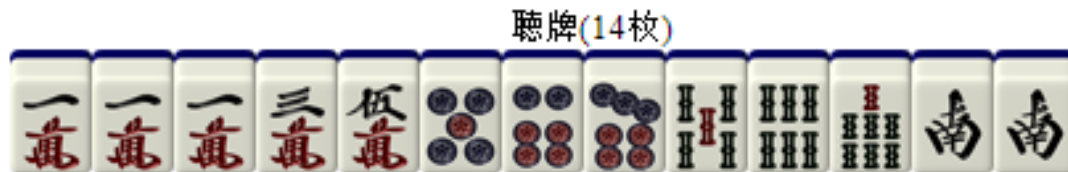
You dama this hand because it is doraless and it is at turn 13.
Left player discarded 4m, should you chi? If yes, what will you discard? Assuming 1m & nan are safe tiles.

6. Not wanting to draw a tile



Chi and discard nan here.
Assuming all tiles are safe, is it still discard nan?

6. Not wanting to draw a tile



Yes. The idea is to discard your safest pair so that when you draw a dangerous tile next, you can discard the 2nd nan and still remain Tenpai!



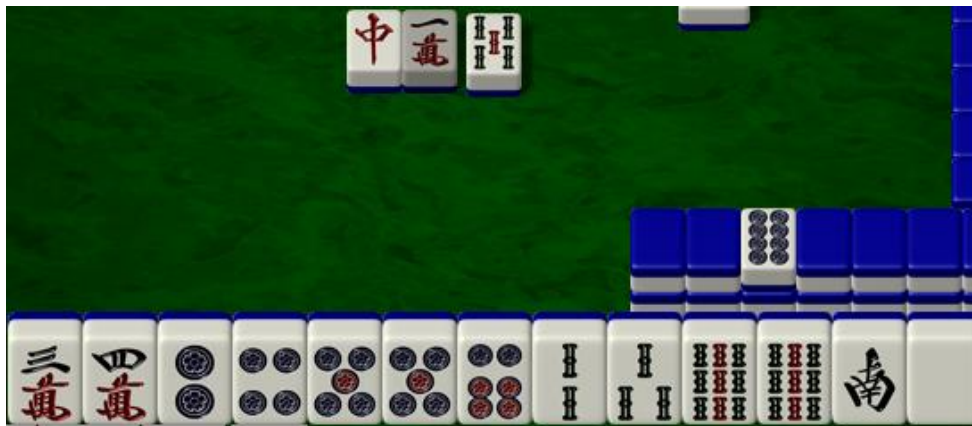
Discard Reading (Tenpai speed)


Degree of importance

Terminals/Honour tiles → Lone 2/8 tiles → Ura-Suji → Middle tiles


Example of Ura-suji discard:

Player discarded 5s very early





Key idea is to spot discards that
do not follow this order and ask
WHY? 90% of the time, you can
interpret something



Examples of questions you should ask yourself

- Why did this player discard 5s, followed by 2s?
- Why did this player discard 3s, followed by 9s?
- Why did this player discard 5s, followed by a honour tile?
- Why did this player discard 1s again despite being discarded already many turns ago?

ASSUMPTION CHECK - Regular or Irregular discard?

Regular Discards: Sequence/speed based hand. Yaku tends to be yakuhai, pinfu, tanyao. **All the discard reading taught are meant for this case ONLY.**

Irregular Discards: More middle tiles flow out first, followed by honours. Shows more pair/triplets based. Yaku tends to be chanta, honitsu, chiitoe and toitoi. Very difficult to read. Do not apply what you learnt about Discarding reading on irregular discards.

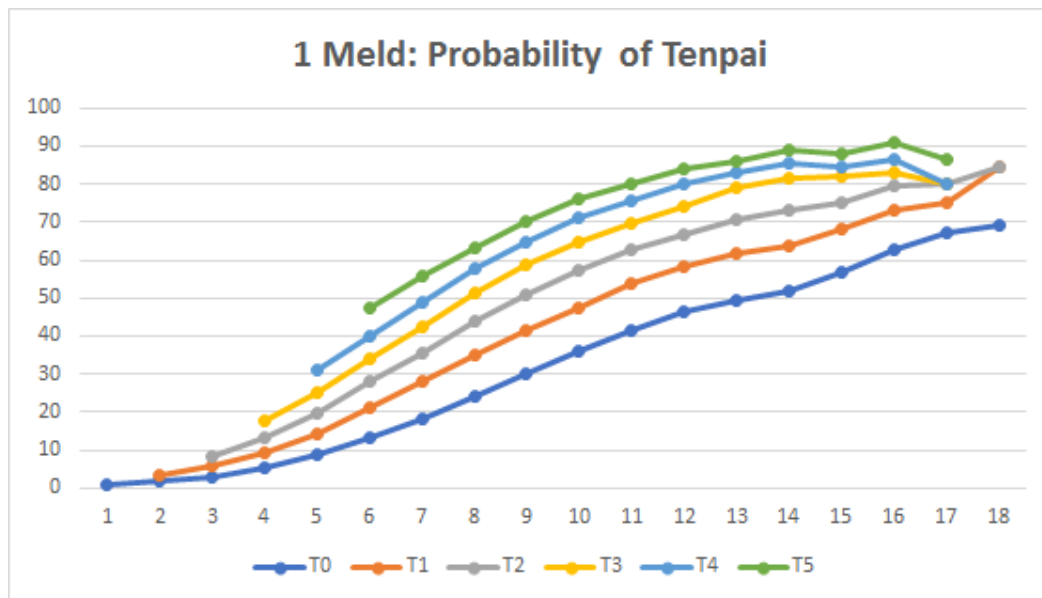
Requirements of Discard reading

1. Staring at opponent's hand and take note which tile was discarded from hand
2. Remember abnormalities
3. MEMORISE tiles that was discarded after a meld
4. Asking yourself what kind of (simple) hand shapes you will that lead you to discard in such a way

Speed Reading (Menzen) - Strong Signs of 1shanten

1. Discarded 2 suits of 3~7 tiles
2. Dora discard (Ignore if is turn 1)
3. Discarded a pair of terminals AFTER some middle tiles
4. Discarded any 2~8 pairs
5. Discarded 3rd colour suit after discarded many of other suits
6. Discarded Kan-chan in the order of from middle to edge

Speed of melded hands

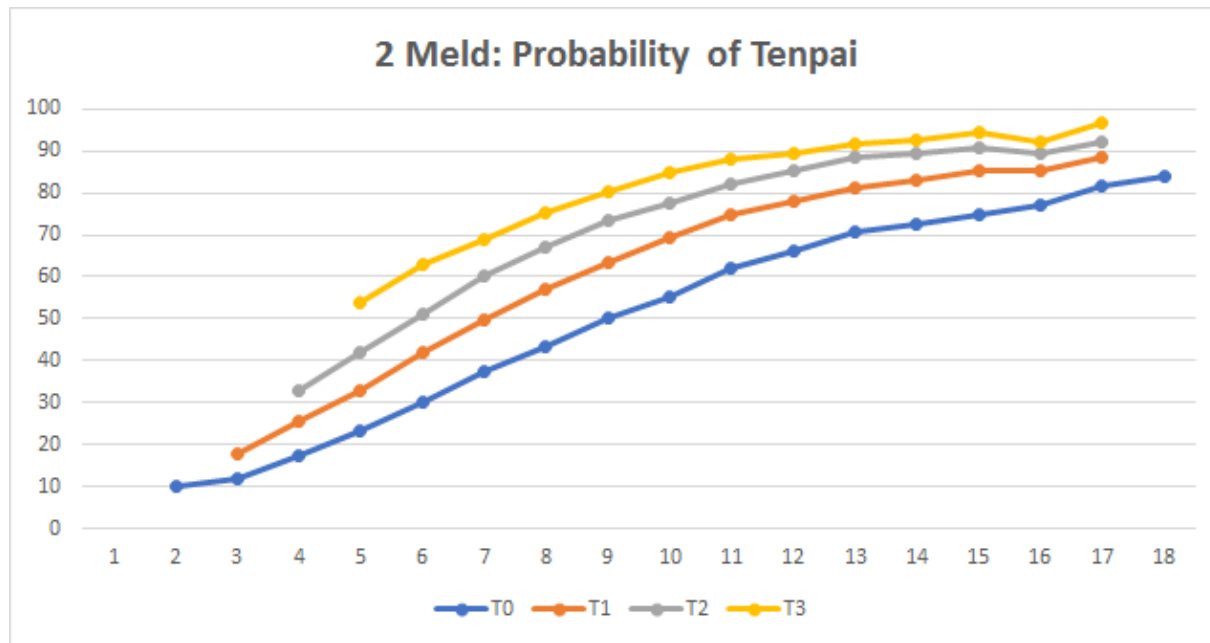


**Apply how you read
menzen hands!**

**Middle tiles are likely to
be tedashi (if you can't
remember)**

**3-4 middle tiles by turn 10
= assume tenpai**

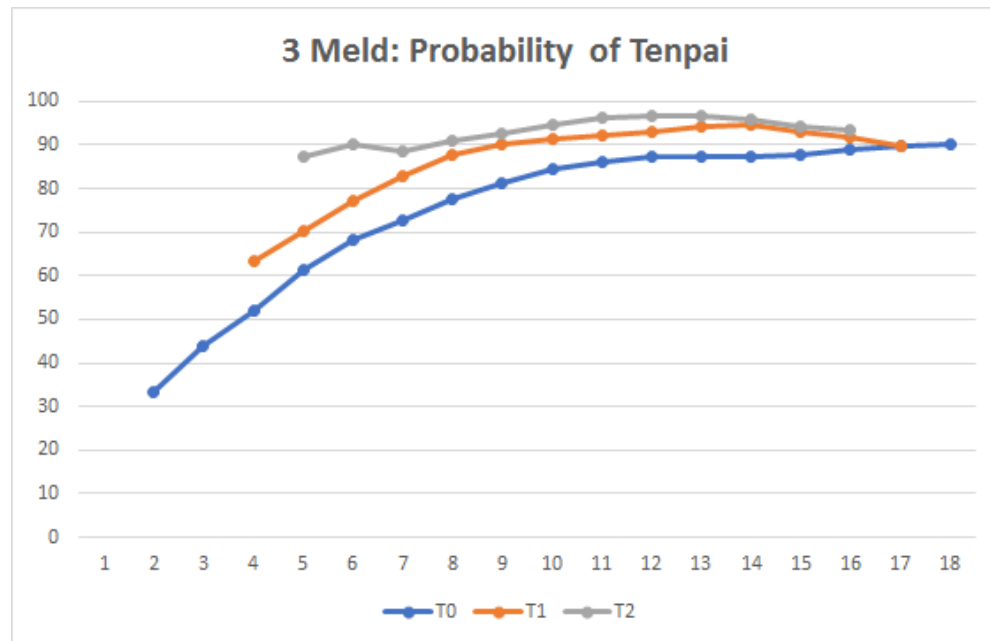
Speed of melded hands



**2 middle tiles at
2nd row =
assume tenpai**

**Look at players'
hand with 2
melds**

Speed of melded hands



If you don't think your hand can reach 1shanten by end of 1st row, fold before that, even if is at turn 1.

Speed Reading (Tile discarded upon a meld) – List of strong signs that the hand is Tenpai

- A meld was done from ryanmen+pair kind of shape. Eg: Chi 4s, discard 2s (previous shape was 223). Likewise to 233, 334, 344 and so on so forth. This shows full aggression from the player, possibly with 2 doras too.
- If the player has previously discarded a few middle tiles but discarded a safe tile after a meld. Keeping 1 safe tile at 1 shanten is common amongst advance players.
- Discard dora or any other extremely dangerous tile (such as a suit to the player's right player who is doing honitsu of that suit)

Reading Abnormality 1 - When 1~3/7~9 is discarded later than 4~6

A player discarded 4m early, then he discarded 2p. What does this mean?

Hypothesis 1 - Almost certain that he has tiles around 2p. Common shapes are 112, 244, 224, 245.

Hypothesis 2 - If 2p is a lone tile, then 4m is ura-suji, 2p is used to float for yaku like sanshoku or ittsu.

Hypothesis 3 - He has a completed pinzu set of 333, 444, 234, 123.

Hypothesis 4 - Sliding, discarding 2 upon drawing 5, from 2345.

Reading Abnormality 1 - When 1~3/7~9 is discarded later than 4~6 (II)

A player discarded 4m early, then he discarded 7m. What does this mean?

Hypothesis 1 - Almost certain that he has tiles around 7m. Common shapes are 667, 677, 778, 779

Hypothesis 2 - If 7m is a lone tile, then 7m used to float for yaku like sanshoku

Hypothesis 3 - He has a completed set of 666, 777, 678, 789, 888, 999

Use other information from the discard pool, other players or your hand to try to eliminate these hypothesis. NEVER become a victim of confirmation bias by concluding on any hypothesis without eliminating other hypotheses!

Reading Abnormality 2 - Discarded a pair of terminals AFTER some middle tiles

This means that the middle tiles are likely to be ura-suji or mataji-suji (eg: 5 from 556), then dropping terminal tiles to move towards pinfu tanyao

Interpretation: Pinfu + Tanyao + Ryanmen + 1shanten is coming. Prepare 1-2 safe tile(s) if your hands can't reach tenpai in 3 turns.

Reading Abnormality 3 - Discarded a pair of 2/8 AFTER some middle tiles

Interpretation: There are very few hands that a pair of 2/8 is not needed after some middle tiles. Only dora/yakuhai pair up is a better pair or simply having extra pair (the rest are ryanmen). This means the hand has very high chance of tanyao + pinfu + good wait and even a pair of dora.

Reading Abnormality 4 - Discarded a pair of 3/7

Interpretation 1 - Shanpon on honour tile + 2/8 is more likely. Can't trust suji.

Interpretation 2 - Too many pairs while doing toitoi, so the pair that is more difficult to pon is discarded. Paired up easier to pon tiles like honour tiles.

Reading abnormality 5- discarding ryanmen

- Generally means 1shanten.
- If is open hand, it means they are moving towards toitoi.

For menzen:

- If is a C class ryanmen discarded, likely has been replaced by 3 sided wait, A class ryanmen or dora ryanmen
- If is A class ryanmen discarded, most likely is replaced by dora related ryanmen

Caution about discard reading

1. It is **PROBABILITY BASED** that is not easy to quantify, there is only high or low chance no 100%!
2. Use it to defend when you have no other defence theories to use
3. Do not conclude 1 hypothesis to justify your decisions made, conclude by eliminating other hypotheses or sorting them based on what you think has the highest probability



Dealing with players who
have melded

Melds at first row

- There are two kind of direction first row melds show: either making high value or high speed hand.
- Ignore speed based, focus on toitoi/honitsu players.
- For players who are your opposite or your left, just play as per normal if you can see some chance of winning your hand
- If the player is on your right, and your hand is not good at all, never throw more than 1 middle tile to them or discard yakuhai so quickly.

Choosing the right block based on melded hands



What will you discard if your **right** player plays pinzu honitsu?

Suggestion: This is a difficult to win hand. If you are up against an expensive hand with a cheap hand, move towards pinfu or tanyao takes priority. Discard 7m or 9m.

Choosing the right block based on melded hands



At turn 3, what will you discard if your **right** player plays pinzu honitsu?

Suggestion: This hand has a decent shape but winning this is still not easy. Discard 4s here first and hope you can draw in 6p so that you don't have to discard 57p for your right player to call.

Choosing the right discard order based on melded hands



At turn 5, what will you discard if your **left** player plays Manzu honitsu with 1 meld?



Suggestion: This hand seems really possible to win and has decent value. You definitely want to win this hand by getting rid of the dangerous manzu and haku. Discard 4m first because it is a tile difficult to be poned and is likely to be utilised by Manzu honitsu player. Afterwards, discard haku. If you were to discard haku first, then 4m becomes a lot easier to deal in as haku is more likely to be poned than 4m.

Sakigiri...or not?



Dora is 3m. Turn 6, Your right player has poned a haku and melded 123p. What should you discard?

Suggestion: For 1 shanten hand with decent value, it is ok to sakigiri the most dangerous tile to your right player first. This is because this hand post a high chance of discarding it when you reach tenpai and you reaching tenpai is quite likely and you will definitely push this tile. So push this now to reduce your risk later.



Discard Reading - When is
suji safer or more dangerous
than usual?

Dangerous Suji (I) - Riichi tile

These are common shapes that players have



Players will discard 6m to riichi.

Check the no. of 24m in the discard pool to gauge danger level of 3m



Players will discard 5p to riichi.

Check the no. of 79p seen and/or early 9p discards in the discard pool. The more you see, the safer 8p is



Players will discard 3s/7s for naki-suji trap

Check the no. of 5s seen and/or if the no. of 4s seen is >6s & vice versa, the naka-suji of 4s will be safer.

Dangerous Suji (II) - Dora Soba

- There are more justifiable cases to riichi on a 1 sided wait to complete the dora-sequence so it is not uncommon.
- Dealing in via dora-soba also mean the hand will definitely have a dora, minimum of 2.6k.
- Do classify this to be almost as dangerous as discarding a suji-dora.

Dangerous Suji (III) - Irregular Discard

- Irregular discards mean Tanki or Shanpon wait is more common.
- The hand cannot be read and therefore, suji cannot be trusted.

Dangerous Suji (IV) - +- 2 tiles of Riichi middle tile (Shanpon suspected)




- +- 2 tiles means 2 tiles before or after the numerical tile. Eg: The riichi tile is a 5, the dangerous tile is 37m.
- 4/6m are not possible because if is shanpon, it means the player chose shanpon wait over ryanmen at the time of riichi, which is very abnormal.
- These hand shapes are common and players will hold on to them till the very end and riichi with it. Because there's no room for sakigiri.

Dangerous Suji (IV) - Riichi with 2/8


- Highly possible of shanpon wait
- 1 & 4 or 6 & 9 have an average of 8% deal in rate
(Regardless of the no. of suji left)
- Better to push any random 1/13 risk level tiles than to try a suji 1 & 4 or 6 & 9 tile.

Dangerous Suji (V) - When many tiles of 2 suits were discarded before (Added)

- Not referring to menzen honitsu, but referring to hands that have 3 blocks of 1 suit, resulting in many of the other 2 suits being discarded before riichi.
- In such cases, complex shapes that has multiple suji waits tend to exist. Eg: 2223m



Whether Suji can be used safely,
is basically trying to read that the
opponent has a 2 sided wait



Safer Suji (I) - Riichi after Tedashi Kanchan

- When a hand doesn't need kan-chan, it is more commonly replaced by a Ryanmen. (Covered under menzen speed reading)

Safer Suji (II) - Suji based on early discards

- Generally, difficult for players to play efficiently yet pull this off
- However, do a rough check for expensive yaku such as Sanshoku or Chantan
- When aiming for expensive hand, it is more common for advanced players to sacrifice some speed to increase the win rate of the expensive hand

Safer Suji (III) - Post Riichi's suji, that is lousy wait

- Generally, players don't riichi with a super lousy wait, especially if it is oikake riichi or riichi without hesitation
- Eg: You see 2 7p in the discard pool, in a post riichi, a player pushed 4p and passed. 7p is also likely to be safe.

Safer Suji (IV) - Riichi with safe tile

- Generally difficult to keep a safe tile without sacrificing speed if the last 2 sets to be completed, are not ryanmen.



I'm currently looking for ideas to write about for the next slides/workshop. Do give me some ideas about the general problem you face in Riichi that has not been covered by Daina Chiba or this slides!



If you have any feedback or
clarification, feel free to contact
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