Game 101 Critical Play Report 9/20/2018

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Go, a simple game played by two people positioning either black or white stones on a board with nineteen times nineteen grid of lines, yet is extremely strategic and time-consuming, unlike most intense and quick-paced board games. Since Go board is so big, and player can position only one stone per round, the most famous and unique-to-Go principle applies ---Corner is gold, Edge is silver, center is grass, which is an old Chinese Go proverb meaning that the territory in the corner is the easiest to secure, followed by the edge, and center is the hardest to get territory.

What the rule says is not obvious only by looking at the empty board, but once stones are positioned both in the corner and in the middle, the advantage of the corner begins to appear. If a black stone is placed at the very corner, only two white stones are needed to take the black stone out; however, if a black stone is placed in the middle, four white stones are needed in order to surround the black stone; that is, the corner is easy to fortify and hard to attack, since the two edge lines are like natural walls that provide solid defense without any cost of the player’s stones.

The rule was tested in the game I once had. My opponent was the first time to play Go. Though I had stopped playing Go for several years and forgot nearly all the strategies, I still had over five years of experience in this game, and that guided me to take as many corners as possible in the beginning of the game. At the very start, both of us take two corners and two edges by positioning our stones in the areas, and we both positioned stones around the boundaries of the two territories in seeking for an invading opportunity. My opponents tried to surround my stones on the edges, and I of course tried to survive. But I did not plan to fight with him, instead I lured him to waste more rounds on surrounding my stones on the edges. Since one stone I placed, he had to place at least two stones to take me out, thus I would have more rounds in fortifying my corners and creating messes in his corners. After a number of rounds, when I thought I had finished my defense by narrowing the space around my corners with my stones, I started to place stones in his corners where he had only few stones. Later I successfully penetrated one of his corners, which means I had three corners by then, and he successfully surrounded my stones in the edge with the loss one corner. He tried to invade my territory by placing stones in one of my corners, but the only thing I needed to do was to force his stones to the edge lines, left him nowhere to go but giving up the stones he put. Because it was then really hard for him to penetrate my corners, I had great advantage in controlling the two edges between the corners. As long as he put stones in those edges, I already had blocked two of his ways, that means he could only position stones center-ward to make them alive. As time passed, the game kept sending clues of who was winning and who was losing. The three corners I had were like solid roots of a tree, and I could guide my branches freely in the center to take as much territory as possible that my opponent just could not do a thing about it, since the stones were all connected from the center to the corners that were impossible to be attacked. Not surprisingly, I won the game with almost three fourth of areas on the board, and the success in capturing three of the four corners on the board largely decided the game’s result.

In conclusion, though no same game is played in the world on the board of Go, the Golden corner is what all experienced players will choose as the foundation to build their fortress and expand it outwards and ensure a half win in their games of Go.