

# Introduction to Handicap Play



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**This release (October 2022) incorporates some minor corrections to the body of the text.**

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## **Acknowledgements.**

I am grateful to Larry Kaufman for granting permission to make this compilation of his articles on handicap Shogi play available in a single book format.

Also, I am grateful to Eric Cheymol for hosting the compilation on his web site, thus making the compilation available to a wider audience.

Thank you both!

Any errors in the resulting text are entirely the responsibility of the editor!

## Editors Preamble.

There is little material on handicap Shogi easily available in English. The two main sources of information of which I am aware are:

- a series of articles by Larry Kaufman (amateur 5-*dan* and Chess Grandmaster) which originally appeared (in the early 2000s) on Eric Cheymol's web pages (<http://www.eric.macshogi.com/>).
- a series of articles in the now defunct magazine *Shogi*, published by the late George Hodges

This document is an edited compilation of the first-mentioned articles by Larry Kaufman, who has given his permission for this version to be released publically.



The rationale for creating the compilation in the first place was that I wished to gather this material together in one convenient place.

My editing has been extensive, but largely 'cosmetic', and (I hope) unobtrusive, being mostly stylistic – capitalising piece names, re-numbering moves in the Japanese style, replacing black with *Sente*, white with *Gote*, etc.

A very few textual errors have been detected and silently corrected.<sup>1</sup> Otherwise, I have made very few changes to the original text. Occasional interpolations in the original text are enclosed in square brackets ( [...])

I have added a few footnotes to explain points which seemed (to me!) to be obscure, but I have tried hard to keep these to a minimum. I have added a significant number of additional diagrams (approx. 70). I hope these footnotes and extra diagrams clarify, rather than obscure the meaning of the text!

I have numbered moves individually (in the Japanese style), in order to facilitate playing through the sequences with a Shogi program such as Shogidokoro.<sup>2</sup> Playing through sequences of moves using such a program is extremely useful if you do not have a board and pieces to hand, (it also enabled me to detect some errors in the original text). However, do remember that (unfortunately!) in handicap games, Shogidokoro counts *Gote's* first move as **1** not **2**, so the move numbers recorded by Shogidokoro are 'off-by-one'.

Where individual moves, or sequences of moves (usually variations to the main line), are un-numbered, I have numbered them, or flagged them with a  (*Sente*), or a  (*Gote*). Move numbers for variations from the

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1 These were at the level of adding a missing 'x' or '\*' in a capture or drop, or correcting an erroneous move number.

2 I have experimented with several free Shogi programs and Shogidokoro seems to me to be the best, see page 288.

main line are ‘greyed-out’, or occasionally, the whole block of text is highlighted in grey. Such sequences may safely be passed over on a first read-through (**but will surely repay careful study on a second read-through!!!**).

An important (vital!) resource used to create this document has been the Shogi diagram generator at:

<http://wormz.free.fr/kifugen/>

I have used this program to add a significant number of diagrams to the original text, and to replace most of the original diagrams (because of formatting problems with the originals).

I have also added short sections on Japanese terminology, Computer Shogi, Shogi literature, Shogi equipment and Shogi on the Internet

I have used Open Office<sup>3</sup> to prepare the document in PDF format as this is likely to afford the greatest portability across devices.<sup>4</sup> The document should be easily readable on Windows PCs, Android tablets, Apple laptops iPads, and e-book readers such as the Amazon

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<sup>3</sup> The version on the [PortableApps](#) web site.

<sup>4</sup> Dedicated formats for different e-book readers are simply **too specific**. For example, masochists with too much time on their hands may care to try to convert a PDF document to other formats using software such as [Calibre](#) – it is possible, and I have tried it briefly, but I’m not convinced that the result is reader-friendly. In particular, diagrams seem not to scale properly, and text ‘objects’ such as tables are ‘mangled’...



Kindle. Whichever PDF reader you elect to use,<sup>5</sup> it will almost certainly have a ‘View Bookmarks’ facility which will display a Table of Contents at the side of the display window, allowing easy navigation through the document. The ‘hand-crafted’ (partial) Table(s) of Contents are provided for the benefit of anyone who chooses to print the document,<sup>6</sup> but they **are** ‘active’, and clicking on a page number from within a PDF reader will navigate you to the desired page.

If you find any errors, typos, or other mistakes in this document, please let me know at [rjhare@outlook.com](mailto:rjhare@outlook.com).

Finally, for lovers of Japanese art, the image on the cover page is a Giga-e (Comic) image from the series of woodblock prints ‘Parodies of Shogi, Japanese Chess’ (*Koma kurabe shôgi no tawamure*) by Kuniyoshi Utagawa (1798-1861). Publisher: Gusokuya Kahei; Censor: Fukatsu Ihei.

RJH

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<sup>5</sup> I use Sumatra – it is small and fast. Available from the PortableApps web site.

<sup>6</sup> Try printing 4-up, double sided to save paper...

# **Introduction to Handicap Play**

## *by Larry Kaufman*

### **Introduction.**

Handicap Shogi is a great way to learn Shogi, for two reasons. First of all, as you learn the techniques needed to break through and win at each handicap, working from largest to smallest, you will learn most of the techniques needed to do well in the opening and middle game of even-game Shogi. You will learn the most important castles and how to attack them, and you will learn how to judge material sacrifices and how to evaluate positions.

I myself learned Shogi primarily in this way. The strategies of even-game Shogi are far too difficult for the amateur player to understand without the proper background afforded by handicap study.

The second reason to study handicap Shogi is that it is widely played. Most clubs in Japan and in the United States stipulate that handicap games should be played in formal club play and in many tournaments whenever there is more than a single rank difference between the opponents.

Moreover, the Shoreikai (professional training organization) also follows this practice in all official

games, though except for special events only the smallest handicap is used. There is also the tradition of an annual game between the Japanese champion (Meijin) and the Japanese Amateur champion, at Bishop handicap.

### **The Basic Rules.**

When a handicap is given, the stronger player removes the specified pieces from the board, and they are retired from the game. The player with the extra piece(s) is called *Sente* and the player without is *Gote*. *Gote* always moves first in a handicap game, as if *Sente*'s first move was the 'capture' of the handicap pieces.

In the rare case of mutual entering Kings (*Jishogi*), when the time comes to count points, *Gote* gets credit for the pieces removed at the start. In some events, it is stipulated that in case of a draw by repetition or a tied *Jishogi* count, *Gote* wins, but this rule should not be assumed.

Because the extra piece(s) for *Sente* are on their initial squares, which may not be ideal, the handicaps are not quite as large as they seem; the extra pieces though useful are also targets for *Gote* sometimes. Some people feel that to make the handicaps fully valid the extra piece(s) should be in hand rather than on the board, which would be much more difficult for *Gote*, but this is not the way it is done.

One must also keep in mind that *Gote* need only recover half the handicap to equalize the material, since he will get to use the captured material himself. For these reasons, even fairly competent amateurs need surprisingly large handicaps to defeat professionals (assuming the pro is trying his best to win, rather than merely teaching).

### **Handicap Traditions.**

There is substantial literature in Japanese on handicap Shogi, which I have been collecting for twenty years, and this series will attempt to cull the best lines from this literature, supplemented when necessary with private analysis by pros or amateur players of 5-*dan* and above, including myself.

Although the series emphasizes how *Sente* should play the handicaps, I have not neglected advice for *Gote*, as amateur players are often totally at a loss as to how to make the game a fight when they start out missing pieces.

The choice of lines for *Sente* is not so easy. Some books give the ‘best’ lines, usually meaning the lines that win most quickly with perfect play. However these lines often score poorly in actual play, because they presume that *Sente* will know and remember every variation perfectly, which is not realistic.

Other books give simplistic systems which are easy to remember, but which don't work well if *Gote* takes the best countermeasures. Another approach is to favor lines that are instructive. As much as possible, I have tried to strike a balance by recommending lines which are sound but not too difficult to learn and remember.

This series will consider eight handicaps, in this order:

1. Six Piece Handicap – *Gote* removes Rook, Bishop, both Lances, and both Knights (page 20).
2. Five Piece Handicap – *Gote* removes Rook, Bishop, both Lances, and either Knight (page 39).
3. Four Piece Handicap – *Gote* removes Rook, Bishop, and both Lances (page 64).
4. Two Piece Handicap – *Gote* removes Rook and Bishop (page 111).
5. Rook and Lance Handicap – *Gote* removes Rook and his left Lance (page 143).
6. Rook Handicap – *Gote* removes his Rook (page 185).
7. Bishop Handicap – *Gote* removes his Bishop (page 209).
8. Lance Handicap – *Gote* removes his left Lance (page 257).

Of these handicaps, six piece is rather popular for teaching novices, two piece is probably the most frequently played of all, and Rook handicap and Bishop handicap are also fairly popular. Five piece handicap is

not played much any more, but since the gap between six piece and four piece handicap is huge I feel (along with some of the pros) that it is important and sometimes the only way to make a competitive game.<sup>7</sup>

Some clubs have done away with Lance handicap, because some amateurs lack the specialized knowledge needed to take advantage of it and because many amateurs feel that if the difference in strength is that small the weaker player might well win an even game, with just the tiny advantage of first move. Still, Lance handicap remains in widespread use in many clubs and in the Shoreikai.

Eight piece handicap is often used with novices; Kazuharu Shoshi (6-*dan*) recommends ♠P7f~♠P2f~♠P2e~♠S3h~♠S2g~♠S2f~♠S3e and then ♠P2d. Three piece handicap (Rook, Bishop, and usually right Lance) is rarely used now, because the gap between two piece and four is not so large as to require it. *Sente* should probably use two piece strategy, with the extra advantage that *Gote* will be reluctant to use his right Knight due to possible Bishop promotion on 9c. Also if the long diagonal gets blocked *Sente* can play ♠B9g without fearing an attack on the Bishop by △P9e. Right Lance handicap was abolished nearly a century ago. Silver handicap (either one) is occasionally used to bridge the wide gap between Lance and Bishop

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<sup>7</sup> Editor's note: 3 piece handicaps (*Gote* gives Rook, Bishop and Lance) are covered in an article in *Shogi* magazine No. 25.

handicaps, but lacks official recognition. Opening strategy is usually quite similar to even game strategy.

How differences in rank are related to the handicaps is a matter of some controversy. Most clubs use systems that only partially offset the difference in strength. A typical Japanese system might be to use just first move for 1 rank difference, Lance for 2, Bishop 3, Rook 4, Rook and Lance 5, two piece 6-7, four piece 8-9. However in modern times the ranks have become somewhat compressed, with each rank representing a rather wide range of strength.

In my experience the rank differences that actually make for a fair game, assuming a 5 or 6 dan amateur is playing *Gote*, are Lance =  $\frac{1}{2}$  rank, Bishop  $1\frac{1}{2}$ , Rook 2, Rook and Lance 3, Rook and Bishop 4, four piece 5, five piece (right) 6, five piece (left) 7, and six piece 8 ranks.

Professionals in training use a Lance for two pro ranks, a Bishop for five, and a Rook for seven; the pro ranks are much narrower than the amateur ranks. A full-fledged pro should be able to give handicaps to amateurs as if he were ranked *7-dan*, assuming he is playing seriously, or as a *6-dan* if he is playing three games at once, as is the common practice. Note that the handicaps are not evenly spaced; the gap between no handicap (or first move) and Lance, and the gap

between Bishop and Rook, are smaller than the other gaps in my opinion.

### **General Advice.**

Here is some general advice about handicap play. At high handicaps (four piece and above) it is generally best for *Sente* to attack as quickly as possible, not bothering to castle, since breakthrough can usually be achieved without giving *Gote* too much material in hand with which to counterattack. Of course castling cannot be bad; former Meijin Kato Hifumi once wrote that *Sente* can go into the Fortress castle at any handicap and do well, but this does give *Gote* time to achieve an ideal disposition of his forces, and *Sente* may later be forced to show some defensive skill.

At any handicap including one or both Lances it is usually wise to attack on the edge rather quickly, because if the attack is postponed fighting may erupt in the center, and the extra Lance(s) will be irrelevant, or even a liability.

When only major pieces (Rook and/or Bishop) are removed it usually pays for *Sente* to exercise extreme patience, only attacking when the position cannot be further improved by quiet means. Normally *Gote* must wait for *Sente* to attack. The principal exception is Bishop handicap, in which case *Gote* often attacks first because in the original position the Bishop is a target for



the Rook, so *Gote* will often have time to castle and prepare an attack before *Sente* has time to reposition his Bishop and do the same.

### **Material Balance.**

In the early stages of the game, which we are studying here, the most important factor in evaluating the position is the material balance, assuming reasonable King safety. Only towards the end, when direct attack on the Kings becomes possible, can material be disregarded. Consequently we need a rough guide to evaluate material exchanges.

The scale I use is a compromise between the opinions of various pros. With a Pawn as 1, Lance=4, Knight=5, Silver=7, Gold=8, Bishop=11, Rook=13, promoted Bishop=15, and promoted Rook=17.

A promoted Pawn is actually more valuable than a Gold, because it unpromotes on capture, and so is worth 10, while the promoted Lance or Knight is worth 9. However, the exchange of a promoted Pawn (or Lance or Knight) for a real Gold is still extremely desirable, because you gain a Gold while your opponent gains only a Pawn. Numerically, you lose 2 (10-8) while your opponent loses 7 (8-1).

Promoting Pawns and then exchanging the promoted Pawns for real generals is probably the single most important technique you will learn from high handicap

play. It is also important to note that although the value of Pawns is rather low, it is rather important to have at least one Pawn in hand if you are missing a Pawn and very important if you are missing two. Therefore the early exchange of a Knight for two Pawns is often very good if the opponent cannot get a Pawn in hand.

Regarding notation, I follow the conventions established by the late George Hodges in 1976 in the British magazine *Shogi*, except for omitting hyphens between the piece symbol and the move.<sup>8</sup>

The files are numbered from 1 to 9 starting on *Gote's* left, while the ranks are lettered from 'a' to 'i' from *Gote's* side.

The first letter of the piece (with 'N' for Knight) is followed by the destination square, unless the departure square must be given first to avoid ambiguity.

- x indicates 'captures'
- + indicates 'promotes' or 'promoted'
- = indicates 'does not promote'
- \* indicates 'drops'

A good move may be followed by '!', a bad one by '?'

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<sup>8</sup> Editor's note: Later, George added '~' to this notation to separate sequences of moves by the same player. I have done the same. I have also used ♠ and ♠ for clarity, and to indicate un-numbered moves by *Sente* or *Gote*.

When evaluating the final position of a line, since we are talking about handicap games the issue is not who has the advantage, but whether *Sente's* advantage has increased or decreased.

So a comment like “*Gote* is doing well” means that given the strength difference implied by the handicap, *Gote* will be more likely to win, even though he is still probably losing objectively.

## Six Piece Handicap.

Six piece handicap (*Gote* removes Rook, Bishop, both Lances, and both Knights) is an enormous handicap, roughly comparable to Queen odds in chess. Although officially the Shogi Renmei considers it only one step above four piece handicap, in reality the difference is immense.

According to the late Nada Rensho (9-*dan*), once challenger for the Meijin title (grand champion) and the leading authority on high handicap Shogi, it is nearly twice as large a handicap as four piece. This is only a slight exaggeration in my opinion, yet in actual practice strong amateur *kyu* players **often lose** to pros at six piece.

There are two reasons for this. First of all, many amateurs don't know or don't use the *Josekis*, (the recommended openings) for the handicap. They play a normal game, in which *Gote's* weaknesses on the edge play little role. The game starts to resemble a two piece game (Rook and Bishop handicap only), and since the players are not of the strength (about 2-*dan*) needed to win with that handicap, they end up losing.

The second reason is that most of the published lines for six handicap are really five-piece handicap openings, in that they attack only one edge or the other, so players

who use these lines are still not getting the full value of the handicap.

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
			銀	金	玉	金	銀			a
										b
	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	c
			●				●			d
										e
			●				●			f
	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	g
		角						飛		h
	香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂	香	i

Six piece start position

Let's start by looking at some of the lines often recommended, and seeing how *Gote* can make the game difficult for *Sente*. One often recommended line is to attack *Gote's* left flank by ♠P7f~♠P2f~♠P2e (to prevent ♞P2d and ♞G2c, defending the edge), ♠P1f~♠1e~♠L1g, and ♠R1h. However, there are three objections to this plan. First of all, it takes several moves, giving *Gote* enough time to achieve a decent development of his own forces.

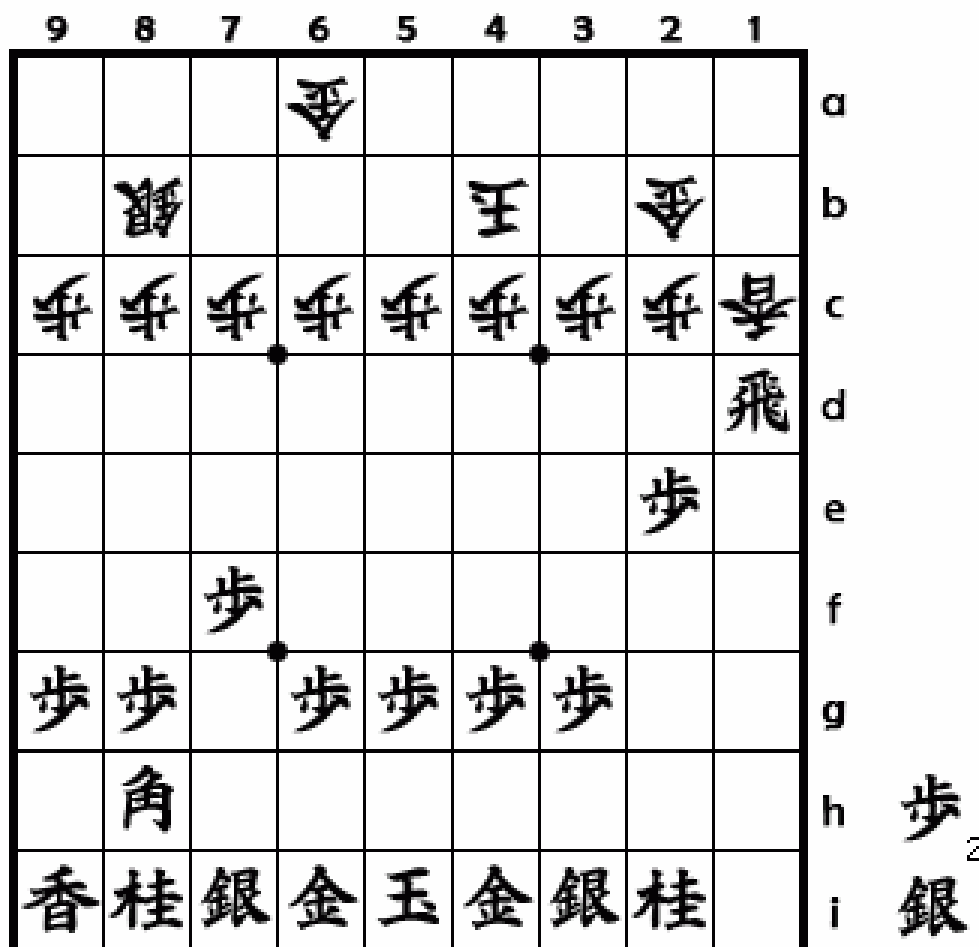
- [23] Six piece, line 1
- [24] Six piece, line 2
- [26] Six piece, line 3
- [27] Six piece, Kunio's line
- [29] Six piece, Iida's line

**Line 1:** Moreover, there is a defense (not mentioned in the books) which I like that complicates things a bit and buys more time: **1 ...**, **2 S2b**; **3 P7f**, **4 S8b**; **5 P2f**, **6 G3b**; **7 P2e**, **8 P1d!**; **9 P1f**, **10 S1c!**; **11 L1g**, **12 K4b**; (defending 3c to free up the Gold) **13 R1h**, **14 G2b!**

			金						a
	銀				王		金		b
歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	銀	c
			●			●		歩	d
							歩		e
		歩						歩	f
歩	歩		●	歩	歩	歩	歩	香	g
	角							飛	h
香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂		i

Six piece line 1, to 14 G2b!

Now if **15 P1e?**, **16 Px1e**; **17 Lx1e?**, **18 P\*1d**; **19 Lx1d**,  
**20 Sx1d**; **21 Rx1d**, **22 L\*1c** and the Rook is trapped.



Six piece line 1, **15 P1e?** to **22 L\*1c**

Instead *Sente* can break in by climbing his Silver to 2f (11 S3h~13 S2g~15 S2f) and then playing  $\triangle$ P1e, but this is slow and usually means exchanging Silvers, giving *Gote* some ammunition for counterplay.

**Line 2:** Yet another (non-book) defense for *Gote* runs: (1 ..., 2 S2b; 3 P7f, – as Line 1) 4 G6b; 5 P2f, 6 P5d; 7 P2e, 8 G5c; 9 P1f, 10 P4d; 11P1e, 12 G4c; 13 L1g,



14 G3b; 15 R1h, 16 G3d; 17 P1d, 18 Px1d; 19 Lx1d,  
 20 G2e; 21 L1b+, 22 P\*1f.

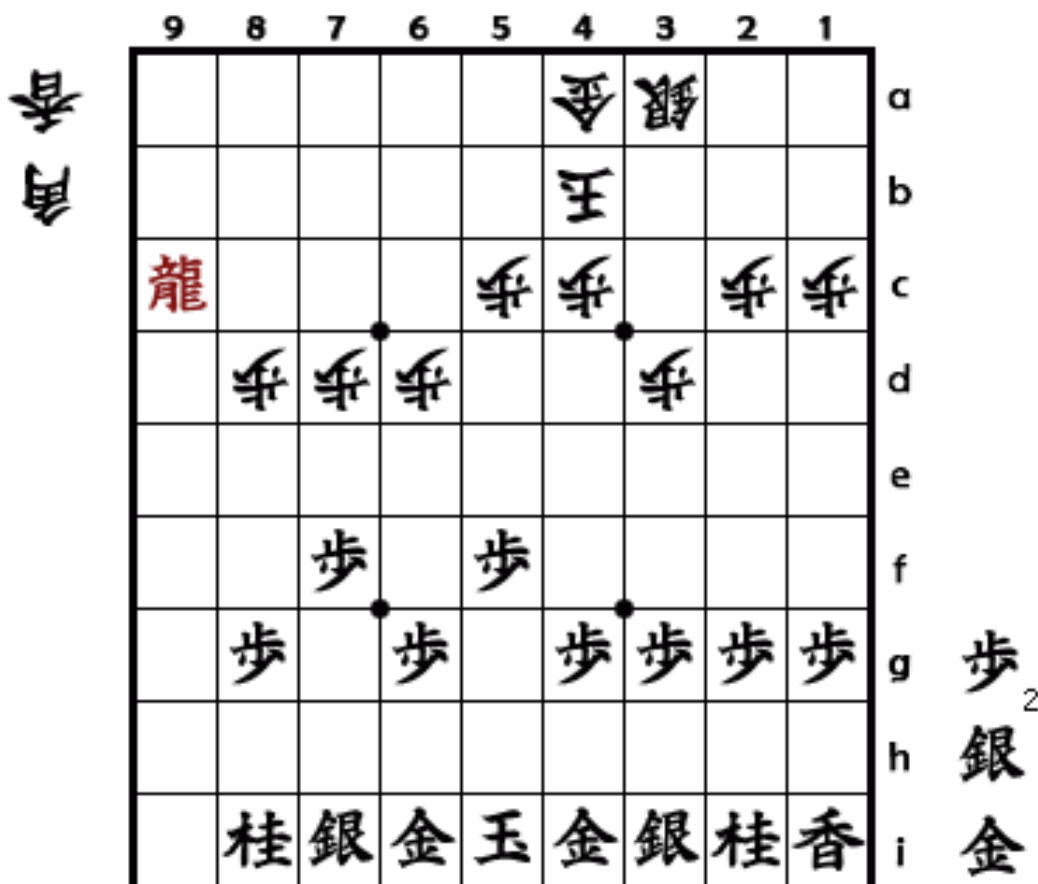
	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
歩			銀		王					a
							馬	銀	士	b
	歩	歩	歩	歩			歩	歩		c
					歩	歩				d
								馬		e
			歩						歩	f
	歩	歩		歩	歩	歩	歩			g
		角							飛	h
	香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂		i 歩

Six piece line 2, to 22 P\*1f

*Sente* wins Silver for Lance, but he cannot easily promote his Rook.

Another popular plan is to attack *Gote's* right edge from the start. This often requires the sacrifice of Bishop for Gold and Pawn. It is the quickest way to break in, but the sacrifice of material means that *Sente* must play well afterwards or face a dangerous counterattack.

**Line 3:** For example: **1** ..., **2** K4b; (the best defense to this plan) **3** P7f, **4** G7b; **5** B6f, **6** S8b; **7** P9f, **8** P7d; **9** P9e, **10** P6d; (if *Gote* plays **10** G7c directly, a later ♖G8d can be met by ♜B5e) **11** P5f, **12** G7c; **13** P9d, (better is **13** B5g and switching to attacking *Gote's* left, as recommended by the late Oyama, 15th lifetime Meijin) **14** Px9d; **15** Lx9d, **16** G8d; **17** R9h, **18** P\*9e; **19** Bx8d!?, (strong but risky; however **19** L1b+, **20** S7c is not very effective; the promotion of the Lance is not enough reward for all the time *Sente* has invested in his attack) **20** Px8d; **21** Rx9e, **22** P3d; (giving the King someplace to run) **23** L9c+, (**23** L9b+ though slower is probably better) **24** Sx9c; **25** Rx9c+.



Six piece line 3, to 25 Rx9c+

The exchange of Bishop and Lance for Gold, Silver, and Pawn is about even, and *Sente* has promoted his Rook. *Sente* can follow up by ♠P7e, answering ♞Px7e by ♠P\*7d and ♠P7c+ next, though the promoted Pawn will be a bit far from the enemy King. However *Gote's* King can run to 3c and after ♞G3b or ♞S3b he has a decent castle and can complicate the game with his two pieces in hand. In my opinion a weak player cannot beat a pro from this position.

So it seems that it's not so easy for *Sente* to win at this huge handicap. One book by Naito Kunio (9-dan) even went so far as to advocate a slow buildup with (in the

preceding line) 13 N7g, 14 G5b; 15 P4f, 16 P5d; 17 S3h, 18 G5c; 19 S4g, which he calls the ‘missile silo’ system, the Bishop being the missile and the Silver on 4g plus the center Pawns forming a ‘silo’ for the Bishop to rest safely on 5g.


Six piece, Kunio’s line to 19 S4g

The point is that unless you plan to attack quickly, the head of the Bishop or the Knight (the square in front of it) is a weak point and should be defended by a general if possible. Then *Sente* has plenty of time to play for an attack on either or both wings, depending on *Gote*’s play. However it does give *Gote* time to make an ideal formation, and it does not seem to me to give *Sente* as

large an advantage as he deserves at six piece. I do think this system is pretty reasonable at five piece (right) handicap, where *Gote* may have enough time to bother the Bishop.

### **Iida's Line**

In my opinion, the best system for *Sente* at six piece handicap is one recommended by former professional player Hiroyuki Iida, who has published two books of his handicap games. The idea is to attack first *Gote's* left edge, then his right, getting full value out of the handicap.

Let's see: **1** ..., **2** S2b; **3** P1f, **4** G3b; **5** P1e, **6** S8b; **7** L1g, **8** P2d; (else **9** R1h and **11** P1d is quick and easy) **9** R1h, (Kazuharu Shoshi (6-*dan*) recommends instead **9** P7f, **10** K4b; **11** P2f, followed by  $\triangle S3h \sim \triangle S2g \sim \triangle S3f$  and then  $\triangle P2e$ , which is an excellent alternative to the text) **10** G2c.

			金	王					a	
	銀						銀		b	
歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	金	歩	c	
			●			●	歩		d	
								歩	e	
									f	
歩	歩	歩	●	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	香	g
	角								飛	h
香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂		i	

Six piece, Iida's line, to 10 G2c

Now **11** P1d?, **12** Px1d; **13** Lx1d?, **14** P\*1c just traps the Lance. So *Sente's* attack appears to be a failure.

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
			馬	王						a
	龍							龍		b
歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	馬	歩	c
			●				●	歩	香	d
										e
										f
歩	歩	歩	●	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩		g
	角								飛	h
香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂			i 歩

Six piece, Iida's line, **11** P1d to the dead-end **14** P\*1c

Considering only this part of the board, that is true. However, *Sente's* plan is to switch to the other flank, in which case *Gote* will suddenly wish that his left generals were back home where they might defend his King against attack from his right.

So, **11** P7f, **12** K4b; (both to guard 3c better, and to run away from attack on his right) **13** P9f, **14** G7b; **15** P9e, (**15** B6f first looks better, but *Gote* can transpose to the

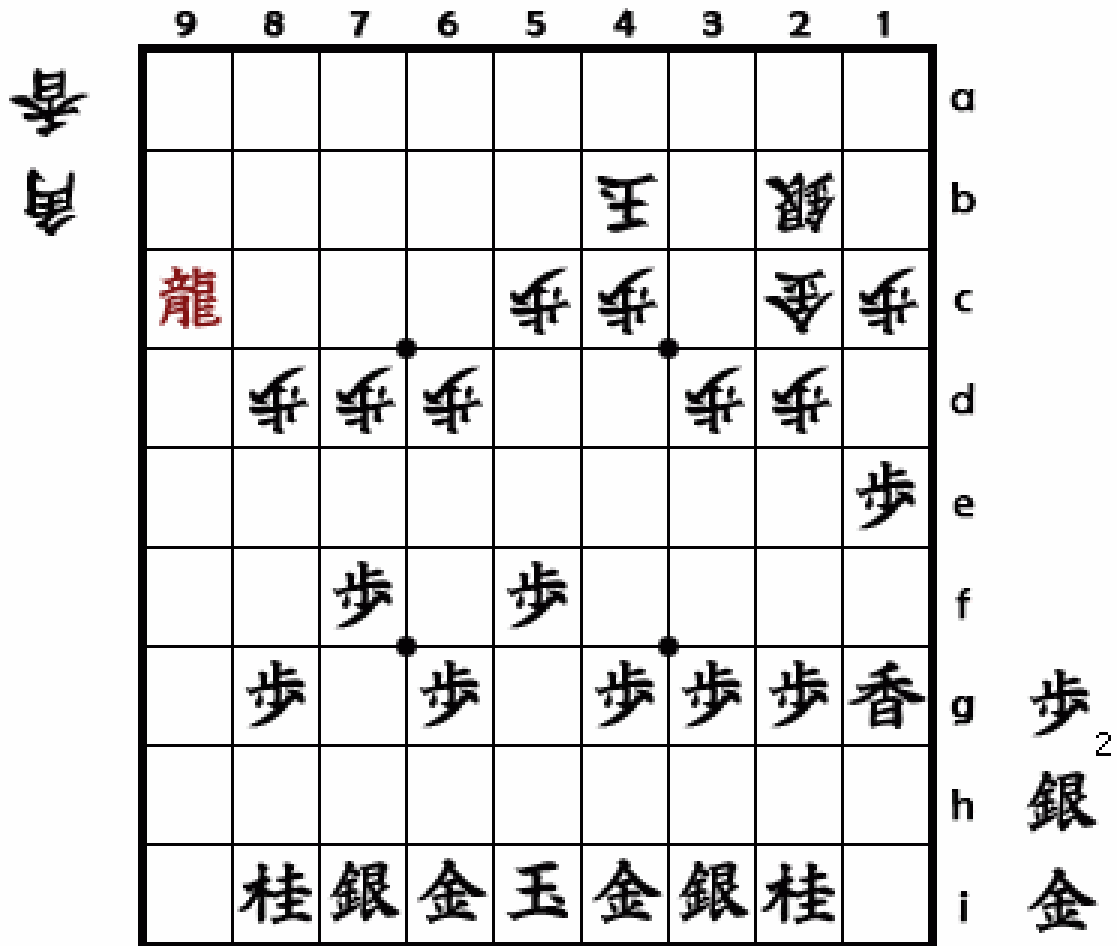
text lines or even sacrifice a Pawn by **16 P8d**, so it really doesn't matter). Now *Gote* must choose between **16 P8d** or **16 P7d** (intending eventually  $\triangleleft G7c \sim \triangleleft G8d$ ).

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
										a
		銀	金			王		銀		b
	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	金	歩	c
								歩		d
	歩								歩	e
			歩							f
		歩		歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	香	g
		角							飛	h
	香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂		i

Six piece, Iida's line, **11 P7f** to **15 P9e**



**16 P7d:** First let's consider **16 P7d: 17 B6f, 18 P6d;** (if **18 G7c; 19 P9d, 20 Px9d; 21 Lx9d, 22 G8d; 23 B5e!, 24 S7a; 25 R9h, 26 P\*9e; 27 L9c+, 28 S6b; 29 B8b+)** **19 P5f,** (so the Bishop can remain pointing at 9c after ... **P6e)** **20 G7c;** (probably *Gote* should just play **20 K3b,** allowing **21 P9d, 22 Px9d; 23 Lx9d,** though **25 R9h** next will lead to promoting Lance, Rook, and perhaps also Bishop) **21 P9d, 22 Px9d; 23 Lx9d, 24 G8d; 25 R9h, 26 P\*9e;** (or **26 S7c; 27 L9c+, 28 P\*9e; 29 Bx8d!, 30 Sx8d; 31 +Lx8c,** which is similar) **27 Bx8d!, 28 Px8d; 29 Rx9e, 30 P3d; 31 L9c+,** (or **31 L9b+)** **32 Sx9c; 33 Rx9c+.**



Six piece, Iida's line, 16 P7d to 33 Rx9c+

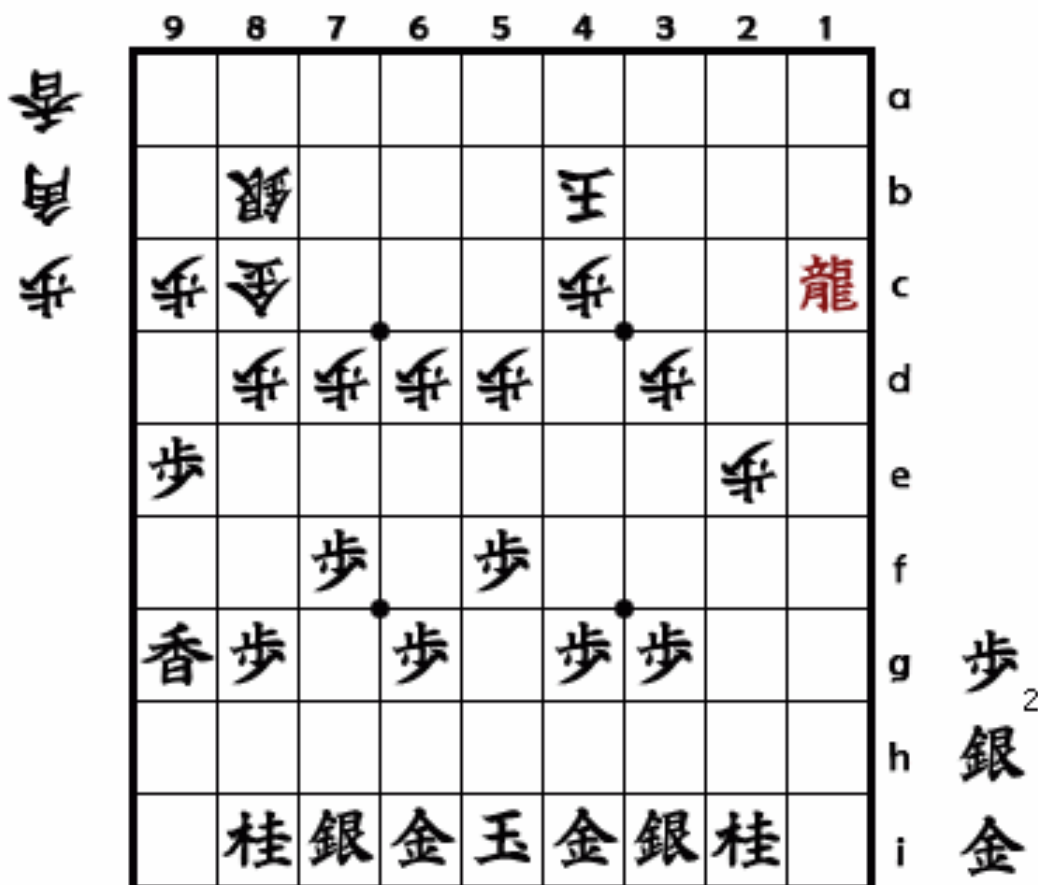
In contrast to the similar position analyzed above with the left generals at home, *Gote* cannot build a castle for his King nor can he interpose generals between his King and *Sente's* Dragon (promoted Rook). This position is an easy win for *Sente*.

16 P8d: So probably better is 16 P8d: Then 17 B6f, 18 G8c; 19 P5f (to give the Bishop an escape) and now 20 P7d or 20 G7d.

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
										a
		銀				王		銀		b
	歩	金	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	金	歩	c
		歩	歩					歩		d
	歩								歩	e
			歩	角	歩					f
		歩		歩		歩	歩	歩	香	g
									飛	h
	香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂		i

Six piece, Iida's line, 16 P8d to 19 P5f

**20 P7d:** If **20 P7d**; **21 L9g**, *Gote* is temporarily safe on both edges but has no piece free to wander but his King. *Sente* can develop leisurely or attack either edge, for example: **22 P6d**; **23 B5g**, **24 P3d**; **25 P2f**, **26 P5d**; **27 P2e**, **28 Px2e**; **29 P1d**, **30 Px1d**; **31 Lx1d**, **32 P\*1c**; **33 Lx1c+**, **34 Sx1c**; **35 Bx1c+**, **36 Gx1c**; **37 Rx1c+**.



Six piece, Iida's line, **20 P7d** to **37 Rx1c+**

Just as in the **16 P7d** line (see page 33) the material exchange is about even, but again the lack of any generals in position to help the King against the Dragon means that *Gote's* game is hopeless.

**20 G7d:** So best is **20 G7d**; **21 N7g**, (to prevent  $\triangle$ G6e) **22 S8c**; **23 L9g**, followed by  $\blacktriangle$ R9h and  $\blacktriangle$ P9d will lead to a break-in with no sacrifice, while *Gote* still has the awful shape of two generals on what will be the wrong side of his King.

					王		銀		
歩	銀	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	金	歩	
	歩	金					歩		
歩								歩	
		歩	角	歩					
香	歩	桂	歩		歩	歩	歩	香	
								飛	
		銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂		

Six piece, Iida's line, **20 G7d** to **23 L9g**

This is the variation quoted by Iida.

Although it probably represents best play, *Gote's* position is critical, and I think a player in the 5-7 *kyu* range could defeat the Meijin from here. If you play it right, six piece handicap is really decisive!

## Lessons from this handicap:

1. Aim to promote your major pieces (Rook and/or Bishop) on the edge with the aid of your Lances. Modest sacrifices (ie: Bishop for Gold) may be made to achieve this, if the opponent's King is unsafe. In this case, you should attack quickly, not giving *Gote* time to drop and promote his Bishop, since a promoted Bishop (called 'Horse') is a superb defender. If you promote a Lance, promote on the 7th or 8th rank, not on the 9th, as Gold generals are very clumsy moving backwards
2. Attack *Gote's* left, then switch to his right if he defends.
3. If you don't see a quick way to win, drop and promote a Pawn, then try to trade it for a real general, preferably a Gold.
4. Defensive generals should be between the King and the enemy Dragon. Don't permit *Gote* to achieve this formation.
5. At this handicap, all of *Sente's* generals can stay home, guarding his King. This allows for the easy transfer of the Rook from one flank to the other on the second rank.

## **Five Piece Left Handicap.**

Five piece handicap (remove Rook, Bishop, both Lances and either Knight) is rarely played, and when it is played normally *Gote's* right hand Knight is removed. This is because *Sente's* Rook and Bishop both point to *Gote's* left, so he will surely choose to keep his left Knight to defend the weaker side.

However for a player who has just graduated from six piece it is a very large step to five piece right, so it is reasonable to insert five piece left (meaning left Knight removed) as an intermediate handicap. In any case, the lessons in this article will be vital to understanding the lesser handicaps, especially four piece.

	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀			a
									b
歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	c
			●			●			d
									e
									f
歩	歩	歩	●	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	g
	角						飛		h
香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂	香	i

Five piece left start position

The strategy I recommend for *Sente* is to play either a Knight attack or a Climbing Silver attack, the latter if *Gote* advances his '2' Pawn. These are two of the most fundamental attacking plans in Shogi, so it will pay to study this article even if you never play this handicap.

Play will normally go **1 ...**, **2 S6b**; (*Gote* moves towards the side where he expects the attack to come) **3 P7f**, (one book recommended **2 P5f**; **3 S7h**, **4 B7i** but I think the text is best) **4 G3b**; **5 P2f**, **6 S2b**; **7 P1f**, (leaving the 2e square open for his Knight).



	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
		桂		金	玉					a
				銀			金	銀		b
	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	c
			●				●			d
										e
			歩					歩	歩	f
	歩	歩	●	歩	歩	歩	歩			g
		角						飛		h
	香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂	香	i

Five piece left, to 7 P1f

Now *Gote* must decide whether to develop (page 42) or to defend (page 47).

Normal development would go **8 P5d**; **9 P1e**, **10 G5b**.

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
		桂			王					a
				銀	金		金	銀		b
	歩	歩	歩	歩		歩	歩	歩	歩	c
			●		歩		●			d
									歩	e
		歩						歩		f
	歩	歩	●	歩	歩	歩	歩			g
		角						飛		h
	香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂	香	i

Five piece left, from **8 P5d** to **10 G5b**

Followed by **11 N1g**:

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
	桂			王					a
			銀	金		金	銀		b
歩	歩	歩	歩		歩	歩	歩	歩	c
			●	歩		●			d
								歩	e
		歩					歩		f
歩	歩		●	歩	歩	歩	歩	桂	g
	角						飛		h
香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀		香	i

Five piece left from **10 G5b** to **11 N1g**

This plan is suggested for six piece handicap in Kimura Meijin's famous old book *Shogi Taikan*, and it seems even more appropriate for five piece left. The Knight move to the edge only makes sense if it goes to 2e quickly; as in Chess, Knights don't belong on the rim.

The alternative plan of **11 P2e**, **12 K4b**; **13 L1g**, **14 K3a**; **15 R1h**, **16 K2a**; isn't as easy as it looks, because **17 P1d?**, **18 Px1d**; **19 Lx1d?**, **20 P\*1c**;

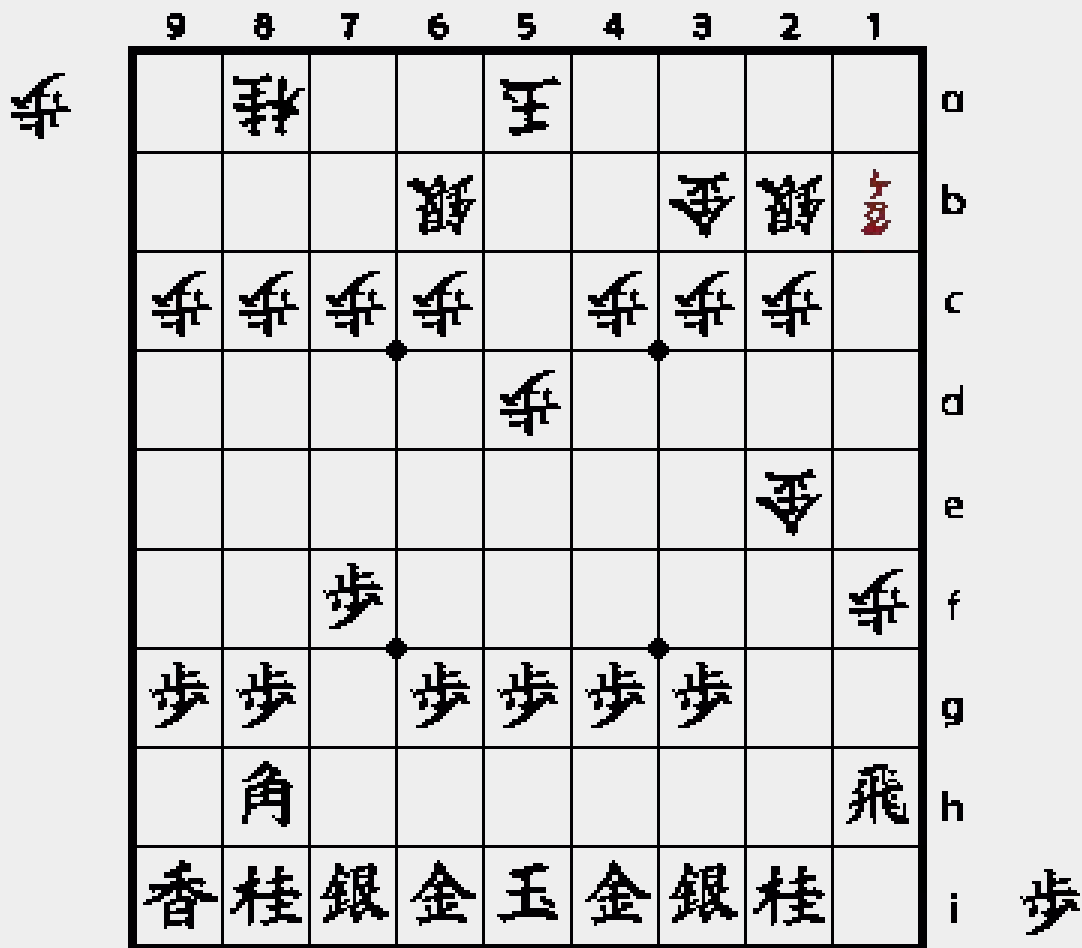
21 Lx1c+, 22 Sx1c; 23 Rx1c+?, 24 L\*1b traps the Dragon!

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
	桂						王		a
			龍	馬		馬		皇	b
車	車	車	車		車	車	車	龍	c
			●	車		●			d
							步		e
		步							f
步	步		●	步	步	步	步		g
	角								h
香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂		i

步<sub>2</sub>  
銀

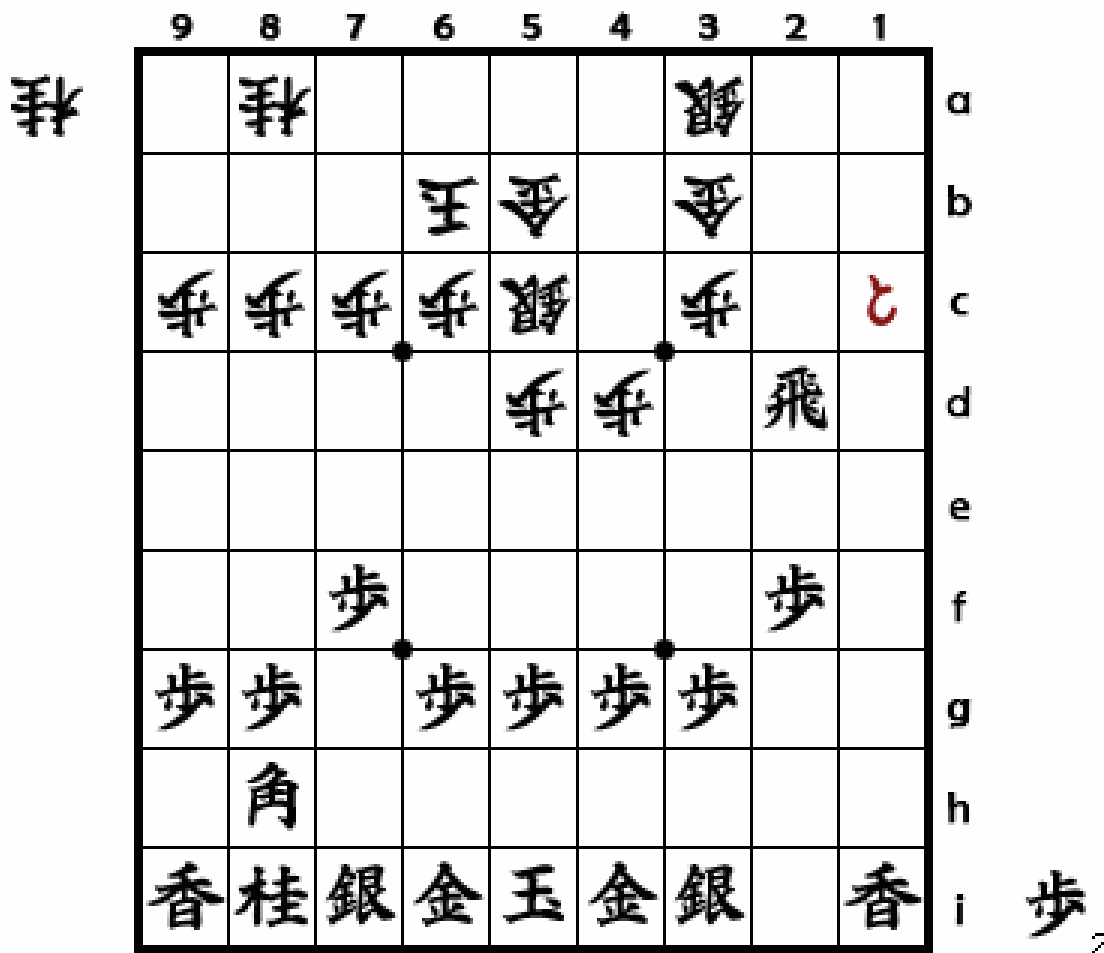
Five piece left from 11 P2e up to 24 L\*1b

Or, *Gote* can answer 11 P2e by 12 G5c; 13 L1g, 14 G4d; 15 R1h, 16 G3d; 17 P1d, 18 Px1d; 19 Lx1d, 20 Gx2e; 21 L1b+, 22 P\*1f keeping the Rook out).



Five piece left from 11 P2e up to 22 P\*1f

12 S5c; 13 N2e, 14 P4d; (14 P2d; 15 Nx1c+, 16 Sx1c; 17 P1d, 18 S2b; 19 P1c+, 20 S3a; 21 P2e, 22 Px2e; 23 Rx2e, 24 P\*2b; 25 P\*2c wins easily) 15 R1h!, 16 P2d; (else 17 P1d and *Sente* breaks through for free) 17 Nx1c+, 18 Sx1c; 19 P1d, 20 S2b; 21 P1c+, 22 S3a; (the sacrifice of Knight for Pawn to promote a Pawn is about even materially, but *Sente* will soon promote his Rook and make further gains) 23 R1d, 24 K6b; 25 Rx2d, intending R2a+ and +P2c.



Five piece left from 12 S5c to 25 Rx2d

*Gote* may prevent the above plan by an early ♠P2d and ♠G2c, which also stops the 13 L1g and 15 R1h plan

(see pages 43 and 45). However the Pawn sticking out on 2d provides *Sente* a target for a ‘Climbing Silver’ attack, the **most basic attack** in Shogi.

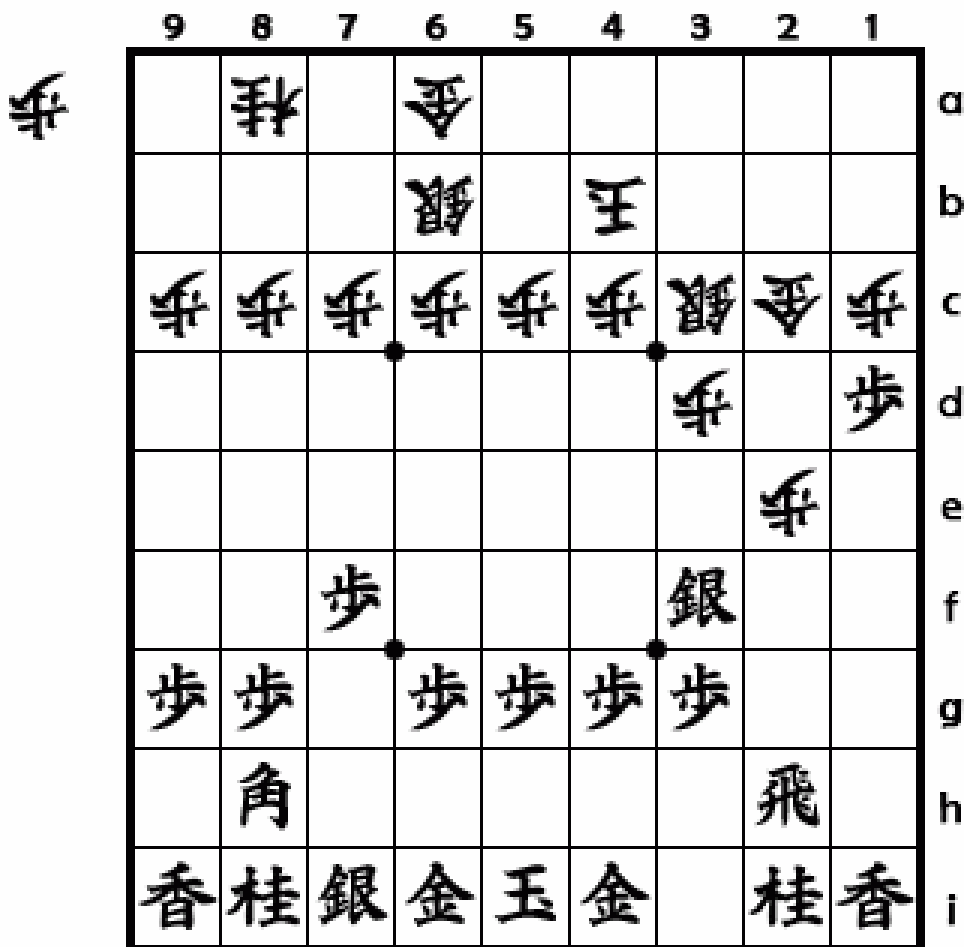
To recap:

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
	桂		金	王					a
			銀			金	銀		b
	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	c
			●			●			d
									e
		歩					歩	歩	f
	歩	歩	●	歩	歩	歩	歩		g
	角						飛		h
	香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂	香

Five piece left up to 7 P1f

Now, the defensive line:

8 K4b; 9 P1e, 10 P2d; 11 S3h, 12 G2c; (if 12 S2c *Sente* can just play L1g and R1h) 13 S2g, 14 P3d; 15 S3f, 16 S3c; (note that without the King on 4b *Sente* could now play 17 P1d, 18 Px1d; 19 Lx1d) 17 P2e, 18 Px2e; 19 P1d! (the key move of the line, giving the Silver a target).



Five piece left defensive line, from 8 K4b to 19 P1d!



20 Px1d; 21 Sx2e, 22 P\*2d; 23 Sx1d, 24 G2b; (or 24 Gx1d; 25 Lx1d, 26 P5d; 27 L1c+, with +L2c next)  
 25 S1c+, 26 G3b; 27 +S1d, 28 P4d; 29 +Sx2d, 30 Sx2d;  
 31 Rx2d, 32 K4c; 33 R2a+, 34 G5a; 35 L1c+, intending  
 ♠P\*2d and ♠P2c+ next.

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
銀		桂			金			龍		a
步				銀			金			b
	步	步	步	步	步	王			士	c
						歩	歩			d
										e
			歩							f
	歩	歩		歩	歩	歩	歩			g
		角								h 歩 <sub>3</sub>
	香	桂	銀	金	玉	金		桂		i 銀

Five piece left defensive line, from 20 Px1d to 35 L1c+

It is really easy to win at this handicap with the above lines; the remaining handicaps are not so simple.

### **Lessons from this handicap:**

1. Attack a weakened edge with a Knight.
2. Attack an advanced Pawn with a Climbing Silver.
3. Watch out for an enemy Lance drop that traps your Rook or Dragon.
4. Learn the technique of pitching a second Pawn before recapturing the first.
5. The main goal of the opening is **promotion**.

## Five Piece Right Handicap.

Five piece right handicap (*Gote* removes Rook, Bishop, both Lances, and his right Knight) is a significantly smaller handicap than five piece left.

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
			銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂		a
										b
	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	c
				●			●			d
										e
										f
	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	g
		角						飛		h
	香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂	香	i

Five piece right start position

[52]Kiyosumi's line

[57]Kunio's line

Both of *Sente's* major pieces are pointed at *Gote's* left, so he needs his Knight there much more than his right Knight. *Sente* can reposition his major pieces to attack

*Gote's* right, but this takes an extra tempo or two. This gives *Gote* enough time to make a rather tough defense using three generals on the right. The classic book *Shogi Taikan* by Kimura (13th lifetime Meijin), shows the direct attack utilizing a Climbing Silver as leading to an easy win for *Sente*, but a later book by the late Itaya (8-dan) shows a better defense for *Gote*. A better version of the attack is given by Kiriyaama Kiyosumi (9-Dan), as follows:

### **Kiyosumi's line**

The line runs: **1** ..., **2** G7b; **3** P7f, **4** P8d; **5** B6f, **6** G8c; **7** P8f, (planning to attack the target on 8d) **8** P6d; **9** P5f, (to give the Bishop a retreat in case of  $\triangle$ P6e) **10** S8b; **11** R8h; **12** G5b, (shifting his army towards the side under attack) **13** P8e, **14** Px8e; **15** Rx8e, **16** P\*8d.

				王		銀	桂		a
	銀			金					b
歩	金	歩		歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	c
	歩		歩						d
	飛								e
		歩	角	歩					f
歩			歩		歩	歩	歩	歩	g
									h
香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂	香	i 歩

Five piece right, Kiyosumi's line up to **16 P\*8d**

**17 R8h**, (not **17 Bx8d?**, **18 Gx8d**; **19 Rx8d**, **20 B\*9e** forking King and Rook) **18 G6c**; **19 N7g**, (now **21 Bx8d** is a threat; the Rook's promotion at the modest price of Bishop for Gold and Pawn would be deadly here, with the *Gote* King still at home) **20 G6c-7d**; **21 S7h**, (now one more piece is needed for the attack to succeed) **22 K5b**; (the *Gote* King is both safer and more useful here) **23 K4h**, (The advance of the center Pawn and the possibility of Bishop checks after a later sacrifice make it unwise to leave the King at home) **24 P5d**; **25 K3h**, **26 S4b**; **27 S8g**

							桂		a
	銀			王	銀				b
歩	金	歩			歩	歩	歩	歩	c
	歩	金	歩	歩					d
									e
		歩	角	歩					f
歩	銀	桂	歩		歩	歩	歩	歩	g
	飛					玉			h
香			金		金	銀	桂	香	i 歩

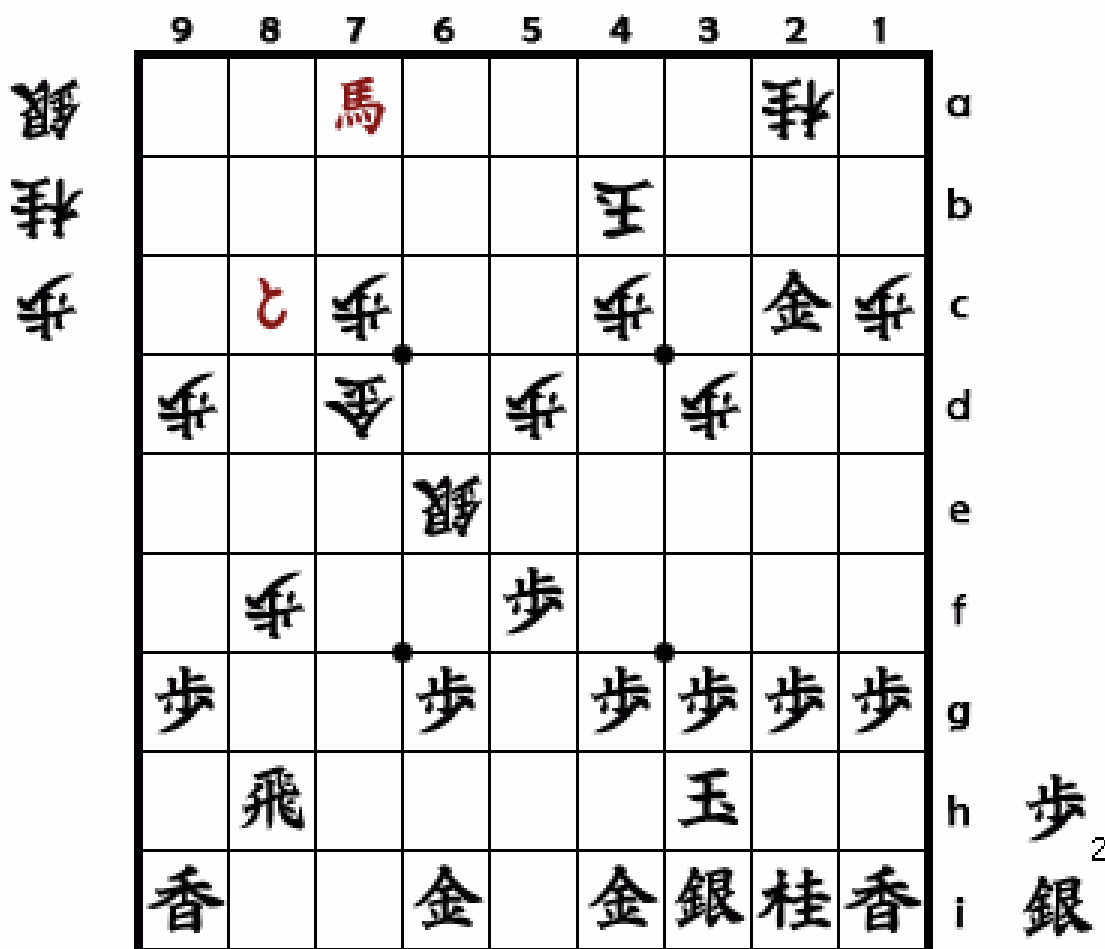
Five piece right, Kiyosumi's line from 17 R8h to 27 S8g

28 S5c; (28 P9d; 29 P7e, 30 P6e; 31 B4h, 32 G6d;  
 33 S7f, 34 S9c; 35 P9f, 36 S5c; 37 P9e, 38 Px9e;  
 39 P\*9b, 40 S8b; 41 Nx6e, 42 S4d; 43 P\*8e, 44 Px8e;  
 45 Sx8e, 46 Sx6e; 47 P\*8d, 48 G9c; 49 Lx9e is over-  
 whelming) 29 P7e, (Kimura gave ♠S9f in a similar po-  
 sition, but the defense △P9d and △S9c as given by  
 Itaya is not so simple to refute)

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
							桂		a
	銀			王					b
歩	銀	歩		銀	歩	歩	歩	歩	c
	歩	銀	歩	歩					d
		歩							e
			角	歩					f
歩	銀	桂	歩		歩	歩	歩	歩	g
	飛					玉			h
香			金		金	銀	桂	香	i 歩

Five piece right, Kiyosumi's line from 28 S5c to 29 P7e

30 P6e; 31 B4h, 32 G6d; 33 S7f, 34 P9d; 35 P\*8e,  
 36 S9c; 37 Px8d, 38 Sx8d; 39 P\*8e, 40 S9c; 41 P7d!,  
 (activating the Bishop) 42 G6dx7d; 43 Sx6e, 44 Gx6e;  
 45 Nx6e, 46 S6d; 47 P8d, 48 G7d; 49 P8c+, 50 Sx6e;  
 51 Bx9c+, (*Sente* is clearly winning) 52 P\*8f; 53 +B7a,  
 54 K4b; 55 G\*2b!, (surrounding the King) 56 P3d;  
 57 Gx2c.



Five piece right, Kiyosumi's line from 30 P6e to  
 57 Gx2c

With both a huge material advantage and the enemy King trapped, *Sente* should win in a few more moves.



## Kunio's line

A quieter alternative for *Sente*, suggested by Naito Kunio (9-*dan*) for six piece handicap but even more appropriate here, is to build a 'missile silo' by an early ♠P4f and ♠S3h~♠S4g to protect the head of the Bishop on 5g. Since this is a slow plan, I think *Sente* should first prevent the three general defense by an early ♠P9f~♠P9e, build the missile silo, castle, and then double on the edge (Lance in front). Next he can break through by attacking the 9c Pawn three times (Lance, Rook, and Bishop or Knight) while it can only be defended twice. For example, after 1 ..., 2 G7b; 3 P7f, 4 P8d; 5 P9f, 6 G8c; 7 P9e, 8 G5b; 9 P5f, 10 P6d; 11 B6f, 12 G6c; 13 P4f, (starting to build the silo to house the 'missile', meaning the Bishop, on 5g) 14 G6c-7d; 15 N7g, (stops 16 G6e) 16 K5b; 17 S3h, 18 P5d; 19 S4g, 20 P6e; 21 B5g, (completing the 'silo') 22 G6d; 23 L9g, 24 S8b; 25 R9h, 26 P7d; (note that because *Sente* has guarded his Bishop's 'head' with his Silver, an attack by 26 P5e; 27 Px5e, 28 Gx5e; can be met simply by 29 P\*5f, driving back the Gold) 27 P8f, 28 K6c; 29 S7h, 30 S4b; 31 S8g, (This is to guard the head of the Knight; otherwise once *Gote* gets a Pawn in hand he could play ♞P7e and answer ♠Px7e by ♞P\*7f) 32 P3d; 33 K4h, (not strictly necessary, but since *Sente* has already chosen a slow plan he might as well improve his position before attacking) 34 P4d; 35 K3h, 36 S4c; 37 G6i-5h, 38 P3e; 39 P1f, (a useful escape

hole for the King) **40** S3d; **41** P8e, (starting the attack, now that *Sente's* position is secure).

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
							将		a
	将								b
将	金		王				将	将	c
	将	将	将	将	将	将			d
步	步		将			将			e
		步		步	步			步	f
香	銀	桂	步	角	銀	步	步		g
飛				金		玉			h
					金		桂	香	i

Five piece right, Kunio's line to **41** P8e

**42** P7e; (if **42** Px8e; **43** P9d, **44** Px9d; **45** Lx9d, **46** P\*9c; **47** Lx9c+, **48** Sx9c; **49** Bx9c+, **50** Gx9c; **51** Rx9c+ and although the material exchange was fairly even *Sente* has promoted his Rook with an overwhelming attack) **43** Px7e, **44** Px8e; (else **45** S7f) **45** Nx8e, **46** P\*8d; **47** Nx9c+, **48** Sx9c; **49** P9d, **50** S8b; **51** P9c+.

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
桂								桂		a
		銀								b
	と	金		王				歩	歩	c
		歩		金	歩	歩	銀			d
			歩	歩			歩			e
				歩	歩				歩	f
	香	銀		歩	角	銀	歩	歩		g
	飛				金		玉			h
						金		桂	香	i 歩 <sub>3</sub>

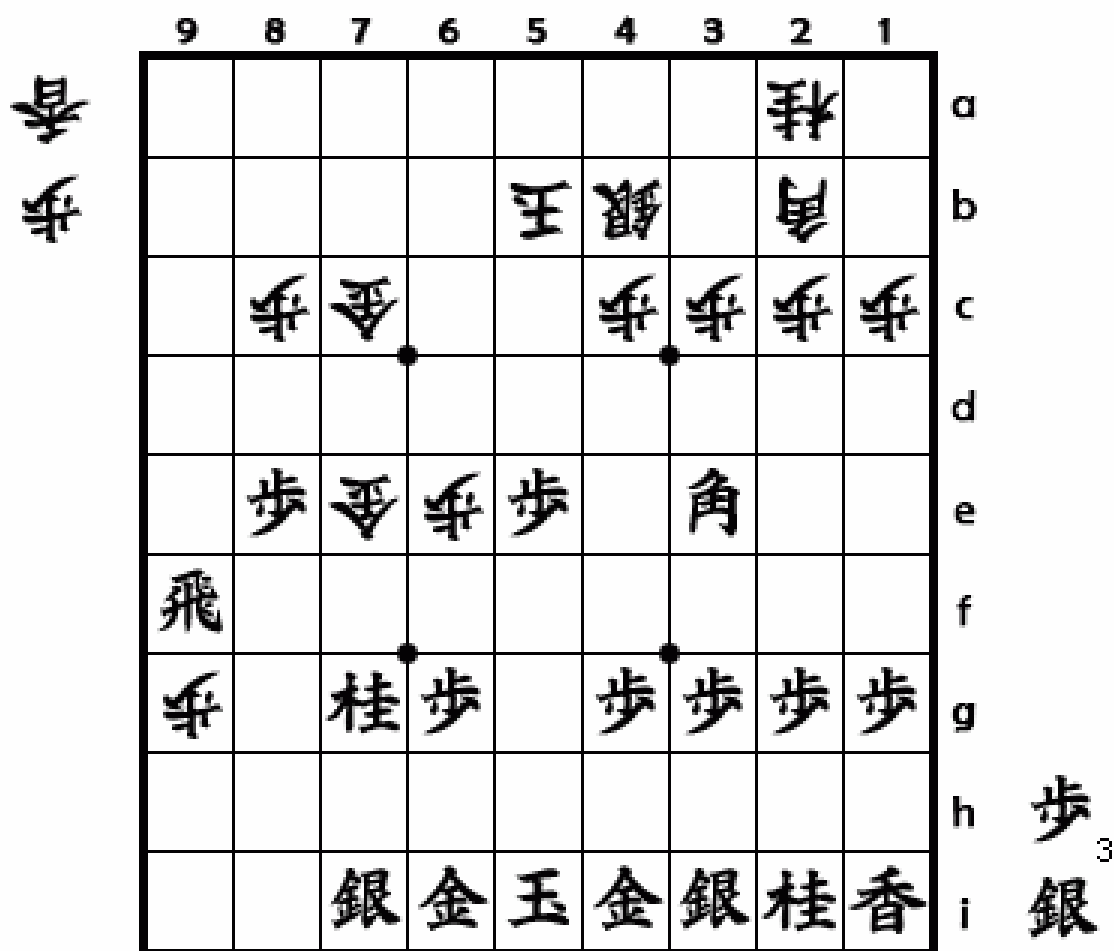
Five piece right, Kunio's line **42** P7e to **51** P9c+ winning material and breaking in.

If *Gote* avoids 4 P8d for fear of the above quick attack (page 57), *Sente* can prevent it altogether before attacking the edge: 1 ..., 2 G7b; 3 P7f, 4 S8b; 5 B6f, 6 G5b; (If *Gote* omits this *Sente* can play a quick ♠P9f~♠9e~♠9d as in six piece handicap) 7 P8f, (7 P9f, 8 P6d; 9 P5f, 10 G56c; 11 P9e, 12 G7d; 13 N7g, is also good but a bit difficult) 8 P6d; 9 P5f, 10 G5b-6c; 11 P8e, 12 G7d; 13 N7g, (stops ♞G6e or ♞Gx8e) 14 K5b; (at high handicaps *Gote's* King is usually best placed near the center, but off the back rank) 15 P9f, (Here also a good alternative is the 'missile silo' by ♠P4f~♠S3h~♠S4g~♠B5g~♠S7h-8g which guards the Knight's head, followed by ♠P9f~♠9e~♠L9g~♠R9h, and castling) 16 P5d; 17 P9e, 18 P6e; 19 B5g, 20 G6d; 21 P9d, (*Gote* is threatening to stir up trouble by ♞P5e so there's no time to castle here) 22 Px9d; 23 Lx9d, 24 P\*9g!; (Keeps the Rook from promoting on the 9th file) 25 L9b+ (25 P\*9c is also strong).

						桂銀	桂		a
	意	銀	金	王					b
	歩	歩			歩	歩	歩	歩	c
			金	歩					d
	歩		歩						e
		歩		歩					f
歩		桂	歩	角	歩	歩	歩	歩	g
							飛		h
		銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂	香	i 歩

Five piece right, Kuno's line to 25 L9b+

26 P7d; (or 26 P5e; 27 Px5e, 28 Gx5e; 29 B7e, 30 S4b; 31 R5h, 32 P\*5f; 33 B6d, 34 G4e; 35 P4f, winning the key center Pawn) 27 +Lx8b, 28 Gx8b; 29 R8h, 30 P7e; 31 Px7e, 32 G7c; 33 R8f, 34 P5e; 35 Px5e, 36 S4b; 37 B3e, 38 Gx7e; 39 R9f.



Five piece right, Kunio's line, 26 P7d to 39 R9f and the Rook promotes (analysis by Kiyono (8 Dan)).

## Lessons from this handicap:

1. Attack the weaker side, in this case *Gote's* right. **The goal is to promote the Rook.**
2. Either attack quickly or else guard the 'head' of your Bishop and Knight, because these pieces cannot guard the square in front of themselves.
3. If you have time, **you should 'castle'**. This means moving the King at least twice, in this case to the right (after first moving the Rook to the left), far from where the fighting is expected to start.
4. Aim to trade Bishop for two generals, but watch out for Bishop forks.
5. Even the Rook should be traded for two generals if it leads to Bishop promotion.
6. Ultimately *Gote* has no defense to the plan of overpowering 9c with three attackers vs. two defenders. The exchange of Bishop and Lance for Gold and Silver is fine if it leads to the Rook's promotion. Even Bishop for Gold and Pawn to promote the Rook is good if *Gote's* King is still uncastled.
7. If you are *Gote*, try to get in both  $\triangle P8d$  and  $\triangle P9d$  to use three generals to defend the weak side. The best square for the King tends to be 6c. If you get the chance, seek to complicate the game with a timely  $\triangle P5e$  or  $\triangle P7e$ . You cannot stop *Sente's* breakthrough, but you should at least try to make him pay for it.

## Four Piece Handicap – Part 1

Four piece handicap (*Gote* removes Rook, Bishop, and both Lances) has intrigued me for nearly two decades. It would seem that with all four of his long range pieces missing, *Gote* should have no chance against anyone past the novice stage, but this is not the case. **Most pros will say that if you can beat them at this handicap, you are a Dan level player.** I almost always win giving this handicap to anyone without a Dan rank, and have sometimes won quick games from players as strong as 3 Dan (!). The total score in official U.S. Shogi Federation rated games played at four piece handicap is 36-8 in *Gote's* favor. Clearly this handicap is much smaller than six piece or even five, but these results aren't reasonable; they indicate that the players of *Sente* just don't know the opening well, or that what they have learned is not correct.



	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
		桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂		a
										b
	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	c
			●			●				d
										e
										f
	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	g
		角						飛		h
	香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂	香	i

Four piece start position

My interest in this handicap is tied to the influence of the late Nada Rensho (9-dan) and once challenger for the Meijin (grand championship). When his results in pro competition went downhill (perhaps for health reasons; he died at only 58), he turned his attention to handicap play, especially four piece. He wrote that the published analysis was both incomplete and inaccurate, and that the usually recommended Climbing Silver attack was no good. He claimed to be able to defeat any amateur below 4-dan at this handicap, and proved his point by winning a series of a dozen games against Dan level opponents by an overwhelming 10-2 score, despite

the fact that each game was published in a monthly magazine, so each opponent could study the previous games (and the literature) before playing his own game. The key to his success was that he always used his King to defend against the enemy attack, whereas all the literature assumed that *Gote* would not place his King in the enemy line of fire.

On my first trip to Japan I earned the rank of 3 Dan, and got the chance to play three games with Nada at four piece, plus two more on a subsequent trip. I won four out of the five, primarily because I already had considerable experience giving the handicap to American players. Nevertheless I was impressed by Nada's ideas, and resolved to work out for myself the best lines of play for *Sente* at four piece, since they could not be found in print. Common sense told me that it should not be difficult for any player who is even close to Dan level to defeat anyone with such a huge handicap, if he is only given correct lines of play in the opening. In other words, it should be possible to demonstrate a huge advantage right out of the opening, but *proving this to be so was a difficult task!*

Most literature on four piece recommends that *Sente* play a 'Climbing Silver' attack, showing that he can win easily by dangling a Pawn behind enemy lines and using it to deflect a defender. While this works well enough against routine play, it does not work very well when

*Gote* uses his King as a defender, as Nada always did, or when *Gote* gets a Pawn in hand early. The other lines recommended in the literature, including the ‘N1g’ attack and the ‘Retreating Bishop’, are also not very convincing against clever play. These lines will be covered in Part II. Some authors (notably Naito Kunio (9-dan)) have suggested that *Sente* just pretend it’s a two piece handicap (Rook and Bishop) game, but only the missing right Lance will help him if he plays that way. In fact the absence of his left Lance may even help *Gote*, as sometimes *Sente* plays to win it in a two piece game. Four piece handicap should be much easier than two.

About a year ago I made the **startling discovery** that if *Sente* substitutes a Climbing Gold for the Climbing Silver, he can break down Nada’s defense. Recently I also proved that the Climbing Gold (*Bokin*) works better than the Climbing Silver (*Bogin*) against standard play, so it seems clear to me that the Climbing Gold is the correct way to play four piece handicap.

It leads by force to a decisive breakthrough in the classical lines, or to a devastating attack in the Nada line. Yet, **this plan had never been mentioned in the literature or played** in any game to my knowledge, even though it is a known (but fairly rare) plan in even game play.

There are probably three reasons for this. One is that professionals like to teach and recommend lines that are likely to be useful in even game play. Another is that the Climbing Gold does not seem natural, because the Gold is the ideal defense piece while the Silver is more suited to attack, primarily because if it is exchanged off (the usual goal of the attacker), the opponent gets a less valuable piece. Why weaken your defense and risk the loss of the more valuable Gold if the Silver will do the job? My answer: the Silver is not agile enough for the task, and it turns out that in the classical lines, *Gote* needs a Silver to defend. Finally, not much attention has been paid to analyzing four piece in the two decades since Nada showed the weakness of the Climbing Silver.

It is my sincere hope that the Climbing Gold will come to be recognized as the proper way to play four piece handicap. In my opinion it is much easier to win this way than with the Climbing Silver, and I consider this discovery to be my greatest contribution to the game of Shogi. The following analysis is based on the analysis of the Climbing Silver by a number of Shogi pros, including the late Kimura Meijin, the late Kato (8-*dan*), the late Hanamura Motoji (9-*dan*), the late Itaya (8-*dan*), former pro Iida Hiroyuki (5-*dan*), and Shoshi Kazuharu (6-*dan*), but modified where necessary by myself due to the use of the Climbing Gold rather than Silver. Wherever I refer to the Climbing Silver, assume

that it is on the same square as the advanced Gold, and that the Gold is on 5h instead of the Silver on 4h. If there are errors, they will be mine.

The basic plan is to open the Bishop's diagonal, advance and exchange off the Rook's Pawn, push the adjacent Lance Pawn twice, and march the Gold to 3f, with the Silver going to 4h for defense. Then follows ♠P1d, ♞Px1d; ♜G2e (or ♜G2e first if *Gote* cannot sensibly reply ♞N3c). Next comes ♠P\*1b and a sacrificial breakthrough based on the use of the Pawn to deflect the Silver from 2b (with a Gold on 2b we drop the Pawn on 1c). Let's look at the Climbing Gold, with comparisons to the Climbing Silver.

- [70] Classical line
- [72] Classical line, Variation A
- [76] Classical line, Variation B
- [78] Classical line, Variation C
- [80] Nada's line
- [84] Gold defence
- [88] Iida's defence
- [90] Early ♞P3d

## Classical line

Let's start with classical play:

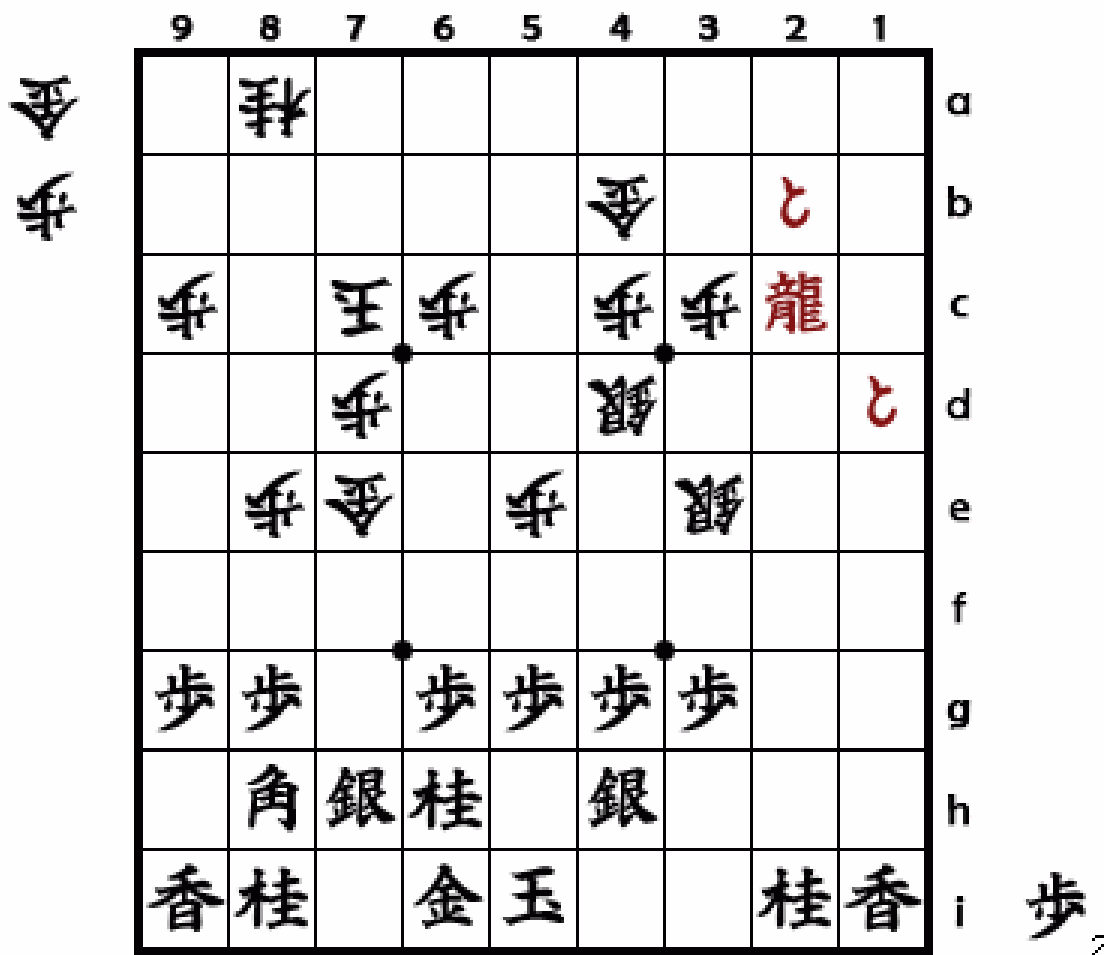
**1** ..., **2** S6b; **3** P7f, **4** P5d; **5** P2f, **6** S5c; **7** P2e, **8** G3b; **9** P2d, **10** Px2d; **11** Rx2d, **12** P\*2c; (For **12** S2b see Variation C, page 78) **13** R2h, **14** G7b; (If *Gote* omits this *Sente* can force him to move his Gold to a worse square; see Variation B, page 76) **15** P1f, (Now **15** P9f, **16** P7d; **17** P9e, **18** P8d; is not advisable for *Sente*) **16** P7d; **17** P1e, **18** S2b; **19** G3h, (Start of the Climbing Gold. Standard is S3h) **20** G7c; **21** G2g, **22** G6d; **23** G3f, **24** P5e; **25** S4h, (A very useful defensive move, guarding three Pawns and the Silver itself. If *Gote* ever plays  $\triangleleft$ P8e or  $\triangleleft$ Gx7f *Sente* may reply S7h) **26** G6e; **27** P1d, **28** Px1d; **29** G2e, **30** S4d; **31** P\*1b, (Also good here is **31** P\*1c, **32** Nx1c; **33** Gx1d, **34** P\*1b; **35** G1e! with  $\blacktriangle$ P\*1d next, winning Knight for two Pawns. This isn't possible with a Climbing Silver) **32** Gx7f; **33** S7h, (Best defense against this or  $\triangleleft$ P8e; the Bishop has a retreat if needed, and the King can run either way) **34** K6b; (The King is both safer and more useful off the back rank) **35** Gx1d, **36** P\*1c.

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
歩		桂						桂		a
			王			金	銀	歩		b
	歩	歩		歩		歩	歩	歩	歩	c
			歩			銀			金	d
				歩						e
		王								f
	歩	歩		歩	歩	歩	歩			g
		角	銀			銀		飛		h
	香	桂		金	玉			桂	香	i

Four piece, classical line to 36 P\*1c

37 P1a+, (Also good is 37 G1e, 38 P8d; 39 P\*2d, 40 Px2d; 41 Gx2d, 42 P\*2c, 43 P1a+. Not so good when *Gote* has a Pawn in hand, as here, is 37 Gx2c, (or 37 Sx2c in the Climbing Silver) 38 Sx2c; 39 P1a+, 40 P\*2d; 41 +Px2a, 42 P1d) 38 Px1d; (38 Sx1a; 39 Gx2c wins easily) 39 +Px2a, 40 S1c; 41 P\*1b, 42 P8d; (This attack is no longer recommended in the Climbing Silver, due to the defense 42 P2d; 43 P1a+, 44 S\*2c; with no easy way to continue the attack. But here *Gote* has the wrong piece in hand to prevent ♠+P1b, so this attack should be ideal with the Climbing Gold) 43 P1a+, 44 P8e; 45 N\*6h!, (*Gote* was

threatening ♁P8f; ♀Px8f, ♁P\*8g with counterplay)  
**46** G7e; **47** +P1b, **48** S2d; **49** +P2a-2b!, **50** G4b;  
**51** +P1c!, **52** K7c; (**52** Sx1c; **53** Rx2c+) **53** +Px1d,  
**54** S2d-3e; **55** Rx2c+, intending ♀+P3b and ♀+Px3c.



Four piece, classical line, **37** P1a+ to **55** Rx2c+

Note how the promoted Pawns gain strength as they retreat; generals are almost useless on the ninth rank.

**Variation A** (King on 4c)

This line is similar to the classical line for the first fifteen moves: **1** ..., **2** S6b; **3** P7f, **4** P5d; **5** P2f, **6** S5c;



7 P2e, 8 G3b; 9 P2d, 10 Px2d; 11 Rx2d, 12 P\*2c;  
13 R2h, 14 G7b; 15 P1f,

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
		桂			王		銀	桂		a
			金				金			b
	歩	歩	歩	歩	銀	歩	歩	歩	歩	c
				歩						d
										e
		歩							歩	f
	歩	歩		歩	歩	歩	歩			g
		角						飛		h
	香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂	香	i 歩

Four piece, variation A to 15 P1f

but *Gote* emphasizes defense:

16 K4b; (16 K5b may transpose) 17 P1e, 18 S2b;  
19 G3h, (Again S3h is standard) 20 P4d; 21 G2g,  
22 K4c; 23 G3f, 24 P3d; 25 S4h, 26 P7d; (26 N3c;  
27 L1f intending R1h and P1d) 27 P1d, (If 27 G2e first  
then 28 N3c is possible, though 29 P1d is still good for  
*Sente*) 28 Px1d; 29 G2e, 30 G7c; (30 N3c; 31 Gx1d  
intending ▲G1c and ▲P\*1d!; 30 S4b? has the point

against the Climbing Silver to play ♖S4b-3c to answer ♜Sx1d by ♖P2d or ♖S2d, but that's nonsense with a Gold on 1d) **31 P\*1b**, (Again **31 P\*1c** should win Knight for two Pawns here; *Gote's* best reply is probably **32 N3c!**) **32 G6d**; (Now **32 P3e?** and **32 P2d?** are reasonable moves against the Climbing Silver but blunders here; likewise **32 K3c** can be met by simply **33 Gx1d 34 P\*1c 35 G1e** intending N1g-2e, which would be impossible with Climbing Silver) **33 Gx1d, 34 P\*1c; 35 P1a+**, (Now with a Silver on 1d, best is **35 Sx2c+**, but here the text is best) **36 Px1d; 37 +Px2a, 38 S1c; (38 S3c; 39 P\*1c and 41 P1b+)** **39 P\*1b, 40 P5e**; (Again, with the Climbing Silver *Gote* would have the tough defense **40 P2d; 41 P1a+, 42 S\*2c)** **41 P1a+, 42 S2d; 43 +P1b, 44 G3c; 45 +P2a-2b!, 46 N7c; 47 +P1c!, 48 Sx1c; 49 +Px2c, 50 P\*2d; 51 +Px1c** with an easy win.

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1		
金										a	
										b	
		歩	歩	桂	歩	銀	玉	金		と	c
				歩	金		歩	歩	歩	歩	d
					歩						e
			歩								f
		歩	歩		歩	歩	歩	歩			g
			角				銀		飛		h
		香	桂	銀	金	玉			桂	香	i
										歩 桂 銀	

Four piece, variation A, 16 K4b to 51 +Px1c

## Variation B

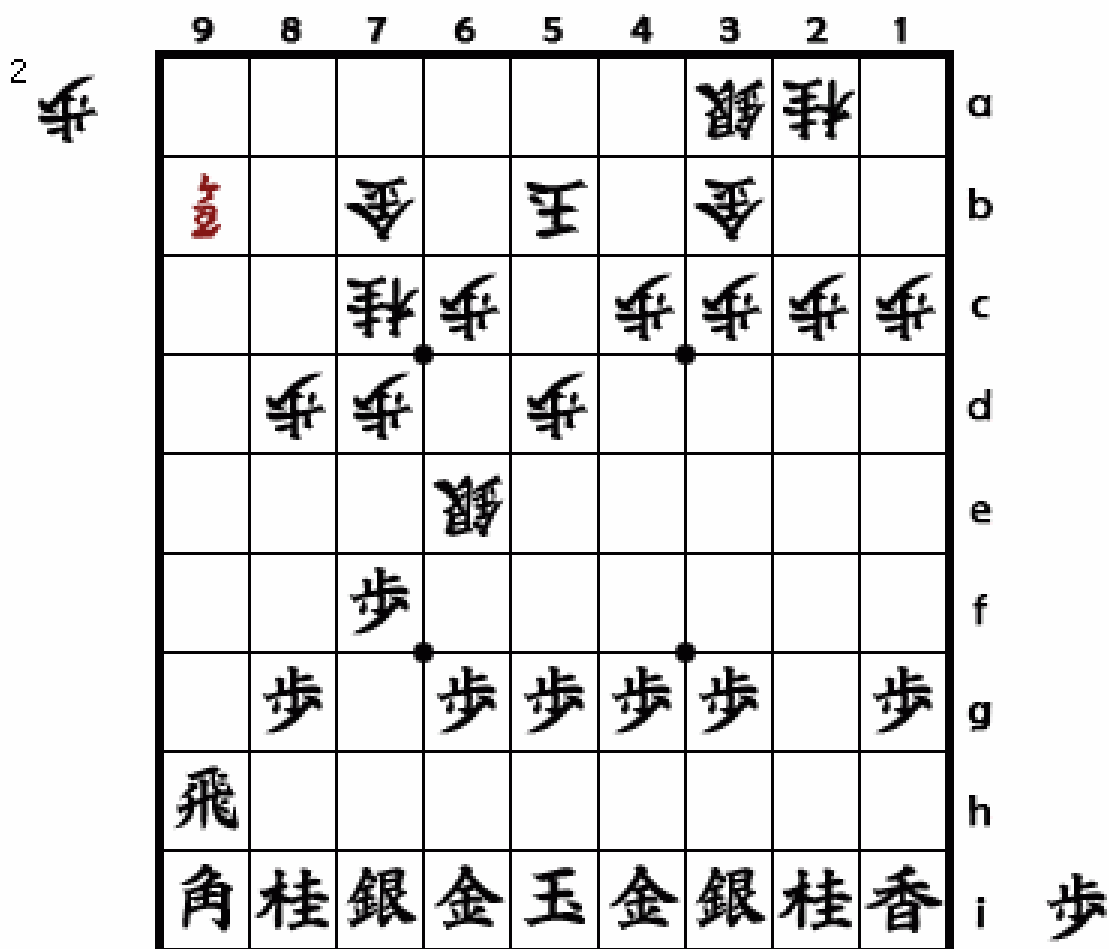
This line is similar to the classical line for the first thirteen moves: **1** ..., **2** S6b; **3** P7f, **4** P5d; **5** P2f, **6** S5c; **7** P2e, **8** G3b; **9** P2d, **10** Px2d; **11** Rx2d, **12** P\*2c; **13** R2h,

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
		桂		金	王		銀	桂		a
								金		b
	歩	歩	歩	歩	銀	歩	歩	歩	歩	c
			●		歩		●			d
										e
			歩							f
	歩	歩	●	歩	歩	歩	歩		歩	g
		角						飛		h
	香	桂	銀	金	王	金	銀	桂	香	i 歩

Four piece, variation B to **13** R2h

**14** K5b; (By omitting **14** G7b, *Gote* tries to save a tempo and possibly use the Gold for defense on his left)  
**15** P9f, (So *Sente* punishes him, though he could also just play the above Climbing Gold strategy. This plan should only be adopted when *Gote* has no generals on his three right files and has not advanced his 7 Pawn)

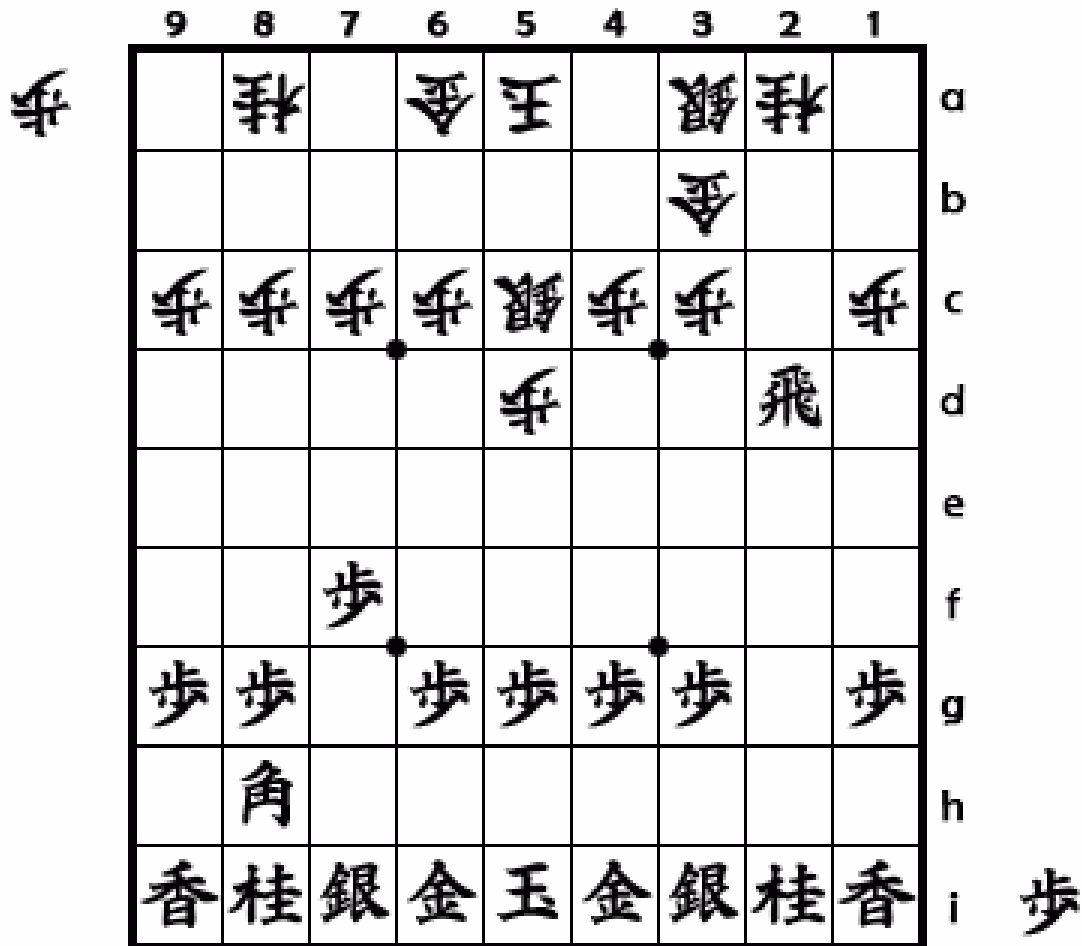
16 G7b; 17 P9e, 18 P7d; (*Gote* can defend by 18 G8b, but then *Sente* will switch back to the Climbing Gold attack, with similar play to the above lines) 19 P9d, 20 Px9d; 21 P\*9b, 22 G8b; 23 P9a+, 24 N7c; 25 +P8a!, (My own idea; several books give 25 B6f in similar positions, but 26 P6d or 26 S6d is a bit messy. Sacrificing the promoted Pawn gains a vital tempo) 26 Gx8a; 27 B6f, 28 G8b; 29 Lx9d, 30 S6d; (else 31 R9h) 31 L9c+, 32 G7b; (32 S6e; 33 +Lx8b wins two generals for a Bishop, with a continuing attack) 33 +L9b, (Planning ♠B9c+) 34 P8d; (34 P7e; 35 R9h) 35 R9h, 36 S6e; 37 B9i and the Rook promotes.



Four piece, variation B, 14 K5b to 37 B9i

## Variation C

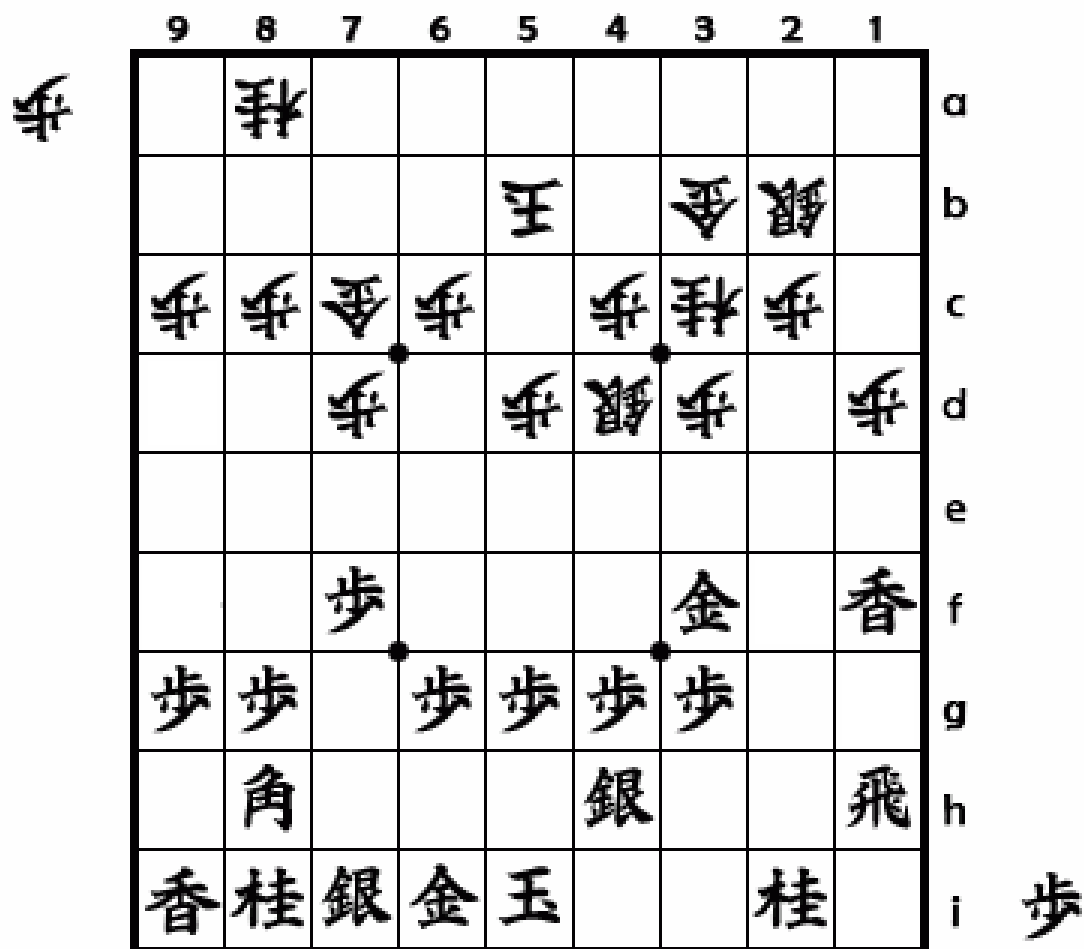
This line is similar to the classical line for the first eleven moves: **1 ...**, **2 S6b**; **3 P7f**, **4 P5d**; **5 P2f**, **6 S5c**; **7 P2e**, **8 G3b**; **9 P2d**, **10 Px2d**; **11 Rx2d**,



Four piece, variation C to **11 Rx2d**

**12 S2b**; **13 R2h**, **14 G7b**; (Again, if omitted *Sente* will play ▲P9f~▲9e as above) **15 P1f**, **16 P7d**; **17 P1e**, **18 S4d**; **19 G3h**, **20 P3d**; **21 G2g**, **22 N3c**; (The point; *Gote* keeps the enemy Gold out of 2e) **23 G3f**, (Note that a Silver here could be driven back by △P3e, but a Gold can move sideways to 4f if hit) **24 P\*2c**; (Else **25 P1d**, **26 Px1d**; **27 Lx1d**, **28 P\*1c**; **29 Lx1c+**) **25 S4h**,

26 K5b; (Note the Gold on 3f, unlike a Silver, prevents  $\triangle$ P5e, due to  $\blacktriangle$ G4f) 27 L1f, 28 G7c; 29 P1d, 30 Px1d; 31 R1h and *Sente* will break in on the edge.



Four piece, variation C, 12 S2b to 31 R1h

## Nada's Line

This line is similar to the classical line for the first seven moves: **1 ...**, **2 S6b**; **3 P7f**, **4 P5d**; **5 P2f**, **6 S5c**; **7 P2e**,

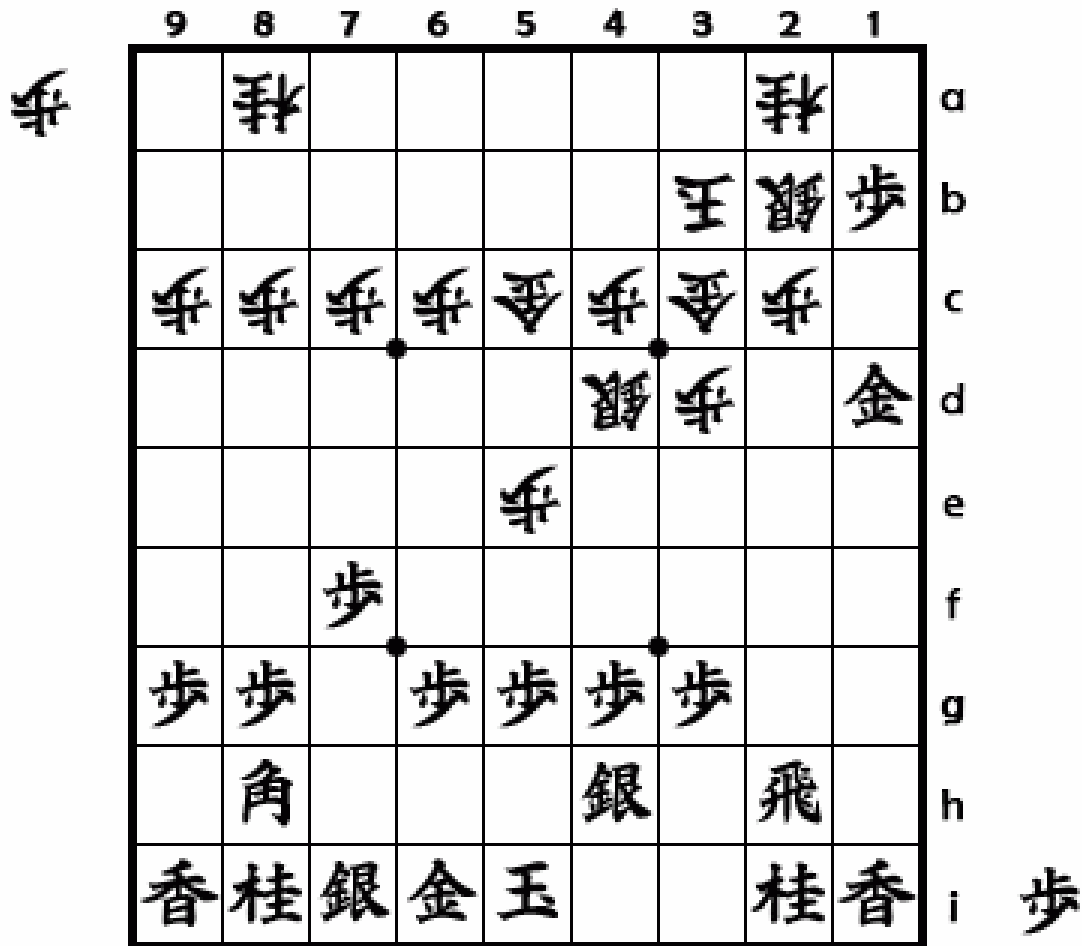
	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
		桂		金	王	金	銀	桂		a
										b
	歩	歩	歩	歩	銀	歩	歩	歩	歩	c
			●		歩		●			d
								歩		e
	歩									f
	歩		●	歩	歩	歩	歩		歩	g
	角							飛		h
	香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂	香	i

Four piece, Nada's Line to 7 P2e

**8 K4b**; **9 P2d**, **10 Px2d**; **11 Rx2d**, **12 K3b**; **13 R2h**, **14 P\*2c**; **15 P1f**, (*Sente* can also try to punish *Gote* for omitting  $\triangleleft$ G7b by playing  $\blacktriangleleft$ P9f-9e as above, but with *Gote's* King far away this is not so convincing) **16 G4b**; **17 P1e**, **18 S2b**; **19 G3h**, **20 S4d**; (**20 P4d** is quite similar but Nada normally played the text move against the Climbing Silver, as it provides better defense and prepares the annoying ... P5e) **21 G2g**, **22 P3d**; **23 G3f**,



**24** G6b; **25** S4h, **26** G6b-5c; **27** G2e, **28** G3c; **29** P1d, (Another good plan, recommended by Sugimoto Masataka (5-*dan*) with the Silver on 2e, is **29** P3f~**31** P4f~**33** N3g, aiming to win Silver for Knight by ♠N4e. It is probably *Sente's* best line with the Climbing Silver, but as I will show *Sente* can do better than this with the Climbing Gold) **30** Px1d; **31** P\*1b, (**31** P\*1c, **32** Sx1c; **33** Lx1d, **34** Sx1d; **35** Gx1d is not so clear since the Pawn on 2c is adequately protected here) **32** P5e; (Now **32** P1e; is effective against the Climbing Silver, since **33** Lx1e, **34** P\*1c; leads nowhere and **33** S1d can be met by **34** G2d, but here **33** G1d followed by ♠Lx1e will eventually transpose to the text line, while **33** Gx1e followed by ♠N1g-2e is also very strong) **33** Gx1d,



Four piece, Nada's Line, 8 K4b to 33 Gx1d

34 P\*1c; (34 G6d; 35 N1g! and the threat of 37 N2e will force 36 P\*1c; 37 Gx1c, with play like the text but even better for *Sente*, since he has an extra Knight in the attack. Now with a Silver on 1d 34 P2d or 34 G2d are not so easy to refute, but here they are just blunders) 35 Gx1c, 36 Nx1c; (36 Sx1c; 37 P1a+, is even better for *Sente*) 37 P1a+, 38 Sx1a; 39 P\*1d!, (Here in similar positions from the Climbing Silver the literature gives 39 Lx1c+, 40 P\*1b; 41 +L1d, which is good but not overwhelming for *Sente*; the text seems clearly better) 40 P\*1b; 41 Px1c,+ 42 Px1c; 43 N\*2e!, 44 S2b; 45 Nx1c+!, (Rather than 45 Lx1c+ because a Lance is

more useful to *Gote* here than a Knight) **46** Sx1c; **47** Lx1c+. At minimal cost in material (Gold for Silver), *Sente* has promoted his Lance on a highly effective square near the enemy King, and has many threats. For example: **48** G6d; **49** S\*1b, **50** G\*2d; (or **50** N\*3a; **51** P\*2b or **50** P2d; **51** P\*2c) **51** P\*2b.

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
桂		桂								a
歩							王	歩	銀	b
	歩	歩	歩	歩		歩	歩	歩	歩	c
				歩		銀	歩	歩		d
					歩					e
		歩								f
	歩	歩		歩	歩	歩	歩			g
	角					銀		飛		h
	香	桂	銀	金	玉			桂		i 歩

Four piece, Nada's Line, **34** P\*1c to **51** P\*2b

There is no defense to **53** P2a+ and **55** +P2b.

In my opinion the Nada line is very effective against the Climbing Silver, but the Climbing Gold handles it nicely.

## Gold defense

This is like Nada's line, but with the Gold on 3c and Silver on 2b reversed. It is rarely seen, because a Gold on 2b is bad style, but it does have the merit of preventing ♠P\*1b. Here too the Climbing Gold works better than the Climbing Silver, because *Sente* must aim for ♠P\*1c

1 ..., 2 K4b; 3 P7f, 4 S6b; 5 P2f, 6 K3b; 7 P2e, 8 S4b;  
 (Instead of 8 G4b which would transpose to Nada line)  
 9 P2d, 10 Px2d; 11 Rx2d, 12 P\*2c; 13 R2h, 14 G3a;  
 15 P1f, 16 P5d; 17 P1e, 18 G2b; 19 G3h, 20 S6b-5c;  
 21 G2g, 22 P4d; 23 G3f, 24 P3d; 25 S4h, 26 S3c;  
 27 G2e, 28 S6d; 29 P1d, 30 Px1d; 31 P\*1c,

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
♞		桂		金				桂		a
							王	銀		b
	♞	♞	♞	♞			金	♞	歩	c
				銀	♞	♞	♞		♞	d
								金		e
			歩							f
	歩	歩		歩	歩	歩	歩			g
		角				銀		飛		h
	香	桂	銀	金	玉			桂	香	i

Four piece, Gold Defence to 31 P\*1c

32 P5e; (Both captures are bad, since 32 Gx1c; 33 Lx1d is very strong, and 32 Nx1c; 33 Gx1d, 34 P\*1b; 35 G1e followed by ♠P\*1d wins material; again this would be impossible with a Silver on 1d) 33 L1f!!, (Better than 33 Gx1d, 34 P\*1a; or 33 Lx1d, 34 Nx1c;) 34 G5b;

35 R1h, 36 P2d; 37 Gx1d, 38 P\*1a; 39 R2h, and *Gote* has no decent defense to 41 Gx2d.

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
a		桂						桂	歩	
b					金		王	金		
c	歩	歩	歩	歩			銀		歩	
d				銀		歩	歩	歩	金	
e					歩					
f			歩						香	
g	歩	歩		歩	歩	歩	歩			
h		角				銀		飛		
i	香	桂	銀	金	玉			桂		歩

Four piece, Gold Defence, 32 P5e to 39 R2h

This is a remarkable variation, because both sides could capture an edge Pawn two different ways, *yet the best move for both sides was to decline!*

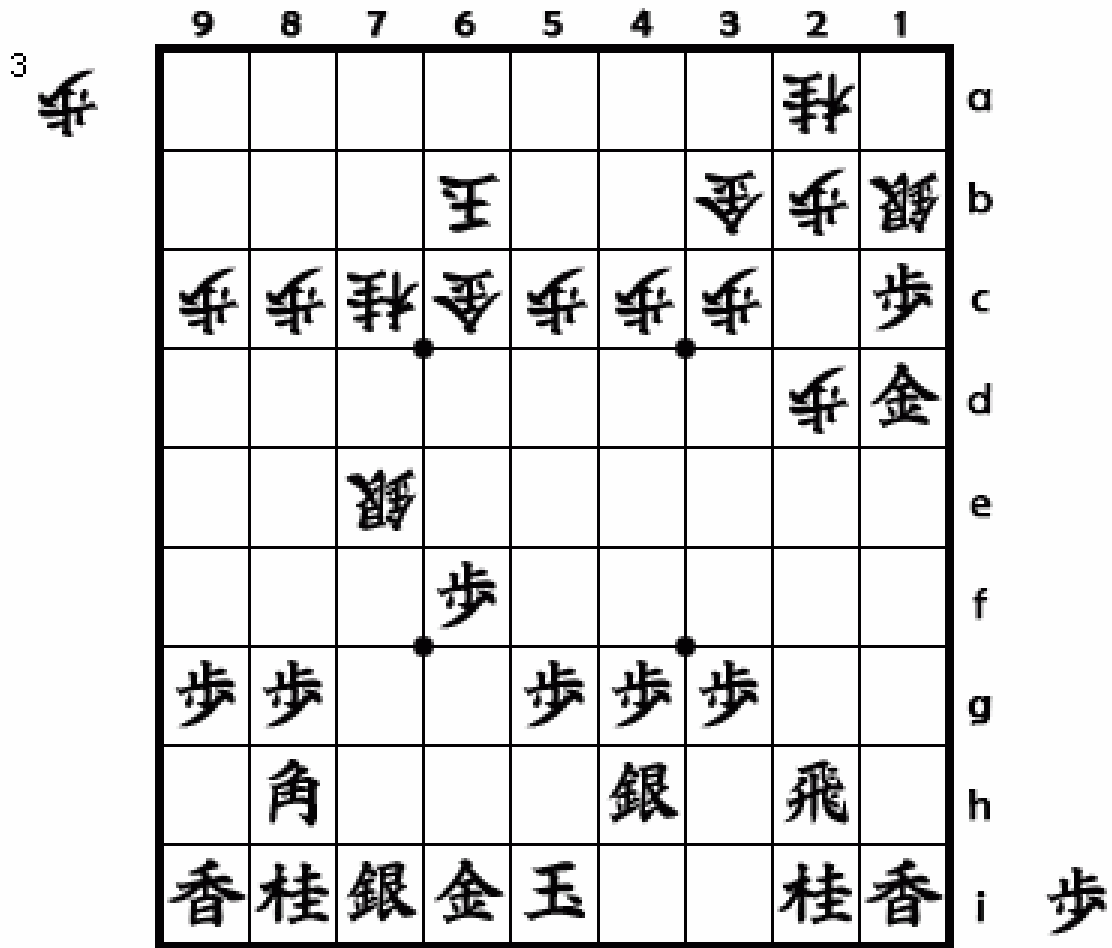
This line is quite tough to defeat with a Climbing Silver, but the Climbing Gold can handle it quite well.

## Iida's defense

This line is similar to the classical but *Gote* attacks with Silver instead of Gold, and exchanges Pawns on 7e. Again the Climbing Gold works well, though in this line I cannot say that it offers any advantage over the Climbing Silver; the analysis would be the same

1 ..., 2 G6a-5b; 3 P7f, 4 P6d; 5 P2f, 6 G3b; 7 P2e, 8 G6c; 9 P2d, 10 Px2d; 11 Rx2d, 12 P\*2c; 13 R2h, 14 P7d; 15 P1f, 16 S6b; 17 P1e, 18 S2b; 19 G3h, 20 S7c; 21 G2g, 22 S8d; 23 G3f, 24 K6b; 25 S4h, 26 P7e; 27 Px7e, 28 Sx7e; 29 P1d, 30 Px1d; 31 G2e, 32 P6e; 33 P\*1b, (Again 33 P\*1c is a decent alternative with the Climbing Gold) 34 P6f; (To block the Bishop) 35 Px6f, 36 N7c; 37 P1a+!, (The normal continuation 37 Gx1d, 38 P\*1c; 39 P1a+, is a bit slow here, as *Gote* is poised to counterattack, but because *Gote* has exchanged Pawns on 7e giving *Sente* a Pawn in hand this quicker attack is possible) 38 Sx1a; 39 P\*2d!, (Not 39 Gx1d?, 40 S2b) 40 S2b; (40 Px2d; 41 Gx2d, 42 P\*2b; 43 P\*1c, with Lx1d next or 42 S2b; 43 P\*2c, with P\*1c next ) 41 Px2c+, 42 Sx2c; 43 P\*2d, 44 S1b; 45 Gx1d, 46 P\*2b; 47 P\*1c, winning a Knight with a continuing attack.





Four piece, Iida's Defence to 47 P\*1c

## Early ♖P3d

*Gote* can prevent the exchange of the Rook's Pawn altogether by an early ♖P3d, but the opening of the Bishop's diagonal should prove fatal.

1 ..., 2 G3b; 3 P7f, 4 S2b; 5 P2f, 6 P3d?!; 7 P1f, (now there's no point to 7 P2e as 8 S3c or 8 G3c prevents 9 P2d, but a quick Knight attack works) 8 G3c; 9 P1e, 10 P4d; 11 N1g, 12 G4c; 13 N2e, 14 K4b; 15 L1g, 16 P2d; (Else 17 R1h) 17 Nx1c+, 18 Sx1c; 19 P1d, 20 S2b; 21 R1h, (21 P2e is also strong), with P1c+ next.

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
歩		桂	銀	金				桂		a
						王		銀		b
	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	金				c
			●			歩	歩	歩	歩	d
										e
			歩					歩		f
	歩	歩	●	歩	歩	歩	歩		香	g
		角							飛	h
	香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀			i 歩

Four piece, early  $\triangle$ P3d to 21 R1h

To summarize, the Climbing Gold works better than the Climbing Silver in nearly every variation because it guards 2d while on 1d, it guards 3e while on 2e, and it can retreat from 1d to 1e or from 2d to 2e. Also, *Gote* needs a Silver, not a Gold, in the main line. The only

downside is a slightly weaker defense. The evidence is overwhelmingly in favor of the Climbing Gold.

### **Lessons from the Climbing Gold at four piece:**

1. The main goal is to promote Pawns, then exchange them for generals and clear the way for the Rook to promote.
2. Two attackers (Rook and Gold) cannot overcome two defenders (Gold and Silver), but the use of *a Pawn to deflect a defender* makes the attack work.
3. Concentrate on your right side as *Sente*, unless *Gote* totally abandons his right side.
4. If *Gote* guards 2c three times, focus your attack on 1c.
5. One or two defense moves are all that are needed; attack before *Gote* can counter.
6. *As Gote*, try to block out the enemy Bishop, and/or get a Pawn in hand early.

## Four Piece Handicap – Part 2.

In this section we'll look at some alternatives to the Climbing Silver or Gold. Some of these are pretty good, but in my opinion not as clear and easy as the Climbing Gold. They are however instructive, and it's interesting to see how *Gote* can make a fight against these dangerous attacks.

[93] Knight attack

[96] Nada style

[97] Knight attack with early ▲P7f

[99] Knight attack with extra *tempi*

[101] Knight attack with classical reply

[103] Knight attack with bishop

[105] Knight attack with bishop, Kaufman's variation

[107] Nada's defence

[108] Manabe's bi-lateral slow attack

### **Knight attack**

Second most often recommended attack at this handicap is the Knight attack. It aims at a very quick knockout, before *Gote* can coordinate his forces. The main line runs like this:

**1** ..., **2** S6b; **3** P1f, **4** P5d; (**4** G7b, **4** G3b, or **4** K4b is probably better) **5** P1e, **6** S2b; (**6** G3b is probably better) **7** R1h, **8** S5c; **9** P1d, **10** Px1d; **11** Rx1d, **12** P\*1c; **13** R1f, **14** G3b; **15** N1g, (or **15** P9f, **16** G7b; **17** P9e, **18** G8b; **19** N1g, which is similar) **16** P2d; (else

17 N2e and 19 Nx1c+ wins rather easily) 17 P\*1d!,  
 18 G2c; 19 Px1c+, 20 Gx1c; 21 N2e!, 22 Px2e; 23 R8f,  
 (This shows why P7f was omitted) 24 G7b; 25 Lx1c+,  
 26 Sx1c; 27 R1f, 28 P\*1d; 29 G\*2c.

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
桂		桂			王			桂		a
香			金							b
	歩	歩	歩	歩	銀	歩	歩	金	銀	c
					歩				歩	d
								歩		e
									飛	f
	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩		g
		角								h
	香	桂	銀	金	王	金	銀			i 歩

Four piece, Knight attack to 29 G\*2c

*Sente* has traded Lance and Knight for a Gold, a slight loss, but his threats give him a big advantage. But there are some problems with this system. First of all, *Gote* can play 6 G3b, and if play follows the above line, 14 G2b will spoil the above plan. Perhaps better yet, *Gote* can omit 4 P5d and 8 S5c in favor of 4? G7b and

**8?** K4b, so that *Sente* has no double attack on move **25** in the above line.

## Nada-style

Finally, *Gote* can play Nada-style, for example 1 ..., 2 K4b; 3 P1f, 4 K3;b 5 P1e, 6 S2b; 7 R1h, 8 S6b; 9 P1d, 10 Px1d; 11 Rx1d, 12 P\*1c; 13 R1f, (13 R1h intending P3f and N3g is better) 14 G4b; 15 N1g, 16 P2d; 17 P\*1d, 18 Px1d; 19 Rx1d, 20 S1c; 21 R1f, 22 P\*1d

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
	桂		金				桂		a
			銀		金	玉			b
歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩		銀	c
			●			●	歩	歩	d
									e
								飛	f
歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	桂	g
	角								h
香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀		香	i 歩

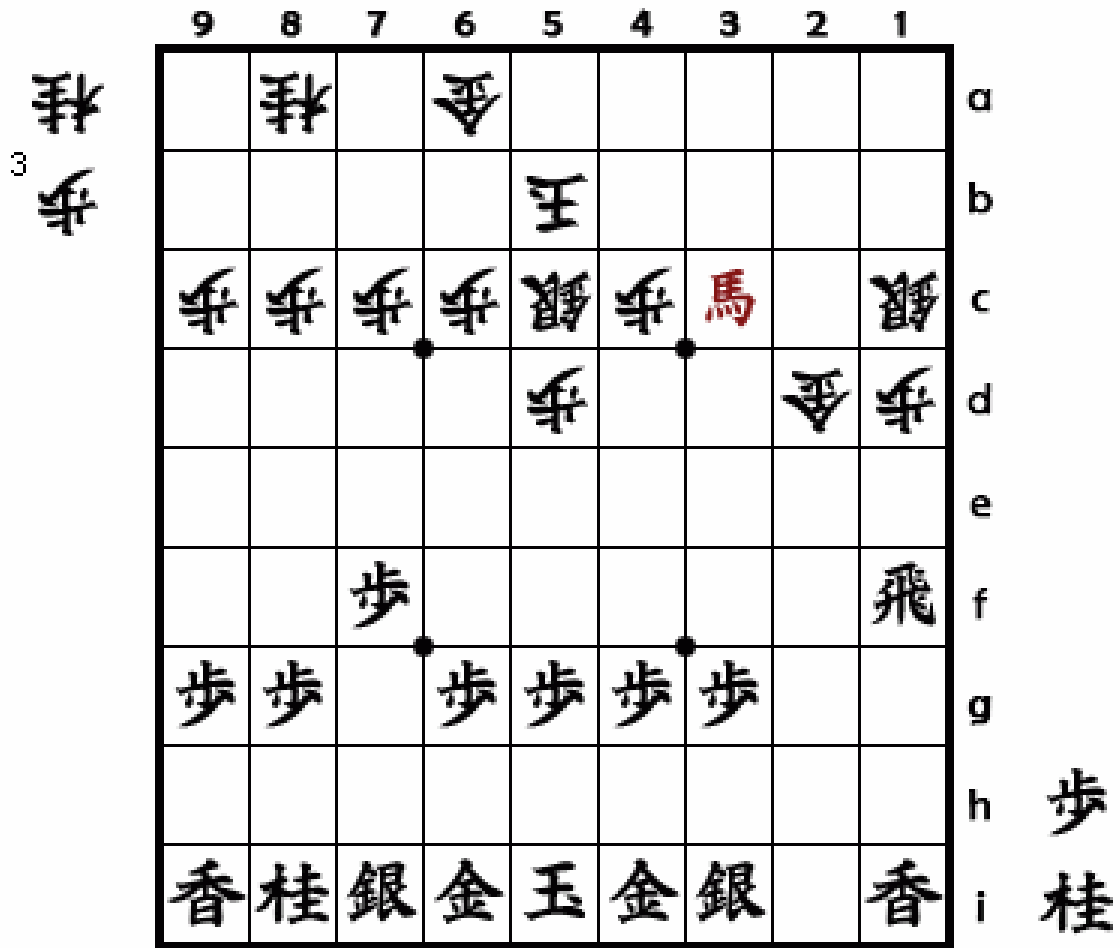
Four piece, Nada style to 22 P\*1d

and *Gote* is okay because he can answer 22 P\*1b by K2b or 22 P2f by K2c, with no easy win for *Sente*.



## **Knight attack with early ♠P7f**

The Knight attack can also be played with an early ♠P7f. The main line runs 1 ..., 2 S6b; 3 P7f, 4 P5d; (normal, but I consider 4 G7b (Iida Hiroyuki) or 4 K4b (Nada Rensho) to be more accurate due to this variation) 5 P1f, 6 S5c; 7 P1e, 8 S2b; 9 R1h, 10 G3b; 11 P1d, 12 Px1d; 13 Rx1d, 14 P\*1c; 15 R1f, 16 K5b; (to guard the 6c Pawn. 16 K4b avoids the following line, but allows the same type of attack as in the above 3 P1f attack) 17 N1g, 18 P2d; (else N2e and Nx1c+) 19 P2f, 20 G2c; 21 P2e, 22 Px2e; 23 Nx2e, 24 P1d; (24 P2d; 25 Nx1c+, is good for *Sente*) 25 P\*1c!, 26 Nx1c; 27 P\*2d!, 28 Gx2d; 29 Nx1c+, 30 Sx1c; 31 Bx3c+, with a huge advantage (Pieter Stouten (amateur) vs. Aono Teruichi (pro)). This is probably why Nada once said that after 4 P5d “*Sente* can win easily”. *Gote* can avoid all this if he omits 4 P5d and 6 S5c in favor of ... G7b (guarding 6c) and ... K4b (guarding 3c). Iida’s setup, with an early ... G6a-5b and ... S8b, also avoids this attack. Another defense is 4 G3b; 5 P1f, 6 S2b; 7 P1e, 8 P2d; but then the attack 9 P2f followed by ♠S3h~♠S2g~♠S3f is quite strong.



Four piece, Knight attack with early ♠P7f to 31 Bx3c+

## **Knight attack with extra *tempi***

If *Sente* likes the Knight attack, I recommend that he take the extra three *tempi* to play ♠P7f, ♠P2f, ♠P3f and ♠N3g, instead of just ♠N1g. This is quite decisive against the Nada line; I won very easily in my last game at four piece with Nada using this attack, which is not given in the literature.

The main line would go like this: **1 ...**, **2 K4b**; **3 P7f**, **4 K3b**; **5 P2f**, **6 S6b**; **7 P1f**, **8 G4b**; **9 P1e**, **10 S2b**; **11 P3f**, **12 P5d**; **13 N3g**, **14 S5c**; **15 R1h**, **16 S4d**; **17 P1d**, **18 Px1d**; **19 Rx1d**, **20 P\*1c**; **21 R1h**, **22 P2d**; (else **23 N2e**) **23 P\*1d!**, **24 Px1d**; **25 Rx1d**, **26 S1c**; **27 R1h**, **28 P\*1d**; **29 P2e** and *Gote* has no defense.

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
		桂		金				桂		a
						王金	玉			b
		歩	歩	歩		歩	歩		銀	c
					歩	銀		歩	歩	d
							歩			e
			歩					歩		f
	歩	歩		歩	歩	歩	歩			g
		角							飛	h
	香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀		香	i 歩

Four piece, Knight attack with extra *tempi* to 29 P2e

## Knight attack with classical reply

Instead, I think *Gote* should switch to classical play against this plan, which means that he should keep the option of  $\triangle$ K3b or  $\triangle$ G3b until *Sente* reveals his plan. For example, 1 ..., 2 K4b; 3 P7f, 4 S6b; 5 P2f, 6 P5d; 7 P1f, (7 P2e, 8 K3b will transpose to the Nada system of Part I) 8 S5c; 9 P1e, 10 S2b; 11 P3f, 12 P4d; 13 N3g, 14 K4c; (reserving 3b for the Gold) 15 R1h, 16 P3d; 17 P1d, 18 Px1d; 19 Rx1d, 20 P\*1c; 21 R1h, 22 N3c; (if 22 G3b, 23 N2e is too strong) 23 P\*1b, 24 G3b; 25 P1a+, 26 Sx1a; 27 Rx1c+, 28 S2b; 29 +R1h, 30 P\*1c.



Four piece, Knight attack with classical reply to  
30 P\*1c

*Sente* has promoted his Rook, but it is an ‘empty promotion’, meaning that since he has been expelled from *Gote*’s territory, it does not promise further dividends. It’s still a nice profit, but not as convincing as the main line of the Climbing Gold. *Sente* can aim to play ♠P2e, ♠+R2h, ♠P\*1b, and ♠P1a+, though it feels a bit slow.

Hatakeyama Nariyuki (7-*dan* Pro) was more impressed by this system than by either the Climbing Silver or Gold, and recommends it.

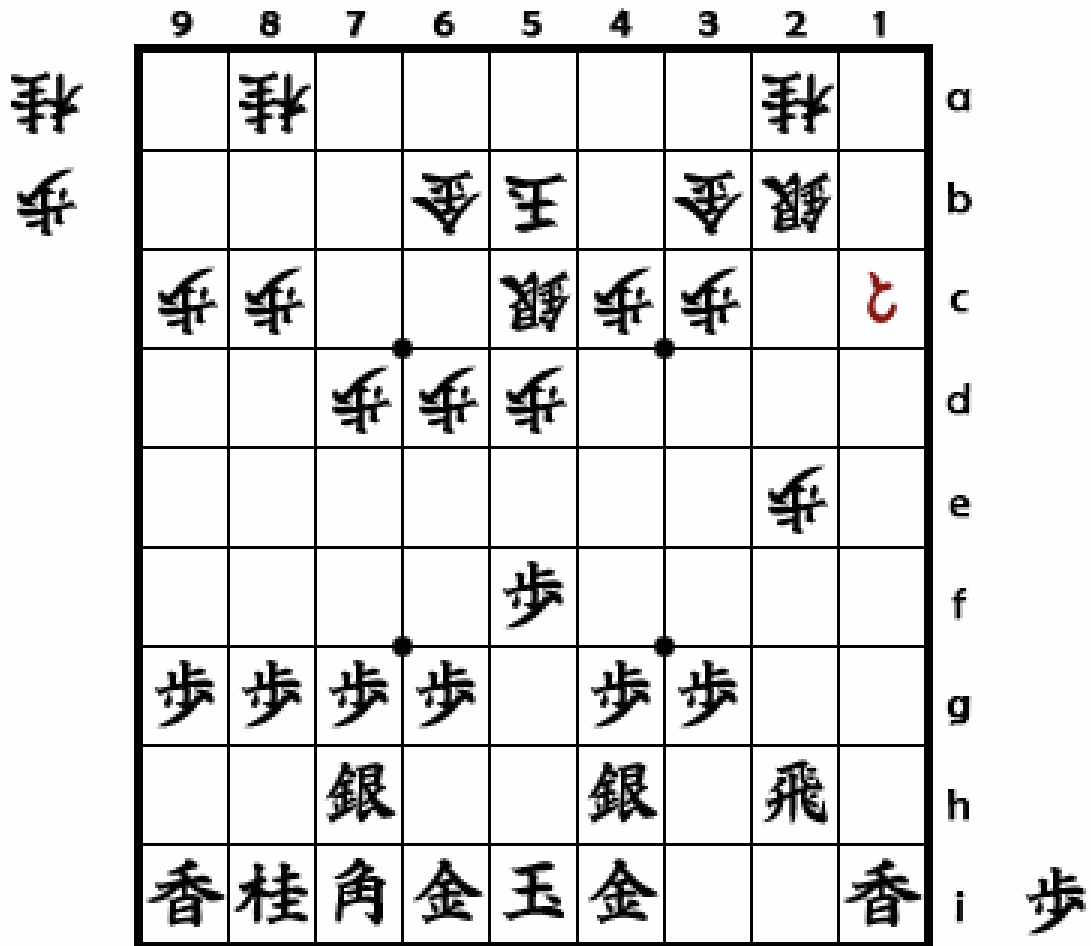
## Knight attack with Bishop

Another version of the Knight attack, as given in a book by two of the all-time greats, Oyama Yasuharu and Nakahara Makoto, involves using the Bishop to attack the 1c Pawn. For example, 1 ..., 2 S6b; 3 P2f, 4 G3b; 5 P1f, 6 P5d; 7 P1e, 8 S2b; 9 P5f, 10 S5c; 11 S4h, 12 K5b; 13 S7h, 14 G6b; 15 B7i,

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
	桂						桂		a
			金	王		金	銀		b
歩	歩	歩	歩	銀	歩	歩	歩	歩	c
			歩	歩					d
								歩	e
				歩			歩		f
歩	歩	歩	歩		歩	歩			g
		銀			銀		飛		h
香	桂	角	金	玉	金		桂	香	i

Four piece, Knight attack with Bishop to 15 B7i

16 P7d; 17 N1g, 18 P6d; 19 N2e, 20 P2d; 21 Nx1c+,  
22 Sx1c; 23 P1d, 24 S2b; 25 P2e!, 26 Px2e; 27 P1c+



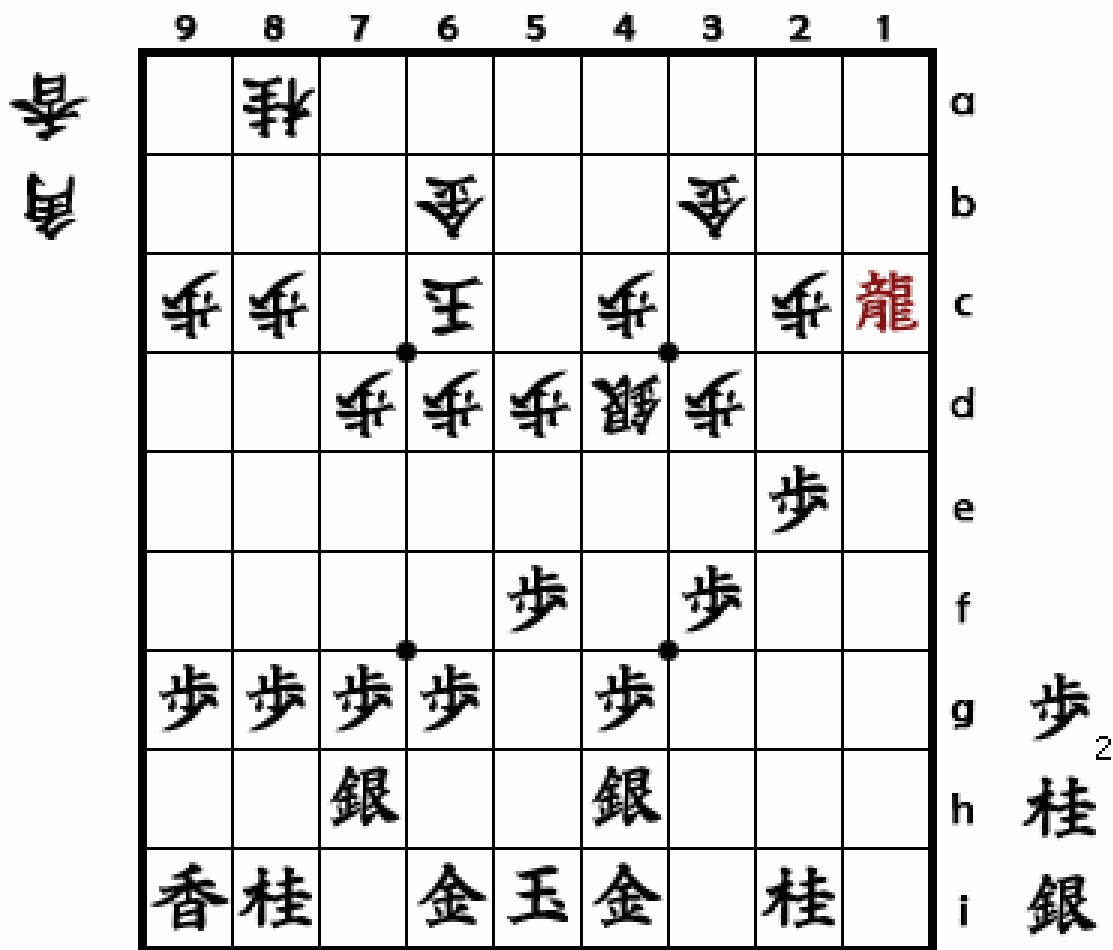
Four piece, Knight attack with Bishop, 16 P7d to  
27 P1c+

This is very good for *Sente*; *Gote's* only hope is that the advance of the Pawn in front of *Sente's* **King** will give him some counterplay.



## Knight attack with Bishop, Kaufman's variation

However I think *Gote* should play 16 S4d; 17 P3f, (17 N1g, 18 P3d; 19 N2e, 20 P3e) 18 P3d; 19 P2e, (19 N3g, 20 P7d; 21 N2e, 22 P3e; 23 Px3e, 24 P2d is unclear) 20 P7d; 21 L1g, 22 P6d; 23 R1h, 24 K6c; 25 P1d, 26 Px1d; 27 Lx1d, 28 P\*1c; 29 Lx1c+, 30 Sx1c; 31 Bx1c+, 32 Nx1c; 33 Rx1c+.



Four piece, Knight attack with Bishop, Kaufman's variation, 16 S4d to 33 Rx1c+

*Sente* has broken through and promoted his Rook at the price of losing Bishop for Silver and Pawn. This plan was suggested to me in private conversation by Oyama

in response to my question of how to defeat Nada's line, and indeed it would lead to an easy win with *Gote's* King on 3b instead of the Gold. In the given position, though, *Gote's* King is pretty safe and I would not call this a clear success for *Sente*.

## Nada's defence

With all these quick attacks running into problems, what about patient play, making a secure castle? Kato Hifumi (9-dan) once wrote that the Fortress castle is a good choice for any handicap game, and it seems to make good sense at four piece since the Bishop ends up pointing at the weakness on 1c. How would *Gote* make a fight of it then?

Well, I tried a somewhat similar system against Nada in one game, and he set up the following defensive formation (shown here against the Fortress):

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
								桂		a
							王	銀		b
		歩	桂			金	銀	歩	歩	c
	歩	金	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩			d
								歩	歩	e
	歩		歩	歩	歩	歩	歩			f
		歩	銀	金		銀	桂			g
		玉	金					飛		h
	香	桂	角						香	i

Four piece, Nada's defence – ♁G4c-G4b

He just moved his Gold back and forth from 4c to 4b, waiting for my attack but ready to launch a counterattack as soon as he got some pieces in hand. I won, but not without some complications. Aside from the difficulty of starting the attack, *Sente* has to be careful about his order of moves, as he might allow *Gote* to start a fight before his formation is completed.

### **Manabe's bi-lateral slow attack**

I think that if *Sente* is going to play a slow system, it is better to adopt one that allows him to attack on either side. The most promising formation seems to be one that was mentioned by Kazuo Manabe (8-*dan*) for two piece handicap, but which looks really powerful at four piece.

The following line is as given by him, with *Gote's* moves modified to be appropriate for four piece: 1 ..., 2 S6b; 3 P7f, 4 P5d; 5 S4h, 6 S5c; 7 P5f, 8 P4d; 9 P4f, 10 G3b; 11 S4g, 12 K5b, 13 S6h; 14 S2b; 15 P6f, 16 P3d; 17 P3f, 18 K4c; 19 N3g, 20 G6b; 21 S6g, 22 P7d; 23 K5h, 24 P6d; 25 R2i, 26 G7c; 27 G3h, 28 G8d; 29 B7i, 30 P7e; 31 Px7e, 32 Gx7e; 33 P\*7f, 34 G7d; 35 B5g, 36 P8d; 37 N7g,



Four piece, Manabe's bi-lateral slow attack  
to 37 N7g

planning ♠G7h, ♠P2f, ♠P1f~♠1e, ♠P9f~♠9e, and an attack on either wing, depending on *Gote's* play. This should win rather easily, as *Sente's* position is very

secure, but perhaps *Gote* can manage to stir up trouble before *Sente* reaches such a solid formation, though anything he tries should backfire with correct play.

To summarize, there are many good ways for *Sente* to play at four piece handicap, but none in my opinion is as simple and powerful as the Climbing Gold.

### **Lessons from this handicap:**

1. Dangling a Pawn in the enemy's home court is often a powerful strategy. It can deflect a defender at any moment.
2. Luring an enemy Knight forward is sometimes a way to win it.
3. Promoting the Rook is not decisive if it can be sent home.
4. *Gote's* King is his most powerful defender.
5. *Sente* should either attack quickly, ie: Climbing Gold, or else set up a super-solid formation before even thinking about attack. Halfway measures tend to be inferior.
6. When *Gote* advances a Pawn to the fifth rank, it is usually wise to defend the corresponding Pawn with a general, even if there is no immediate threat.
7. A Gold on 3c invites an attack based on ♠N2e (or ♠N\*2e).
8. Two promoted Pawns together can devastate the enemy. The sacrifice of a general for a Knight to achieve this is a very good deal.

## Two Piece Handicap.

- [114] Standard line
- [121] Standard line, Variation I
- [123] Standard line, Variation II
- [130] Standard line, Variation III
- [134] Standard line, Variation IV
- [139] Standard line, Variation V

Two piece handicap (*Gote* removes Rook and Bishop) is probably the most frequently played handicap, as well as the most thoroughly analyzed one.

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
a	香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂	香	
b										
c	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	
d			●				●			
e										
f										
g	歩	歩	歩	●	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	
h		角						飛		
i	香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂	香	

Two piece, start position

It is considered very instructive, and it is the first handicap we have come to in which *Sente* is generally advised to castle before attacking, as he would in an even game. *Sente* has a huge material advantage, but with *no weak edge to attack* there is no reason to hurry. Although two piece is a huge handicap, in actual practice it is not so easy to beat a pro who wants to win, even if he allows you to start the game on move **33** with your formation completed.<sup>9</sup> It is generally said that you must be 2-*dan* to have an even chance with a pro at this handicap, and if it's a serious head to head timed game I think 3-*dan* might be more realistic. As there is a wealth of professional analysis on this handicap there is very little room for improvements, so almost all the following variations are taken from the Japanese literature. Special thanks to Shoshi Kazuharu (6-*dan*), for much of the following analysis. Izumi Masaku (7-*dan*), Kiriya Kiyosumi (9-*dan*), and several other pros are also prime sources.

Most pros recommend that *Sente* establish a vanguard of twin Pawns on 4e and 3e, which should force *Gote's* Silver to 2b, and then after castling attack in the center. There are two ways for *Sente* to do this: the 'Crab castle' strategy using the Rook on the third file, or the 'Twin Silvers' strategy using the Rook on the center file. The Crab castle is more popular, though it is said that the Twin Silvers actually scores better in practice. Perhaps this is because many of the best lines for *Sente*

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<sup>9</sup> Editor's note: That is, on completion of *Sente's* Crab castle – see page 115.



in the Crab castle require spectacularly brilliant play, which may be too difficult for a player receiving two piece handicap. The twin Silvers gives *Sente* a safer King, but *Gote* gets a better shape and the chance of an entering *Gote* King is higher. We will begin with the Crab castle, which is also considered the most instructive. It is best to learn both, as certain unusual early *Gote* strategies work well against one plan but not against the other. For example, omitting  $\triangle P5d$  is effective against the Twin Silvers but has little merit against the Crab castle, since *Sente* usually doesn't attack the fifth file.

One word of warning: Some of these variations are quite difficult, and some of the final positions are not so simple to win. Furthermore, sometimes small differences in the position call for a change in plan. It is **not possible** to analyze the handicap to a clear win for *Sente*, in contrast to the handicaps we have examined so far. For this reason, playing two piece handicap can be enjoyable for both sides, even if *Sente* knows the 'book' well. There is enough scope for *Gote* to vary his play and force *Sente* to think for himself. Still, *Sente* can usually afford several errors before he loses the advantage, while *Gote* is apt to lose badly after even one error.

## Standard line

**1** ..., **2** S6b; **3** P7f, **4** P5d; **5** P4f, **6** S5c; **7** P4e, (to prevent the obstruction of the Bishop by **8** P4d, though Manabe Kazuo (8-*dan*) and some other pros advocate the alternate plan of provoking **8** P4d and then attacking it) **8** G3b; (**8** P5e and **8** K4b are important alternatives which we will examine later) **9** S4h, (*Sente* rushes the Silver forward to eliminate any possibility of **10** P5e) **10** K5b; **11** S4g, **12** G6b; **13** P3f, (note that *Sente* does not play S4f or P5f as he plans to guard his 7f Pawn with a Rook on 3f) **14** P7d; **15** P3e, **16** S2b; (if *Gote* omits this *Sente* can force the Silver there anyway by P3d followed by taking on 3c and dropping on 3d) **17** R3h, (to get a Pawn in hand and to post the Rook on 3f where it works on both rank and file) **18** P6d; **19** P3d, **20** Px3d; **21** Rx3d, **22** P\*3c; (**22** S3c; **23** R3f, **24** P\*3d; is met by **25** N3g, **26** P2d; **27** S4f, intending P\*3e) **23** R3f, **24** K6c; (Generally the safest square for the *Gote* King at this handicap; also the King guards many key squares from here) **25** N3g, (Knight behind Rook is a good shape in Shogi; the Knight guards the Rook's 'ears' and the Rook guards the 'head' of the Knight) **26** G7c; **27** G7h, (only now that the attacking formation is complete does *Sente* take the time to castle) **28** P6e; **29** K6i, **30** G6d; **31** G5h, (*Sente* should not prevent ... P5e by **31** S4f or **31** P5f due to **32** P7e; **33** Px7e, **34** Gx7e and *Sente* can no longer drive back the Gold by **35** P\*7f) **32** N7c; (**32** P5e is well met by **33** S4f, **34** S5d; **35** P5f, **36** Px5f?; **37** P\*5e) **33** S6h.

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
皇							桂	皇	a
						金	銀		b
歩	歩	桂	玉	銀	歩	歩	歩	歩	c
		歩	金	歩					d
			歩		歩				e
		歩				飛			f
歩	歩		歩	歩	銀	桂	歩	歩	g
	角	金	銀	金					h
香	桂		玉					香	i 歩

Two piece, standard line to 33 S6h

This completes the Crab castle, often seen in even games. The Golds are said to be the eyes of the crab. It's a sensible formation, because none of the generals controls the square on which the King sits, which would be pointless. It is recommended at this handicap because it is the strongest castle against a frontal attack, though weak against a Rook on the back rank. So *Sente* will not hesitate to sacrifice a Bishop for a general to break in to *Gote's* position, but should not sacrifice his Rook without getting major compensation. 34 P8d; 35 P9f!, (Having the option of B9g is important in some lines,

and the escape square for the King doesn't hurt either)  
**36 P9d; 37 S4f,**

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
a	皇							将	皇	
b							金	金		
c			将	王	銀	歩	歩	歩	歩	
d	歩	歩	歩	金	歩					
e				歩		歩				
f	歩		歩			銀	飛			
g		歩		歩	歩		桂	歩	歩	
h		角	金	銀	金					
i	香	桂		王					香	歩

Two piece, standard line, **34 P8d to 37 S4f**

**38 P8e; (38 P7e; 39 Px7e, 40 Gx7e; 41 S3e, 42 P6f; 43 Bx6f!, 44 Gx6f; 45 Rx6f, 46 S6d; 47 P\*7d, 48 N6e; 49 G\*7f, 50 B\*5e; 51 Gx6e, 52 Bx6f; 53 Gx6d, 54 Kx6d; 55 Px6f, 56 R\*3i; 57 S5i,** and although *Sente* has lost Rook for Silver and Knight, his advantage in King safety is overwhelming. It is usually good for *Sente* to sacrifice Bishop for Gold and Pawn on 6f if he can take with the Rook at the end, because *Gote* needs the missing Pawn to defend) **39 P5f, (39 S3e** is also

book, meeting 40 P5e; by 41 S4f, 42 S5d; 43 P5f, 44 Px5f?; 45 P\*5e, but 44 P6f!; 45 Px6f, 46 Px5f; 47 S6g, 48 S3a; or 48 G4b; is a bit tricky; also 40 P6f; 41 Bx6f, 42 P5e; 43 B8h, 44 S5d; 45 S4f, 46 K5b; is tough to refute)

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
皇							桂	皇	a
						金	銀		b
		桂	王	銀	歩	歩	歩	歩	c
歩		歩	金	歩					d
	歩		歩		歩				e
歩		歩		歩	銀	飛			f
	歩		歩			桂	歩	歩	g
	角	金	銀	金					h
香	桂		玉					香	i 歩

Two piece, standard line, 37 S4f to 39 P5f

40 L1b; (Planning a later  $\triangle$ S3a to reactivate this poorly placed piece; then P3d Px3d B1a+ will not capture a Lance. An alternative is 40 P7e; 41 Px7e, 42 Gx7e; 43 P5e!, (because the King is now poorly defended) 44 Px5e; 45 P\*5d!, 46 Sx5d; 47 Sx5e, 48 Sx5e; 49 Bx5e, 50 S\*6d; 51 B4f, 52 P\*5e; 53 B3e, 54 S5c;

55 P\*7f, 56 G7d; 57 S\*7e, 58 G4b; 59 Sx7d, 60 Kx7d;  
61 P\*5d, 62 Sx5d; 63 B6b+, with decisive advantage;  
40 P6f; 41 Bx6f, 42 G6e; 43 B8h, 44 Gx7f; 45 P5e, is  
another line) 41 S3e, (41 P5e, is less convincing here)  
42 S3a; (Note how *Gote* tries to bring the Silver back to  
the center as soon as it is tactically feasible, in part due  
to 40 L1b; *Gote* can first throw in 42 P6f; 43 Bx6f,  
44 P5e; 45 Px5e, 46 S3a, which may be met by the  
advance P2f-2e, followed by R2f or R4f depending on  
*Gote's* play) 43 P4d, (43 P\*3d, 44 Px3d; 45 Sx3d,  
46 P\*3c; 47 Sx3c+, is also good, though perhaps less  
convincing) 44 S3a-4b; (44 Px4d; 45 Sx4d, 46 Sx4d;  
47 Bx4d, 48 S\*5c; 49 B2f, 50 P\*4d; 51 P\*4e, or  
50 P\*4c; 51 N4e, 52 S4d; 53 S\*5c, 54 Sx4e?; 55 S6b+  
mate) 45 N4e, 46 S6b; (46 Sx4d; 47 Sx4d, 48 Px4d;  
49 Bx4d, 50 S\*6b; 51 P\*3d, 52 G4c; 53 Px3c+,  
54 Gx4d; 55 +Px4b) 47 Px4c+, 48 Sx4c; 49 P\*4d,  
50 S5b; 51 P\*3d, 52 P5e; 53 Px3c+, 54 Nx3;c 55 S4f!  
pinning and winning the Knight.

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
2 歩	香									a
			銀	銀		金		香		b
		桂	玉			桂	歩	歩		c
	歩	歩	金		歩					d
	歩		歩	歩	桂					e
	歩		歩	歩	銀	飛				f
	歩		歩					歩	歩	g
	角	金	銀	金						h
	香	桂		玉					香	i 歩

Two piece, standard line, 40 L1b to 55 S4f!

**Variation I** *Gote* plays to obstruct the Bishop with a timely Pawn sacrifice (page 121).

**Variation II** *Gote* plays to avoid the exchange of generals at all costs (page 123).

**Variation III** *Gote* concentrates solely on making it hard for *Sente* to break in (page 130).

**Variation IV** *Gote* plays to get a Pawn in hand (page 134).

**Variation V** *Gote* sacrifices two Pawns to block the Bishop and centralize his offside Silver (page 139).

**Lessons from this handicap:** <sup>10</sup>

1. ...
2. ...

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<sup>10</sup>Editor's note: Text missing in the original.



## Two Piece Handicap – Variation I

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
皇							将		a
						金	銀	皇	b
		将	王	銀	歩	歩	歩	歩	c
歩		歩	金	歩					d
	歩		歩		歩	銀			e
歩		歩		歩		飛			f
	歩		歩			桂	歩	歩	g
	角	金	銀	金					h
香	桂		玉					香	i 歩

Two piece, standard line, variation I to 41 S3e

In this variation *Gote* plays to obstruct the Bishop with a timely Pawn sacrifice.

42 P7e; 43 R4f, 44 P5e; (44 P6f; 45 Bx6f, 46 G6e; 47 P4d!, 48 S4b; 49 Px4c+, 50 Sx4c; 51 B4d!!, 52 Sx4d; 53 Sx4d, with threats of S4c= or N4e) 45 P4d, (if 45 Px5e, 46 S3a; and the Silver will participate in the game) 46 S5d; (As usual, *Gote* tries to avoid exchanges. If 46 Px4d; 47 Sx4d, 48 Sx4d; 49 Rx4d, 50 P\*4c; 51 Rx6d!!, 52 Kx6d; 53 Bx5e, 54 K6c; 55 S\*5d!!,

(since 56 Sx5d; is met by 57 G\*6d, mate) 56 K6b; 57 N4e, with a winning attack) 47 Px4c+, 48 Sx4c; (48 Gx4c; 49 Px5e, 50 P\*4e; 51 R5f, wins two generals for the Bishop and breaks in) 49 Bx5e!, (note how readily *Sente* sacrifices Bishop for Gold with the safety of the Crab castle, in this case to denude *Gote's* King) 50 Gx5e; 51 Px5e, 52 B\*2h; 53 P\*3h, (although Knight and Lance are close in value, this drop keeps *Gote's* Bishop out of play) 54 Bx1i+; 55 P\*4d, 56 S5b; 57 G\*5d, 58 K7b; 59 P4c+, winning easily.



Two piece, standard line, variation I,  
42 P7e to 59 P4c+

## Two Piece Handicap – Variation II.

In this variation *Gote* plays to *avoid the exchange of generals* at all costs. The exchange of pieces tends to favor *Sente* for several reasons:

1. *Sente's* Rook and Bishop tend to cover the squares on which pieces in hand might be dropped.
2. Pieces in hand favor the attacker, which is normally the player receiving the handicap.
3. Finally, it usually takes more skill to use the pieces on the board than the ones in hand; a good piece drop is usually obvious.

For these reasons, this line is **rather tough to beat** in practice; it's very hard to find the right plan with no piece in hand.

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
a	香							桂		
b						銀	金	銀	香	
c			桂	玉		步	步	步	步	
d	步			金	步	步				
e		步	步	步			銀			
f	步		步		步	飛				
g		步		步			桂	步	步	
h		角	金	銀	金					
i	香	桂		玉					香	步

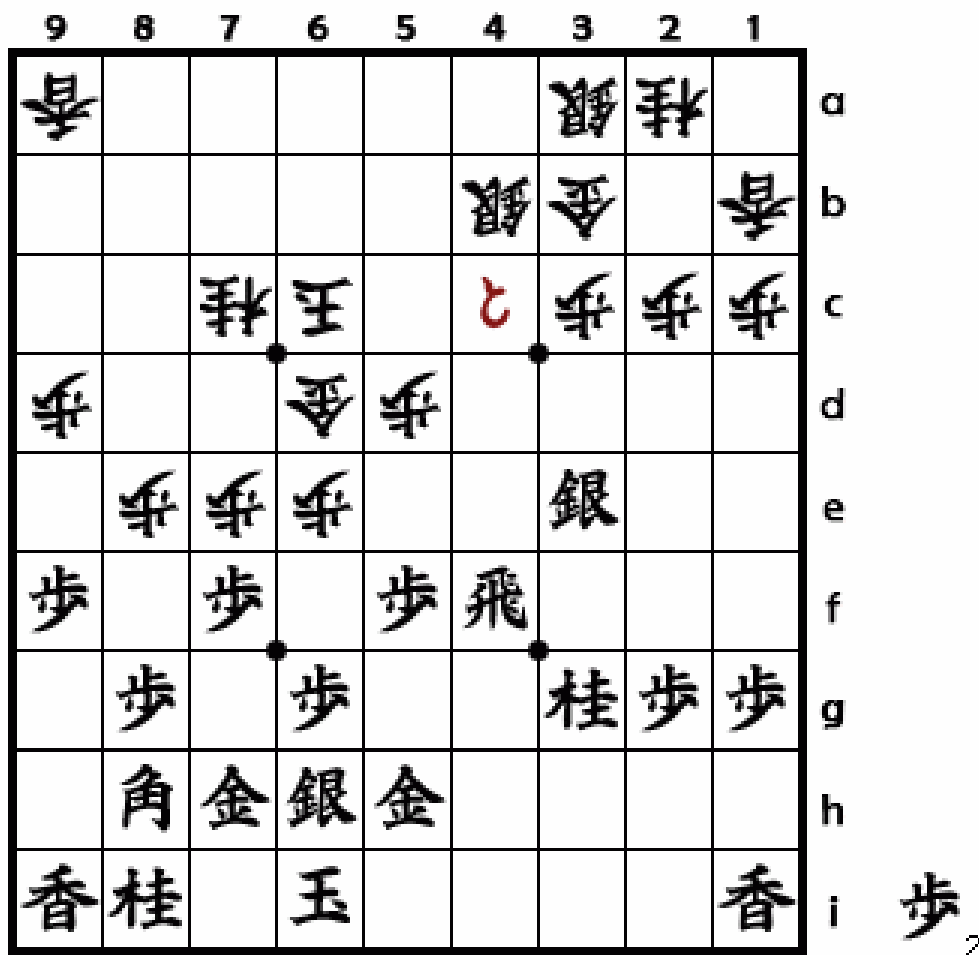
Two piece, standard line, variation II  
to **40** L1b

41 S3e, 42 P7e; 43 R4f, (43 Px7e, 44 Gx7e; helps *Gote* by letting the Gold support ... P8f or ... P6f, and 43 P4d as above (page 118) is not so convincing as there is no mate on 6b or drop on 7e here) 44 S4b; (to avoid a Silver exchange) 45 P4d,

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
皇							桂		a
					銀	金	銀	皇	b
		科	王		歩	歩	歩	歩	c
歩			皇	歩	歩				d
	歩	歩	歩			銀			e
歩		歩		歩	飛				f
	歩		歩			桂	歩	歩	g
	角	金	銀	金					h
香	桂		玉					香	i 歩

Two piece, standard line, variation II,  
41 S3e to 45 P4d

46 S2b-3a; (46 Px4d; 47 Bx4d, 48 K7b; 49 P\*4c!,  
 50 Gx4c; 51 B5c+!, 52 P\*4e; 53 Rx4e, 54 P\*4d;  
 55 +Bx6d, 56 Px4e; 57 G\*6c, 58 K8a; 59 +Bx7c,  
 60 R\*9b; 61 N\*8d, with an imminent mate) 47 Px4c+,



Two piece, standard line, variation II,  
 46 S2b-3a to 47 Px4c+

48 Sx4c; (48 Gx4c; 49 P\*4d, 50 G5c; 51 N4e, 52 G5b;  
 53 P4c+!, 54 Gx4c; 55 P\*4d, 56 G3d; 57 Sx3d,  
 58 Px3d; 59 P4c+, 60 Sx4c; 61 G\*5c, forking) 49 S4d,  
 (aiming for an exchange) 50 S5b; (*Gote* is consistent  
 and avoids the exchange) 51 N4e,

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
歩	香						銀	桂		a
				銀		金		香		b
		桂	玉			歩	歩	歩		c
歩			金	歩	銀					d
	歩	歩	歩		桂					e
歩		歩		歩	飛					f
	歩		歩					歩	歩	g
	角	金	銀	金						h
香	桂		玉						香	i 歩 <sub>2</sub>

Two piece, standard line, variation II,  
 48 Sx4c to 51 N4e

52 S4b; (Centralization, just as in chess. 52 P\*4b; 53 N5c+, leads to promoting the Bishop, while 52 P\*4c; is met by 53 N5c+, 54 Sx5c; 55 Sx4c+, leading to promoting the Rook) 53 P\*4c, 54 Gx4c; If either Silver takes, 55 N5c+, wins material) 55 Sx4c+, 56 S4bx4c; (56 S5x4c; 57 G\*5c, leads to a Bishop promotion) 57 Nx3c+, 58 P\*4d; 59 +Nx4c, 60 Sx4c; 61 Bx4d!,

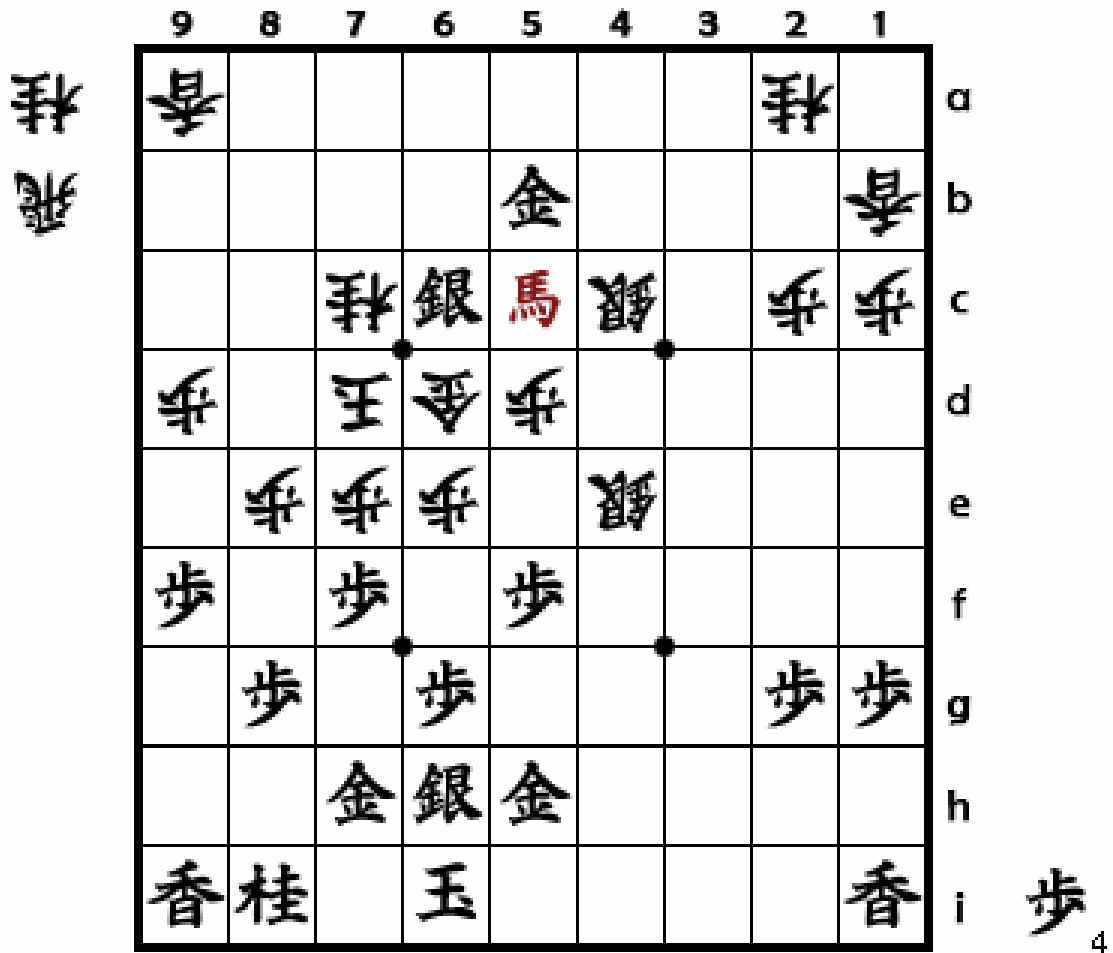
	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
銀	香							桂		a
桂									香	b
步			桂	王		銀		歩	歩	c
	歩			金	歩	角				d
		歩	歩	歩						e
	歩		歩		歩	飛				f
		歩		歩				歩	歩	g 歩 <sub>3</sub>
			金	銀	金					h 銀
	香	桂		王					香	i 金

Two piece, standard line, variation II,  
52 S4b to 61 Bx4d!

(Trading Bishop for general to promote the Rook is perhaps the most common motif of this handicap) 62 P\*4e; (62 Sx4; 63 Rx4d, 64 K5b; 65 S\*4b, is



deadly) 63 Rx4d, 64 S\*3d; 65 G\*6b!, 66 K7d;  
 67 B5c+!!, 68 Sx4e; 69 S\*6c,



Two piece, standard line, variation II,  
 62 P\*4e to 69 S\*6c

with a decisive attack. In general I think this variation is one of *Gote's* best, as some of the positions where *Sente* promotes at the cost of a Knight may not be trivial to win.

## Two Piece Handicap – Variation III .

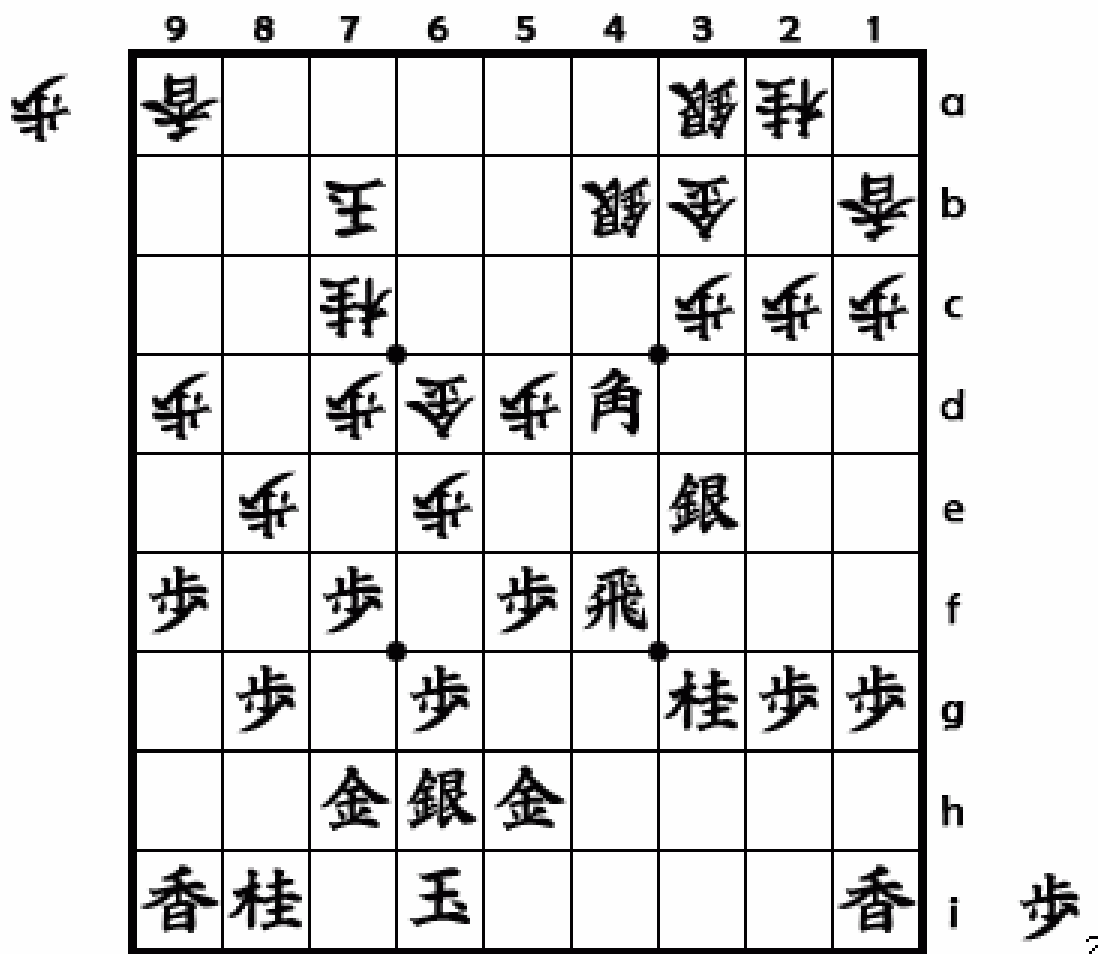
In this line *Gote* concentrates solely on making it hard for *Sente* to break in, rather than on doing anything constructive himself. In even game Shogi such passive play is generally fatal, but in handicap games, especially larger handicaps, aggressive play by *Gote* is apt to result in a quick win for *Sente*, who will usually break in easily if *Gote* does not concentrate all his forces on defense. So lines like this are probably *Gote's* best practical chance.

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
皇							桂		a
						金	銀	皇	b
		桂	玉	銀	歩	歩	歩	歩	c
歩		歩	金	歩					d
	歩		歩		歩	銀			e
歩		歩		歩		飛			f
	歩		歩			桂	歩	歩	g
	角	金	銀	金					h
香	桂		玉					香	i 歩

Two piece, standard line, variation III to 40 L1b

41 S3e, 42 S4b(!); 43 R4f, 44 S2b-3a; (This looks very passive, but it is not so simple to refute; it is similar to

the preceding variation, in which ... P7e was played first) **45** P4d, **46** Px4d; **47** Bx4d, **48** K7b;



Two piece, standard line, variation III,  
**41** S3e to **48** K7b

(*Gote* simply prevents any promotion or exchange)

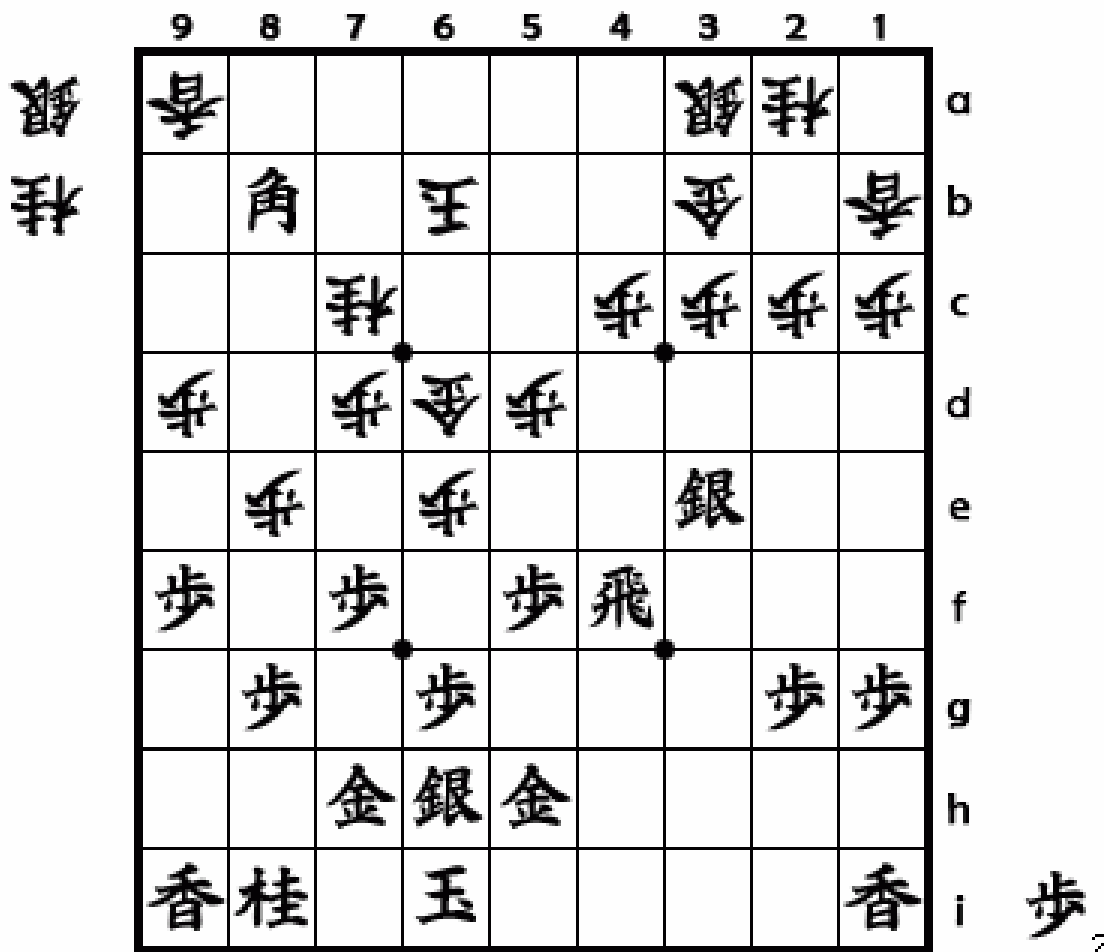
49 N4e, 50 P\*4c; 51 B5c+, 52 Sx5c; 53 Nx5c+, (The Knight's promotion compensates for the lost exchange)

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
角	香						銀	桂		a
			王				金		香	b
		桂		金	歩	歩	歩	歩		c
	歩	歩	金	歩						d
		歩		歩			銀			e
	歩		歩		歩	飛				f
		歩		歩				歩	歩	g
			金	銀	金					h
	香	桂		王					香	i

歩<sub>2</sub>  
銀

Two piece, standard line, variation III,  
49 N4e to 53 Nx5c+

54 B\*7a!; (54 S4b; 55 S\*4a, 56 G3a; 57 S5b+),  
 55 S\*6b, 56 Bx6b; 57 +Nx6b, 58 Kx6b; 59 B\*8b,



Two piece, standard line, variation III,  
 54 B\*7a! To 59 B\*8b

*Sente* will regain the sacrificed material and promote his Bishop, and can continue his attack by ♠P9e, aiming to promote a Pawn on the 9th file. An improvement for *Gote* on this line by Kato Hifumi (9-dan) is to replace 36 P9d by 36 P1d, so that the above plan for *Sente* will take more time. This may well be *Gote's* best line against the Crab castle system. At least he won't lose quickly.

## Two Piece Handicap – Variation IV.

In this line *Gote* plays to get a Pawn in hand, which is useful if he wants to play positively. But it takes time and weakens his King, so I don't recommend it for *Gote*. The main line is quite beautiful:

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
香							桂	香	a
						金	銀		b
歩	歩	桂	玉	銀	歩	歩	歩	歩	c
		歩	金	歩					d
			歩		歩				e
		歩				飛			f
歩	歩		歩	歩	銀	桂	歩	歩	g
	角	金	銀	金					h
香	桂		玉					香	i 歩

Two piece, standard line, variation IV to 33 S6h

34 P7e; 35 Px7e, 36 Gx7e; 37 P\*7f, (The Gold is driven back so that *Gote* won't be able to block out the Bishop by ... P6f) 38 G7d; 39 P9f, 40 P9d; 41 S4f, 42 G6d; (*Gote* now has a Pawn in hand, but it cost two moves and gives *Sente* a later possibility of dropping a Silver on 7e to exchange Silver for Gold) 43 P5f, 44 P8d; 45 S3e, (45 P5e is an alternative)

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
歩	皇							桂	皇	a
							金	銀		b
		桂	王	銀	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	c
歩	歩		金	歩						d
			歩		歩	銀				e
歩		歩		歩		飛				f
	歩		歩			桂	歩	歩		g
	角	金	銀	金						h
香	桂		玉						香	i 歩

Two piece, standard line, variation IV,  
34 P7e to 45 S3e

46 P8e; (46 P2d; 47 P1f, with P4d next so that when the Bishop lands on 2f it can retreat to 1g if attacked by ... P2e; if 47 Sx2d?, 48 P\*2h; will win a Lance) 47 P4d,

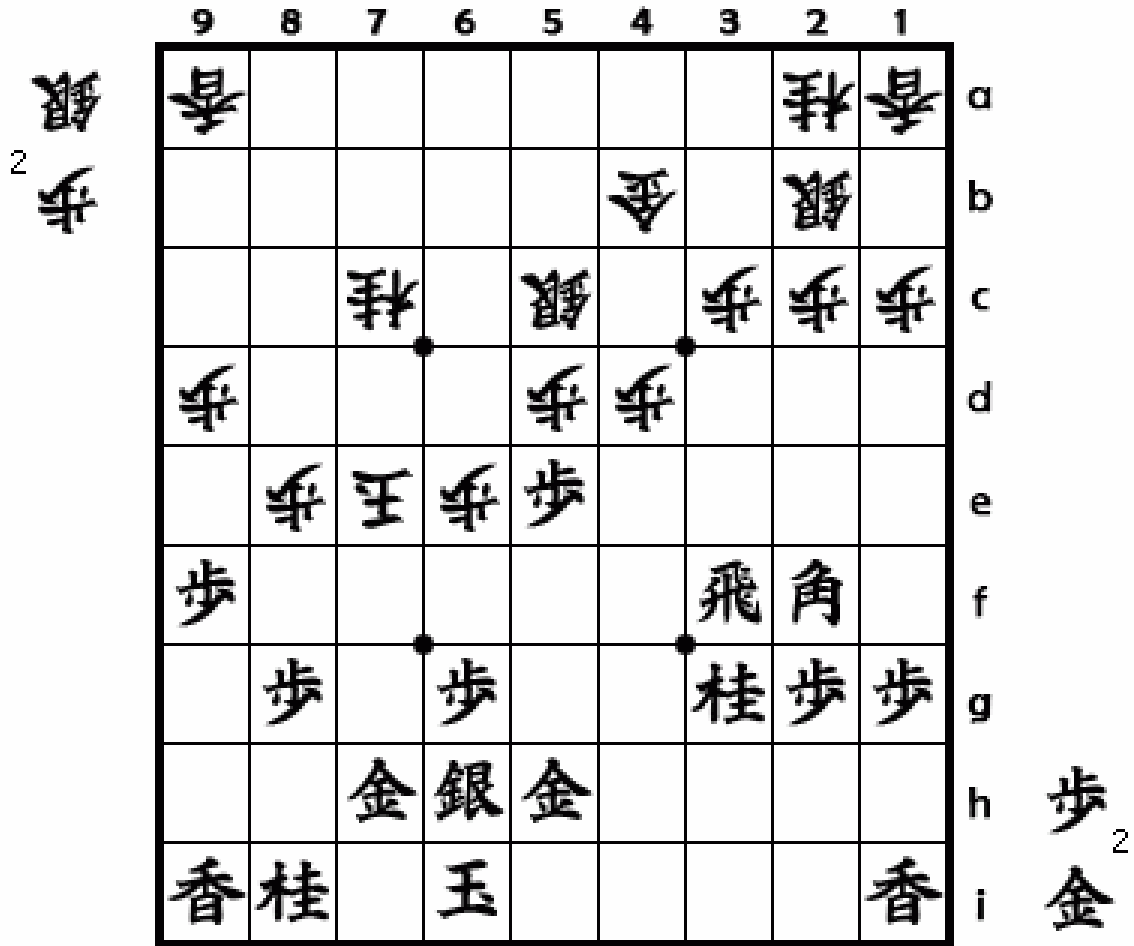
(or 47 R4f, 48 P5e; 49 P4d, as in Variation II) 48 Px4d;  
 (48 P5e; 49 R4f, as in Variation II) 49 Sx4d, 50 Sx4d;  
 (50 S6b; 51 R4f, or 50 S4b; 51 P\*4c) 51 Bx4d,  
 52 S\*5c; 53 B2f, 54 P\*4c



Two piece, standard line, variation IV,  
 46 P8e to 54 P\*4c

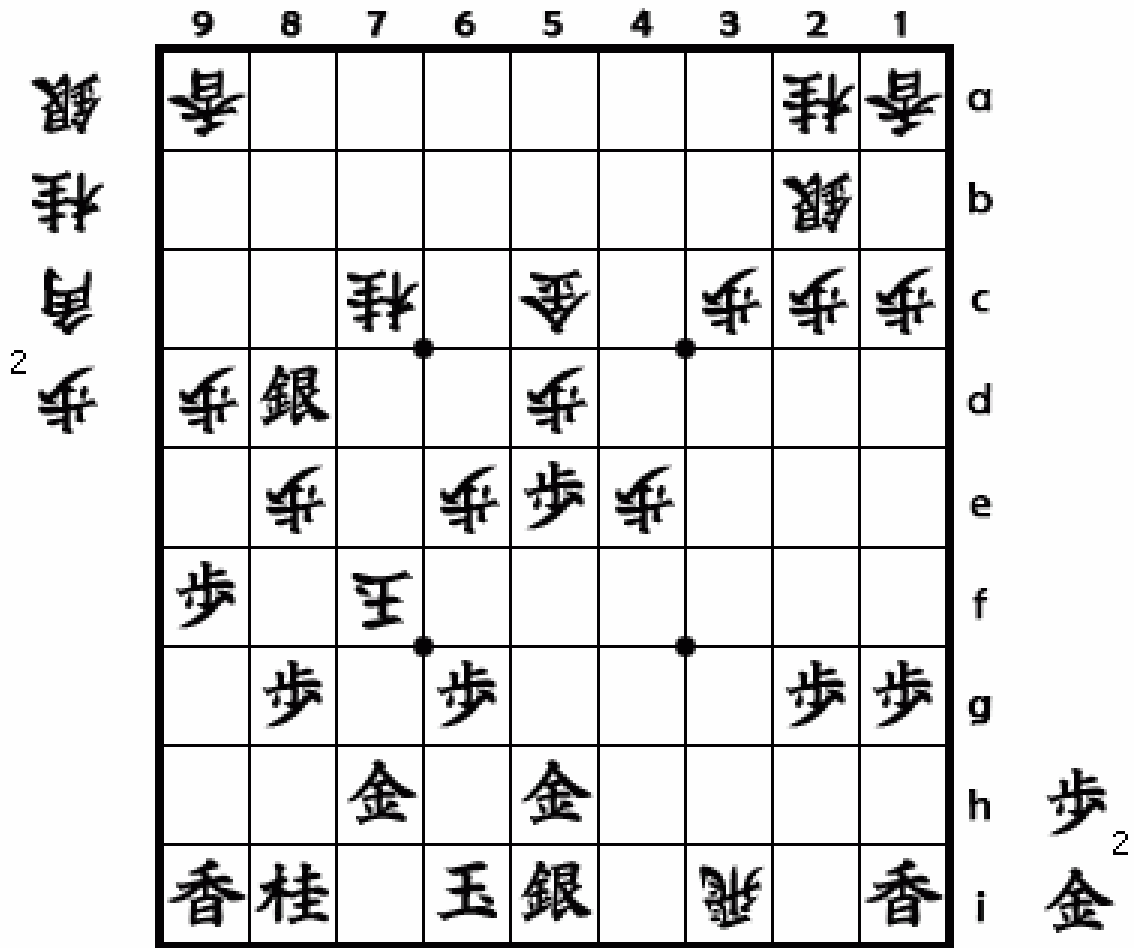
(Sente's threat was 55 N4e, 56 S6b; 57 S\*5c, and 54 P\*4d would be met by 55 P\*4e, 56 G4c; 57 S\*3b) 55 S\*7e!, (Showing the downside of the early ... P7e) 56 G4b; 57 Sx6d, 58 Kx6d; 59 P7e!, 60 Kx7e; (60 K6c; 61 P5e! to swing the Rook to 7f) 61 P5e!, (To activate the Rook on the rank) 62 P4d; (To block the Bishop)





Two piece, standard line, variation IV,  
55 S\*7e! to 62 P4d

63 N4e!!, 64 Px4e; 65 R7f!!!, 66 Kx7f; (else 67 G\*7d)  
67 Bx5c+!!, 68 Gx5c; 69 S\*8d!, 70 R\*3i; 71 S5i



Two piece, standard line, variation IV,  
**63** N4e!! to **71** S5i

and *Gote* cannot prevent mate by G\*7e or G7g. One of the most spectacular variations in Shogi; *Sente* sacrificed *two Pawns, a Knight, a Rook, and a Bishop* for a quiet final mate.

## Two Piece Handicap – Variation V.

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
歩	皇							桂	皇	a
							金	銀		b
	歩	桂	玉	銀	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	c
歩			金	歩						d
			歩		歩					e
歩		歩		歩	銀	飛				f
	歩		歩				桂	歩	歩	g
	角	金	銀	金						h
香	桂		玉						香	i 歩

Two piece, standard line, variation V - follows variation IV to 43 P5f

In this line *Gote* sacrifices two Pawns to block the Bishop and centralize his offside Silver. The Silver on 2b (together with the Knight behind it) is called a Wall Silver, because if the King needs to run away in that direction, it will run into a wall of its own pieces. This is a very undesirable formation, so *Gote* looks for any opportunity to correct it. As with the previous line, the problem for *Gote* is the weakness created on the 7th file.

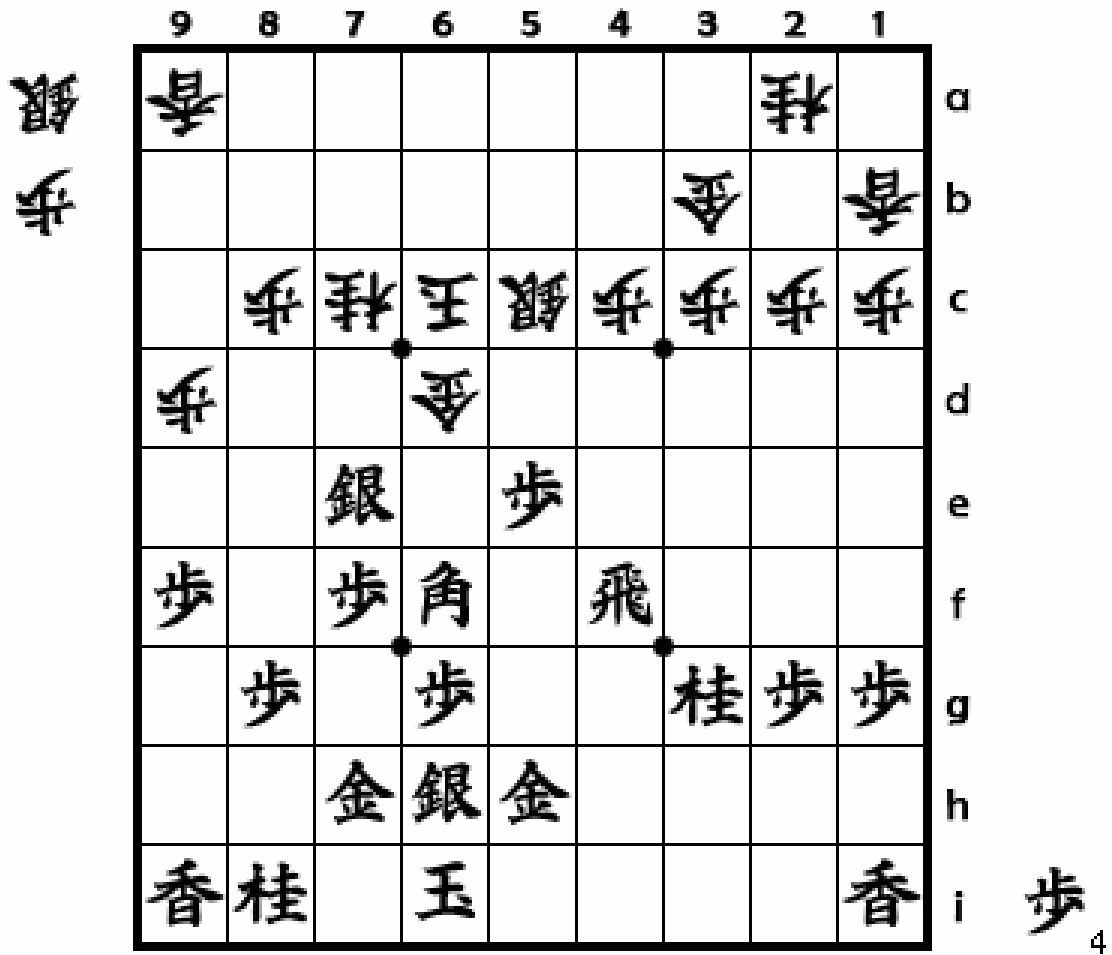
44 L1b; 45 S3e, 46 P6f; (44 P1d and 44 S3a are similar to previous lines) 47 Bx6f, 48 P5e; 49 Px5e; 50 S3a

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
歩	歩						銀	桂		a
							金		歩	b
	歩	桂	王	銀	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	c
歩			金							d
				歩	歩	銀				e
歩		歩	角			飛				f
	歩		歩			桂	歩	歩		g
		金	銀	金						h
香	桂		王						香	i

歩<sub>3</sub>

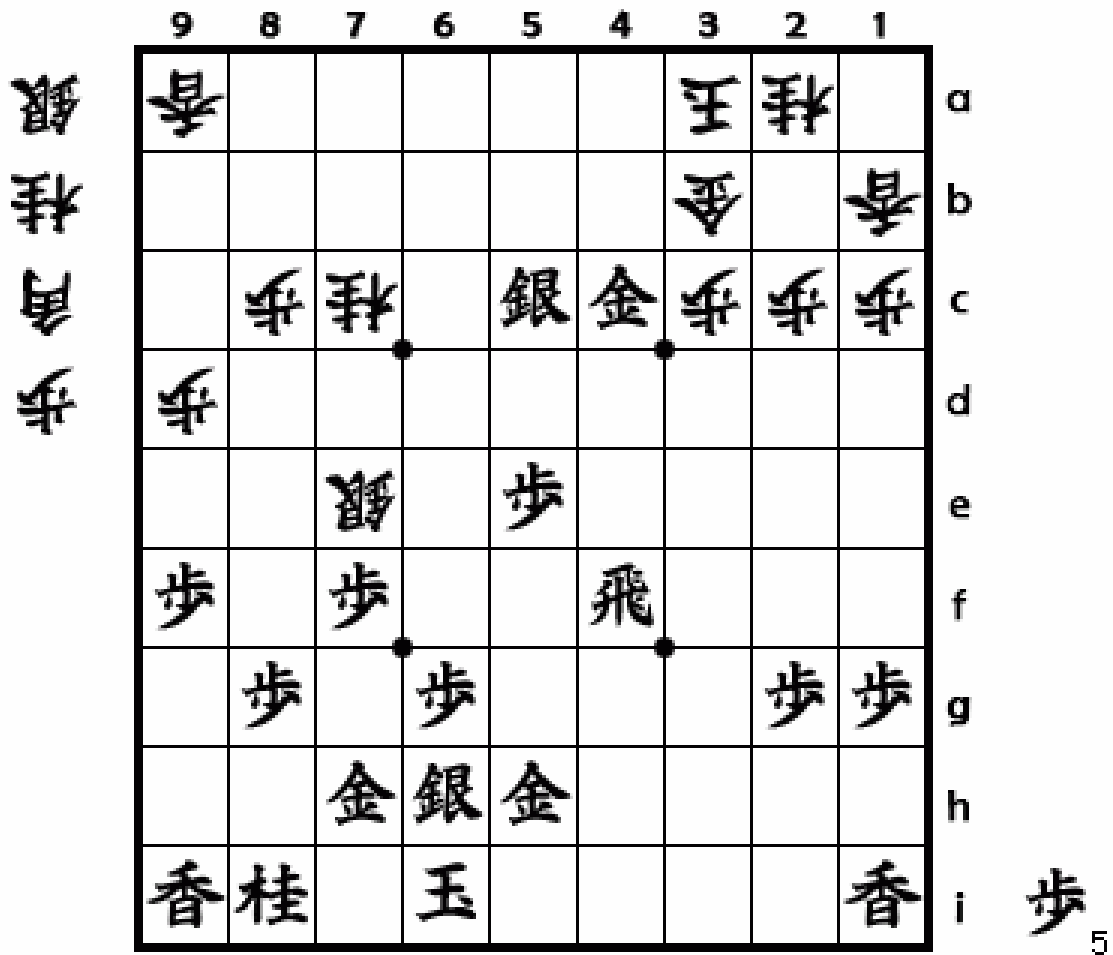
Two piece, standard line, variation V,  
44 L1b to 50 S3a

(*Gote* clears 6e for his Knight and blocks the Bishop before activating his Silver, at the cost of two Pawns) 51 R4f, 52 S34b; 53 P4d, 54 Px4d; 55 Sx4d, 56 P\*4c; 57 Sx5c+, 58 Sx5c; (Although exchanges favor *Sente*, *Gote* can take satisfaction from the fact that it was his bad Wall Silver that has been exchanged) 59 S\*7e!, (This exposes the flaw in *Gote's* exchange of the 7 Pawn)



Two piece, standard line, variation V,  
51 R4f to 59 S\*7e!

60 Gx7e; (60 G6e; 61 N7g!!, 62 Gx6f; 63 Rx6f,  
64 P\*6d; 65 Sx6d, 66 Sx6d; 67 G\*5d) 61 Bx7e,  
62 S\*6d; 63 N4e!, 64 Sx7e; 65 Nx5c+, 66 Kx5c;  
67 G\*5d, 68 K4b; 69 S\*5c, 70 K3a; 71 Gx4c



Two piece, standard line, variation V,  
**60 Gx7e to 71 Gx4c**

winning easily. Analysis by Kiyosumi Kiriya (9-  
*dan*).

# Rook & Lance Handicap

[143] Part 1 – Main Line

[156] Part 2 – Blocking Lines

[170] Part 3 – Other Lines

[183] Lessons from Rook and Lance handicap

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂		a
							角		b
歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	c
			●			●			d
									e
									f
歩	歩	歩	●	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	g
	角						飛		h
香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂	香	i

Rook and Lance handicap, start position

## Part 1 – Main Line

Rook and Lance handicap (*Gote* removes Rook and left Lance) is a special favorite of mine to analyze, because the absence of the Lance focuses play on that sector and leads to forcing variations. When the handicap consists of only major pieces, *Sente* is usually advised to complete his formation and play very patiently, but when a Lance is missing it generally pays to attack fairly early, before fighting might develop elsewhere, rendering the extra Lance irrelevant. Generally, *Sente* finds it easier to break thru and promote his Rook than he does at two piece handicap, but it is more difficult to win after promoting because the Bishop gives *Gote* counterplay. Generally this handicap is considered appropriate for an amateur 3-*dan* against a pro, though the late Hanamura (9-*dan*) usually defeated amateur 4-*dan* players this way, and once even beat a Pro 2-*dan* in a magazine game!

There are several attacking systems recommended by pros for this handicap. The most widely recommended is right Fourth File Rook (as in Rook handicap), but preceded by exchanging off the Lance Pawn with the Rook's help. This is a fairly slow system, and while it is undoubtedly very good, there are many variations, some of which are not totally convincing. Another good system involves a very early Lance sacrifice, but here too some of the lines seem a bit less than overwhelming. The Climbing Silver is recommended by some pros, but



I think this is the least convincing of the main lines; the variations are too dissimilar and complex.

I decided to opt for the Knight attack, primarily because of a new refinement by Masaki Izumi (7-*dan*), involving castling right instead of left. The Knight attack consists of exchanging off the Lance Pawn with the aid of the Rook, and then after a few preparatory moves playing ♠N1g~♠N2e combined usually with ♠P\*1b. This will normally lead to promoting the Rook at no cost other than the few moves needed to set up this plan.

[146] Classical play

[152] Variation 1: the Gold stays home

## Classical play

Let's start with classical play by *Gote*:

**1 ...**, **2 P3d**; **3 P7f**, **4 P4d**; (It is possible to make or allow the exchange of Bishops, just as it is at Rook handicap, but the subsequent play will be even more difficult for *Gote* because of possible Bishop drops on 1a or 1b or captures on 1c) **5 P1f**, **6 S3b**; (or S4b) **7 P1e**, **8 S4c**; (lines with P2d, here or in similar positions, will be considered later under the heading 'blocking lines'. They are generally met by a Climbing Silver attack. Another *Gote* option, now or on the next move, is  $\triangle$ S3c to meet a later  $\blacktriangle$ N2e by  $\triangle$ S2d, but this should make an attack on the fourth file effective for *Sente*.) **9 R1h**, **10 P5d**; **11 P1d**, **12 Px1d**; **13 Rx1d**, **14 P\*1c**; **15 R1h**, **16 K6b**; **17 S3h**, (This is important for the Knight attack, because *Sente* intends P2f and wants to guard 2g against later drops) **18 K7b**, **19 G6i-5h**,

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
香	桂	銀	金		金		桂		a
		玉					角		b
歩	歩	歩	歩		銀		歩	歩	c
			●		歩	歩	歩		d
									e
		歩							f
		●				●			
歩	歩		歩	歩	歩	歩	歩		g
	角			金		銀		飛	h
香	桂	銀		玉	金		桂	香	i 歩

### Rook and Lance, classical line to 19 G6i-5h

(Masaki Izumi's new idea, making a Mino castle. Previously ♠G6h usually followed by ♠K6i was standard, following the proverb "Keep the King and Rook far apart". But ♠G6h has the big drawback of setting up a possible Knight fork on 7f. Since *Sente* plans to exchange off his right Knight, this is a real problem. *Gote* often drops a Knight on 8d at a time when 7f is hard to defend, or may plan P7e without fearing Pxp due to N\*7f. More generally, *Gote* usually attacks on his right, since *Sente's* Dragon will dominate the other side, so it seems to make sense for *Sente* to castle right here. In an even game, this way of playing

would allow the enemy Rook to break in easily, but since he lacks a Rook here it should be okay.) **20** S6b; (20 G3b; 21 P2f, 22 P2d; 23 P\*1d!, 24 G2c; 25 Px1c+, 26 Gx1c; 27 R2h, 28 P\*1d; 29 L1f!, is strong) **21** P2f, (vital to be able to meet a later  $\triangle$ P2d by  $\blacktriangle$ P2e) **22** G3b; (later we will consider the important consequences of omitting this move) **23** N1g,

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
香	桂		金				桂		a
		王	銀			金	角		b
歩	歩	歩	歩		銀		歩	歩	c
				歩	歩	歩			d
									e
		歩					歩		f
歩	歩		歩	歩	歩	歩		桂	g
	角			金		銀		飛	h
香	桂	銀		王	金			香	i 歩

Rook and Lance, classical line, **20** S6b to **23** N1g

(Here you may wonder why we don't move our King into the Mino castle before attacking. The answer is that if *Gote* resists by  $\triangle$ P2d in the next couple of moves we will open up our right side, and the King will be safer

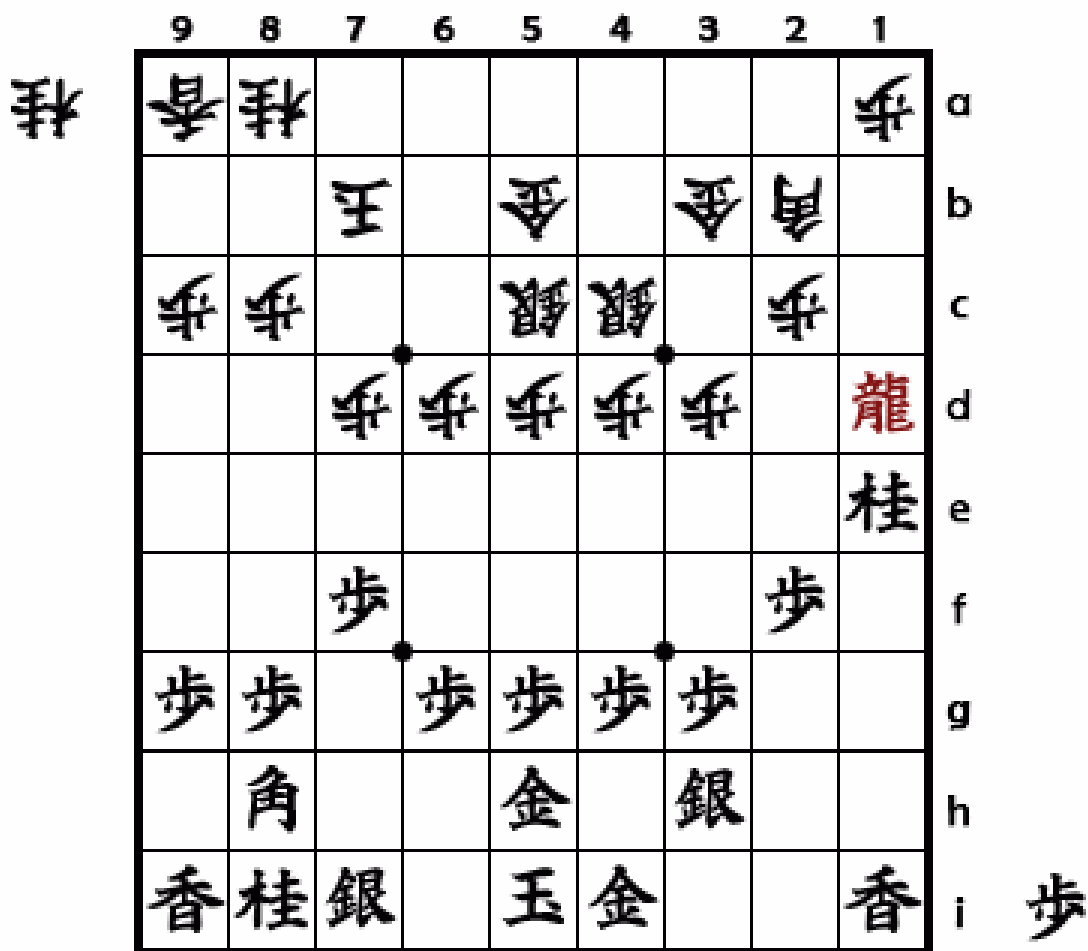
on its home square. Only after we make a Dragon will it be wise to move into the castle.) **24 S5c**; (**24 N3c**; **25 P\*1b**, **26 P2d**; [else **P1a+**, **N2e**, and **Rx1c+**, followed by recapturing the Knight] **27 R2h**, followed by **P2e**) (or **24 P2d**; **25 P2e**, **26 Px2e**; **27 Nx2e**, **28 G2c**; **29 R2h**, **30 P\*2d**; **31 Nx1c+**, **32 Nx1c**; **33 P\*2f!**, with **P\*1d** next) **25 P\*1b**, (**25 N2e**, first may transpose, but gives *Gote* the extra option of **26 P2d**) **26 G5b**;

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
香	桂						桂		a
		玉	金	金	金	角	步		b
步	步	步	步	銀	銀		步	步	c
			●	步	步	步			d
									e
		步					步		f
步	步		●	步	步	步	步		g
	角			金		銀		飛	h
香	桂	銀		玉	金			香	i

Rook and Lance, classical line, **24 S5c** to **26 G5b**

(**26 P2d**; **27 P2e**, **28 G2c**; **29 Px2d**, **30 Gx2d**; **31 R2h**, **32 P\*2c**; **33 N2e**, **34 P1d**; **35 P1a+**, **36 Bx1a**; **37 P\*1c**, promoting next.) **27 N2e**, **28 P7d**; **29 P1a+**, **30 Bx1a**;

31 Nx1c=, 32 Nx1c; 33 Rx1c+, 34 B2b; 35 +R1b, (to force *Gote* to commit his Pawn in hand) 36 P\*1a; (else 37 L1c+, 38 P\*1a; 39 +Rx2b, making the profitable exchange of Dragon for Bishop and Gold) 37 +R1d, (not 37 +R2a?, 38 G3a, winning Dragon for just the Bishop) 38 P6d; 39 N\*1e!,



Rook and Lance, classical line, 27 N2e to 39 N\*1e!

(*Sente* could just move into his Mino castle by ♠K4h~♠K3i, but the text move is really strong) 40 N\*3a; 41 P\*1b!, 42 Px1b; 43 +Rx1b, 44 P\*1a; 45 +R2a, (looks like the previous note, but this time *Gote* cannot play G3a to trap our Dragon because his

Knight is on that square) **46** K6c; (nothing better to do; this at least prepares  $\triangle N7c$  by guarding 7d) **47** P\*1d!, **48** N7c; **49** P1c+, **50** Bx1c; **51** Nx2c+

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
歩	馬						桂	龍	歩	a
				金		金				b
	歩	歩	桂	玉	銀	銀		金	角	c
		歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩			d
										e
		歩						歩		f
	歩	歩		歩	歩	歩	歩			g
		角			金		銀			h
	香	桂	銀		玉	金			香	i 歩

Rook and Lance, classical line, **40** N\*3a to **51** Nx2c+ winning Bishop for Knight, a huge profit.

## Variation 1: the Gold stays home:

The same as the classical line to 21 P2f

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
a	香	桂		金		金		桂		
b			王	銀				馬		
c	歩	歩	歩	歩		銀		歩	歩	
d					歩	歩	歩			
e										
f			歩					歩		
g	歩	歩		歩	歩	歩	歩			
h		角			金		銀		飛	
i	香	桂	銀		玉	金		桂	香	歩

Rook and Lance, variation 1 to 21 P2f

22 S5c; 23 N1g, 24 S6d; 25 N2e, (I recommend omitting 25 P\*1b if *Gote* omits 22 G3b [pp 148-149]. This Knight sacrifice attack is also *joseki*. The P\*1b attack is still possible here, but after 25 P\*1b, 26 P5e; 27 N2e, 28 P4e; the Bishop has a nice place to go, namely 4d, after the Rook promotes. Although Masaki Izumi analyzes this as also good for *Sente*, the lines are more complex and less convincing than after  $\triangleleft$ G3b,



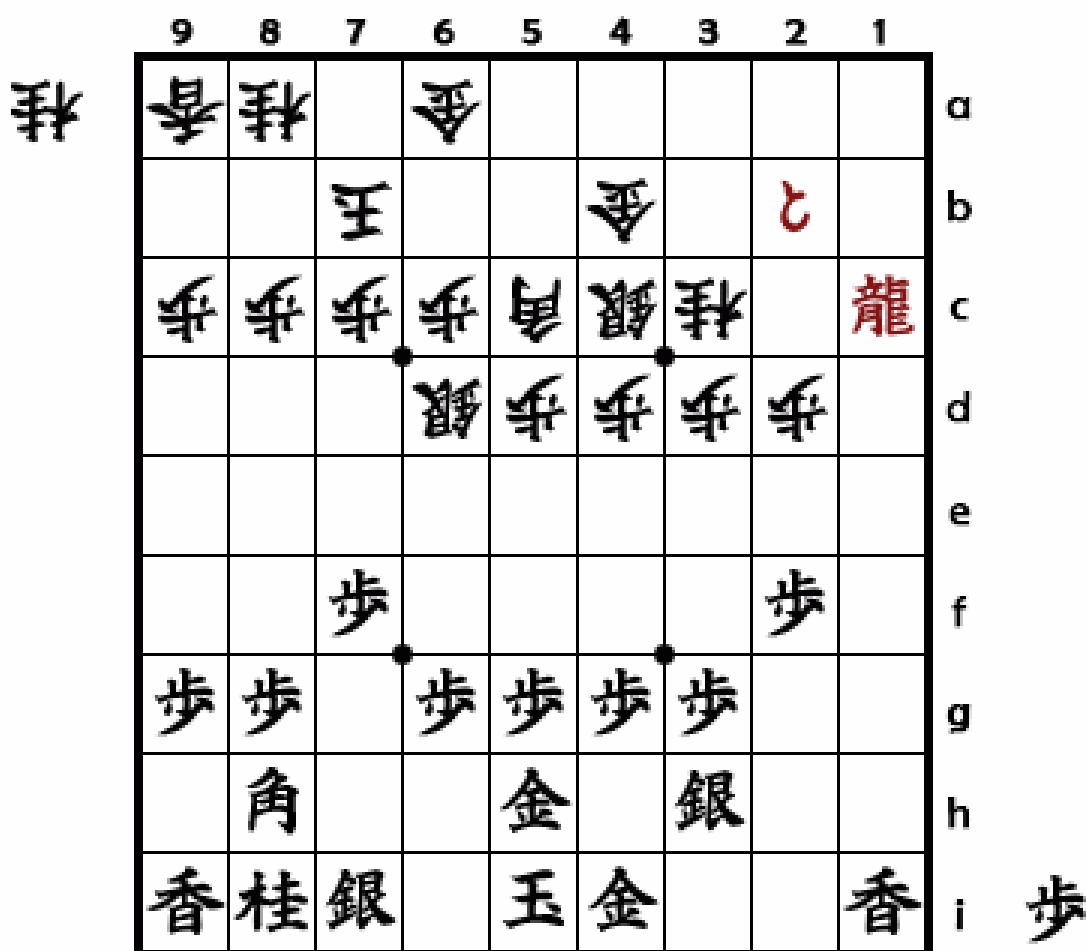
because the tempo saved allows the Bishop to get out of danger)

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
a	香	桂		金		金		桂		
b			王					馬		
c	歩	歩	歩	歩		銀		歩	歩	
d				銀	歩	歩	歩			
e								桂		
f			歩					歩		
g	歩	歩		歩	歩	歩	歩			
h		角			金		銀		飛	
i	香	桂	銀		玉	金			香	歩

Rook and Lance, variation 1, **22** S5c to **25** N2e

**26** P2d; (note that now **26** P5e could be met by **27** R2h! followed by **29** Nx1c+, **30** Nx1c; **31** P\*1d. With **26** G3b instead of **26** P5e **27** R2h is not so great due to **28** P4e exchanging off the target Bishop, but instead **27** P\*1b gives *Sente* the same attack as in our previous variation.) **27** Nx1c+, **28** Bx1c; (**28** Nx1c; **29** P\*1d) **29** P\*1b, **30** B3a; **31** P1a+, **32** N3c; **33** +P2a, (This line is good here because ... B6d is impossible. If *Gote* had left this option open by replacing **22** S5c~**24** S6d [page

152] by other moves, I would advocate the P\*1b version of the Knight attack, as in our first variation.) 34 B5c; 35 R1c+, (usually 1b is a better square to promote on, but here the attack on the pinned Knight is powerful) 36 G4b; 37 +P2b



Rook and Lance, variation 1, 26 P2d to 37 +P2b

and the threat of ♠+P2c~ ♠+P3c is deadly.

Note that in the above variations, *Sente* never got around to moving into his castle by ♠K4h~♠K3i. Still, it's nice to know that *Sente* can do so if *Gote* makes any attempt to attack on his right side with moves like ♞P7e

or  $\triangle S6d \sim \triangle S6e \sim \triangle Sx7f$  (which is usually met by  $\blacktriangle S7h$ ).

## Rook & Lance Handicap Part 2 – Blocking Lines

In Part 1, we looked at how *Sente* should play against ‘standard’ play by *Gote*, meaning that *Gote* simply develops his generals to good squares and castles. This is the way pros usually play this handicap. However, when a strong player really wants to win a game, he is apt to thwart *Sente*’s intended Knight attack even if it means having to make unnatural moves, since the standard *Sente* plan given in part 1 is so powerful. There are three primary plans available to *Gote* to foil the Knight attack. Here we will look at the plan involving an early  $\triangle P2d$  together with  $\triangle G2c$  or  $\triangle S2c$ . We call these variations ‘Blocking Lines’ since *Gote* usually blocks the exchange of the Lance Pawn as  $\blacktriangle R1h$  can be answered by  $\triangle S2c$  or  $\triangle G2c$ . However in our first variation *Gote* defers  $\triangle P2d$  until after  $\blacktriangle R1h$  has been played, gaining time but allowing the Pawn exchange. The true blocking lines are usually well met by a quick Climbing Silver attack, aiming at an exchange of generals.

[157] Variation 2: Delayed Blocking Lines

[161] Variation 3: Silver Blocking Lines

[165] Variation 4: Gold Blocking Lines

## **Variation 2: Delayed Blocking Lines** (allowing the exchange of *Sente's* Lance Pawn)

**1 ...**, **2 P3d**; **3 P7f**, **4 P4d**; **5 P1f**, **6 S3b**; (**6 B3c**; **7 P1e**, **8 S2b**; **9 R1h**, **10 P2d**; **11 P1d**, **12 Px1d**; **13 Rx1d**, **14 P\*1c**; **15 R1h**, **16 S2c**; **17 S3h**, **18 G3b**; **19 P4f**, **20 G5b**; transposes to the main line of this variation.) **7 P1e**, **8 G6a-5b**; **9 R1h**, **10 P2d**; **11 P1d**, **12 Px1d**; **13 Rx1d**, **14 S2c**; **15 R1h**, **16 P\*1c**; (**16 P\*1d** looks better, but then *Sente* attacks by ♠P2f and ♠S3h~♠S2g~♠S1f when the Pawn on 1d is a target.) **17 S3h**, **18 G3b**; **19 P4f**, (Since *Gote* has defended the edge well, *Sente* attacks the center, which is weakened by the absence of the Silver from 4c. The Pawn in hand is also useful for attacking the center.) **20 B3c**; **21 S4g**, **22 G5b-4c**; **23 P3f**, **24 P5d**; **25 N3g**, **26 P1d**; **27 S5f**, **28 S6b**; **29 R4h**, **30 S5c**; **31 P4e**,

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
香	桂			王			桂		a
						金			b
歩	歩	歩	歩	銀	金	角	銀		c
			●	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	d
					歩				e
		歩		銀		歩			f
歩	歩		●	歩	歩		桂	歩	g
	角				飛				h
香	桂	銀	金	王	金			香	i 歩

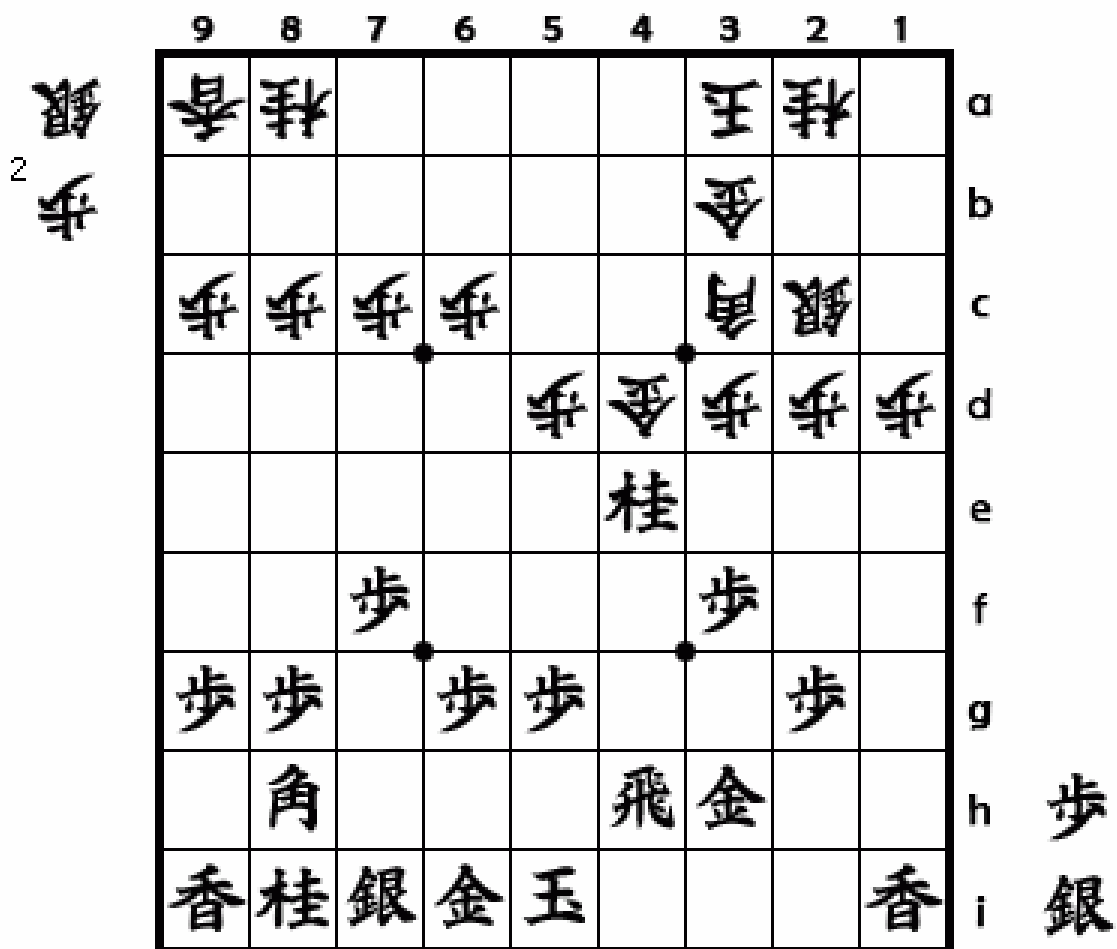
Rook and Lance, variation 2 to 31 P4e

(*Sente* refrains from the natural ♠K6h~♠K7h so that a later ♞Bx8h+ by *Gote* will not be check and may allow *Sente* to capture on 5c before recapturing on 8h.)  
**32** K4a; (*Gote* puts his King where his generals will protect it.) **33** G3h!, (guarding the loose Knight before starting a fight, and also giving the King running room)  
**34** K3a; (**34** Px4e?; **35** Nx4e, **36** Bx8h+; **37** Nx5c=, favors *Sente*.) **35** Px4d, **36** Sx4d; (**36** Bx4d; **37** Bx4d, **38** Sx4d; **39** Rx4d, **40** Gx4d; **41** B\*5c, wins material)  
**37** S4e, **38** Sx4e; (**38** P5e; **39** Sx4d, **40** Gx4d; **41** N4e, is strong) **39** P\*4d!,

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
銀 步	香	桂					玉	桂		a
							金			b
	步	步	步	步		金	角	銀		c
				步	步	步	步	步	步	d
						銀				e
		步					步			f
	步	步		步	步		桂	步		g
		角				飛	金			h
	香	桂	銀	金	玉				香	i 步

Rook and Lance, variation 2, 32 K4a to 39 P\*4d!

40 Gx4d; 41 Nx4e.



Rook and Lance, variation 2, 40 Gx4d to 41 Nx4e

*Sente* wins Gold for Knight. Analysis from move 21 on by Masaki Izumi, (Pro 7-dan).



### Variation 3: Silver Blocking Lines (featuring ... P2d and ... G2c)

**1 ...**, **2 P3d**; **3 P7f**, **4 P4d**; (**4 N3c**; **5 P2f**, **6 P2d**; **7 P1f**, **8 S3b**; **9 P1e**, **10 S2c**; is another version of the Silver Blocking Line. *Sente* plans ♠S3h~♠S2g♠S3f~♠N1g~♠G4h~♠P2e and a Knight sac on 1c. This plan works well against any blocking line when *Gote* plays **4 N3c**.) **5 P1f**, **6 S3b**; **7 P1e**, **8 P2d**; **9 P2f**, **10 B3c**; (**10 S2c**; is less accurate as *Sente* can either play as in this variation or choose **11 P2e**, **12 Px2e**; **13 Rx2e**, **14 P\*2d**; **15 R4e!!**, **16 G3b**; **17 Rx4d!!**, when *Sente* will get a promoted Bishop and some Pawns for the Rook.) **11 S3h**, **12 S2c**; **13 S2g**, (*Sente* could also attack the fourth file as in the previous variation, but without a Pawn in hand his attack might be less effective here.) **14 G3b**; **15 S3f**, **16 K6b**; **17 K6h**, (Another plan here is a quick attack by **17 G4h**, **18 K7b**; **19 N1g**, but **20 P4e!**, aiming to exchange the Bishop which is the intended target of the Knight attack, is a bit messy.) **18 K7b**; **19 K7h**, **20 S6b**; **21 P9f**, (prepares a later B9g) **22 P9d**; **23 G4i-5h**, **24 P5d**; **25 P2e**, (*Sente* strikes before *Gote* can play S5c, which would spoil the B9g-3a+ plan used here.) **26 Px2e**; **27 P1d!**,

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
歩	香	桂		金				桂		a
			王	銀			金			b
	歩	歩	歩				角	銀	歩	c
歩			●		歩	歩	歩		歩	d
								歩		e
歩		歩					銀			f
	歩		●	歩	歩	歩	歩			g
	角	王		金				飛		h
	香	桂	銀	金				桂	香	i

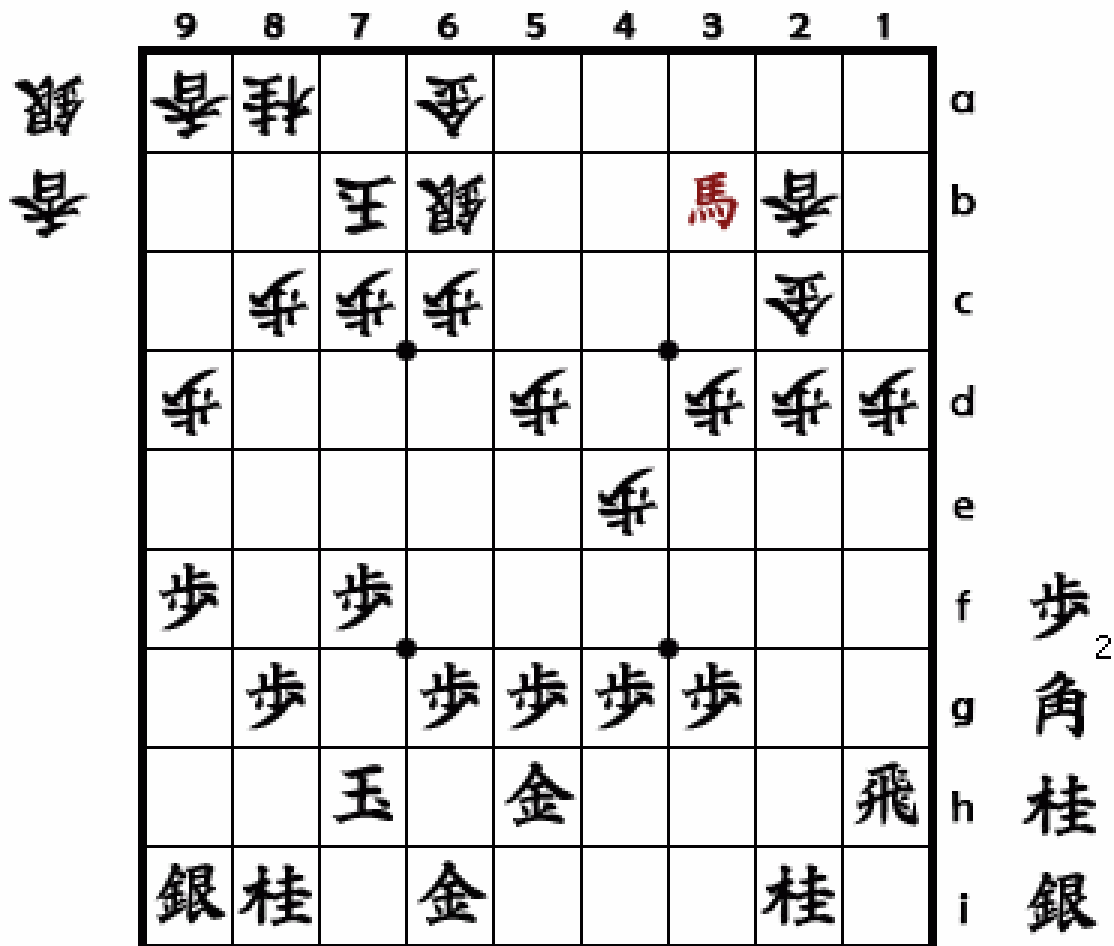
Rook and Lance, variation 3, to 27 P1d!!

(this sets up an exchange of generals) **28** Px1d; **29** Sx2e, **30** P\*2d; **31** Sx1d, **32** Sx1d; **33** Lx1d, **34** S\*2c; (**34** P\*1c; **35** Lx1c+, **36** Nx1c; **37** P\*1d, **38** L\*1a; **39** R1h, **40** N2e; **41** P1c+, and *Sente* will soon win the Knight and/or the Lance.) **35** P\*1c, (not **35** R1h?, **36** Sx1d!) **36** P\*1a; (**36** Sx1d; **37** P1b+, and after taking the Knight, *Sente*'s promoted Pawn and *Gote*'s offside Silver give *Sente* a nice advantage.) **37** R1h, **38** G2b; (probably *Gote* should just allow the promotion on 1b, perhaps by **38** P4e.) **39** B9g!,

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
香	桂		金				桂	香	a
		玉	銀				金		b
	歩	歩	歩			角	銀	歩	c
歩				歩	歩	歩	歩	香	d
									e
歩		歩							f
角	歩		歩	歩	歩	歩			g
		玉		金				飛	h 歩
香	桂	銀	金				桂		i 銀

Rook and Lance, variation 3, 28 Px1d to 39 B9g!

40 P4e; 41 B3a+, 42 G3b; 43 +Bx2a, 44 Bx9i+; 45 S8h,  
 46 +B9h; 47 P1b+, 48 Px1b; 49 Lx1b+, 50 P\*1d;  
 51 +L2b, 52 G3c; 53 +Lx2c, 54 Gx2c; 55 +B3b,  
 56 L\*2b; 57 S\*9i, 58 +Bx9i; 59 Sx9i.



Rook and Lance, variation 3, 40 P4e to 59 Sx9i

and *Sente* has a decisive material advantage.

Analysis by Kazuharu Shoshi, (Pro 6-*dan*). He considers this to be *Gote's* best blocking line, since the Gold blocking line allows *Sente* to win Gold for Silver by the same plan as here, as shown below. I might even call this the 'best line' of all; the lines given in the notes to moves 34, 35, 36, and 37 don't seem quite as bad for *Gote* as the main lines of the Knight attack in Part I, since at least *Sente* doesn't have a Dragon yet.

## **Variation 4: Gold Blocking Lines** (featuring ... P2d and ... G2c).

**1** ..., **2** P3d; **3** P7f, **4** P4d; **5** P1f, **6** G3b; **7** P1e, **8** P2d; **9** P2f, (**9** R1h? is pointless after **10** G2c) **10** G2c; (The main advantage of the Gold blocking line is that a Knight attack on 1c is less effective against a Gold on 2c than against a Silver there.) **11** S3h, (*Sente* aims for a Climbing Silver attack.) **12** G5b; **13** S2g, **14** S3b; (**14** G4c; **15** S3f, **16** N3c; **17** N1g, **18** S3b; **19** G6h, **20** P5d; **21** G4h, **22** K6a; **23** P4f, **24** K7b; **25** P2e, **26** Px2e; **27** Nx2e, **28** P\*2d; **29** Nx1c+, leads to an exchange of Knight and Lance for a Gold, which is a slight loss for *Sente*, but afterwards *Sente* attacks by R1h and P4e, which is hard to meet.) **15** S3f, **16** B3c; (**16** S3c; **17** P2e, **18** Px2e; **19** P1d!, leads to an exchange of Silver for Gold, with *Gote's* Bishop remaining as a target. The text move has the point that *Gote* can initiate a Bishop exchange when appropriate.) **17** P4f, **18** K6a; **19** K6h, **20** K7b; **21** G4i-5h, **22** P9d; **23** P9f, **24** S6b; **25** K7h, **26** P5d; **27** G6i-6h, **28** S5c; **29** P2e, **30** Px2e; **31** P1d!,

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
歩	香	桂						桂		a
		玉		金		銀				b
	歩	歩	歩	銀		角	金	歩		c
歩			●	歩	歩	歩			歩	d
								飛		e
歩		歩				歩	銀			f
	歩		●	歩	歩		歩			g
	角	玉	金	金				飛		h
	香	桂	銀					桂	香	i

Rook and Lance, variation 4, to 31 P1d!

32 Px1d; 33 Sx2e, 34 P\*2d; 35 Sx1d, 36 Gx1d;  
 37 Lx1d, 38 S2c; (38 S\*2c; 39 P\*2b!, 40 Bx2b;  
 41 G\*1b, 42 B3c; 43 P\*2b, 44 P\*1a; 45 Gx2a, 46 Sx1d;  
 47 G3a, 48 S12c; 49 P2a+, 50 L\*1d; [to stop 51 N\*1e]  
 51 N\*4e!, 52 Px4e; 53 +P2b, winning material)  
 39 P\*2b,

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
銀	香	桂						桂		a
步			玉	金				步		b
	步	步	步	銀		角	銀			c
	步			步	步	步	步	香		d
										e
	步		步			步				f
		步		步	步		步			g
		角	玉	金	金			飛		h 步
	香	桂	銀					桂		i 金

Rook and Lance, variation 4, 32 Px1d to 39 P\*2b

40 Bx2b; 41 G\*1b, 42 B3c; 43 L1c+, 44 Sx1b;  
 45 +Lx1b, 46 P\*1f; 47 +Lx2a, 48 P1g+; 49 Nx1g,  
 50 P\*1f; 51 N2e,

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
金	香	桂						士		a
銀			玉	金						b
		歩	歩	銀		角				c
	歩			歩	歩	歩	歩			d
								桂		e
	歩		歩			歩			歩	f
		歩		歩	歩		歩			g
		角	玉	金	金			飛		h
	香	桂	銀							i

歩<sub>2</sub>  
桂  
銀

Rook and Lance, variation 4, 40 Bx2b to 51 N2e

52 B5a; (52 P1g+; 53 Nx3c+, 54 +Px2h; 55 S\*4c, 56 G6b; 57 N\*6e, 58 S6d; 59 Bx4d, with a decisive attack) 53 N1c+, 54 P1g+; 55 R4h, 56 P5e; 57 P4e, 58 G\*5d; 59 Px4d, 60 Sx4d; 61 +L3a, 62 P\*4e; 63 +L3b, 64 S5c; 65 +N2c, 66 P7d; 67 P\*4c, 68 B8d; 69 +N3c, 70 P5f; 71 P4b+, with advantage.



	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
銀	香	桂								a
		玉		金	と	金				b
	歩		歩	銀		金				c
	歩	角	歩	金		歩	歩			d
					歩					e
	歩	歩		歩						f
	歩		歩	歩		歩		歩	と	g
	角	玉	金	金	飛					h
	香	桂	銀							i
										歩 <sub>2</sub> 桂 銀

Rook and Lance, variation 4, 52 B5a to 71 P4b+

This is analysis by the late Motoji Hanamura (9-dan), considered the greatest handicap player of all time. In view of the complexity of this variation, it seems to be a decent choice for *Gote* at this handicap.

## Rook & Lance Handicap Part 3 – Other Lines.

*Gote* has two other defensive schemes, not involving ... P2d. *Gote* can defend the edge by an early ... S3c, rather than the usual S4c, to meet N2e by ... S2d to defend the edge better than in the standard lines. This generally leaves *Gote* with little offensive potential, so *Sente* should castle left, still planning the Knight attack. Alternatively, *Gote* can induce an early Bishop exchange. Since the Bishop is often a target for *Sente's* attack, this has some appeal, but the downside is that the absence of Rook and Lance leaves many drop squares for *Sente's* Bishop, which must be guarded by *Gote's* generals. This is apt to leave him with nothing to do but move aimlessly while *Sente* builds up his position calmly. *Sente* normally sets up the 'Incomplete Fortress', an ideal castle when Bishops are exchanged early.

[171] Variation 5: Silver on 3c

[175] Variation 6: 'Trident' line

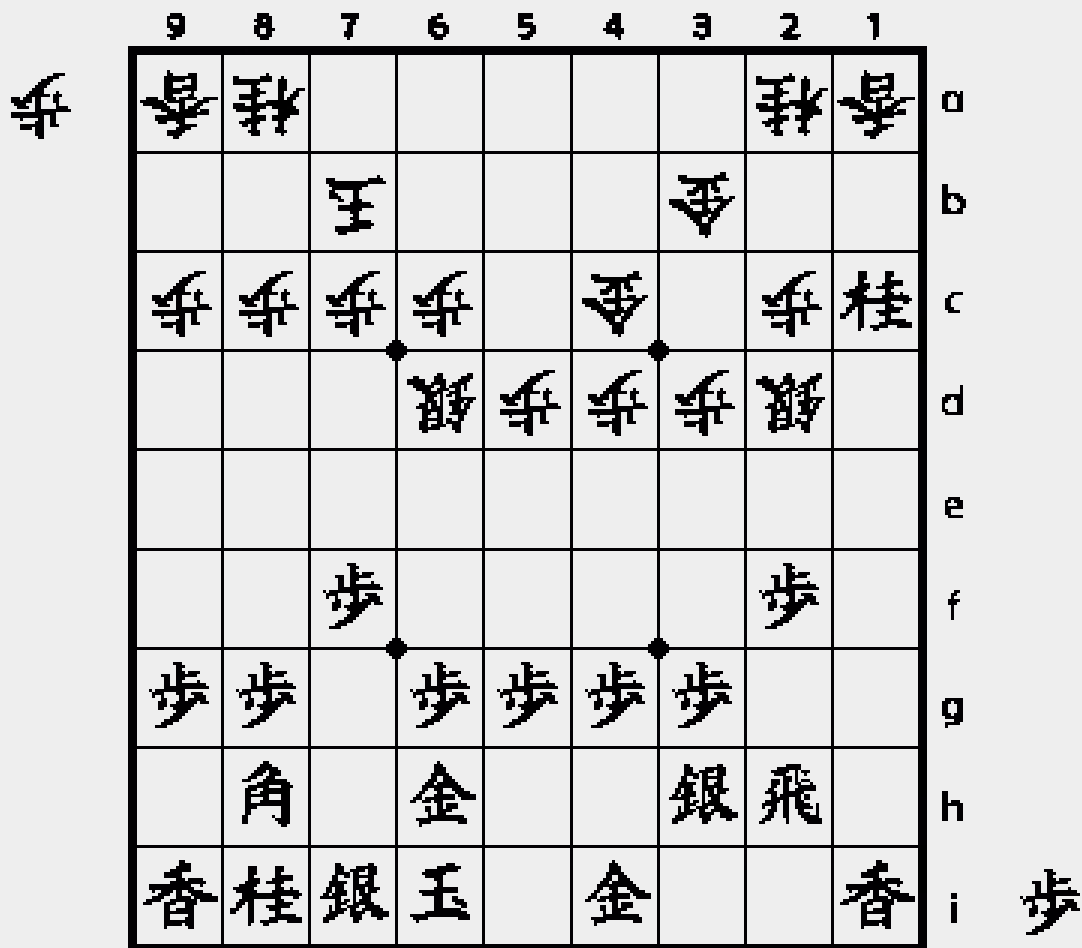
## Variation 5: Silver on 3c

1 ..., 2 P3d; 3 P7f, 4 P4d; 5 P1f, 6 G3b; 7 P1e, 8 S4b;  
 (8 G3c is occasionally seen, to answer 9 R1h by G2d.  
 Instead of R1h, *Sente* can play as in Variation 2 above,  
 plus castling and P2f, aiming for a timely N2e if the  
 Gold stays on 3c or P4e if it retreats.) 9 R1h, 10 S3c;  
 (10 G5b, 11 P1d; 12 Px1d, 13 Rx1d, 14 P\*1c; 15 Rx3d,  
 is a questionable gambit by *Gote*) 11 P1d, 12 Px1d;  
 13 Rx1d, 14 P\*1c; 15 R1h, 16 G5b; 17 S3h, 18 G5b-4c;  
 19 P2f, 20 P3e;

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
a	香	桂	銀		玉			桂		
b							金	角		
c	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	金	銀	歩	歩	歩
d						歩				
e							歩			
f			歩					歩		
g	歩	歩		歩	歩	歩	歩			
h		角					銀		飛	
i	香	桂	銀	金	玉	金		桂	香	歩

Rook and Lance, variation 5, to 20 P3e

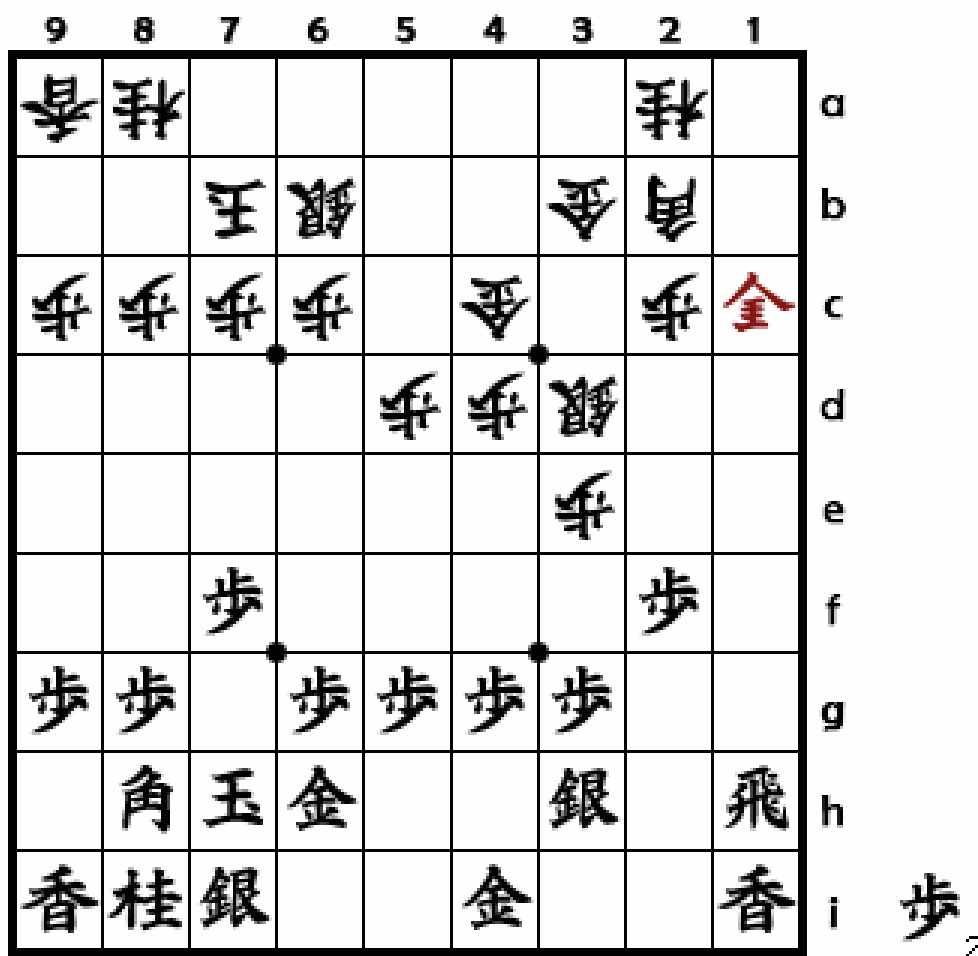
(20 K6b; 21 G6h, 22 K7b; 23 K6i, 24 S6b; 25 N1g,  
 26 P5d; 27 N2e; 28 S2d; 29 R2h, 30 S5c; 31 P\*1b,  
 32 S6d; 33 P1a+, 34 Bx1a; 35 Nx1c=,



Rook and Lance, variation 5, side line, 20 K6b to  
 35 Nx1c=

36 Nx1c; 37 P2e, wins material, and *Gote* has no  
 castle.)

21 N1g, (*Sente* strikes before *Gote* can set up the strong defense ... S3d, ... P2d, and ... N3c.) 22 S3d; (22 P2d; 23 R2h, 24 G3d; 25 K6h, 26 K6b; 27 K7h, planning S2g-1f and P2e) 23 N2e, 24 K6b; 25 G6h, 26 K7b; 27 K6i. (*Sente* castles left in these lines as *Gote* has most of his army on the other wing.) 28 P5d; 29 K7h, 30 S6b; 31 Nx1c+,



Rook and Lance, variation 5, 21 N1g to 31 Nx1c+

32 Bx1c; 33 P\*1b, 34 B2d; 35 P1a+, 36 N3c; 37 R1b+, 38 G34b; 39 P2e!, and *Gote* must lose something.

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
桂	香	桂							と	a
		玉	銀		金				龍	b
	歩	歩	歩		金	桂	歩			c
				歩	歩	銀	角			d
						歩	歩			e
		歩								f
	歩	歩		歩	歩	歩	歩			g
	角	玉	金			銀				h
	香	桂	銀			金			香	i 歩

Rook and Lance, variation 5, 32 Bx1c to 39 P2e!

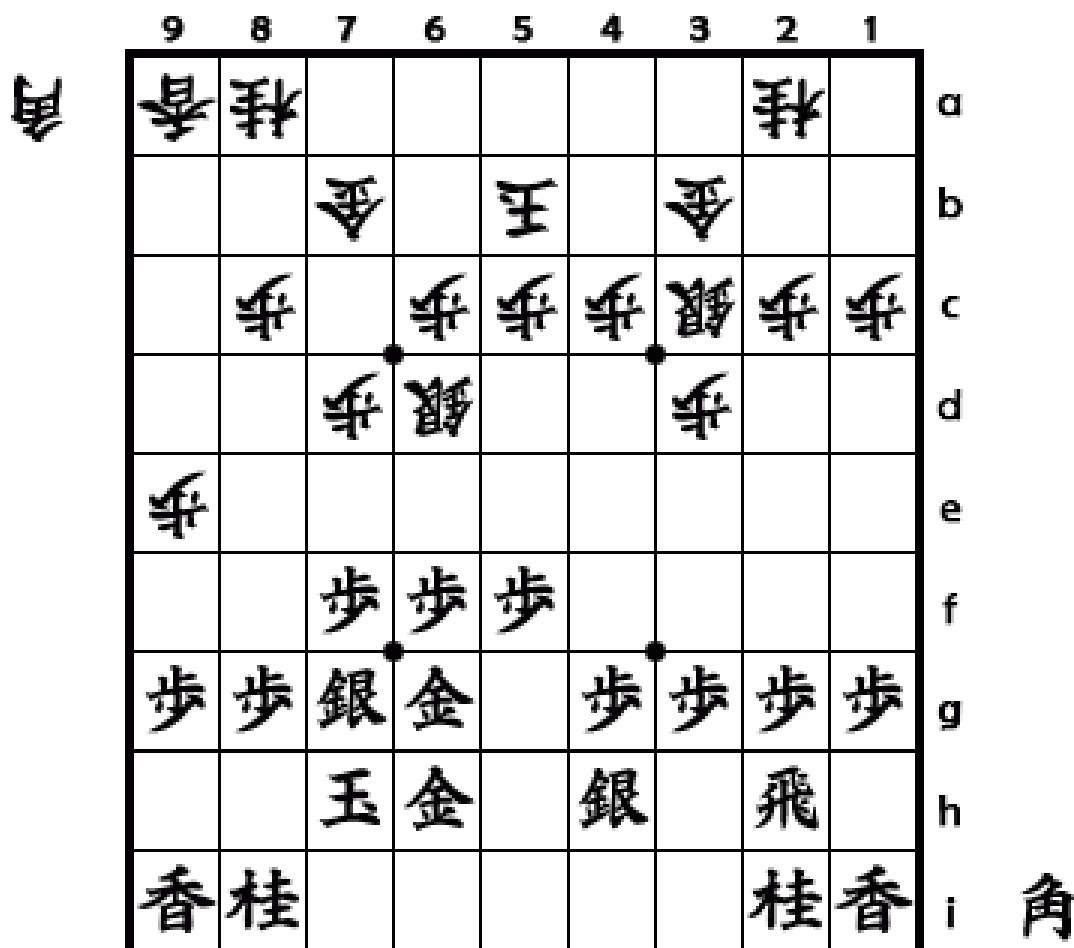
## Variation 6: 'Trident' line

1 ..., 2 P3d; 3 P7f, 4 G3b; (If *Gote* exchanges Bishops himself he will simply be one tempo behind this line. If 4 B4d; 5 Bx4d, 6 Px4d; 7 B\*4c, [or *Sente* can play as in the 'Trident' line] 8 N3c; 9 Bx3d+, 10 N4e; 11 G4h!, 12 B\*5e; 13 L9h, 14 B9i+; 15 S7h, 16 +Bx9h; 17 P4f, with advantage.) 5 Bx2b+, (If *Sente* waits, *Gote* may close the diagonal by ... P4d at a time when *Sente* cannot transpose back to our main lines.) 6 Sx2b; 7 S8h, 8 G7b; 9 S7g, 10 S6b; 11 G4i-5h, 12 P7d; 13 P6f, 14 S7c; 15 G6g, 16 K5b;

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
角	香	桂						桂		a
			金		王		金	銀		b
	歩	歩	銀	歩	歩	歩		歩	歩	c
			歩				歩			d
										e
			歩	歩						f
	歩	歩	銀	金	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	g
								飛		h
	香	桂		金	王		銀	桂	香	i 角

Rook and Lance, variation 6, to 16 K5b

(If *Gote* plays ... S3c next, his shape resembles a ‘trident’ or pitchfork, each pair of generals being one prong while the King is the handle.) 17 K6h, 18 S6d; (18 S8d; 19 S8f, prevents *Gote* from getting a Pawn in hand by 20 P7e) 19 K7h, 20 P9d; 21 P5f, (*Sente* refrains from answering on the edge, because with *Gote*’s King in the center, *Sente* has no interest in an edge attack on the ninth file. A *Sente* Pawn on 9f might give *Gote* more chances to start such an attack.) 22 P9e; 23 G6i-6h, 24 S3c; 25 S4h,

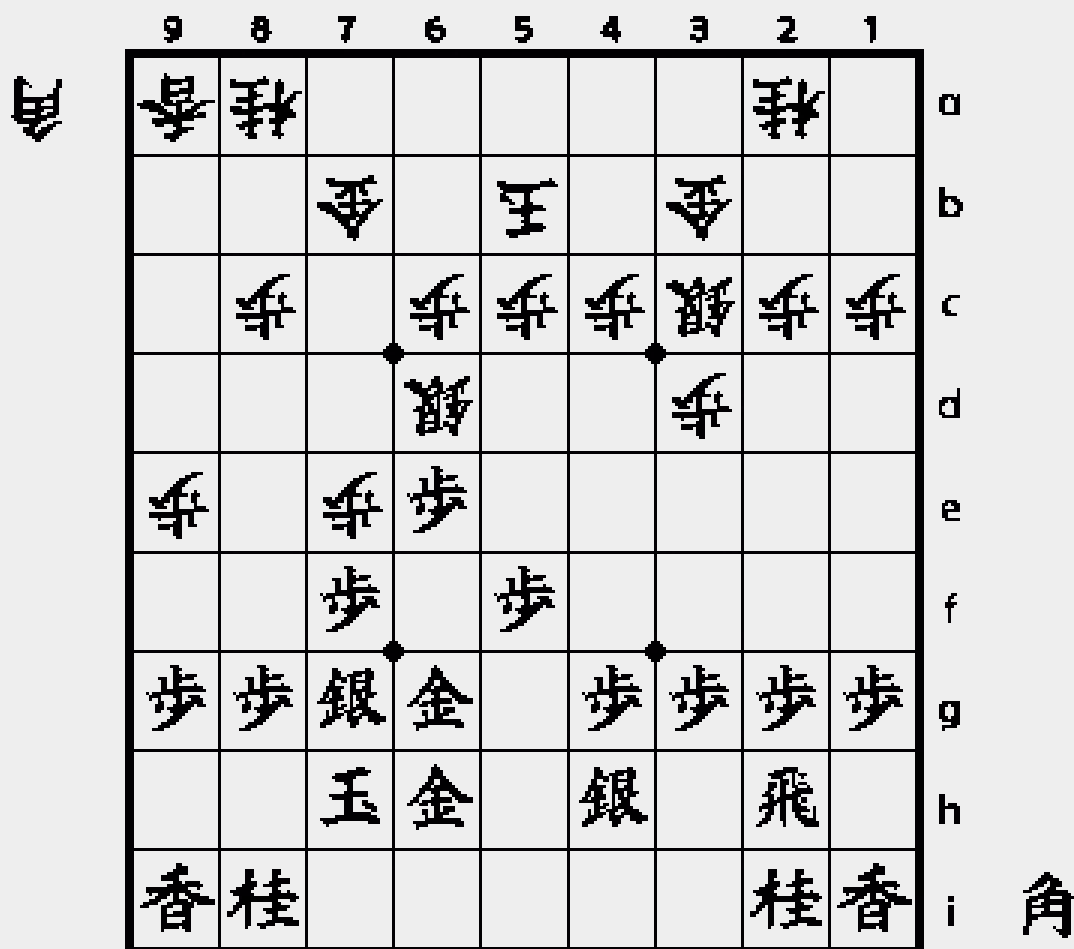


Rook and Lance, variation 6, 17 K6h to 25 S4h



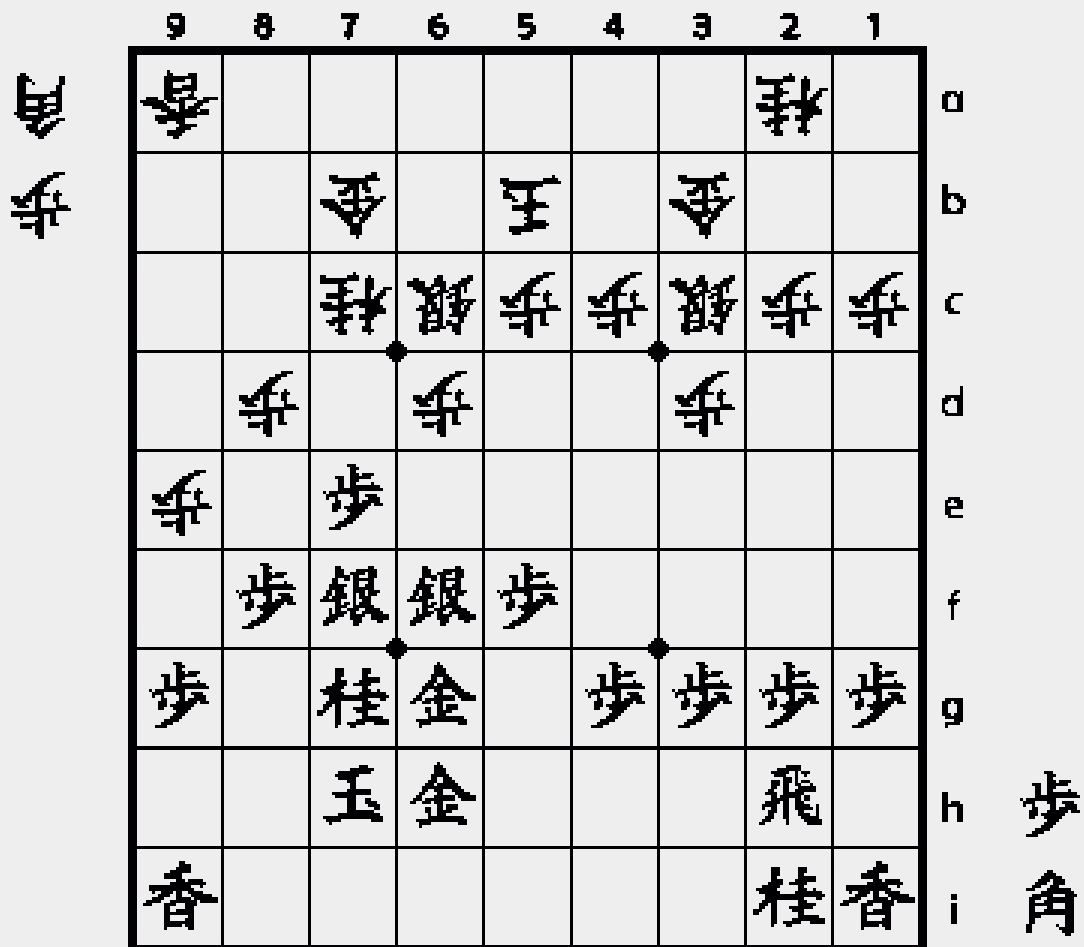
(*Sente's* castle is known as the 'Incomplete Fortress' and is considered to be a very good choice when Bishops have been exchanged. While the normal 'Fortress' castle, with the King and second-rank Gold shifted one square to the left, is slightly more secure, the 'Incomplete' version defends more squares against Bishop drops. Strategy for both sides now has great similarities to the Bishop exchange lines in even games.) **26** N7c;

(26 P7e; 27 P6e,



Rook and Lance, variation 6, Side line 26 P7e to 27 P6e

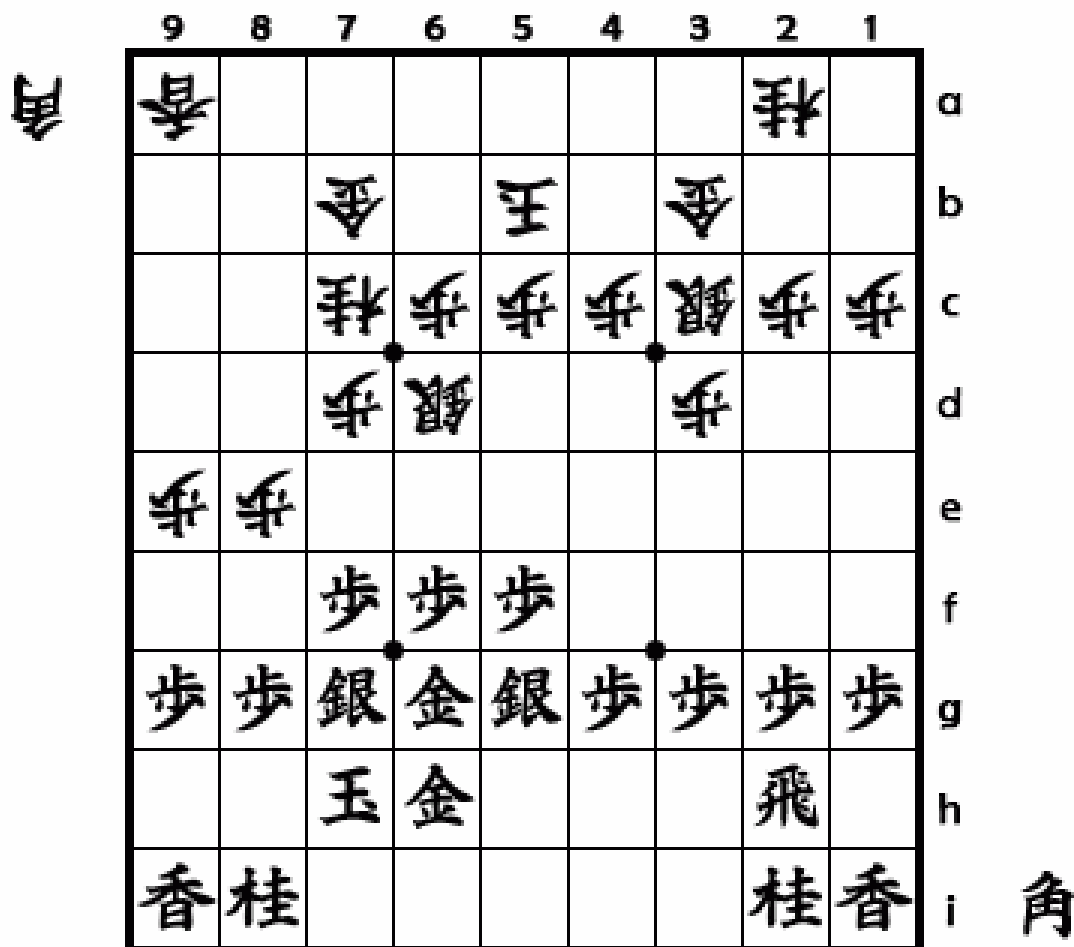
28 Sx6e; [28 Px7f; 29 Sx7f, 30 S7c; 31 P\*7e, helps Sente] 29 Px7e, 30 S5d; [else 31 P5e, and P\*6f] 31 S7f, 32 P6d; 33 N7g, 34 S6c; 35 S5g, 36 N7c; 37 S6f, 38 P8d; 39 P8f.



Rook and Lance, variation 6, Side line 28 Sx6e to 39 P8f

*Gote* can do nothing, while *Sente* can build up by ▲P1f~▲P1e~▲P5e~▲R5h, and finally ▲P\*6e. Note that *Sente* refrains from advancing ▲P2f so that his Rook can move without allowing □B\*2g.)

27 S8f, (stops the intended P7e). 28 P8d; 29 S5g,  
30 P8e; 31 S7g,



Rook and Lance, variation 6, 26 N7c to 31 S7g

(*Sente* doesn't mind the loss of two moves, as *Gote* can no longer play  $\triangle N8e$  and hence cannot exchange Pawns on 7e due to  $P^*7d$ . This strategy is often seen in even games as well.) 32 P4d; 33 P2f, 34 P3e, (if *Gote* just makes passing moves, *Sente* could exchange off his Rook's Pawn, advance  $\blacktriangle P1f \sim \blacktriangle P1e$ , and answer  $\triangle G2b$  by  $\blacktriangle N1g \sim \blacktriangle N2e \sim \blacktriangle Nx1c+$ ) 35 P2e, 36 P5d; 37 P1f, 38 S5c; 39 S4f, 40 S3d; 41 P2d,

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
角	香							桂		a
			金		王		金			b
			桂	歩	銀			歩	歩	c
			歩		歩	歩	銀	歩		d
	歩	歩					歩			e
			歩	歩	歩	銀			歩	f
	歩	歩	銀	金		歩	歩			g
			玉	金				飛		h
	香	桂						桂	香	i 角

Rook and Lance, variation 6,  
32 P4d to 41 P2d

42 Px2d; 43 B\*1b,

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
馬	香							桂		a
歩			金		王		金		角	b
			桂	歩	銀				歩	c
			歩		歩	歩	銀	歩		d
	歩	歩					歩			e
			歩	歩	歩	銀			歩	f
	歩	歩	銀	金		歩	歩			g
			玉	金				飛		h
	香	桂						桂	香	i

Rook and Lance, variation 6,  
42 Px2d to 43 B\*1b

winning the Knight.

## Lessons from Rook and Lance handicap:

1. Against 'standard' play by *Gote* (Silver on 4c), exchange off the Lance Pawn with the aide of the Rook, make a right-side Mino castle with the King remaining at home, play ♠P2f, and plan a Knight attack by ♠N1g~♠N2e. If *Gote's* left Gold goes to 3b, dangle a Pawn on 1b, promote it, and play ♠Nx1c=, thus achieving the promotion of your Rook. If *Gote's* left Gold is not on 3b, omit ♠P\*1b and play ♠R2h instead, aiming to sacrifice the Knight on 1c. If your King feels threatened run into the castle. Aim to attack with promoted Pawn, Lance, or Knight together with your Dragon. If *Gote's* Silver is on 3c instead of 4c, the Knight attack still works, but you should castle left instead of making a right-side Mino.
2. If *Gote* plays ♠P2d after the Pawn exchange on the Lance file and/or develops his left Silver to the second file, switch plans to a fourth file Rook attack to exploit the weakened center and the Pawn in hand.
3. If *Gote* plays ♠P2d before the Pawn exchange, play ♠P2f and a quick ♠S3h~♠S2g~♠S3f. If *Gote* puts his Knight on 3c attack quickly by

4. ♠G4h~♠N1g, and ♠P2e. If *Gote* defends by ♞B3c instead of ♞N3c, castle left and plan to exchange generals by ♠P2e followed by ♠P1d and ♠S3f~♠Sx2e~♠Sx1d.
5. If you can exchange Bishops early, do so and forget about attack until you have built an ideal formation based on the 'Incomplete Fortress' (♠K7h, ♠S7g, Golds on 6h and 6g) with the other Silver on 5g. Don't allow *Gote* to exchange Pawns on 7e without paying a price (answer ♞P7e by ♠P6e if plausible). Be very patient – *Gote* is almost immobilized by fear of Bishop drops if he does anything. Attack in the center if you get a Vanguard Pawn in that area; otherwise attack on files 1 and 2. Be alert for a good Bishop drop.



## Rook Handicap.

[186] Subway Rook

[188] Kurokawa vs. Makoto

[195] Cheymol vs. Habu

[200] Cheymol vs. Takano

[203] Lessons from the Subway Rook

[204] G5c Defense

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂	香	a
							角		b
歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	c
			●			●			d
									e
									f
歩	歩	歩	●	歩	歩	●	歩	歩	g
	角						飛		h
香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂	香	i

Rook handicap start position

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
香	桂	銀	金	玉			桂	香	a
						金	角		b
歩	歩	歩	歩		銀		歩	歩	c
				歩	歩	歩			d
									e
		歩		銀	歩				f
歩	歩		歩	歩		歩	歩	歩	g
	角						飛		h
香	桂	銀	金	玉	金		桂	香	i

Rook handicap to 12 P5d<sup>11</sup>

### Subway Rook

The system beginning with 13 P4e (instead of the standard 13 R4h, usually met by 14 N3c) is a very old one, known as ‘quick attack’ (but rather misnamed, as it usually leads to a slow game!), which is sometimes recommended by pros. However the specific plan used here, involving ♠R4h~♠R4i~♠R8i, is known as the ‘Subway Rook’ as the Rook’s movement suggests that it took an underground train. I don’t know who invented it, but it was played in Tokyo on July 18, 1972, by

<sup>11</sup>Editor’s note: Opening moves are not given in LK’s original text, but are assumed to be as on page 188: 1 ..., 2 P3d; 3 P7f, 4 P4d; 5 P4f, 6 G3b; 7 S4h, 8 S4b; 9 S4g, 10 S4c; 11 S5f, 12 P5d;

Student Meijin Kurokawa (amateur) against Nakahara Makoto Meijin, Kurokawa winning fairly easily. The game was nearly identical to Eric's game vs. Habu up to move 45 (see page 195); the only differences in the position were that the 9th file Pawns were not pushed, the moves ♖P1e and ♜P8f were not played, and *Gote* had chosen ♖P2d instead of ♖P1d. *Sente* played ♜P6f (actually he played it some moves earlier), so as to meet ♖P5e by ♜S6g, which looks better than having to retreat to 4g as Eric did. *Sente* then won with an attack on the 8th file, similar to Eric's win.

This game was shown by Horiguchi Koji (6-*dan*) to George Hodges, who had planned to run it in his magazine which unfortunately stopped publication. The pro had told George that it was a 'sure win' system for *Sente*. He sent me the game two years ago, and I was impressed by the idea. I never got to use it, as in recent years I always play pros at Bishop, but I showed the idea to Marc Theeuwen who was visiting D.C. Although Marc had a terrible record of countless losses to pros at Rook prior to this, he immediately won games from pros Ishikawa Akio and Kondo Masakazu with this system. Ishikawa defended as in the Nakahara game but kept his right Gold at 6a to slide to 7a when needed for defense, while Kondo chose the setup ♖K5b and ♖G7b (which I think is tougher for *Sente* than the ♖K7b setup), but still the system worked fine for Marc. Marc later explained it to Eric for use against Takano

Hideyuki (4-*dan*) and now against Habu Yoshiharu 4 Crowns. So far as I know, the only failure of the system was a loss by George Fernandez against Yonenaga Kunio (9-*dan*), but I believe that George did not study the system enough and did not play it correctly.

Does all this mean that Rook handicap is ‘busted’ or solved? Not quite. It seems to me that once the Bishops are exchanged, the game is indeed pretty difficult for *Gote*. One possible solution: meet **13** P4e by G5b, avoiding the Bishop trade. Pros rarely do this, because after **15** R4h they have been ‘tricked’ into playing a defense (G5b) that was not their intended defense to **13** R4h (namely **14** N3c). Nevertheless, the G5b defense is quite playable and theory exists on it. Still, *Sente* can be satisfied that he has avoided the ‘best’ defense (**14** N3c), which experience shows is quite difficult to defeat.

Here is the 1972 Student Meijin Kurokawa (amateur) against Nakahara Makoto Meijin game, with comments by me based partly on comments by Horiguchi Koji (6-*dan*):

**1** ..., **2** P3d; **3** P7f, **4** P4d; (**4** G3b is another line, but since it also usually leads to a Bishop exchange like our main line, I won’t discuss it further) **5** P4f, **6** G4a-3b; **7** S4h, **8** S4b; **9** S4g, **10** S4c; (**10** S3c or **10** G5b; **11** S5f, **12** S3c; avoids the Bishop exchange, but is rarely

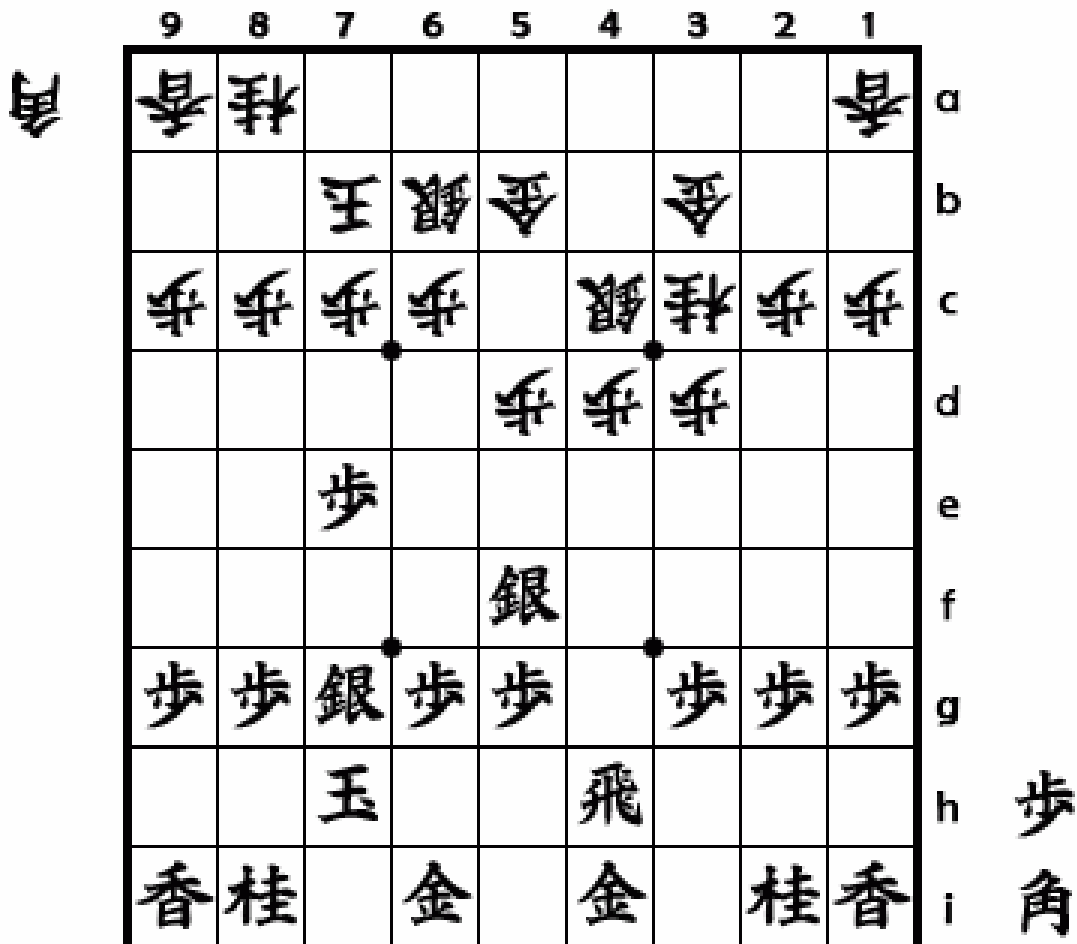
played as the Bishop is blocked and the Silver is a target for a later N3g-2e) **11** S5f, **12** P5d; (not **12** N3c? because of **13** S5e) **13** P4e,

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1		
香	桂	銀	金	玉			桂	香	a	
						金	角		b	
歩	歩	歩	歩		銀		歩	歩	c	
			●	歩	歩	歩			d	
					歩				e	
		歩		銀					f	
歩	歩		●	歩	歩		歩	歩	歩	g
	角						飛		h	
香	桂	銀	金	玉	金		桂	香	i	

### Subway Rook to 13 P4e

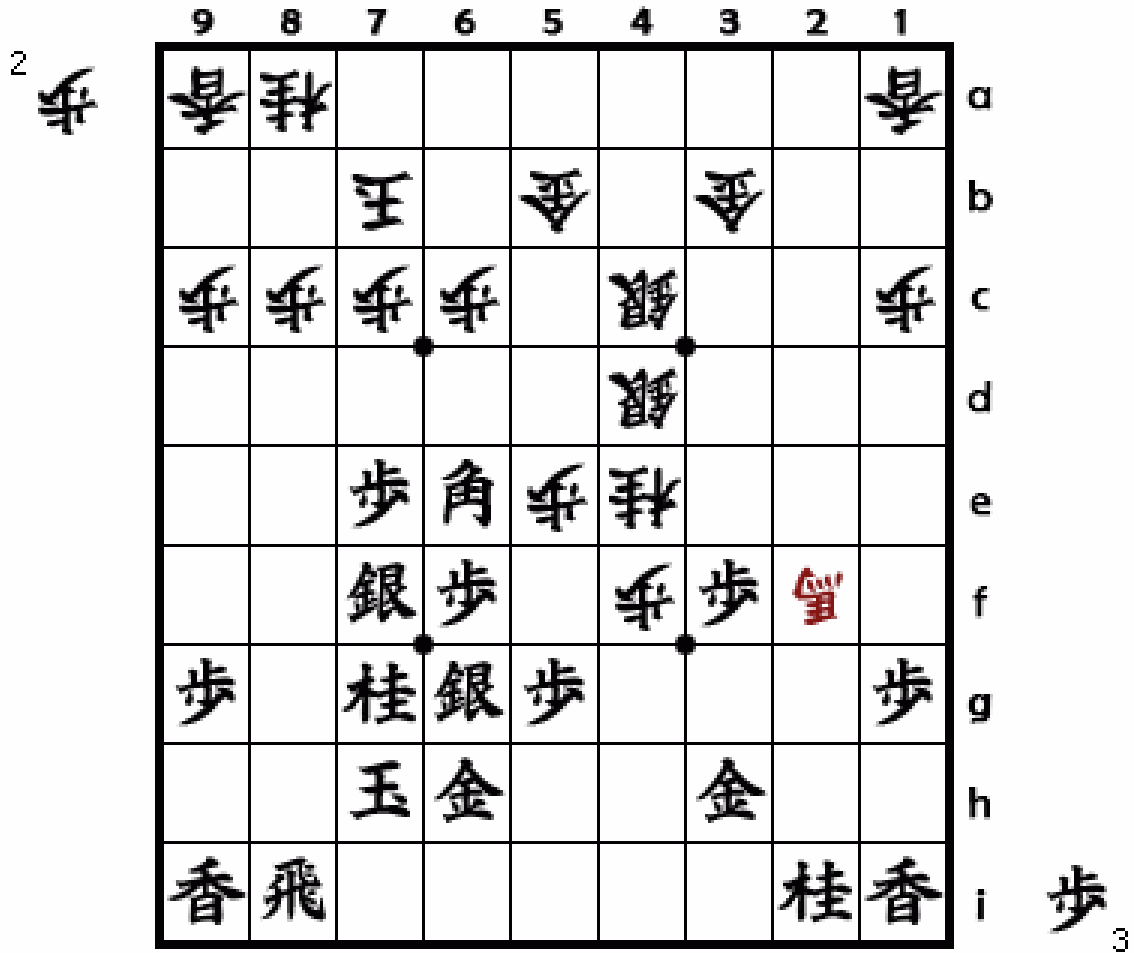
(The so-called but misnamed ‘Quick Attack’. Usual is **13** R4h, **14** N3c; but it is quite difficult for *Sente* to attack successfully in some of the ensuing variations) **14** Px4e; (Probably better is **14** G5b; in view of this game, but if so after **15** R4h *Sente* has ‘forced’ *Gote* to play the second-best defense to **14** R4h) **15** Bx2b+, **16** Gx2b; **17** Sx4e, **18** P\*4d; **19** S5f, **20** N3c; (This allows **21** B\*3a and promoting the Bishop, but prevents

*Sente* from exchanging the 2 Pawn, as **21** P2f can be met by P2d. Books recommend that *Sente* promote the Bishop or exchange the 2 Pawn, based on *Gote's* tenth move, but for the system recommended here *Sente* does neither, so *Gote's* tenth move makes no difference) **21** R4h, (keeping the Bishop in hand is the key to this system; the threat of Bishop drops severely inhibits *Gote's* freedom of action) **22** G3b; **23** S7h, **24** K6b; **25** K6h, **26** G5b; **27** S7g, **28** K7b; **29** K7h, **30** S6b; **31** P7e!,



Subway Rook, **14** Px4e to **31** P7e!

(This Vanguard Pawn is the key to this system) **32** S5c; **33** P6f, (to give the 5f Silver a retreat which will make a nice castle) **34** P3e; **35** G3h!, (another key move; the Gold defends the right flank perfectly) **36** P4e; **37** G6h, **38** P2d; **39** S7f, **40** S5c-4d; **41** N7g, **42** P5e; **43** S5f-6g, **44** P3f; (To promote the Bishop and get some play. Otherwise *Sente* will simply play ♠R4i, ♠P8f~♠P8e, and ♠R8i with a one-sided game. The reason this system scores so well for *Sente* is that it is so difficult to suggest good moves for *Gote*) **45** Px3f, **46** B\*5i; **47** R4i, **48** B1e+; **49** P8f, **50** P2e; **51** P8e, **52** P2f; **53** Px2f, **54** +Bx2f; **55** R8i, **56** P4f; **57** P8d, **58** Px8d; **59** Rx8d, **60** P\*8b; **61** R8i, **62** N4e; **63** P\*8c, **64** Px8c; **65** B\*6e,

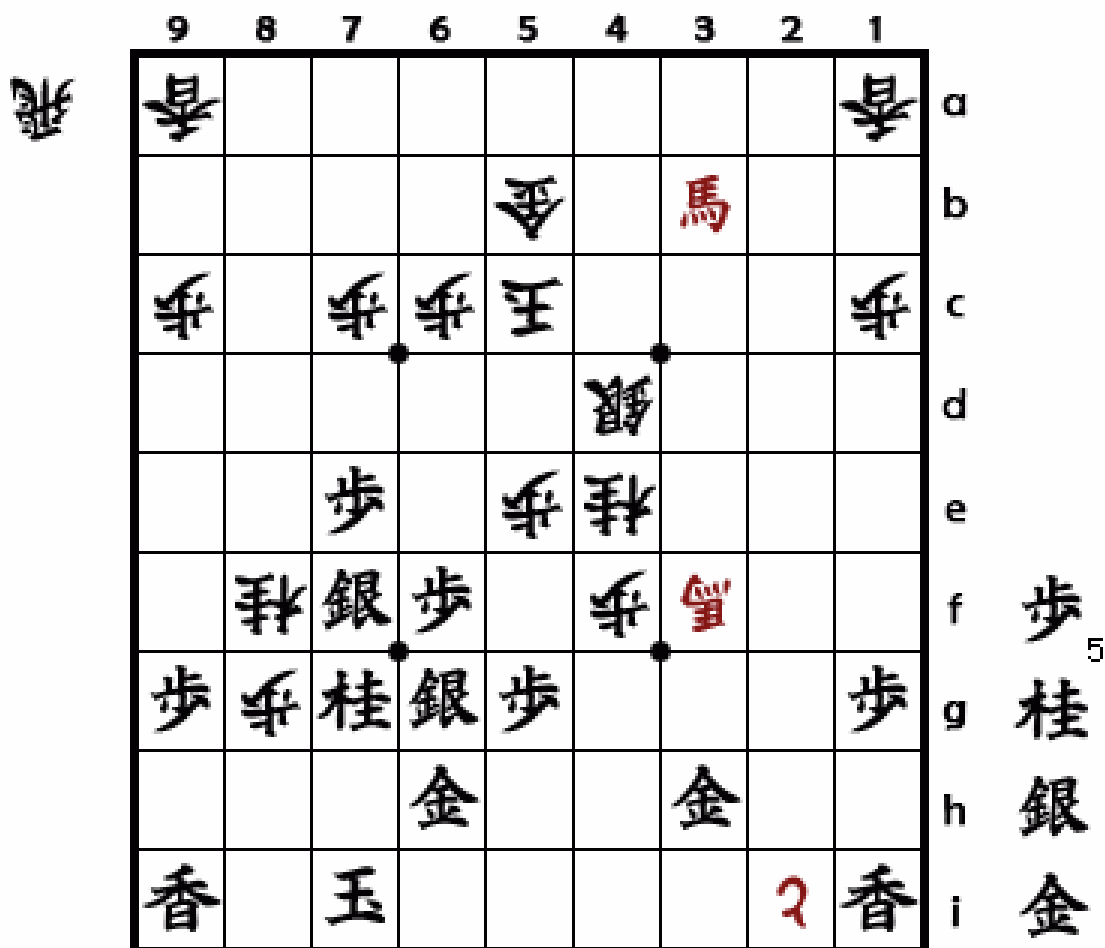


Subway Rook, 32 S5c to 65 B\*6e

(note how keeping the Bishop in hand gave *Sente* a decisive attack)

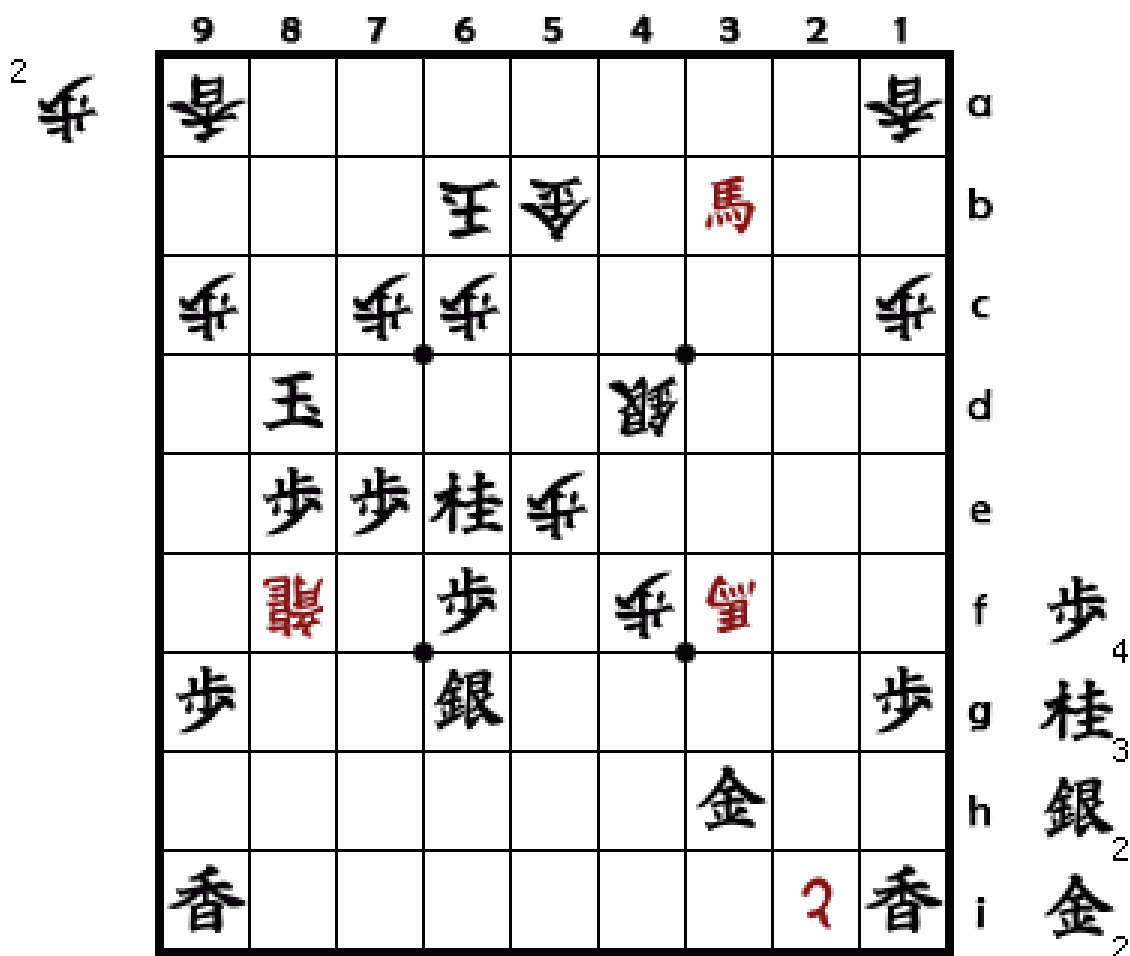


66 P\*3g; 67 G4h, 68 K6b; 69 Bx8c+, 70 P\*2h; (with some slight hope for an entering King) 71 +B6e, 72 Px2i+; 73 Rx8a+, 74 P3h+; 75 Gx3h, 76 K5c; 77 +R2a, 78 N\*8f; 79 K7i, 80 +Bx3f; 81 +Rx3b, 82 Sx3b; 83 +Bx3b, 84 P\*8g;



Subway Rook, 66 P\*3g to 84 P\*8g

85 Sx8g, (Better was 85 N6e, 86 K6b; 87 P7d, 88 R\*5i; 89 N\*6i, 90 Px7d; 91 S\*7c, 92 K5a; 93 P\*4c, winning) 86 Nx5g+; 87 N6e, 88 K6b; 89 Sx8f, 90 +Nx6h; 91 Kx6h, 92 R\*6i; 93 K7g, 94 G\*8g; 95 K7f, 96 Gx8f; 97 Kx8f, 98 R8i+; 99 P\*8g, 100 S\*8e; 101 Kx8e, 102 +Rx8g; 103 P\*8f, 104 P\*8d; 105 Kx8d, 106 +Rx8f; 107 P\*8e and *Gote* resigned.



Subway Rook, 85 Sx8g to 107 P\*8e

In the following two games, Eric followed the system except for leaving out the important move P6f which gives the Silver a nice retreat square on 6g. The result is that *Gote* got more counterplay than in the Nakahara

game, but the fact that Eric still won both games decisively shows just how hard this system is for *Gote* to beat.

[Sente "Eric Cheymol, amateur 4 Dan"]

[Gote "Yoshiharu Habu, 4 Crowns"]

[Date "2002/05/22"]

[Site "Paris"]

[Handicap "Rook"]

[Result "1-0"]

**1 ...**, **2 P3d**; **3 P7f**, **4 P4d**; **5 P4f**, **6 G3b**; **7 S4h**, **8 S4b**;  
**9 S4g**, **10 P5d**; **11 S5f**, **12 S4c**; **13 P4e**, **14 Px4e**;  
**15 Bx2b+**, **16 Gx2b**; **17 Sx4e**, **18 P\*4d**; **19 S5f**, **20 G3b**;  
**21 K6h**, **22 K6b**; **23 K7h**, **24 K7b**; **25 R4h**, **26 N3c**;  
**27 S6h**, **28 S6b**; **29 S7g**, **30 S5c**; **31 P7e**, **32 G5b**;  
**33 S7f**, **34 P3e**; **35 G3h**, **36 P9d**; **37 P9f**, **38 P1d**;  
**39 G6h**, **40 P1e**; **41 P8f**, **42 P4e**; **43 N7g**, **44 S5c-4d**;  
**45 R4i**, **46 P5e**; **47 S4g**, **48 P2d**; **49 R8i**, **50 P6d**;  
**51 P8e**, **52 B\*5d**; **53 R8f**, **54 G6c**; **55 P6f**, **56 P1f**;  
**57 Px1f**, **58 P4f**; **59 S5h**, **60 P3f**; **61 P6e**, **62 Px6e**;  
**63 P\*6d**,

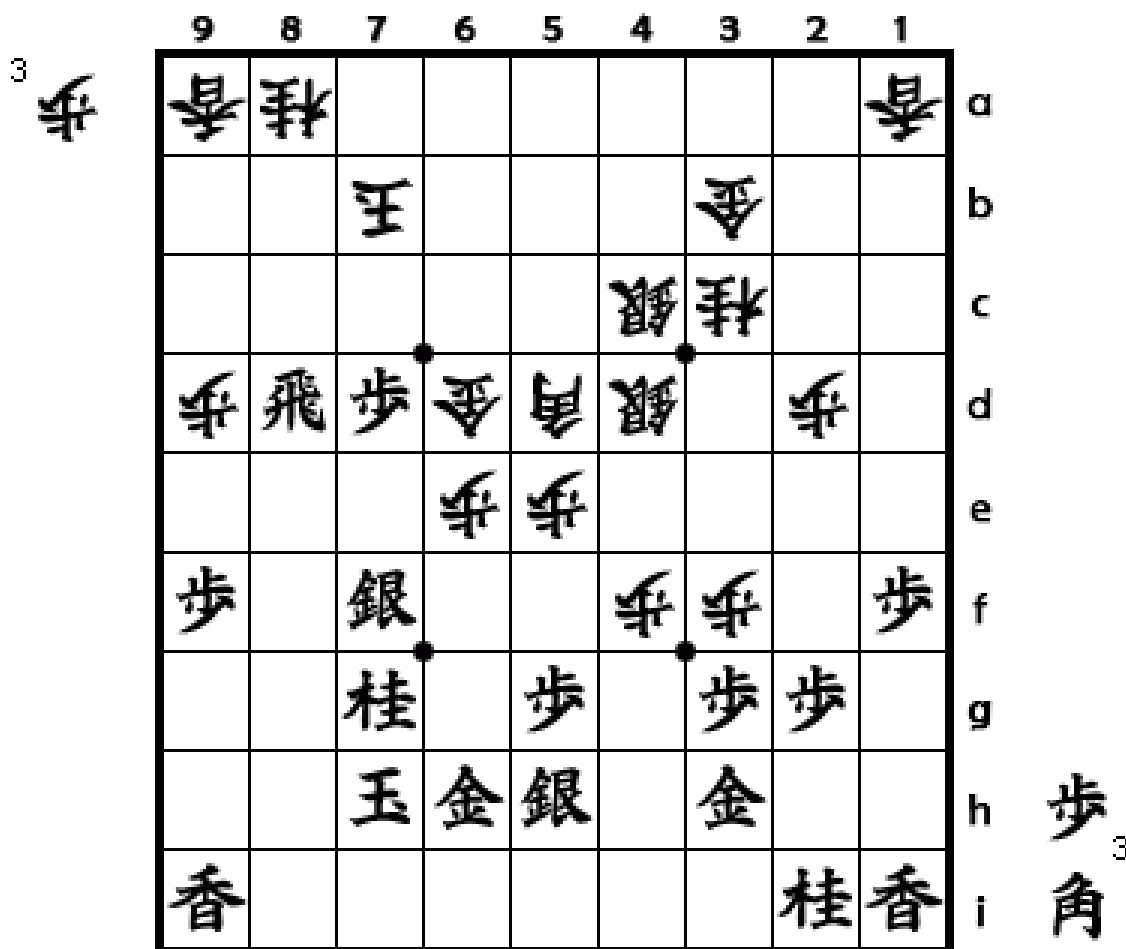
	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
歩	香	桂							香	a
		玉				金				b
	歩	歩	金		銀	桂				c
歩			歩	角	銀		歩			d
	歩	歩	歩	歩						e
歩	飛	銀			歩	歩		歩		f
		桂		歩		歩	歩			g
		玉	金	銀		金				h 歩
香							桂	香		i 角

Rook, Cheymol vs. Habu to **63** P\*6d

Very good move, if **63** Sx6e then **64** B4e; **65** K8h, **66** P\*6d; **67** S7f and the game is unclear – Yoshiharu Habu.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Editor's note: Initially, I interpreted this sequence of moves as a *continuation* from **63** P\*6d – which is impossible. It is, of course, an *alternative* sequence of moves. Thanks to Andy Olsen for pointing this out!

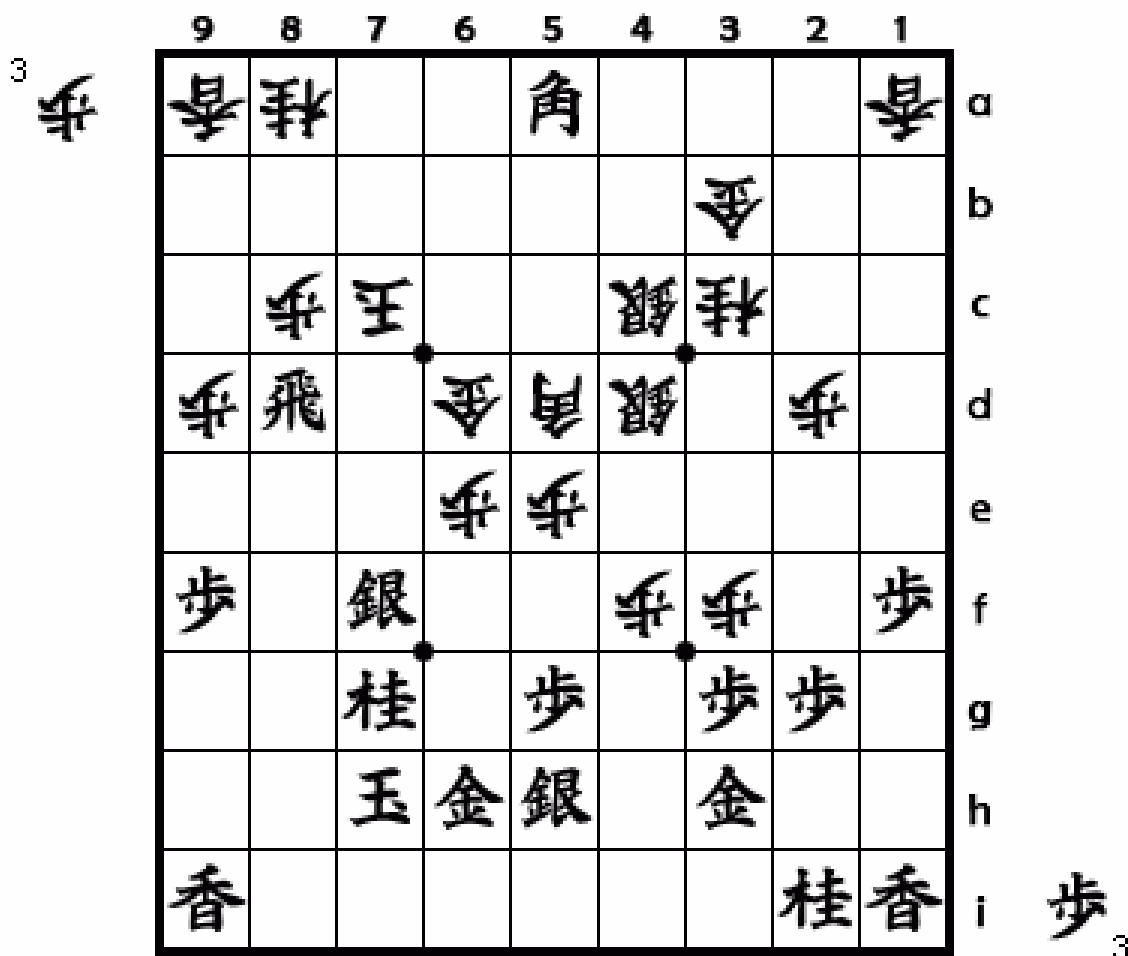
64 Gx6d; 65 P8d, 66 Px8d; 67 Rx8d, 68 P7d; 69 Px7d,



Rook, Cheymol vs. Habu, 64 Gx6d to 69 Px7d

The key move – Yoshiharu Habu.

70 P\*8c; 71 P7c+, 72 Kx7c; 73 B\*5a,



Rook, Cheymol vs. Habu, 70 P\*8c to 73 B\*5a

74 K6c; 75 Rx8c+, 76 K5b; 77 B8d+, 78 P6f; 79 +R8b,  
 80 P\*7b; 81 +Rx8a, 82 Bx7f; 83 +Rx7b, Resigns

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
銀	香								香	a
步			龍		王		金			b
						桂	銀			c
	步	馬		●	金		銀		步	d
					步					e
	步		銀	步		步	步		步	f
			桂		步		步	步		g 步 <sup>5</sup>
			王	金	銀		金			h 角
	香							桂	香	i 桂

Rook, Cheymol vs. Habu, 74 K6c to 83 +Rx7b

[Sente "Eric Cheymol, amateur 4 Dan"]

[Gote "Hideyuki Takano, 4 Dan"]

[Date "2000/10/26"]

[Site "Paris"]

[Handicap "Rook"]

[Result "1-0"]

**1 ...**, **2 P3d**; **3 P7f**, **4 P4d**; **5 P4f**, **6 G3b**; **7 S4h**, **8 S4b**;  
**9 S4g**, **10 S4c**; **11 S5f**, **12 P5d**; **13 P4e**, **14 Px4e**;  
**15 Bx2b+**, **16 Gx2b**; **17 Sx4e**, **18 P\*4d**; **19 S5f**, **20 G3b**;  
**21 K6h**, **22 G5b**; **23 K7h**, **24 K6b**; **25 R4h**, **26 N3c**;  
**27 S6h**, **28 K7b**; **29 S7g**, **30 S6b**; **31 P7e**, **32 S5c**;  
**33 S7f**, **34 P3e**; **35 G3h**, **36 P9d**; **37 P9f**, **38 P2d**;  
**39 G6h**, **40 P2e**; **41 P8f**, **42 S6d**; **43 B\*6f**, **44 G5c**;  
**45 N7g**, **46 B\*1b**; **47 R4i**, **48 P5e**; **49 S4g**, **50 S5d**;  
**51 R8i**, **52 N4e**; **53 P8e**, **54 G3b-4c**; **55 P9e**, **56 Px9e**;  
**57 P\*9d**, **58 Nx5g+**; **59 Bx5g**, **60 P5f**; **61 B3i**, **62 S5d-**  
**5e**; **63 Lx9e**, **64 P\*9b**; **65 P8d**, **66 Px8d**; **67 P\*8e**,  
**68 P4e**; **69 Px8d**, **70 P\*8b**; **71 N\*8c**, **72 P4f**; **73 S5h**,  
**74 P7d**; **75 Nx9a+**, **76 Px7e**; **77 S8e**, **78 N7c**; **79 S7d**,  
**80 P5g+**; **81 Bx5g**, **82 P7f**; **83 P8c+**, **84 K6b**; **85 +Px7c**,  
**86 Sx7c**; **87 Sx7c+**, **88 Kx7c**; **89 N6e**, **90 K6d**;  
**91 Rx8b+**, **92 Kx6e**; **93 +R8d**, **94 S\*7g**; **95 K8g**,  
**96 G6d**; **97 L\*6f**, **98 S5ex6f**; **99 Px6f**, **100 K5d**;  
**101 S\*6e**, **102 K5c**; **103 P\*5d**, **104 K4b**; **105 Sx6d**,  
**106 Px6d**; **107 Kx7f**, **108 Sx6h+**; **109 Bx6h**, **110 B7h+**;  
**111 P\*4d**,



	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
金	金								皇	a
銀	歩					王				b
桂						皇			歩	c
皇	歩	龍		歩	歩	歩				d
歩	香						歩	歩		e
			玉	歩		歩				f
							歩	歩	歩	g
			皇	角	銀		金			h
								桂	香	i

Rook, Cheymol vs. Takano to 111 P\*4d

**112** +Bx6h; **113** Px4c+, **114** Kx4c; **115** P5c+, **116** Kx5c;  
**117** N\*4e, **118** K5d; **119** +Rx6d, **120** Kx6d; **121** S\*6e,  
**122** K5e; **123** G\*5d, **124** Resigns

## Lessons from the Subway Rook:

Move order is important to reach the desired formation.  
The key points of move order are:

1. Answer ♖Nc3 by ♜R4h to deter ♖P4e.
2. Answer ♖P3e by ♜G3h to avoid any tricks based on ♖P3f. If *Gote* doesn't play ♖P3e, don't play ♜G3h until the left side formation is complete.
3. Answer ♖S5c by ♜P6f, regardless of whether or not you have already played ♜P7e. The point is that if you have played ♜P7e, then ♖S6d can be met by ♜S7f without fearing ♖P5e. If you haven't yet played ♜P7e, then ♖S6d is well met by ♜P6e.

## G5c Defense

1 ..., 2 P3d; 3 P7f, 4 P4d; 5 P4f, 6 G3b; 7 S4h, 8 S4b; 9 S4g, 10 S4c; 11 S5f, 12 P5d; 13 P4e, 14 G5b; (a similar defense is 14 S6b; 15 R4h, 16 S5c, but after 17 Px4d *Gote* must settle for 18 S5cx4d; 19 P\*4e, 20 S3c; since other continuations allow a Bishop or Silver drop on 8b; then ♠P3f followed by castling and an eventual ♠N3g~♠N2e should be good for *Sente*) 15 R4h, (This position would normally arise with *Sente's* seventh and eighth moves reversed) 16 G5c; 17 P3f, (Here *Sente* does not want to invite exchanges by taking on 4d as there is no open drop square in *Gote's* camp; that's why 14 G5b is considered better than 14 S6b) 18 K6b; 19 N3g, 20 K7b; 21 G6h, (This is better than ♠K6h~♠K7h because it is sometimes advantageous for *Sente* not to have the King on 7h so that ♞BxB will not be check) 22 S6b; 23 K6i, 24 P9d; 25 P9f, 26 P6d; (26 Px4e; 27 Bx2b+, 28 Gx2b; 29 B\*7g, 30 B\*4d; 31 Sx4e, 32 Bx7g+; 33 Nx7g, 34 P\*4d; 35 N6e, ends up in *Sente's* favor) 27 K7h, 28 B3c; (and now 28 Px4e; 29 Bx2b+, 30 Gx2b; 31 B\*6f, [note that *Sente* picks a square which is not next to his King, avoiding check in some lines] 32 B\*4d; 33 Nx4e, 34 G5b; 35 Bx4d, 36 Sx4d; 37 B\*3a, 38 G3b; 39 Bx6d+, 40 G6c; 41 +B4f, 42 B\*6d; 43 +Bx6d, 44 Gx6d; 45 G3h, with a nice advantage since 46 P5e? would be met by 47 S6e!) 29 B6f!,

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
香	桂						桂	香	a
		玉	銀			金			b
	歩	歩		金	銀	角	歩	歩	c
歩			歩	歩	歩	歩			d
					歩				e
歩		歩	角	銀		歩			f
	歩		歩	歩		桂	歩	歩	g
		玉	金		飛				h
香	桂	銀			金			香	i

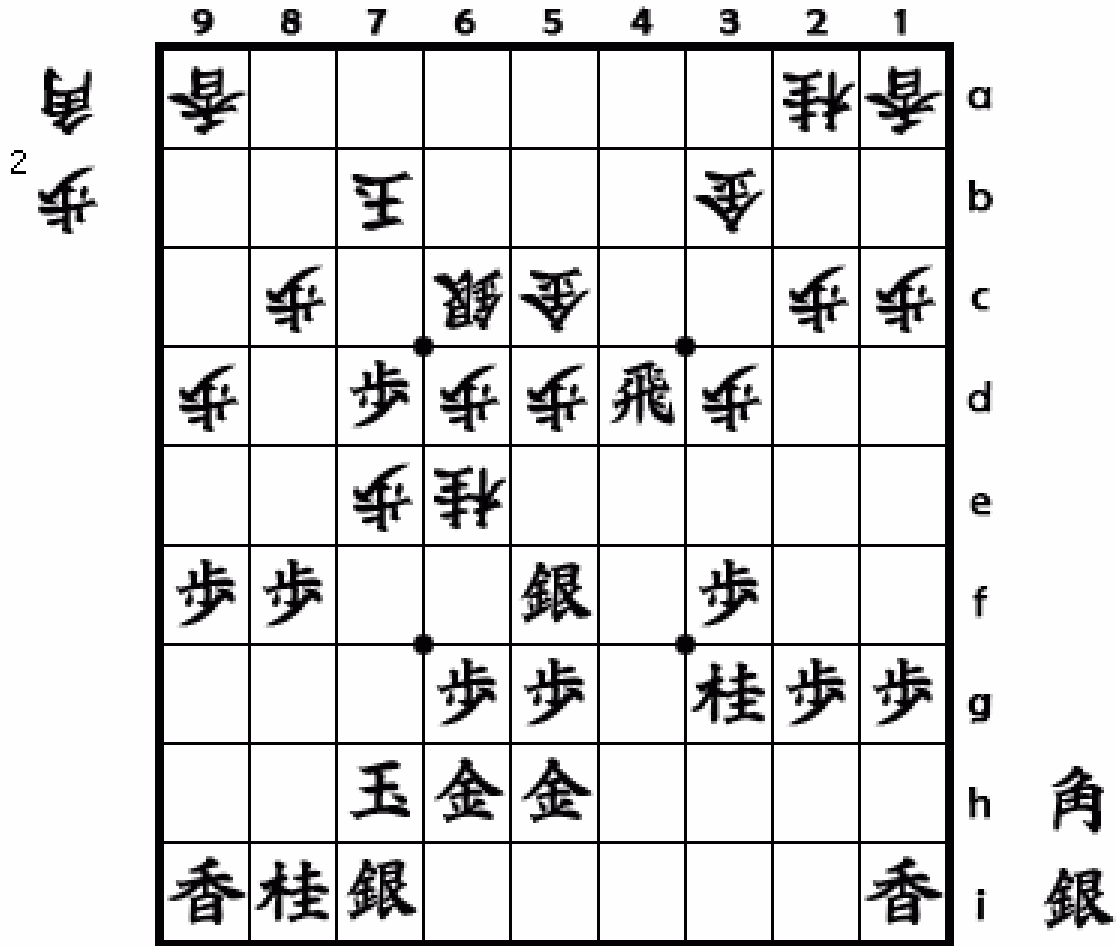
Rook, G5c Defense to **29** B6f!

(This is the key move against  $\triangle B3c$ , so that  $\triangle Px4e$  can be met by **31** Nx4e, **32**; Bx6f **33** Nx5c+) **30** S6c; **31** G4i-5h, **32** P7d; **33** P8f, (*Sente* is in no hurry to start action by  $\blacktriangle Px4d$ , since *Gote* cannot take on 4e due to the Knight fork) **34** N7c

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
皇							桂	皇	a
		王				金			b
	歩	桂	銀	金	銀	角	歩	歩	c
歩		歩	歩	歩	歩	歩			d
					歩				e
歩	歩	歩	角	銀		歩			f
			歩	歩		桂	歩	歩	g
		王	金	金	飛				h
香	桂	銀						香	i

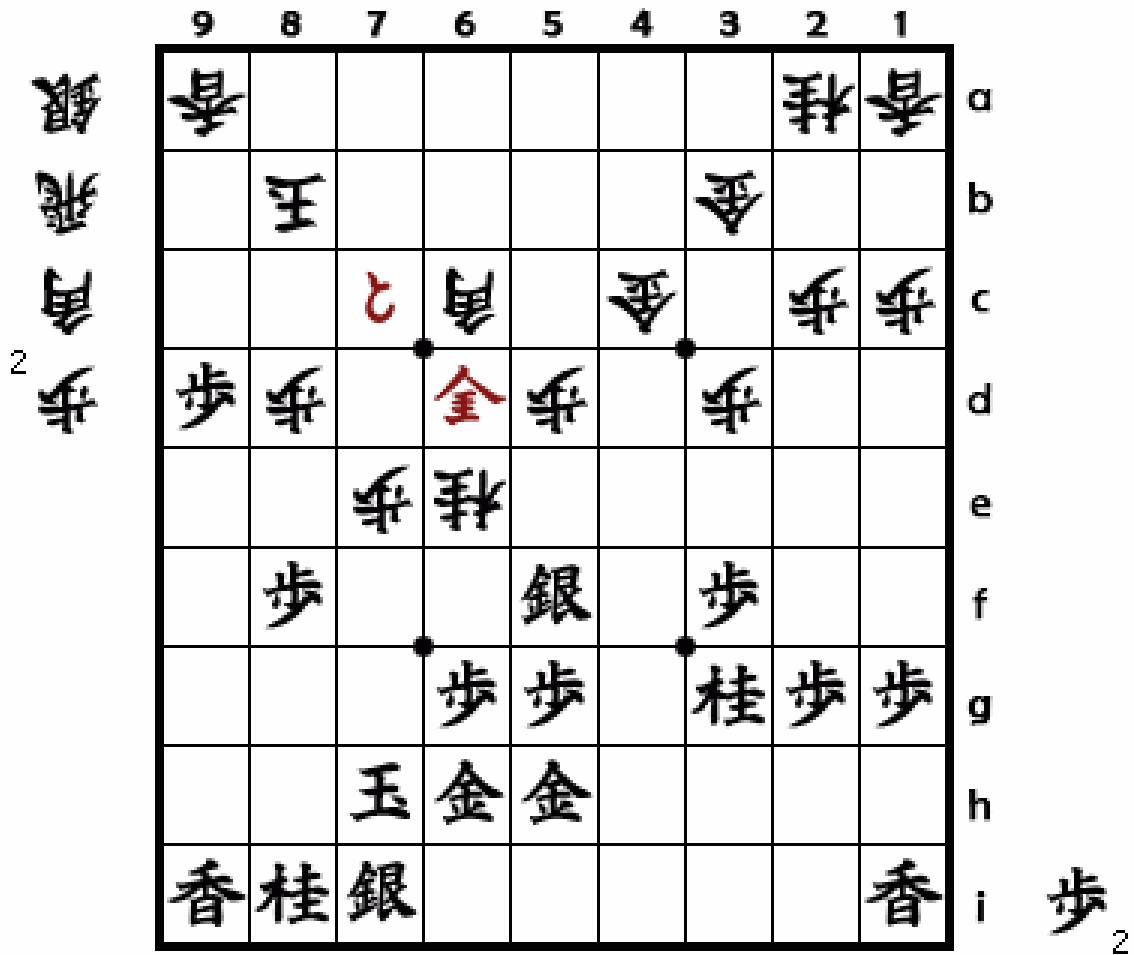
Rook, G5c Defense, 30 S6c to 34 N7c

(by threatening  $\triangle P6e$  driving the Bishop back to a square next to the King, followed by  $\triangle Px4e$ , *Gote* forces *Sente* to attack. But the Knight on 7c becomes a target. If *Gote* just made passing moves, *Sente* would strengthen his position by  $\blacktriangle S8h \sim \blacktriangle S8g$  before starting action) 35 Px4d, 36 Bx4d; 37 Bx4d, 38 Sx4d; 39 P7e, 40 Px7e; (40 P\*4c; 41 Px7d, 42 N6e; 43 B\*7c) 41 P\*7d, 42 N6e; (42 Sx7d?; 43 B\*4a) 43 Rx4d!!,



Rook, G5c Defense, 35 Px4d to 43 Rx4d!!

44 Gx4d; 45 B\*5c, 46 G4d-4c; 47 S\*7c, 48 K8a;  
 49 B6b+, 50 B\*4a; 51 +Bx6c, 52 Bx6c; 53 S\*8b,  
 54 K9b; 55 P9e, 56 P8d; 57 Px9d, 58 K8c; 59 Sx6d+,  
 60 Kx8b; 61 P7c+ followed by  $\triangle$ +Sx6c winning.



Rook handicap, G5c Defense, 44 Gx4d to 61 P7c+

These variations seem a bit complicated, but if you remember to castle by ♠G6h, then ♠K6i~♠K7h and then ♠G4i-5h, meet ♞B3c by ♠B6f, and try to postpone ♠Px4d until ♞N7c provides you a target, you should do fine. Remember that once you are castled, it may be possible to sacrifice your Rook for a general and a strong attack.

Most of the analysis of this line is based on the handicap book by Shoshi Kazuharu (6-dan).



## Bishop Handicap.

[214] Line 1: Vanguard allowed

[217] Line 1: Variation 1

[221] Line 1: Variation 2

[223] Line 1: Variation 3

[226] Line 2: Vanguard prevented

[231] Line 2: Variation 1

[233] Line 2: Variation 2

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
a	香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂	香	
b		飛								
c	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	
d				●			●			
e										
f										
g	歩	歩	歩	●	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	
h		角						飛		
i	香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂	香	

Bishop handicap, starting position

Bishop handicap differs from the larger ones in that *Sente* is not advised to pursue a strategy different from

one that he might adopt in an even game. Rather, he should choose between Static Rook and Fortress (Yagura) castle, or Ranging Rook and Mino castle, just as he might do in an even game. Bishop handicap is more difficult for *Sente* than one might expect, because in the starting position the Rook bears down directly on the Bishop, and so the Bishop can be a target. This often means that *Gote* will be the one to start the attack, rather than *Sente* as is usual in other handicaps. So Bishop handicap is said to teach defensive skills along with attacking skills, and so is more akin to an even game. It is also thought to emphasize endgame skills, as *Gote* can usually make the ending close.

There is great disagreement among pros as to how wide is the gap between Bishop and Rook handicap. Some say that it is huge, while others say that the two handicaps are quite close. Having played over a hundred handicap games with pros at Bishop or Rook handicap (perhaps  $\frac{3}{4}$  at Bishop), my view is that the gap is the smallest in the handicap series but is still substantial.

In the 1800s *Sente* usually played Third File Rook and Mino castle. This strategy prevents *Gote* from launching any effective attack, as *Sente's* King is removed from the danger area and *Sente's* Rook guards the most vulnerable file, the one where the Bishop must go after  $\triangle P8e$ . *Sente* has plenty of time to complete his castle and make everything safe. *Gote* often ends up just

‘passing’ (moving a Gold back and forth for example). However, it is quite difficult for *Sente* to start the fight, and if he wishes to avoid *sennichite* (draw by repetition), as he is generally expected to do, he must often resort to risky plans.

Around 1900 it became popular for *Sente* to play Static Rook and Fortress castle, and this is generally considered the main line even today. If *Gote* starts out with  $\triangleleft P8d$  and  $\triangleleft P8e$  this strategy is particularly appropriate, because the Silver on 7g (the key move of the Fortress opening) prevents a Pawn exchange. However today *Gote* usually refrains from  $\triangleleft P8e$  in the early stages, and then if *Sente* still plays the Fortress the Silver on 7g is a potential target for a N8e attack. Although this is *joseki*, the variations involving this N8e attack are pretty complex and tricky, and so I don’t recommend the Fortress strategy except against a very quick  $\triangleleft P8e$  (which can also be well met by playing opposing Rook). Also, the Fortress lines tend to be rather easy for *Gote* to play.

In modern times, perhaps forty years ago or so, central Rook and Mino became popular for *Sente*. The idea is to advance and/or exchange off the center Pawn, and then bring up the left Silver to the 5f square. This is very good shape (Silver in front of Rook with no Pawn behind the Silver, and nothing blocking the Bishop), and is considerably more aggressive than Third File Rook.

This strategy is one of my favorites. One argument against it is that if *Gote* refrains from advancing his Rook's Pawn, he may later switch his Rook to his left and castle right, in which case *Sente* will have no direct pressure on the front of the castle (as he would with 3rd File Rook, for example). If *Gote* adopts this strategy *Sente* should switch from Mino to a right Fortress castle, to prevent *Gote* from exchanging off the 2 Pawn. The game then resembles a normal Fortress opening, but with everything on the wrong side of the board!

In the last two decades, *Sente* has often chosen Fourth File Rook, the strategy that has become the dominant form of Ranging Rook in even games. I think that it is particularly appropriate at Bishop handicap, because the Rook supports the natural move P6e which will reopen the Bishop's diagonal. In even games this risks a Bishop exchange, which is often undesirable for the Ranging Rook side, but here there is no downside to the move. Pros seem to be pretty evenly split on the question of whether Central or Fourth File Rook is the best Ranging Rook for Bishop handicap. I have played both many times, and my feeling is that I have done a bit better with Fourth File Rook, though it's not quite clear. I have chosen to recommend Fourth File Rook in this article, primarily because it is more of a deterrent to *Gote's* plan of castling right, since the spearhead of *Sente's* play will be one file closer to *Gote's* King in that case. Another plus is that castling is easier with Fourth File Rook,

since a Central Rook interferes with the natural ▲G6i-5h~▲G4g. The following analysis is based heavily on a *Shogi Sekai* supplement by Izumi (7-dan) and on a book by Manabe (8-dan) *Handicap revolution*. There are two main lines, depending on whether or not *Gote* allows *Sente* a Vanguard Pawn on 6e:

[214] Line 1: Vanguard allowed

[226] Line 2: Vanguard prevented

## Line 1: Vanguard allowed

1 ..., 2 S6b; 3 P7f, 4 P5d; 5 P6f, 6 P8d; 7 P6e, (the Vanguard Pawn) 8 P8e; 9 B7g, 10 S5c; 11 R6h, 12 K4b; (12 S3a-4b; planning  $\triangle$ P4d and  $\triangle$ S4c is also played, but it seems to commit *Gote* earlier than necessary. *Sente* can aim for  $\blacktriangle$ S5f and  $\blacktriangle$ P4e after castling). 13 S7h, 14 K3b; 15 S6g, 16 S3a-4b; 17 K4h, 18 G6b; 19 K3h, 20 P7d; 21 S6f,

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
a	香	桂				金		桂	香	
b		飛		金		銀	玉			
c	歩			歩	銀	歩	歩	歩	歩	
d			歩		歩					
e		歩		歩						
f			歩	銀						
g	歩	歩	角		歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	
h				飛			玉			
i	香	桂		金		金	銀	桂	香	

Bishop, Vanguard allowed to 21 S6f

(*Sente* needs to support his Vanguard Pawn with his Silver, but which way, 21 S6f or 21 S5f? If *Gote* had

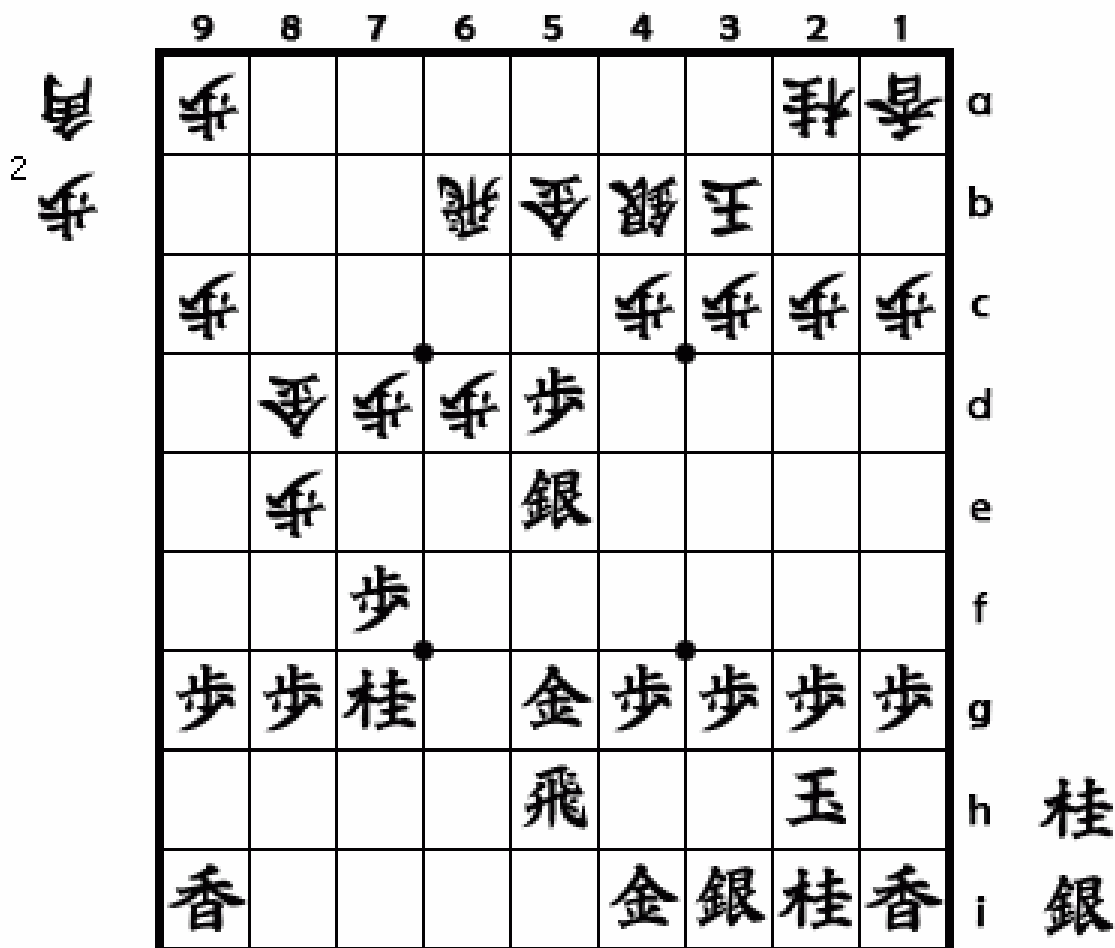
already played  $\triangle P4d$  then **21** S5f would be best, as it would support an attack on 4d. But here **21** S6f is better, because on 5f it would have no role. On 6f, although the Silver blocks the Bishop, it deters  $\triangle P7e$  and prepares  $\blacktriangle P5f-5e$ .) **22** G4a-5b; **23** G6i-5h, **24** G7c; **25** K2h, **26** G8d; **27** P5f, **28** R6b;

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
香	桂						桂	香	a
			飛	金	銀	玉			b
歩			歩	銀	歩	歩	歩	歩	c
	金	歩		歩					d
	歩		歩						e
		歩	銀	歩					f
歩	歩	角			歩	歩	歩	歩	g
			飛	金			玉		h
香	桂				金	銀	桂	香	i

Bishop, Vanguard allowed, **22** G4a-5b to **28** R6b

(else **29** P5e, **30** Px5e; **31** Sx5e, **32** P\*5d; **33** P6d, will lead to favorable exchanges for *Sente*, because *Gote's* Gold on 8d will be out of play) **29** G5i-4h, (to punish *Gote* for his failure to play  $\triangle P4d$  by playing for a quick attack on the center file) **30** N7c; **31** P5e, **32** Px5e;

33 R5h, 34 P6d; 35 Sx5e, 36 P\*5g; 37 Gx5g!, 38 Nx6e;  
 39 P\*5d, 40 Nx7g+; (40 S4d; 41 Sx4d, 42 Px4d;  
 43 Bx4d) 41 Px5c+, 42 Sx5c; 43 P\*5d, 44 S4b;  
 45 Nx7g,



Bishop, Vanguard allowed, 29 G5i-4h to 45 Nx7g

The exchange of Bishop and Pawn for Silver and Knight is about even, but with the threat of ♠S\*7c and the 'bomb' on 5d *Sente* should win.



**Line 1: Variation 1:** White attacks the Vanguard after defending the center.

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
香	桂						桂	香	a
	飛			金	銀	王			b
歩		金	歩	銀	歩	歩	歩	歩	c
		歩		歩					d
	歩		歩						e
		歩	銀						f
歩	歩	角		歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	g
			飛	金			王		h
香	桂				金	銀	桂	香	i

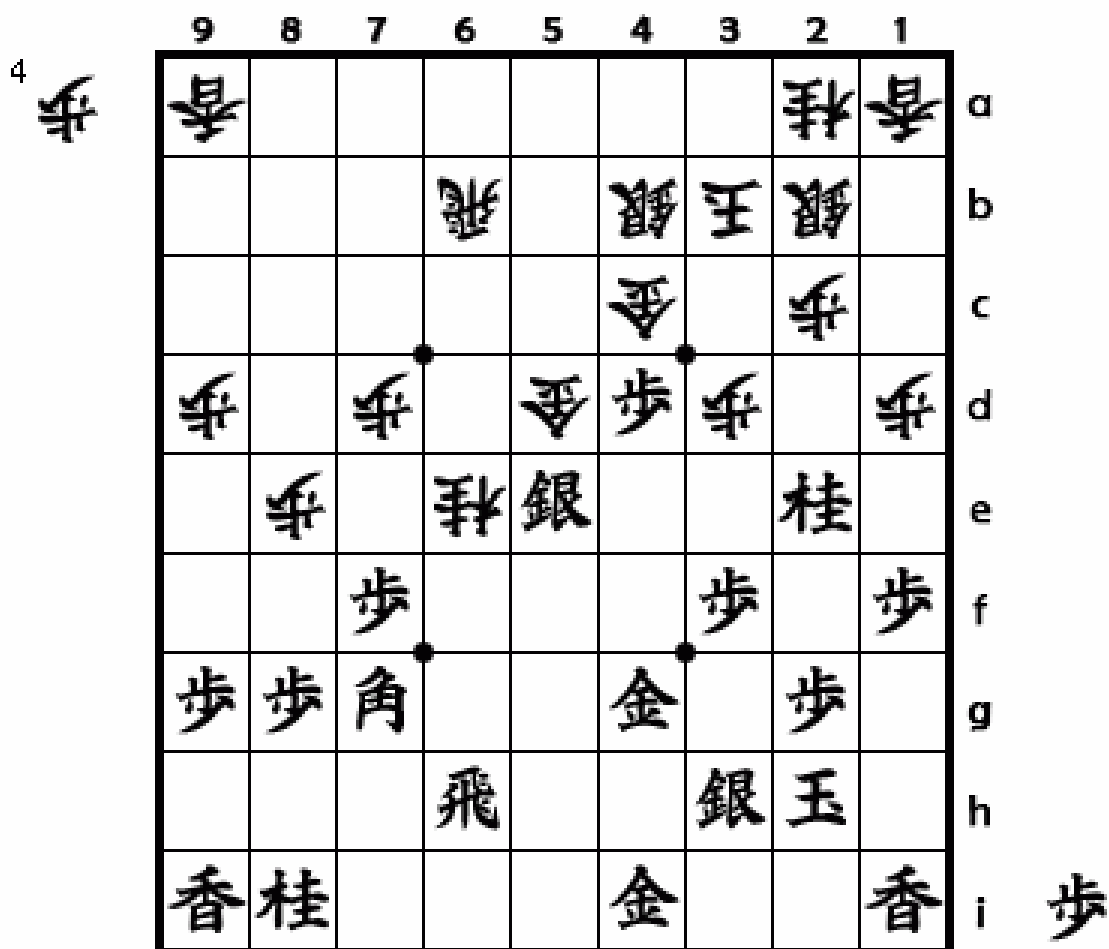
Bishop, Vanguard allowed, Variation 1 to **25** K2h

26 P4d; (to defend 5d against the above attack) 27 S3h,  
 28 P3d; 29 P5f, 30 G4c; 31 P4f, 32 P1d; 33 P1f,  
 34 P9d; (to prevent a later ♠B9e) 35 P3f, (no need for  
 ♠P9f as *Gote's* push was purely defensive) 36 R6b;  
 (aiming to attack the Vanguard Pawn) 37 G4g,

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
香	桂						桂	香	a
			飛		玉銀	玉			b
		金	歩	銀	金		歩		c
歩		歩		歩	歩	歩		歩	d
	歩		歩						e
		歩	銀	歩	歩	歩		歩	f
歩	歩	角			金		歩		g
			飛			銀	玉		h
香	桂				金		桂	香	i

Bishop, Vanguard allowed, Variation 1, 26 P4d to  
 37 G4g

(the High Mino, generally the ideal castle for Ranging Rook) **38** P6d; **39** Px6d, **40** Gx6d; **41** P\*6e, **42** G6c; **43** N3g, **44** N7c; (threatens **45** Nx6e, **46** Sx6e; **47** P\*6d, so *Sente* must attack now) **45** P5e, **46** Px5e; **47** P4e, (trying to pry open the Bishop's diagonal) **48** G6c-5d; **49** Px4d, **50** Sx4d; **51** P\*4e, **52** S4d-3c; **53** N2e, **54** S2b; **55** Sx5e, **56** Nx6e; **57** P4d,



Bishop, Vanguard allowed, Variation 1, **38** P6d to **57** P4d

**58** G4c-5c; **59** Sx5d, **60** Gx5d; **61** G\*4c, **62** Sx4c; **63** Px4c+, **64** Kx4c; **65** S\*6c!, **66** Rx6c; **67** Bx2b+.



Bishop, Vanguard allowed, Variation 1, **58** G4c-5c to  
**67** Bx2b+

With an extra promoted Bishop and much safer King  
*Sente* should win.

**Line 1: Variation 2: *Gote* tries for King side space.**<sup>13</sup>

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
a	香	桂						桂	香	
b		飛				銀	王			
c	歩		金	歩	銀	金		歩		
d			歩		歩	歩	歩		歩	
e		歩		歩						
f			歩	銀	歩	歩			歩	
g	歩	歩	角				歩	歩		
h				飛	金		銀	玉		
i	香	桂				金		桂	香	

Bishop, Vanguard allowed, Variation 2 to **33 P1f**

**34 P3e; 35 G4g, 36 S3c; (36 G3d; 37 P2f, 38 P2d; 39 S2g, planning R3h and P3f defeats *Gote's* plan, or 38 S3c; 39 S2g, 40 S2d; 41 P5e, {to get a pawn in hand} 42 Px5e; 43 Sx5e, 44 P\*5d; 45 S6f, 46 K4c; 47 R3h, 48 N3c; 49 P2e!, 50 S1c; (all captures lose a piece to P\*2f) 51 P3f, 52 Px3f; 53 Sx3f, again defeating *Gote's* plan) 37 P3f, 38 Px3f; 39 Gx3f, 40 P\*3d; (else 41 P\*3e) 41 S4g, 42 P2d; 43 G3h, 44 P9d; 45 N3g,**

<sup>13</sup> Editor's note: Variation 2 follows Variation 1 to move **33 P1f**.

46 P9e; 47 P4e, with advantage because ♖Px4e loses Silver for Knight.

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
香	桂						桂	香	a
	飛					王			b
		金	歩	銀	金	銀			c
		歩		歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	d
歩	歩		歩		歩				e
		歩	銀	歩		金		歩	f
歩	歩	角			銀	桂	歩		g
			飛			金	玉		h
香	桂							香	i 歩

Bishop, Vanguard allowed, Variation 2, 34 P3e to  
47 P4e

**Line 1: Variation 3:** *Gote* attacks the Vanguard without preparation.<sup>14</sup>

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
香	桂				金		桂	香	a
	飛		金		銀	玉			b
歩			歩	銀	歩	歩	歩	歩	c
		歩		歩					d
	歩		歩						e
		歩	銀						f
歩	歩	角		歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	g
			飛			玉			h
香	桂		金		金	銀	桂	香	i

Bishop, Vanguard allowed, Variation 3 to **21** S6f

<sup>14</sup> Editor's note: Variation 3 follows the main Vanguard allowed line to **21** S6f.

22 G7c; 23 P5f, 24 P9d; (prevents a later ♠B9e)  
 25 K2h, 26 R6b; 27 P5e,

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
香	桂				金		桂	香	a
			飛		銀	王			b
		金	歩	銀	歩	歩	歩	歩	c
歩		歩		歩					d
	歩		歩	歩					e
		歩	銀						f
歩	歩	角			歩	歩	歩	歩	g
			飛			王			h
香	桂		金		金	銀	桂	香	i

Bishop, Vanguard allowed, Variation 3, 22 G7c to  
 27 P5e

This position arose in a magazine game in 1987 between Naganuma Hiroshi, (4-*dan* Pro), and Kiriya Kiyosumi (Kisei title holder). Naganuma just completed his Mino by ♠S3h, but after ♞P6d *Gote* obtained a satisfactory position, although he ultimately lost. The text is my suggested improvement on the game, by analogy to the first line above.



28 Px5e; 29 R5h, 30 P6d; (30 R5b is safer, but then *Gote's* plan is spoiled) 31 Sx5e, 32 P\*5d; (else *Sente* drops there) 33 Sx5d, 34 Sx5d; 35 Rx5d, 36 Px6e; (or 36 G6c; 37 R5i, 38 Px6e; 39 P\*6d, 40 Gx6d; 41 S\*5c, with advantage) 37 S\*5c, 38 G6c; 39 Sx4b+, 40 Rx4b; 41 R5i, 42 P\*5d; 43 P\*5e, with advantage to *Sente*.

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
2 銀	香	桂				金		桂	香	a
						飛	玉			b
			金			歩	歩	歩	歩	c
	歩		歩		歩					d
		歩		歩	歩					e
			歩							f
	歩	歩	角			歩	歩	歩	歩	g
								玉		h 歩
	香	桂		金	飛	金	銀	桂	香	i 銀

Bishop, Vanguard allowed, Variation 3, 28 Px5e to 43 P\*5e

For the actual game, see the final issue of George Hodges' magazine *Shogi*.

## Line 2: Vanguard prevented

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂	香	a
	飛								b
步	步	步	步	步	步	步	步	步	c
			●			●			d
									e
									f
步	步	步	●	步	步	步	●	步	g
	角						飛		h
香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂	香	i

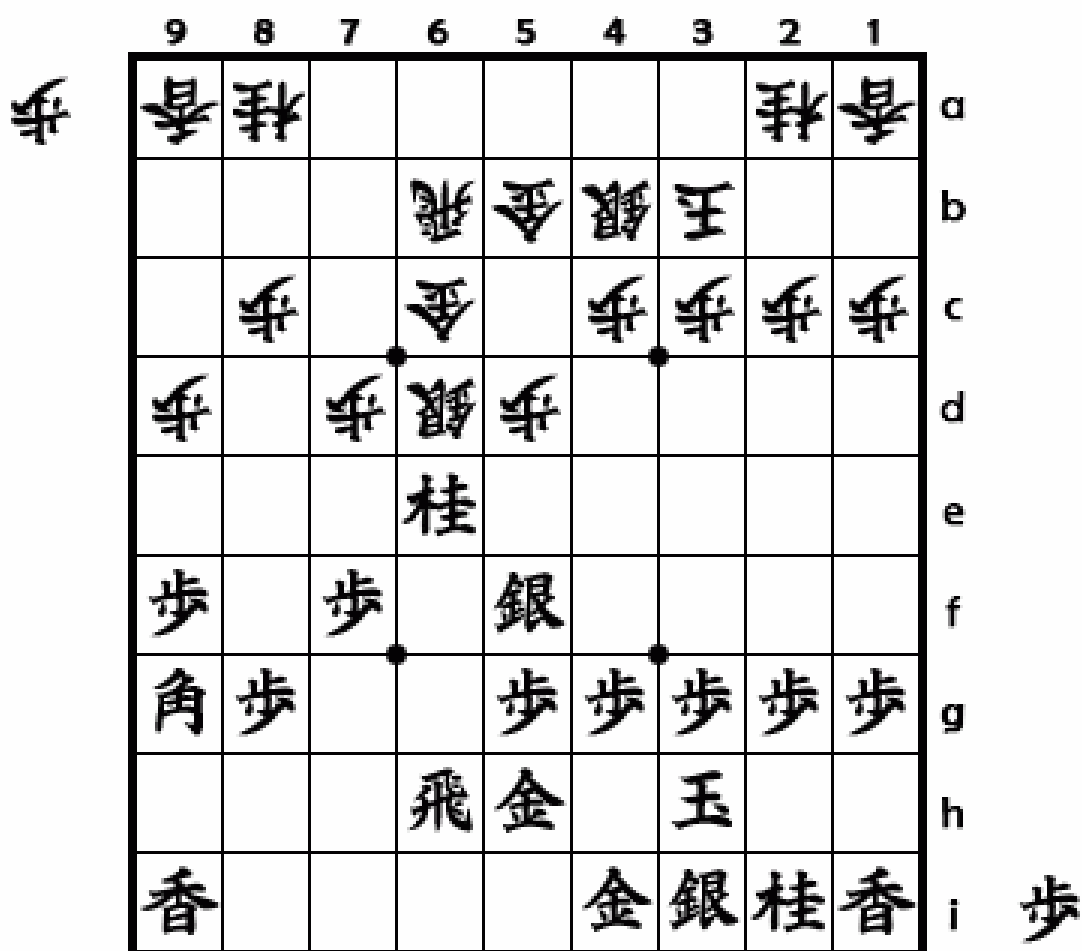
Bishop handicap, starting position

1 ..., 2 S6b; 3 P7f, 4 P5d; 5 P6f, 6 P6d; (Prevents the vanguard pawn, but gives *Sente* a target) 7 R6h, 8 S5c; (8 S6c below (page 233) is probably better, to foil the following plan) 9 P9f, (Planning a direct attack on the 6d pawn by B9g. It turns out to be quite difficult for *Gote* to counter this plan from here.) 10 G4a-5b; 11 B9g, (This seems risky in view of the danger of P9d-9e, but this can usually be met by an exchange of the Bishop for Silver plus Lance) 12 G6c; 13 N7g, 14 S3a-4b; 15 P6e, 16 R6b;

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
香	桂		金	玉			桂	香	a
			飛		銀				b
歩	歩	歩	金	銀	歩	歩	歩	歩	c
			歩	歩					d
			歩						e
歩		歩							f
角	歩	桂		歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	g
			飛						h
香		銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂	香	i

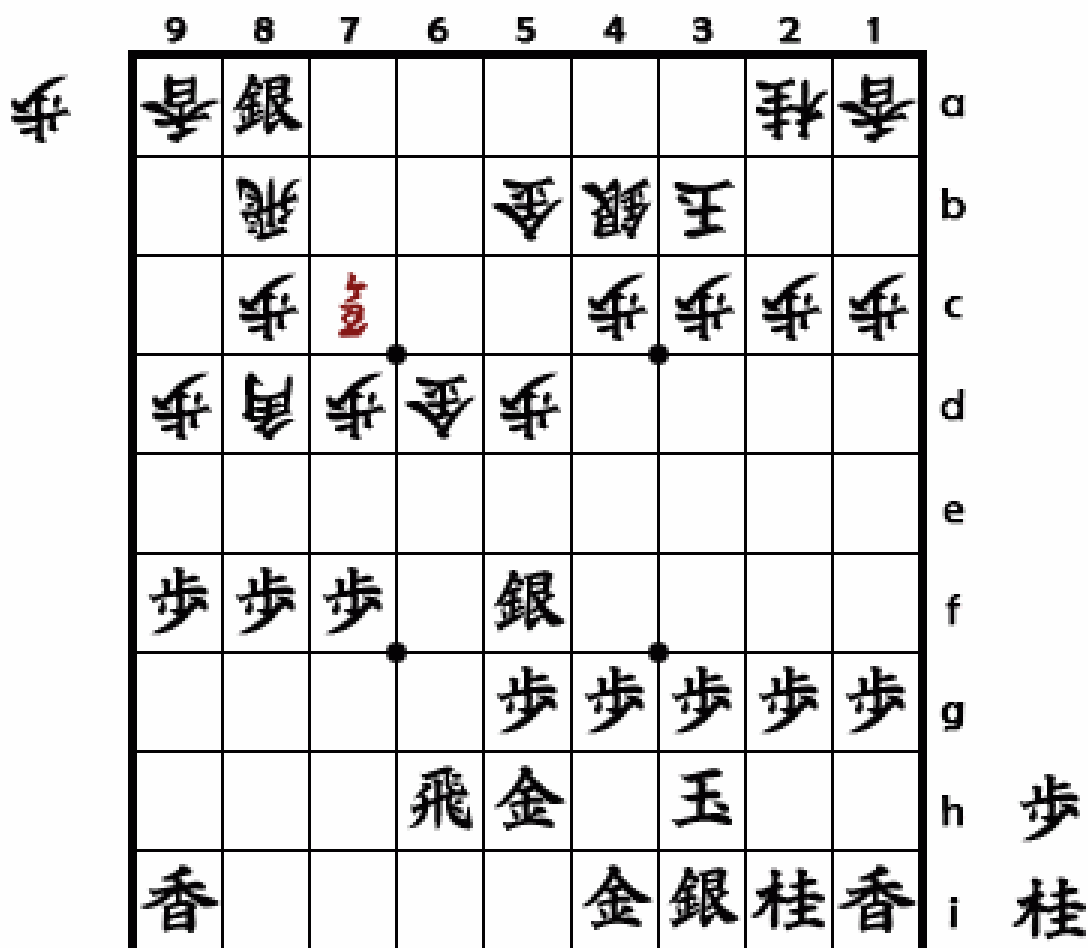
Bishop, Vanguard prevented to 16 R6b

(not 16 Px6e?; 17 Rx6e, 18 P\*6d; 19 R2e,) 17 S7h, 18 K4a; (and now not 18 Px6e?; 19 Nx6e, 20 S6d; 21 Bx6d, 22 Gx6d; 23 S\*5c,) 19 K4h, 20 K3b; 21 K3h, 22 G5b; 23 Px6d, (now that the 5c square is adequately defended, *Gote* was threatening to capture on 6e) 24 Sx6d; 25 S6g, 26 P7d; 27 S5f, 28 S6d-5c; (This retreat is not forced, but aims at either P\*6d or P9d-9e, since the exchange of Bishop for Silver and Lance is much less effective with the Silver on 5c than on 6d. If *Gote* just leaves things alone, *Sente* can complete his Mino castle while *Gote* can't do much.) 29 G6i-5h, 30 P9d; 31 N6e, 32 S6d;



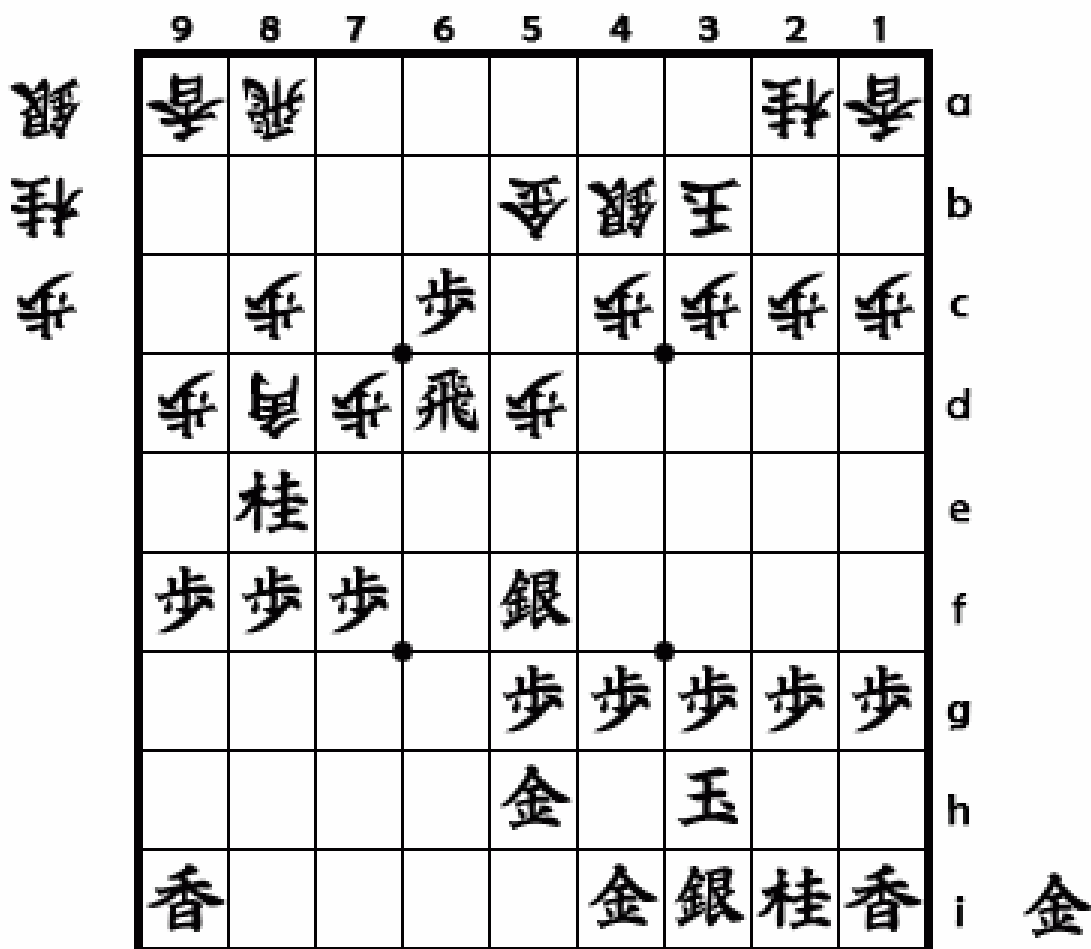
Bishop, Vanguard prevented 17 S7h to 32 S6d

(32 S4d; 33 P\*6d, 34 Gx6d; 35 N7c+, 36 Nx7c; 37 Rx6d, makes profit) 33 Bx6d!, 34 Gx6d; 35 S\*7c, 36 R6c; (36 Nx7c; 37 Nx7c+, 38 R6a; 39 P\*6b, wins the Gold on 6d) 37 S7b=, 38 R6b; 39 Sx8a=, (note how it's usually best not to promote a Silver on the last two ranks, as a Silver has twice as many retreating moves as a Gold. Now *Sente* threatens 41 N7c+, 42 R6a; 43 S7b=) 40 B\*8d; (guards the threat, but the Bishop is now a target. If instead 40 G56c; then 41 N\*8e) 41 P8f, 42 R8b; (42 P5e; 43 P8e, 44 B9c; 45 N7c+) 43 N7c+!! (a nice tactic).



Bishop, Vanguard prevented 33 Bx6d! to 43 N7c+!!

44 Bx7c; 45 N\*8e, 46 B8d; 47 Rx6d, 48 Rx8a;  
 49 P\*6c, (*Sente* has lost Bishop for Gold, but his threats  
 of G\*7b or Rx7d are hard to meet).



Bishop, Vanguard prevented 44 Bx7c to 49 P\*6c

## Line 2: Variation 1:

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
歩	香	桂						桂	香	a
			飛	金	銀	玉				b
	歩	歩	金	銀	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	c
		歩		歩						d
										e
	歩		歩		銀					f
	角	歩	桂		歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	g
				飛	金		玉			h
	香					金	銀	桂	香	i 歩

Bishop, Vanguard prevented, Variation 1, to  
29 G6i-5h

30 P\*6d; 31 P\*6e, 32 N7c; (32 Px6e would be one tempo worse than above line) 33 Px6d, 34 Sx6d; (34 Gx6d; 35 Bx6d!, 36 Sx6d; 37 P7e, 38 B\*4d, 39 Px7d, 40 Bx7g+; 41 Px7c+, 42 Sx7c; 43 Rx6b+, 44 Sx6b; 45 P\*6c, 46 S6b-5a; 47 N\*6d, 48 Gx6c; 49 N5b+, 50 Sx5b; 51 R\*7b, forking Horse and Silver) 35 N6e, 36 Nx6e; 37 Sx6e, 38 Sx6e; 39 Rx6e, 40 P\*6d; 41 R8e, 42 R8b;

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
銀	香							桂	香	a
桂		飛		金	銀	玉				b
	歩	歩		金		歩	歩	歩	歩	c
			歩	歩	歩					d
		飛								e
	歩		歩							f
	角	歩			歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	g 歩
				金		玉				h 桂
	香				金	銀	桂	香		i 銀

Bishop, Vanguard prevented, Variation 1, 30 P\*6d to 42 R8b

(42 G7c; 43 P7e, 44 P8d; 45 Px7d, 46 Gx7d; 47 R2e, 48 R6a; 49 N\*6f, 50 G6e; 51 Nx5d, 52 S5c; 53 Rx6e,



54 Px6e; 55 Bx5c+, 56 Gx5c; 57 S\*6b) 43 P\*6e,  
 44 N\*7c; (44 Px6e; 45 N\*6d) 45 Px6d, 46 Nx8e;  
 47 Px6c+, 48 Nx9g+; 49 G\*7c, 50 R9b; 51 +Px5b,  
 52 Rx5b; 53 P\*6c, 54 P\*6a; 55 P6b+, 56 Px6b;  
 57 N\*6d, 58 R5c; 59 Gx6b and the threat of N5b+ gives  
*Sente* the advantage.



Bishop, Vanguard prevented, Variation 1,  
 43 P\*6e to 59 Gx6b

## Line 2: Variation 2 : Quick attack prevented.

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
a	香	桂		金	玉	金	銀	桂	香	
b		飛		銀						
c	歩	歩	歩			歩	歩	歩	歩	
d				歩	歩					
e										
f			歩	歩						
g	歩	歩			歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	
h		角		飛						
i	香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂	香	

Bishop, Vanguard prevented, Variation 2 to 7 R6h

8 S6c; (best, I think) 9 S7h, (the P9f and B9g attack is not good here because after a later Nx6e S5c-6d Bx6d Sx6d the Silver guards the squares that the Knight attacks, whereas a Gold on 6d does not.) 10 S4b; 11 K4h, 12 S5c; 13 S3h, 14 K4b; 15 K3i, (This method of castling, rather than ♠K3h~♠K2h before ♠S3h, is preferred when an early attack using the right Knight is planned, to save a move and because sometimes the king will stay on 3i or go to 2i since on 2h it may be vulnerable to a later attack on 3f by Knight or pawn)

16 G6a-5b; 17 P4f, 18 P4d; 19 P6e, 20 Px6e; 21 Rx6e,  
 22 P\*6d; 23 R6h, 24 G4c; 25 P3f, 26 G5b; 27 S6g,  
 28 P8d; 29 S5f, 30 P8e; 31 B7g, 32 P7d; 33 N3g,  
 34 N7c;

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
a	香							桂	香	
b		飛			金	玉				
c	歩		桂	銀	銀	金	歩	歩	歩	
d			歩	歩	歩	歩				
e		歩								
f			歩		銀	歩	歩			
g	歩	歩	角		歩		桂	歩	歩	
h				飛			銀			
i	香	桂		金		金	玉		香	歩

Bishop, Vanguard prevented, Variation 2,  
 8 S6c to 34 N7c

(This is better than 34 K3b which is met by 35 R4h,  
 36 N7c; 37 G6i-5h, 38 P6e; 39 P4e, 40 Px4e; 41 Nx4e,  
 42 S4d; 43 Bx4d!, 44 Gx4d; 45 S\*5c. Note that this is  
 almost a mirror image of the quick attack main line  
 above. This type of attack works against Silver and  
 Gold but not against two Silvers. Since *Gote* cannot

guard both 6d and 4d with two Silvers, *Sente* attacks whichever point has only one Silver defending.) **35** G6i-5h, (now **35** R4h, **36** P6e; **37** G6i-5h, is met by **38** P6f) **36** P9d; (now or later  $\triangle$ P6e or  $\triangle$ N6e are met by  $\blacktriangle$ Sx6e; although *Sente* loses Silver for Knight and Pawn, nominally a loss, the lack of any *Gote* Pawn to block out the Rook makes this good for *Sente*. This is a very important point.) **37** G4g, (**37** P9f would be inconsistent with the plan of attacking 4d) **38** P9e; **39** K2h, (now that 3f is defended this is appropriate) **40** P1d; **41** P1f, **42** K3b; **43** P2f.

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
香							桂	香	a
	飛			金		玉			b
		桂	銀	銀	金	歩	歩		c
		歩	歩	歩	歩			歩	d
歩	歩								e
		歩		銀	歩	歩	歩	歩	f
歩	歩	角		歩	金	桂			g
			飛			銀	玉		h
香	桂				金			香	i 歩

Bishop, Vanguard prevented, Variation 2,  
**35** R4h to **43** P2f

Since *Gote* makes no threat, *Sente* plays every useful move before attacking with several branches:

## Line 2: Variation 2 : Branch A:

44 P7e; 45 Px7e, 46 N6e; 47 Sx6e, 48 Px6e; 49 Rx6e,  
50 S\*7f; 51 R6h, 52 Sx7g+; 53 Nx7g



Bishop, Vanguard prevented, Variation 2, Branch A,

and despite *Gote's* Bishop for Knight and Pawns profit, *Sente's* threat of ♠P7d, his pieces and Pawns in hand, and *Gote's* lack of any Pawn in hand give *Sente* the edge. But if *Gote* plays ♞R8d or ♞R8a first, this will be a real threat.

## Line 2: Variation 2: Branch B:

44 R8d; 45 P4e, (else 44 P7e) 46 Px4e; 47 Nx4e, 48 S4d; (48 P\*4d; 49 Nx5c+, 50 G5bx5c; 51 S\*6b, 52 N6e; 53 B6f, wins Gold for Knight) 49 Bx4d!, (again this tactic, the theme of this whole Vanguard denied line) 50 Gx4d; 51 S\*5c, 52 Gx4e; 53 Sx5b=, 54 Sx5b; 55 Sx4e,

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
銀	香							桂	香	a
桂				銀		玉				b
角			桂				歩	歩		c
歩		飛	歩	歩	歩				歩	d
	歩	歩				銀				e
			歩				歩	歩	歩	f
	歩	歩			歩	金				g
				飛			銀	玉		h 歩 <sub>2</sub>
	香	桂				金			香	i 金 <sub>2</sub>

Bishop, Vanguard prevented, Variation 2, Branch B,  
44 R8d to 55 Sx4e

(this exchange of Bishop and Knight for two Golds is about even materially, but *Gote* has lost his castle)

56 B\*5e; 57 P\*4f, 58 Bx9i+; 59 G\*6b, 60 S\*4c;  
 (60 S4c; 61 Rx6d) 61 Sx5d, (if *Gote* had played 44 R8a  
 instead of 44 R8d *Sente* would now prefer 61 Rx6d,  
 62 +B5e; 63 Gx5b, 64 +Bx6d; 65 S\*5c, 66 Sx5b;  
 67 G\*4b, 68 K2b; 69 Sx6d+, 70 R\*6h; 71 B\*7b;  
 72 R8d; 73 Bx5d+, with a winning attack) 62 +B4d;  
 (“Bring the Horse home.” is a proverb) 63 Gx5b,  
 64 Sx5b; 65 Rx6d, 66 N\*7b; 67 S\*4c, 68 Sx4c;  
 69 Sx4c+, 70 +Bx4c; 71 R6b+, followed by taking the  
 Knights favors *Sente* due to his Dragon and much better  
 castle.



Bishop, Vanguard prevented, Variation 2, Branch B,  
 56 B\*5e to 71 R6b+



## Line 2: Variation 2: Branch C:

*Gote* attacks first. 44 P5e; 45 Sx5e, 46 N6e; 47 B6f, 48 P8f; 49 P4e, 50 Px8g+; 51 Px4d, 52 G4c-4b; 53 N4e, 54 S6b; 55 P3e, 56 P\*8h; (56 +P8f; 57 R8h, 58 P\*8g; 59 R7h, 60 +P7g; 61 P\*8c, 62 Rx8c; 63 P\*8d with advantage) 57 P3d, 58 Px3d; 59 S4f, 60 L1c; 61 P4c+, 62 G5bx4c; 63 B1a+, 64 P\*4d; 65 P\*3c, 66 K3a; 67 Rx6e!,

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
歩	香						王	桂	馬	a
		飛		銀		金				b
				銀		金	歩	歩	香	c
			歩	歩		歩	歩		歩	d
	歩			飛		桂				e
			歩			銀		歩	歩	f
	歩	?			歩	金				g
		歩					銀	玉		h 歩 <sub>2</sub>
	香	桂				金			香	i 桂

Bishop, Vanguard prevented, Variation 2, Branch C,  
44 P5e to 67 Rx6e!

68 Px6e; 69 N\*5e, 70 S5d; 71 Nx4c+, 72 Sx4c; 73 S5e, 74 Px4e; 75 P\*4d, 76 S5b; 77 S5d, 78 P\*5c; (78 Nx3c; 79 G\*4c or 78 N\*5a; 79 G\*2b) 79 P4c+, in all cases with a huge attack.

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
桂 <sup>2</sup>	香						玉	桂	馬	a
飛		飛		銀	銀	金				b
				歩	と	歩	歩	歩	皇	c
			歩		銀		歩		歩	d
	歩			歩		歩				e
			歩					歩	歩	f
	歩	と			歩	金				g
		歩					銀	玉		h 歩
	香	桂				金			香	i 金

Bishop, Vanguard prevented, Variation 2, Branch C,  
68 Px6e to 79 P4c+

## Games

[243] Kaufman vs. Chuza

[248] Kaufman vs. Nozuki

The following Bishop handicap I played with professional player Makoto Chuza, (5-*dan*) illustrates the system I recommend rather well. This game followed line 2 of this article, the initial (main) line, but *Gote* omitted **12** G6c.

[Sente "Larry Kaufman, amateur 5 Dan"]

[Gote "Makoto Chuza, 5 Dan"]

[Date "2002/10/19"]

[Site "Second International Shogi Forum, Tokyo"]

[Handicap "Bishop"]

[Result "1/2"]

**1** ..., **2** S6b; **3** P7f, **4** P5d; **5** P6f, **6** P6d; **7** R6h, **8** S5c;  
**9** P9f, **10** R6b; **11** B9g, **12** G4a-5b; **13** N7g, **14** K4a;  
**15** S7h, **16** K3b; **17** P6e, (**17** K4h then K3h first is also plausible, but I was concerned that after **18** S3a-4b the game continuation would not work as 5c is too well defended) **18** Px6e; **19** Nx6e, **20** S6d;

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
歩	香	桂		金			銀	桂	香	a
			飛	金			玉			b
	歩	歩	歩			歩	歩	歩	歩	c
			銀	歩						d
			桂							e
	歩		歩							f
	角	歩			歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	g
			銀	飛						h
	香			金	玉	金	銀	桂	香	i 歩

Kaufman vs. Chuza to 20 S6d

21 Bx6d, 22 Rx6d; 23 S\*5c, 24 Gx5c; 25 Nx5c+,  
 26 S\*6f; 27 G4i-5h, 28 B\*4d;

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
歩	香	桂		金			銀	桂	香	a
							王			b
	歩	歩	歩		金	歩	歩	歩	歩	c
				飛	歩	角				d
										e
	歩		歩	龍						f
		歩			歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	g
			銀	飛	金					h 歩
	香			金	玉		銀	桂	香	i 金

Kaufman vs. Chuza, 21 Bx6d to 28 B\*4d

29 +Nx5d, 30 Rx5d; 31 G\*4e, 32 P\*6g; 33 Sx6g,  
 34 Sx5g+; 35 Gx5d, 36 +Sx6h; 37 G6ix6h, 38 Bx9i+;  
 39 R\*8b, 40 N\*6b; 41 Rx8a+, 42 Nx5d; 43 +Rx6a,  
 44 P3d; 45 +R5b, 46 G\*4b; 47 +Rx5d, 48 L\*5b;  
 49 +Rx3d, 50 P\*3c; 51 +R2e, 52 Lx5h+; 53 Sx5h, (I've  
 traded my Bishop for Silver, Knight, and two Pawns,  
 and with so many pieces in hand I am clearly winning)  
 54 R\*8i; 55 P\*6i, 56 G\*7g;

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
皇						銀	桂	皇	a
					金	王			b
歩	歩	歩			歩	歩	歩	歩	c
									d
							龍		e 歩 <sub>3</sub>
歩		歩							f 香
	歩	金			歩	歩	歩	歩	g 桂 <sub>2</sub>
			金	銀					h 銀
香	金		歩	玉		銀	桂	香	i 金

Kaufman vs. Chuza, 29 +Nx5d to 56 G\*7g

Here I erred by attacking with 57 L\*2f, which gave him a strong attack by 58 Gx6h; 59 Kx6h, 60 Rx8g+; the

game ending a few moves later in a draw by repetition (*sennichite*).

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
金	香						銀	桂	香	a
歩						金	王			b
	歩	歩	歩			歩	歩	歩	歩	c
										d
								龍		e
	歩		歩					香		f
		龍				歩	歩	歩	歩	g
				玉	銀					h
	龍			歩			銀	桂	香	i

歩<sub>3</sub>  
 桂<sub>2</sub>  
 銀  
 金<sub>2</sub>

Kaufman vs. Chuza, 57 L\*2f to 60 Rx8g+

Instead, 57 Gx7g, 58 +Bx7g; 59 G\*6h leaves me with an easy win, as Mr. Chuza pointed out after the game.

Hiroataka Nozuki (Pro 5-*dan*) played the game with me in Chicago on the 26 April 2003 and reviewed it afterwards before the audience at the U.S. Championship. The following comments are based heavily on his.

**1** ..., **2** S6b; **3** P7f, **4** P5d; **5** P6f, **6** P6d; (it seems that most pros prefer not to allow the Vanguard Pawn) **7** R6h, **8** S6c; (as I recommend in this article) **9** S7h, **10** S4b; **11** K4h, **12** S5c; **13** S3h, **14** P7d; (deviating from the normal **14** K4b given in this article) **15** K3i, **16** P8d; **17** P6e, **18** Px6e; **19** Rx6e, **20** K6b; (right side King, which is more aggressive than the usual left side King. But it is precisely because of this possibility that I prefer Fourth File Rook over Central Rook, as my attack will be closer to his King.) **21** R6h, **22** P\*6d; **23** S6g, **24** P4d; **25** G6i-5h, **26** G3b; **27** S6f, (~~**27** P4f~~, and S5f was the plan given in my article against left side King. But against right side King, S6f seemed better to me.) **28** P3d; **29** K2h, **30** N3c; **31** P1f, **32** P1d; **33** P5f, **34** G4c; **35** P9f, **36** P8e; **37** B9g!,



9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
香	桂		金					香	a
	飛		玉						b
歩			銀	銀	金	桂	歩	歩	c
		歩	歩	歩	歩	歩		歩	d
	歩								e
歩		歩	銀	歩				歩	f
角	歩				歩	歩	歩		g
			飛	金		銀	玉		h
香	桂				金		桂	香	i 歩

Kaufman vs. Nozuki to 37 B9g!

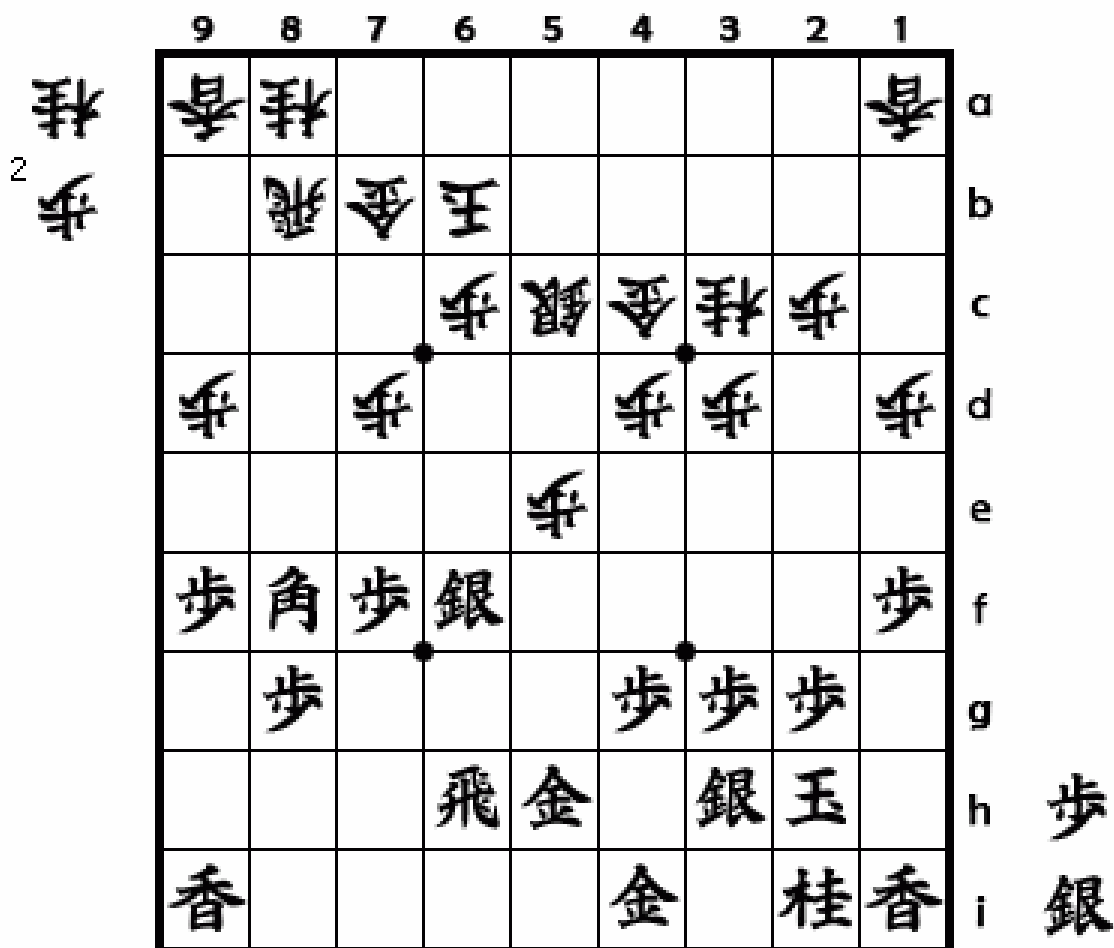
Perhaps *Gote* would have played 36 P8e before I played 35 P9f if he knew I intended this move. I say in this article not to play this way against the Silvers on 6c and 5c, but I felt that the location of *Gote's* King justified the plan here.

38 G7b; 39 N7g, 40 P9d; 41 P\*6e, 42 P8f; (42 Px6e; 43 Sx6e, 44 P\*6d; 45 Sx6d, and although I lose Bishop for Silver and Pawn, the lack of any Pawn to drop in defense should prove fatal to *Gote*.) 43 Bx8f, (even better was taking on 6d first) 44 Px6e; 45 P\*6d!,

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
歩	香	桂							香	a
		飛	金	玉						b
			銀	銀	金	桂	歩	歩		c
	歩		歩	歩	歩	歩	歩		歩	d
			歩							e
	歩	角	歩	銀	歩				歩	f
		歩	桂			歩	歩	歩		g
			飛	金		銀	玉			h
	香					金		桂	香	i

Kaufman vs. Nozuki, 38 G7b to 45 P\*6d!

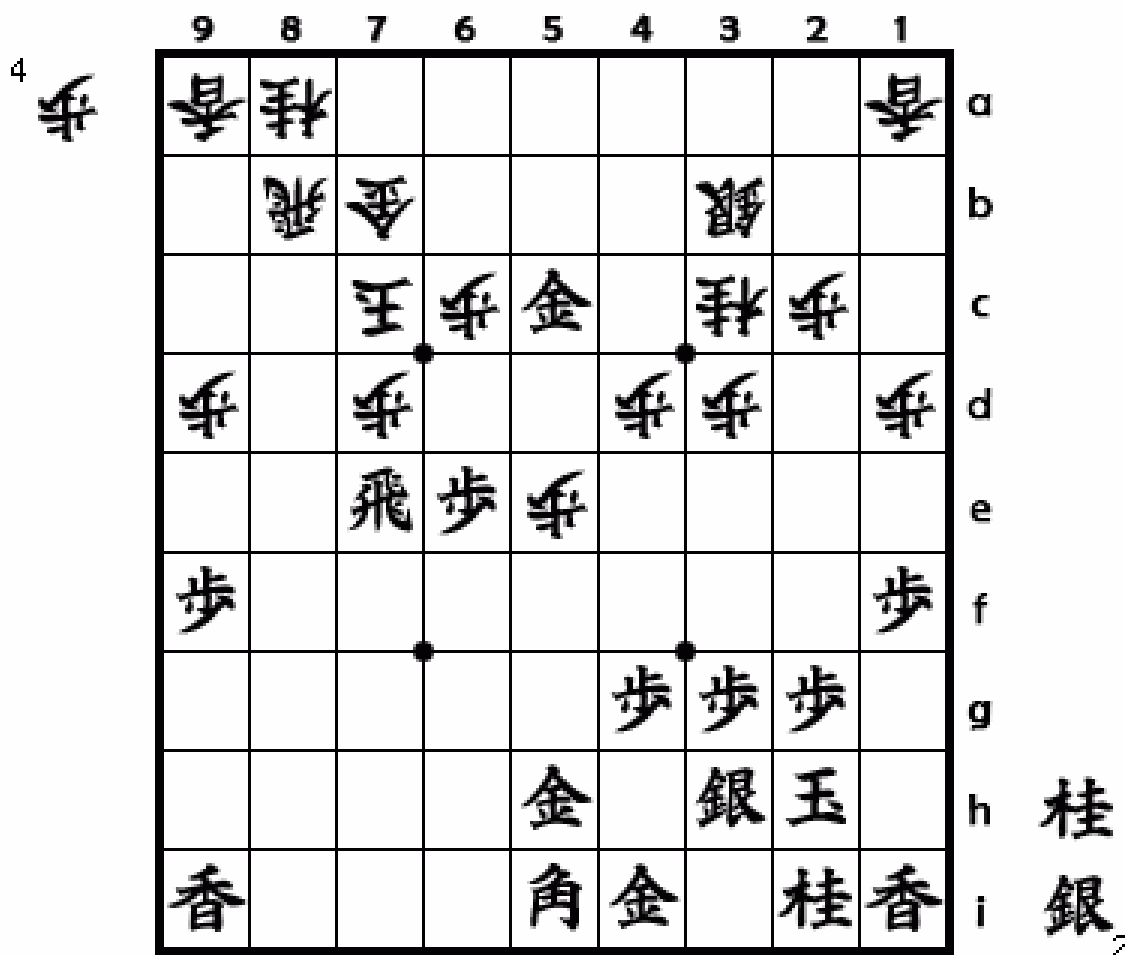
46 S6cx6d; (46 Px6f; 47 Px6c+, 48 Gx6c; 49 Rx6f, 50 P\*6d; 51 P\*6e, 52 Px6e; 53 Nx6e, 54 S6d; 55 Bx6d, 56 Gx6d; 57 S\*5c, 58 Gx5c; 59 S\*7a, 60 Kx7a; 61 Nx5c+, 62 P\*6e; 63 P\*6c, 64 Rx8g+; 65 R6g, with decisive advantage. I wonder if I could have found all these moves had he played this way. I felt during the game that Nozuki always chose the ‘correct’ move rather than the trickiest one.) 47 Nx6e, 48 P\*6c; 49 Nx5c+, 50 Sx5c; 51 P5e, 52 Px5e;



Kaufman vs. Nozuki, 46 S6cx6d to 52 Px5e

53 S6e, (Even better was: 53 Sx5e, 54 P\*5d; 55 P\*6d, 56 Px5e; 57 Px6c+, 58 Gx6c; 59 S\*7a, 60 Kx7a;

61 Rx6c+, 62 S\*6b; 63 +R5b, 64 G4b; 65 G\*6a, winning. Of course if I could see all this in 1 minute, being in *byoyomi* by now, I wouldn't need a handicap from anyone!) 54 N\*6d!; 55 S\*3b, 56 G5d; 57 S4c+, 58 Gx6e; 59 Rx6e, 60 S\*5d; 61 G\*5b!, 62 K7c; 63 R6f, 64 Sx4c; 65 Gx5c, 66 S\*8e; 67 B5i, (Nozuki expected me to trade the Bishop for Knight and Silver, but my move is also good) 68 S3b; 69 P\*6e, 70 Nx7f; 71 P8f, 72 Sx8f; 73 Rx7f, 74 S7e; 75 Rx7e!,



Kaufman vs. Nozuki, 53 S6e to 75 Rx7e!

76 Px7e; 77 N\*8f, 78 G8c; (78 K8d; 79 S\*7d, 80 P\*8e;  
 81 Gx6c, 82 Gx6c; 83 Sx6c=, 84 Px8f; 85 P\*8e,  
 86 Kx8e; 87 S\*7d, 88 K8d; 89 G\*8e, 90 K9c; 91 P9e,  
 winning) 79 S\*8e, 80 N9c; 81 S\*7d, 82 Gx7d; 83 Sx7d,  
 84 K8d; 85 Gx6c, 86 P7f; 87 B4h, (*Gote* almost got an  
 entering King, but fortunately ‘almost’ doesn’t count!)  
 88 P\*6f; 89 Bx6f, 90 S\*7e; 91 P\*8e!,

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
皇									皇	a
飛		飛					銀			b
桂			金			桂	歩			c
歩	王	銀				歩	歩		歩	d
	歩	銀	歩	歩						e
歩	桂	歩	角						歩	f
						歩	歩	歩		g
				金		銀	玉			h 歩
香					金		桂	香		i 金

Kaufman vs. Nozuki, 76 Px7e to 91 P\*8e!

92 Nx8e; 93 S7c=

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
飛	香								香	a
4 歩		飛					銀			b
			銀	金			桂	歩		c
	歩	王				歩	歩		歩	d
		桂	銀	歩	歩					e
	歩	桂	歩	角					歩	f
						歩	歩	歩		g
					金		銀	玉		h 歩
	香					金		桂	香	i 金

Kaufman vs. Nozuki, 92 Nx8e to 93 S7c=

and *Gote* resigned. Despite my inaccurate moves 43 Bx8f and 53 S6e, this was a nice example of the B9g attack.

## Bishop Handicap Summary:

1. If *Gote* allows a Vanguard Pawn on 6e, support it by ♠R6h and ♠S6f, and bring your King to 2h, usually followed by ♠S3h.
2. If he then fails to guard 5d twice, consider an early attack with ♠P5e and ♠R5h.
3. If he does guard 5d twice, make a high mino castle, and aim for an attack with ♠P5e followed by ♠P4e, hoping to open the Bishop's diagonal.
4. If he plays ♞P3e, fight for control of the third file.
5. If *Gote* denies *Sente* a Vanguard Pawn by an early ♞P6d, aim to post your Bishop on 9g unless *Gote* plays an early ♞S6c.
6. Then play ♠N7g and ♠P6e, followed by ♠S7h and ♠K3h, capturing on 6d only when *Gote* threatens to take there without consequences. Then bring the Silver to 5f and play ♠G6i-5h.
7. Look for a chance to start the fight by ♠N6e or ♠P\*6e aiming to sacrifice Bishop for Silver on 6d followed by a drop on 5c or 7c, since a Gold on 6d doesn't defend those squares.
8. If *Gote* doesn't allow this, just make a High Mino castle and anything *Gote* does will backfire. There will surely be a good way to attack then.
9. If *Gote* plays an early ♞S6c, keep the Bishop on its original diagonal, exchange off the 6 file Pawn, make a High Mino castle, and bring the Silver to 5f. Aim for the attack ♠P4e~♠Px4e~♠Nx4e~♠S4d~♠Bx4d followed by a drop on 5c, the mirror image

of step 7 above. Remember, this type of attack works poorly against two Silvers, so be sure to attack the point which has a Gold as one of its defenders.

10. *Gote* may choose to attack first, but this will give you more ammunition for your counterattack. Remember, your attack on the center files is always closer to his King than his attack on the Rook's home file is to yours, so even if *Gote* seems to break in first it does not mean success for him, so long as your attack is not far behind.



## Lance Handicap.

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂	香	a
	飛						角		b
歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	c
			●			●			d
									e
									f
歩	歩	歩	●	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	g
	角						飛		h
香	桂	銀	金	玉	金	銀	桂	香	i

Lance handicap, start position

Lance handicap (left Lance removed, right Lance handicap was abolished about a hundred years ago) is not too popular, because if a fight erupts in the center of the board the extra Lance may be irrelevant or even a liability, an extra piece for the opponent to capture and use. Some clubs have abolished it, though the Shogi Renmei clubs and the Shoreikai still employ it. Many amateurs refuse to accept Lance handicap, choosing just to play first in an even game instead. It is the aim of this

article to show that this attitude is wrong and that Lance handicap deserves its place in the handicap spectrum.

Clearly, at Lance handicap *Gote* should play Ranging Rook and castle towards the side where he retains a Lance, since a castle without a Lance is a damaged castle. *Sente's* strategy is far less clear. In the majority of games, *Sente* plays Static Rook, aiming for a quick attack generally involving a sacrifice on the 1c Pawn. However, there are some problems with this plan. As with quick attacks in even games (Static vs. Ranging Rook), *Sente* will generally be the first to break through and promote pieces, but *Gote* has the better castle (Mino vs. Boat), so the game remains close. Furthermore, *Gote* has various ways to prevent a quick breakthrough and/or to start a fight in the center, even on slightly unfavorable terms. Then there is the practical objection that one needs to learn a great many razor-sharp variations just for a handicap that will be rarely played. Therefore, I recommend instead 'Plan B', in which *Sente* also plays Ranging Rook. Instead of trying to exploit the extra Lance by quick attack, he takes advantage of the fact that *Gote* will not have a Lance pressing on *Sente's* King.

The specific plan I advocate is one (of three) analyzed in a recent book on handicap Shogi by Takahashi Michio, (pro 9-*dan*). I recently tried out the strategy against handicap expert Shoshi, (pro 7-*dan*), and

although I hadn't yet had time to learn it well and misplayed the opening somewhat I obtained a promising position (the game was unfinished due to time constraints). The plan is simple: range the Rook to the seventh file, move the King to the right, exchange off the Pawn in front of the Rook, make an Anaguma castle, and attack by a timely ♖S7f, ♜B7g, and ♙P6e, and/or by an edge attack. The point of this line at Lance handicap is that in an even game, *Gote* would attack the Anaguma on the edge by a timely P1e and N-1g-2e<sup>15</sup> (after exchanging off the 2nd file Pawn). The absence of the Lance makes it safe for *Sente* to hide in the Anaguma, while *Gote* dare not do the same due to this edge attack threat. *Sente's* advantage is thus transformed into having a safer castle as well as the option of an edge attack against the enemy castle. In my opinion this strategy gives *Sente* a clear advantage, though of course not so large an advantage as he should obtain at the major piece handicaps.

Let's look at Takahashi's analysis, together with the lessons learned from my encounter with Mr. Shoshi.

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<sup>15</sup> Editor's note: This has the Knight moving **backwards** – are the moves reversed – or is *Sente* meant rather than *Gote*?

1 ..., 2 P3d; 3 P7f, 4 P4d; (An early Bishop exchange should favor *Sente*, as *Gote's* missing Lance leaves *Sente* more drop squares for his Bishop.) 5 R7h, 6 S4b; (*Gote* rushes a Silver to 4c to defend 4d against the threat of P7e, P7d, Rx7d and Rx4d!) 7 P7e, 8 S4c; 9 K4h, 10 B3c; 11 K3h; 12 R2b, (This is the standard way to play double Ranging Rook in even games, since the Rook can now support an attack by a timely ♠P2f.) 13 S6h, 14 P2d ;

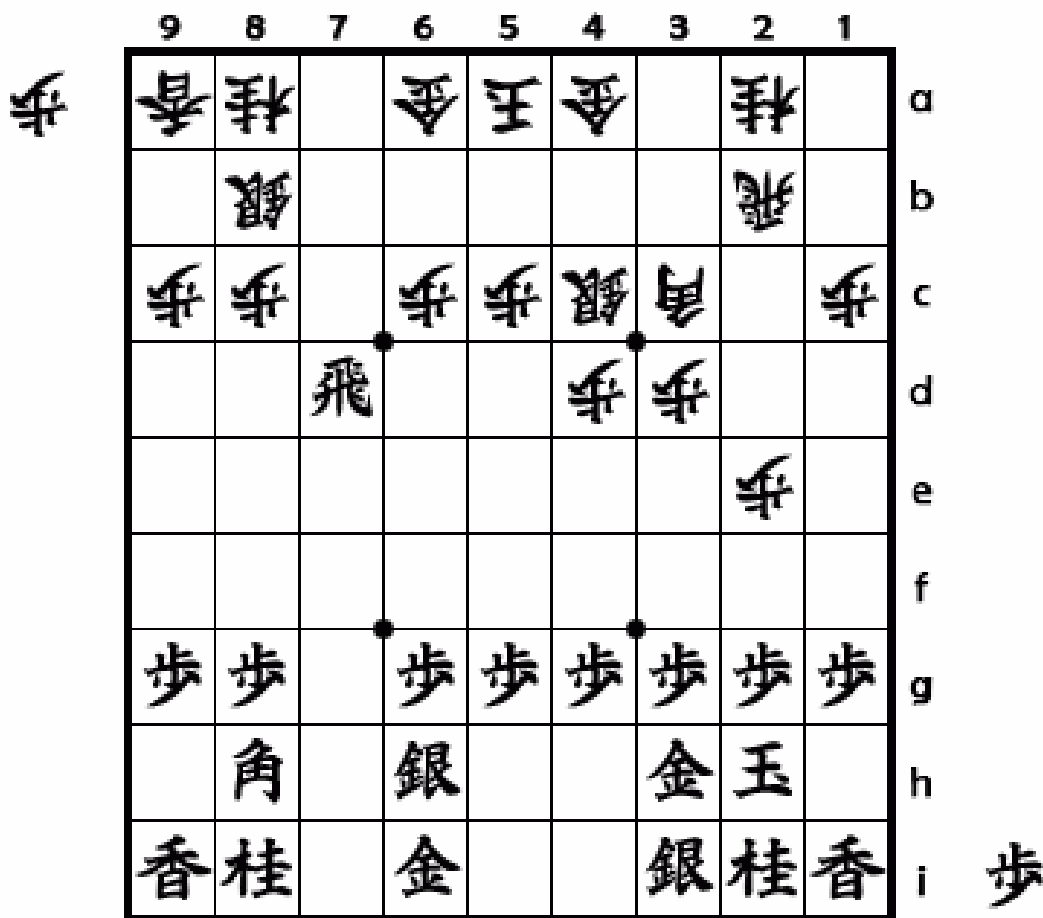
9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
香	桂	銀	金	玉	金		桂		a
							飛		b
歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	銀	角		歩	c
			●		歩	歩	歩		d
		歩							e
									f
歩	歩		●	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	g
	角	飛	銀			玉			h
香	桂		金		金	銀	桂	香	i

Lance, to 14 P2d

It might be more accurate to make castling moves first, with the idea of not capturing when *Sente* plays ♠P7d.

Then when *Sente* eventually captures on 7c, play will transpose to our main line, except that *Sente's* Rook is on 7h instead of 7i. This is how Shoshi (7-dan) played against me. This difference slightly favors *Gote*, but as we'll discuss later it's a minor point.

15 P7d, 16 Px7d; 17 Rx7d, 18 S8b; (*Gote* aims for the Yagura, or Fortress, castle. If instead 18 P\*7c; 19 R7f, and *Sente* will get to make both an Anaguma castle and an Ishida formation by ▲N7g, ▲P9f, and ▲B9g. *Gote* is likely to be stuck with no counterplay.) 19 K2h, 20 P2e; 21 G3h!,

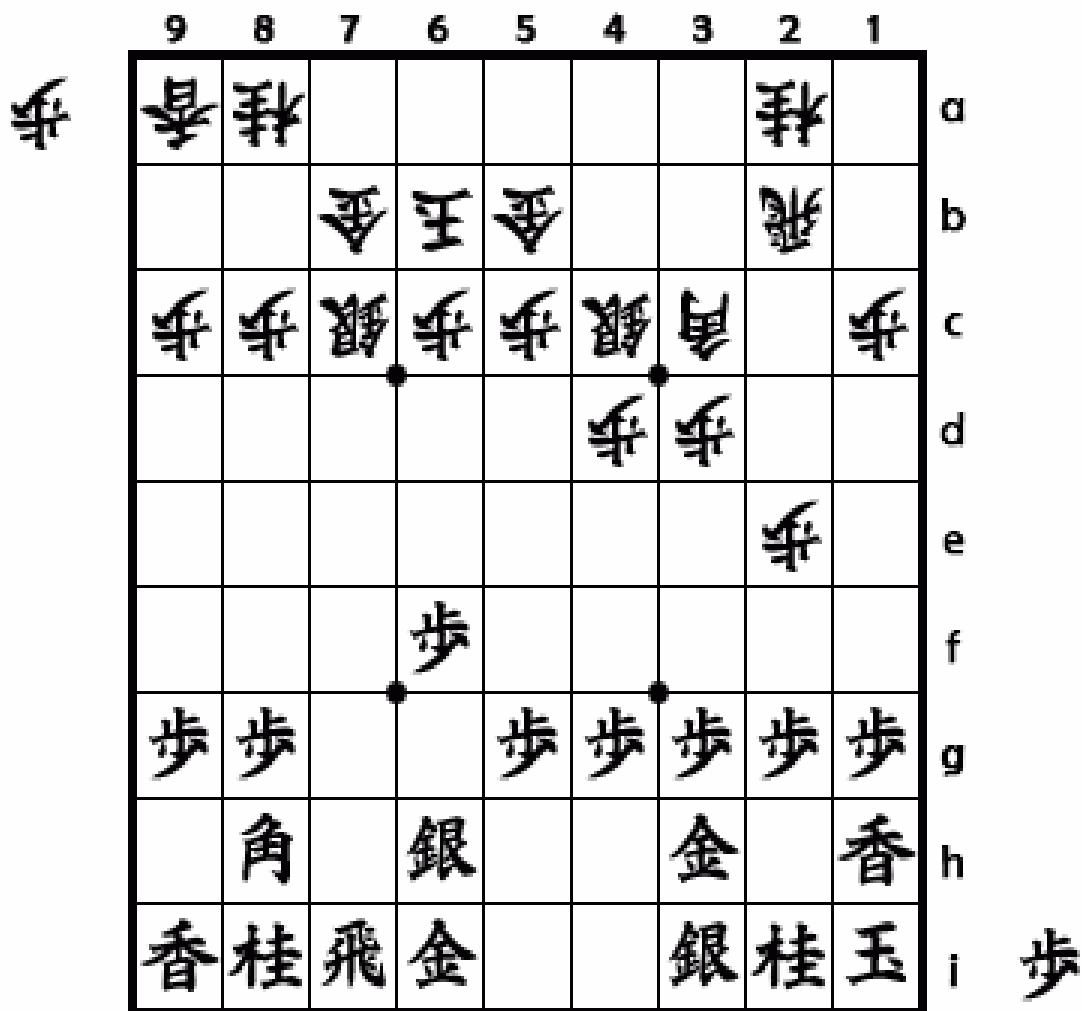


Lance, 15 P7d to 21 G3h!

This is needed so that when *Sente* plays ▲K1i later he can answer ◻P2f by taking and dropping a Pawn on 2g.

22 K6b; 23 L1h, 24 G4a-5b; 25 K1i, 26 G7b; 27 P6f, (to give the Silver access to 6g) 28 S7c; 29 R7i, (29 R7f is only logical if *Sente* intends ▲N7g and the Ishida

shape, but here the Rook would be a target for a timely ♖S8d~♗7e. This illustrates why the Fortress castle is said to be *Gote's* best bet in this line.)



Lance, 22 K6b to 29 R7i

30 P\*7d; 31 S6g, 32 P6d; 33 G5h,

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
a	桂	桂						桂		
b			金	玉	金			飛		
c	歩	歩	銀		歩	銀	角		歩	
d			歩	歩		歩	歩			
e								歩		
f				歩						
g	歩	歩		銀	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	
h		角			金		金		香	
i	香	桂	飛				銀	桂	玉	歩

Lance, 30 P\*7d to 33 G5h

*Sente* chooses this over ▲G5i aiming to put this Gold on 3i because in a game with the Kings on opposite sides the attacks usually come from the front rather than from the sides, so the Anaguma with all three generals on the second rank is more appropriate.



34 G5b-6c; 35 S2h, 36 K7a; 37 G5h-4h, 38 K8b; (Both players have completed their castles, Anaguma vs. Fortress.) 39 P9f, 40 P9d; (Otherwise *Sente* has an attack against the edge by ▲P9e and ▲N8e.)

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
a	桂	桂						桂		
b		玉	金					飛		
c		歩	銀	金	歩	銀	角		歩	
d	歩		歩	歩		歩	歩			
e								歩		
f	歩			歩						
g		歩		銀	歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	
h		角				金	金	銀	香	
i	香	桂	飛					桂	香	歩

Lance, 34 G5b-6c to 40 P9d

41 S7f, 42 P2f; 43 Px2f, 44 Rx2f; 45 P\*2g, 46 R2d;

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
歩	香	桂						桂		a
		王	金							b
		歩	銀	金	歩	銀	角		歩	c
歩		歩	歩			歩	歩	飛		d
										e
	歩		銀	歩						f
		歩			歩	歩	歩	歩	歩	g
		角				金	金	銀	香	h
香	桂	飛						桂	香	i 歩

Lance, 41 S7f to 46 R2d

(In an even game *Gote* would play  $\triangle R2h$  and follow up by P-1f-1e and N-1g-2e.<sup>16</sup>)

<sup>16</sup> Editor's note: The same comment here as in the earlier note – the Knight, and this time the Pawn appear to be moving backwards?

47 B7g, 48 S5d; (to deter P6e) 49 R6i, 50 P4e; 51 P9e!,  
 52 Px9e; 53 P\*9d;



Lance, 47 B7g to 53 P\*9d

(This edge attack is effective, because if 54 Lx9d; 55 S8e or 54 S8d; 55 P6e, with advantage for *Sente* due to the weakened sixth file.) 54 B4d; 55 Lx9e, 56 P\*9b; (The result of the edge attack is the loss of running room for the *Gote's* King. Now a central attack will be more deadly.) 57 P5f, (The purpose of this move is to prepare ▲P6e which if played now would allow the reply 58 P\*2f; 59 Px2f, 60 Rx2f; and the attack on the

Silver is very annoying. 57 P5f blocks the fourth rank.)  
 58 N3c; 59 P6e,

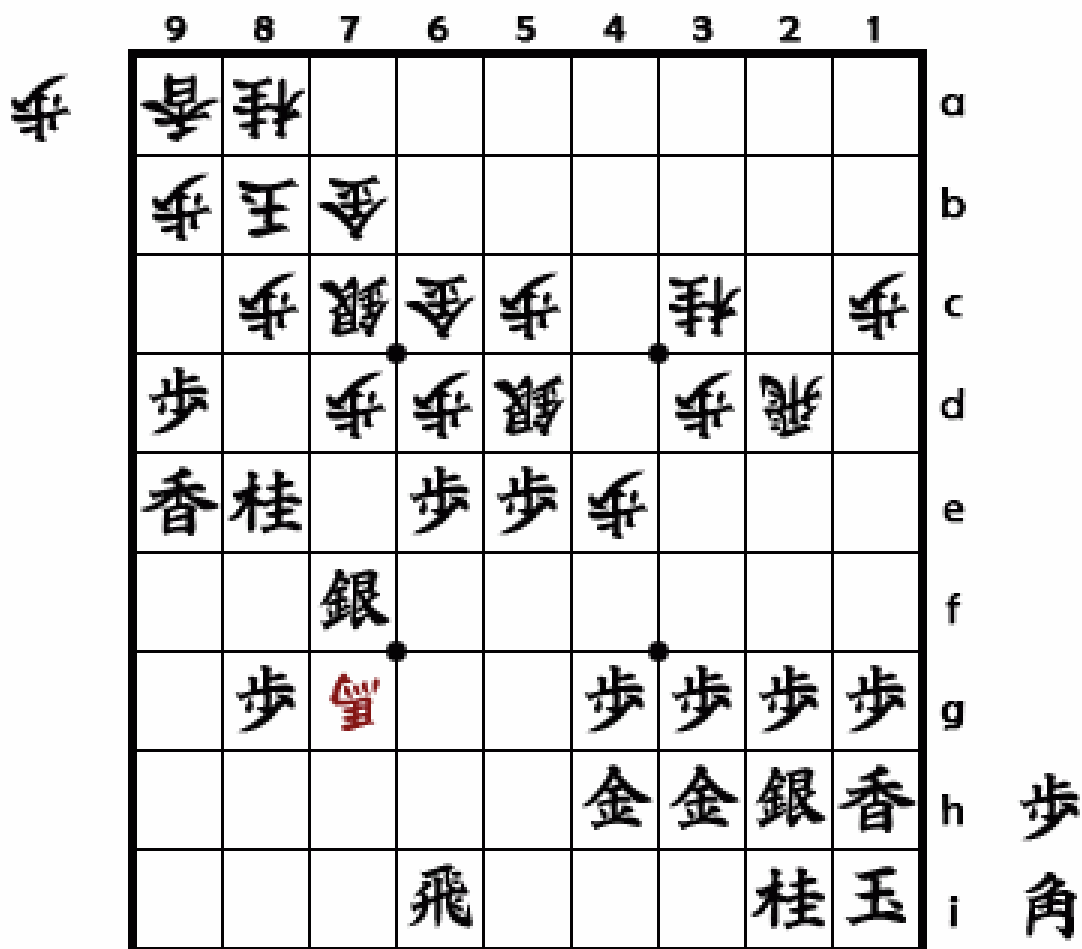
	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
歩	香	桂								a
	歩	玉	金							b
		歩	銀	金	歩		桂		歩	c
	歩		歩	歩	銀	角	歩	飛		d
	香			歩		歩				e
			銀		歩					f
		歩	角			歩	歩	歩	歩	g
						金	金	銀	香	h
		桂		飛				桂	玉	i 歩

Lance, 54 B4d to 59 P6e

Now it's time to consider what we would do if *Gote* had not captured on 7d back on move 16. We would ultimately reach this same position, but with the Rook on 6h instead of 6i. It would then be advisable to play ♠R6i before attacking with ♠P6e, due to the danger of a Silver or Bishop drop on 5i later, so *Gote* would have a free move. His most useful move is ♞P1d, with ideas of disturbing the Anaguma by ♞P1e and ♞P1f, even without a Lance behind this Pawn. But this is unlikely

to make any difference, because *Sente* will attack before this becomes possible. However the Pawn on 1d does prevent ♠B\*1e, so it may affect things slightly.

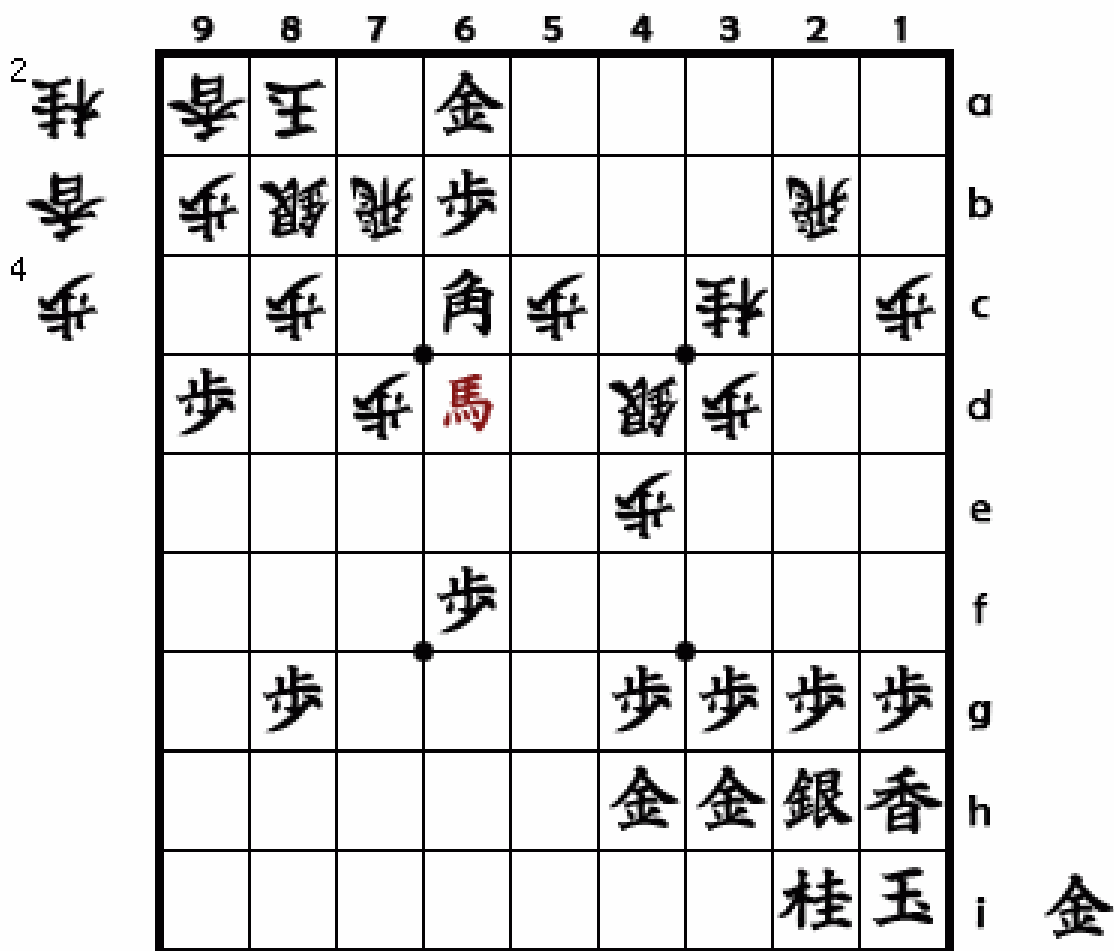
60 Bx7g+; 61 Nx7g, 62 B\*4d; (if 62 Px6e; 63 Sx6e, with attack and the threat of B\*1e R2c S\*3b. Even if *Gote* had played P1d earlier, preventing B\*1e, *Sente* should be doing well here.) 63 N8e, 64 B7g+; (Takahashi points out that if *Gote* tries to avoid the Knight for Silver exchange by 64 S8d; then 65 Px6d, 66 G6c-6b; 67 P\*7c, is very strong, because if 68 Nx7c *Sente* exchanges Knights and forks the Rook and Bishop by N\*3f.) 65 P5e!,



Lance, 60 Bx7g+ to 65 P5e!



72 Gx6d; 73 P\*7c, 74 Nx7c; (If the Gold retreats 75 S\*6b is decisive.) 75 Nx7c+, 76 Gx7c; 77 N\*8e, 78 +Bx9e; (If 78 G7c-6c; 79 S\*7c wins quickly.) 79 S\*7a!, 80 Kx7a; 81 Nx7c+, 82 +Bx7c; 83 Bx7c+, 84 R2b; 85 P\*6b, 86 R\*7b; 87 G\*6a, 88 K8a; 89 +Bx6d, 90 S\*8b; 91 B\*6c.



Lance, 72 Gx6d to 91 B\*6c

*Gote* can safely resign. *Sente's* Anaguma remains perfectly intact.



## Lance Handicap Summary:

1. Assuming *Gote* avoids the Bishop exchange on move two, range the Rook to the seventh file and advance the 7 Pawn one square.
2. Move the King to the right twice, and advance your left Silver towards the center.
3. Exchange off the 7 Pawn. If he refuses to take it, don't rush to capture, but he can eventually force you to do so by  $\triangle G6c$ .
4. If he does capture, retreat to the fourth rank if attacked by a Pawn, aiming for Ishida shape. If attacked by a general, retreat to the first rank, aiming for a later  $\blacktriangle S7f$  and  $\blacktriangle P6e$  attack.
5. Move into an Anaguma after first playing  $\blacktriangle G3h$ . Aim for the high Anaguma with the generals lined up on the second rank from 4h to 2h.
6. Play  $\blacktriangle P6f$  and  $\blacktriangle S6g$ , then  $\blacktriangle P9f$  and  $\blacktriangle S7f$ . If *Gote* does not answer the edge push you can attack the edge by  $\blacktriangle P9e$  and  $\blacktriangle N8e$ , when the natural  $\triangle S8d$  weakens the defense of the sixth file.
7. Advance your Bishop to 7g (to permit a Knight recapture) and move your Rook to 6i (to support  $\blacktriangle P6e$  without allowing a Silver fork on 5i).
8. Consider an edge attack with  $\blacktriangle P9e$ , aiming to deprive *Gote* of an escape hatch for his King.
9.  $\blacktriangle P5f$  may be advisable to obstruct the fourth rank.
10. When there are no more useful preparatory moves, start the attack by  $\blacktriangle P6e$ . Then attack with maximum energy, sacrificing material if necessary.

Your Anaguma castle will protect you against any counterattack. The main risk is that if you lose material without getting a mating attack, *Gote* may eventually win by getting an entering King, so you must avoid slack moves once the fight starts. As always when attacking, look for ways to knock out the defending generals (especially Golds) and for ways to drive the enemy King back to the first rank.

## Appendix: Larry Kaufman on the relative merits of Chess and Shogi<sup>17</sup>

Since there seems to be so much interest in comparing various games in the chess/shogi family, I thought I would add my 2 cents worth, though I do feel that the attention given to games that are only mildly related to shogi has been a bit excessive in this list, considering that probably a million games of shogi are played for every game of these variants.

First of all, my credentials. I am the only person in the world to have earned a 2400 rating in both chess and shogi, being an International Master in the former and an Amateur 5-*dan* in the latter. I was once thought to be the strongest non-oriental player in the U.S. of Shanghai (Chinese chess), and have played roughly ten games each of Junk-ki (Korean chess), Chu-Shogi, and Grand Chess (the modernized version of Capablanca's 10x10 chess), enough to have some feel for the good and bad points of each.

In my opinion the key points to consider in comparing the games are the frequency of draws in games between masters (less is better, though perhaps a small percentage of draws may be preferred by some to none at all), rough equality of chances of the two sides, the

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<sup>17</sup> Editor's note: This additional section is a subjective comparison of Shogi & Chess published by LK on an Internet Chess forum on 7/2/99. While not related directly to handicap Shogi, it is an interesting comparison of the two games and their variants. The original can be found at: <http://www.shogi.net/shogi-I/Archive/1999/Nfeb07-06.txt>

importance of memorizing opening theory (less is better), variety of play (a major objection to checkers and some might say to Go), history and tradition (very desirable), game length (not too short or too long, though this is subjective), strategical

Let's start with chess, the most widely played game (geographically) of the family. It ranks very highly on history and tradition, game length, strategical principles, and early interaction. Unfortunately the draw percentage is too high (around 50% at high levels), and this is mostly due to the nature of the game rather than to lack of fighting spirit. The chances of the two players are quite unequal, white winning about 5 games for each 3 won by black at high level. Memorized opening theory is way too important at high level, though ideas like shuffle chess could solve this problem. Variety of play is not bad but could be much better. So chess gets 4½ good grades out of 8. Shuffle chess would score the same, gaining a point on memorized theory but losing it back on history and tradition, of which it has none.

Now consider Chinese chess, the version of chess played by the largest number of people world-wide, I believe. It also ranks very highly on history and tradition, game length, and early interaction. I'll give it a medium score on strategical principles (there's plenty of strategy, but less than chess, I feel). The draw percentage is perhaps a bit lower than in chess, but still

too high (the restriction of the elephants and ministers to their own camp is the main reason for the draws, I believe). The first player has a substantial edge, though perhaps a bit less than in chess. Memorized theory is a big problem, as in chess. Variety of play is about like in chess. So I'll give Chinese chess the same  $4\frac{1}{2}$  score as chess got.

Korean chess is a relative of Chinese chess. It scores a bit lower on history and tradition, and a bit higher on the memorized theory problem, with other scores about the same. Let's also give it  $4\frac{1}{2}$ .

Okay, how about Chu-shogi, the topic of much discussion on this list. It certainly has history and tradition, though most of it is lost to us now, so let's give it  $\frac{1}{2}$  for this. I suspect that the percentage of draws among masters would be very low, though I don't believe there are any masters in the world now to test this hypothesis. Similarly I cannot imagine that the first move could be more than a trivial advantage, perhaps 51-49%. Memorized opening theory is obviously not a problem; even if it existed, it is very unlikely that this would ever be a decisive factor in such a complex and long game. Variety of play is obviously enormous; in fact I'll only give it  $\frac{1}{2}$  credit because the variety of moves of the different promoted and unpromoted pieces is far more than anyone would ever need to enjoy the game, and simply serves to lower the standard of play

by making it difficult to ever become proficient with all the different pieces. Game length is much longer than most people would consider desirable, though the game is certainly of playable length. Early interaction certainly can occur, though the space between the camps minimizes it, so I'll give Chu half credit here. As for strategical principles, in my opinion there are not so many here, as the tactical element seems to dominate the game, but I'll give it half credit, mostly due to my not being expert enough to say for sure. So I give Chu 5 points, the best score so far, with the reservation that one would have to devote an enormous amount of time to the game to acquire any real proficiency. I do enjoy playing the game on occasion, but since I have not played enough to know the moves of the promoted pieces without reference to the manual, both my skill and my enjoyment go way down late in the game.

As for the larger relatives of Chu, I must agree with Colin Adams that they are clearly less playable than Chu without offsetting advantages, and so I find the constant discussion of these 'games' to be rather silly. I am quite in agreement with George Hodges in the opinion that the really large versions were not really meant to be played at all. In particular versions in which pieces demote on promotion would simply be drawish and boring. Chu shogi already has too many pieces, probably the reason it died out, so even larger versions

must simply be a joke. Sorry I don't even know what "tenjiku" shogi is, so no comment here.

As chu is to shogi, Grand chess is to chess. The larger board and extra pieces (Bishop + Knight and Rook + Knight) add a whole new dimension to the game. I'll have to give it a zero for history and tradition (a few games by Capablanca don't qualify it here). I believe the draw percentage would be very low among masters (I haven't had one yet), and the advantage of first move small enough. Memorized theory doesn't exist, though it could become a bit of a problem if the game became popular, so I'll give it  $\frac{1}{2}$  here. Variety of play is good, more than chess without reaching the point of overkill as with Chu, but perhaps still a bit less than I would like, so I'll give it  $1\frac{3}{4}$ . Game length seems about right to me, a bit more than chess but nothing like Chu. Early interaction is the same as in chess, and the strategical principles should be similar. So Grand chess, despite its meager following, scores an amazing  $6\frac{1}{4}$  out of 8 on my criteria, by far the best so far. It really is an excellent game and deserves a bigger following.

Now for shogi, as it is currently played by millions of Japanese and a few thousand Westerners. History and tradition are there in abundance, comparable to chess. The draw % (about 2% in pro play, 1% in amateur) is minimal (some might argue it's too low!). The advantage of first move is minimal (about 52-48%).

Variety of play is nearly ideal (ten piece types, including promoted rook and bishop, versus six in chess). Memorized theory is a big problem, nearly as much as in chess, though the chances of turning around a bad opening are better in shogi, so I'll give it  $\frac{1}{4}$  (maybe we need shuffle-shogi !). Game length is ideal. Early interaction is adequate, though a bit less than in chess, so I'll give it  $\frac{3}{4}$ . Strategic principles are quite ample, perhaps on a par with chess. So shogi gets 7 out of 8, making it clearly the winner of this 'competition'. Shogi is not a perfect game. Some criticisms include the rather arbitrary moves of some pieces, the occasional draw due to there being no good way to start the fight in certain openings, the very unaesthetic need to resolve impasse games by point count, and the fact that many games begin with both sides moving into identical fortress formations before any interaction occurs. Also the strength of the Left Anaguma castle is felt by many to be a spoiler in shogi, as for a while it seemed to relegate the Ranging Rook openings to the dustbin of history, though the recent success of Fujii with his anti-Anaguma system seems to puncture a big hole in that criticism. Despite these criticisms, I think the evidence is strong that shogi is the best game in the entire chess family, and with the risk of offending Go players (a game which I also play and respect greatly), perhaps the best game of all.

Larry Kaufman



## Glossary of Shogi Terms.

I have shown the Romanised form (*Rōmaji*), (in a few cases, the *kanji*) and the commonly-used Western term – literal meanings are usually not given.

### Shogi Pieces

In this case, the *kanji* are shown also.

<i>Sente</i> (先手)	Black
<i>Gote</i> (後手)	White
<i>Gyoku</i> (玉將)	Black King
<i>O</i> (王將)	White King
<i>Hi</i> (飛車)	Rook
<i>Ryu</i> (龍王)	Dragon (promoted Rook)
<i>Kaku</i> (角行)	Bishop
<i>Uma</i> (龍馬)	Horse (promoted Bishop)
<i>Kin</i> (金將)	Gold
<i>Gin</i> (銀將)	Silver
<i>Narigin</i> (成銀)	Promoted Silver
<i>Kei</i> (桂馬)	Knight
<i>Narikei</i> (成桂)	Promoted Knight
<i>Kyō</i> (香車)	Lance
<i>Narikyō</i> (成香)	Promoted Lance
<i>Fu</i> (歩兵)	Pawn
<i>Token</i> (と金)	Promoted Pawn

## **Piece quality**

In ascending order:

<i>kaki-goma</i>	<i>kanji</i> are painted directly onto the surface of the piece, usually with lacquer
<i>hori-goma</i>	<i>kanji</i> are inscribed into the pieces and lacquer is applied
<i>hiriume-goma</i>	<i>kanji</i> are inscribed into the pieces and lacquer is applied until it is flush with the surface of the piece
<i>moriage-goma</i>	<i>kanji</i> are inscribed into the pieces and lacquer is applied until it stands proud of the surface of the piece

## **Shogi Openings and Attacks (*joseki*)**

Note that the same term is sometimes used to describe both an opening strategy (*joseki*) and a castle (*gakoi*).

<i>Ibisha</i>	Static Rook
<i>Aibisha</i>	Double Static Rook
<i>Furibisha</i>	Ranging Rook
<i>Aifuribisha</i>	Double Ranging Rook
<i>Yagura</i>	Fortress
<i>Sō yagura</i>	Complete Fortress
<i>Kata yagura</i>	Incomplete/Half Fortress
<i>Aiyagura</i>	Double Fortress
<i>Shikenbisha</i>	4th file Rook
<i>Ai/Sankenbisha</i>	Double/3rd file Rook

<i>Nakabisha</i>	Central Rook
<i>Mukaibisha</i>	Opposing Rook
<i>Hineribisha</i>	Twisting Rook
<i>Chikatetsubisha</i>	Subway Rook
<i>Tatefu</i>	Rook on Pawn
<i>Bōgin</i>	Climbing Silver
<i>Bōkin</i>	Climbing Gold
<i>Aigakari</i>	(Double) Wing attack
<i>Kakugawari</i>	Bishop exchange opening
<i>Kakutōfu</i>	Bishop's Head Pawn, <i>a.k.a.</i>
<i>Kakutōfuzuki</i>	Bishop's Head Pawn Push
<i>Sujichigai-Kaku</i>	(primitive) Parallel Bishop
<i>ai/Yokofudori</i>	Double/Side Pawn(capture)
<i>Ukibisha</i>	Floating Rook
<i>Sodebisha</i>	Sleeve Rook or Sidestepped Rook or Sideways Rook or Right 3rd file Rook
<i>Suzumezashi</i>	Spearing the Sparrow
<i>Koshikakegin</i>	Reclining Silver
<i>Tsunogin</i>	Horn Silver (Central Rook)
<i>Gatchangin</i>	Clanging Silvers

## **Shogi Castles**

<i>Gakoi</i>	Castle – generic term
<i>Yagura</i>	Fortress
<i>Gangi</i>	Snow Roof Fortress
<i>Ginyagura</i>	Silver Fortress
<i>Kinyagura</i>	Gold Fortress
<i>Anaguma</i>	Bear in the hole

<i>Minogakoi</i>	Mino
<i>Taka mino</i>	High Mino
<i>Gin kanmuri</i>	Silver Crown
<i>Kata mino</i>	Incomplete Mino
<i>Funagakoi</i>	Boat
<i>Hayagakoi</i>	Quick Yagura
<i>Edo</i>	Quick Castle/Wall Castle
<i>Kanigakoi</i>	Crab
<i>Kinmusou</i>	Gold Excelsior which is the same as:
<i>Nimaikin</i>	Twin Gold
<i>Hishigakoi</i>	Lozenge Castle

### **Handicap Shogi** (common handicaps only)

<i>hirate</i>	even game
<i>kyō ochi</i>	left Lance
<i>kaku ochi</i>	Bishop
<i>hi-kyō ochi</i>	Rook, left Lance
<i>ni-mai ochi</i>	2-piece; Rook, Bishop, right Lance
<i>san-mai ochi</i>	3-piece; Rook, Bishop
<i>yon-mai ochi</i>	4-piece; Rook, Bishop, both Lances
<i>go-mai ochi</i>	5-piece; Rook, Bishop, both Lances, one Knight (usually right)
<i>roku-mai ochi</i>	6-piece; Rook, Bishop, both Lances, both Knights
<i>nana-mai ochi</i>	7-piece; Rook, Bishop, both Lances, both Knights, left Silver
<i>hachi-mai ochi</i>	8-piece; Rook, Bishop, both Lances, both Knights, both Silvers

## General Shogi Terms

<i>Aji</i>	potential
<i>ajikeshi</i>	erasure/loss of potential
<i>akukei</i>	bad shape
<i>atsumi</i>	thickness
<i>boyomi</i>	countdown of time
<i>shogi-ban</i>	the Shogi board
<i>fugire</i>	with no Pawns in hand
<i>furigoma</i>	Pawn-tossing (ritual to decide who plays <i>Sente</i> ; one player throws five pawns and if a majority of five land face up, he is <i>Sente</i> )
<i>hisshi</i>	brinkmate problems
<i>hoshi</i>	the four circular dots which divide the board into ‘camps. Sometimes known as ‘the four stars
<i>igyoku</i>	sitting King
<i>jishogi</i>	game deadlocked by <i>impasse</i> (ie: both Kings have entered the enemy camp and cannot be mated), leading to a piece count to decide the winner
<i>joseki</i>	established principles of Shogi, ‘standard’ opening sequences
<i>kakugen</i>	Shogi proverbs
<i>kakukokan</i>	Bishop swap or exchange
<i>karanari</i>	empty promotion, ie: promoting without a capture
<i>katachizukuri</i>	making one’s position look as good as possible before resigning

<i>kifuzu</i>	‘thorn-in-the-flesh’ Pawn
<i>kokei/ryoku</i>	good shape
<i>koma</i>	the Shogi pieces
<i>komada</i>	side table for the storing of captured (‘in-hand’) pieces
<i>komafukuro</i>	piece bag
<i>komahako</i>	piece box
<i>kuraidori</i>	Vanguard Pawn
<i>kuzushi</i>	castle-destroying techniques
<i>narisute</i>	promotion sacrifice
<i>nifu</i>	having two unpromoted Pawns on the same file (which is illegal)
<i>nimaigae</i>	exchanging one piece for two pieces
<i>nozoki</i>	peeping (Bishop)
<i>nyugyoku</i>	entering King(s)
<i>nyūjō</i>	the process of castling
<i>ougyoku</i>	Two Kings mating problem
<i>okiritesuji</i>	shepherding finesse
<i>onigorosho</i>	demon slayer
<i>otebisha</i>	Rook-and-King fork
<i>sabaki</i>	development resulting from exchange of pieces
<i>semeai</i>	mutual attack: attacking race
<i>sennichite</i>	endless repetition
<i>shitate</i>	the junior (less experienced) player in handicap games. (a.k.a. <i>Sente</i> )
<i>shōgi</i>	Shogi, General’s chess
<i>sujichigai-Kaku</i>	wrong-diagonal Bishop
<i>tanegoma</i>	seed piece

<i>tarashi/tarefu</i>	the act of dangling a Pawn; <i>tarefu</i> is the dangled Pawn
<i>tataki</i>	striking Pawn
<i>teikijin</i>	promotion zone
<i>tesuji</i>	sequence of ‘clever’ moves
<i>tonshi</i>	sudden death by checkmate while pursuing checkmate yourself
<i>tsume-shogi</i>	mating problems
<i>uwake</i>	the senior (more experienced) player in handicap games. (a.k.a. <i>Gote</i> )
<i>yoseai</i>	a position from which a final kill can be administered

## Computer Shogi.

### Shogidokoro.

There are quite a few Shogi programs around. For the English speaker, the best free one (in my opinion) is Shogidokoro.

Shogidokoro is not itself a Shogi program, but rather a scaffolding/interface which allows the incorporation of Shogi game playing engines, the playing and recording of games<sup>18</sup>, and the display of the board and game statistics. You can even choose your own style of calligraphy on the pieces!<sup>19</sup> Users can play against the computer, against another human player, or set the program to play against itself using the engine(s) loaded into the program. The program has the facility to play using time limits (*boyomi*), and you can also set up and solve *tsumeshogi* problems. It is also possible to set up and play handicap games.

The following page shows a screenshot showing what the Shogidokoro program looks like in action.

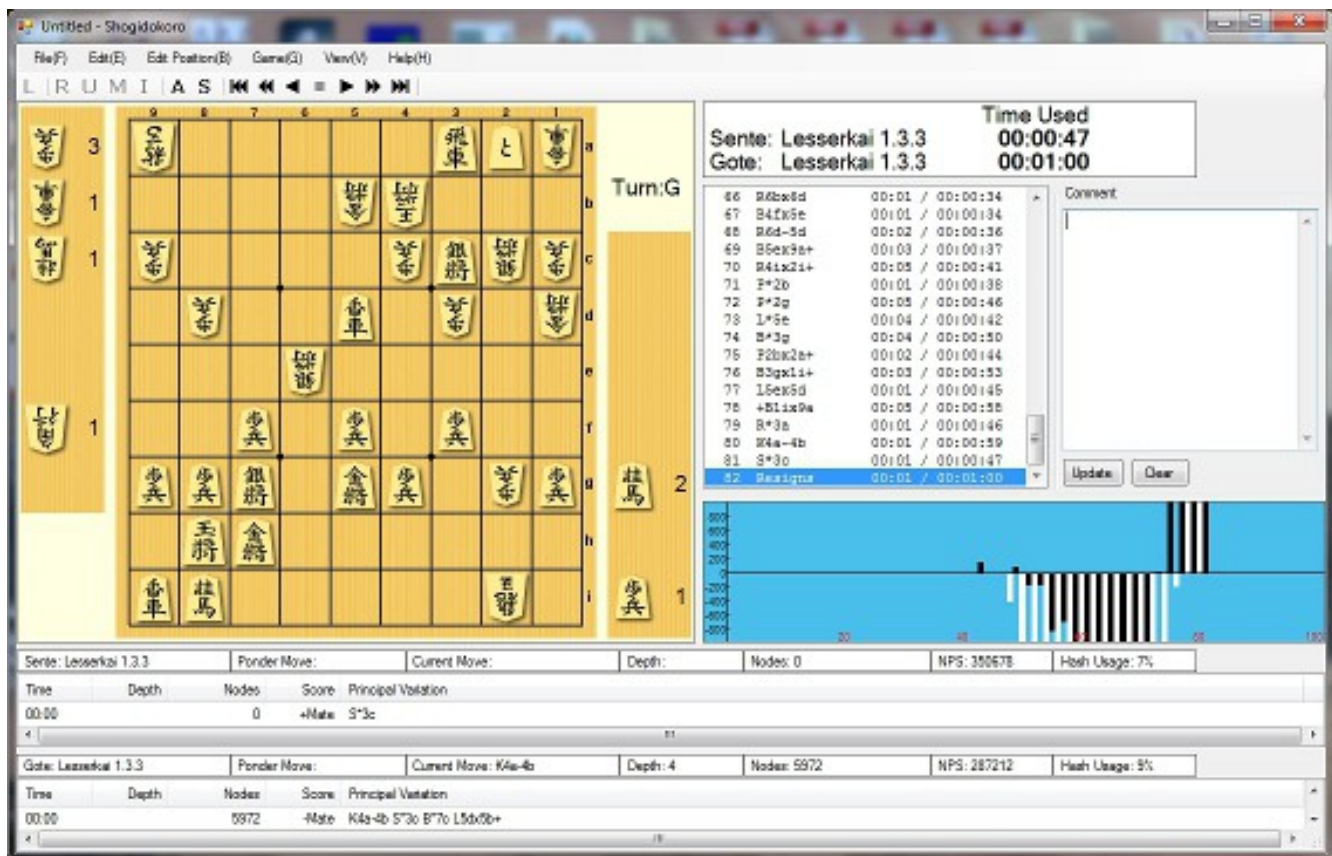
You can see the board and the *komada* at the side with the in-hand (captured) pieces displayed. It is also possible to see the time taken for both Black and White moves, and that it is *Gote's* (White) turn to move next.

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<sup>18</sup> Games can be saved using different formats, including ones which use simplified *kanji* for recording the moves.

<sup>19</sup> Including pieces with single *kanji*, red promoted pieces, and 'Westernised' pieces.





The game record is in the centre, and to the right of this is an area for making notes to be saved with the game. The remainder of the display is given over to the display of various statistics, search trees, etc. This display is typical of a modern Shogi program.

Shogidokoro can load previously saved games, and using the tape-recorder style buttons on the display, (|<<<<<|>>>>>|) it is possible to play through the games on either a single-move or continuous basis.

The Shogidokoro program numbers moves individually. This is why in this document, I have usually numbered moves in this way – to facilitate the easy and unambiguous playing through of game situations using the program.

Shogidokoro is downloadable from the following website:

<http://shogidokoro.starfree.jp/download.html>

The site may appear in Japanese or English (depending on how your browser is configured). The download link is the 3rd from the top of the page (ダウンロード in Japanese).

Shogidokoro comes with one engine – Lesserkai – this will need to be installed before use. Reijer Grimbergens web site contains instructions for downloading Reijers Spear engine. See:

<http://www.cloud.teu.ac.jp/public/CSF/grimbergen/research/SPEAR/spearmain.html>

Spear can be found at the ‘Available releases’ section. Other engines must be searched for on the internet (try ‘Shogi engines’ in your search box).

Some of the diagrams in this document were created using screenshots from the Shogidokoro program.

Shogidokoro is, as far as I know, available for Windows platforms only.

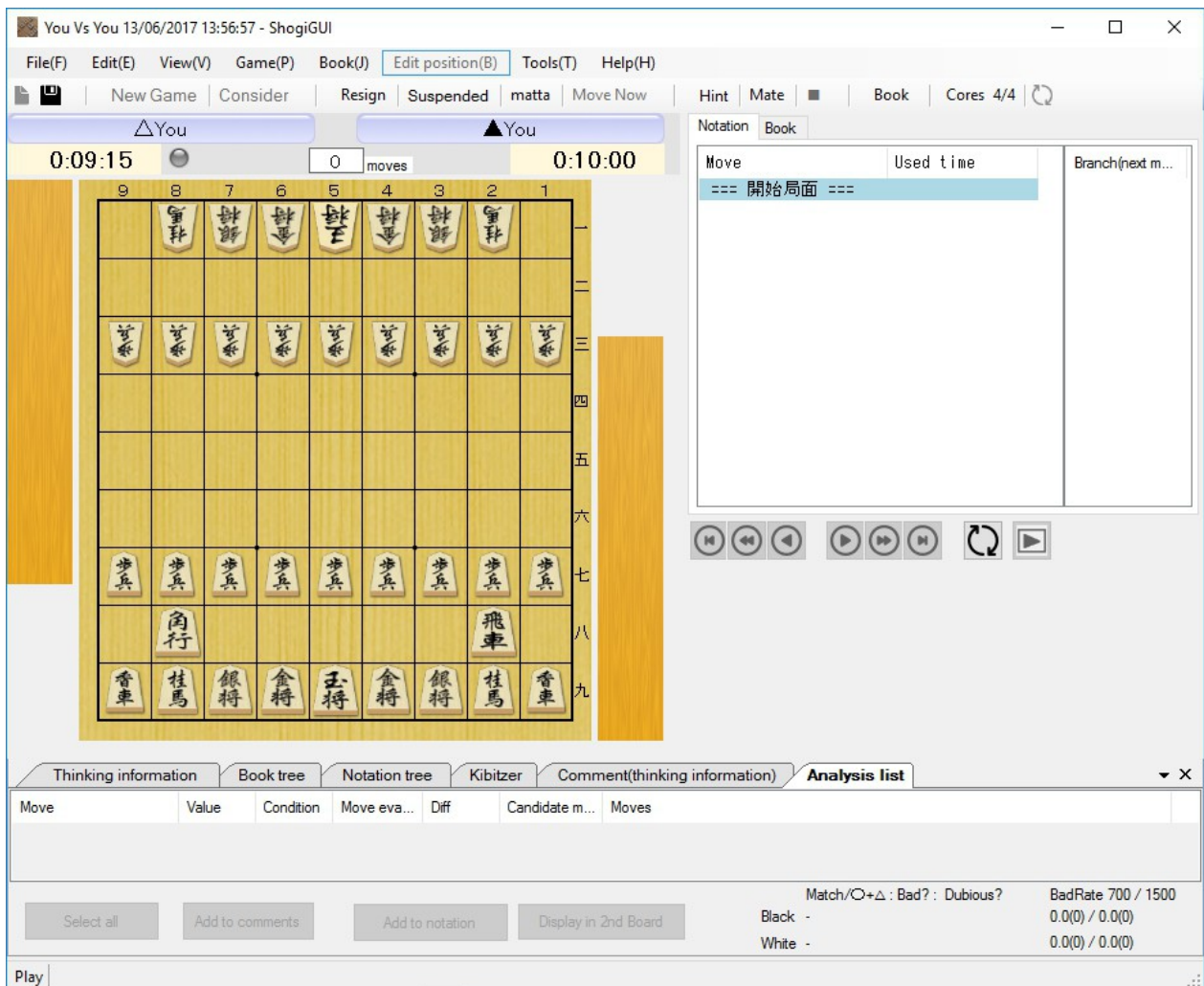
In principle, Shogidokoro can be run on other architectures/operating systems using the WINE emulation system – see: <https://www.winehq.org/>. I

haven't tried this myself, but the only reports I have (June 2020) are that the WINE system itself does not work on the most recent versions of the MacOS operating system (Catalina 10.15). On Linux, the Shogidokoro menus do not display correctly – whether the program works is doubtful.

For more about Shogidokoro, and computer Shogi in general, see the Wikipedia page 'Computer Shogi'.

# ShogiGUI.

ShogiGUI is similar in some ways to Shogidokoro, as the screenshot below illustrates:



This screenshot shows the position at the start of a two-piece handicap game (*Gote* gives up the two Lances at the start of the game).

The display is similar to Shogidokoro – you can see the board, the *komada* for storing captured pieces, the move window, etc. However, ShogiGUI is more flexible and powerful than Shogidokoro:

- The notation used to record moves in the ‘Move’ window can be changed
- ShogiGUI can display ‘hints’ as to the next best move
- ShogiGUI has powerful game analysis features.<sup>20</sup>
- Game engines can be ‘fine-tuned’.

ShogiGUI can be downloaded from:

<http://shogigui.siganus.com/>

The interface of the program as downloaded is entirely in Japanese, but it can be converted to English (or German),<sup>21</sup> although much of the fine detail in the display is still in Japanese. With some determination, there is no reason why the non-Japanese speaker should not use ShogiGUI, even if not all of its features are fully exploited.

The program comes with one pre-installed game engine (GPSFish), and like Shogidokoro, other engines can be downloaded and installed – I have successfully installed Lesserkai.

ShogiGUI seems better at setting up *tsume-shogi* problems than Shogidokoro.

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<sup>20</sup>See: <http://shogibond.nl/how-to-analyze-your-games-using-a-shogi-engine/> for a description of how to do this.

<sup>21</sup>See: <http://shogibond.nl/shogi-school/artikelen-van-hideaki-takahashi/gui-introductie/> or: <http://shogibond.nl/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/GUI-Introduction.pdf> for details of how to configure the program. I also have a copy of this PDF file.

Versions exist for use on Android computers (Japanese language only – seems to be a completely different interface to the Windows version).

In principle, ShogiGUI can be run on other architectures/operating systems using the WINE emulation system – see: <https://www.winehq.org/>. I haven't tried this myself, but the only reports I have (June 2020) are that the WINE system itself does not work on the most recent versions of the MacOS operating system (Catalina 10.15). On Linux, the program does not display correctly.

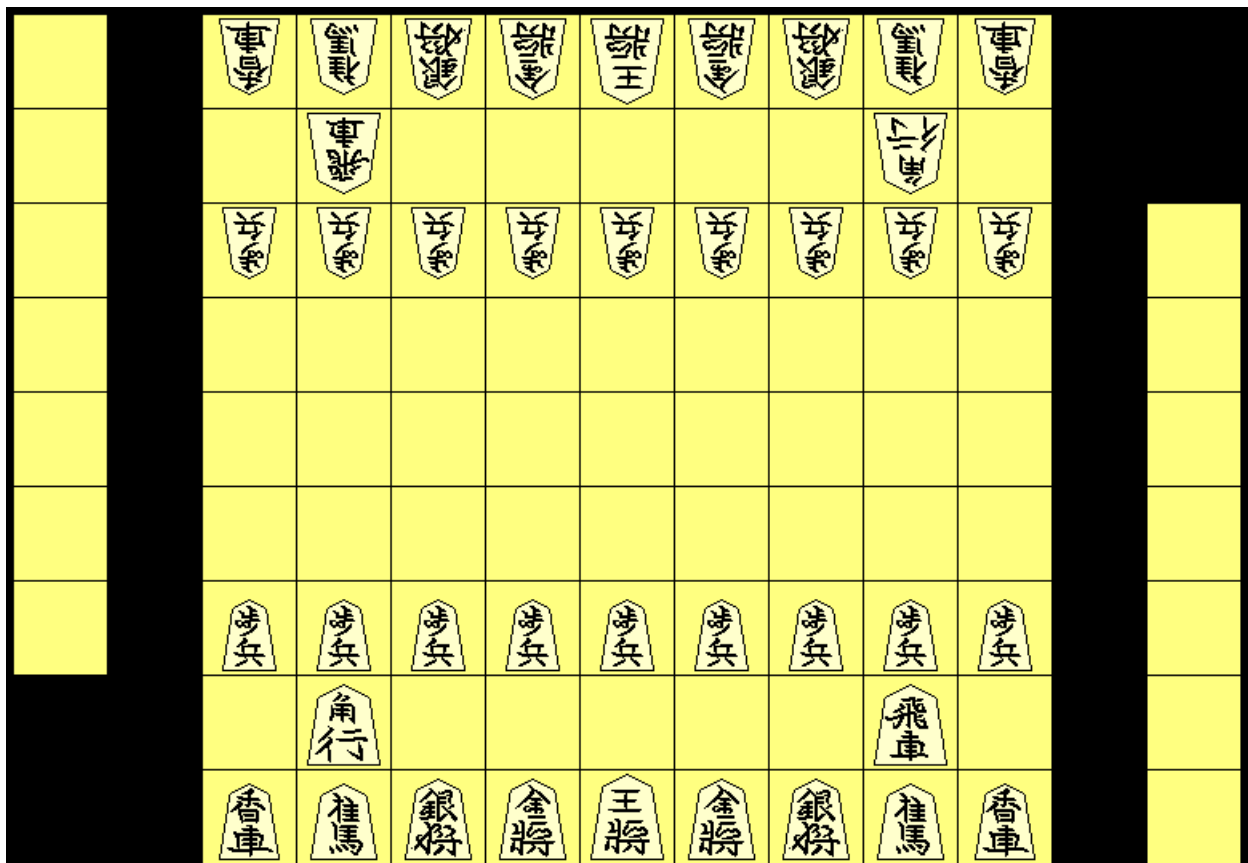
## Winboard (Alien Package).

Also available for Windows machines is a Winboard package developed by H.G.Muller. This package can be downloaded from:

<http://hgm.nubati.net/WinBoard-Chu.zip>

and when unpacked gives access to several Shogi variants: Chu Shogi, Dai Shogi, Sho Shogi, Shogi and Tori Shogi. Once you have unpacked the program, simply click on the Black Knight's head icon to start up the program. You have the choice of using Western-style pieces or pieces with Japanese-style *kanji*.

The screenshot shows the position at the start of a game:

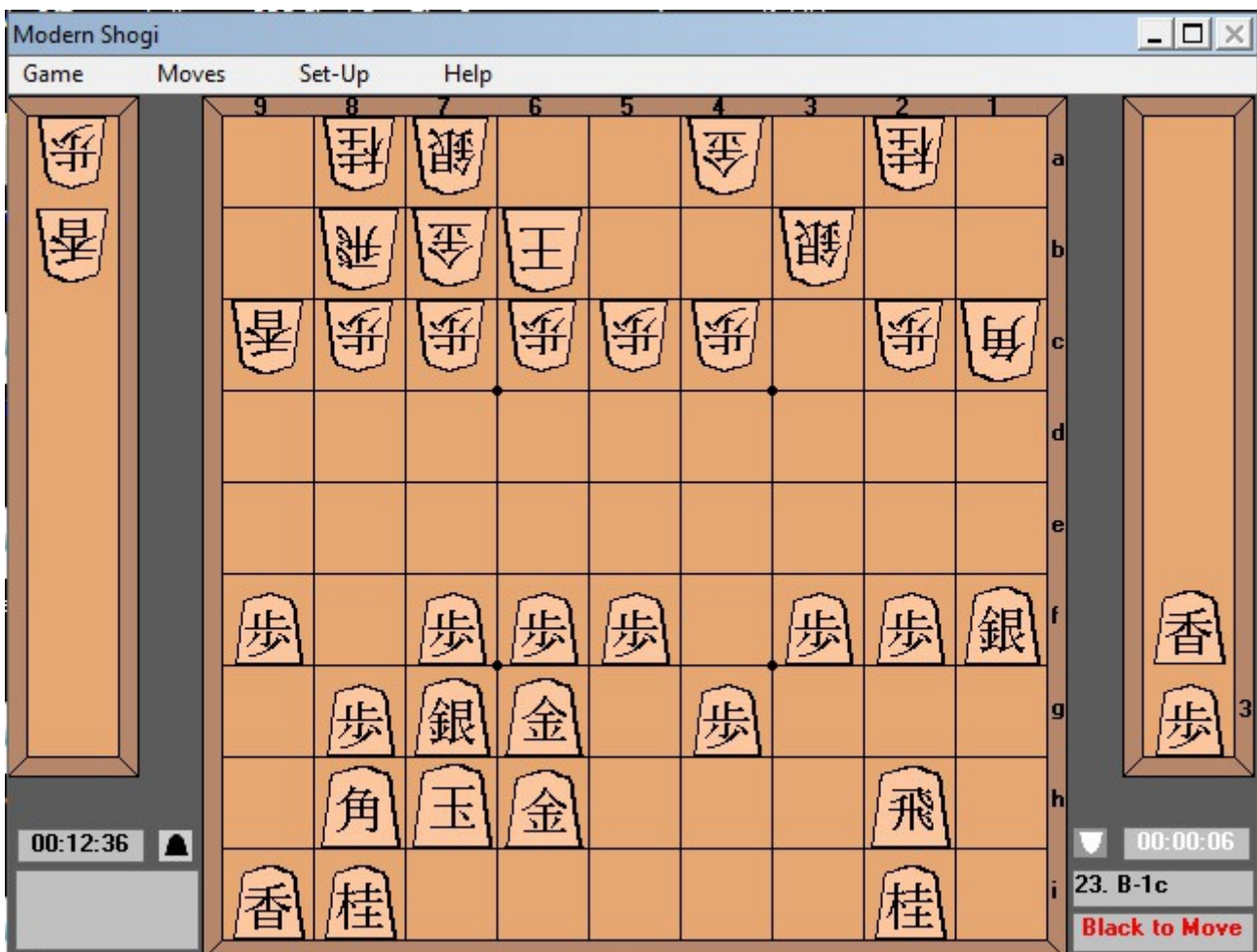


## Steve Evans Shogivar Program.

This Shogi variant software has been around since the 1990s. Originally available as a 32-bit PC implementation written in Visual Basic (you will need a very old PC, or 32-bit emulation plus the VB Library files to run this), it is now also available as a Linux port maintained by H G Muller. Downloadable in either form from:

<http://www.users.on.net/~ybosde/>

The screenshot shows the position several moves into a human vs. computer game:





## **Phil Holland's Shogi Variants Program.**

For those interested in the Shogi variants, a variants program can be downloaded from Phil Hollands web pages:

<http://www.hollandnumerics.demon.co.uk/SHOGI.HTM>

Simply click on the Shogi Software icon, and download and unpack the SHOGIV41.ZIP file.

You will also need to download the file MSAFINX.DLL as well.

This program has only a text-based display.

## **BCMGames/BCMShogi.**

Development of this program was 'frozen' by the author in ~2012. I had difficulty finding a version of the program which worked when downloaded and installed, though I finally tracked one down. As the program has not been updated since 2012, I have not given a download link here.

## Shogi Game File Formats.

Unfortunately, most of the computer programs described above use **different** formats for storing game records – a real can of worms!!!

There is some overlap – for example, Shogidokoro will handle `.CSA`, `.KIF`, `.Ki2` and `.PSN` formats (`.PSN` is the default). ShogiGUI will handle `.CSA` and `.KIF` formats (`.KIF` is the default).<sup>22</sup>

Winboard uses `.PGN` and `.GAM` formats to store games.

Phil Hollands program uses `.SHO` format to store games.

Steve Evans program appears to be unable to save games.

It doesn't matter what these files look like, but it is clearly not possible to load the same game file into different programs – except in the case of Shogidokoro and ShogiGUI (`.CSA` or `.KIF` format).

To avoid problems, you should pick a program and stick with it – I use Shogidokoro.

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<sup>22</sup> `.KIF` and `.Ki2` formats are possibly best avoided as they both use Japanese characters.

## **Shogi programs on other architectures.**

Shogidokoro is a Windows PC program, as is ShogiGUI (for English speakers). On Unix/Linux systems, gnushogi/xshogi is available, as is Xboard (a Unix/Linux version of WinBoard).

On Macintosh machines there are some Shogi programs available. For tablet computers, there are programs available for the Macintosh iPad and for Android systems (including ShogiGUI, p. 292).

I can't comment on any of these as I don't (yet) have any experience with these programs.

## Shogi Equipment.

Moderate quality Shogi equipment is available *via* numerous suppliers on Amazon/eBay.

Rakuten in Japan seem to be a Japanese version of Amazon, and supply Shogi equipment – customer reviews of the company seem to be ‘mixed’.

For better quality equipment, you need a specialist trader. A short list follows. I have equipment/books from, and have dealt satisfactorily with those marked with a \*:

\* **The Shogi Foundation** – Shogi books:

<http://www.shogifoundation.co.uk/>

\* **Czech Shogi Federation** – suppliers of Shogi equipment, books and other Shogi equipment. The basic Shogi set includes a set of **very nice** hybrid pieces :

<http://shogi.cz>

\* **Aobo Shop** – suppliers of Oriental board games, puzzles and books:

<http://en.aobo-shop.com/>

\* **G. F. Hodges** – Shogi equipment, variants, books, etc. Supplier of *Shogi* magazine as a PDF download.

Tel: +44 (0)1234 211 286

E-mail: [George.hodges@talk21.com](mailto:George.hodges@talk21.com)

\* **Kurokigoishi Shop** – suppliers of Oriental board games, including Shogi (**Masters** may be able to supply in the U.K.):

<http://shop.kurokigoishi.co.jp/en/category/10>

\* **Masters Traditional Games** – suppliers of Oriental board games, including Shogi:

<https://www.mastersofgames.com/>

\* **Nekomado Online Shop** – suppliers of books and Shogi equipment:

<http://shop.nekomado.com/>

**Schaak en Go winkel het Paard** – suppliers of books and Shogi equipment:

<https://www.schaakengo.nl/goshop-keima/shogi-889416/>

**Yutopian Enterprises:**

<http://www.yutopian.com>

**Ohishi-Tengudo Corporation** – suppliers of high quality Shogi equipment:

<http://go.tengudo.jp/english/shogi.html>

**Kiseido** – suppliers of high quality Shogi equipment:

[http://www.kiseidopublishing.com/shogi/shogi\\_equipment.htm](http://www.kiseidopublishing.com/shogi/shogi_equipment.htm)

**Tendo Sato Kei Shoten** – suppliers of high quality Shogi equipment:

<http://shogi-koma.jp/index.html>

**Horikoshi** – suppliers of high quality Shogi equipment:

<http://www.shogi-horikoshi.com/>

**The Shogi Game Store** – suppliers of high quality Shogi equipment:

<http://www5b.biglobe.ne.jp/~goban/english@shogi@version.html>

**Japanese Games Shop** – suppliers of books and Shogi equipment:

<http://japanese-games-shop.com/>

[no longer trading?]

\* **Pentangle Puzzles and Games** – suppliers of Shogi, Go and Xiang-chi equipment:

<http://www.pentangle-puzzles.co.uk/>

[no longer trading?]

Please note that I have no connection with, or financial interest in any of the organisations listed above. The information provided is based on the latest information I have from these organisations. For fuller information please contact the organisations direct.

## **Downloadable and printable Shogi sets.**

If you want to ‘do-it-yourself’, I have created a set of templates for a simple Shogi board and pieces. These templates can be downloaded from:

<https://tinyurl.com/RogersShogiArchive><sup>23</sup>

Download the file:

### **DIY Shogi set.pdf**

When making a Shogi set with these templates, I recommend using double-sided adhesive tape to make the board and pieces. You can also make a laminated board if you have access to a laminating machine.

You can use glue<sup>24</sup> – if you do, use good quality glue to stick the pieces and board to good quality mounting card. Trim the board, if desired, with a craft knife, and use sharp scissors to cut the pieces to shape, and you can make a very acceptable set. Try not to get air-bubbles/wrinkles when you offer the templates to the card. I use a rolling pin to flatten the templates to the card and to squeeze out excess glue.

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23 This is a DropBox folder. The full URL is:

[https://www.dropbox.com/sh/2wicm2bnw5lv3t0/AADyepK\\_y\\_3e819UAbwJJoza?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/2wicm2bnw5lv3t0/AADyepK_y_3e819UAbwJJoza?dl=0)

24 See [http://www.edenworkshops.com/Bookbinding\\_Adhesives.html](http://www.edenworkshops.com/Bookbinding_Adhesives.html) for a serious discussion of what sort of glue to use. I use PVA craft glue or 3M PhotoMount. Don’t use cheap glue – it can be difficult to apply evenly, and will bleed through the paper template and ‘stain’ the set...

## **Bibliography and other Shogi resources.**

Items in my possession, or consulted by myself have been given a ‘star rating’ – maximum 5 stars – this is of course, entirely subjective, you may think differently!

### **Books.**

*Better Moves for Better Shogi*, Teruichi Aono, (trans. John Fairbairn), Man to Man Books, 1983, 2377-906053-2732. ★★★★★

*Guide to Shogi Openings*, Teruichi Aono (trans. John Fairbairn), Man to Man Books, 1983, 2377-906052-2732. ★★★★★

*Tsume Puzzles for Japanese Chess*, T Gene Davis, 2011, 146369055X. ★★★★★★

*Shogi – How to Play*, John Fairbairn, The Shogi Association, 1979. ★★★★★★ (rare)

*Shogi for Beginners*, John Fairbairn, The Ishi Press, 1989, 4-87187-201-7.<sup>25</sup> ★★★★★★

*Habu’s Words*, Y Habu, The Shogi Foundation, 2000, 0 9531089 2 9. ★★★★★★

*Masters of Shogi*, Y Habu & Tony Hosking, The Shogi Foundation, 978 09531089 4 7. ★★★★★★

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<sup>25</sup>*Shogi for Beginners* is available in PDF format from at least one paid-for e-book service on the internet. The monthly subscription rate is more expensive than buying the book outright. Seems like a no-brainer to me...



*4 Great Games*, Tony Hosking, The Shogi Foundation, 1998, 0 9531089 1 0. The games are: Chess, Shogi, Go and Xiang ch'i. ★★★★★

*The Art of Shogi*, Tony Hosking, The Shogi Foundation, March 1997. ★★★★★

*Classic Shogi*, Tony Hosking, The Shogi Foundation, 2006, 0 9531089 3 7. ★★★★★

*Ending Attack Techniques*, Takashi Kaneko (trans. Tomohide Kawasaki), Nekomado, 2012, 978-4-905225-03-4. ★★★★★★

*Storming the Mino Castle*, Takashi Kaneko, (trans. Richard Sams), Nekomado, 2013, 978-4-905225-05-8. ★★★★★★

*Joseki at a Glance*, Madoka Kitao (trans. Tomohide Kawasaki), At a Glance Series, 2011, 978-4-9052-2501-0. ★★★★★★

*Edge Attack at a Glance*, Madoka Kitao, (trans. Tomohide Kawasaki), At a Glance Series, 2012, 978-4-9052-2502-7. ★★★★★★

*Sabaki at a Glance*, Madoka Kitao (trans. Tomohide Kawasaki), At a Glance Series, 2013, 978-4-9052-2510-2. ★★★★★★

*Ending Attack at a Glance*, Madoka Kitao (trans. Tomohide Kawasaki), At a Glance Series, 2014, 978-4-9052-2513-3. ★★★★★★

*Japanese-English Shogi Dictionary*, Tomohide Kawasaki (a.k.a. Hidetchi), 2013, Nekomado, 978-4-9052-2508-9. One-way only (Japanese to English)

★★★★★

*Japanese Chess: The Game of Shogi*, E. Ohara and Lindsay Parrott. Has received a very poor review on Amazon.com.

*Shogi Primer: Japanese chess guide for English speakers*, Seigo Sato, 2021, Independently published, 979-8755253314. I don't have this one, but in the description on Amazon, the author states "I believe that Kanji is not a big obstacle to learning the Shogi rules.". This is a promising start!

*First Step To Shogi*, Space Sano, Oyama Memorial Museum, 1995.

The following items contain articles or chapters of greater or lesser depth pertaining to Shogi and/or Shogi variants. The star rating reflects both the quality and quantity of material on Shogi:

*Board and Table Games from Many Civilizations*, R C Bell, Dover, 1979, 0-486-23855-5. ★★★☆☆

*Games Ancient and Oriental and How to Play Them*, Edward Falkener, Dover, 1961 (originally published 1892), 486-20739-0. Of historical interest, but like many early publications, contains some mistakes.

★☆☆☆☆

*Chess Variations*, John Gollon, Charles E Tuttle Company, 1985, 0-8048-1122-9. ★★☆☆☆

*The Great Shogi Games*, George Hodges, The Shogi Association, 1978. ★★★★★ A description of Shogi variants larger than 15x15 squares. (rare)

*A History of Chess*, H J R Murray, Skyhorse Publishing, 2012 (originally published 1913). Of historical interest, but like many early publications, contains some mistakes. ★☆☆☆☆

*The Encyclopaedia of Chess Variants*, David Pritchard, available as a PDF from <https://www.jsbeasley.co.uk>. Contains a small amount of Shogi material of mixed quality. ★☆☆☆☆

*New rules for classic games*, R. Wayne Schmittberger, Wiley, 1992, 0471536210. Reputed to contain a good description of the rules of Chu-Shogi – I haven't seen this one myself.

## **Books in 'Western' languages other than English.**

### **Esperanto.**

*Invito al japana ŝako*. Ueda Tomohiko. Esperantista Klubo de Japano Ŝako. Tokio. 1996, 4-9900498-0-2. My knowledge of Esperanto is limited, but this looks like an excellent introduction.

*Japana ŝako. Ekzercaro por progresantoj*. Ueda Tomohiko. Esperantista Klubo de Japano Ŝako. Tokio.

2001, 4-9900498-1-0. A collection of *tsume-shogi* and *hisshi* problems.

### **French.**

*L'art des échecs japonais*, Fabien Osmont, Fédération Française de Shogi, 2009, 978-2952047258.

*Shikenbisha*, Fabien Osmont, Fédération Française de Shogi. No further details

### **German.**

*Shogi Anfängerbuch Das japanische Schach*, Frank Sölter, no further details.

*Shogi - Schach der Samurai*, Stephan Michels no further details.

### **‘One-off’ Books?**

*Shogi – Japan’s Game of Strategy*, Trevor Leggett, Charles E Tuttle Company, 1966. Re-published as *Japanese Chess*, 2009, 978-4-8053-1036-6. This book is of historical interest, as it was the first serious book published in English after WWII. However, it has poor diagrams, the notation system is confusing, it contains at least one major/vital error, and the advice given is sometimes suspect. So, it’s a very interesting book, but possibly not the best choice for a new player.

### **Books to Avoid.**

Unfortunately, there are a few poor Shogi books in English. I have listed some of them here.

*Japanese Chess or Shogi Book of Board Game Strategy*, John Sami Mamoun, independently published, 2021, 979-8712410125. Uses Chess-like notation, a chequered board and diagrams with *faux*-Staunton style images. Clearly an attempt to force Shogi to look as much like Chess as possible. Not recommended.

*Oriental Board Games*, David Pritchard, Know The Game Series, 1977, 0-7158-0524-X. By the same author as *Encyclopaedia of Chess Variants*. The same poor diagrams as Leggett, there is no notation system, contains many errors, and the advice given is usually highly suspect. Not recommended.

*SHOGI (Japanese chess)*, Calogero A. Salomon, print-on-demand, 2019, 978-8831643177. A poor translation of an Italian original. The typesetting is poor, and many of the illustrations are distorted in either the horizontal or vertical direction. The price (~£30+) seems high when compared to that of far better books! Not recommended.

## **The History of Shogi.**

The history of Shogi is outlined in the April 1999 issue of the Japan Foundation Newsletter. This can be found here:

[https://web.archive.org/web/20151105233924if\\_/http://www.jpf.go.jp/j/publish/periodic/jfn/pdf/jfn26\\_5.pdf](https://web.archive.org/web/20151105233924if_/http://www.jpf.go.jp/j/publish/periodic/jfn/pdf/jfn26_5.pdf)

There is a 2021 paper entitled “*1000 Years of Shogi History*” by Prof. Dr. Frank Rövekamp here:

<https://ostasieninstitut.com/1000-years-of-shogi-history/>

The Wikipedia article ‘History of Shogi’ is also of interest:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_shogi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_shogi)

Three short articles from *Variant Chess* magazine:

Masukawa, K., *A Brief Introduction to the History of Japanese Chess*, *Variant Chess* No. 9, Jan-Mar 1993, pp 4-7.

Masukawa, K., *Oldest Shogi Men Discovered*, *Variant Chess* No. 10, Apr-Jun 1993, p 21.

Masukawa, K., *The Origin of Japanese Chess*, *Variant Chess* No. 15, Oct-Dec 1994, pp 100-104.

## Magazines.

Here, the star rating reflects both the quality and quantity of the Shogi content.

The late George Hodges published *Shogi* magazine from 1978-1986. A complete run of the 70 issues of the magazine is now available as a paid-for zipped download. To get details of how to access these magazines, go to:

<https://tinyurl.com/ShogiPriceList>

and use the contact details you will find there.

This is a very valuable archive of Shogi material in English. ★★★★★

In the UK, The British Shogi Federation (BSF) published a magazine – *Shoten* – on a quarterly basis. I have numbers 38-61 inclusive. ★★★★★★

In the USA, The Ishi Press published a quarterly magazine, *Shogi World* in the late 1980s-early 1990s. I have numbers 1-9 inclusive. ★★★★★★

*Variant Chess* magazine was published in the U.K. From 1990 to 2010. Contains several Shogi-related articles of mixed quality. Diagrams usually show rather silly ‘westernised’ forms of the pieces. Available as a

single 1200 page download, or as individual issues from  
<https://www.jsbeasley.co.uk>. ★★★★★

### **Other Literature.**

*Zen Culture*, Thomas Hoover

*Heihō Kadensho* (A Hereditary Book on the Art of War),  
Yagyū Munenori

*Go Rin No Sho* (A Book of Five Rings), Miyamoto  
Musashi



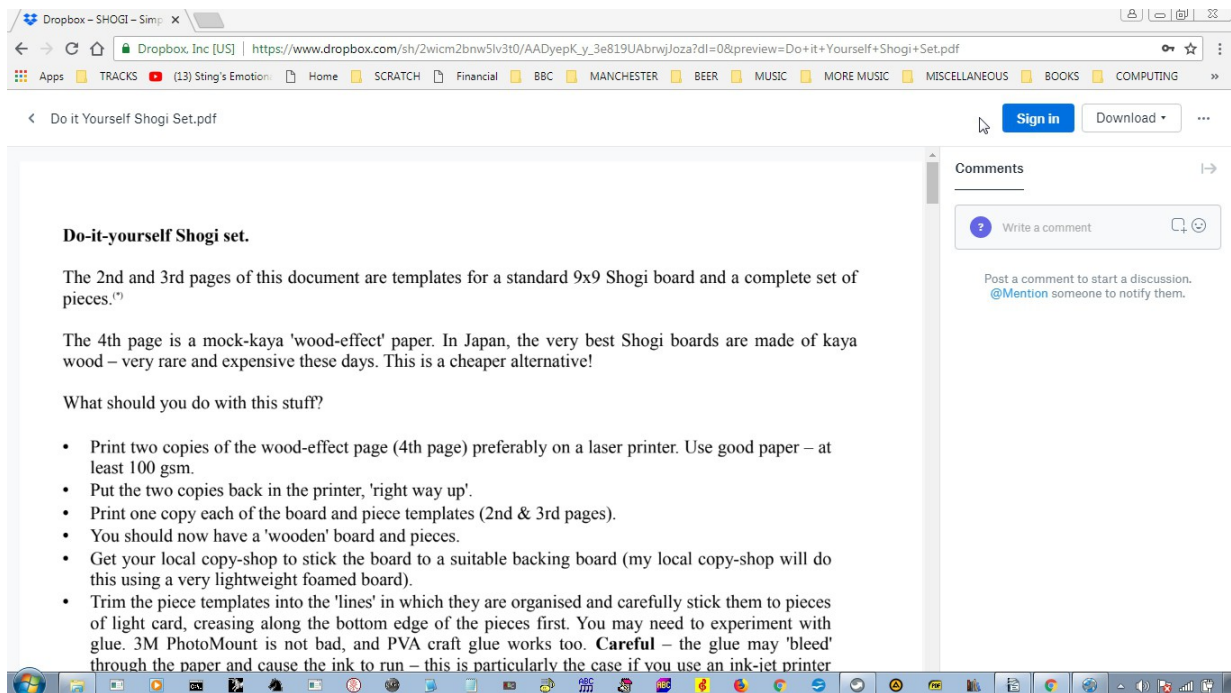
# Shogi on the Internet.

## Dropbox.

I have recently created a Dropbox archive of Shogi material. This is located at:

<https://tinyurl.com/RogersShogiArchive><sup>26</sup>

When you connect to this shared folder, you should see a list of the contents of the folder – simply click on the required item and then on the Download button which should be visible at top right. Then click on ‘Direct download’ and select the location for the file.



If you do not select an individual document and simply click the Download button when the DropBox page first appears, you should get a zipped download of all the

<sup>26</sup> The full Dropbox URL is::

[https://www.dropbox.com/sh/2wicm2bnw5lv3t0/AADyepK\\_y\\_3e819UAbwJJoza?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/2wicm2bnw5lv3t0/AADyepK_y_3e819UAbwJJoza?dl=0)

documents in the folder (*warning* – this may be a large download).

There is a wide range of Shogi related material here, including: a README file; paper templates for DIY sets for Shogi and some of the Shogi variants; plus a selection of edited digests of articles from magazines (including *Shogi* magazine) which cover many aspects of Shogi including Openings, Castles and castling, Shogi proverbs, *tsume-shogi*; other oriental board games; etc. Please browse and help yourself – that's what it's there for.

Copyright material is included with the permission of the copyright holder – where I have been able to contact the copyright owner.

Please explore this resource and let me have feed-back – this will help me improve the archive.

### **Google Drive Archive.**

There is now an experimental 'mirror' of the Dropbox archive:

<https://tinyurl.com/GoogleShogiArchive>

If there are any problems with this, please let me know.

## **Wikipedia.**

There is a great deal of information about Shogi on Wikipedia (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia>).

The entry-level Shogi listing is at:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shogi>

The Shogi information on Wikipedia is widely dispersed. This is not a criticism, but an observation – this is just the way Wikipedia works. The information is an *extremely* valuable resource. You will need to start Wikipedia and then enter the Shogi term in which you are interested into the Wikipedia search box. Try ‘shogi opening’, ‘shogi castle’, ‘shogi tesuji’, etc.

If you understand Japanese, you are laughing! [Japanese Wikipedia](#) has a wealth of articles on Shogi.

If you do not understand Japanese, the English language pages mentioned above are very good – they are not direct translations of the Japanese pages, but there is usually an English page corresponding to each Japanese page, and the information on each page is pretty much the same.

## **Internet fora and Web sites.**

Internet fora come and go – unfortunately. Websites which are largely information-only tend to be a little more permanent. Those listed below are available at the time of writing (see front cover for date). Traffic is low on all but the first of the three internet fora. The remaining URLs are basically information-only web sites.

There is a Reddit Shogi forum with 3500+ subscribers:

<https://www.reddit.com/r/shogi/>

81Dojo World Shogi Forum:

<https://system.81dojo.com/en/forums>

BoardGameGeek Shogi forum:

<https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/2065/shogi>

Shogi.net. Contains teaching information, Shogi variant web pages, etc. Not very active:

<http://www.shogi.net/shogi.html>

Shogi.net proverbs pages. Contains list of Shogi proverbs and explanatory notes and diagrams illustrating the proverbs ‘in use’:

<http://www.shogi.net/kakugen/>

Reijer Grimbergen's web page. Contains download instructions for Shogidokoro and for the Spear engine, plus some archived games:

<http://www2.teu.ac.jp/gamelab/>

Eric Cheymol's web page. Contains Larry Kaufman's handicap notes plus some archived games:

<http://eric.macshogi.com/>

A modern Shogi diagram generator – used for many of the diagrams in this document:

<http://wormz.free.fr/kifugen/>

Shogi Playground – an alternative diagram generator which allows storage of games and recall via a unique URL. If this had been around when I started, I would probably have used it for my own diagrams:

<https://play.mogproject.com/>

British Shogi Federation/Shogi London web pages:

<https://shogilondon.blogspot.com/>

[http://www.kittywompus.com/shogi/other\\_uk\\_shogi\\_events/](http://www.kittywompus.com/shogi/other_uk_shogi_events/)

### **Defunct web sites.**

81 Square Universe. Disappeared *ca.* 2015. Contained active mail fora, lessons, videos, etc. Was a good place to find out more about WinBoard, amongst other things:

<http://81squareuniverse.com/>

## **Playing Shogi on the Internet.**

I'm not really familiar with playing Shogi 'live' (or otherwise) *via* the internet – I'm an 'across-the-board' player, but I have listed a couple of sites where this is possible:

### **Shogi Playground Live.**

This site allows play without any formal registration, subscription, or divulging of personal information. It appears to do this by allowing a player to start a game, and allocating a unique URL to that game, which the player then shares with the opponent. The site is minimalist in its presentation, while at the same time being flexible enough to allow personalisation of boards and pieces in the display. The site is here:

<https://live.mogproject.com/>

and the documentation here:

<https://mog-playground-docs.readthedocs.io/en/latest/>

### **81 Dojo.**

Besides a Shogi forum (p.316), the 81 Dojo web site also hosts an interactive Shogi application:

<https://81dojo.com/en/>

## Videos.

In February 2020, lady professional Karolina Styczyńska (5-*dan*) inaugurated a series of videos entitled 'Road to Shodan'. The first four of these can be seen at:

<https://youtu.be/bmH2hqRyR8A> (Weak King falls easily)

<https://youtu.be/nrS3WnnWA6Qv> (Fighting Anaguma)

<https://youtu.be/VOXX67hAHuM> (Beating your rival)

<https://youtu.be/lfExOhAJmsw> (Fooling the opponent)

Typically, these themed videos last approximately 40 minutes – highly recommended.

The whole series, which also includes an Introduction to Shogi, a discussion of Shogi notation, plus analyses of some professional games is available on the Shogi Harbour channel:

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRnXG7CkKfEN6IINKcO\\_uBg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRnXG7CkKfEN6IINKcO_uBg)

In mid 2019, Chess Grandmaster Matthew Sadler and Women's International Master Natasha Regan produced an introductory Shogi video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=At6KWe7bCbg>

This lasts about 45 minutes and is an excellent introduction to the game.

The second video in this series is at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eu6kRSkjp64>

Another good source of Shogi videos is Hidetchi's YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/HIDETCHI>

The channel includes a useful series of 40 short video films teaching the basic aspects of Shogi. Also included are series relating to Shogi Openings, Famous Shogi Games and Tsume Shogi.

Connect to YouTube and enter 'hidetchi shogi lessons' into the search box and you should see the teaching videos listed.

There is a lot more Shogi material on YouTube.