

# Transparent Hands!? The Secrets of Reading Calls in Mahjong\*

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## 0 Preface

The Essence of Crying Reading The original copyright belongs to the original author Hirazawa Genki. The translation is for learning and communication purposes only and may not be used for commercial purposes.

Personal translation by a trashy individual, mistakes and omissions are inevitable, might be abandoned at any time. Really might be abandoned at any time. Also, beware of impulse consumption, I can choose not to learn, but I cannot be without.

Author's Biography: Hirazawa Genki, former professional mahjong player, member of the All Japan Mahjong Association, retired in 2020. Tengen 10th dan.

Preface

My book Reading Tiles with Data (yes), published in 2017, received praise from many sides for its comprehensive and systematic refined content, becoming my representative work.

For the book Reading Tiles with Data, what I regret the most is that the section on reading tiles after discarding is very short. Since it is a book with a main theme of systematic reading of tiles, it is inevitable that such a situation occurs. However, in actual play, more than half of the reading tile techniques valued by intermediate and higher level players are reading tiles after discarding, that is, reading tiles of opponents who have already discarded.

This book is dedicated to the reading of tiles after discarding. At the same time, for the convenience of beginners and intermediate players who rarely use reading tiles, this book includes many reading tile techniques that do not require memorizing hand shapes.

I hope everyone can discover the joy of reading tiles in this book and understand more about the depth of mahjong.

Hirazawa Genki

# 1 Chapter 1 Prologue

## 1.1 Section 1 Why is reading tiles after discarding important

The most important reading tile techniques

This book specifically explains the reading tile techniques after discarding in mahjong, that is, reading tiles of opponents who have already discarded.

Several years ago, I systematically explained the reading tile techniques in mahjong in the book *Reading Tiles with Data*, and reading tiles after discarding is of course included. This book will focus on reading tiles after discarding and delve into this part.

The reason why reading tiles after discarding should be treated separately and published in a book is because reading tiles after discarding is the most important part of reading tile techniques in mahjong.

So why is it the most important? Let me explain this first. If you want to directly understand the specific technical content, you can skip this chapter and start reading from Chapter 2.

Reading tiles after discarding is reliable

One reason why reading tiles after discarding is important is that it is more reliable than other reading tile techniques. After all, even superior players cannot guarantee a high accuracy rate for this skill of reading tiles. The drawing of tiles in mahjong is random, and because of the nature of this game, the range of impossibility to read tiles at the mechanism level is large.

However, in the case of reading tiles after discarding, this range of impossibility to read tiles at the mechanism level is narrower and smaller than the state of having a clear front.

Reasons why reading tiles after discarding is reliable 1 Information volume

Firstly, purely because some of the tiles in the hand have been exposed, the number of tiles that need to be read has decreased.

A mahjong hand consists of 4 sets and 1 pair, making a total of 5 blocks. If you want to completely read the opponent's hand with a clear front, you must guess all 5 blocks. However, if the opponent has two discards, only 3 blocks need to be read.

With fewer parts to read, the accuracy will be higher. Moreover, there may be information such as the number of dora tiles and hand value in the two discards. The amount of information revealed by the discarded hand and the front hand is like the difference between heaven and earth.

Reason 2 why reading discards is reliable Determining the range of hand values

Especially, determining the range of hand values is a very important factor. It is natural that a person who eats 7s with 89s cannot possibly have popular mangan such as tanyao, riichi, and pinfu. They can only have yakuhai, sanshoku, honitsu, and all terminals, which are limited in their ability to build a hand. This makes it possible to predict the remaining tiles in their hand.

Or in simpler cases, when the opponent is highly likely to have tanyao, even if they are waiting for a tile, you can treat all tiles numbered 1-9 as safe tiles.

Reason 3 why reading discards is reliable Reducing the occurrence of leading good tiles

Moreover, when facing opponents who have a certain understanding of tile efficiency, the composition of their discarded hand is more straightforward than that of their front hand. This is also a reason why reading discards

is reliable.



Dora: North

For example, in this situation A, whether to discard 3m or West is a rather subtle choice. The modern way of playing is to discard only when you're waiting for a tile! Many people have probably learned this, but according to *The Latest Theory of Modern Mahjong* (written by: Jakugoko K, supervised by: Nisi), written by the mahjong researcher nisi based on simulation data, whether you discard 3m or West, there is almost no difference in expected value. This decision needs to be made based on factors such as the number of rounds played, the situation on the board, and the score situation.



Dora: North

Then how should you choose B here? Compared to A, because you can call riichi while waiting, the value of 3m will naturally increase, but of course, this depends on the situation. However, because it is more inclined to keep 3m, the likelihood of discarding 3m and waiting for 3m will increase.

Detailed explanations will be provided in the following text. With fewer occurrences of leading good tiles, it becomes easier to speculate what suits of tiles the opponent may hold and which part of the corresponding suit of tiles they may hold. Reading blocks will become much easier.

Reason 4 why reading discards is reliable Seeing the last tile before winning



(Self-drawn: 7s Dora: North)

Discarding 3m when holding this hand is a common move for declaring riichi. Many people use this as a basis to judge the danger around the riichi declaration tile, but when the last tile before winning is 25m, discarding 3m and declaring riichi is equally valid.



(Self-drawn: 6s Dora: North)

Looking at this hand waiting for a tile, discarding 3m and declaring riichi, in fact, does not pose a danger around 3m. Of course, if you make a comprehensive judgment based on other information, you may be able to read the situation where the riichi declaration tile is dangerous. However, in most cases, it is wrong to regard the riichi declaration tile as the target. If you are not familiar with this knowledge, it is better not to apply reading tile techniques.



Pung 8s, discard 8s, chi 3p, discard 3m.

If it's a situation where the opponent has declared a meld, as shown in the diagram above. Specific reading tile techniques will be explained in the following text. For now, let's assume that the opponent declared a meld with 3p and is now waiting for a tile, then it's impossible for the last tile before winning to be in the character suit.

Even if you can interpret the opponent's hand to a certain extent, if you don't know which side the last tile before winning is, the final result will be basically random. Randomness also means losing the meaning of reading tiles. If these random elements are eliminated, the situations where reading tiles can be applied will increase.

There are many other examples, but let's just list these important parts for now. When you want to learn how to read tiles, it's very inefficient to read the tiles of players in riichi. You should start by learning how to read discards, which is the first point this book wants to convey to the readers.

## 1.2 Section 2 Level of skill required to learn how to read discards

Beginners shouldn't learn how to read tiles

Next, although this book explains reading tile techniques, the second topic we will discuss is: how dangerous it is to use reading tiles. Reading tiles in mahjong is a very delicate technique.

There are many useless things in this world. Most of those useless things are harmless. But if reading tiles are used improperly, learning will weaken instead, which means that reading tiles are a technique that can have negative effects.



Dora: 8m

For example, this hand. Declaring riichi with this hand is a basic theory. In most cases, not declaring riichi when you can is a big loss.

If you choose to passively wait because you read that 36p is highly likely to be in the opponent's hand and the remaining tiles in the wall are low, then you will suffer a big loss. The key point is that even if this reading of tiles is correct, choosing to passively wait is still a loss.

The choice in mahjong is based on expected value. For example, the expected value of declaring riichi with the hand in the above example is 500 points, while not declaring riichi is 0 points (the numbers are arbitrary).

Even if there is information such as low stock of 36p or the fact that it's the first round South, which may favor not declaring riichi, if the expected value changes from 0 points to 300 points, the result is still 500 points for declaring riichi vs. 300 points for not declaring riichi, so you should declare riichi.

Therefore, for reading tile techniques, the ability to read is important. But above that, you also need to have a high level of understanding of conventional theories and judge whether the impact of reading tiles is great enough to overturn conventional theories. If you don't have this ability to judge, you can't use reading tile techniques well.

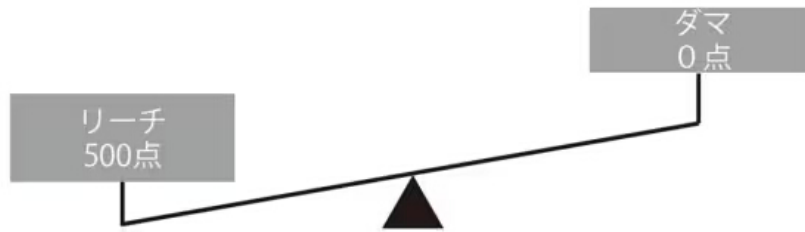
We often say that playing mahjong requires a case-by-case analysis. I feel that this is indeed the case, but if we excessively consider the specific circumstances and disregard the theoretical judgments based solely on our own hand, it is very likely to result in: although the specific analysis seems reasonable, it actually leads to losses.

The standard is intermediate level and above

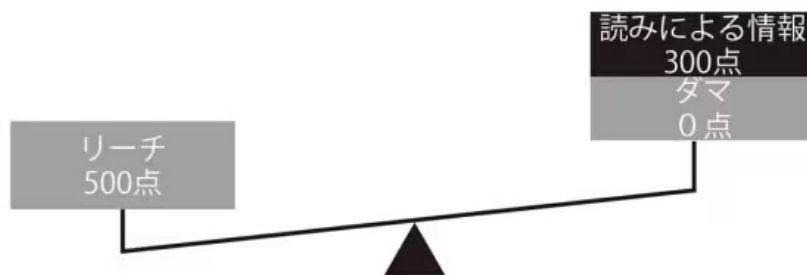
So, at which level should one try to learn how to read tiles? Here, the standard is just my personal opinion: players who have reached the level of Tenhou 5th dan, Mahjong Soul Elite, or Free Mahjong Club around a rating of 2.40.

Players who have reached these levels mostly have mastered the basic theory of judging based solely on their own hand. From this stage onwards, you can start to learn how to read tiles. While paying close attention to how reliable this reading tile is, learn the theory of reading tiles and practice reading tiles.

Key points of this section



Riichi 500 points, Waiting 0 points If additional information from reading tiles increases the favorability of waiting compared to the usual situation,



Reading tile information 300 points But the final result is still in favor of declaring riichi.

In order to make good use of reading tile techniques, you not only need to learn reading tile knowledge but also understand before considering the impact of additional reading tiles, which judgment is better and how much better it is.

Therefore, I suggest that the recommended level for learning to read tiles is: Tenhou 5th dan, Mahjong Soul Master, Free Mahjong Club 2.40 rating, which is the intermediate level.



you find looking at discards enjoyable, you'll naturally become interested in draws, and then it'll be easier to memorize them.

Not every draw needs to be memorized

Okay, I've been giving advice, but I myself can't remember every draw.

Of course, there are also people among the top players who memorize all draws. But even top pros often say I only remember the important parts.

So, what draws are considered important? There are several important parts, and I hope readers will start by memorizing the draws of players who are close to winning, as described earlier.

As mentioned earlier, reading tiles against players with a clear hand is often unsuccessful. In other words, it's likely that even if you painstakingly remember draws, it will be in vain.

On the other hand, players with melds provide more information, and by remembering draws, you can reduce the potential waits to 1-2 kinds, which is not uncommon.

What kind of opponent is close to winning? This will be explained in detail in the subsequent text, but roughly speaking, it's only worth looking at the draws of players who have passed the mid-game.

Key points of this section

Incorrect method of memorizing draws

- (1) Memorizing draws mechanically
- (2) Reading tiles based on remembered draws

Correct method of memorizing draws

- (1) First, learn reading tile techniques
- (2) Discards convey meaning, making it easier to remember draws
- (3) Gradually learn to practice deeper reading tile techniques based on the results

Repeatedly following the correct method of memorizing draws is the key to improving reading tiles.

But I've never read tiles before! For readers in this category, you can start by reading this book and gradually learning the mindset of reading tiles. In other words, your first step is to develop an interest in reading tiles.

## 1.4 Chapter 1 Summary

Among the various techniques for reading opponents' discards, the one with the highest hit rate is discard reading from tile calls. There are four main reasons for this:

The information revealed by players who call tiles is greater than that of players with concealed hands. Tile calls allow for narrowing down the range of possible hands of the calling player. Players who call tiles are less likely to discard good tiles early in the hand. When a player calls a tile to complete a set (chi, pon), it provides information about the remaining tiles they need to complete their hand. For players who have reached the rank of 5th Dan in Tenhou, are considered top players in Mahjong Soul, or have reached approximately a 2.40 rating in free online Mahjong platforms, improving judgment accuracy against opponents who call tiles can be achieved through tile call reading.

## 1.5 Sidebar 1: Mahjong Soul Bubble

Until now, I have mentioned Tenhou, an online Mahjong platform, several times in my book.

The ranking system on Tenhou is very rigorous, and using Tenhou rankings as an indicator of skill level is quite reliable. After all, I am also a Tenhou player and know that Tenhou players frequently read Mahjong tactics books. So, I often use Tenhou as an example in my book.

However, during the writing process of this book, another online Mahjong platform, Mahjong Soul, gradually gained popularity. Mahjong Soul began operating in Japan in 2019 and, despite being a relatively new platform, has seen tremendous growth in its user base.

The distributor is Yostar, which manages many popular mobile games, such as Azur Lane, with over 8 million users.

When looking for the next hot topic, this company chose the Mahjong theme. As an industry insider, I am deeply gratified. Moreover, Yostar's promotional efforts are remarkable, with oversized billboards hung around stations in Akihabara and vigorous promotion aimed at the general public.

Besides making lecture videos on YouTube, I also do live streaming and gameplay recordings. Since the launch of Mahjong Soul, my video views have increased by 24 times, reaching 3-5 times the original numbers.

I often receive comments like, Started playing Mahjong because of Mahjong Soul, been playing for a month, and now watching Furukawa's videos.

I originally gained fame during the Tenhou era and have sentimental attachments to Tenhou, but the allure of increased viewership is undeniable. While silently apologizing to Tenhou in my heart, I stream Mahjong Soul every week. If any readers are Mahjong Soul players and don't mind, they can come to my live stream.

We still don't know whether this Mahjong Soul trend will be fleeting like a shooting star or have a lasting impact like Tenhou. At least in the short term, the user base should continue to grow. Some of the people buying my book are likely Mahjong Soul players, so the content of this book will cater to players of both Mahjong Soul and Tenhou.

## 2 Chapter 2 The basics of card reading

### 2.1 Section 4 Considering the Opponent's Hand Composition

#### Limiting the Cards Available to the Opponent

When trying to read the opponent's hand after a meld, the first step is to pay attention to the opponent's potential hand compositions.

As mentioned in Chapter One, after an opponent melds, they cannot use certain relatively flexible hand compositions anymore (those with fewer restrictions on the types and shapes of tiles), such as Riichi and Pinfu. Leaving aside the case of calling a tile to complete a triplet, among other hand compositions, if a player calls a tile, they cannot have a pair of terminals and honors, and if they have a three-color hand, they must have already decided on three sets. In this way, hand compositions become clues for reading the opponent's hand.

#### More Important than Reading Knowledge is Attention Allocation

When someone calls a tile, thinking about their hand composition is something anyone can do, including beginners. You might think this is obvious, but consider this: out of 100 times someone calls a tile, have you really thought about their hand composition each time? It's not enough to think about it 98 times; it must be 100 times.

While reading tiles does require some specialized knowledge and thinking, much of it is a matter of can you notice it, can you be aware of it. If we don't have the idea of looking at discards, even an obvious chinitsu (full flush) might go unnoticed.

So, for players who want to learn how to read tiles after a meld, what they need to master first is not knowledge but attention allocation. Make sure that you think about the opponent's hand composition every time you see them call a tile.

#### Key Points for Seeing through Hand Composition

Next, let's discuss the approach to deducing the opponent's hand composition after a meld.

##### (1) Calling a Tile for a Triplet



When calling a tile for a triplet, the hand composition naturally becomes the tiles called. Just this one set satisfies the winning condition, and the shapes of the other parts cannot be determined. With such little information, from a reading perspective, this is a very tricky meld.

##### (2) Calling Middle Tiles



For melds involving middle tiles, the first suspicion should be on the absence of terminals and honors. Of course, there is also the possibility of other hand compositions, but the occurrence of tiles without terminals and honors

is overwhelmingly the most common. Exceptions to middle tiles without terminals and honors are slightly more advanced and will be explained in Chapter Three.

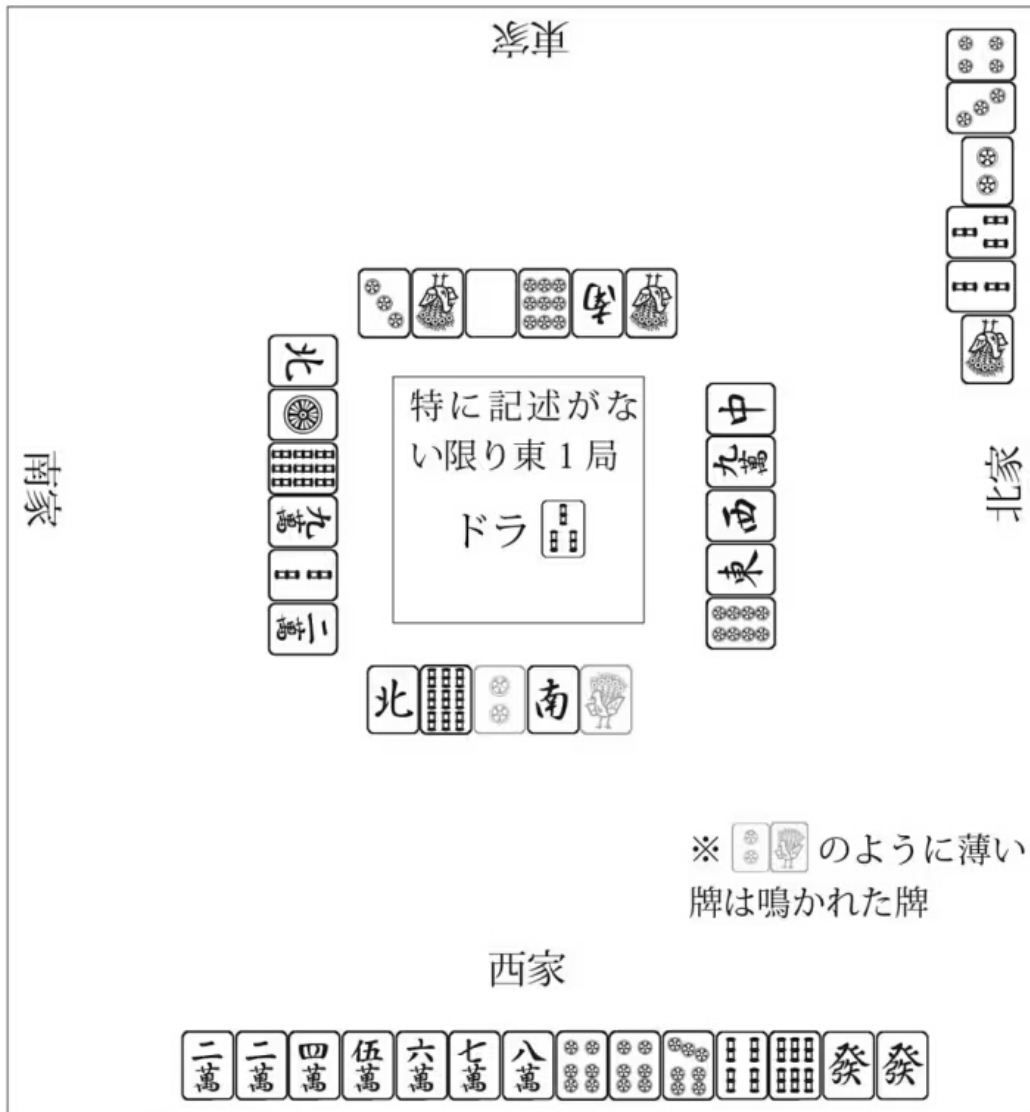
### (3) Melds Including Terminals and Honors



Melds including terminals and honors negate the prevalence of melds without terminals and honors, making them the most valuable for deducing the hand composition.

Firstly, the most common scenario is melding terminals and honors. Although it could also be a concealed triplet, it's still necessary to be wary of late waits.

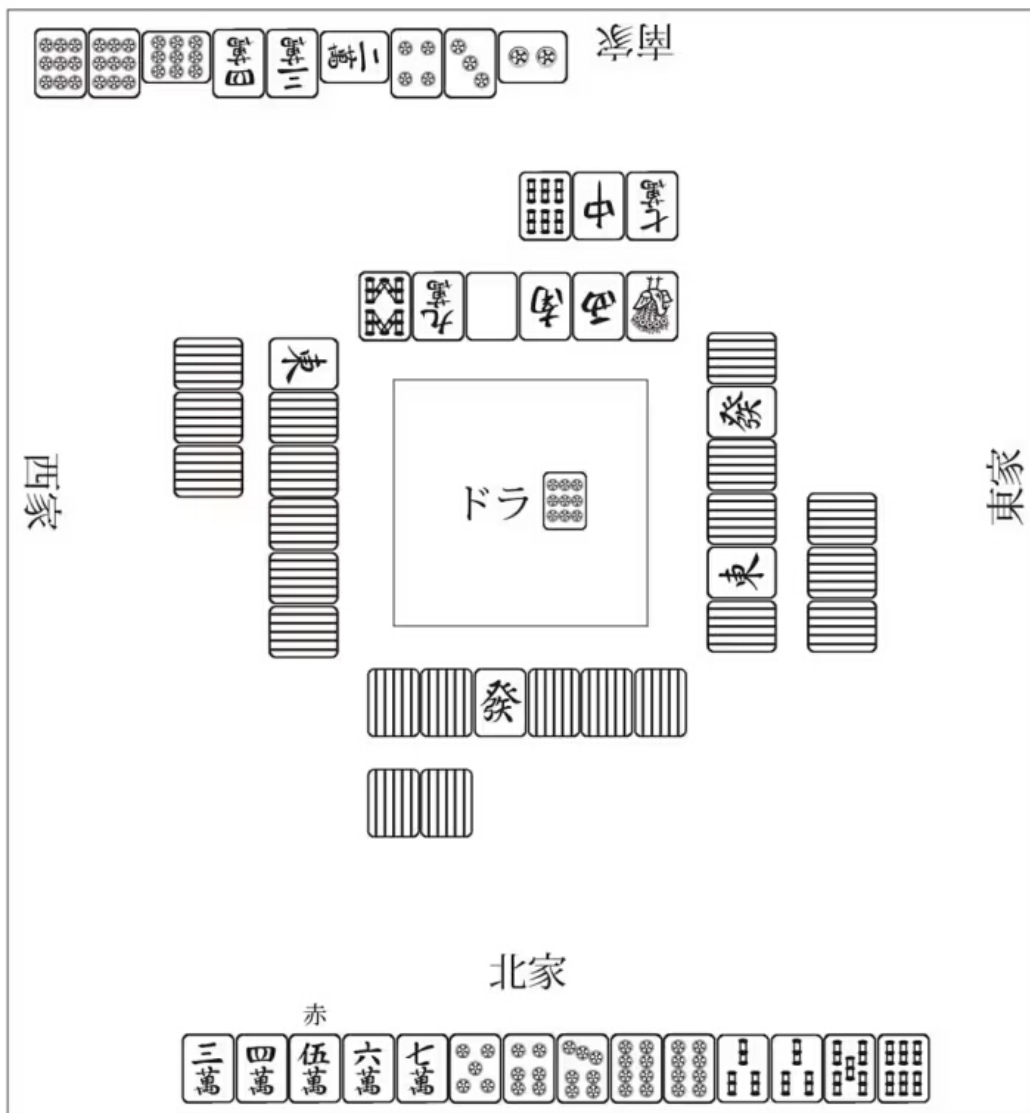
Other possibilities include chinitsu (full flush), sanshoku (three color), all simples, and pung, which can still combine with terminals and honors to form high-scoring hands. In other words, it's a good habit to be cautious of chinitsu when encountering a meld including terminals and honors.



Dora: 3s (Note: Unless specified otherwise, all examples are based on the East round, and transparent tiles such as 2p1s are the tiles called by the opponents.)

For example in the diagram above, let's examine the opponent's discards. When the opponent chi 1s, you should check all the visible dora tiles on the board. The presence of two visible dora tiles can be ruled out, and since the opponent hasn't pon any tiles, the likelihood of there being only one visible dora tile is very low.

In this example, both east and north dora tiles have been discarded, leaving only the red dragon tile. Because your hand has a 6-block shape, you definitely don't want to discard the red dragon tile. It's necessary to plan ahead: It's highly unlikely that I'll get the red dragon tile, so I'll use it as a pair and go for a riichi route.



If all yaku tiles are ruled out...

Look at the opponent's open melds. For ease of understanding, unrelated tiles have been covered. All yaku tiles are visible (strictly speaking, it is possible that the opponent has formed an anko of white dragons if they have discarded one, but this possibility is so low that it is best to disregard it). Now, consider yaku other than yaku tiles:

Honitsu (Half Flush): If there are melds of two different suits, rule it out.

Chanta (Mixed Outside Hand): If there are melds not involving 2, 3, or 4, rule it out.

Ittsuu (Pure Straight): If three consecutive sequences cannot be formed, rule it out.

Thus, the only remaining possibility is a Sanshoku Doujun (Mixed Triple Sequence) of 2, 3, 4.

In your own hand, you need to break up either the 8p pair or the 3s pair. Since you've deduced that the

opponent is aiming for a Sanshoku Doujun of 2, 3, 4, even though 3s is a safe tile (genbutsu), you should not discard the 3s.

Of course, it is possible that the opponent is waiting on a single 8p with a closed sequence of 234. However, your hand is strong enough, so compared to the slight risk of them waiting on an 8p, it is better to play aggressively by discarding the 8p.

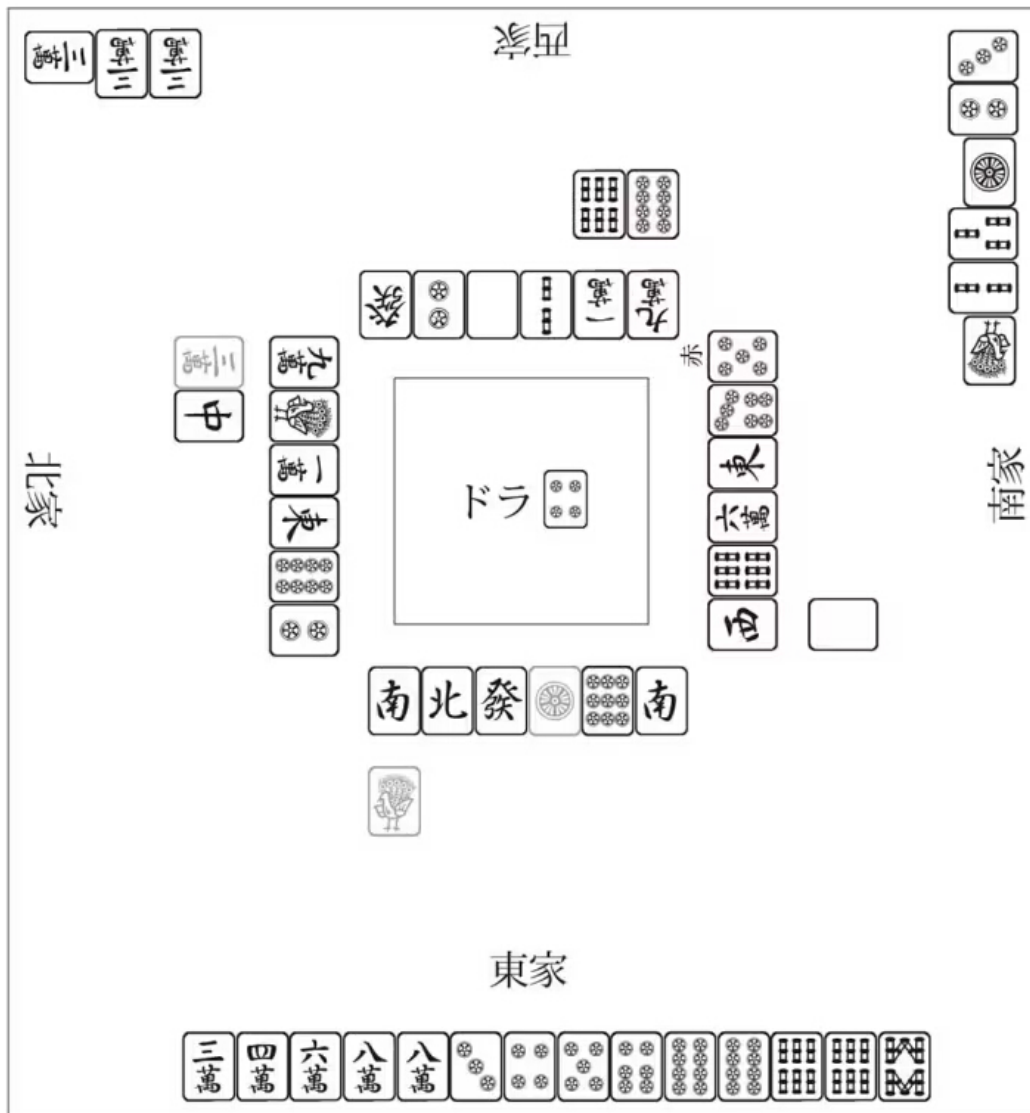
As demonstrated in these two examples, even without considering whether a tile was self-drawn or the order of discards, you can gather a lot of information. First, you need to develop a habit: when an opponent opens a meld, think about what yaku they are trying to make.

## 2.2 Section 5: Organizing Public Information

First, make good use of public information.

Reading opponents' hands typically involves inferring hidden information, such as their hand tiles and the remaining tiles in the wall. To accomplish this, you must first possess the ability to thoroughly organize public information.

Especially concerning the previous section on identifying their hand composition, thoroughly organizing public information is crucial. For example, when encountering a meld of honor tiles, it's essential to immediately count the visible honor tiles on the table.



Dora: 4p Particularly effective for certain hands

(Regarding certain hands, which are hands that can be completed using only part of your tiles.)

In the illustration above, how should one approach the situation when the opponent across melds? Start by counting the honor tiles; all the East, South, White Dragon, and Green Dragon tiles have been discarded. As long as they don't have a concealed triplet of honors, there must be another yaku (scoring element).

Typically, when we see two sequences of the same number, we become wary of Sanshoku (Three Colors). However, this time, there's another public information available. If you haven't spotted it yet, please take a moment to carefully search for any clues that can help determine their hand composition.

From the tiles in the discards and your own hand, you can see that there are four copies of 3m and 6s. With four copies of 3m already visible, it's not a Sanshoku with 123. Of course, if the opponent is waiting for 3m with 12m in their hand, as long as you don't discard 3m, they can't win, so there's no need to be wary of that possibility.

From the discards and your own hand, you can see that there are 4 tiles of both 3m and 6s. The presence of 4 tiles of 3m indicates that it's not a San Shoku of 123. Of course, the opponent could be waiting for 3m with a sequence of 12m, but as long as you don't discard 3m, they cannot win, so there's no need to be cautious in this scenario.

If the opponent has a yaku, then the only possibilities left are Itsu (Pure Straight) and Chanta (Half Outside). With 4 tiles of 6s, it's not a Pure Straight of Souzu. The likelihood of a Pinzu Pure Straight is very low since the opponent has discarded 0p.

Therefore, the thing to be cautious of is Chanta (All Types).



With the hand as shown in the diagram, the possible points for Half Outside are 38m, 38p, and 8s. It's necessary to consider how to proceed with the tiles without discarding these tiles.

Key Points of this Section:

When encountering a meld of honor tiles, consider the following possible yaku:

Yaku Tiles

Chanta (Mixed Outside Hand)

Toitoei (All Triplets)

Sanshoku (Three Colors)

Iitsukan (Pure Straight)

Honroutou (All Terminals and Honors)

Among these, it's relatively easy to judge Chanta based on discards, and Toitoei can be excluded as long as they have made a chi (sequence). Sanshoku and Iitsukan can be excluded if necessary tiles are visible.

As demonstrated in the previous example, by solely utilizing public information and employing the process of elimination, you can narrow down the opponent's potential hand compositions to a very narrow range. For those just starting to learn about reading hands, start by mastering the method of handling public information.



In your hand, you need to discard either 57p or 68s. In this case, you should discard 68s.

Of course, there are many exceptions to this reading, which will be discussed in Chapter 3. For beginners just starting to learn how to read waits, it's enough to remember to watch out for dangerous tiles around meld discards.



Why can we say this?

Because situations like this, where a player melds a chi of 2s and then discards 6p, are very common. Reviewing the content of Chapter 1, in a hand where the player has no melds, the tile that completes their hand may be 2s or 58p. However, in this example, due to the meld, we already know that the tile that completes their hand is 2s. Additionally, if they discard 6p early, they miss the opportunity to chi for a wait. Therefore, compared to a hand without a meld, a hand with a meld is more likely to retain this kind of shape until the end. Ultimately, tiles around the meld discard are the most dangerous.

Check the meld discard.

The premise for this reading to be valid is that the opponent has actually reached tenpai after melding a chi.









In reality, after a meld discard, it's possible that they've only reached the first stage of their wait, not actually reaching tenpai. For example, in this hand, the opponent also melded a chi of 2s and discarded 6p. The technique for determining whether the player has reached a wait or not will be explained later. The key point here is that if the opponent has reached a wait after the meld discard, they will discard other tiles. For example, Player B draws 5-8p and discards 3m, waiting for 25m. But because we don't know the tile that completes their hand, our accuracy is lower than with the meld discard. In any case, remember to watch out for tiles around the final discard.

However, it's best to remember the meld discards of two or more players (i.e., those with a higher rate of waiting after melding). Even if you don't look at the meld discards of the player across from you, at least check the meld discards of the player who made the meld. If you still find it difficult, start by observing the meld discards at the moment of the meld.

The specific range of tiles to watch out for:

In the previous discussion, terms like tiles around the meld discard and tiles around the final discard were used. So, what exactly does around refer to?

For example, when discarding 6p, pay special attention to the following three situations:

- ①  →  待ち
- ②  →  待ち
- ③  →  待ち

Other situations include cases like 688p discarding 6p to wait for 8p+another pair, but the waits in these situations overlap with edge waits and two-sided waits. Therefore, it's sufficient to remember the dangerous tiles in the three categories mentioned above.

Are meld discards dangerous?

After discussing the danger around meld discards, let's consider the danger around melding and then discarding. The conclusion is that the danger around meld discards is neither high nor low. Here's why:



In a situation similar to the previous example where you are in a complete one-sided wait, if you meld a triplet of 3p and discard 6p, waiting for a tile in the souzu suit, the discarded tile is not related to the waiting tile at all. Therefore, we cannot definitively say that the tiles around meld discards are always waiting tiles.



In another scenario, if your hand shape is such that melding a triplet of 3p and discarding 6p allows you to wait for 58p, then the discarded tile is indeed related to your waiting tile. Therefore, when melding and then discarding, the tiles around the discard may or may not be waiting tiles.

It's very difficult to determine the specific situation when melding and discarding. Therefore, for now, remember that the danger around meld discards is uncertain.

## 2.4 Section 7: Beware of Overreacting to Reading Hands

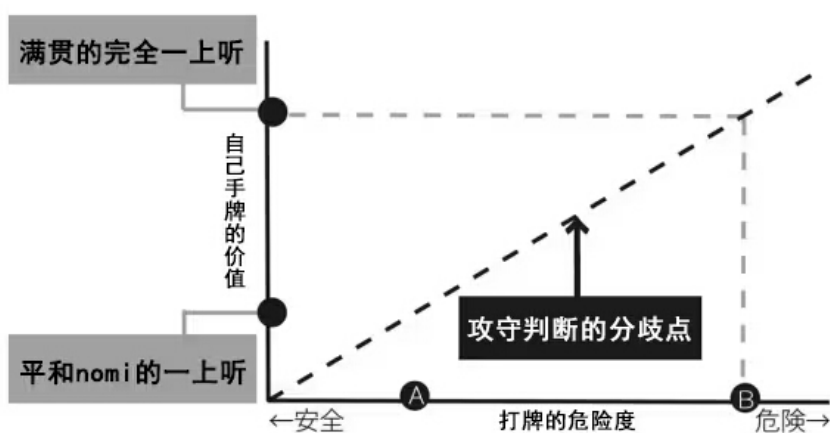
Be cautious of meld allergy.

When discussing reading hands, there's always the issue of people becoming overly sensitive to reading hand information. What does this mean exactly? After reading the previous sections, you might experience the following symptoms:

Thinking that the player across from you has a full hand and not discarding any honor tiles.

Believing that since the player next to you melded a chi of 6p, they definitely won't discard 8p.

However, we shouldn't think like this, which is the theme of this section. Reading hands mainly involves identifying the dangerous tiles in the opponent's hand after melding. But just because you identify a tile as dangerous doesn't mean you should never discard it.

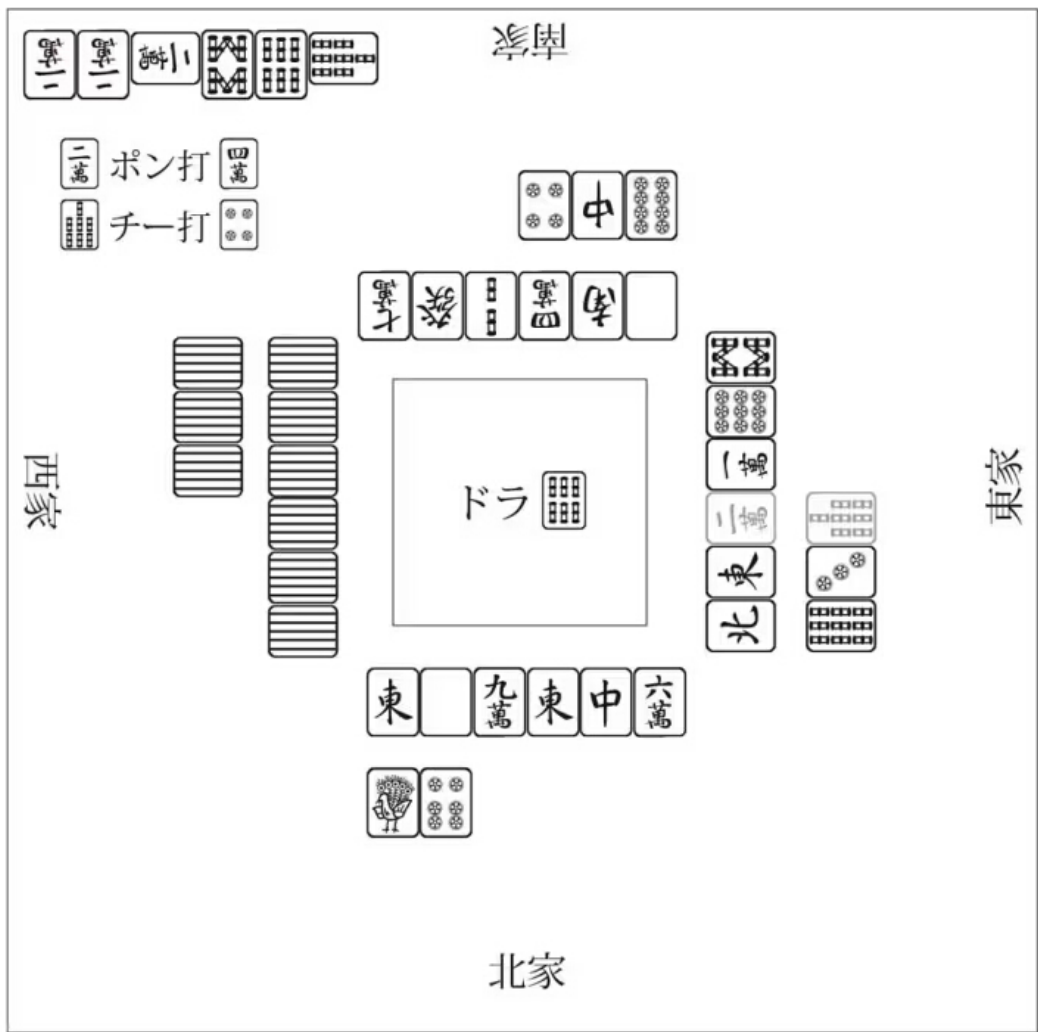


Let's look at a chart. The horizontal axis represents the danger level of the tile you want to discard, indicating whether it's classified as danger level A or B based on your reading skills.

The vertical axis represents the value of your hand. Based on factors such as point value, number of tiles to complete the hand, and the number of tiles left in the wall, if the value of your hand is high enough, you should discard even dangerous tiles.

In other words, if, according to your reading, a tile is categorized as danger level B, but in extreme cases, your hand is already worth a mangan or higher and you're waiting for just one tile, then it's better to discard that tile.

Judging based on your hand, how many dangerous tiles you can discard, and how much risk you can take belong to the category of offense and defense judgment. Offense and defense judgment is a complex technique that deserves its own book for thorough explanation, which is beyond the scope of this book. However, we should recognize that reading hands and offense and defense judgment complement each other.



Melding 2m and discarding 4m, melding a chi of 7s and discarding 4p, Dora: 6s.

Remember the line between offense and defense.

For example, consider the scenario in the image above. Because the opponent melded a chi of 7s and discarded 4p, the 2p tile is quite dangerous. Based on this premise, let's consider the offense and defense judgment for the following hand scenarios.

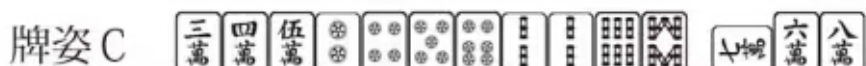


Discarding 2p or 8s would have a similar impact, as it won't affect the number of tiles you need to complete your hand or the hand's potential points. When you have tiles that have no significant difference in their impact, if you discard a tile that's more dangerous, it can be considered a mistake. It's important to pay attention to such situations.



In the case of a hand that's already worth a mangan or higher when waiting for just one tile, regardless of how dangerous the reading suggests, you should prioritize offense. It's rare for the reading to suggest giving up on such strong waits or waits with a potential for three or more han.

However, in later stages like the South 3 round, when considering the point situation, there might be cases where you choose not to discard tiles around 4p and give up on waiting. From this perspective, we can say that the better you grasp offense and defense judgment, the more effectively you can utilize reading hands.



Particularly difficult to judge are scenarios involving low-scoring foolish waits and complete one-sided waits. In such cases, offense and defense judgment can undergo significant changes influenced by the danger level assessment (reading). It's influenced by factors such as your hand, other discards, the presence of red fives, and the overall point situation. So, it's meaningless to only remember the examples mentioned in this section.

Comprehensive questions considering the point situation will be discussed in Chapter 5. The key is to understand which situations fall under subtle choices and then only apply reading hands in those subtle choices.

If you overly focus on reading hands, you might make decisions like discarding on strong wait hands like in Pai-C, or conversely, holding onto a poor hand with just one possible wait despite reading out a safe tile. Such decisions won't lead to winning. It's essential for readers to recognize this point.

Key points of this section:

Even if the reading suggests a tile is dangerous, it's possible to choose offense, and even if it suggests a tile is safe, it's possible to discard it. Remember that reading hands (especially in relation to the danger level in melding hands) is ultimately just a tool to assist in offense and defense judgment.

For those not adept at offense and defense judgment, I suggest using reading hands to change judgment only in situations where it's clearly a subtle choice (where the number of tiles to complete the hand remains the same regardless of which tile you discard, or in complete one-sided wait situations, etc.).

## 2.5 Section 8: Be Wary of High-Scoring Discards

Be cautious of high-scoring discards

As mentioned in the previous section, reading the danger level is an auxiliary tool for judging offense and defense. There is also a part of discard reading that involves determining whether the opponent is waiting for a winning hand.

Suppose a certain tile has a winning rate of 15% (when the opponent is waiting for a win). If the likelihood of the opponent waiting for a win is 50%, then the actual winning rate is 7.5%, and the corresponding baseline for offense and defense judgment naturally changes.

The details of whether the opponent is waiting for a win will be explained in detail in Chapter 3. Reading whether the opponent is waiting for a win is a difficult aspect. To accommodate readers who are not yet familiar with discard reading, let's discuss a rough judgment criterion here.

First, you need to be wary of high-scoring discards. After all, in extreme cases, if the opponent's scoring is only 1000 points or 2000 points, whether it's a ron (winning hand) or a penalty after a discard, the point difference will be about the same.

It is important to have an idea of how many points the opponent is likely to score. Keeping this in mind makes it easier to obtain information about the opponent's scoring. So, what are the high-scoring discards to watch out for?

- (1) Discards where two Doras are visible
- (2) Double East tile (pon)
- (3) Mixed one-suit hand

The above are the main types of high-scoring discards. There are also others to watch out for, such as when the Dora is a terminal tile, you should be careful of the all-suit, three-color series, and pairs series. But as the first step, you should reflexively react to the above three types and immediately think, This discard must be approached with caution upon seeing them.

As terrifying as a riichi

Just by seeing these discards, you can be sure of at least a two-han hand. Then, if you recall your own approach to playing the hand, you should understand. When you have a pair of East tiles in your hand or have the opportunity for a mixed one-suit hand, you will always make use of them to add 1-2 han to your hand. So, these types of discards usually amount to three han, and achieving a mangan (limit hand) is not surprising.

By the way, the average point value of a dealer's riichi is in the range of 6000-7000 points. (This may vary depending on the level of the game.) In other words, these discards, which are worth 3-4 han, pose an equal threat once they become a winning hand.

The baseline is two discards in the second row

How do you judge whether the opponent is waiting for a win? First, let's look at the most basic criteria:

Three discards in the first row - 50% chance of waiting for a win

Two discards in the second row - 50% chance of waiting for a win

One discard in the third row - 50% chance of waiting for a win

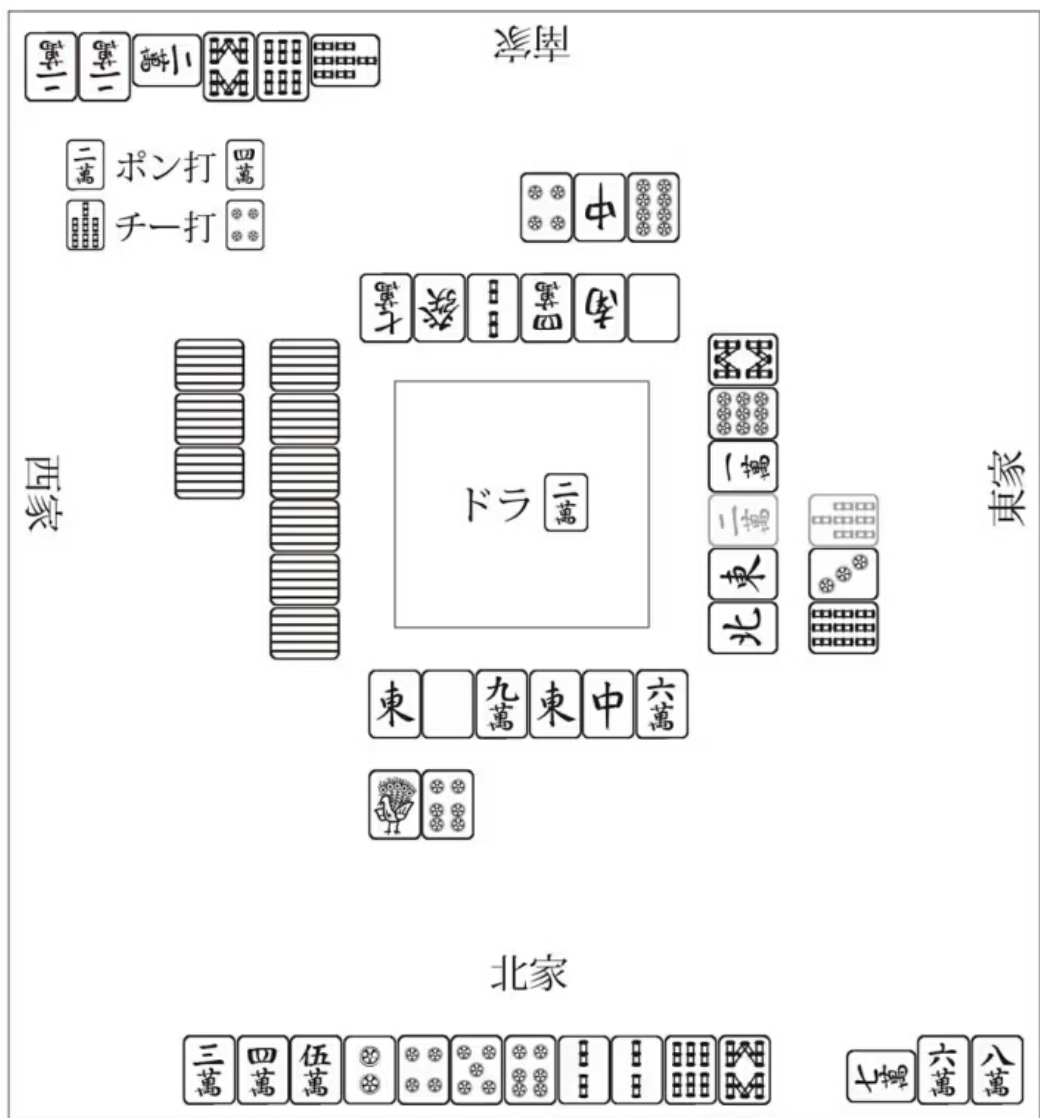
These three situations have an approximately 50% chance of the opponent waiting for a win. Among them, two discards in the second row should be the most common. (One discard in the third row is also common, but

there is usually a riichi from another player or you are waiting for a win yourself.)

Of course, this is just an average value. If there are other pieces of information, such as subsequent discards or the appearance of Doras, the opponent's likelihood of waiting for a win will increase. In any case, remember the following rough judgment:

- (1) Discards where two Doras are visible
- (2) Double East tile (pon)

These two types of discards should be approached with heightened caution when there are two discards in the second row. I believe that even this level of vigilance is sufficient to reduce many instances of conceding points to the opponent. The discussion does not include (3) mixed one-suit hand because the waiting points for a mixed one-suit hand are relatively easy to read, and will be discussed in the next section.



Pung 2m discard 4m, Chi 7s discard 4p. Dora: 2m. Be extremely vigilant of high-scoring discards

For example, in the image above, the discard is the same as the previous one, with 2p being the dangerous tile. The hand is a delicate hand mentioned in the previous section, a foolish type hand worth 1000 points when waiting. Only the Dora has changed to 2m.

The opponent has declared a pon with the Dora, meeting the conditions mentioned earlier for two discards in the second row. Of course, in reality, the opponent may not be waiting for a win, or even if they are, it's not guaranteed to be on 2p.

However, we know that once a win is declared, it will definitely be a high-scoring hand. Faced with this situation, while thinking in our minds that it may be a bit overly defensive, it's still better to be cautious, and simply discard and concede points. This is what it means to be extremely vigilant of high-scoring discards.

Statements like 2p is dangerous because of the discard of 4p and be cautious of discards with two or more Doras are individual readings or criteria. Relying too much on them often brings danger because of exceptions. However, when multiple criteria are combined, the judgment becomes more reliable.

I hope to draw the attention of all readers to the fact that discard reading is often prone to errors. By combining these readings, it becomes easier to make correct judgments. To achieve this, it's crucial not to simply memorize these readings and judgment criteria but to understand their mechanics and logic.

## 2.6 Chapter 9: Huh? It's Mixed Suit After All? Thinking Like This Won't Lead to Victory

### Typical Attention Allocation Issues

The theme of this section is how to counteract mixed suits and pure suits. Melding mixed suits also yields 2 han, usually combined with yakuhai tiles and dora tiles, aiming for a mangan, making it a representative among high-scoring melds. Additionally, because the player is gathering tiles of the same suit, there will be a large number of tiles of other suits in the tile pool, making mixed suits very easy to read.

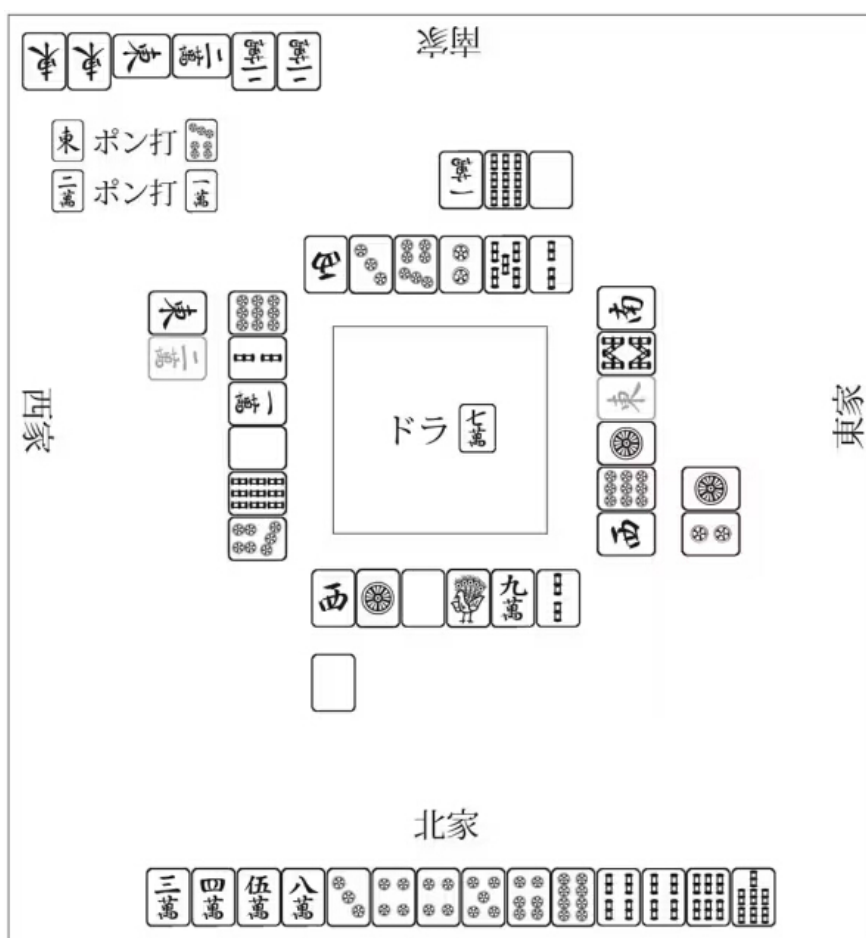
Mixed suits have high scoring potential and are easy to read (though occasionally a mixed suit might be completely unreadable). Failing to read a mixed suit can be very costly. After giving up points to a player with a colored suit hand, you may suddenly realize, Huh? It's a mixed suit? Then, when you pay attention to the tile pool, you discover that it's indeed mostly characters and circles. I think everyone has had this experience. This is a typical attention allocation issue that doesn't require learning any new knowledge but can be solved by improving attention allocation. Be sure to minimize this type of mistake.

### Easy to Read Wait Tiles

At the same time, there are straightforward criteria for the waiting tiles of mixed suits. Basically, after playing tiles of the same suit as the colored suit hand, the likelihood of waiting for a tile becomes very high. Many people should already be aware of this point, and even beginners can notice it with this awareness. Attention allocation does indeed have a significant impact on performance.

Since it's a mixed suit, naturally, tiles other than those corresponding to the suit and honor tiles won't be discarded. In other words, playing tiles of the same suit as the colored suit hand against a player with a colored suit hand is riskier than playing tiles with no potential.

Playing tiles is equivalent to reaching, and after the colored suit hand is overflowing, the probability of waiting for a tile is high. Playing tiles of the same suit as the colored suit hand is riskier than playing tiles with no potential. So unless your hand's value is exceptionally high, it's not advisable to easily play tiles of the colored suit.



Peng East and discard 7p, peng 2m and discard 1m Dora tile: 7m

Further Reading of Mixed Suits

Overflowing with tiles of the same suit is equivalent to waiting for a tile. Although this is a concise and effective criterion, there are still more detailed ways of reading tiles in actual games.

Looking at the illustration, can you attack by discarding 8m ? Below are the alert levels for the discards of a player with a colored suit.

C Alert Level: Guest Winds and One Discarded Yaku Tile

From a reverse perspective, when going for a half-flush, pairing guest winds doesn't increase the score, and it's hard to pair up a yaku tile that has already been discarded once, making it not very valuable. Naturally, before discarding guest winds or a single yaku tile, other suit tiles would be discarded first. Therefore, discarding guest winds or a single yaku tile suggests that the opponent's hand is fairly organized, but the probability of them being in tenpai (ready to win) is still not high.

B Alert Level: Unused Yakuhai Tile

Conversely, unused yakuhai tiles can help make a mangan, and they are usually hoped to form a pair. It could also indicate that the hand is already shaped, and the unused yakuhai tile is discarded to leave safe tiles or

guest winds. In any case, a slight increase in vigilance is warranted.

Alert Level B+: Outer terminal tiles of meld pairs

This refers to the situation of peng 2m and discard 1m in the example. From the result, it's an overflow of characters, but it's difficult to utilize 1m after peng 2m, and it's not unusual to discard it earlier than isolated honor tiles. Of course, if your hand is really bad, you should still be cautious. But in the example, the player is holding a hand with relatively high value, so giving up because overflow = discard would be quite regrettable.

Alert Level A: Middle tiles of the colored suit

The essence of overflow=peng+pai is: Clearly, these are key tiles that would greatly assist in hand formation, but they've been discarded. Presumably, the player's hand is now very tidy. In terms of tile theory, the middle tiles in a colored hand hold significant value, especially tiles 4 6. When these tiles are played, the likelihood of drawing a winning tile is high. Naturally, there are exceptions, but it's safer to assume that the player is waiting.

Now, let's refer to the example. This 8m appears to be a forced attack, but suppose that instead of discarding 1m after forming the 2m triplet, the player discarded 4m. In that case, the judgment would greatly favor defense.

How tight should tile discarding be against the next player when they're making a colored hand?



When the next player appears to be forming a colored hand, should you discard tiles against them? This dilemma is likely common. It's a tough question. I think in most cases, if your own hand is relatively good, then you don't need to worry about their colored hand. By relatively good, I mean a hand that's shaping up normally and can expect to win with 23 han in the middle of the game.

For example, if the next player appears to be forming a colored hand, one option is to immediately discard tiles that would break their sequences or triplets. Another option is to dismantle the 79m sequence at your own pace, and only discard them when the next player seems close to winning. The latter option is more advantageous. Since someone is forming a Manzu set, on one hand, it's easier to win with suits other than Manzu, and on the other hand, not discarding Manzu or honor tiles avoids the risk of losing points alone. The risk of being called by another player is shared among the other three players, so you won't incur losses alone.

Accidentally giving points to a player with a honitsu hand is something to avoid, but being overly cautious due to fear of feeding the opponent is also not good.

## 2.7 Chapter 2 summary

The first step in mastering reading opponents' melds is to ensure that you always consider the type of melds the opponent might have.

At the beginning, don't rely on complex sequences for reading melds. Instead, make good use of information like the presence of all four tiles, using process of elimination to determine the opponent's melds.

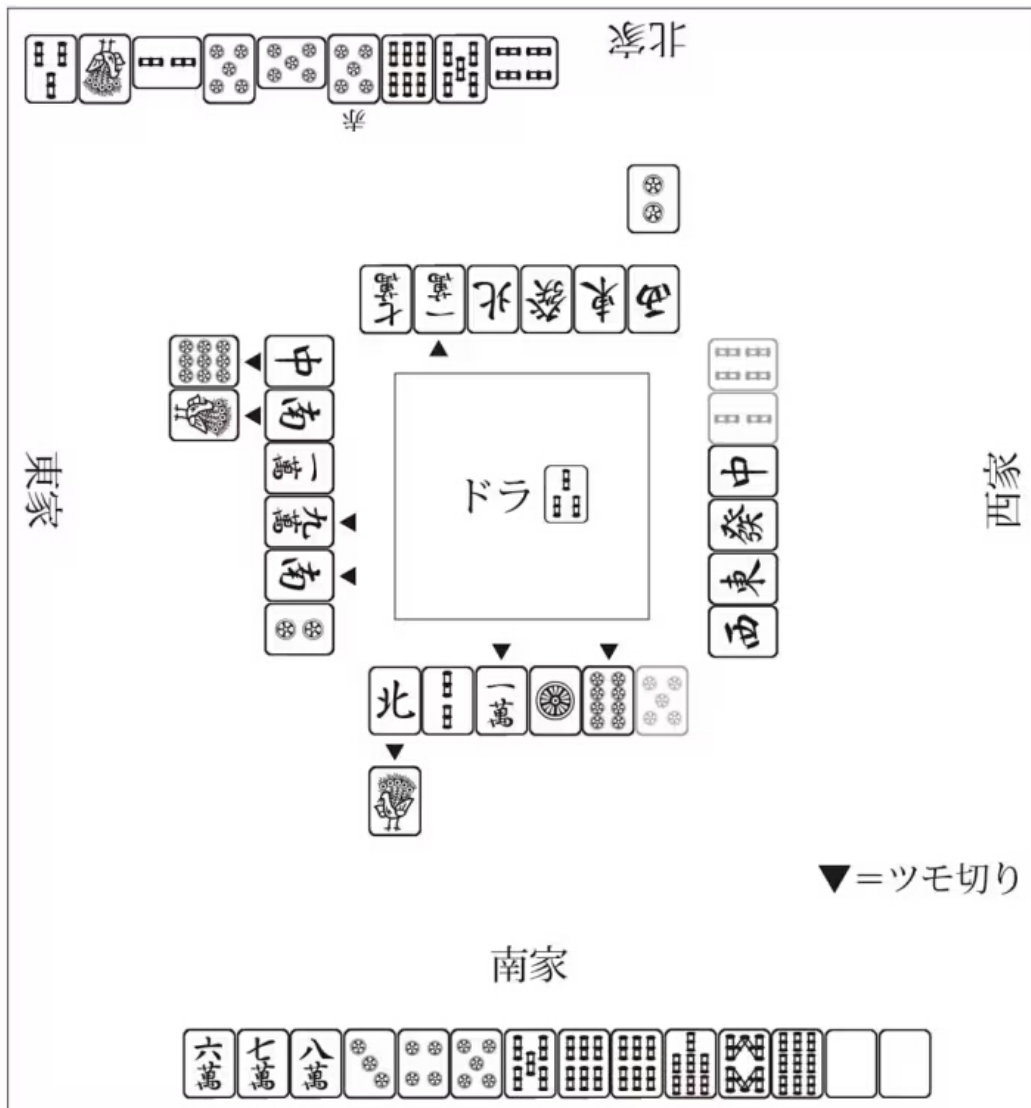
Be especially cautious of high-scoring melds like double east, melds with two or more dora tiles, and mixed suits.

When facing these high-scoring melds, if the opponent discards in the first row three melds, in the second row two melds, or in the third row one meld, be aware that they might be waiting for a win.

However, reading melds is just an auxiliary tool. Judging offense and defense should be based on the value of your own hand. For those who are not clear about these criteria, start by learning about offense and defense judgments.

## 2.8 Solutions to Exercises 1-8

### Exercise 1



Opponent has declared three sets. Determine their hand type using the discarded tiles and choose your own discard.

## Exercise 1 Solution

Answer: Discard 6s and declare Riichi.

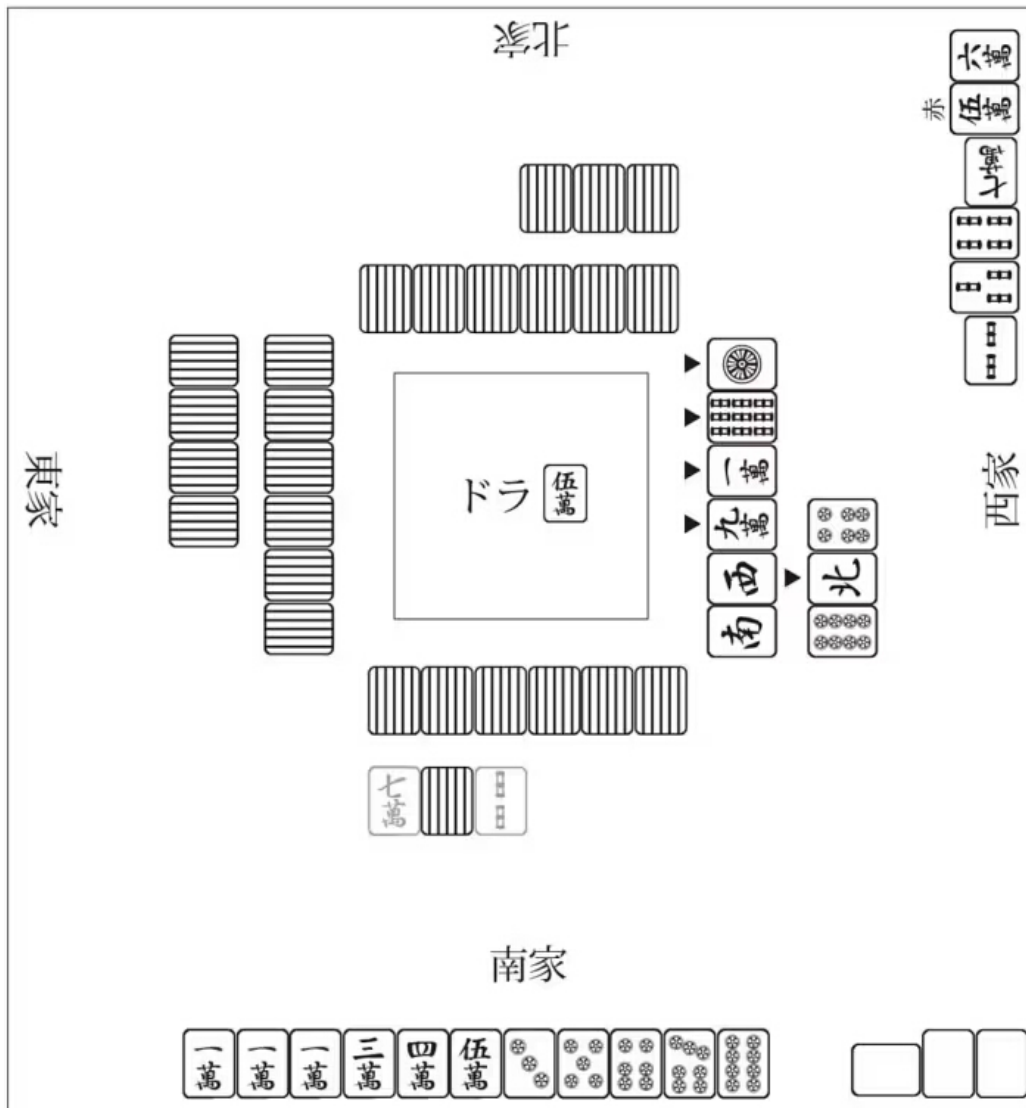
First, consider the opponent's hand type. We can exclude mixed one suit, All Triplets, and Half Outside based on their discards. Three Color is also unlikely because there are only 4 tiles left, which isn't enough for two sequences of 123 in both manzu and pinzu.

This leaves us with either Yakuhai or Pure straight. In the case of Yakuhai, the unseen tile could only be the white dragon.

With this in mind, examine your own hand. The options are limited to 569s. We should not discard 9s as it may complete a sequence. Discarding 5s would not give much points, and discarding 6s would leave only 1 tile, which the opponent may have.

Therefore, the best choice is to discard 6s and declare Riichi. It's unlikely to be dealt into and is a strong two-sided wait.

Exercise 2



The opponent has just claimed a chow with 2s and discarded 6p. What is the most dangerous discard for the opponent? How should you choose your own discard?

## Exercise 2 Solution

Answer: Discard 1m.

The opponent claimed a chow with 6p, so if they are waiting, it's highly likely to be a tile related to it.

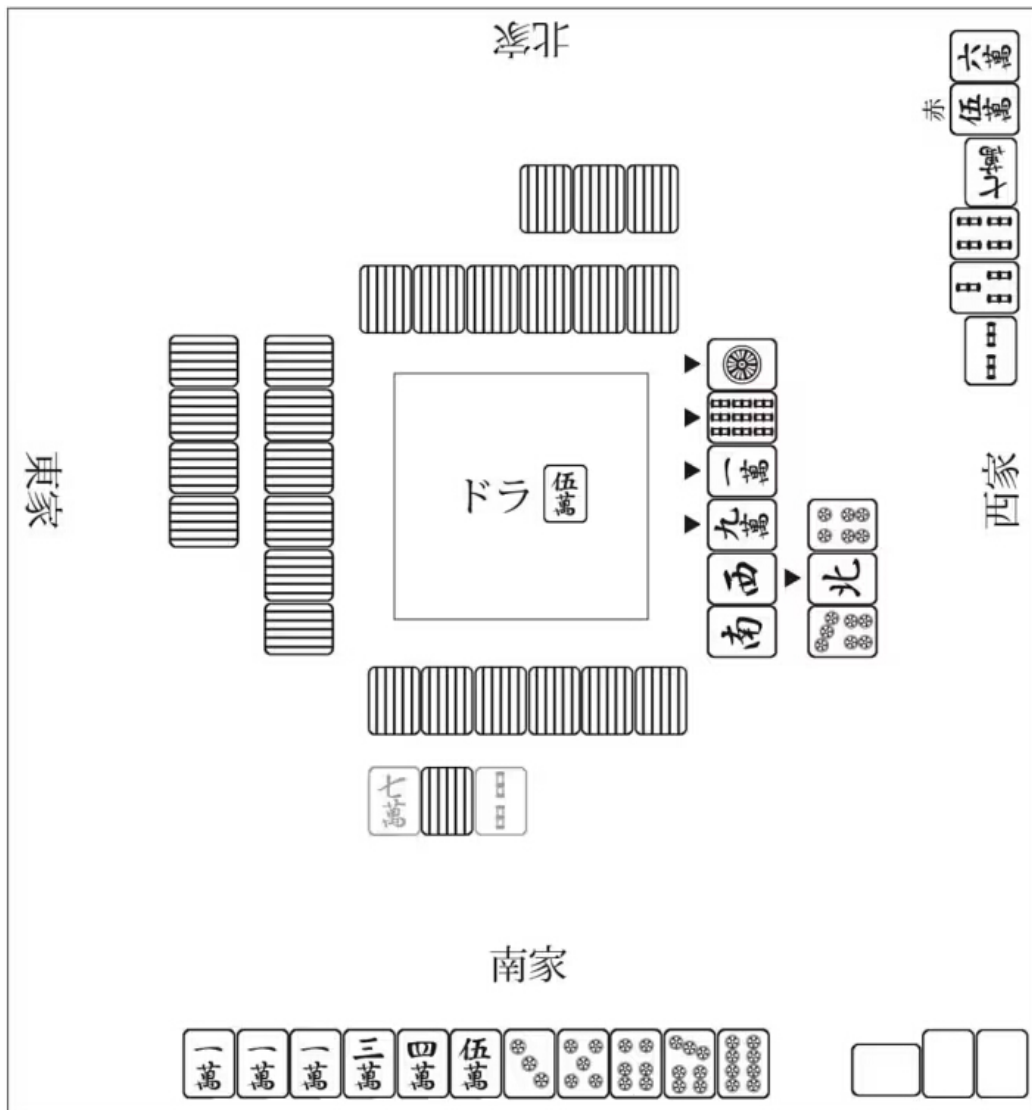
In the scenario where 6p is their final discard, the most common waits are 667p for a chow with 58p, 566p for a chow with 47p, and adding to that, 246p for a chow with 3p.

Since 8p has already been discarded, they won't be waiting on 58p, increasing the danger of 3p. Considering the opponent has the Dora 2, they have reached a danger point.

Taking into account your own low points at 2000, it's better to discard 1m in this situation.

The difference between 8p and 1m is difficult to compare, and in actual gameplay, it may require referencing the discards of the other two players. For simplicity here, the correct answer is set as the 4p wait with one tile more to complete the hand.

Exercise 3



Similar hand and situation as the previous exercise. Consider: What has changed? How does this change affect the choice of discard?

Exercise 3 Answer

Answer: Discard 3p.

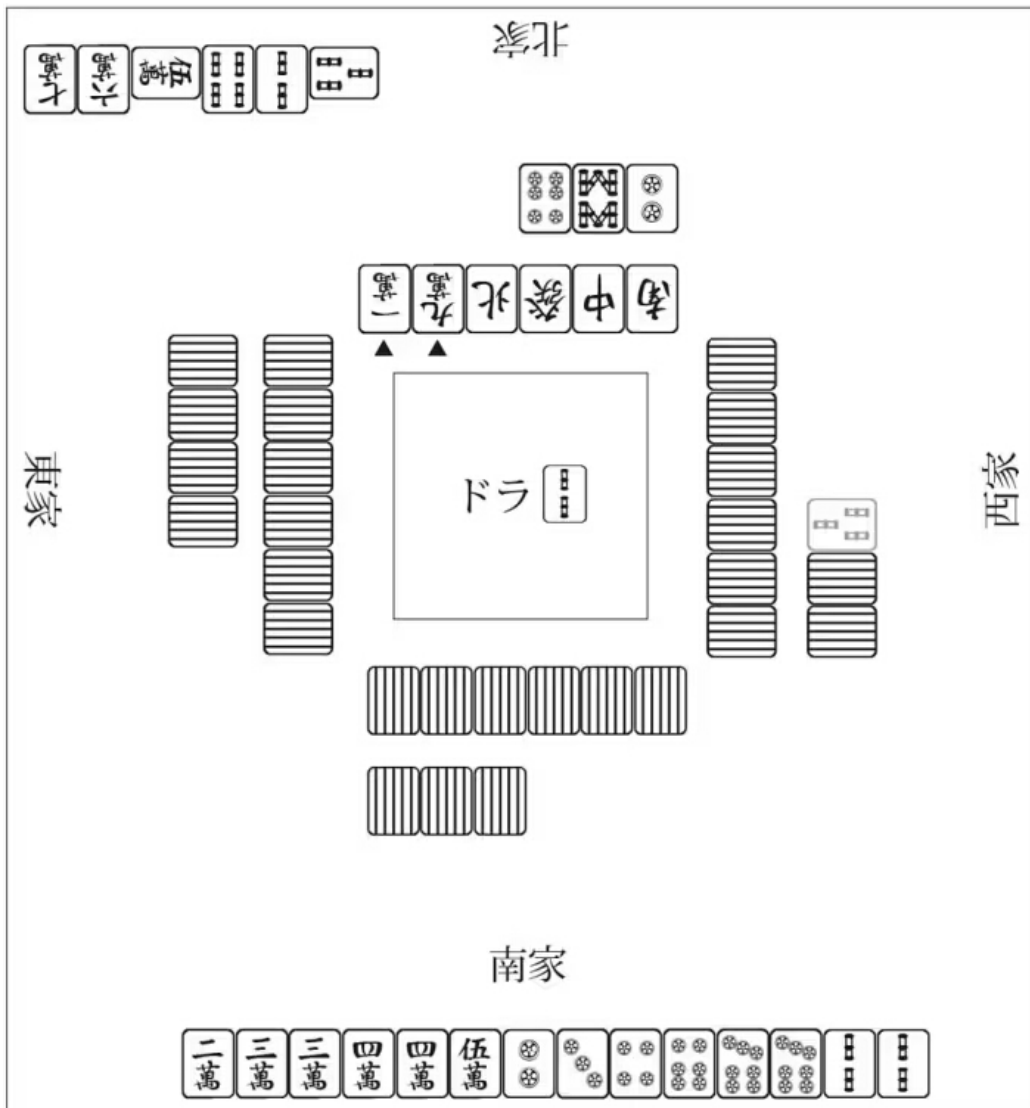
The difference from the previous exercise is that the 8p in the opponent's discard pile has changed to 7p.

Earlier, it was mentioned that there is a risk of completing a sequence with 3 tiles after an 8p discard. Forming the sequence 2468 naturally leads to discarding the 8p after the 6p.

Can we expect the sequence 2467 to be discarded after drawing the 8p? That's almost impossible. Therefore, if the discard after a chi is a sequence with two side waits, these sequences will be very safe.

Of course, it's still possible that 3p is part of a pair or a pair with another tile, so the chances of a win are not reduced to zero. Even so, 3p can be seen as an ordinary sequence tile, so it's acceptable to discard 3p here for a better wait.

Exercise 4



The opponent has just called chi on 3s and discarded 6p. Considering the opponent's meld, how should you choose your next move? If you choose to declare a win, should it be a reach or a silent win?

#### Exercise 4 Answer

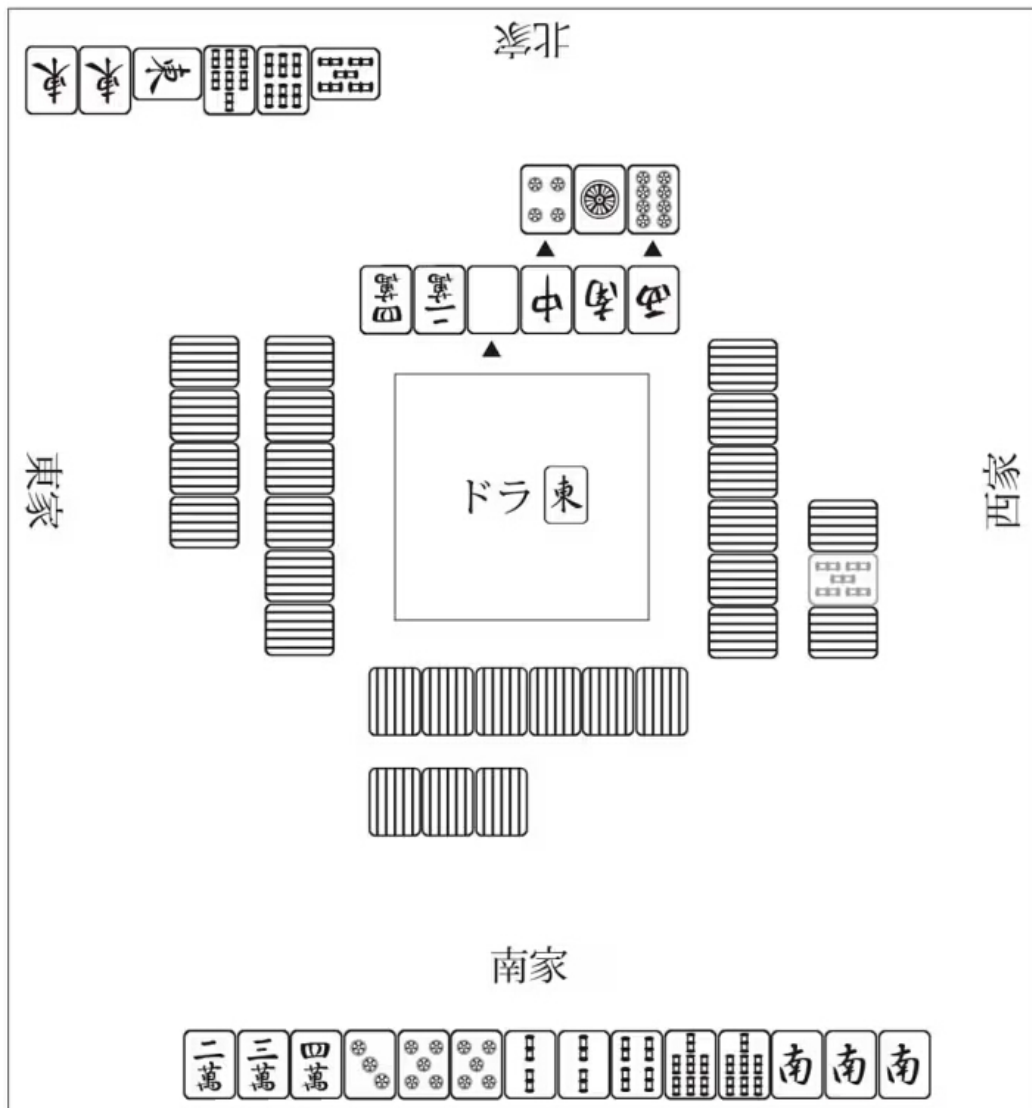
Answer: Declare a reach and discard 7p.

The opponent has two melds, so it's not uncommon for them to be waiting for a win. Since the discard after calling chi on 6p makes 7p a likely win tile, the chances of a win seem high.

With this information in mind, it's best to discard 7p and go on the offensive. Ultimately, mahjong strategy should be based on the value of your own hand. It's impossible to fold a hand that could potentially reach a full win with a silent win or a reach. If you feel 7p is so scary, that's just excessive reading. Even if 7p is won, it's just bad luck. Stay calm and remember that this is a reasonable discard.

By the way, in terms of choosing between a silent win and a reach, both choices are correct according to the main theme of this book. However, personally, considering the risk from the opponent's 58p, if both the players on the left and right are capable of recognizing this, even if you choose to silently win, you can't expect a win, so I would choose to reach.

Exercise 5



The opponent has just called chi on 5s and discarded 1p. Considering the opponent's meld, formulate the strategy for this hand and choose your next discard.

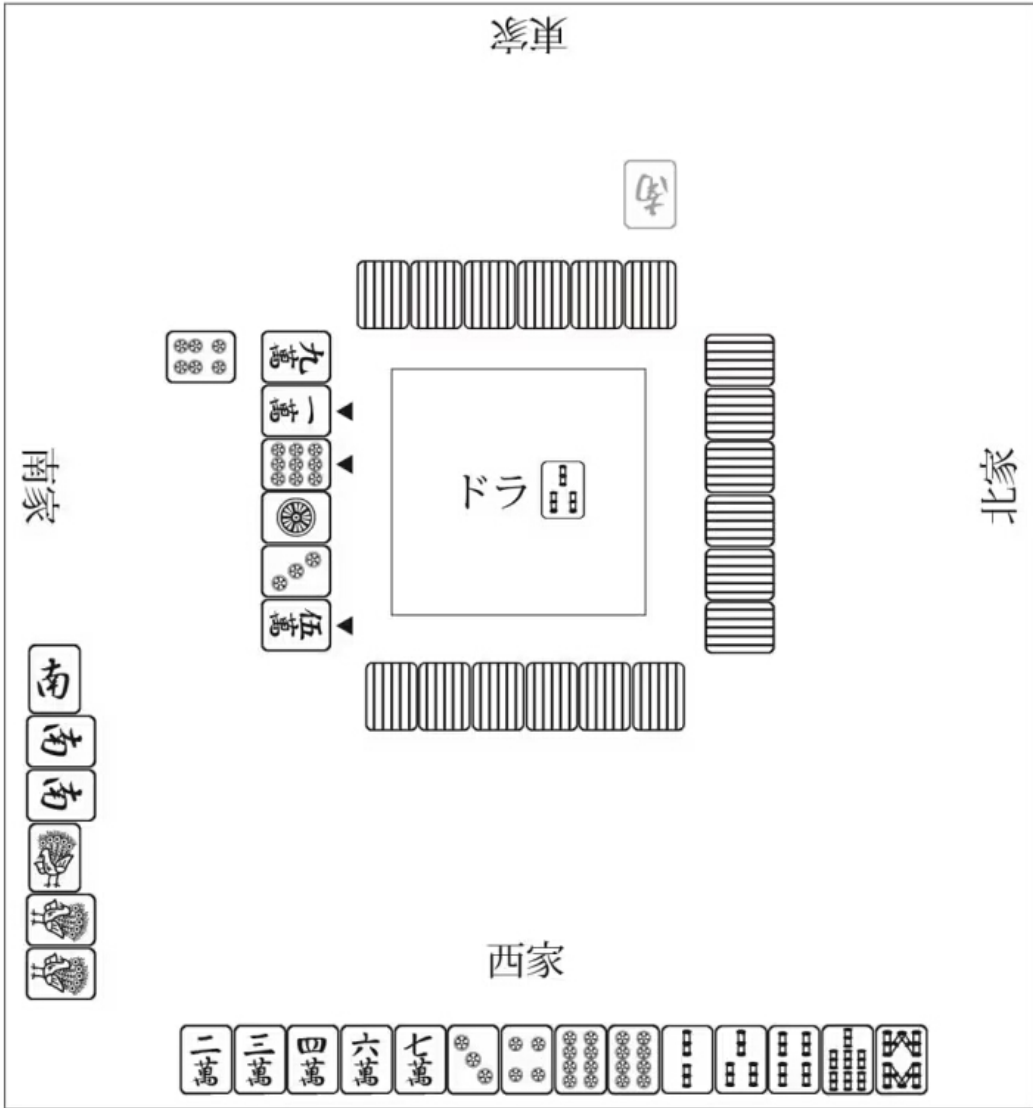
## Exercise 5 Answer

Answer: Discard 4m.

The opponent's final discard is 1p, so their waiting tile is... but that's not the focus of this question. The opponent has called chi on the East wind, clearly reaching the alert line. At the same time, this is the second row with two calls, which is about the time to start suspecting a win.

In contrast, your hand is entirely composed of tiles with limited potential for scoring unless you make a concealed triple. The value of your hand is completely insufficient to counterbalance the risk of feeding a win to the opponent. Clearly, it's better to choose to fold here.

Discarding the South wind could be considered a decent choice for beginners. However, almost all tiles here are likely to be discarded, so to guard against the possibility of the players on your left and right declaring a reach, it would be better to start discarding from 4m. Exercise 6



The player ahead of you has just called pong on South and discarded 6p. Carefully observe the player's discard pattern and melds, and formulate the strategy for this hand, and choose your discard.

## Exercise 6 Answer

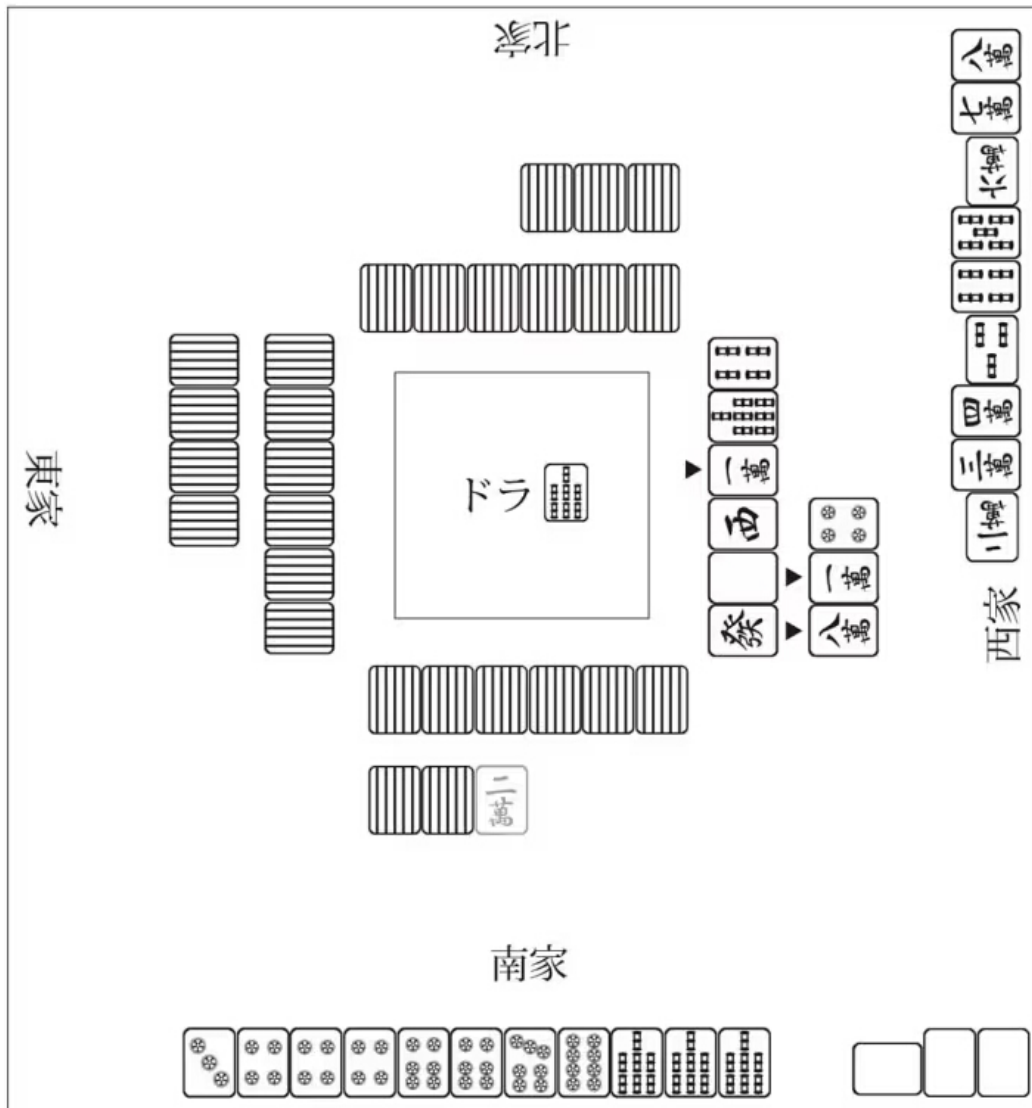
Answer: Discard 78s.

Observing the player's melds and discard pattern, it's evident that they are aiming for a half flush. It was previously mentioned that half flush have relatively predictable waiting tiles, and in this case, the player hasn't discarded any of their honors, indicating a very low probability of them waiting for a win. On the other hand, in games where someone is aiming for a half flush, the win rate for corresponding suit tiles slightly decreases. This is because the player is likely to be holding a large number of bamboo tiles, and it becomes difficult for the players on the left and right to discard bamboo tiles in the middle of the game.

Therefore, it's best for your hand to aim for a waiting pattern that doesn't involve bamboo tiles. Moreover, discarding 78s from your hand not only helps to establish a fixed closed wait but also eliminates the risk of 78s being taken by the player ahead.

Having said that, the decrease in the win rate for corresponding suit tiles is only a small probability. So even if you have just a tiny bit of information suggesting that they might be waiting for a win, it's still wise to obediently discard crack or character tiles.

Exercise 7



The player after you has just called chi on 2m and discarded 4p. Your hand is waiting for a win with either 3p or 6p, with the difference in the number of tiles needed to win being insignificant. Considering the opponent's meld, should you discard 3p or 6p?

## Exercise 7 Answer

Answer: Discard 3p.

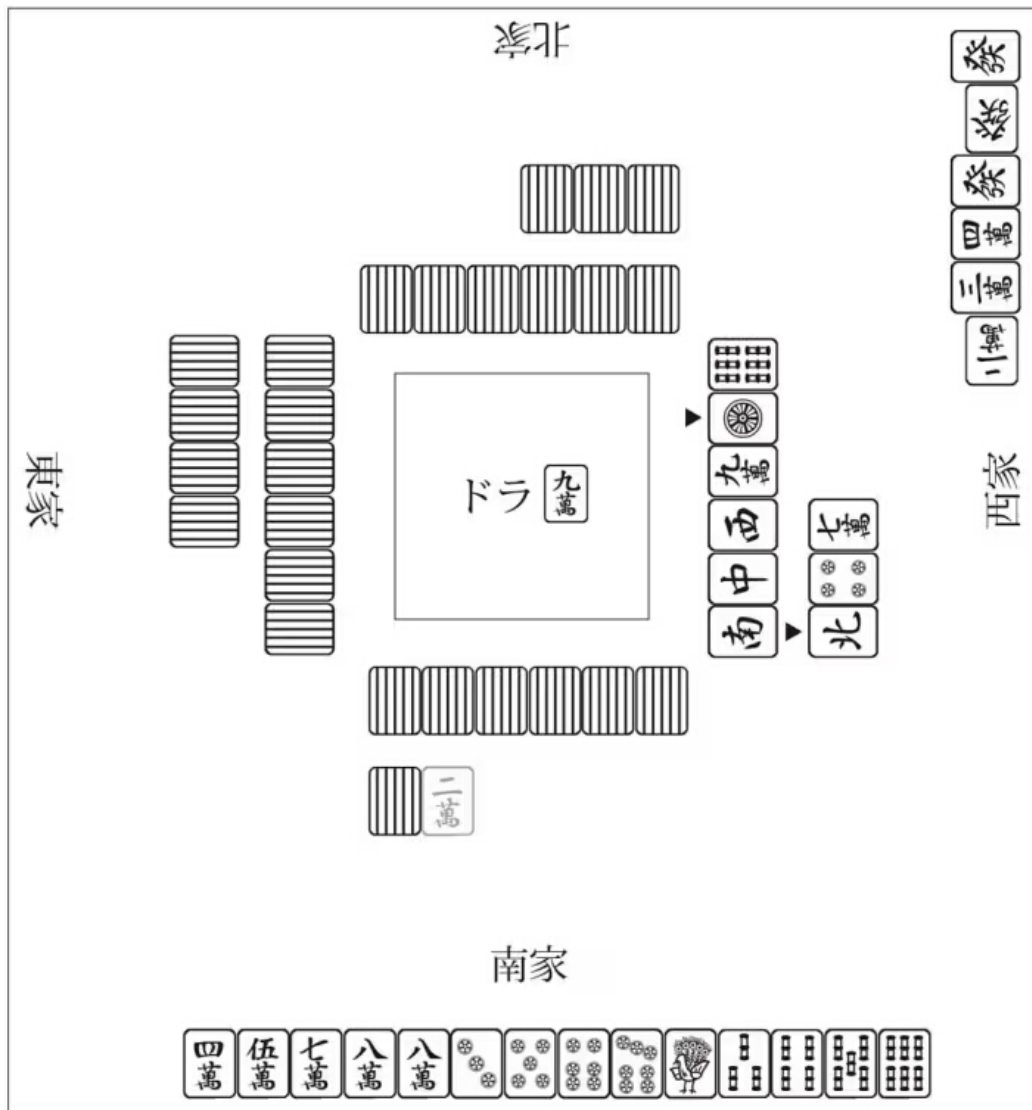
The player after you has two melds in the second row, which suggests they might be waiting for a win. Although the tile they discarded after chii was 4p, seeing all four 4p tiles completely eliminates the possibility of waiting for tiles adjacent to 4p. Therefore, it's crucial to pay extra attention to waiting patterns related to 4p.

Let's examine the waiting patterns for 3p, considering pairs and sequences. First, because all four 4p tiles are visible, waiting for a pair is not possible. Additionally, waiting for a sequence is unlikely because 334p typically chooses to discard 3p and wait for tiles on both sides.

Next, considering the waiting patterns for 6p, a fool wait is eliminated because 457p wouldn't discard 4p. However, waiting for a sequence from 466p to discard 4p and wait for 6p is common.

Therefore, there are more potential ways for 6p to win, making 3p the correct choice. This question can be generalized as follows: Waiting for tiles with a gap of two (difference of 2) from the called chi carries more risk of waiting for pairs than waiting for adjacent tiles (difference of 1).

Exercise 8



The player after you has called chi on 2m and discarded 4p, then discarded 7m from their hand. Considering this, formulate your strategy and choose your next discard. Exercise 8 Answer

Answer: Discard 7m.

Detailed analysis of hand and discard information will be covered later in Chapter 3. This question adds some supplementary information about the danger of called chi.

After calling chi to discard 4p and subsequently discarding 7m from their hand, the danger around 7m is equivalent to that around the called chi. Does the danger around 4p decrease? Not really.

Of course, the safety around 4p will increase after subsequent discards, but if it's only one hand discard, it's better to treat the dangers around 4p and 7m equally.

So, in this hand, try to strategize without discarding 3p or 8m, and discard 7m. Also, think ahead and consider the subsequent strategy. If you draw 36m, discard them in the order of 1s first and then 6s. Try to regroup and aim to wait around 3p.

If you draw 2s directly, then consider whether to discard 3p later.

## 2.9 Sidebar 2: The Charm of Mahjong Soul?

Why has Mahjong Soul risen so rapidly? Let me share my insights.

Firstly, I want to clarify that I am not a Mahjong Soul enthusiast. I just see this surge in popularity comparable to major league gaming and sweeping the mahjong world, and I want to go with the flow.

In short, aiming at the production concept of the live broadcasting industry can explain it all.

In other words, Mahjong Soul features many cute female characters, includes elements of character development, and incorporates mechanisms beyond mahjong. These are the characteristics of Mahjong Soul.

But nowadays, all kinds of mobile games are full of cute girls. If that's all there is, it may not attract people who don't play mahjong.

This aspect can be greatly improved through live gaming. Flashy special effects, characters speaking suddenly during matches, and a gacha system similar to social games are all broadcasting and live-oriented systems.

In other words, Mahjong Soul not only has elements of enjoying playing mahjong but also includes elements to attract video viewers. I think that's about it.

Readers who don't usually engage with live streaming or broadcasting culture may still not fully understand. Nowadays, when young people want to find gaming strategy information, their first reaction is not to Google it but to ask YouTubers. Today's live streaming culture is that strong. Being able to leverage this, I think Mahjong Soul's marketing strategy is indeed very clever.

So, is reality developing as Mahjong Soul anticipated? Although it's not clear yet, with the popularity of VTBs (virtual YouTubers, a trend that has been growing on YouTube in recent years with anime-style characters as virtual identities) starting to play Mahjong Soul, and viewers who have watched the live streams all rushing to play Mahjong Soul, such an overall atmosphere has already been created.

### 3 Chapter 3 Applied card reading

#### 3.1 Section 10 - The skillful techniques used by superiors

##### Block Composition Reading

Starting from this section, we'll gradually delve into more complex tile reading. First, let's explain the foundation of all complex tile readings: Block Composition Reading.

Block composition refers to rough divisions of mahjong tile areas, such as upper Manzu and lower Pinzu. Block composition reading is the technique of inferring the areas that make up the opponent's hand.

If you can read the block composition, not only can it assist in predicting waiting tiles, but it can also aid in tile discarding. When combined with other tile reading techniques, it's possible to completely grasp the opponent's hand. Block reading can slightly expand the range of the above three situations.

Focus on early discard tiles

First, we need to know that there's a universal tile reading theory: Tiles discarded early in the game are likely isolated tiles.



##### Blank self-draw discard

This refers to the example of 8m 2p in the illustration. These two tiles are likely isolated tiles, meaning there are no tiles around them for the opponent. If the opponent has shapes like 788m or 112p, although there are some exceptions, discarding 8m 2p in the early game is relatively rare.

In addition, the possibility of the opponent holding tiles around the discarded pairs of 3s (124s) and the tiles adjacent to the discarded edge joint of 89p is also low.

By integrating the above information, we can determine that the opponent likely doesn't have the upper Manzu, lower Pinzu, upper Pinzu, or lower Souzu. Also, because the hand must consist of 13 tiles, we can also say: The probability of the opponent holding tiles outside these areas (not held) is higher than usual.

Among these, particularly the 5p area left until last, it's very likely that the opponent holds tiles in the middle of the Pinzu. Summarizing this information, we can draw the following table.

	万子	饼子	索子
上	×	×	×
中	○	○	○
下	○	×	○

The circles represent areas that may be held, and it's highly likely that the opponent holds 5 pairs in these areas. The divisions into upper, middle, and lower aren't strict, and it's also possible to divide them into upper and lower sections. I usually divide them into upper, lower, and X sections for each suit, totaling 6 areas.

Additionally, honor tiles are relatively easy to discard early in the game and are likely to be formed into sets or used in conjunction with terminal tiles, making them easier to read, but this won't be discussed in detail this time.

However, honor tiles are usually considered as one area.

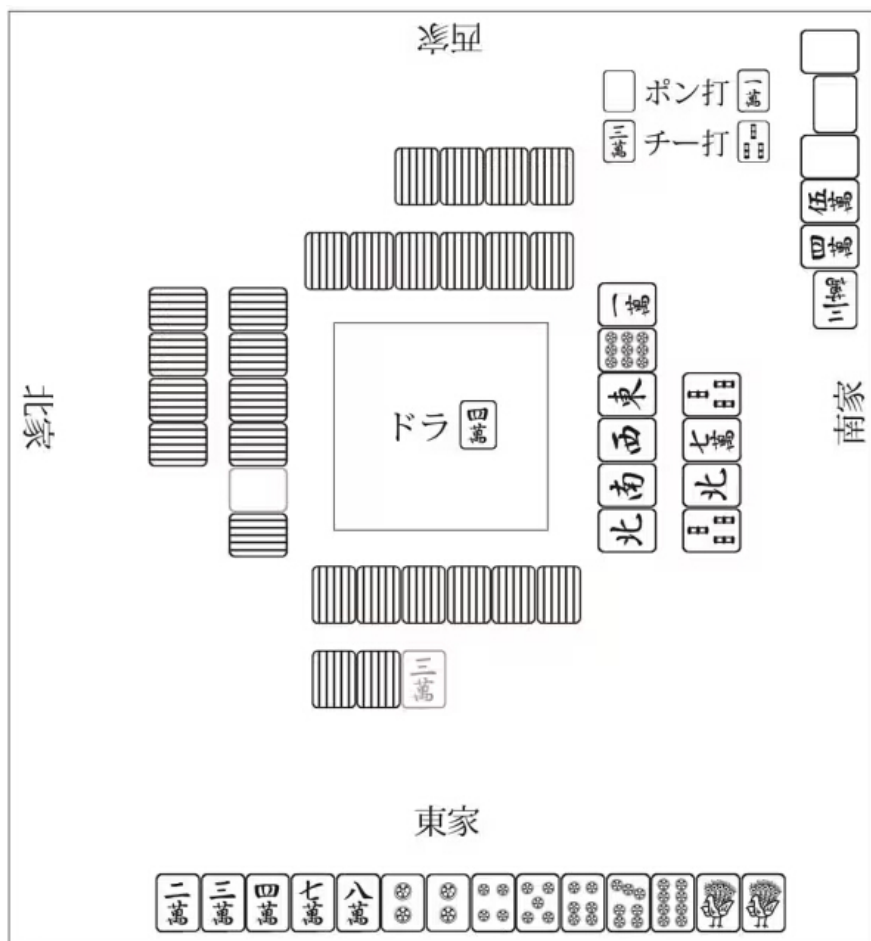


For example, consider this tile river. If all the tiles are hand discards, then 1p and 8m can be considered isolated tiles, and the area around 4p is unclear. After that, the hand discard of 9p should be related tiles (holding tiles like 77p or 88p), and 2s5m could also be related tiles.

Tiles Souzu has hardly been played, so it's possible to hold any of the Souzu tiles, and there are many cases where they hold more than two pairs of tiles in the corresponding suit. The remaining portion possibly holds an upper Pinzu joint and a joint around 4p. Both the upper and lower Manzu have been played, so it's likely that they hold a joint around 5m.

### 3.2 Section 11 Determining pairs by the order of discards.

The previous section discussed identifying the general composition of pairs by observing the opponent's entire discard sequence. There's a saying that goes, One leaf obstructs the eyes, obscuring the view of Mount Tai, assuming we're actually interested in seeing Mount Tai. In the previous section, we focused on Mount Tai; now, we'll focus on those leaves.



This time, I want to draw your attention to the situation where pairs and shaping are separated.

In the example above, after the opponent discarded 3s, they discarded North and 7m, and finally chowed to discard 3s. Even if you haven't memorized the draw and discard sequence, knowing it's a chow discard gives you valuable information:

3s is a broken pair.

North and 7m were discarded in between.

If it's a straightforward breaking of pairs, we typically assume there may be no tiles around the pair. But if pairs are broken with some time in between, it indicates that the second 3s's value is higher than both North and 7m.

In other words, there are related tiles in hand, but it's highly unlikely to be a closed two-sided wait like 34s because forming a concealed triplet with the two 3s in the discard pile would have occurred when the first 3s was discarded. In such a case, the remaining common scenario is shapes like 1133s or 3355s, where one 3s is discarded, leaving one as reinforcement for other pairs.

Therefore, in the diagram, instead of pursuing a tile without terminals by discarding 1s, it's necessary to discard 2p instead.

When breaking shaping, beware of two-sided waits.

When breaking pairs separately, two-sided waits are essentially negated, making it easier to determine the tile for winning. In situations where pairs and shaping are separated, the possible breaking patterns may be slightly more complex.

For example, breaking 8p followed by any tile, and then breaking 6p for shaping, could result in common shapes as shown in the diagram.

原来的形状	剩下的形状	危险牌

Apart from these, there are more complicated consecutive shapes, but we should first remember the patterns in the diagram, so we can instantly recall them when encountering situations of separating shaping in actual play.

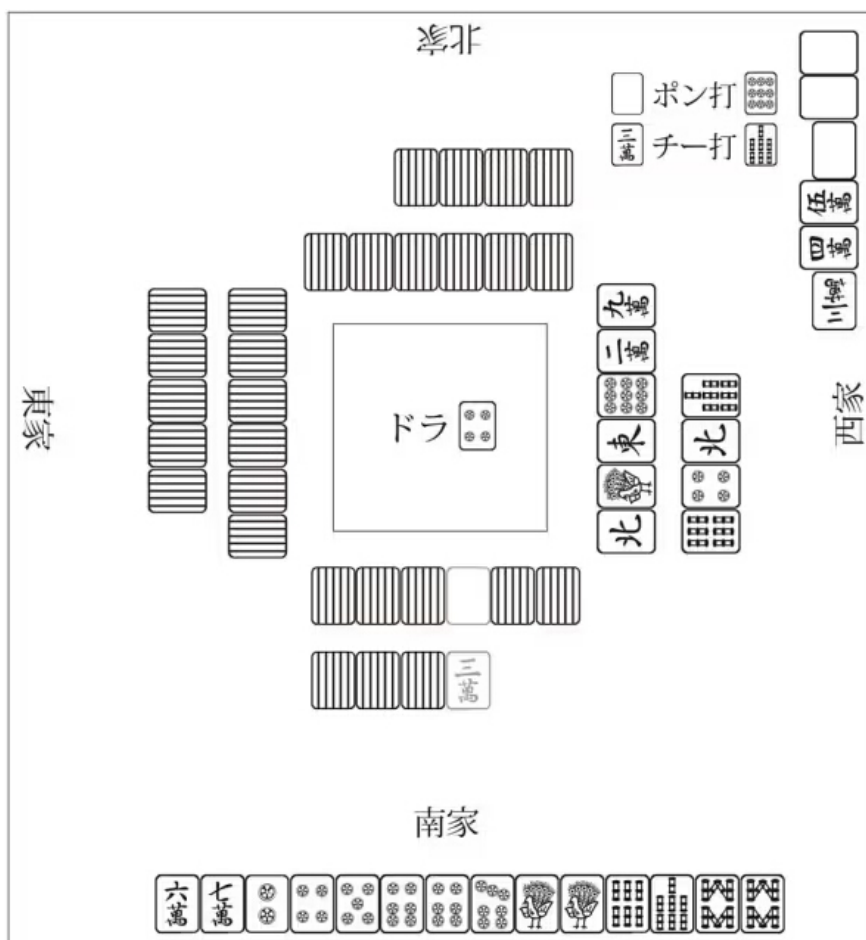
Helping remember the draw and discard sequence.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, to remember the draw and discard sequence, you need to learn about reading tiles. And this section is precisely about such content.

If it's just the information about discarding 6p, you might forget it after a few turns. But if you can instantly read, Just two turns ago, they discarded 8p, so what's left in their hand should be shapes like 56p or 44p, this kind of thinking will serve to reinforce memory.

### 3.3 Section 12 Pay attention to disassembling double-sided pairs

We often use special tile sequences to read the tiles, and among these special sequences, separating double-sided pairs provides particularly valuable information, so it's essential to pay extra attention to such situations. This section will summarize the tile reading related to separating double-sided pairs.



For example, in the illustration, there's a sequence of separating 6s first, followed by any tile, and then 7s. The most common scenario is having repeating tiles like 6677s, in which case 58s can indeed be considered as the key tile. If one hasn't won yet, discarding 1s to wait for better tiles can be a better choice.

Purely separating double-sided pairs

Now, what if there's no gap between 67s and it's a continuous discard? In such a case, it's still possible to have repeating tiles, so 58s isn't safe. When there's a consideration of separating pairs, the tiles left in hand must be better than 67s. There are various reasons: holding valuable tiles, holding red tiles, having three-sided waits, or having high remaining tiles, among others.

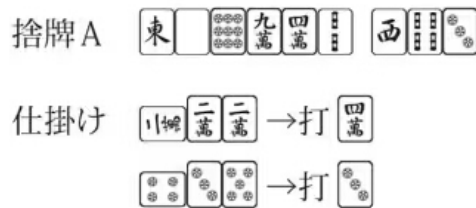
Sometimes, we can use this to definitively rule out some waiting shapes.



### 3.4 Section 13 : Case Studies on Safe Discards Around Chows

Simple theories like XX is dangerous have too many exceptions. To effectively use tile reading in advanced gameplay, we must improve the accuracy of our tile reading, understand the logic of tile reading, find possible exceptions from discards, and comprehensively apply various combinations of tile reading.

The previous section introduced the simple theory of dangerous chows, and this section will explain the logic behind dangerous chows.



For example, in the illustration, when the opponent discards 3p after calling, and 3p is also part of a meld, naturally we cannot say that the area around 3p is dangerous. In this situation, what cards can be considered particularly dangerous? Usually, there are two kinds.

- (1) Tiles in areas where pairs may exist
- (2) The tile discarded before the current one

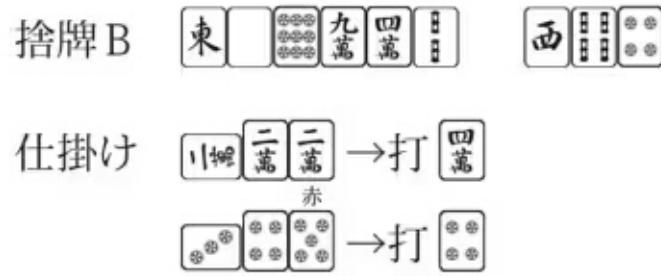
Let's go through them in order. Firstly, the first kind, look at the discard, if you have the characters, it should be a region above 4m. Since 9m has been discarded, if waiting on both sides, it could be 58m. Then the upper half of the bamboo tiles hasn't been discarded, it could be held, making 5869s a more dangerous area. This part can be roughly inferred without memorizing the hand's discards.

If you can remember the hand's discards, you should also pay attention to the second kind, the tile discarded before the current one. Suppose the previous discard was 4s. At this point, the area around 4s can be considered dangerous. The reasons are as follows:



Suppose the opponent has this hand, fixing the two sides of 445s and leaving foolish 335p is efficient. In this example, the meld is foolish, so it's entirely possible for the opponent to be waiting on both sides around the previous discard of 4s. Of course, it's also possible that the tiles around 4s formed a pair before being discarded, but considering the two sides around 4s as a possible danger is not wrong.

Ultimately, when the meld is good, the situation changes. The following example is typical.



Similar to the previous example, the final meld becomes 40p, waiting on 3p, and discarding 4p.

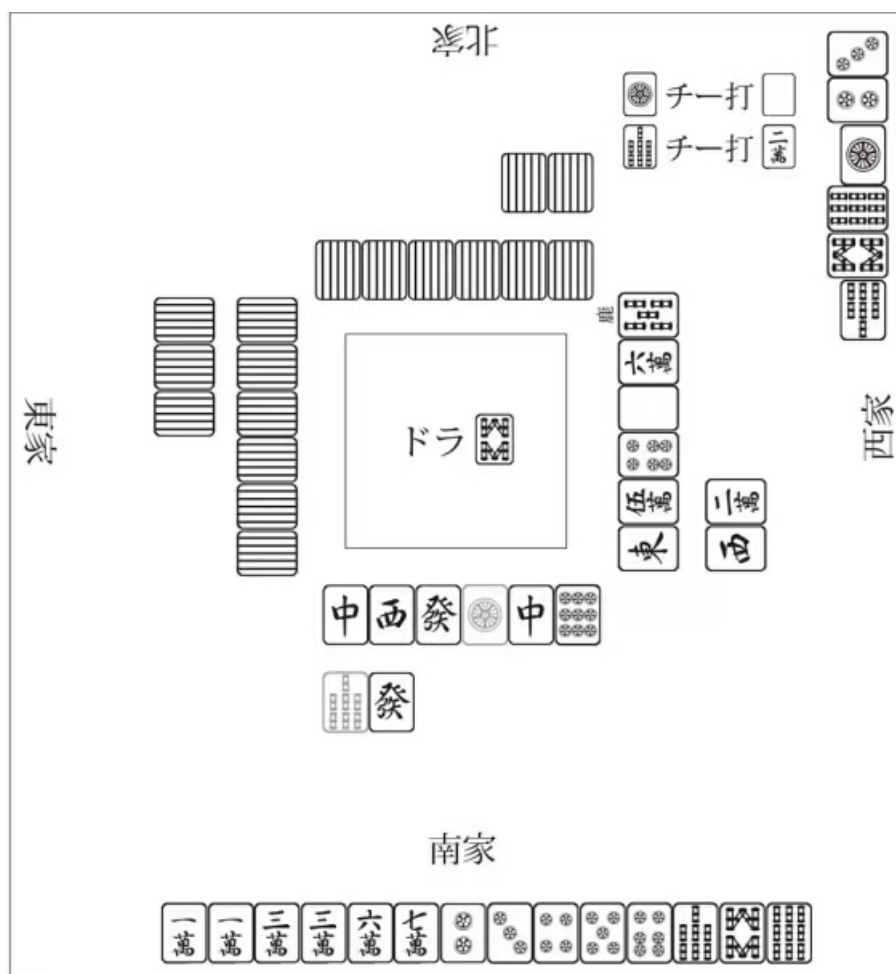


Here, 4p in 440p was originally a low-value tile because if 4p or 8s are melded, it requires discarding a red dora tile. Therefore, 4p should be discarded first. Nevertheless, 440p is left until the end, naturally leading to the idea that the area around 4s is irrelevant to waiting. At this point, the only potential waiting candidates would be tiles in the region where joints may exist.

This may sound somewhat complex, but the key is to infer the shape of the area around the previous discard based on the relationship between the final meld joints, final meld discard, and previous discard before the final meld.

Combining Yakuhai (Honors) with tile sequences can yield more information.

The reliability of tile reading depends on the amount of information obtained. We've learned some theories before, and if these theories are combined, they can have a greater effect. Let's look at a case study.



All the honor tiles are visible, and it seems like the opponent has all of them. It may seem dangerous to discard 13m around the eaten 2m, but in reality, there's a high probability that 3m can be played. If the opponent indeed has all the honor tiles, the possible shapes around 2m could be 112m or 122m.

The former is a double pung waiting on 1m and another tile, while the latter is a side weight on 3m.



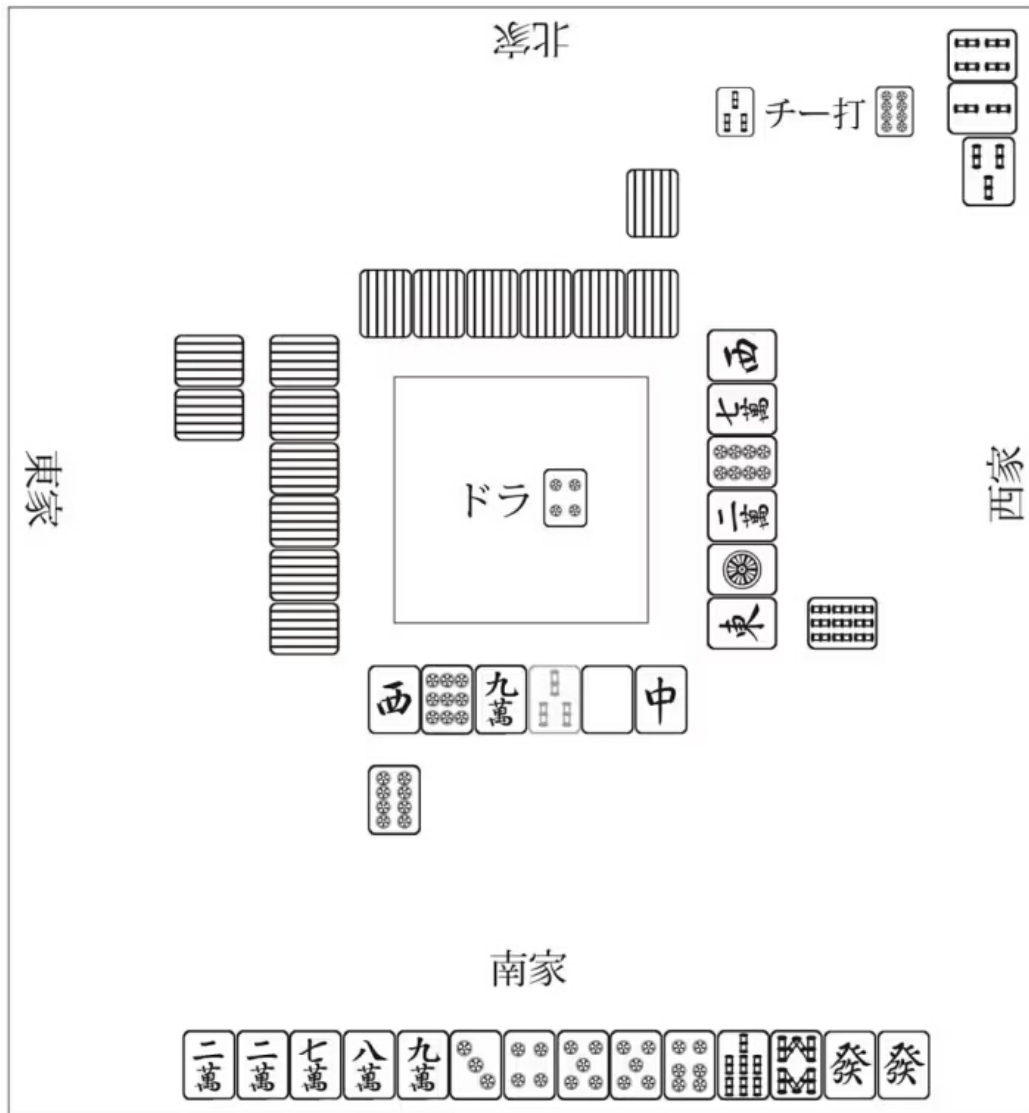
However, would everyone leave the 2m tile here? After discarding the West wind, even if we draw the 2m tile, it wouldn't contribute to any scoring hands. So, typically, we would leave the safe West wind tile and discard the 2m tile. Furthermore, it's more common for the 2m tile from the 112m sequence to be discarded, overwhelmingly so. By the way, there's a situation where the honor tiles haven't appeared yet, which might look like this:



Please note, in this situation, it's possible for the player to wait on 3m after discarding the West wind tile.

### 3.5 Section 14: Seeing Through the True Enemy

Seeing Through the Secondary Draw after Discards In the second chapter, we mentioned: Inferring the hand composition of a player who has melded is the first step in tile reading regarding melds. In practice, we occasionally encounter situations where what seemed to be a tile suited for the honor tile pair isn't actually the case. This section will discuss the technique of seeing through these seemingly difficult-to-distinguish melds.



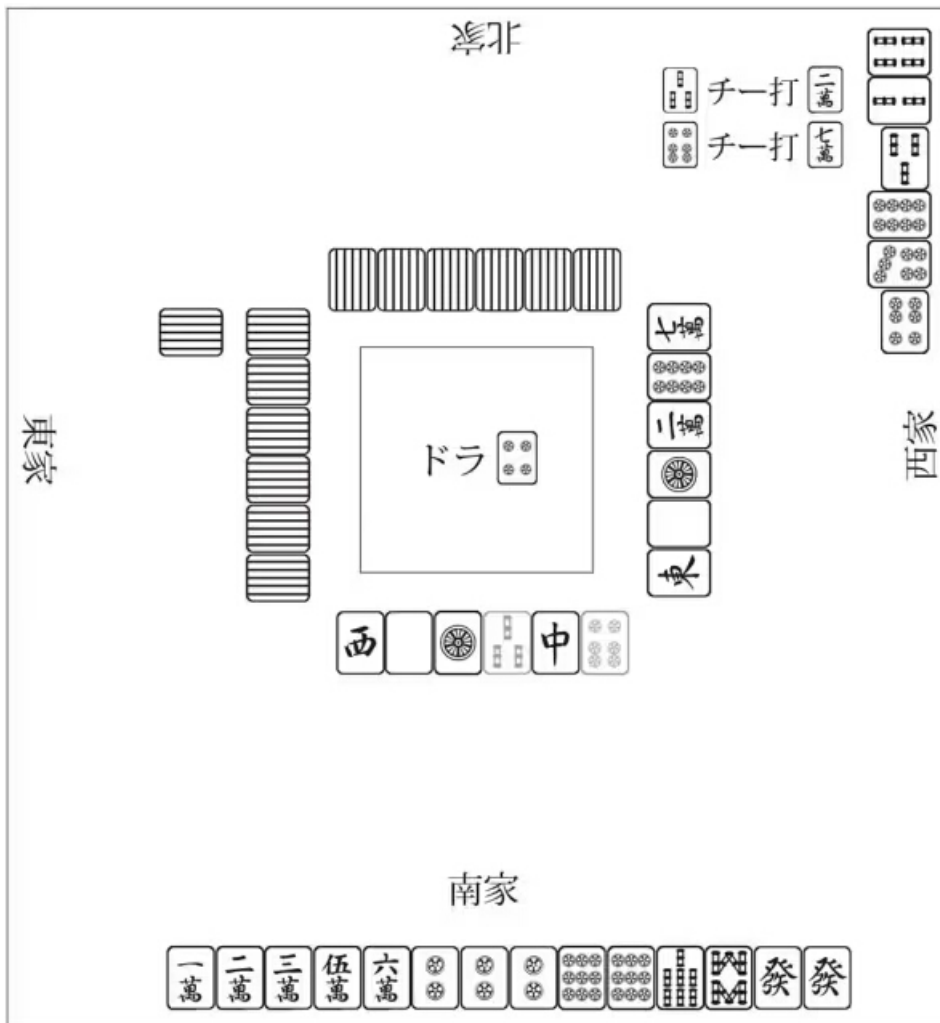
Look at the illustration. For beginners in meld reading, it's reasonable to assume that the opponent, who melded the 24s after eating the 3s, has a hand without honor tiles. However, if you want to learn more advanced tile reading techniques, it's necessary to pay attention to the secondary draw. For example, in the case where the 9s is discarded after eating the 8p, upon seeing this 9s, one should have an epiphany.

In the example, the opponent discarded the West wind before the 9s, so we know that the 9s wasn't left as a

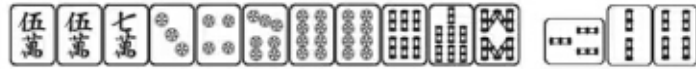
safe tile. The 9s is a part of the hand that can be utilized = it's not an honor tile pair. While the player's hand has a possibility of winning with a pair of Green Dragons, considering that all other honor tiles have been discarded, it's better to play it safe and discard the 2m tile.

Remember the Discomfort of the Previous Discard

Next, let's do a practice problem, combining the content of this section with the previous section on paying attention to the previous tile drawn.



This time, the meld from the player on the right feels off, making one suspect that it might not be a hand without honor tiles. Why is this said? The key lies in the previous discard of the meld, which is the 8p. The 8p was discarded before melding the 78 chow with the 6p, meaning the 8p was drawn from a sequence like 788p. If the opponent was playing with a concealed hand, this would be a normal move. However, for a melded hand, especially one without honor tiles, it's impossible to draw the 8p from the sequence 788. When the player on the right ate the 3s, they should have already determined a certain hand composition. If this composition includes an honor tile pair:



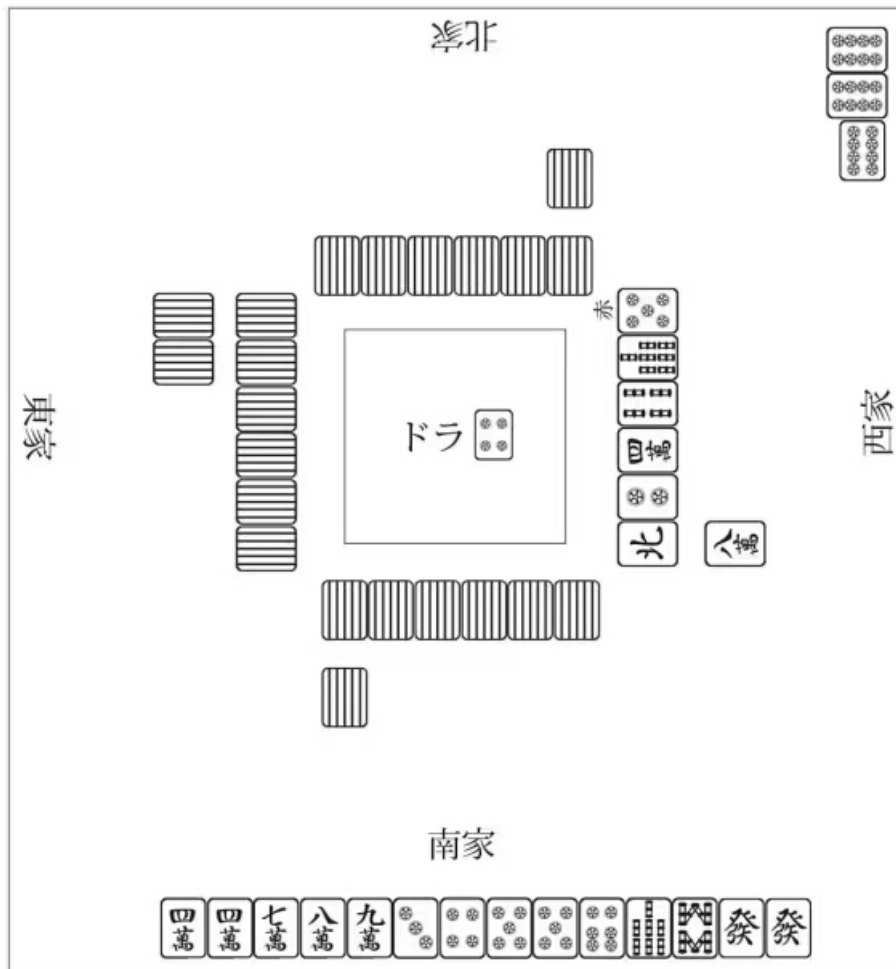
For example, in such a hand, it would be more prudent to discard the 7m or 7p rather than the 8p. So, this hand should have a certain hand composition other than honor tile pairs.

Once we grasp this point, we can manipulate the game. Naturally, we won't feed the player on the right with the Green Dragon. Additionally, when they reach tenpai, we might intentionally discard the Green Dragon, prompting a scenario where both sides engage in an aggressive battle. Being conscious of the previous discard just before the meld has a significant impact on performance.

### 3.6 Section 15: Tile Reading in High-Density Tile Rivers

How Does the Opponent Form a 5-Pair Hand?

In the previous section, we discussed reading hands by observing specific discards, revealing hands that appear to lack honor tiles but actually don't. This section will explain how to observe the opponent's overall tile river and identify the melded hand composition.



Take the example diagram. Regarding the meld from the player on the right, let's analyze their joint formations. The tiles played early in the game, 2p 4m 4s, represent an isolated set. Since the 0p tile has been discarded, there are no tiles around the 5p tile. Following the theory of tile reading, we end up with the following conclusion:

	万子	饼子	索子
上	○	碰	△
中	×	×	×
下	×	×	×

Simply by looking at the number tiles, it seems impossible to form a 5-joint hand. But with 13 tiles in the opponent's hand, they will certainly try to form a 5-joint hand using these tiles. Where would the remaining pairs be then? Naturally, we think of the areas not indicated in the table, meaning the opponent might hold honor tiles.

#### Beware of Pair Hands in High-Density Tile Rivers

In cases like the example above, observing discards suggests that the opponent might not have enough space to form a 5-joint hand, with many tiles forming pairs. If the opponent values honor tiles and ignores the fundamental principle of hand development, their tile river's density naturally increases.

Especially in the example provided, if the opponent has called the 8p, it's highly likely they have pairs. We can consider: If our hand is still slow, we won't easily discard honor tiles; if we have to discard one from 6, 7, 8, or 9, we should choose the one less likely to form a triplet. Just generating this line of thought can frustrate the opponent.

However, it's important to note that the tile ultimately discarded is just one of the opponent's 3 or 4 tiles. Don't be overly cautious.

#### Key Points of This Section

For middle tiles melded but not forming honor tiles, the primary discards leading to this conclusion are primarily as follows:

Discarding honor tiles after melding. Deliberately leaving behind tiles that seem to enhance a one-sided wait, opting to discard tiles that strengthen the hand's vertical development. Discarding middle tiles in a high-density tile river, making it difficult to form a 5-pair hand.

### 3.7 Chapter 3 Summary

It's essential to pay attention to specific tiles and sequences, as well as to read the general composition of pairs from all discards. Combining these with other tile reading techniques can reveal a lot of information.

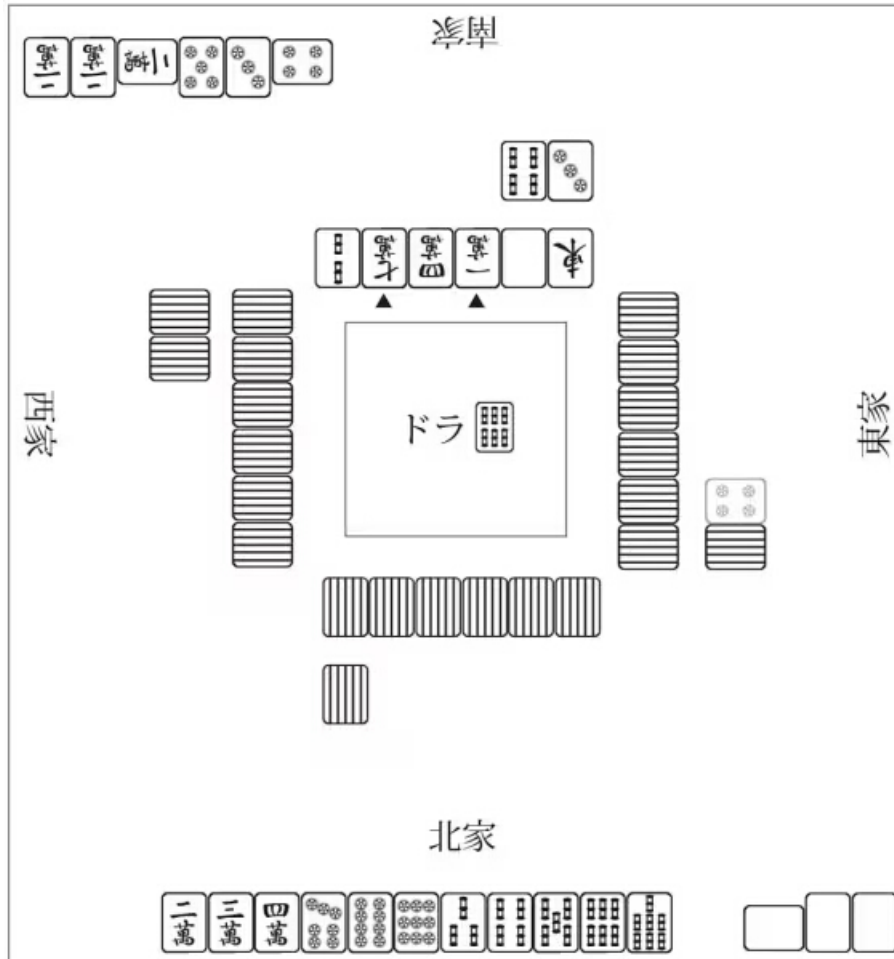
Breaking shaping and breaking pairs yield a particularly large amount of information. So when encountering these situations, try to think about what information these sequences might imply. For online mahjong players, it's advisable to review game records after the match to understand why certain shaping decisions were made.

Although we have theories about the danger of discarding tiles around chi-waiting shapes, many times, considering the previous discards, discarding around a chi-waiting shape may not necessarily be dangerous.

Actions like mistakenly assuming it's a terminal discard when it's actually a honor tile or disguising as a mixed suit hand when it's actually a regular hand can often be deciphered through careful observation of discarding sequences.

### 3.8 Solutions to exercise 9-17

#### Exercise 9



Question: Your hand is tenpai. You need to choose between waiting on 36s or 47s. However, with the opponent having two calls, it wouldn't be surprising if they were also tenpai (eating 4p and discarding 4s). Since you really want to win this hand, which tile should you discard for safety?

Answer: Discard 3s.

The intention of this question is to make you consider the safety of the tiles around the one you discard, based on the eaten tiles and the previous discard. In this case, the opponent's previous discard was 3p, indicating an early discard from a sequence like 335p. Choosing to discard the 3s, which reinforces the potentially dangerous sequence 445s, while keeping the potentially safer 445s, is highly unlikely. Therefore, if there's a chance of being ronned, it's likely to be on a tile that reinforces the foolish wait. While there's a possibility of 24s being in the wait, it's more common for such tiles to be used for a double pon rather than waiting on a single wait. Therefore, it's more prudent to be wary of the possibility of discarding 4s and waiting for 7s.



Answer: Discard 1s (assuming no White Dragon discard, semi-isolated tiles, and hand shape considered)

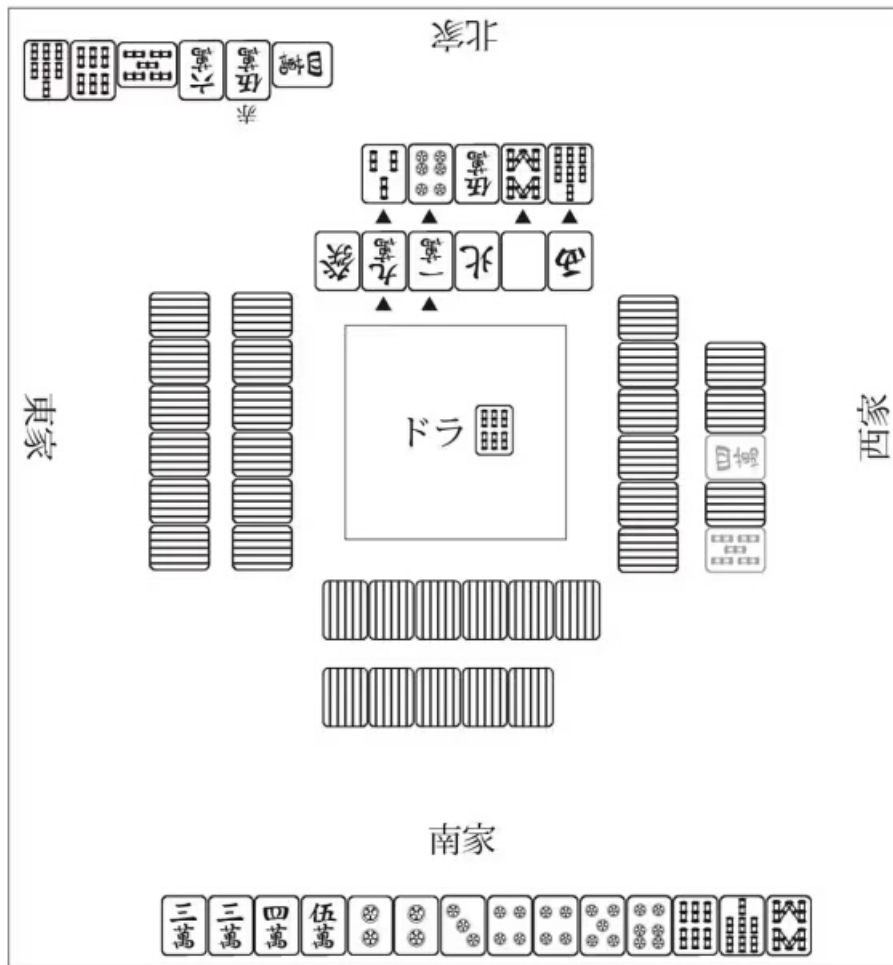
This is supplementary content regarding the situation of waiting for a tile after discarding the White Dragon. The key point lies in the sequence of the South Wind and the Red Dragon. Since the tile discarded for a chi or pong is the Red Dragon, whether the South Wind is discarded from the hand or drawn from the wall is not crucial. Regardless of whether it's discarded from the hand or drawn, there will definitely be a choice between the South Wind and the Red Dragon in the turn when the South Wind is discarded.

The opponent has discarded 7s near the tile sequence and then 3s; their hand should be relatively organized. If it's a hand with sufficient joints for completion, usually, they won't leave a lone Red Dragon but will choose to keep a safe tile like the South Wind.



For hands like this, the main strategy is waiting for a tile after discarding the White Dragon, but if you can draw the Red Dragon, you can break up the closed wait and create a more stable double-waiting tile situation after discarding the White Dragon. It's quite common to want to keep the Red Dragon in this situation. Of course, it's also possible that the opponent forgot to check the tile sequence and carelessly discarded the South Wind, so don't blindly trust this tile reading. However, in the example, with one's own hand being mostly low-value tiles, the mindset of feeling like the opponent probably has isolated tiles, so regardless, let's discard a White Dragon first is quite risky.

Exercise 11



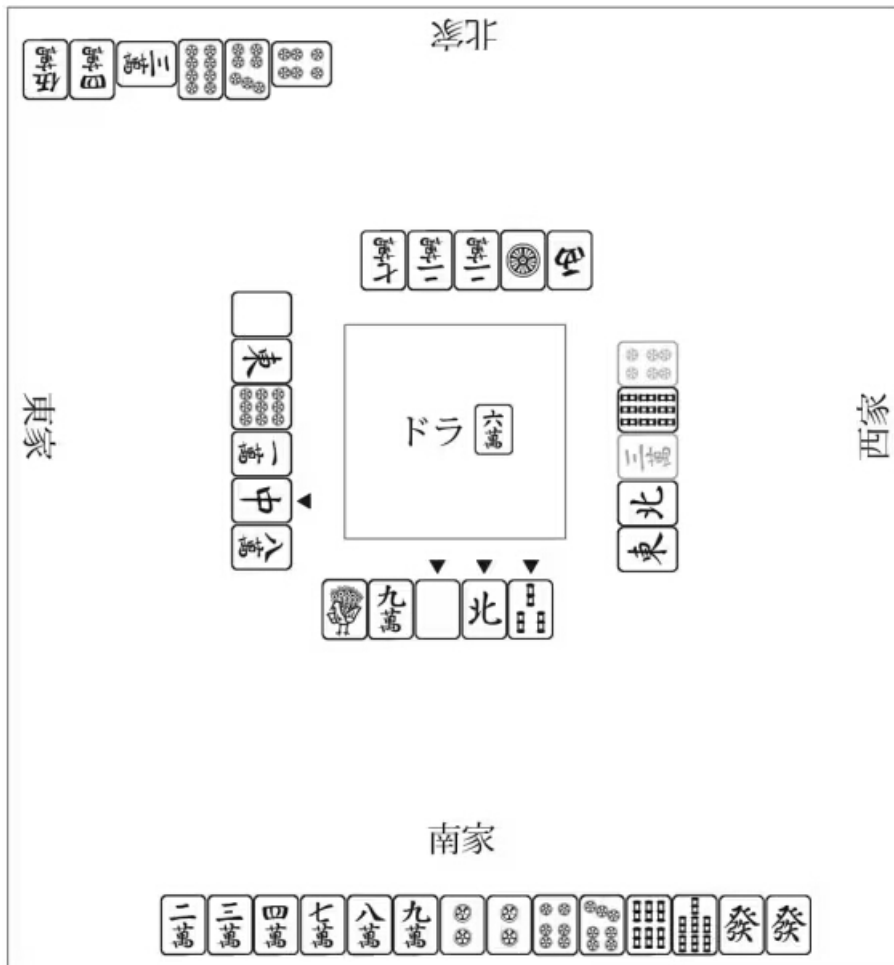
Question: After eating 4m and discarding 5m, you draw and discard 6p and 3s. Considering the opponent's melds, assume an offensive stance and choose the safest tile to discard.

Answer: Discard 3m, declare Riichi.

Reading the opponent's melds can indicate they might be waiting on Pin tiles. Pin tiles pose a high threat. Which Pin tile is dangerous? Since there are four 6p already played, the Pin tiles are disconnected. If the opponent is tileless and waiting on Pin tiles on both sides, it's only possible to wait on 25p.

Of course, they could also have a pair of 8p and be waiting on other suits, but let's err on the side of caution and choose to discard 3m. Just like the example showed, sometimes we can use tiles with four already played to identify especially dangerous waits.

Exercise 12



Question: What is the opponent's hand? Determine the strategy for this round and your current discard.

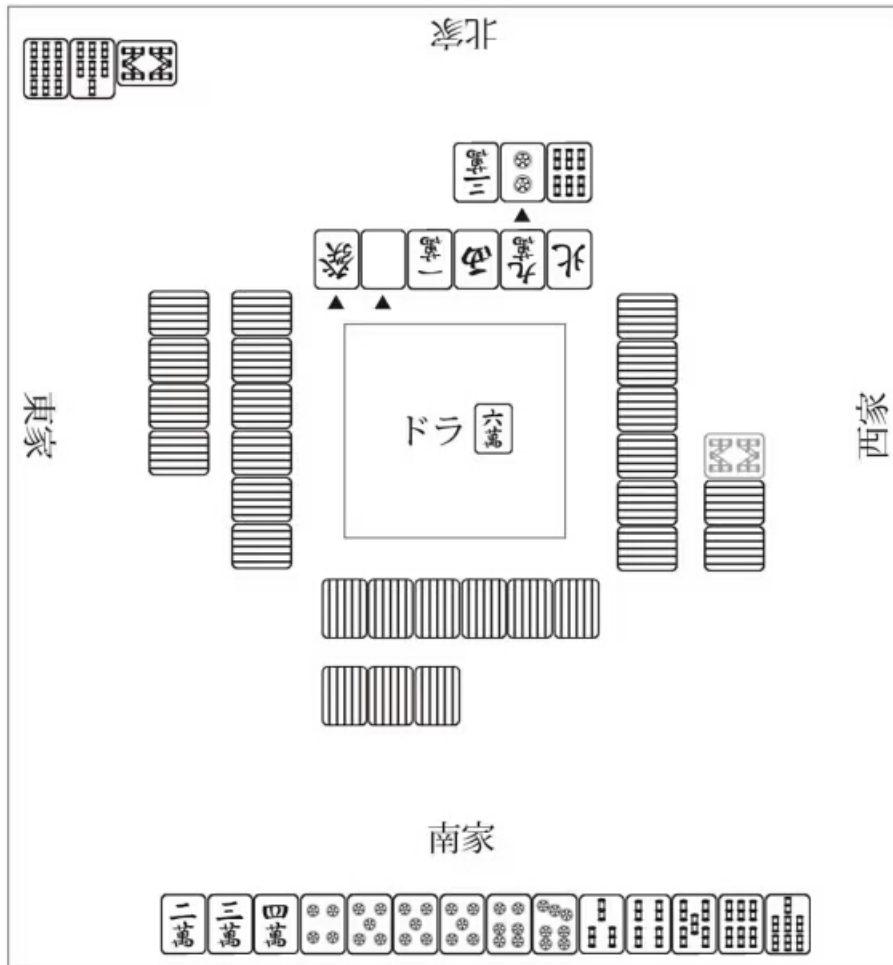
Answer: Discard 2p.

At first glance, it seems like the opponent is going for a tile pattern with no terminals or honors, but breaking apart the pair of 2m is quite unusual. After they called for the 3m, if they were only going for a tile pattern with no terminals or honors, then the value of 22m should be higher compared to the narrow wait of 78p. In other words, it can be inferred that they may have a hand beyond a tile pattern with no terminals or honors.

In the example, except for honors, all other potential tiles for a yaku have been discarded, so keeping the pair of honors as a potential head is reasonable.

In fact, if they have a pair of honors, then the value of 2m as a potential set should also be high. Therefore, the possibility of a three-color hand exists, or the second discarded 2m could be a slide, among other possibilities. The key point of this problem lies in the potential of a yaku forming after a discard. It would be inappropriate to assume, With two sets of middle tiles called, they should be going for a pattern without terminals, and overlook the possibility of a yaku forming after a discard.

Exercise 13



Opponent calls for a tile to complete a sequence and discards 3m. Considering the opponent's potential yaku, decide on the tile to discard.

### Exercise 13 Solution

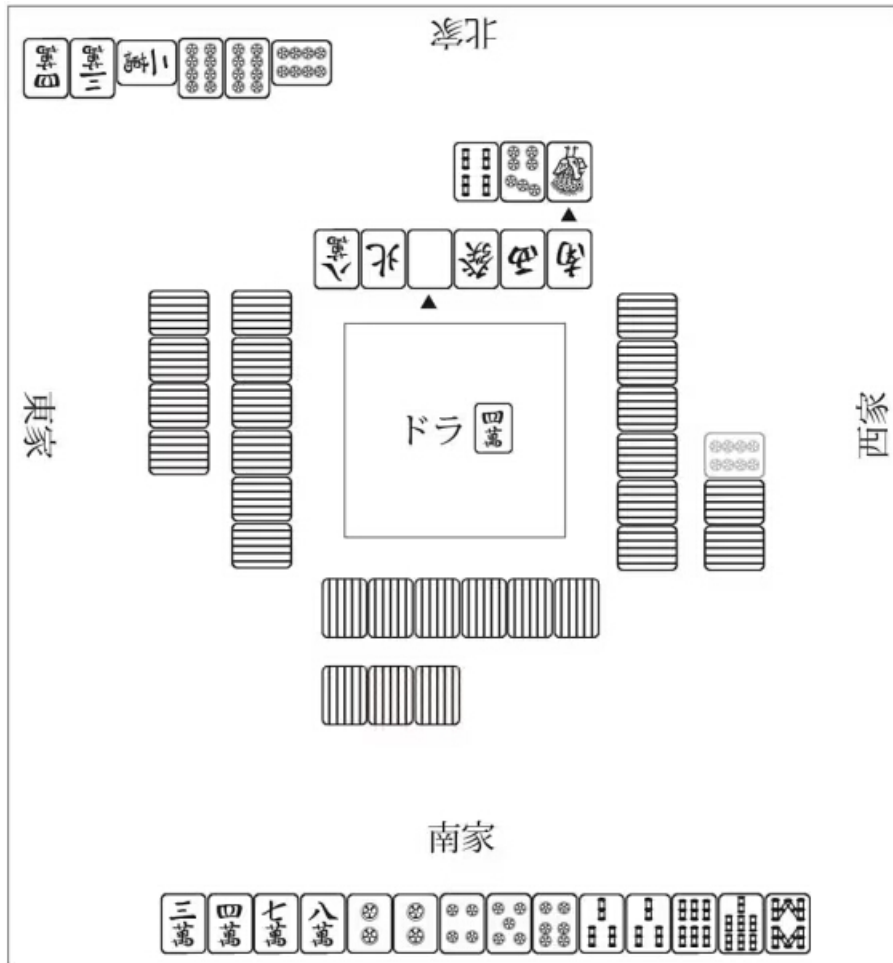
Answer: Discard 4p and declare riichi.

If it were a simple sequence completion with 79s, the most common yaku would be honitsu.

However, what we should focus on here is the 6s in the tile sequence. If the opponent had a honitsu hand, they wouldn't intentionally turn both sides into a pair, so they wouldn't discard 6s. Therefore, we can understand that 789s is an important part of their hand, indicating a potential sanshoku, half outside, or full straight yaku.

Moreover, they wouldn't consistently discard 6s while the hand shape is not fully determined yet, indicating they might not be fixed on discarding 6s. Therefore, even if they have called a tile, there's still a possibility of them waiting for a winning tile. With our hand having two options, 4p wouldn't lead to sanshoku or full straight, so discard 4p and declare riichi.

Exercise 14



Opponent calls pon on 8p and discards 4s. Assuming the opponent is tenpai, choose the safest discard with an attacking mindset.

Exercise 14 Solution

Answer: Discard 3s.

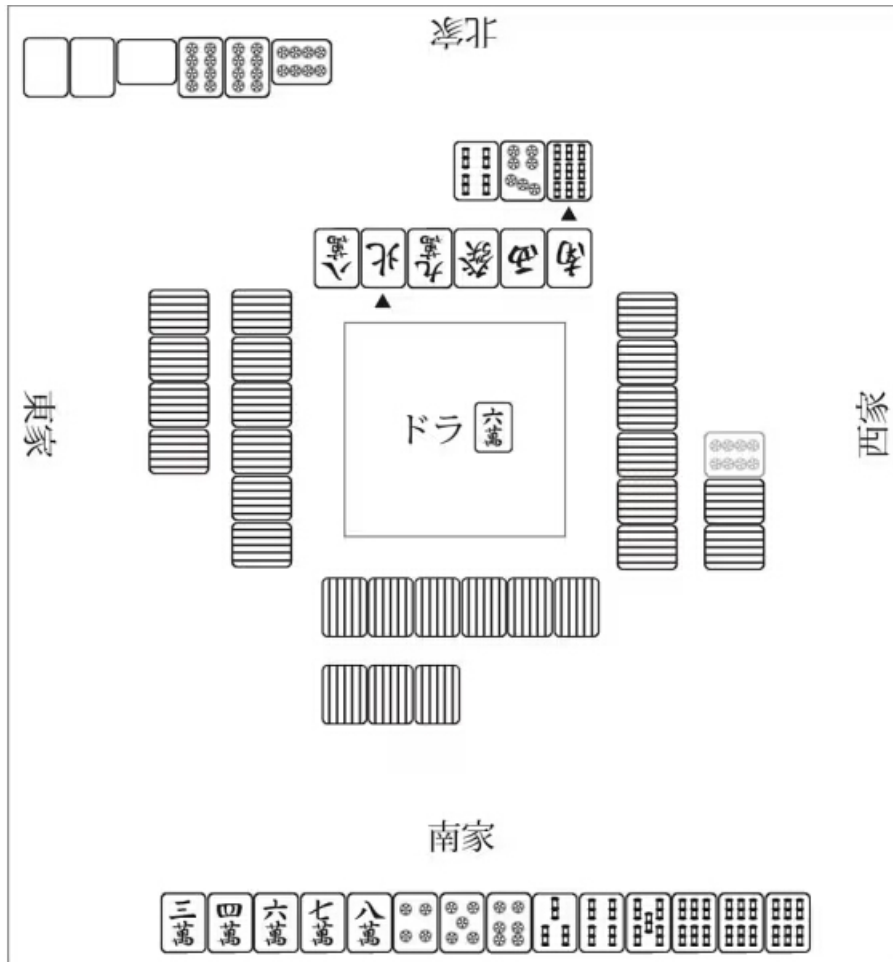
This problem belongs to the application issues not mentioned in the main text: Examples of safe discards around a called pon.

The opponent discards 7p before calling pon on 8p. Because they have already called a tile, it's unlikely they're fixed on pairs. This situation is commonly seen in cases like the one shown below.



In a scenario like this, discarding 7p creates a complete one-away tenpai hand. In this case, discarding around the called pon to form a joint and waiting for another tile becomes more common. Conversely, areas outside of 4s are dangerous if they might contain potential joints, with the lower part of the manzu suit and the upper part of the souzu suit being the most dangerous. Therefore, it's safer to discard 3s.

Exercise 15



Opponent calls pon on 8p and discards 4s. Consider the opponent's potential yaku and waiting tiles, then choose a tile to discard.

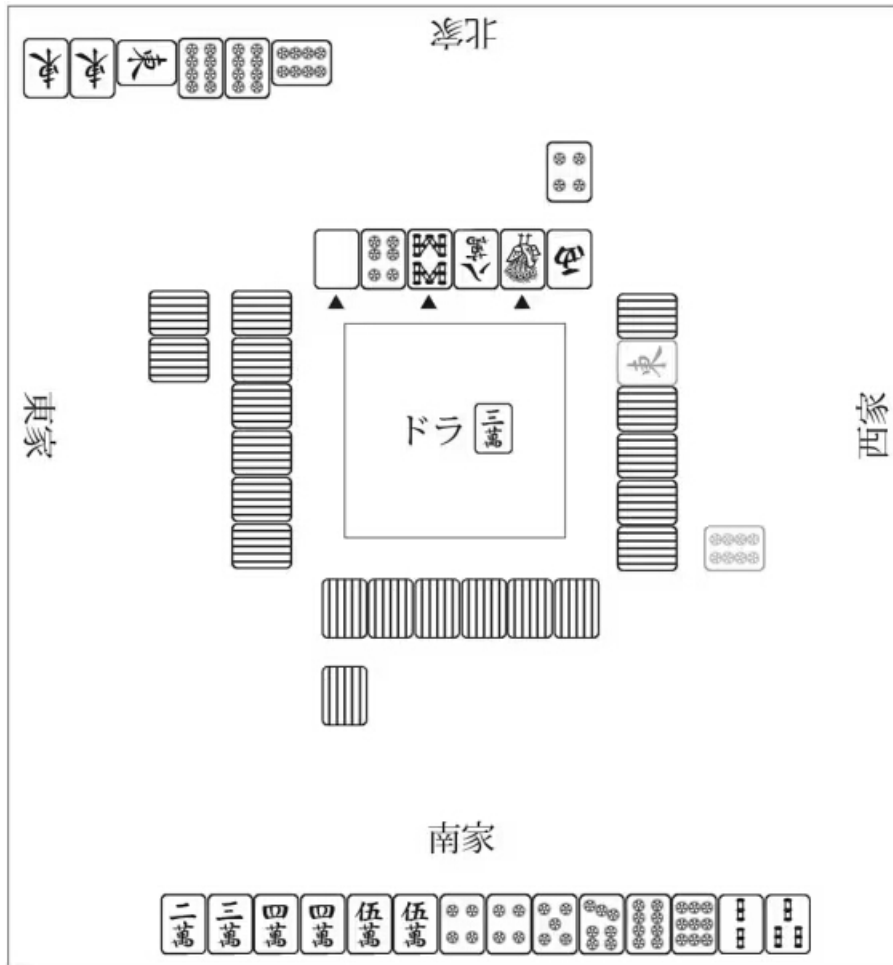
### Exercise 15 Solution

Answer: Discard 6s and declare riichi.

The tile sequence is the same as problem 14, but the second discarded 2m forms a pair. Like the previous problem, the proportion of 4s being used as a pair is relatively high. The difference lies in the pon being called with a white dragon tile, which introduces the possibility of forming a pair of honors. If it were a pair of honors, then early discarding of 7p and waiting for a 4s from 334s to complete a double pair is also possible. Therefore, in this problem, 6s with three tiles in our hand wouldn't be discarded as a double pair, so discard 6s.

Some might hesitate to declare anpon, but considering the opponent's tile sequence, they wouldn't likely be waiting for both sides or a single tile, making 6s a safe discard.

Exercise 16



Opponent calls pon on East and discards 6p, then calls pon on 8p and discards 4p. Considering their moves, assess the danger level of 5p.

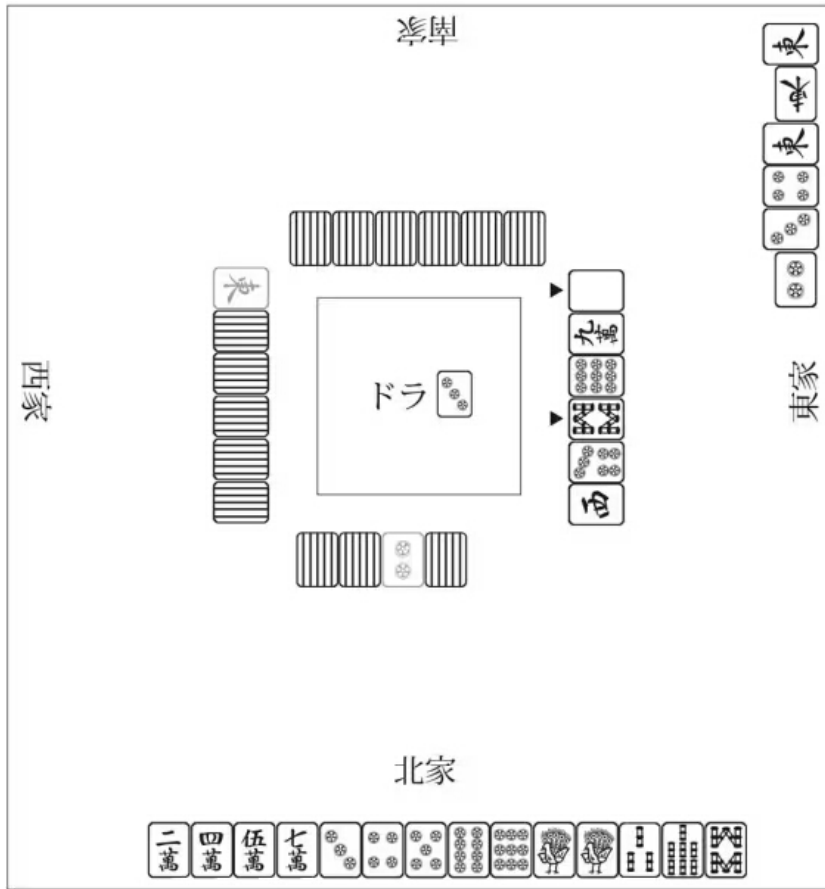
Exercise 16 Solution:

Answer: Discard 5p.

To conclude: Discarding 5p is likely to be safe. Typically, the tile sequence of 6p, white dragon, and 4p often originates from 3446p, ultimately leaving 34p in hand. But let's focus on the pon on 8p and the discard of 6p. When you hold 344688p, would you discard 6p? Generally, you would discard 4p to keep both sides open. Therefore, it's rare for them to be waiting for 25p.

2p might form a double pair, and it's highly likely that the opponent doesn't have 5p. Hence, it's probable that 5p will be safe to discard. In continuous pon calls like this, situations where the same suit tiles are called often provide more information compared to other discards.

Exercise 17:



Next player calls pon on East and discards 7p, then calls pon on 2p and discards 9m. Assess the speed and tile composition of the next player, and consider the strategy for this round.

Exercise 17 Solution:

Answer: Discard 9p.

Although the next player has only two sets of tiles in the first row, they already have a pair of East and a dora, indicating a possible mangan hand. Considering their tile composition, they probably won't have any more pinzu tiles, while they might hold tiles below 7s in souzu, and all tiles in manzu are possible.

This means that the potential discards from our hand, 27m 3s, are all dangerous. If the next player hasn't yet reached tenpai, and we discard these three tiles in sequence, it's highly likely that one of them will be claimed by the next player.

Our hand is still in a slow state, and facing the next player who might be aggressively discarding tiles in dangerous areas with a possible mangan hand, it's a bit overly aggressive. Therefore, we should discard tiles that are less likely to be claimed, while trying to protect the completion of our hand as much as possible. Choosing to discard the edge tile 9p would be a better option. Once our hand makes some progress, we can observe the tile sequence again and make decisions accordingly.

Observing the opponent's tile discards can to some extent determine the possibility of certain scenarios. In this case, the 2p was discarded just before the opponent discarded West, which means if West was a drawn tile, then the possibility of the opponent not drawing a winning tile after 2p was discarded would disappear.

Remembering the opponent's tile discards has the advantage of assessing the credibility of tiles that have not been called.

If remembering tile discards seems challenging, then remember that the credibility decreases as the number of rounds passed after the discard of this tile (in this case, 2p) increases.

Another common situation is anticipating the opponent's wait on a pair. In such cases, even if the opponent passes on 2p, if they then call 5s and discard 3p, they could be waiting for a pair or a two-sided wait on 2345p.

These waits on pairs or two-sided waits are not suitable for calling, so even if the previous player has passed on the tile, there is still a possibility of a win.

While it's challenging to foresee these situations, they don't occur too frequently, so it's enough to have a general awareness of them.

### 3.9 Sidebar 3: Transforming Cloud Mahjong Players

Since the birth of the M League, or strictly speaking, since the birth of the RTD League before the M League, a new term cloud mahjong has gradually emerged in the mahjong community. Originally, there was a term called cloud shogi, used to describe fans who never played shogi but enjoyed watching professional shogi matches. Cloud mahjong is the mahjong version of cloud shogi.

Indeed, there are quite a few people who started playing mahjong because of the M League. Many people who don't usually play mahjong often watch M League matches. Combined with the emergence of live-streaming specialized mahjong games like Mahjong Soul (this is my own definition), I believe the culture of cloud mahjong is about to take shape.

However, for those who became interested in mahjong after watching M League matches, when they want to start learning mahjong, what should they do? There's currently no guidance mechanism for this. I'm not criticizing this, as there are indeed some aspects that are difficult to address in offline mahjong. But I believe it's the job of those of us in the industry to solve these problems.

On the other hand, for viewers of Mahjong Soul, if they see their favorite streamers playing Mahjong Soul and find mahjong interesting, all they have to do is play the same game. This is a complete guidance mechanism and conversion chain. From the perspective of popularizing mahjong, this is quite remarkable.

TV programs like Wareme de Pon or popular anime like Saki and Legendary Gambler Tetsuya, through which people become interested in mahjong, when they want to start learning mahjong, no one tells them what to do next. This may be the first time in history that cloud players have been converted into mahjong players, probably thanks to Mahjong Soul.

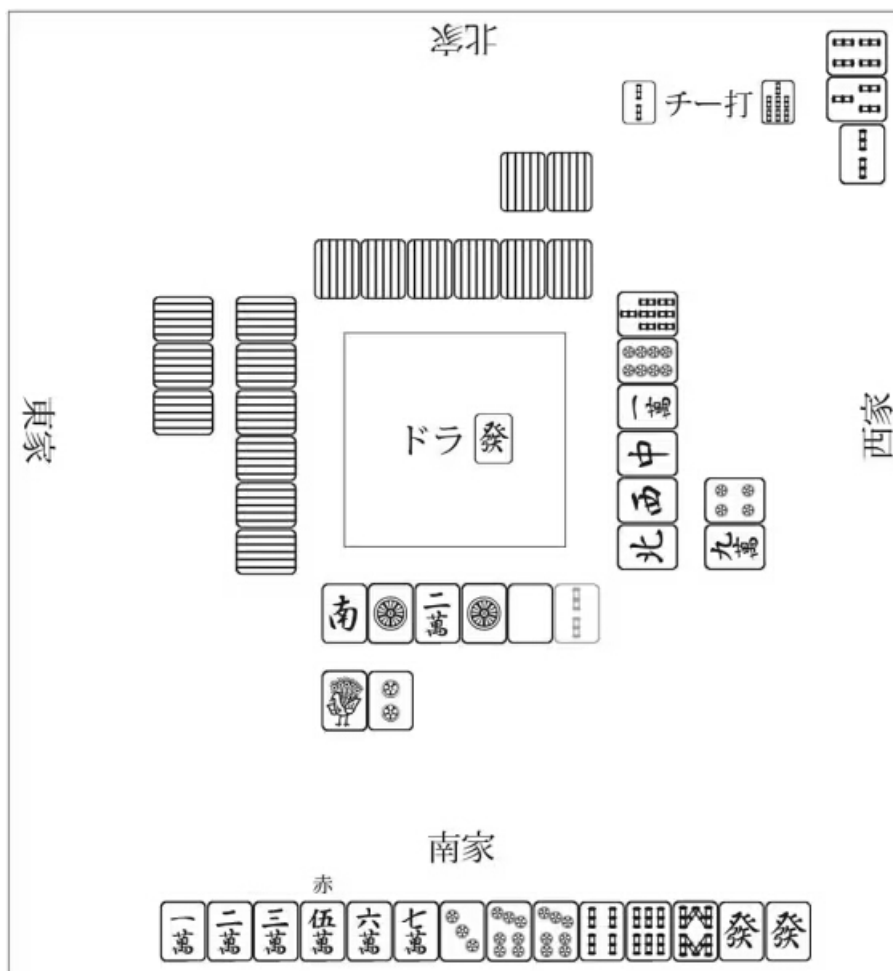
However, after actually starting to play Mahjong Soul, it's challenging to retain players because fans just want to play with their favorite streamers and receive messages or replies. Mahjong Soul has completed the conversion chain from cloud mahjong to mahjong players for the first time. I hope Mahjong Soul can become the catalyst that ignites the mahjong community, just like the M League. I also plan to fully invest in riding this wave.

## 4 Chapter 4: A More Practical Approach to Tile Reading

### 4.1 Section 16: Reading Acceptable Discards

#### Discarding Tiles Doesn't Mean It's Wrong

Earlier, it was mentioned that in the process of learning tile reading, there's a growing fear of discarding tiles. However, the purpose of mahjong is not to avoid dealing into opponents' hands. Rather, because our expected calculations include the probability of dealing into opponents' hands, if we consistently make the correct choices, there will inevitably be a certain proportion of hands where we deal into the opponent's hand.



For example, consider the situation in the diagram. The 3-pin is dangerous for the player to the right, as even if they don't discard it, it's highly likely to be taken by another player. If it's taken, the player will still have to be wary of discarding it the next time they draw it. Consider this, if we discard to the player to our left, how many points could that potentially be?

The prevailing wind is East, and the player has a pair. Assuming the player to the left has a pair of East, they would need other yaku (scoring elements) to win. If they're aiming for a Yakuhai (honors) hand and they have

a pair of East, they'd need to complete a set of East, but since one is already in the player's hand and the other one is the Dora, it's unlikely. If they aim for All Inside, the only dora available is the red dora. Since we have the 0-man in our hand, the only remaining tiles are 0-pin and 0-sou. So, the maximum possible score for the discard to the left would be 3900 points for a Tanyao hand with two red Doras, but in practice, it's more likely to be 1000 or 2000 points.

Points = Doras

The scoring potential of the player who has declared a set is limited, as many yaku cannot be utilized, such as riichi, menzen tsumo, ippatsu, ura-dora, pinfu, and yakuhai. Moreover, most of the 2-han yaku are dependent on tsumo (self-draw).

Therefore, the scoring potential of a declared set mainly relies on Doras to increase. By simply observing the number of Doras on the board, one can to some extent predict the scoring potential of the player who has declared a set. When reading tiles, one should not only consider the opponent's potential yaku and identify dangerous tiles but also observe the number of Doras on the board to estimate the number of Doras the opponent may utilize.

Especially in cases where the Doras are honor tiles or terminal tiles, the scoring potential of a declared set with tanyao yaku (all simples) is often relatively low. Therefore, when employing tile reading, one must also pay attention and not solely focus on identifying dangerous tiles, being careful not to overlook cases where it's reasonable to deal into the opponent's hand.

#### High-Scoring Declared Sets

Conversely, there are yaku that can bring high scores without utilizing Doras, which should be noted. In addition to the tile sets discussed in Chapter 2, yaku such as Toitai and Junchan fall into this category of high-scoring declared sets. When Doras are terminal tiles, extra caution should be taken against these yaku.



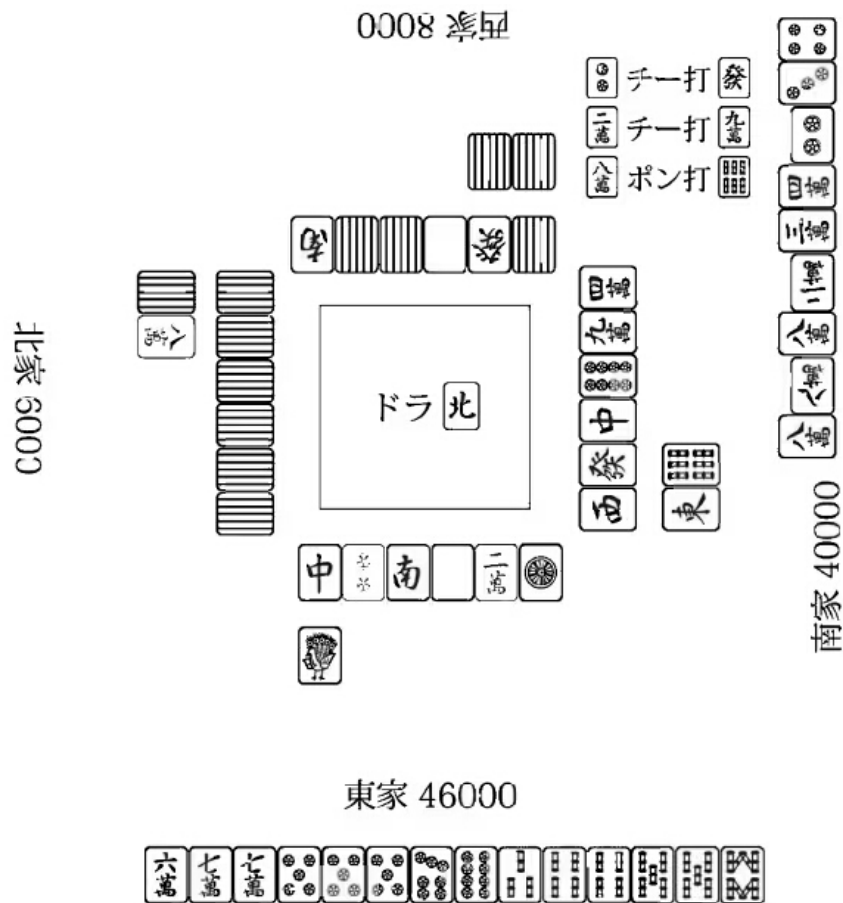
For example, hands like a hand composed of a certain tile configuration (e.g., Tiles A) and Junchan with one Dora, utilizing Doras located at the edges, are common methods for a declared set to achieve a mangan. When the opponent makes a declared set including terminal tiles, such as chi-ing 1-sou to complete a sequence of 23-sou or chi-ing 7-pin to complete a sequence of 8-9-pin, the possibility of achieving a mangan greatly affects their threat level.

## 4.2 Section 17: Identifying Potential Acceptable Discards

### Understanding the Point Value of Opponents' Hands

In situations like all last, where the point standings are crucial, understanding the potential point value of opponents' hands becomes especially important. Strictly speaking, this depends on the rules, but for commonly played rules like those in the M League, where there are several ten thousand-point horses, the importance of reaching what position is significantly higher than simply considering what happens if someone wins or what happens if someone deals in.

For example, consider the scenario below. While you're in first place, the player in second position has already made three melds, likely indicating they're in tenpai.



You discard 2p, call 2m to discard 9m, and then call 8m to discard 6s. The point difference is 6000 points, meaning if you deal in 3900 points, you'll drop to second place. However, it's also unacceptable to deal into a hand worth 1000-2000 points by Tsumo.

Here, more important than considering what tiles your opponent is waiting for is which tiles would cause a reversal if discarded.

### Considering the Possible Tile Combinations

Let's take another look at the melds of the player on your right:



The Dora is North. If the player on your right has a concealed set of North tiles, they'll have no yaku, so they likely have at most a pair of North tiles. In this case, the only possible yaku is Sanshoku Doujun, so the potential acceptable discards are only 234s and a single North tile.

Next, consider the scenario of a hand without honor tiles. To achieve a hand worth 3900 points, they would need either (1) one Red Dora + Sanshoku Doujun or (2) two Red Doras.

In scenario (1), with one Red Dora + Sanshoku Doujun, their hand must consist of one of the combinations of 234s + 0m/0p/0s.

In scenario (2), with two Red Doras, their hand must include a pair with one Red Dora and a meld with the other, so their wait must be on the 3-7 number tiles.

Therefore, the tiles that would cause a reversal if discarded are only 234s, 3-7 number tiles of each suit, and North tiles. This conclusion is not drawn from the sequence of discards but rather from a physical analysis.

Based on this tile reading, you can confidently discard the 8s, which you don't need (even if it causes you to deal into a hand, it won't result in a reversal). Additionally, you can gain information from the melds of the player across from you or the player to your left. For example, if the player across from you melds a set with 0m, then the player to your left likely won't need 0m, so you can safely discard it.

Even if you draw a North tile when any of the 234s are visible in four tiles, you can discard it without worry.

The difference in accuracy of determining the standings at all last between those who consider which tiles would cause a reversal if discarded and those who don't is significant, so it's essential to have this perspective. Especially against opponents with two or three melds, where the range of possible hands is narrower, scenarios where you can determine potential reversals based on physical analysis are common.

### 4.3 Section 19: Reading Speed Can Differentiate Skill Levels

In Chapter 2, we established a preliminary warning line based on three pon in the first row, two pon in the second row, and one pon in the third row. Now, I'd like to introduce some more refined methods for reading the opponent's speed.

The above standard has an average tenpai rate of about 50% for all situations. However, in practice, depending on the information available in each situation, the tenpai rate could be around 70% or as low as 30%.

I believe the unnecessary disparity in calling pon tiles is a reflection of the difference in skill levels between intermediate and advanced players, which also applies to the difference between Tsuchinoko and Phoenix players in Tenhou. However, on the other hand, if an opponent with only a 30% tenpai rate overly guards against calls and chooses to discard, it's obviously impossible to win. Therefore, when facing opponents who have called tiles, it's essential to carefully read their tenpai timing as much as possible.

#### Number of Tile Discards

In addition to the number of pon calls mentioned above, the number of tile discards and the thickness of the discards are also essential factors.

Firstly, the number of tile discards is crucial. When two pon calls have been made in the second row, the tenpai rate is approximately 50%. However, if there is another tile discard afterward, then the tenpai rate will increase. Personally, I become quite vigilant when there's an additional tile discard following this 50% benchmark.

#### Thickness of Tile Discards

Moreover, the thickness of tile discards, i.e., what tiles have been discarded, is also vital information.

So specifically, what kind of tile discards indicate a high tenpai rate? There are three representative types:

(1) Breaking up pairs: Breaking up pairs indicates that there are at least five pairs visible, making it almost impossible to have a situation worse than a two-sided wait. It's a good indication that the hand is close to tenpai.

However, it's essential to note whether these pairs are genuinely broken up or if it's a case of discarding the second tile drawn after the first tile discard. If this isn't clear, it becomes challenging to read the opponent's speed. Additionally, when the opponent is working on pairs or sequences, it's possible for them to start breaking up unnecessary pairs even when they are far from tenpai.

(2) Discarding valuable tiles: Of course, this depends on the type of dora tiles and the specific hand composition, but it's common for players not to discard dora tiles when there's no progress in their hand. While it may not reach this level for tiles like terminal tiles in the case of calling pon, for middle tiles that are easily incorporated, if the opponent discards them, it's a sign to pay attention. This is relatively easy to judge for those who are just starting to consciously read the tiles.

(3) Safe tiles: No longer needing safe tiles, in other words, reaching tenpai, is also common. It's essential to read whether this tile is genuinely held as a safe tile, which is also related to the order of tile discards.

In mahjong, tiles are generally discarded in the order of honor tiles → terminal tiles → middle tiles. From the point of discarding middle tiles onwards, tiles discarded after the mid-game can be considered safe tiles.

#### Whether the Discarded Tile Has Value

Up to this point, we've introduced some easily understandable indicators for reading tile discards, but the essence of these indicators is discarding tiles that are of low value to the current hand, thus indicating a tenpai hand.

Ultimately, Mahjong is a game about discarding lower-value tiles and retaining higher-value ones. So, what exactly are these high-value tiles? For most hands, they are pairs, dora tiles, or safe tiles.

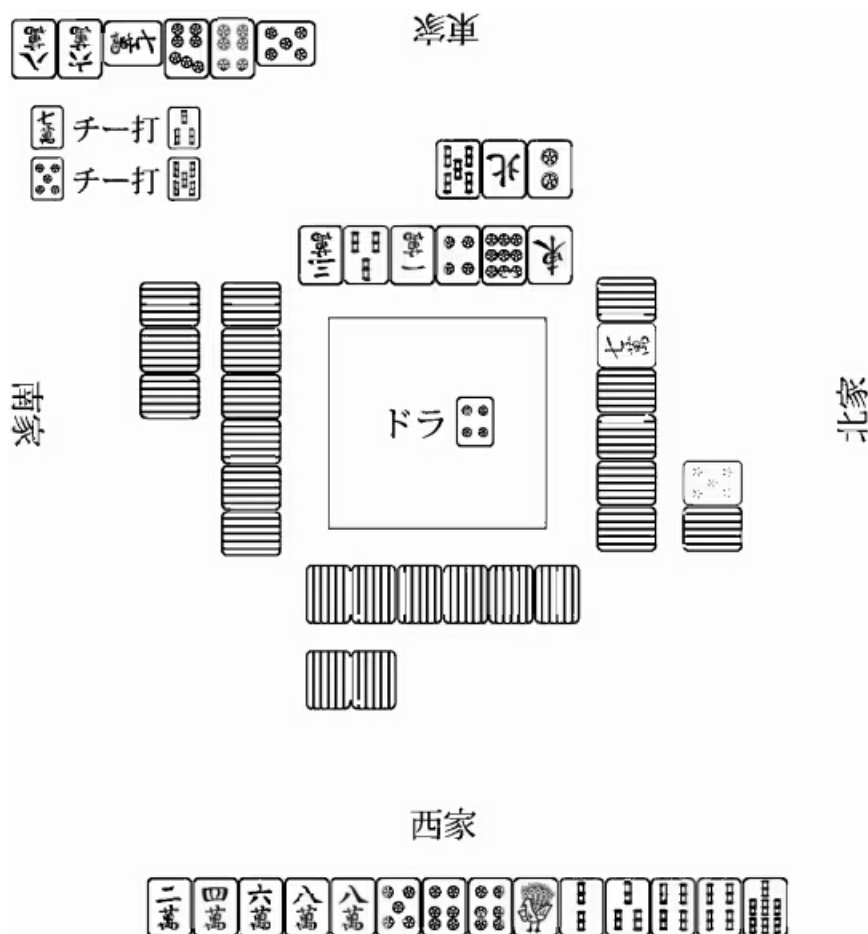
For hands aiming for a specific suit, high-value tiles are those of the same suit or tiles that could potentially form a yakuhai set. For hands aiming for a triplet, high-value tiles are those that are likely to form triplets or yakuhai sets depending on the situation.

### Considering Block Composition

There are many types of tiles that can be used for both Ryanmen and yakuhai sets. However, for these two types of yaku, the high-value tiles are generally number tiles ranging from 3 to 7, which are easy to use in sets.

Especially when you can read the block composition to some extent, if a tile is discarded from an area that appears to be able to form a block, then you can suspect whether the opponent is in tenpai.

In the following diagram, besides discarding 3s in the 5th turn, the opponent has not discarded any other sou tiles. Meanwhile, several characters and pin tiles have been discarded, and there have also been pon calls.



Eating 7m and discarding 3s, eating 5p and discarding 5s

When reading normally, you can infer that there are approximately 1-2 blocks in the upper part of 4s. By

discarding a tile from an area where a compound shape is inferred, the hand advances a step, and the tenpai rate is higher than 50%. Therefore, it's not advisable to discard 7s from such a hand.

While it's not possible to perfectly predict the timing of achieving tenpai every time, if you can think, The tile discards indicate a strong possibility of tenpai by now, right?, then it can significantly impact the rate of discarding winning tiles. It's essential for those who have discarded perfectly safe tiles during riichi but still haven't reduced their rate of being ron'd to realize this point.

## 4.4 Section 20: Do We Need to Be Cautious of Ryanmen?

Another essential factor in reading the speed of an opponent who has called tiles is what shape they called with.



For example, with hand A, depending on the turn, you might consider calling 4p but not 58s. Or, hand A might be more likely to call either side, while hand B would typically only call 4p.

Generally, calling with a foolish shape is more common, while calling with a Ryanmen shape in the early or middle game is often unnecessary for high-scoring hands or when the hand can reach tenpai directly.

However, this benchmark can vary from person to person. When to call which tile is unrelated to reading the tiles and purely depends on how the opponent thinks.

For example, if an opponent who doesn't typically call Ryanmen shapes in the early game does so, it could indicate a high-scoring hand or a fast pace. However, for opponents with a call rate close to 50%, it's not necessary to pay much attention to early-game Ryanmen calls.

If possible, it's best to understand the standard for calling tiles of the opponents you usually play against. Being able to grasp each person's standard and apply it to reading tiles is also a form of reading people. While I don't think reading people is very reliable, it's a crucial factor when reading tile discards.

Recently, people have started using the term hand range, borrowed from poker terminology, to refer to questions like how many high-scoring hands will an opponent call from. For anything, giving it an easy-to-understand term makes it easier to realize, even in practical play. Be sure to predict your opponent's hand range while reading tiles.

### Types of Calls Affected by Reading People Factors

Calls affected by reading people factors, i.e., calls where the assumed hand range changes significantly depending on the player, are quite common and include the following:

Calling Ryanmen shapes  
Calling yakuhai sets  
Leaving open tiles for a possible win from furiten. For players with a high call rate, these calls don't provide much information. On the contrary, for players who tend to avoid calling, these calls often indicate a fast pace (ryanmen or ron'ten) or a high-scoring hand.

Although people often ask, What should I do if I'm playing against someone with a high call rate? there are many calls that can be ignored when playing against such players. It's more important to be cautious when opponents with a low call rate make such calls.

### Key Points Summary

Key Points for Reading Speed:

(1) Discards High-Value Tiles:

Taatsu (potential melds or pairs);

Dora (bonus tiles);

Safe tiles;

Tiles that can indicate the presence of a block in the area.

(2) Makes Exposed Melds that Usually Wouldn't Be Melded:

Chow from a two-sided wait;

Honor tiles added after other melds;

Exposed melds that leave the hand in a one-sided wait.

However, these standards can vary from person to person, so it's important to understand the meld standards of opponents you frequently play against.

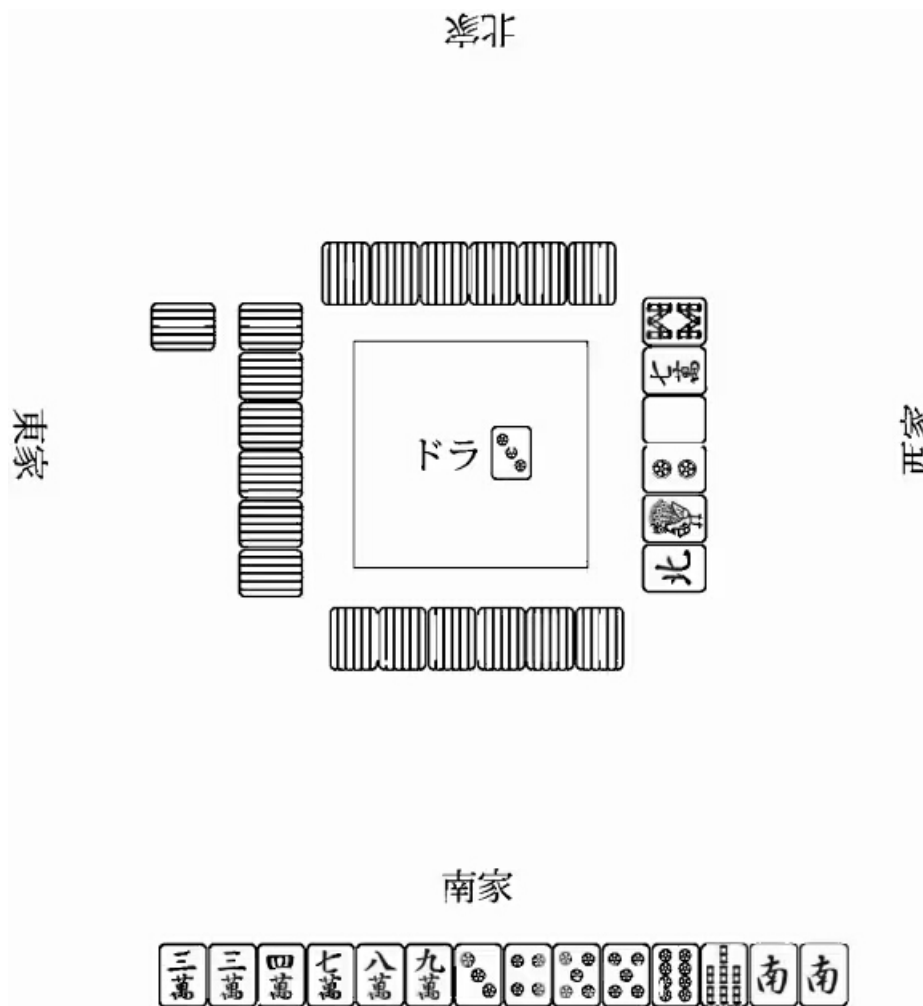
However, these standards may vary from person to person, so understanding the disclosure standards of opponents you frequently play against is essential.

#### 4.5 Section 21 It is impossible to read whether there is a treasure card or not.

Whether there are dora tiles cannot be discerned.

When talking about card reading, you sometimes hear the saying that the opponent who cuts the surrounding cards of the treasure tile during the prologue is fixing the treasure tile. I have also seen situations where similar statements have been turned into theories.

When it comes to reading tile discards, sometimes you might hear statements like the opponent who discarded the Dora 2p in the early game must have a pair or more of 3p. I believe such readings are not valid. Regardless of the rules regarding Doras, in modern gameplay:



Even without the possibility of drawing the Dora, having red dora tiles can still result in scoring.

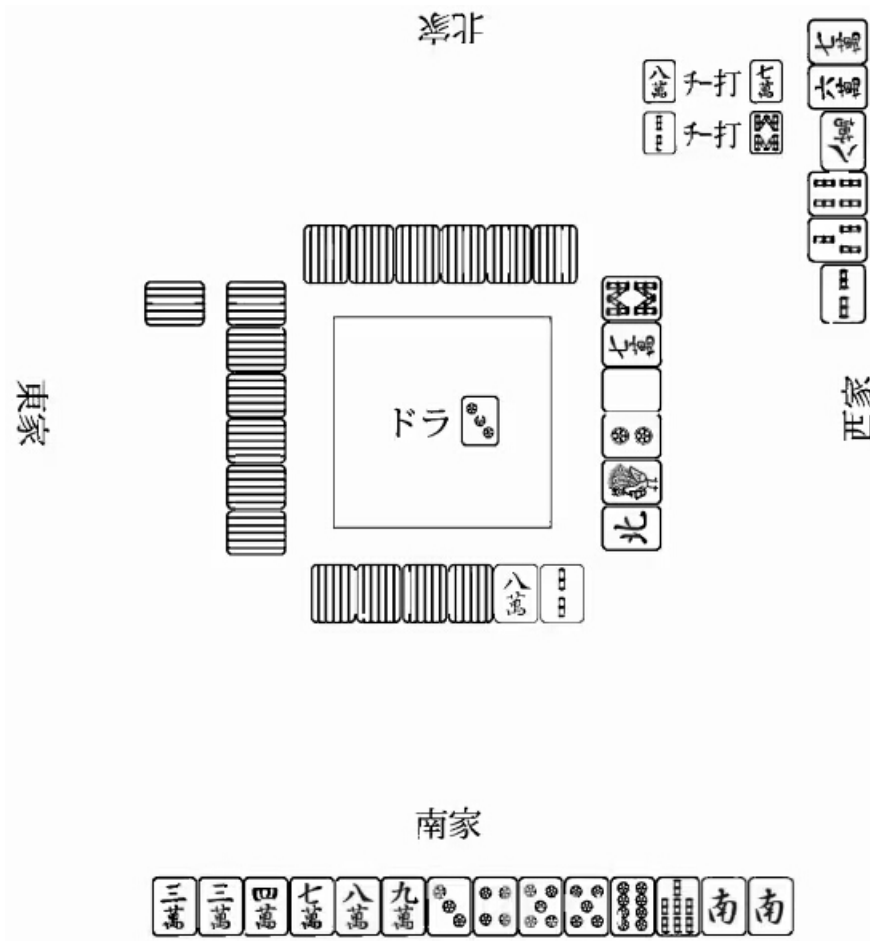
Even without the Dora or red dora tiles, a hand worth only 1000 points can still be valuable, and there's widespread understanding of this concept.

The key point here is that there are many situations where a player needs to discard 2p even if they don't have

3p.

### Combining Multiple Reading Methods

However, in another scenario, I think the likelihood of the opponent holding more than one pair of 3p is quite high.



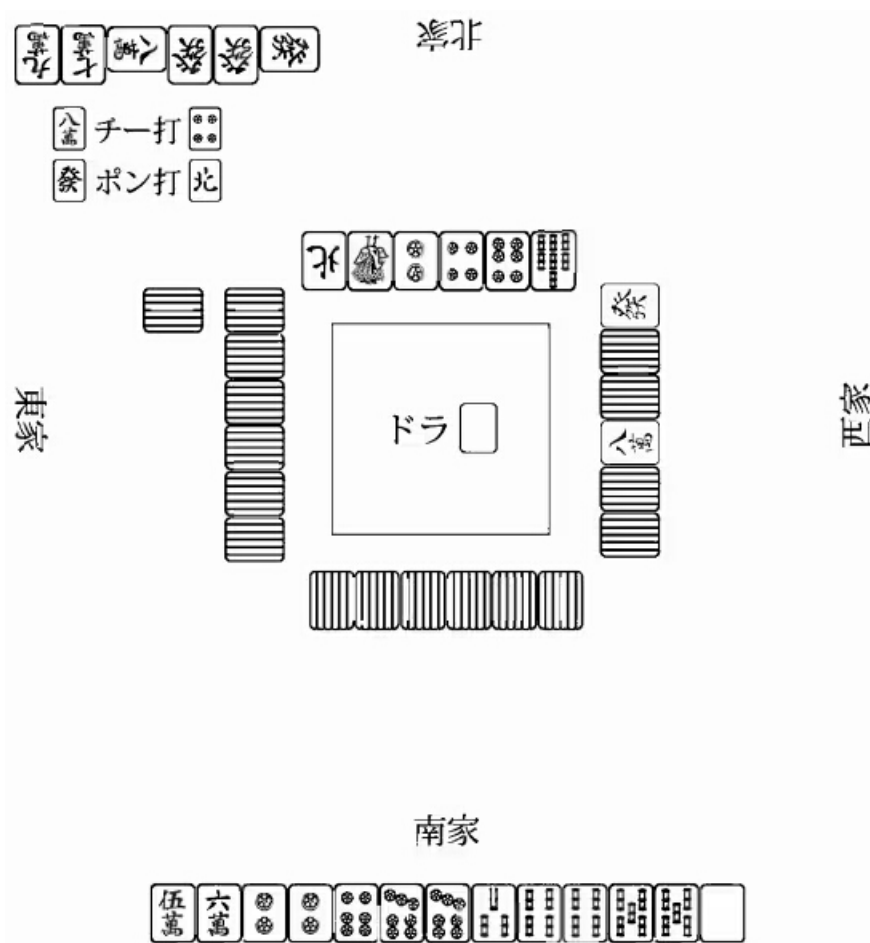
Eating 8m and discarding 7m, eating 2s and discarding 8s.

The discards are exactly the same, with the only variation being the use of Ryanmen calls twice. Earlier, we mentioned that opponents who make Ryanmen calls often have high-scoring hands or play at a fast pace, although this is a somewhat ambiguous reading method based on opponents' gameplay tendencies.

However, even if factors are ambiguous, when multiple factors are present simultaneously, they can cumulatively result in high accuracy. In this case, the opponent has made two Ryanmen calls on consecutive sides, which indicates better advancement. Thus, the likelihood of high-scoring or fast-paced gameplay increases significantly.

However, if the pace is fast and the scoring potential is only in the form of tanyao (all simples), as in the scenario below, wouldn't it be better to maintain a clean hand and target an opponent in furiten status?





Eating 8m and discarding 4p, ponging green dragon and discarding North.

The opponent is clearly aiming for a mixed suit. But if they have a pair of white dragons or more, is it necessary to specifically discard pin tiles and aim for a mixed suit?



Of course, this also falls within the realm of reading the opponent. There are certainly players who, holding such a shape, would cut tiles in the order of 7s → 6p → 4p → 2p to target those aiming for mangan or higher.

However, theoretically speaking, as the hand progresses, deciding whether to complete the two pon on the tiles around the dora based on the number of turns, with the goal of 3900 points or a mangan, is the more common strategy. If the majority of players in the environment opt for this approach, then playing the white dragon aggressively would be more advantageous. It can be said that the likelihood of the white dragon being ponged by the opponent is quite low.

That being said, the scenario where the white dragon starts with only one tile, so the decision is made to go for honitsu, but halfway through it becomes a pair is certainly possible. Therefore, as the mid-game progresses, one should not overly rely on this assumption. Additionally, whether 1s was a discard or a draw in this round of discards will also affect the likelihood of the white dragon forming a pair, so please also take note of this.

## 4.6 Chapter Four Summary

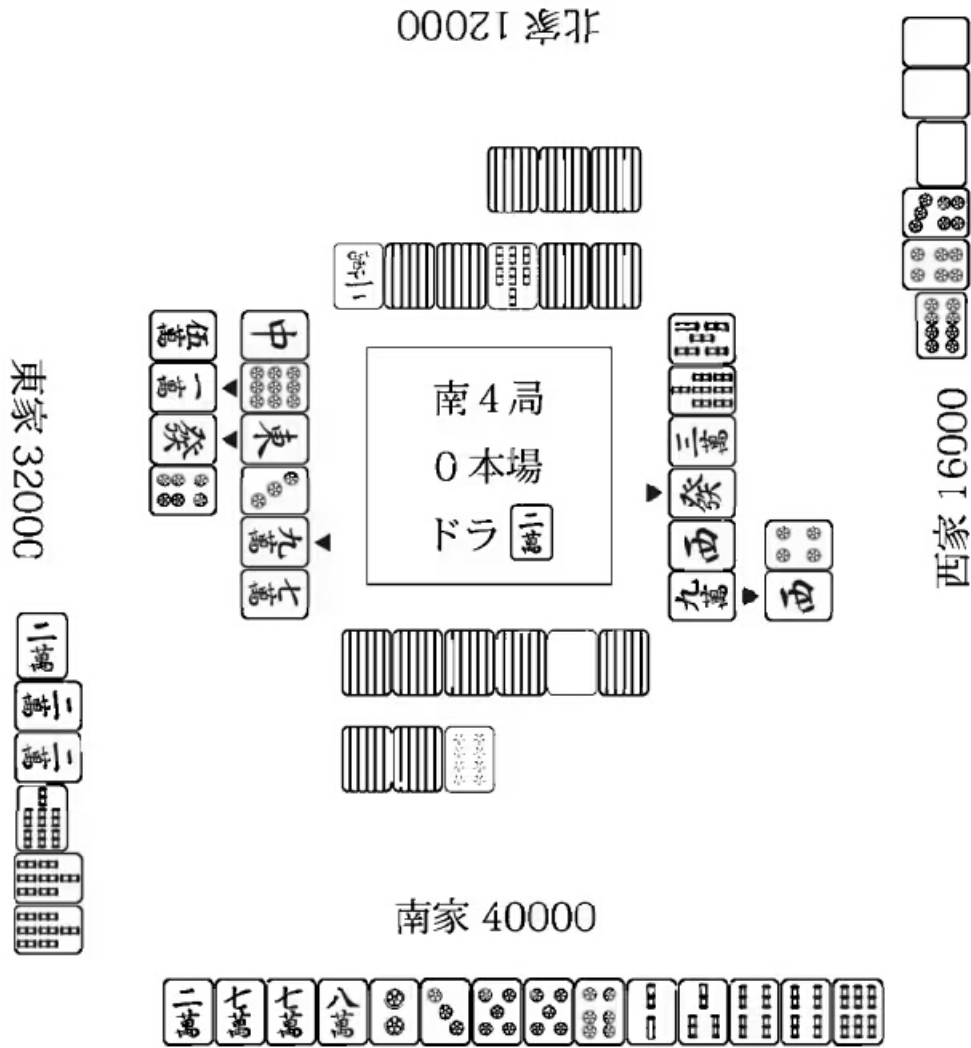
The goal of reading discards is not to accurately determine the opponent's waiting tiles. If you can identify tiles with low point value, you can categorize them as even if discarded, it's fine, enabling you to disregard concerns about being ronned. Especially in situations like all last, where the competition for position is fierce, how many points you allow yourself to be ronned for is acceptable? If you can think about this, you won't just focus on can this tile be ronned?, but also consider even if this tile is ronned, it's acceptable, broadening the range of playable tiles.

When reading discards, it's also crucial to read the tiles that haven't been declared. Don't just rely on the discards of the player before you, but also utilize information like a certain tile hasn't been ponged.

Reading opponents is vital when reading discards. If you're playing against familiar opponents, study the hand ranges of each player. And if you're playing against unfamiliar opponents, understand the orthodox theory and apply your knowledge of reading discards.



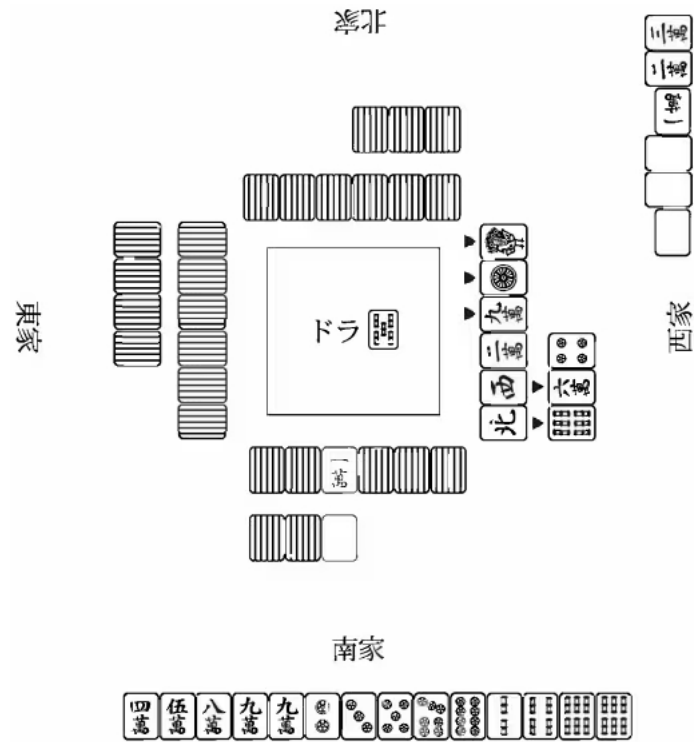
Question 19



All last, competing for a central position. What's the best discard strategy based on reading the declarations of the previous and next players?

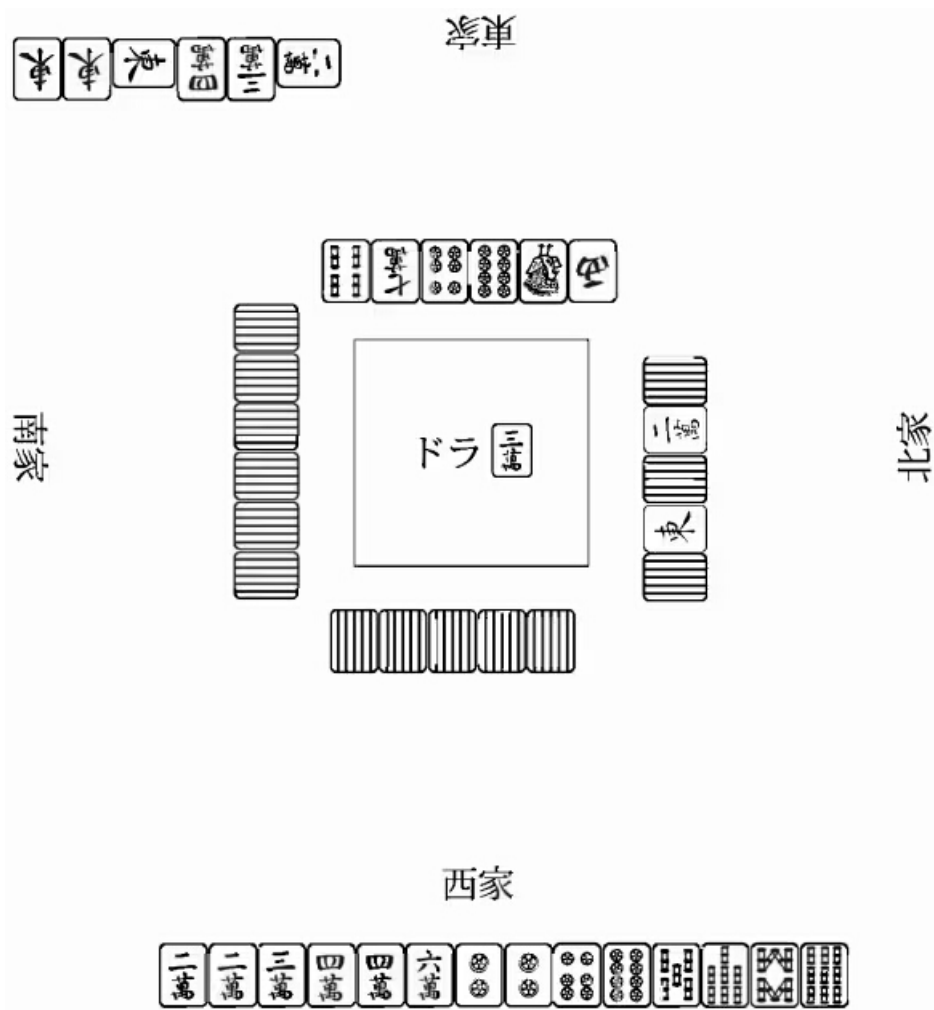
The previous player declared a pon of 7s to discard 3p and a pon of 2m to discard 5m. The next player declared a pon of white dragon to discard 7s and a chi of 8p to discard 4p.

Question 20



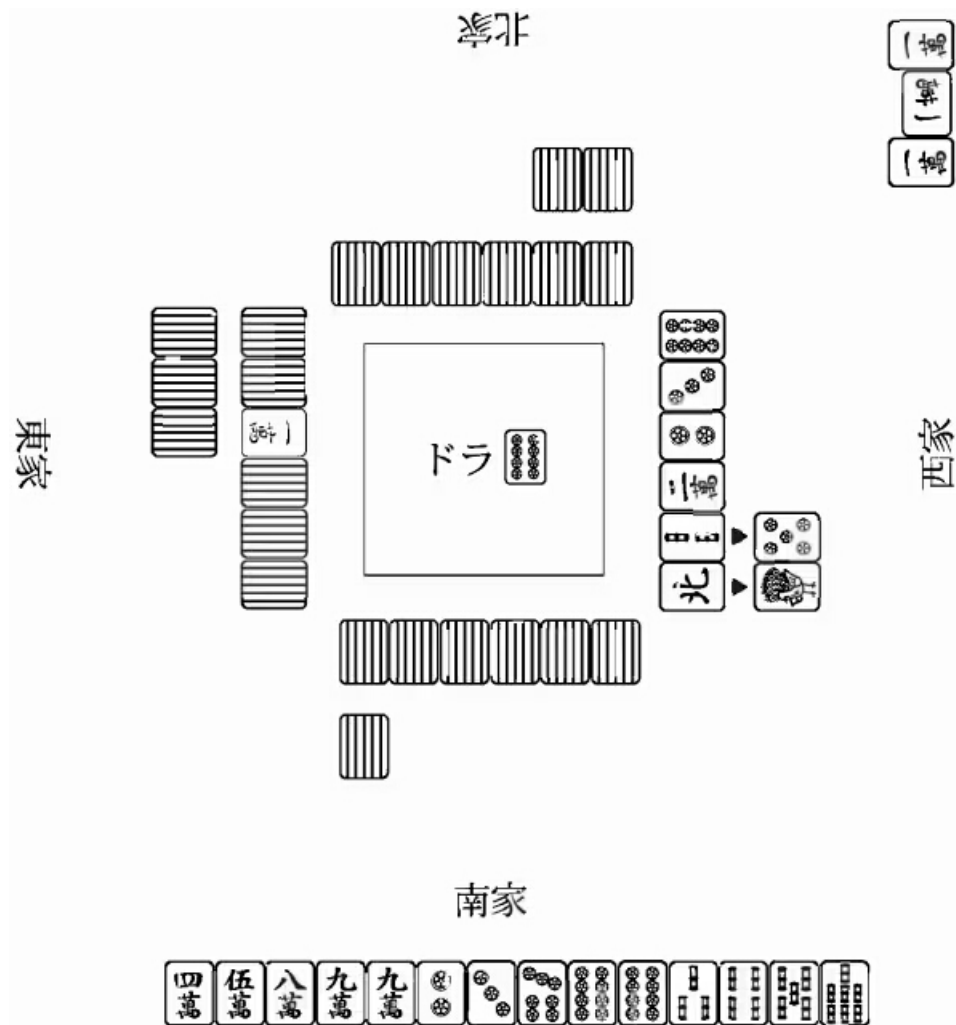
The player sitting next ate 1m and declared 2m, melded white dragon and discarded 4p.  
 Although this question is quite abstract, what aspects should be considered in this situation?

Question 21



The player sitting opposite melded east and discarded 8p, ate 2m and discarded 7m, then discarded 4s. Based on the reading of the opponent's speed, choose your own discarding strategy.

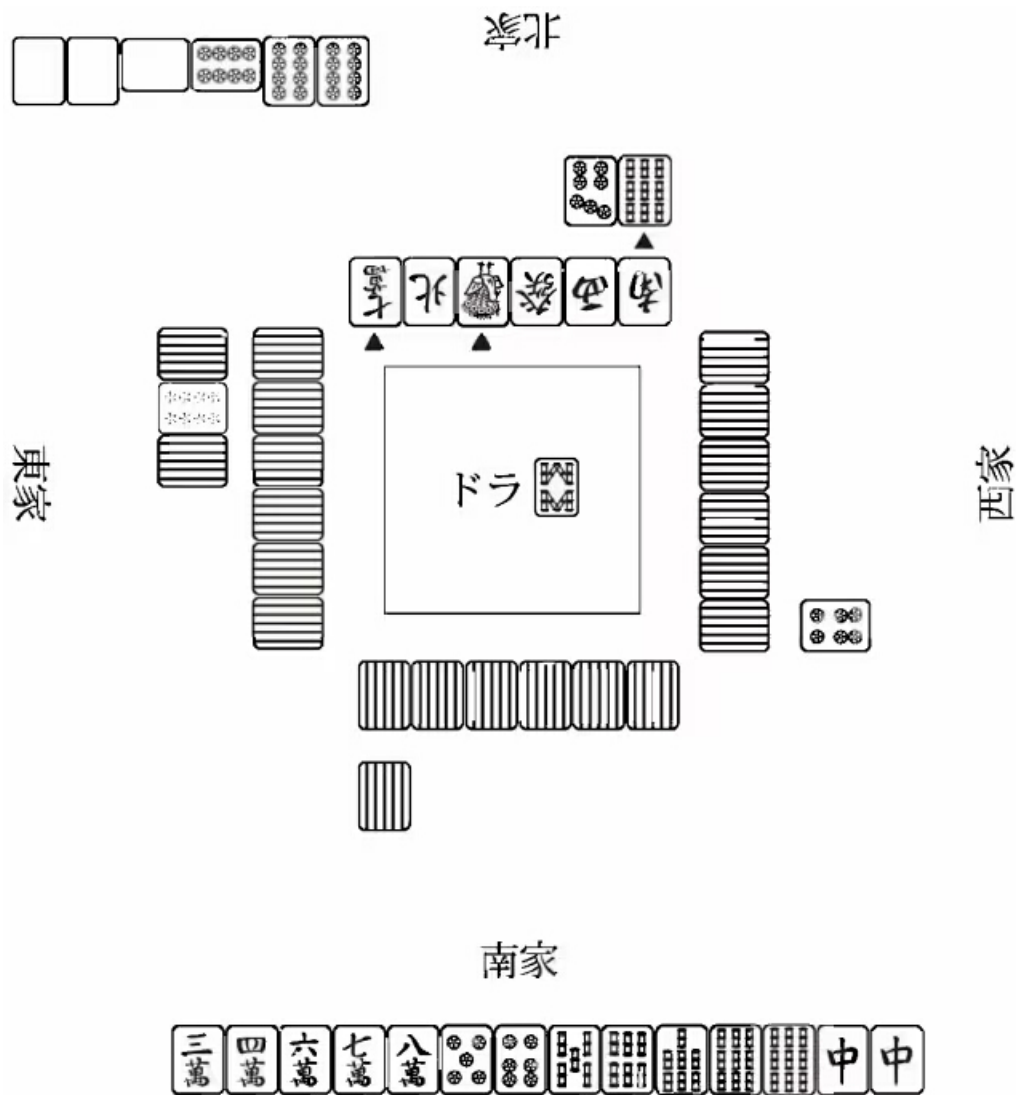
Question 22



The player sitting next melded 1m and discarded 2m.

How should the hand of the player sitting next be evaluated? How should you play your tiles?

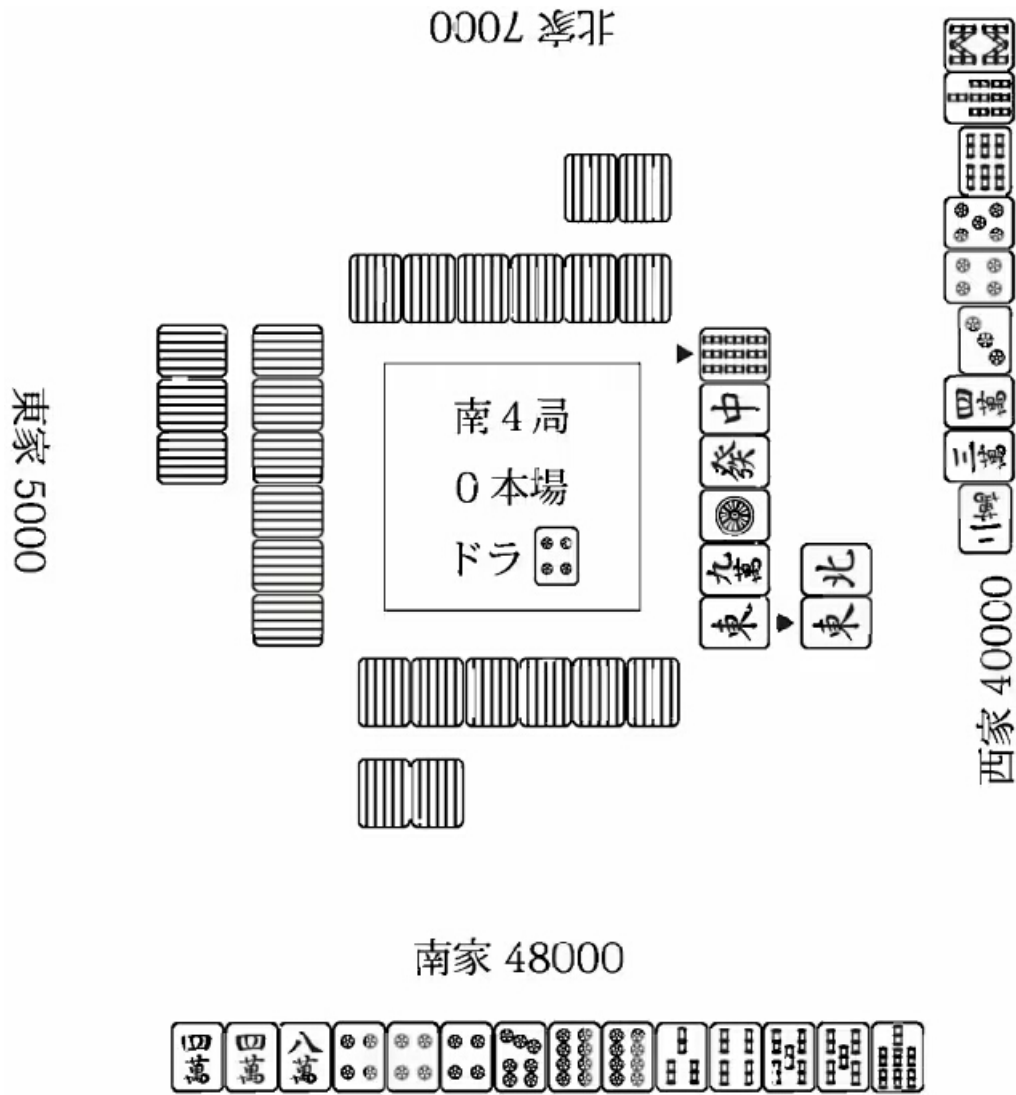
Question 23



The player sitting opposite melded 8p and discarded 7p.

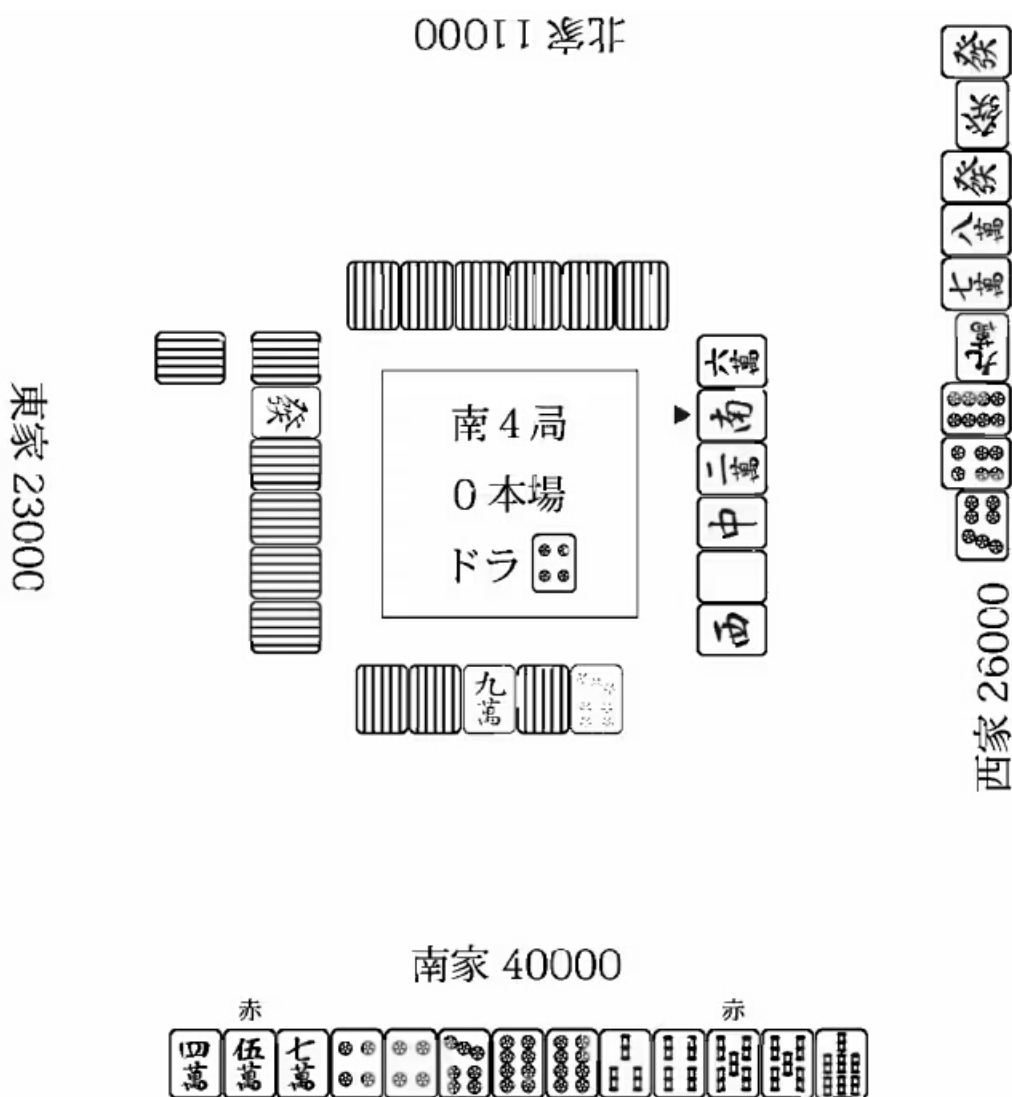
What can be inferred from the discards of the player sitting opposite and the player sitting next?

Question 24



All last, currently competing for first place. Assuming the player sitting next is targeting one specific player, consider whether discarding floating tile 8m is a good idea, and which tiles should be kept.

Question 25



All last. The player sitting next ate 7p and discarded 6m.

In order to achieve the highest win rate, what tile should you discard, and what strategy should you adopt for discarding tiles thereafter?

## 4.8 Answers 18—25

Answer 18: Discard 2p.



Opponent's Overcall In this situation, consider the opponent's non-melded tiles, focusing on the 3p discard by the player sitting opposite. If it's challenging to understand, organize the sequence of events chronologically:

- (1) The player sitting opposite discarded 3p;
- (2) You discarded 3s, and the player sitting next ate and declared 3p;
- (3) It's your turn to discard.

This means that after the player sitting opposite discarded 3p, the player sitting next hasn't drawn any tiles. Therefore, the possibility of keeping 334p is almost non-existent.

Discarding 2p could lead to losing points if the opponent reached tenpai with a double pung from 223p, but it's not a common scenario. Thus, discarding 2p is a reasonable move here.

Answer 19:Discard 7m.



### Opponent's and Partner's Melds

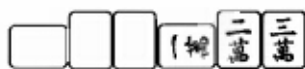
Your hand is quite scattered, so consider discarding in a way that might lead to giving points to the player sitting next. Dangerous tiles for the player sitting next are the ones around the eaten 4p, namely 2356p, as well as the lower section of bamboo tiles and the upper section of character tiles, which seem to block.

Based on this, let's consider the discards of the player sitting opposite. Firstly, 25p and the lower section of bamboo tiles pose a threat to the player sitting opposite, so they are excluded from potential discards. Secondly, since 6p was recently discarded, there's no need to discard 36p.

With these considerations, only 78m remains as a potential discard, but there's a possibility of giving points to the player sitting opposite with 8m (although it seems passable, theoretically, there's a possibility of losing points). Therefore, discarding 7m is the best choice here.

Reading melds is not just about avoiding giving points; it's also a useful skill for feeding or giving points at the right time, which can improve your gameplay. For those aiming to win in turn-based games, mastering this skill is essential.

Answer 20:Discard 6s.



### Opponent's Overcall

Although 6s is given as the correct answer, the main issue here is not what to discard but rather what could be the hand range of this opponent when facing such an overcall, and how to play based on this consideration. This is the essence of this question.

Starting from the 1m as an indicator of a closed hand with both sides, even in a closed hand, this type is relatively rare. While the player sitting next starts with a closed hand with both sides, the shape like 223m is not in immediate need of additional tiles, and declaring 1m would expose the lack of terminals.

For such complicated overcalls, one should not take them lightly. In other words, facing such an overcall, one should be able to determine whether the player sitting next is likely to have a hand worth over 8,000 points or possibly just 1,000 points.

If playing against an unspecified opponent, there may be different tendencies based on rules and popular strategies. For instance, in Phoenix, when facing such an overcall, there are many cases where holding honors or pairs above are prevalent. In such cases, one should make a choice that is more acceptable to oneself.

Answer 21: Discard 8p to break the potential wait.



#### Opponent's Melds

The opponent made two melds right from the start, similar to the general benchmark mentioned in the previous chapter. However, by using the refined reading speed method learned in the fourth chapter and considering the following factors:

- Breaking the joint of 86p;
- Discarding 7m and 4s from the upper section of characters and the middle section of bamboos, which seem to block, at a relatively fast pace.

In this case, the likelihood of a waiting hand is indeed quite high. The opponent is the dealer, and your hand is in a shape that is one tile away from ready, plus the 5s is a challenging tile to discard for the last player, making a detour after breaking 86p the safer option.

Answer 22: Discard 7s and temporarily play in a straightforward manner.



#### Opponent's Overcall

At first glance, the player sitting next broke a pair of both sides and discarded a dora tile, which might lead to the impression of fast speed just by looking at discards. However, such flashy discards are mostly aimed at targeting high-scoring but slow-playing hands, so there's no need to be overly cautious.

Although the player sitting next discarded 2m, having a large number of character tiles in the upper section is the main focus. If not already committed to a single suit, there's a high possibility of a pair or triplets. If going for a single suit, there's no need to worry until the dora or character tiles overflow; if going for a pair or triplets, it only needs one more meld to consider.

For now, discard 7s to proceed straightforwardly with your hand. When the player sitting next makes the aforementioned moves, reevaluate the offensive and defensive situation, which is a better choice.

Answer 23: Discard 9s.



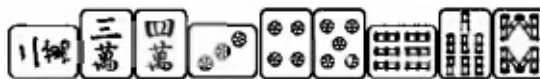
#### Opponent's Melds

First, let's look at the melds of the opponent. Despite having 788p, they passed on 6p and chose to declare 8p. They seem more inclined towards having pairs or triplets rather than sequences, indicating a high possibility of having a pair-based hand.

In situations like this, where one side of a potential pair or triplet is declared while the other is not, there's a likelihood of having a specific hand waiting, making it easier to anticipate and counter. In actual gameplay, please do not overlook these cues.

If the opponent indeed has a pair-based hand, there's a risk in declaring a 9s, so I believe breaking the pair of 9s would be a better choice.

Answer 24: Discard 8m.



Opponent's Melds Even if the player sitting next achieves a mangan, it's acceptable for you. You can see four dora tiles of 4p, as long as you don't give away more than two red dora tiles.

The player sitting next has already made three melds. To utilize two red dora tiles, one would be as a pair and the other as a sequence or a triplet.

In this case, the tiles that might lead to losing points are only the number tiles from 3 to 7. Even if the 1289 tiles are discarded, it's fine. Hence, confidently discard 8m here. Conversely, if you're not ready, it's better to proceed cautiously by breaking tiles from 3 to 7.

Answer 25: Discard 7m.



### Opponent's Melds

If you give a mangan to the player sitting next, you'll lose one position. However, since all other potential hands have been ruled out, achieving a mangan would require having a total of three red dora tiles.

You hold two 4p tiles and have no tiles from the 0m and 0s, so the potential hands of the player sitting next are significantly reduced compared to Question 7, except for shapes like 4406p. In other words, except for 457p, all tiles can be discarded.

Another difference from Question 7 is that the player sitting next is competing with the dealer. This means that from the beginning, the player sitting next might not be aiming for a mangan. If you're hit with a dealer's 6000all, you'll be reversed, so instead of thinking except for the middle section of characters, all tiles can be discarded, consider discard tiles other than those in the middle section of characters.

So, for now, break your hand, discard 7m, and then decide whether to discard 7s or 5s based on the situation.

## 4.9 Sidebar 4 Appreciating the Charm of Tenhou Once Again

In the previous columns, I may have seemed to be captured by the soul of Mahjong Soul, but I certainly also deeply love Tenhou, which I have cultivated.

When it comes to the popularity of Mahjong Soul, comments like Compared to Tenhou... are inevitable, but I believe the topic is not as simple as that.

Although both are mahjong games, the value provided by Mahjong Soul and Tenhou is completely different.

As mentioned earlier, I believe Mahjong Soul is designed to create a community for players, including streamers, to enjoy the game, providing opportunities to create communities and leisure entertainment.

The charm of Tenhou lies in excluding all aspects of leisure entertainment to the extreme. Although Mahjong Soul's ranking system is also quite ascetic and is designed to distinguish skill levels, Tenhou is truly unparalleled (I believe Mahjong Soul's ranking system is intentionally designed to allow players with a certain level of skill to clear the game).

Mahjong Soul's friend battle function is very rich, and relatively, Tenhou has the upper hand in reviewing game records (as of July 2020).

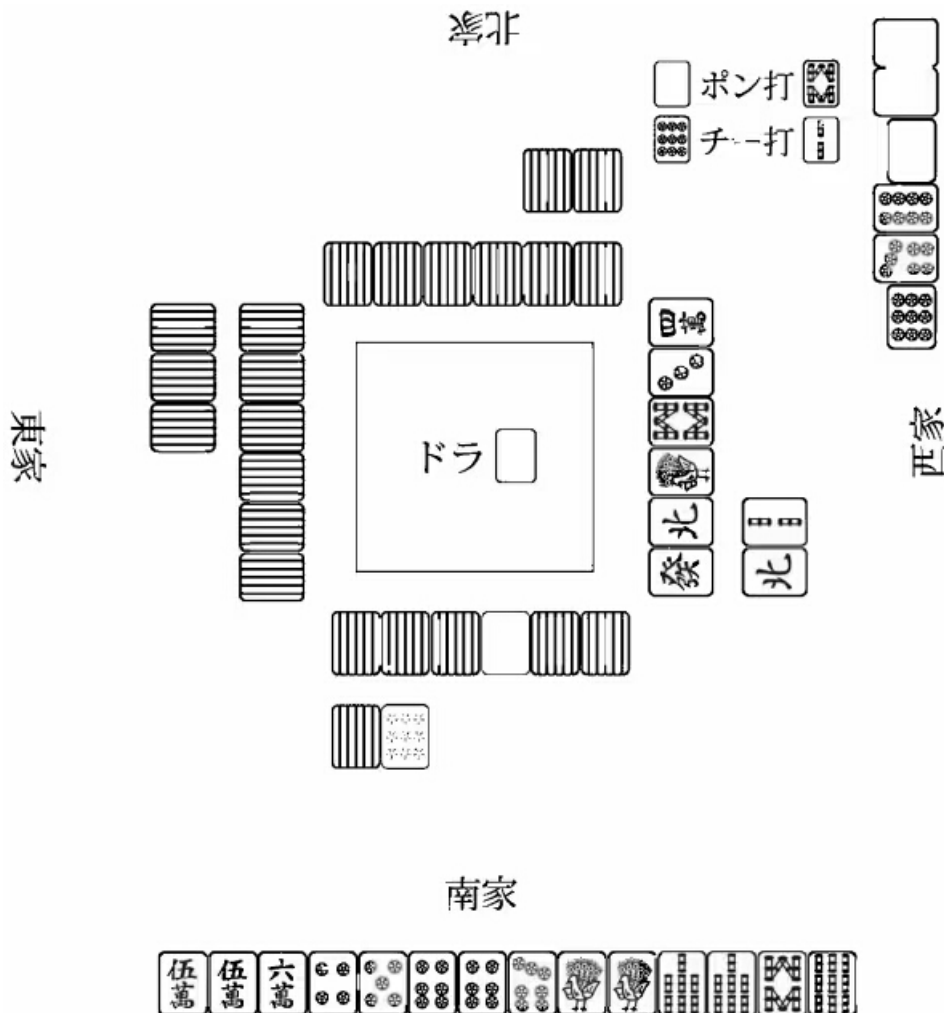
In other words, for those who enjoy mahjong with the purpose of competing in skill and becoming stronger in mahjong, Tenhou is undoubtedly the best mahjong game, that's what I think.

Looking at the broader aspect of popularizing mahjong, Tenhou and Mahjong Soul play different roles. Among the increased users of Mahjong Soul, there are also some who are happier to watch the smoothness of the recent 2000 games than watching paper people, and for such people, playing Tenhou would be better.

If possible, I hope everyone can experience various online mahjong games. Furthermore, I hope everyone can also try various mahjong games other than online ones, find the mahjong they pursue, and enjoy mahjong throughout their lives.

## 5 Chapter 5 Conditional card reading

### 5.1 Section 22 Foolish Shape Composite Shape



Call white, discard 8s, eat 9p, and discard 2s

Let's start this section from the above problem. The next player called the dora tile, which is the object that needs the most caution. Although you're one tile away from ready, considering that the next player seems to have a block in the upper section of characters and middle section of bamboos, tiles like 5m and 7s are quite difficult to discard... that's the problem.

What needs attention this time is the 2s eaten and discarded after. Typically, the two sides around the tile discarded after eating are quite valuable for calling, but this time, the 1s was called after eating, which makes this possibility quite low.

So, besides 223s, in what shape can 2s become a related tile? Considering this, there are also 224s, 244s, 246s, these shapes are all foolish shapes.

That is to say, it's highly likely that 2s exists as part of a foolish shape composite shape in the hand. In the case where the last discarded tile is a tile from the foolish shape composite shape, all other two-sided waiting tiles will become slightly relatively safe.



In such a situation, leaving 2s doesn't make sense. It's better to leave a safe tile like North instead of 2s.

Since it's a foolish shape composite shape, it means that this part is intended to be made into a meld, so this tile is left. Therefore, if the tile is called after eating, it means that this part has not yet formed a meld, which also means that the possibility of waiting in other parts will be slightly lower, and such logic can be established.

There are many exceptions to this analysis, however.



Having said that, there are also many exceptions to the above analysis. Such as a one-sided wait with concealed triplets of 2s is quite common. If it's this shape, the number of draws for 2s and North is vastly different, so North will be discarded.



Next, there is such a shape. It's quite common to form a composite shape like 24456s. The 2s was not left as a foolish shape composite shape just to make a joint of 3s. In the case of eating 69p, 2s can be discarded to wait on 47s as a one-sided or two-sided tile.

Similar shapes include 23345s or 23456s, which are also discarded to wait on 36s. Although sometimes you may hear theories like you can pass on the last tile or tiles declared for a riichi hand, similarly, in cases where there is a shape like 23345s, it's quite common to discard 2s and wait on 36s. Therefore, for those who want to fully utilize reading tiles, it's essential to consider such changes from a tile with no potential pairs to waiting on a one-sided or two-sided tile.



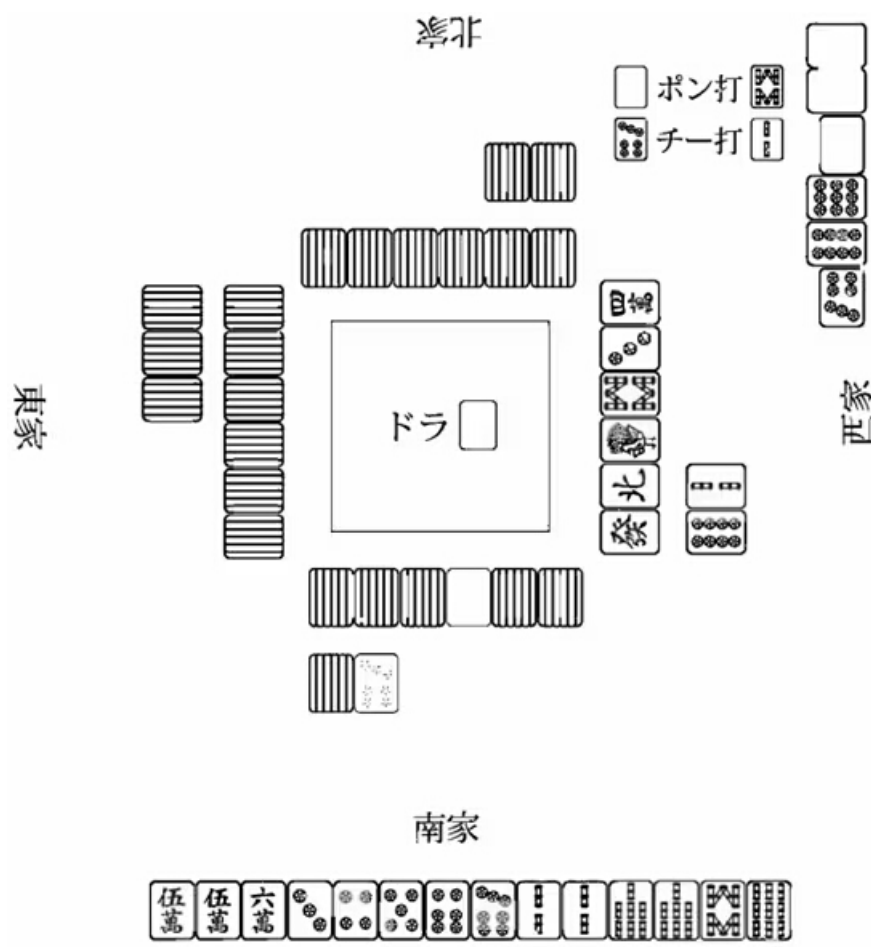
In such shapes, the credibility decreases. In the case where the last discard is a foolish shape (here, after eating 7p), because there is a change in waiting on a tile with no potential pairs after eating 3s, discarding North is also a reasonable choice.

## Understanding Shapes One by One

Reading discards can be summarized as making judgments like this shape is possible or this shape is not possible based on various pieces of information and confirming various shapes one by one. Advanced players accustomed to this process can quickly visualize the opponent's hand shape in their mind, skipping the intermediate steps, but beginners need to consider various shapes one by one.

This is also why you shouldn't think that there are too many exceptions in this reading, so it can't be applied, but rather think about whether such discards can negate these exceptions.

There are also cases where certain counterexamples can be clearly denied.



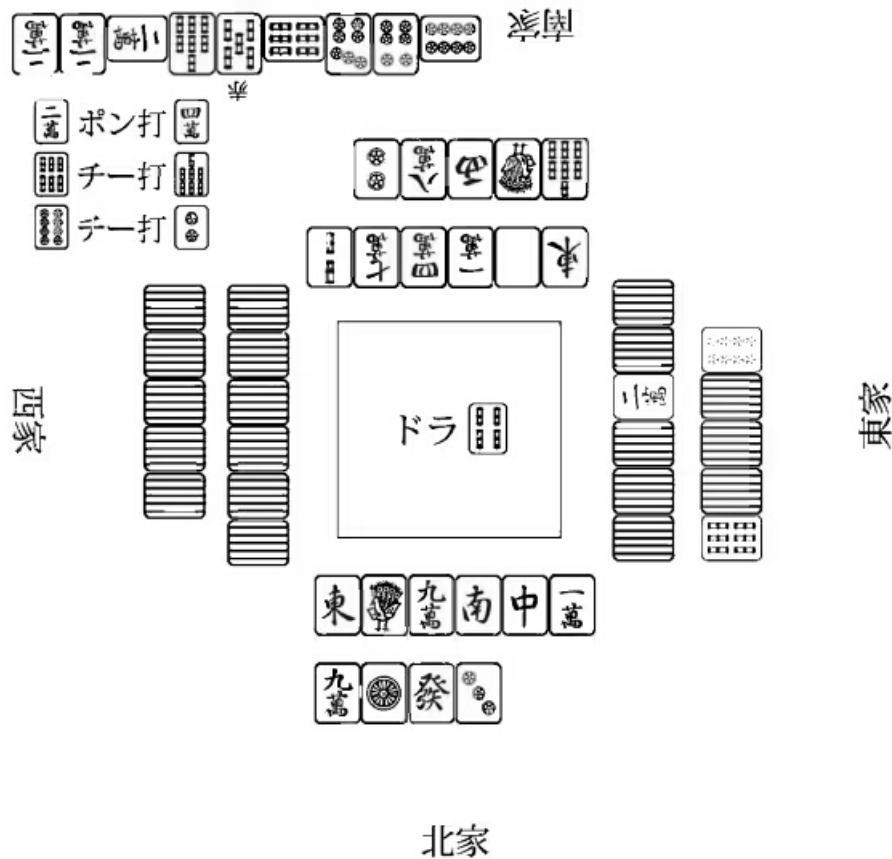
Call white, discard 8s, eat 7p, and discard 2s

For example, in the above scenario. First, including your own hand, you can already see three 2s, so the possibility of the next player eating 7p and discarding a tile from the concealed set of 2s disappears. That is to say, 2s is purely a related tile.

Next is the composite shape of 24456s, but the next player discarded 8p before the first turn.



## 5.2 Section 23 Knowledge of Presence or Absence



Call 2m, discard 4m, eat 6s, and discard 7s, eat 8p, and discard 2p Please look at the above scenario. If you only look at your own hand (Note: It seems the author missed his own hand, but it doesn't affect the discussion to follow), you really want to discard 6p. That is to say... yes, this 6p is quite dangerous for the next player, and that's what we're going to talk about.

First of all, as a premise, the next player has already revealed three sets of melds by the second turn, so the waiting rate is quite high. Considering 2p as a related tile, the most common shape is to wait on 3567p after discarding 8p, which turns into a shape of waiting on both sides after eating 8p.

Such melds are called shichioyan, and they are quite common sequences of melds in a melded hand, so if you can see through them, the game becomes much simpler.

What is Shichioyan?

### 食延是什么?

Shichioyan refers to the act of eating tiles like 3568p from a shape like 4567p, thereby creating a new block.



In shapes like this, eating 8p and breaking up 57m can turn it into a better shape of waiting on both sides. This is one type of shichioyan.



In shapes like this, there are already two blocks in the characters, and eating 8p increases the potential pairs of 3p to waiting on both sides of 36p, and such melds can also be called.

Although it's difficult to read out Shichioyan like Shape A simply, Shichioyan like Shape B will discard related tiles like 2p, and if you read it carefully, you can detect it.

Criteria for Seeing through the shichioyan

Is the opponent shichioyan? To suspect whether the opponent is shichioyan, two criteria need to be considered:

- (1) After two sets of calls or beyond.
- (2) After a call, playing a tile of the same suit that cannot form a composite shape (Note: Excluding cases like calling 778 to form 69, then discarding 7, or calling 779 to form 8, then discarding 7).

First is (1). Although shichioyan from a menzen state is possible, typically it doesn't alter the number of shanten, so passing is more common. If the opponent is already tenpai, opting for riichi is also frequent. In other words, it's only necessary to suspect a shichioyan from after two sets of calls.

Next is (2). If shichioyan from a shape like 24567p with two blocks, it's essential to play a related tile of the same suit. Only from a shape like 33456p, eating 2p and discarding 3p to retain 45p, is it impossible to differentiate from a simple call of 334p.

Therefore, when a tile of the same suit is played after a call but cannot form a composite shape with the called part, the possibility of a shichioyan should be considered.

For example, in the case of calling 67p to form 8p and discarding 2p, considering the tiles between 2p and 67p in mind naturally reveals the corresponding shape.

元の形

副露形

切る牌

残る形

元の形

副露形

切る牌

残る形

元の形

副露形

切る牌

残る形

元の形

副露形

切る牌

残る形

Even if it's only an awareness, it can make a difference.

In the figure below, I'll provide some common shichioyan shapes. People with confident memory can memorize them. If these shapes can be conjured in mind during actual play, the range of tile reading can be broadened.

If memorization seems difficult, at least consider whether there might be a shichioyan when meeting the above two criteria. Even if only the corresponding shapes surface in the mind, it's a significant progress. This can also be regarded as an issue of how to allocate computational power.

However, calls that meet the above criteria may not always indicate a shichioyan, such as in the case of 22367p,

which has only two blocks.

Therefore, it's absolutely not viable to overly believe in reading a shichioyan. As long as there's a thought of maybe there's a shichioyan, avoiding dealing in certain situations is possible.

Moreover, if the opponent's tenpai rate is read to be high, there's also a high probability of a shichioyan in such situations. This reading is frequently applicable, so please remember this point.

So, how do we read whether the opponent is tenpai? From the next section onward, I will introduce related content.

### 5.3 Section 24 Pay Attention to the Inner-to-Outer Discard Order

The topic of discarding tiles while splitting apart sets has been previously discussed. What kind of shape does it leave in the hand for a sequence like 3p → another tile → 1p?

When splitting apart sets in a sequence of inner-to-outer, the likelihood of leaving a shape for both sides is very low. If the shape is 1334p, generally, tiles are discarded in the order of 1p → 3p, rather than reverse.

Discards like these are commonly slides or empty cuts.



It's natural to discard 3p in this kind of shape.



Then, it becomes like this, showing the terminal tile, and even if there's no terminal, considering safety and 0p's drawing, 1p would be discarded.

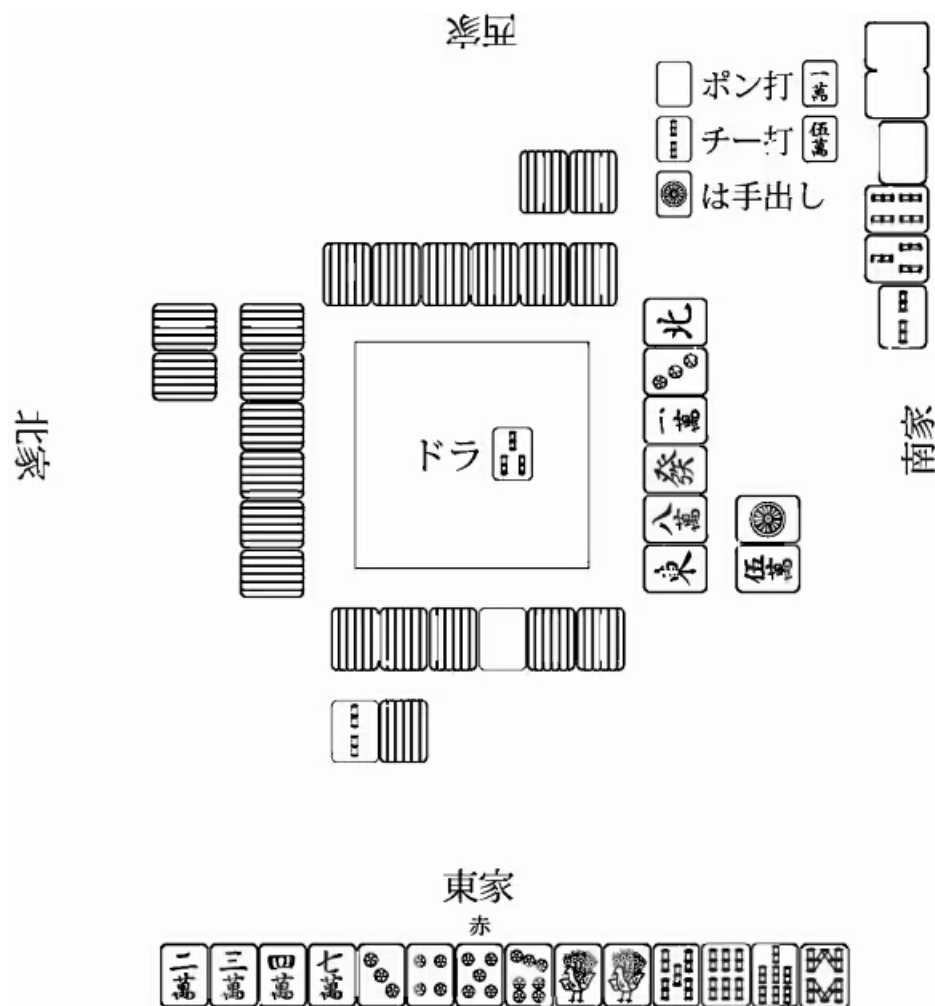
Transforming from 123p to 234p, shifting the sets horizontally in the hand, is called a slide.

And if Shape B draws 1p, sometimes 1p will be discarded from the hand; this is called an empty cut.

This is also for reading the blocks potentially present in the opponent's hand or for remembering the important theory of hand draws.

In other words, when it's noticed that after some time, the terminal tile previously discarded is from the outer edge, suspicion of either a slide or an empty cut should be raised. Please remember this point. What Information Can be Gained by Reading Slide?

Let's delve into practical questions. In the scenario below, if we want to be cautious of the adjacent player's call, what should we discard?



Pong White, discard 1m ; Eat 2s, discard 5m ; Discard 1p

Here, it's crucial to note the sequence of discarding 3p → 1p, where the likelihood of reading a slide is quite high. So, once a slide is read, what information can be obtained? That's the question at hand.

To start with the answer, 47p is relatively easier for the adjacent player to call, so 7p should be discarded here. If 1p is indeed a slide, then there should still be 234p in their hand. If they can hear 47p, then they should also have 56p, resulting in a shape of 23456p, making 1p a winning tile.

If a slide can be read like this, then the far-off tiles (e.g., 1's far-off tiles are 47, and 7's far-off tiles are 14) become quite difficult to deal into. Please remember this point.

Furthermore, if 1p is indeed a slide, then essentially, the final discard tile is 5m, so 7m is dangerous. Assuming the adjacent player hasn't reached tenpai yet, there's a high possibility of them calling or ponging 7m. Allowing the adjacent player to call to 7m would result in some loss, so it's better to discard 7p here.

By the way, while watching professional matches, there are cases where in shapes like 12356p, when drawing 1p, the player discards 1p to trick the opponent into misreading it as a slide and calling 47p. If 7p leads to a deal-in for the adjacent player, and they have 12356p in hand, think, So, the adjacent player is that type, and

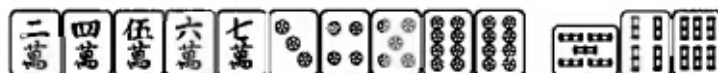
from the next tile reading onwards, decrease your reliance on this type of tile reading.

## 5.4 Being Conscious of Speed Frequently Can Lead to Feeling of Disharmony

For those with some degree of tile reading awareness, I'm eager to teach you the method of seeing through tenpai to tenpai.

Seeing through tenpai to tenpai refers to the call from tenpai to tenpai, which is a call made to change the waiting shape.

For example, in the previously explained shape of a shichioyan:



In a situation like this, where you're already in tenpai, calling 6m to discard 2m and change the waiting shape to two-sided is considered a call from tenpai to tenpai. The reason for attaching such importance to calls from tenpai is twofold:

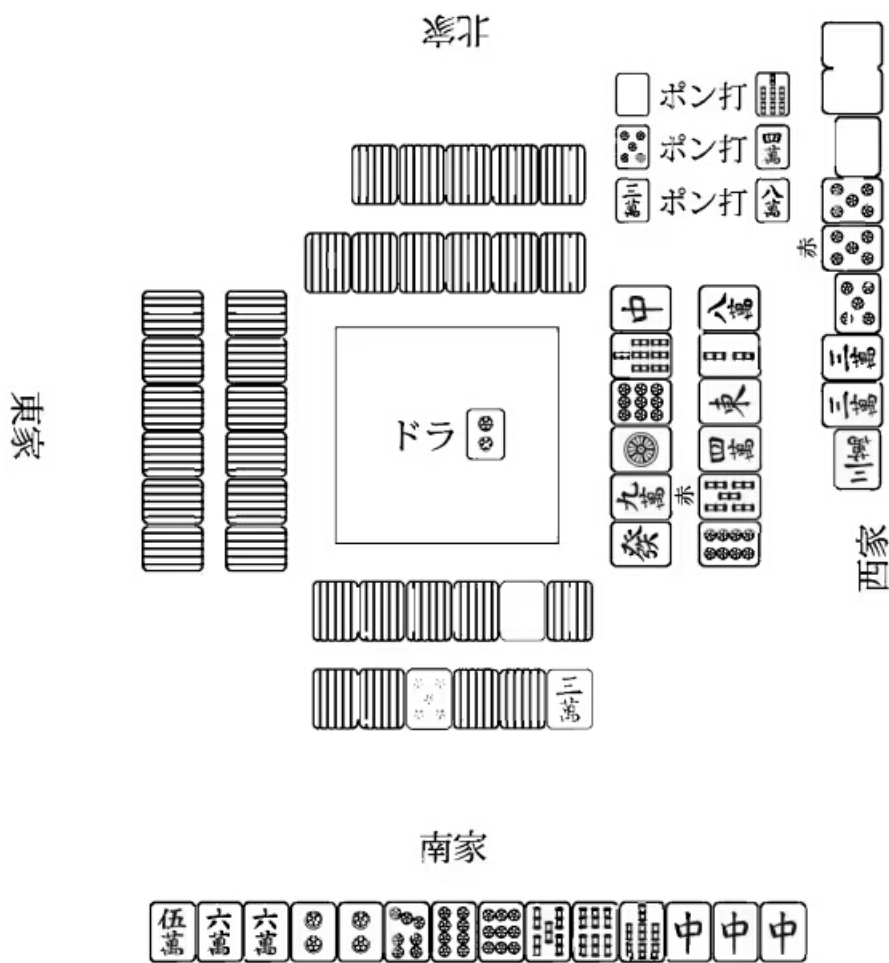
If you're accustomed to reading calls to some extent, there are many cases where calls from tenpai to tenpai can be read.

In such situations, it's possible to substantially disrupt the waiting shape with high precision.

The key here is the speed of reading. For opponents who have called two sets or more and have made multiple hand discards, or from the perspective of reading blocks, have discarded several crucial tiles, like in the case of opponents with a high probability of being tenpai already, if they make a call, it's time to suspect whether it's a call from tenpai to tenpai.

Then, if the opponent eats 45m after calling 6m and discards 2, if it's a shichioyan, it's not difficult to read that they're waiting on 58m. The most important thing here is to read the opponent's speed carefully. For opponents making calls from tenpai to tenpai, it depends on whether you have a sense of disharmony like Huh? They're still not tenpai?

If it's not a shichioyan, one common scenario is as follows:



Pong White, discards 7s; Pong 5p, discard 4m ; Pong 3m, discard 8m

The adjacent player has already discarded many middle tiles before ponging 3m, such as the 0s, which is a high-value tile. The probability of them being tenpai is very high. However, they pong 3m now, which is one mismatch point.

Moreover, they previously discarded 4m, which is another mismatch point. If both the following conditions are met:

- It looks like they're already tenpai, but they ponged a tile.
- They have previously discarded tiles around the pong material.



Then, one very common possibility is a transition from waiting on a foolish shape to waiting on a single tile.

Among these, transitioning to all pongs is quite common. Even if there isn't explicit information that 7m is a poor wait, transitioning to waiting on a single tile like this is valuable.

If you consider the adjacent player was probably already tenpai but made a call, then a player who clearly seems tenpai chose to pong and tiles around the previously discarded pong material would be two convincing reasons.

And if you want to read this pong, the tile discarded at the moment of tenpai will definitely be the tile adjacent to the final discard tile. In this example, if the adjacent player holds 78m, they will win by drawing 68m, so the possibility of having a shape of 68m will be higher. In other words, it's quite risky to discard 6m oneself, so it's a clever move to quietly discard 5m here.

## 5.5 Section 26 If there is no corresponding awareness , then there will be no countermeasures .

Without the corresponding awareness, there's no room for countermeasures.

At its core, tile reading assumes that opponents will generally play tiles efficiently, allowing players to predict their opponents' hands by reverse-engineering tile efficiency.

In other words, if opponents disregard tile efficiency in their gameplay, tile reading becomes ineffective. Hence, tile reading isn't solely based on one's own skill; choosing when to apply it is equally important. However, if opponents' tile efficiency is extremely poor, winning becomes effortless regardless of how many conclusions are misread, provided that the player has a good grasp of fundamental knowledge like tile efficiency.

However, if opponents have a good understanding of tile efficiency, it becomes necessary to pay attention to cases where tile efficiency is disregarded.

A representative example of this is all pongs. Lateral hand development is a basic part of tile efficiency, but all pongs require vertical hand development. For instance, in a shape like 788m, deciding to all pong would require discarding 7m from this shape, which is quite uncommon. When reading all pongs, the following two points should be noted:

Calling tiles that complete sets (especially honor tiles) is dangerous. Edge tiles and tiles in the middle of consecutive numbers have no reliability.

These two points are relatively simple, even beginners or intermediates can easily realize them. However, I often see people who aren't good at tile reading focusing too much attention on common tile reading based on the assumption that the opponent is forming sequences, thus failing to realize when opponents are making all pongs.

### Methods for Reading All Pongs

To see through opponents' all pongs, there are mainly several conditions to consider:

They have called tiles (especially when they have called multiple tiles). They have discarded many middle tiles, making it difficult to find 5 blocks based on the assumption of forming sequences.

They have made multiple hand discards after discarding red dora or dora tiles.

They have called tiles that were discarded first.

Based on this, what tiles should be cautious of? Undoubtedly, calling tiles should be vigilant, so it's necessary to have a certain level of grasp on calling tiles. When making decisions regarding riichi's offense and defense, we consider how many of the 18 types of edge tiles have been called.

Similarly, when making decisions regarding all pongs, we should consider how many calling tiles are left.



89s is still a calling tile despite 7s being discarded, and the honor tile West is also particularly dangerous. Although these are tiles that the opposite player and the player on the left would discard if they drew them, they are still calling tiles, meaning the possibility of the adjacent player holding a pair is relatively high. In this case, it's not ideal to discard 9s from your hand, so let's discard 5m instead.

## 5.6 Chapter 5 Summary

After getting used to reading the tiles, you can acquire some knowledge of reading in extremely limited situations. Although these situations occur infrequently, they can have a tremendous impact when they arise.

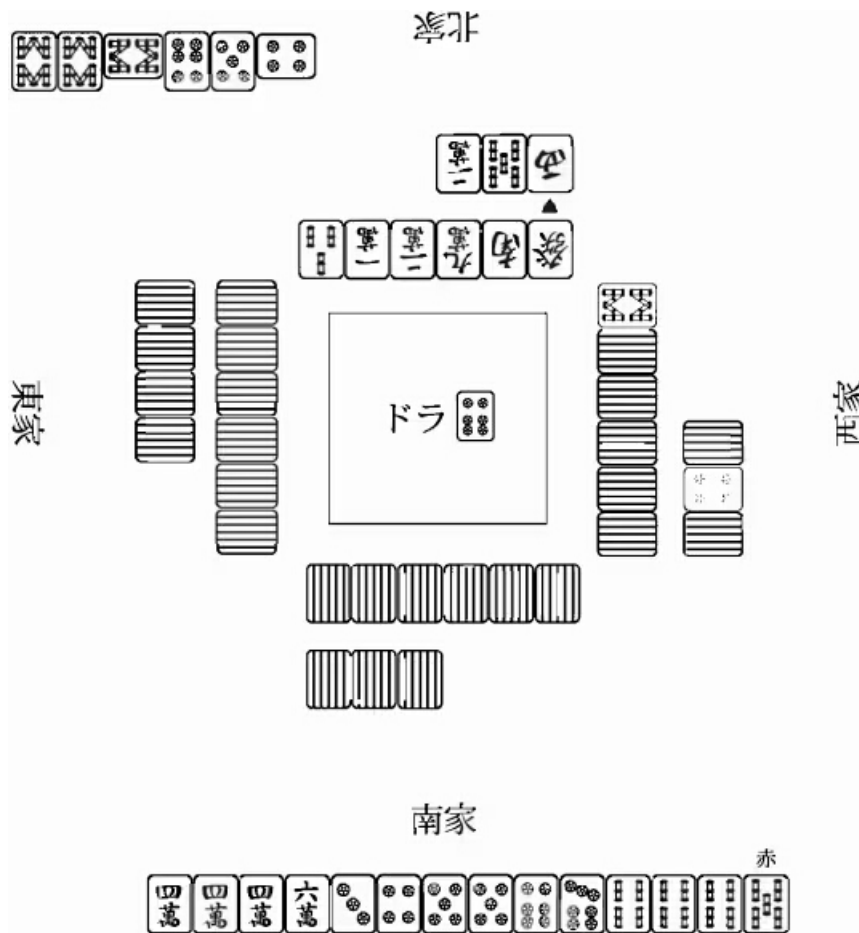
In particular, reading slides or food delays, as well as discerning concealed waits, if you can accomplish these two aspects, then you can both withhold dangerous tiles for effective play and confidently discard seemingly risky tiles when drawing.

A crucial aspect of such tile reading is maintaining interest in opponents' discards and sensing incongruities from them.





Question 28:



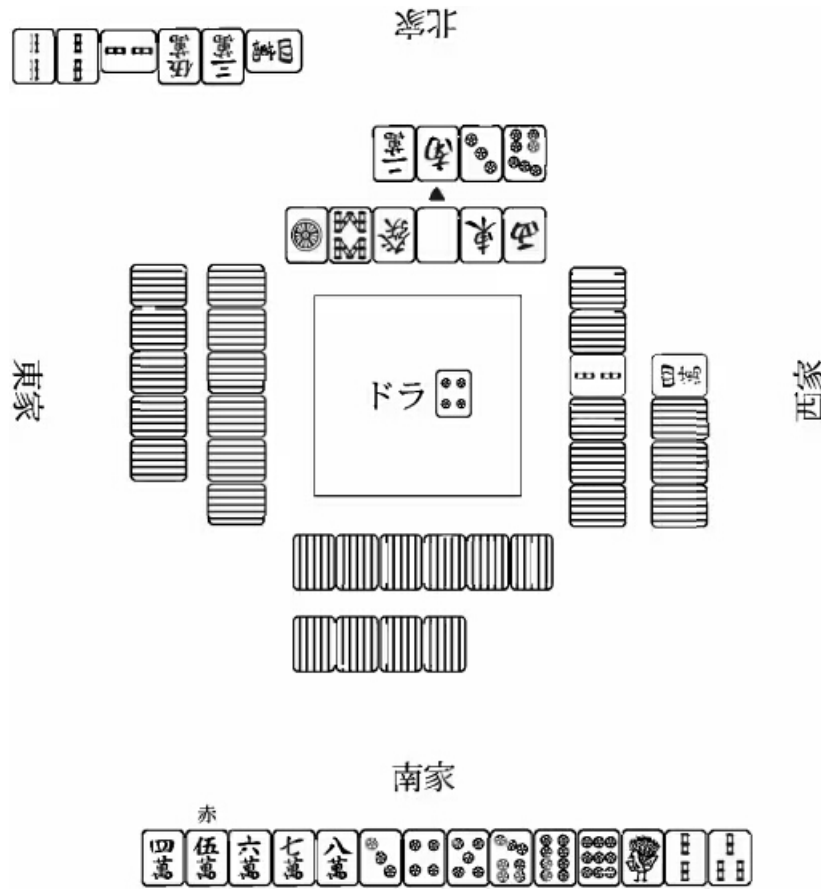
The opponent declared a meld of 8s, discarded 3s, and then called for a chow with 4p, discarding 5s.

Your hand is ready for a win. Discarding 6m would be better in terms of either completing the hand or discarding a safe tile, but it seems unlikely to pass the opponent's hand. On the other hand, 5s is a visible discard from the opponent. Which tile should you discard?





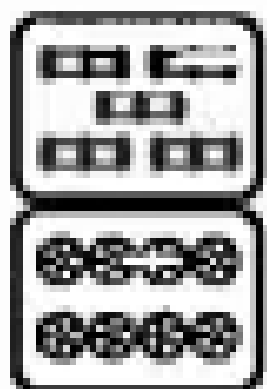
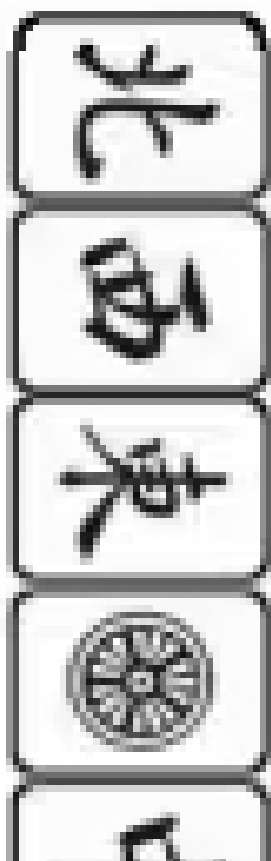
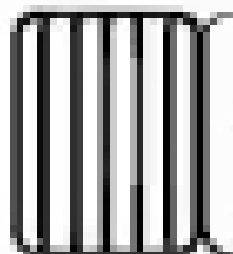
Question 31:



The opponent melds 2s, and discards 4m, then calls chii of 4m discarding 2m. With my hand being a winning hand, which tile, 4m or 8m, should I discard?



Question 33:



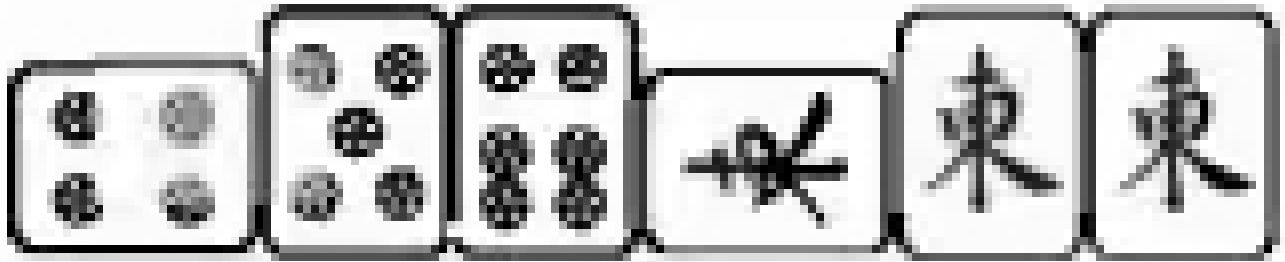
# 東家

The player before me eats 7m and discards 3 pin, then eats 3 sou and discards 8 pin.  
Considering the player's hand and the dangerous tiles, what should I discard?

## 5.8 Answers 26–33

Answer to Question 26:

Discard 6 pin and declare riichi.



Opponent's melds:

Seeing the opponent's melds, one cannot help but think, 'Why does he have a sequence like 3-5-6 pin?' The ability to spot inconsistencies is the essence of unique hand reading skills.

In the mid-game or later, having a sequence like 3-5-6 pin often indicates a delayed win. Common situations where a shape like 5-6 pin is used to take a sequence from 4 pin include the following two:

- (1) 35678 pin, leaving 78 pin after the sequence is taken.
- (2) 33456 pin, leaving 34 pin after the sequence is taken.

However, if it were (1), the opponent should have already won with 4 pin, so there is essentially only possibility (2) left. Hence, keep 2 pin and discard 6 pin. It's worth noting that the opponent's discard this time includes 1 pin. If there is no 1 pin, it could also be a simple pair like 23356 pin, so please be careful.

Answer to Question 27:

Discard 5 pin and declare riichi.



Opponent's melds:

Regarding this discard, there should be a sense of inconsistency in the fact that the opponent previously discarded 7 sou but then called for 8 sou. However, the opponent is not going for a pair. For more common scenarios where there's a head tile near the 9m and two-sided waits elsewhere:



In this case, it would be correct to discard 9m first. So what is the opponent doing? The answer is wait-ing→waiting. At the time the opponent called for 4 pin, they already had either 89m and were waiting, then switched to waiting with the head tile 8s. This consideration is quite convincing.

Waiting→waiting is often seen in the conversion from a pair to a two-sided wait as introduced earlier, but in cases like this where they're waiting foolishly, waiting for a single tile, etc., it's important to be aware of such situations.

Therefore, instead of discarding the dangerous 8m, it's better to discard 5 pin.

Answer 28:

Discard 6m and declare riichi.

Opponent's melds:



This time, there should be a sense of inconsistency in the fact that they discarded 2m on the 4th turn, but now they're discarding 2m again.

In shapes like 2246m 2244m, discarding in the order of 2m  $\rightarrow$  1m is almost impossible (these shapes would usually discard 1m first). So, what is the purpose of keeping this 2m? The most likely explanation is a slide. Initially, 2m was discarded from the shape 12234m. After that, they drew 5m and then discarded 2m again. Especially in the cases of 25 and 58, due to the improvement of red dora, sliding is more common.

So, what is the significance of reading a slide? The answer is that 6m is quite easy to pass. Since it's a slide (or an empty discard), it means they still have 334m or 234m. Combined with your own hand, seeing 4 tiles of 4m, it's quite difficult for 6m to be discarded. In this case, prioritize waiting tiles and point tiles, so discard 6m.

Answer 29:

Discard 4 pin.

Opponent's melds:



Considering the opponent's call for 9m and their discards, the opponent's main line is going for a pair. For a pair, the basic cautionary method is to pay attention to live tiles (for tiles that are not mandatory discards, consider if they have any value worth discarding), but this time the options 4 and 8 pin are both live tiles, and there seems to be no apparent difference.

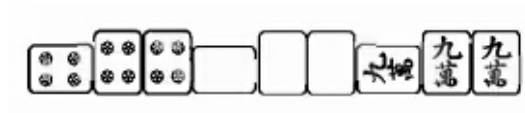
What needs to be noted here is the opponent's discard of 2 pin after calling for 3 pin. If the opponent is going for a pair of 4 pin and another tile, then when they called for 3 pin, they had a shape like 2-3-3-4-4 pin. Although it's not impossible to start with calling for 3 pin to aim for a pair, it's quite difficult to form a meld in this shape. At least compared to forming a meld from 23388 pin, the difficulty of forming a meld is like night and day.

Combining this with the opponent's melds, you can find situations where relatively safe live tiles can be identified quite often, so please don't overlook this information.

Answer 30:

Discard 5 sou.

Opponent's melds:



This time, the content is related to reading the opponent as mentioned in Chapter Four, which is a quite rare topic.

The opponent starts with calling for 9m, then discards 2 pin and calls for 4 pin, deciding to go for a pair early in the game. In modern mahjong, there's a benchmark for whether or not to aim for a pair, which is if there are multiple middle tiles in hand, you won't forcibly aim for a pair. This is because forming a pair with middle tiles is difficult, and keeping them will hinder the progress of the hand.

Returning to the opponent's melds, when the opponent called for 9m, they had at least a pair of 4 pin, so the other pairs should be middle tiles closer to the edges or honor tiles. Of course, we don't know what the opponent's discarding strategy looks like, so this hand reading is not that reliable.

Answer 31:

Discard 8m and declare riichi.

Opponent's melds:



I'd like everyone to feel uneasy about the opponent holding 235m, but even if you can't imagine the remaining shape of the opponent, you can still judge that 8m is relatively safer.

This is because if the opponent is waiting on both sides of 8m, then they should have 6-7m in hand, combined with the melded parts, it's a shape of 23567m. So, discarding this 4m is quite strange, and even if they want to call, they should at least pick up 23m.

Of course, it's still possible for 8m to be discarded by someone going for a double sequence, but 4m can still be discarded for a regular two-sided wait, so it's better to discard 8m here.

Answer 32:

Discard 1 pin.

Opponent's melds:



This question is a supplementary question that has not been covered in this chapter, so it may be somewhat difficult to understand the intention behind it. When teaching tile reading at the beginning of this book, it was mentioned that in such situations, one should consider Is the opponent's hand three colors? Or is it a full straight?

However, now it's already the third turn, and calling for a meld with the intention of forming a shape is also quite common. In other words, the tile reading based on the assumption that the opponent has a meld so far is no longer valid. Of course, there is still the possibility that the opponent has a colorful hand, but strictly speaking, this needs to be considered in conjunction with the discards of the players in other positions. Without the awareness that there are also melds aimed at forming shapes in the third turn, don't be misled, one may unnecessarily abandon the advantage of waiting for a tile. This is not directly related to tile reading knowledge; it is more about whether there are relevant thoughts. Therefore, I designed this question here. At least, there is no need to give up waiting for a tile, which is a clear advantage.

Answer 33:

Discard white dragon.

Opponent's melds:



This is also a supplementary question that has not been covered in this chapter. The atmosphere of the opponent's hand is quite strong, with only white dragon and red dragon remaining unseen as yakuhai. Moreover, they have two Doras, and the potential points are considerable.

However, here I would like to draw attention to the fact that they discarded 5 sou first. If they have gone tenpai after discarding white dragon now, then the hand at the time of discarding 5 sou should be similar to the following shape:

