The principle of straight development

The concept of development

The act of placing new stones on the board, creating a foothold for future stones, is called development. As soon as a group of stones has been formed, there is a sense of direction to this development. The influence exerted by a group, indicates the range and the direction in which a group wants to develop.

Straight lines and diagonal lines

In Go, stones ideally develop along straight lines. Why is this so? The basic reason is that two adjacent stones of the same colour form a simple connection, sharing their liberties. Such a simple connection is strong. Two diagonally "linked" stones are not fully connected and do not share their liberties. However, one could argue that the diagonal is potentially connected and more flexible than the simple connection. So we have to find more arguments for the statement that *straight is better than diagonal"*.

development

In the upper left of this diagram, two groups run across the board, one diagonally, the other straight. They will meet halfway. The first one to play *a* will continue its development and block the other's. If it is Black's turn (below left), he will block the diagonal development, while smoothly continuing his own and the whole chain remains connected. If it is White's turn (below right), she will block the straight development, while continuing her own, but Black now can cut.

This is the basic difference between straight and diagonal: when they meet, the straight group can do more damage.

One point jumps

Even clearer becomes the weakness of diagonal development, if both increase their speed and jump a point. The straight line now develops twice as fast, with one space jumps. If White tries to cut one of the segments, she is immediately reduced to two liberties. In the ensuing sequence, Black can maintain a high degree of connectivity. The diagonal line also develops at double speed, but when Black cuts it, he can do so while keeping a maximum of liberties. In the ensuing sequence, White's line of development is completely disrupted.

Principle: ***straight lines are better than diagonal lines***