



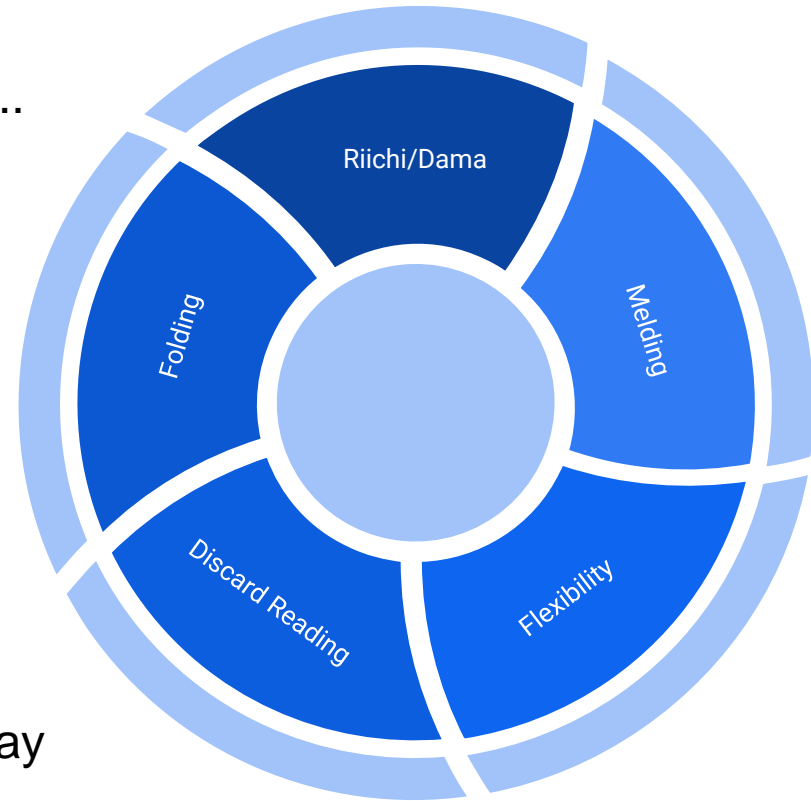
# Intermediate Riichi Strategies Workshop

## Credits

Riichi/Dama Judgement by  
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To be a good player, you will need....



They will all be slightly covered today



# Cognitive Biases

## 4 Common Cognitive Bias to avoid

1. Optimism/Pessimism Bias
2. Confirmation/Choice Supportive Bias
3. Hindsight/Outcome bias
4. Self-Serving Bias

## 4 Common Cognitive Bias to avoid

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

## 4 Common Cognitive Bias to avoid

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

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

# Examples of what people with bias will say

**Optimism Bias:** *“This tile is dangerous, but I think can pass.”, “I where got so sway one, just throw la.”*

**Pessimism Bias:** *“I scared riichi then people chase then I draw dora and then I fang pao.”*

**Choice Supportive Bias:** *“I Riichi because if I tsumo and hit ura-dora I can get baiman!” or “I riichi on hell wait because if people draw, sure throw.”*


**Hindsight/Outcome Bias:** *“I knew you are waiting on this tile, so I didn’t throw.”* \*Though in actual fact, the tile wasn’t thrown because it’s useful for the player\*

**Self-Serving Bias:** *“I Riichi first, then people chase-riichi me and I fang pao. I sway lo.”, “Riichi, Ippatsu, pinfu, tanyao, dora 3! I’m actually not bad. Never win because sway only”*




## Disclaimer

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



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





# Fundamentals of a Win

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



Understanding what are  
good hand shapes (Point 1)



# Ryanmen Ranking



A - Class  
69.46%  
Win rate



B - Class



C - Class  
60.85%  
Win rate

# Penchan/Kanchan Ranking for Tenpai

Best



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



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



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



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

Worst

# Kanchan Ranking for building hands



OR



OR



OR





# Penchan/Kanchan for Building Hands



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

# Penchan/Kanchan for Building Hands



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



標準形(七対国士を含む)の計算結果 / 一般形

打 [ 五 ] 摸 [ 七 四 三 二 ] 13枚 ]

打 [ 三 ] 摸 [ 五 七 四 二 ] 13枚 ]

# Penchan/Kanchan for Building Hands

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



標準形(七対国士を含む)の計算結果 / 一般形

打 5m 摸 [ 7m 1p 2p 3p 4p 13枚 ]

打 89m 摸 [ 5m 7m 1p 2p 3p 13枚 ]

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

# Middle Lone tiles Comparison



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



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



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

# Pairs

Best

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



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



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



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

Worst

# Ryankan



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



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

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

# Ryankan (Tenpai)



Discard 5p and Riichi



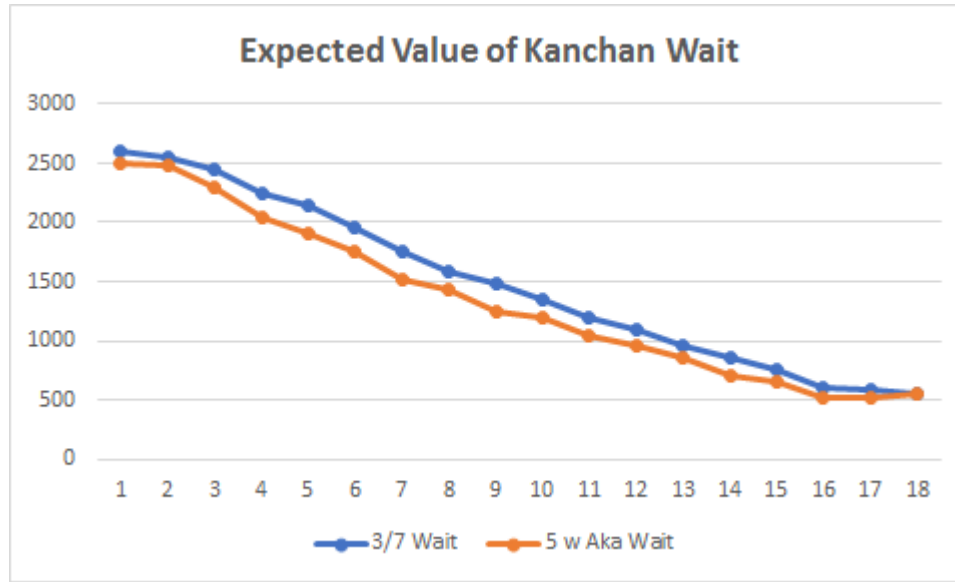
Discard 6m and Riichi. If is 468m, discard 4m and Riichi



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

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

# Ryankan (Tenpai)



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

Do not deviate from this



# Ryankan VS other kind of shapes



Usually in most cases, discard 9p and move towards tanyao.

Exception: 1shanten for pinfu, take ryankan

# Ryankan VS other kind of shapes



6m in both cases



2m in both cases



Menzen: 6m

Open: 2m



2m, try to form  
ryanmen around 3s

# Ryankan VS other kind of shapes



Menzen: Take Ryankan  
Open/Tanyao: Discard 7s, 3/7s, 3s respectively



N/A  
(Situational)

3/7s  
More tiles for  
Ryanmen

N/A  
(Situational)

# 1.5 Blocks (4tiles)

Best



Worst



# 1.5 Blocks (4tiles)

Best



Worst



## 1.5 Blocks (5tiles)

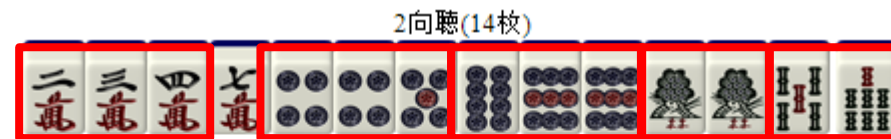
Best



Worst

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

# Common wrongly application of 5 blocks



標準形(七対国士を含む)の計算結果 / 一般形

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

打 1p 摸 [ 2m, 3m, 4m, 5m, 6m, 7m, 8m, 9m, 10m, 11m ] 20枚

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

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

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

## Important Point about Block method

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



# Thinking in 6 blocks is more common



標準形(七対国士を含む)の計算結果 / 一般形

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

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

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

By default, think of your hand in 6 blocks.


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




# The Default Mode in Riichi - Attack or Defense?

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

<25%



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



# Average shanten starting hand

[14枚(親)の場合]

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

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

**20% = full force attack mode.**

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

**5% = Shitty hand**

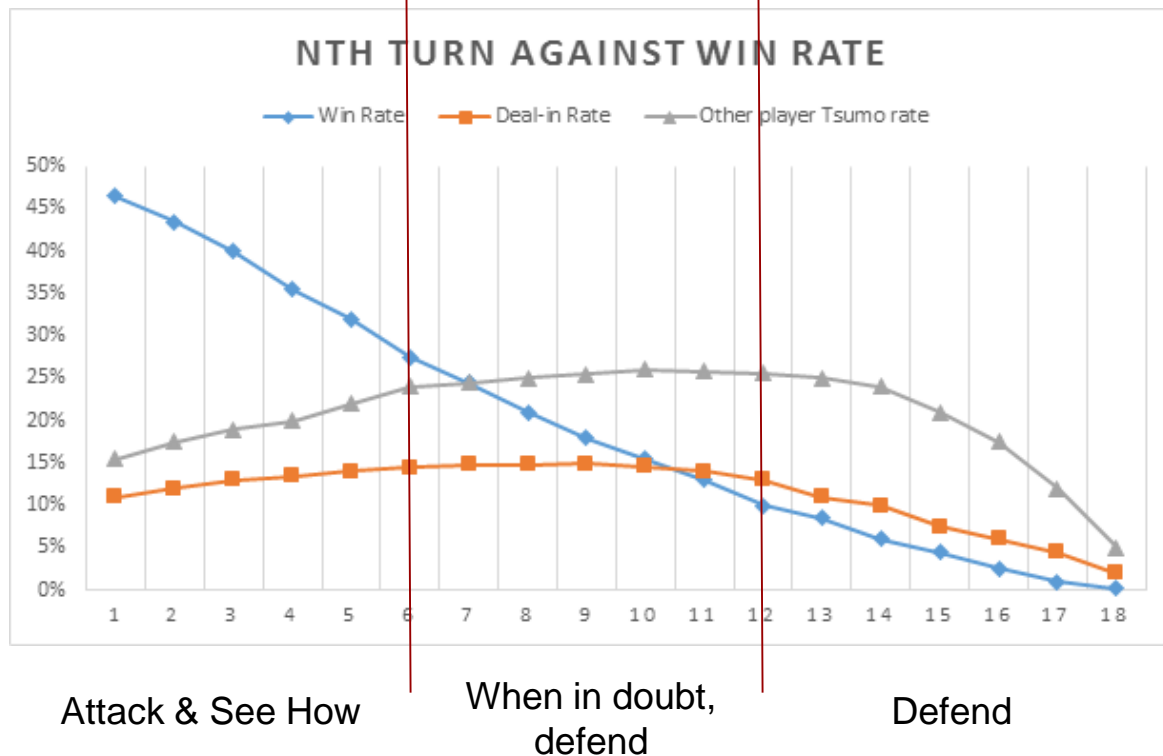
**5% = Give up. Fate Sealed.**



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

1st Row

2nd Row

3rd Row





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



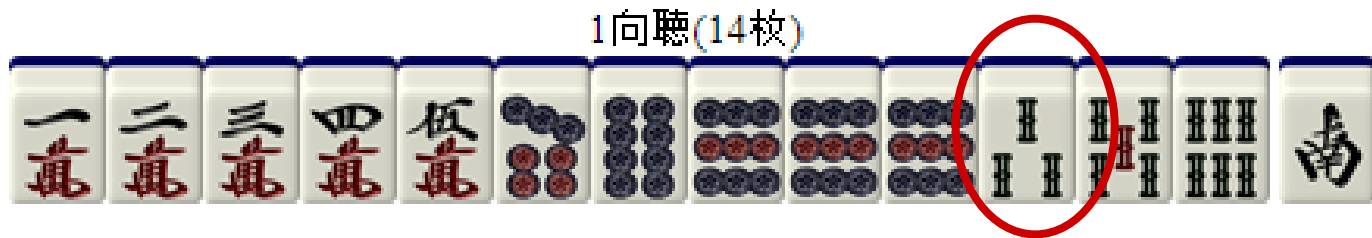
## Attacking with 13 tiles (FULL OFFENSE)



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

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

## “Attacking” with 12 tiles (Sakigiri)



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

## Attacking with 12 tiles



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

Discard 7m here and keep 1 safe tile.

## Attacking with 12 tiles (Exception)



If 3 dora = Attack, discard Pei

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

## Attacking with 12 tiles (Exception)



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

Risk of totally ruining winning the hand is too high.

# Attacking with 11 tiles (Default & Advance)

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

- NEVER CHASE TENPAI BLINDLY. Move away from riichi nomi.
- Fix ryanmen, focus on good hand shape FIRST.
- Early discarding penchan is fine. You have many other lone middle tiles to replace it.
- Do not keep any lone 1/9 tiles.
- Discard 1/9 from 124 or 689 shape.



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

## General concept

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



## Step 1: Identify the kind of shitty hands you have

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

## Step 2: Identify the dora

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

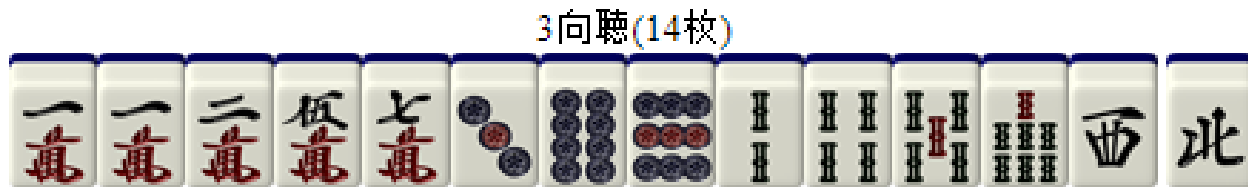
Example: DO NOT FORCE a chantan/junchan when the dora is 4/5/6. Forcing chanta/junchan is effective when terminal/wind tiles are dora.

# 1. “Normal” lousy hand that doesn’t show any obvious pattern



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

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

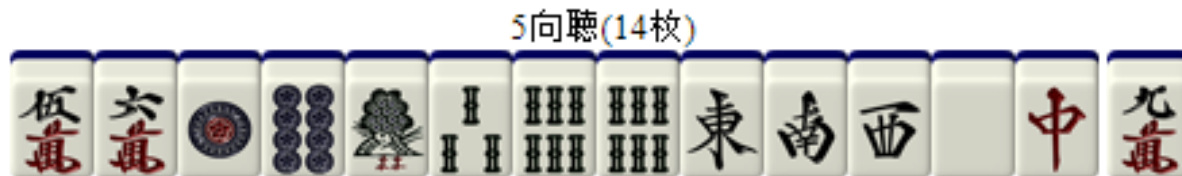


Discard 2m here first to fix your pair then do not keep any pairs in middle tiles. Eg: discard 5m if that's your next draw.

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

Attack with 10 tiles.

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



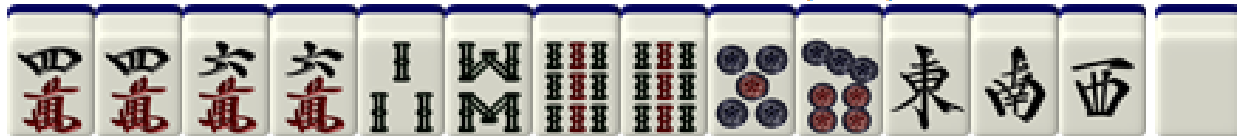
Pon 6s, chi 2s, force honitsu but never pon away the only pair of honours.

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

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

### 3. 2-3 pairs of middle tiles with bad shape

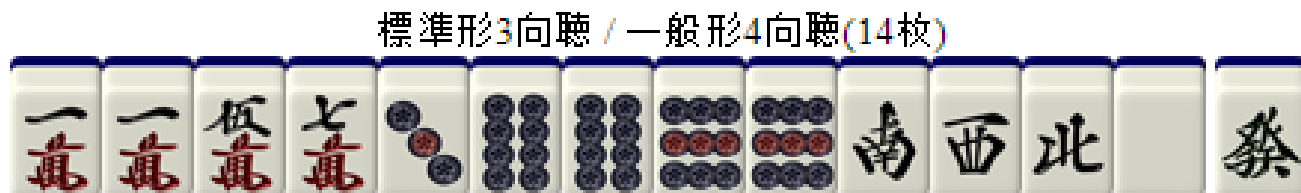
標準形3向聴 / 一般形4向聴(14枚)



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

Aim straight for chiitoe

## 4. 2 pairs of easy-to-pon tiles with lousy shapes and lone honour tiles



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

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

# Summary

- Always prepare yourself an escape path
- Be more decisive in making scary-looking melds and high value hands
- Make a GAME PLAN and put up some fight!





# Riichi Judgement

To Riichi or not to Riichi?



# RIICHI's

## Pros

- **Boosts value:** riichi, ippatsu, ura dora, kan ura  
→ About 30% chance of hitting ura on pinfu hands  
→ After accounting for ippatsu and ura, the value of riichi is now ~**1.3 han**
- **Aggressive stance:** scares off other players, forcing them to break their hand if they have no safe tiles

## &

## Cons

- **Compromises speed:** players start guarding against you, thus decreasing ron-rate  
→ Drops by about 30% in 2nd row  
→ The later you riichi, the less likely you'll win  
→ At 3rd row, the difference is less significant
- **Completely defenseless:** you have no option to defend yourself anymore in autopilot mode
- **1000-point deposit**
- **Locks your hand**
- **No flexibility in choice of waits for yaku:**  
Have to take first winning tile or be in furiten (esp. junchan, chanta, iipeikou, sanshoku)

## Other factors to consider

- **Dealership** - Your riichi is more effective at deterring other players from pushing their hands against you. This is a step towards your renchan as others fold their hands.
- **Apparent danger** - If opponents appear to be in tenpai for / nearing tenpai for expensive hands (dora pon, chinitsu or potential yakuman), you may not want take such large risks of accidentally dealing in by committing your relatively cheap hand to riichi.
- **Need for value or speed**
- **Points standing & stage of round** - Affects your need for value/speed
- **Cumulative score standing** - Affects your need for value/speed
- **Opportunity cost** - value/speed tradeoff



When to not Riichi? (dama-  
ten)

# The diminishing returns of Riichi

Han	Points	Marginal point benefit (points gained by adding one more han)	Marginal % increase
1	1000	1000	100%
2	2000	1900	95%
3	3900	3800	97.4%
4	7700	300	3.9%
5	8000	4000	50%

Han	Points	Marginal point benefit (points gained by adding one more han)	Marginal % increase
6	12000	0	0%
7	12000	4000	33.3%
8	16000	0	0%
9	16000	0	0%
10	16000	8000	50%

\* These point values are for non-dealer 30 fu hands. Dealer's hands see roughly the same marginal % increase.

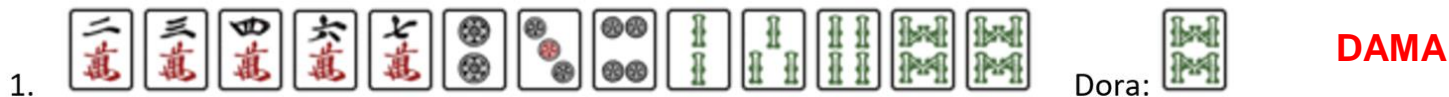
**Generally, at 4 han and 6 han, where calling riichi doesn't guarantee you can upgrade to the next tier, dama.**



If your hand already has  
**sufficient value** without riichi



# Haneman confirmed and above



Tanyao, pinfu, sanshoku, dora 2 = 6 han haneman (non-dealer 12000, dealer 18000)

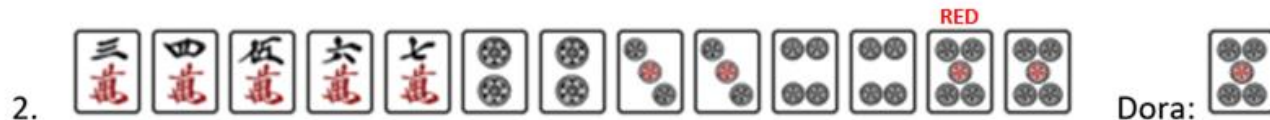
- This is already a monster hand that can put you in a solid lead. Assuming you don't play badly later on, winning this hand as a dealer (haneman 18000 points) will give you a solid lead that'll give you an 80% chance of winning the game.

## DEMERITS OF RIICHI > MERITS OF RIICHI

Reduced chance of winning this monster hand.  
This hand might even end in a draw if everyone else folds their hand! What a waste!  
18000 dealer haneman vs 3000 tenpai payment

+1 han for riichi → 7 han (still haneman!!)  
But got +1 for ura dora!!! → 8 han (BAIMAN!!)  
BUT this is NOT EVEN GUARANTEED.  
Plus, this is assuming that you WIN the hand in the first place!

## Mangan/Haneman confirmed and above



Tanyao, pinfu, iipeikou, dora 3 = 6 han haneman (non-dealer 12000, dealer 18000)



Chiitoui, honroutou = 4 han 25 fu (non-dealer 6400, dealer 9600)

**Good waits (ie. likely to come out even with riichi + good tsumo chance),**  
 → Still **acceptable to riichi in early game (1st row)**, otherwise dama



## What about these 5 han hands?


4.  Dora: 

Early game (1st row) → Riichi (push to haneman)

Mid game (2nd row) → Still advised to riichi because wait is good (class A ryanmen)

End game (3rd row) → Preferably dama to secure this mangan hand, unless you REALLY need the value (eg. to gyakuten). Remember, win-rate decreases the later it gets.

## What about these 5 han hands?


5.  Dora: 

Early game (1st row) → Riichi (push to haneman)

Mid game (2nd row) → Somewhat ok to riichi because wait is okay (even better if a suji-trap has been set)

End game (3rd row) → Preferably dama to secure this mangan hand, unless you REALLY need the value (eg. to gyakuten). Remember, riichi affects what the other players discard when they start guarding against you.

## What about these 5 han hands?


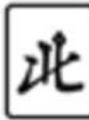
6.  Dora: 

Early game (1st row) → Preferably dama. Lousy wait of kanchan with center tile. Non-suji 456 tiles are especially difficult to come out after riichi.

Mid game (2nd row) → Dama

End game (3rd row) → Dama

## What about these 4 han hands?

7.  Dora: 

Tanyao, pinfu, sanshoku = 4 han mangan (non-dealer 8000, dealer 12000)



**Riichi-ing 4 han hands do not confirm haneman and generally should lean towards dama as mentioned earlier. This is, however, a rather grey area.**

If in early game (1st row) → By all means go ahead and riichi because the wait is good (class B ryanmen) and you have many draws ahead.

Mid game (2nd row) → This is where you need to start exercising caution and balance for your need for speed/value. Although riichi is acceptable up till the end of mid game, despite the good wait, start considering dama if you need the current value from this hand.

End game (3rd row) → Dama

## What about these 4 han hands?

8.  Dora: 

Haku, dora 3 = 4 han mangan (non-dealer 8000, dealer 12000)

Early game (1st row) → Riichi (2-8 tile wait, better if suji trap set, and you have many draws ahead)

Mid game (2nd row) → Your tendency to call riichi for this type of hand should be less than the previous hand due to the poorer wait. Riichi in the 1st half of mid-game is still acceptable.

End game (3rd row) → Dama

## What about these 4 han hands?

9.  Dora: 

Itsu, dora 2 = 4 han mangan (non-dealer 8000, dealer 12000)

Early game (1st row) → Preferably dama. Lousy wait of kanchan with center tile. Non-suji 456 tiles are especially difficult to come out after riichi.

Mid game (2nd row) → Dama

End game (3rd row) → Dama

If the difference between takame 高目  
and yasume 安目 is **significant**

One out gives haneman 12000 points  
One out gives 1 han 1300 points



### DAMA

9p → Pinfu, junchan, sanshoku = 6 han haneman (non-dealer 12000, dealer 18000)

6p → Pinfu nomi = 1 han 30 fu (non-dealer 1000, dealer 1500)

**While in dama, you won't risk furiten if you don't commit the hand to riichi.  
Besides, this hand is already expensive enough.**





If you have an **urgent need for speed**  
(and don't need the value)

# If you have an urgent need for speed (and don't need the value)

South-4, West - 1st: 50,100 2nd (YOU): 28,400 3rd: 27,900 4th: -6,400



**DAMA - ALREADY HAVE YAKUHAI (non dealer 1300 points)**

- 1st player is in a very far lead (you need sanbaiman to overtake him) and it doesn't look like this hand has that sort of potential.
- 3rd player is very close to you (just 500 points below you). If you let him win or if you deal into any hand, you will drop to 3rd place below him.
- If you win the hand, the game ends, confirming your 2nd place.
- Why make others guard against you by calling riichi, decreasing your chance of securing 2nd place? Declaring riichi is unlikely to give you the value to reach 1st either. Just settle for 2nd and avoid dropping further, harming your overall cumulative position. Don't forget that you put 1000 points on the table for riichi.
- The same argument applies if you were in 3rd position fighting for 2nd position.
- If no yaku, have to make yaku. Otherwise have to take the risk of riichi.



If there are **plenty of tiles** you can wait  
for to **improve the hand's speed/value**  
**significantly**

# Consider the opportunity cost of riichi before you commit a hand to riichi

- Can your hand improve its wait (speed) or get more yaku (value)?
- Is it practical (speed) and worthwhile (value) to wait for those tiles to come?
- When are you going to wait until? This depends on how desperate you are to win the hand and many other situational factors like points situation and risk of dealing into others' hands when committing to a lousy riichi.

Generally, if the number of tiles you can wait for to improve the hand's speed/value is **twice or more** than the number of outs your current hand has, you should opt to dama for the time being.

# Common blocks to dama first for wait change



3-7 Shanpon waits (2 types, 4 outs)

- Many tiles you can draw to upgrade to ryanmen (2 types, 8 outs).  
→ Draw 24m or 68s (**4 types, 16 tiles**)  
→ May give you pinfu as a result



12 or 89 Shanpon waits (2 types, 4 outs)

- NOT AS EFFICIENT** to wait to draw to upgrade to ryanmen. Should just riichi (reasonably okay wait anyway)  
→ Only can draw 3m or 7s (2 types, 8 tiles)

# Waiting for tanyao?



Do I dama to wait for 4p to come in so I can get tanyao? **NO. This hand is generally instant riichi.**

It doesn't make sense to wait on 4p (1 type 4 tiles) to come in first and then accept tenpai and riichi, while your current wait is already ryanmen (2 types 8 tiles).

There are, however, times that you may wish to dama this hand for speed, such as if:

- There are many honba and riichi sticks on the table up for grabs
- You wish to end the current oya's turn
- You sense danger in other players' hands (danger of yakuman, chinitsu, etc); too risky to commit to this relatively cheap riichi pinfu hand [EV analysis of your hand vs opponents' hands]
- It is already in the 3rd row/end of 2nd row. Paying 1000 points to upgrade a 1000 points hand to 2000 points without a justifiable chance of winning your deposit back doesn't make sense.

# Flexibility in both speed and value

East-4, West, Turn 6 - 1st: 38,600 2nd (YOU): 31,800 3rd: 25,800 4th: 23,800 Dora: haku



Current hand is worth: yakunashi dora 2

If riichi now, you commit to a poor shanpon wait with dora and center 6p tile, takame dora mangan.

This hand has potential to change to ryanmen or better wait around 6p (speed), and even better, ittsuman (value). If you draw 1p or 2p, you can dama ittsuman dora 2 = 4 han mangan hand.

If you can wait on the **genbutsu** 現物  
of other riichi player(s)



# If you can wait on the genbutsu 現物 of other riichi player(s)

When a player calls riichi, attention will be directed at his genbutsu and safe tiles. If you happen to reach tenpai for the riichi player's safe tiles, you can snipe those tiles from other players who are defending while remaining undercover in dama.

However, this riichi judgement also depends on several factors.

## **MOST SIGNIFICANT FACTOR**

When your hand has much marginal benefit to gain from calling riichi, you should still okkake-riichi (chasing-riichi) despite waiting on the other player's genbutsu.

Less than 3 han 40 fu, good wait → Riichi

3 han 40 fu and above, or bad wait → Dama

# If you can wait on the genbutsu 現物 of other riichi player(s)

## The number of your waits available

Few → Dama

Many → Riichi

## The actions of others

Defending (discarding riichi player's safe tiles) → Dama (increases the chance they will discard your winning tile, because they are focused on the riichi player)

Attacking (discarding non-suji, live tiles) → Might as well riichi (because it doesn't really change your win-rate from those players)

# If you can wait on the genbutsu 現物 of other riichi player(s)

## What tiles you are waiting on that are in his genbutsu - eg. ryanmen 36

Both seem likely to be discarded (6 is genbutsu, so suji 3 appears safe) → Dama

Only one side seems likely to be discarded (only 3 is genbutsu, 6 is not cleared) → Riichi

## The tiles you have to discard to remain in dama-ten

Safe tiles → Continue to dama, doesn't attract attention towards you

Dangerous tiles that haven't cleared → Might as well riichi to give yourself a better payoff for the risk you are taking, and since you've drawn attention to yourself that you're pushing dangerous tiles

# If you can wait on the genbutsu 現物 of other riichi player(s)


The timing that the genbutsu you are waiting on was discarded

Recent → Dama (especially if there are limited genbutsu)

If the other players don't follow up, you can opt to tsumo-giri riichi too.


Your score situation and the stage of the game

If you cannot afford to deal in, or if the game is approaching a draw → Dama



Push-Pull

To what extent should I  
push, should I fold?



# Understanding the conditional probability of your winning rate

For simplicity sake...let's assume

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

If your opponent riichi, with 2 sided wait,

You chase with 2 sided wait = 50% win rate

You chase with 1 sided wait = 33% win rate

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

# Understanding the expected value of your hand



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

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

# Understanding the expected value of your hand

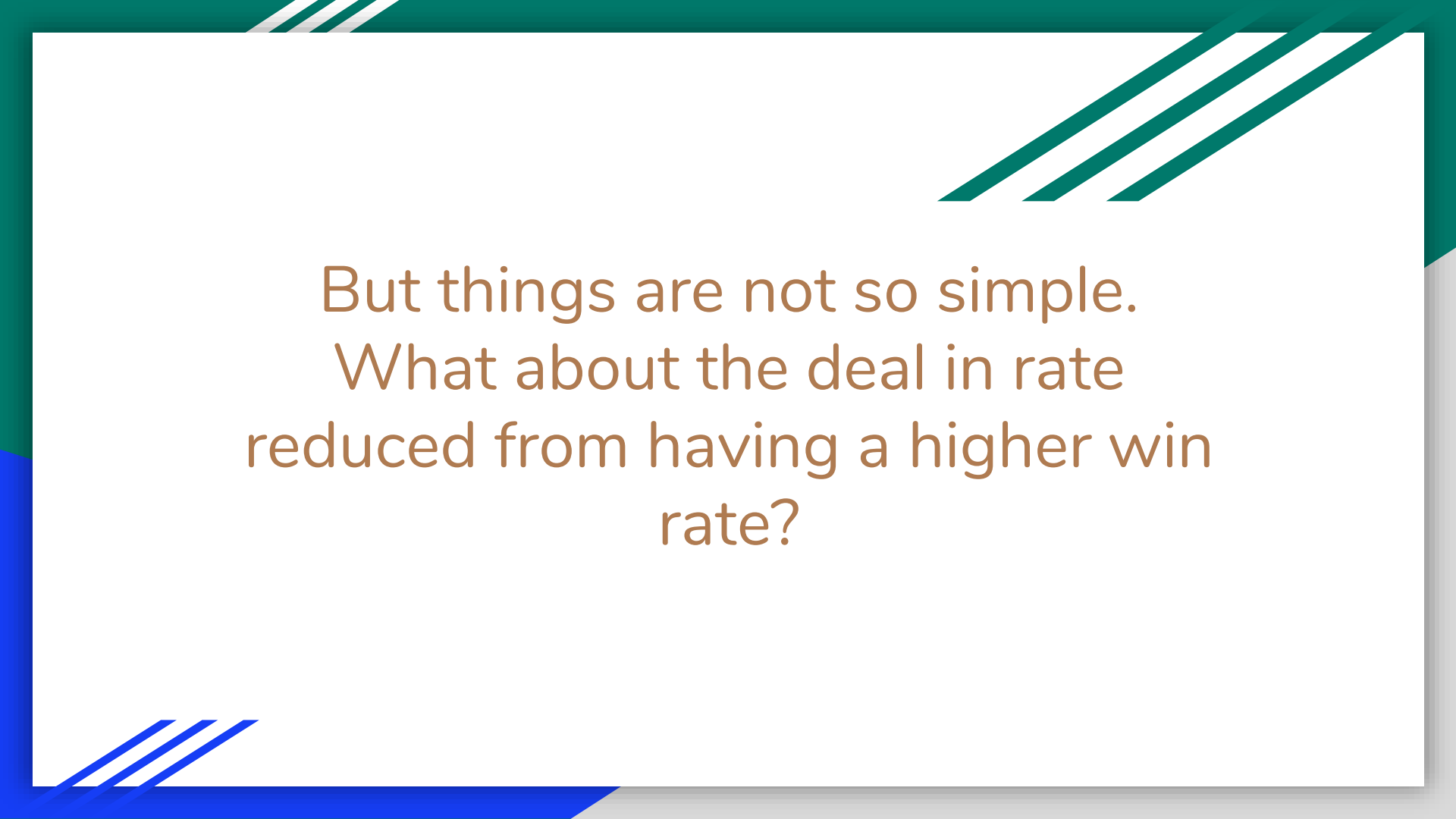


Assuming Tsumo rate at 40%,

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

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





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

# EV against a player's Riichi

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

## Player A

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

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

**1.3k**



## Player B

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

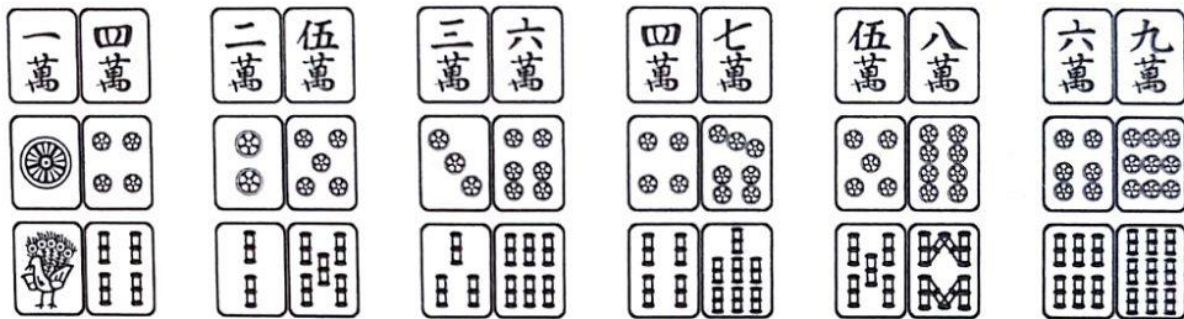
$$\text{EV: } 0.33(0.5 \cdot 8k + 0.5 \cdot 8k + 1k) - 0.67(0.5 \cdot 2.6k + 0.5 \cdot 1.3k + 1k) = 3k - 1.98k =$$

**1.02k**

**Good wait still triumph!**

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

# Assessing the risk you will be taking



合計 18 本

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

## Assessing the risk you will be taking

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



**What is the deal in rate of a 5s?**



## Compound Risk



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

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

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

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

# Risk Threshold Guide

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



## Exercise

2向聴(14枚)



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

Do you agree with John's decision? Why?





Don't be like John.



Do not confuse push-pull  
situations with defence.

# Push-pull vs Defence Situations

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

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

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

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

## Ironclad rules of pushing your hand against riichi

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



Melding (Calling)

# Why do we meld?

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

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



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

# 1. Speed up - Matching tenpai speed



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

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



# 1. Speed up - Matching tenpai speed



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

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

## 2. Improve hand shape via melding (Kuinobashi)

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



Chi 3m or 7m



Chi 4s



Chi 5p

## 4. Show opponent tiles

標準形1向聴 / 一般形3向聴(14枚)



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

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

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

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

## 5. To break Ippatsu and/or shift haitei

Conditions in Melding JUST to break Ippatsu

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

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

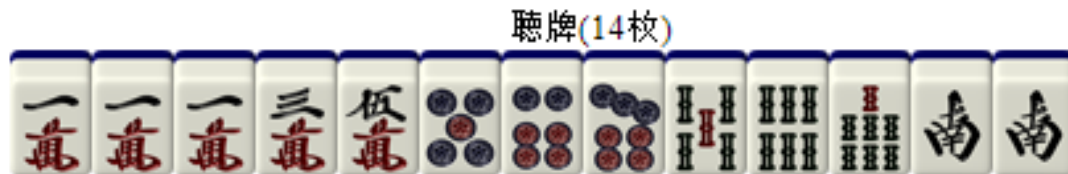
## 5. To break Ippatsu and/or shift haitei

Order of Priority to prevent the player from taking Haitei

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

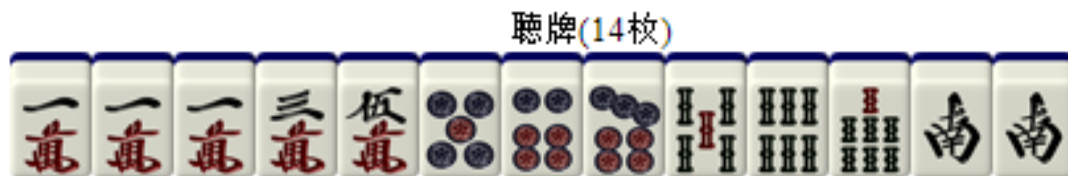
If the conditions are not met, **don't be a hero**.

## 6. Not wanting to draw a tile



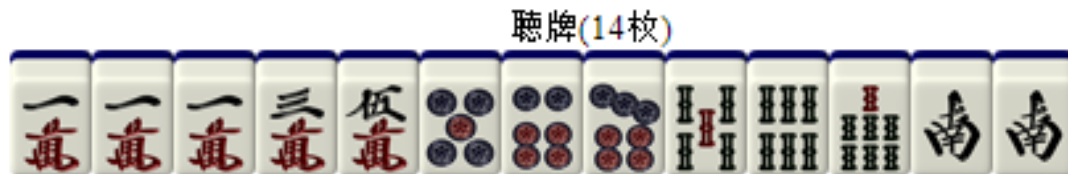
You dama this hand because it is doraless and it is at turn 13. Left player discarded 4m, should you chi? If yes, what will you discard? Assuming 1m & nan are safe tiles.

## 6. Not wanting to draw a tile



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

## 6. Not wanting to draw a tile



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



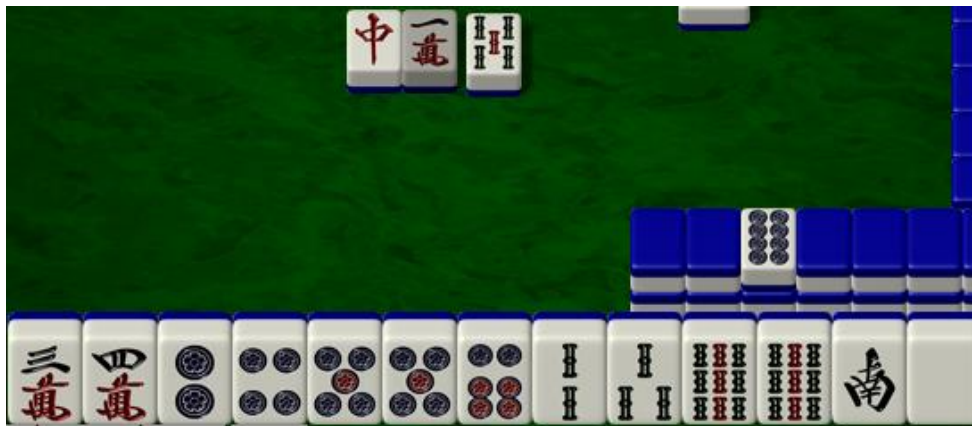



# Discard Reading (Tenpai speed)

# Degree of importance


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

*Example of Ura-suji discard:*





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



# ASSUMPTION CHECK - Regular or Irregularity?

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

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

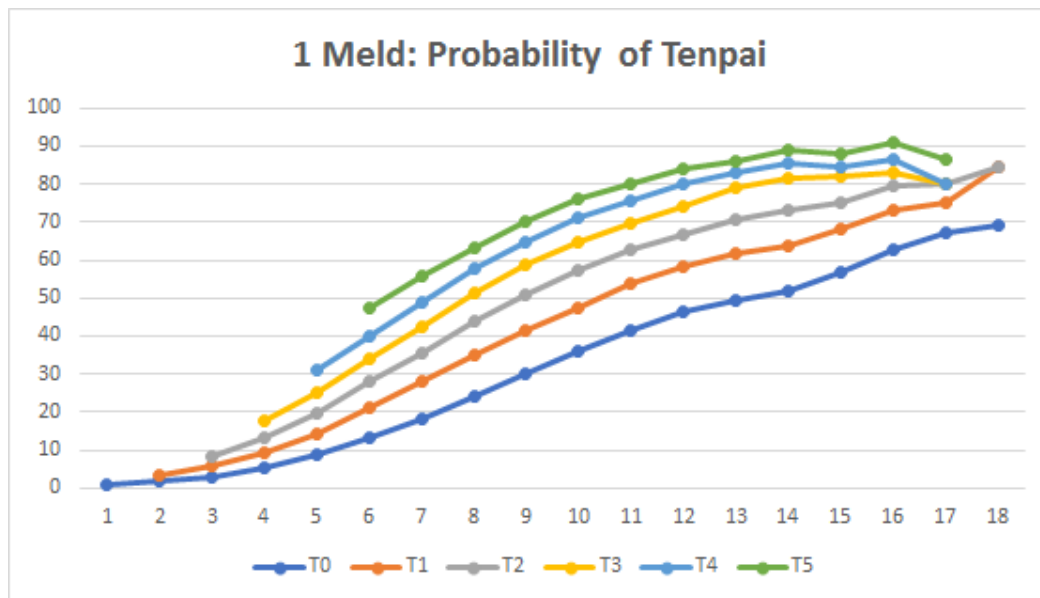
## Requirements of Discard reading

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

# Speed Reading (Menzen) - Strong Signs of 1shanten

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

# Speed of melded hands

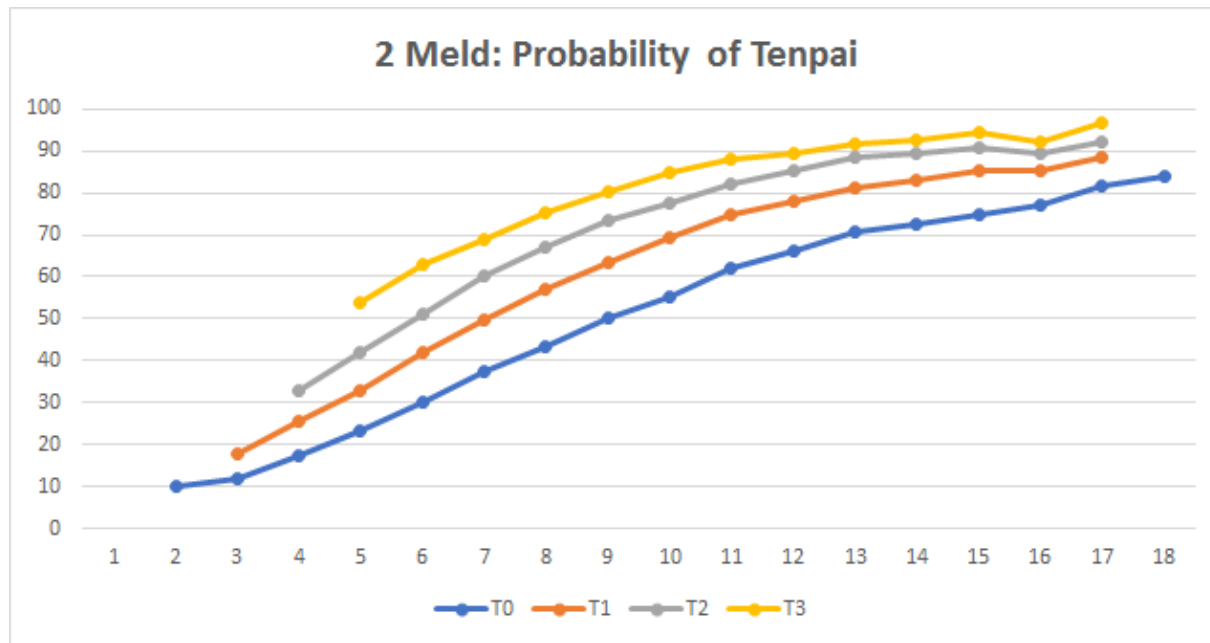


**Apply how you read  
menzen hands!**

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

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

# Speed of melded hands

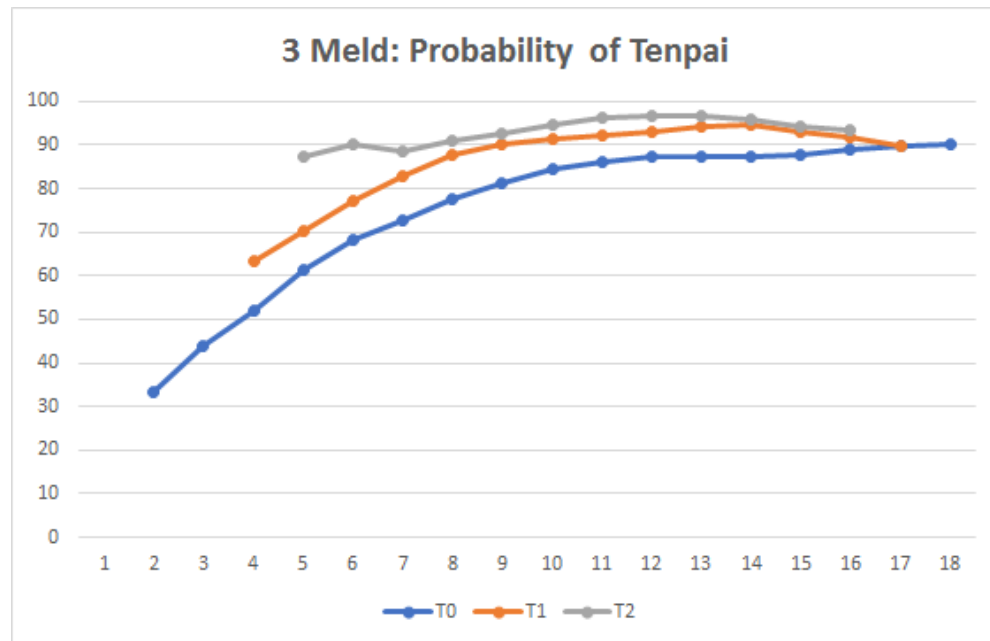


**2 middle tiles at  
2nd row =  
assume tenpai**

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



# Speed of melded hands



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

# Speed Reading (Tile discard upon a meld)

## - Strong signs that the hand is TENPAI

A meld was done from ryanmen+pair kind of shape. Eg: Chi 4s, discard 2s (previous shape was 223). Likewise to 233, 334, 344 and so on so forth. This shows full aggression from the player, possible have 2 doras too.

If the player has previously discarded a few middle tiles but discarded a safe tile after a meld. Keeping 1 safe tile at 1 shanten is common amongst advance players.

Discard dora or any other extremely dangerous tile (such as a suit to the player's right player who is doing honitsu of that suit)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Interpretation:** Pinfu + Tanyao + Ryanmen + 1shanten is coming. Keep safe tiles NOW.

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

**Interpretation:** There are very few hands that a pair of 2/8 is not needed after some middle tiles. It means the hand is 100% tanyao + pinfu + good wait and even a pair of dora.

## Reading Abnormality 4 - Discarded a pair of 3/7

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

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

# Reading abnormality 5- discarding ryanmen

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

## **For menzen:**

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



## Caution about discard reading

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



Dealing with players who  
have melded

## Melds at first row

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

# Choosing the right block based on melded hands



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

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

# Choosing the right block based on melded hands



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

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

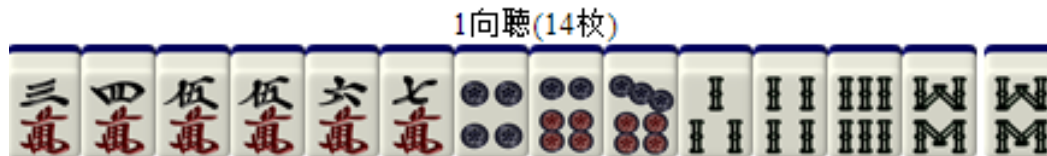
# Choosing the right discard order based on melded hands



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


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

## Sakigiri...or not?




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

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



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





# Dangerous Suji (I) - Riichi tile

These are common shapes that players have



Players will discard 6m to riichi.

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



Players will discard 8p to riichi.

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



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

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

## Dangerous Suji (II) - Dora Soba

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

## Dangerous Suji (III) - Irregular Discard

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

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




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

## Dangerous Suji (IV) - Riichi with 2/8


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

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

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



When Suji can be used safely, it is  
basically reading that the  
opponent has a 2 sided wait



## Safer Suji (I) - Riichi after Tedashi Kanchan

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



## Safer Suji (II) - Suji based on early discards

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

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

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


## Safer Suji (IV) - Riichi with safe tile

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



Future Workshop will be  
conducted if there are enough  
players requesting for it





If you have any feedback or  
clarification, feel free to contact  
Feng at [thamhin@hotmail.com](mailto:thamhin@hotmail.com)

