

# GO STUDIES

## A HISTORY OF ADVENTURE



SINAN DJEPOV



# Preface

From my point of view, Go has always been something more than just a game with elegant rules and complex strategy, it has been a passion and art.

The last few years passed imperceptibly and learning the basic rules didn't take much time, but soon afterwards I realized that a lifetime might not be enough to master the game.

Nevertheless, Go is still one of the most joyful things in my life.

*“Go Studies: A History of Adventure”* is a book about an adventure into the deepness of Go in my three months of study in the Ge Yuhong Go Academy as part of the CEGO Academic Programme in China, Beijing.

This book will reveal new opening ideas, joseki changes, creative moves, strategy plans and it will cover what it is like to study Go in a Chinese Go School in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

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programme; Everybody who contributed to my  
growth in one way or another.

This book is also dedicated to all players who dive  
into the deepness of Go without any hesitation.

Thank you



# Go Terms

- ❖ **Aji** - roughly we can say that stands for possibilities left in a position
- ❖ **Atari** - the state of the group or a stone which has only one liberty and is threatened to be killed
- ❖ **Attachment** - a move which is played in contact with a stone of the opponent, without being in contact with other stones
- ❖ **Fuseki** - whole board opening of each game
- ❖ **Gote** - losing the initiative
- ❖ **Honte** - proper move which leaves few or no weaknesses
- ❖ **Joseki** - sequence which can result in a fair outcome for both players
- ❖ **Keima** - knight move
- ❖ **Miai** - certain position where there are two different options that if one of the players take one of them, the other will take the second
- ❖ **Moyo** - area where one player has a lot of influence and has potential of making territory
- ❖ **Pincer** - this is response to a corner approach move from the other side in order not to let it make a base easily
- ❖ **Sente** - the meaning of sente is to play first or if a move is sente, then it means that opponent has to answer that move and give the next move to the opponent again
- ❖ **Tesuji** - clever move played in local position
- ❖ **Tewari** - method which helps to judge whether position is good or bad by changing the order of moves or taking away equal stones from both sides to revert to other position in order to see which exchanges are bad or good
- ❖ **Tsumego** - life and death problems
- ❖ **Tenuki** - play somewhere else by not answering opponent move locally



## Beginning of the programme !

As part of the CEGO Academic Programme, six European players go to China every year, to study Go for a period of six months in the Ge Yuhong Go Academy.

There is a period in which players can apply to the programme and usually, those applying are young, promising and looking forward to significant improvement at Go. Some have goals to become professionals. This year, the journey began immediately at a tournament in Xi'An, called Silk Road City Weiqi Open, which is located pretty far from Beijing.

We went by plane from Beijing, because we missed our train. Sometimes the traffic can be very amazing.

The six players accepted in the program this year are:

Stanislaw Frejlak from Poland

Oscar Vazquez from Spain/Belgium as well.

Anton Chernykh from Russia

Dominik Boviz from Hungary

Gabriel Wagner from Germany

Also me, but I will leave at the beginning of November, due to preparations for high-school exams for university.

Apart from us, there were other European players playing in the Silk Road Tournament. There were also four of EGF Professionals : Ilya Shikshin, Pavol Lisy, Ali Jabarin and Artem Kachanovskyi.

The tournament was quite well organized and the place was very good, in total we played nine games.

The winner was Tang Zheng Nan from China, and the runner up was Ilya Shikshin. According to other players, Ilya expected second place in the tournament as many powerful Chinese players joined this year's tournament. Pavol Lisy took 3<sup>rd</sup> place and the next best European player was Alexander Dinerchstein who took 10<sup>th</sup> place.

We studied our games with AI's, because nowadays this is one of the best ways to improve, although some of the moves suggested by the computer are difficult to understand.

The content of this book, I double checked with AI tools, saw commented on by the teachers at the Ge Yuhong Go Academy or discussed with strong players.



## Meeting the adventurers

I decided to ask each one of the participants in this CEGO Academic programme four questions and here are their answers with their own words. The pictures are provided by EuroGoTV.

**Oscar Vazquez 5D** - Born 2003

Q: When did you first start playing Go?

A: When I was six, in other words, I've been playing Go for two-thirds of my life.

Q: What is Go for you?

A: Go to me is something I can focus on and develop with as a person, and I feel like having such a project to grow with is somehow crucial to being happy and fulfilled in my life. However, since I am a very competitive person, Go is not just a way to improve myself, it is also a way to satiate my thirst to destroy everyone.

Q: Why did you decide to apply for this programme?

A: My biggest ambition for the last couple of years has been to become the strongest Go player in Europe. I realized at some point, however, that in Europe I find it hard to really concentrate on Go in my daily life and I could not improve fast enough because of this. In China, on the other hand, you need no real decision-making or willpower to study. The decision to study was made for you by the past version of you that applied to this programme. In short, it makes it "easy" for me to improve at Go.

Q: What advice would you give to these who want to improve at Go?

A: Every time I was serious about studying Go, or anything else for that matter. I found it very useful to plan a schedule (even one for only half an hour of the day) for my study. In some sense, schedules produce an effect similar to what I experience in China, since the decision to study was made by the "past" you, and you can just follow the steps. I find this to make my life very simple and easy somehow, even though it usually makes me work more...





## Gabriel Wagner 4D

Born 1998

Q: When did you first start playing Go?

A: When I was 14 years old, my friend introduced me to the game.

Q: What is Go for you?

A: Go is something big unknown that offers me an infinite amount of knowledge and skills to obtain. Knowing that I will never even possibly *MASTER* that game, I consider it rather an art than anything else, it doesn't have any specific purpose and only stands for itself. It pushes me to work harder and become a more disciplined person.



Q: Why did you decide to apply for this programme?

A: Ever since I learned Go I was impressed by the fact that there are other human beings who treat something as “useless” as Go as something important enough to spend a huge amount of their time on it. While studying Go just in my spare time in Europe I always felt like I was not giving Go the time it deserves to be developed sufficiently. Here in China I feel that I can finally do justice to Go itself and also to my eagerness to learn.

Q: What advice would you give to these who want to improve at Go?

A: I think whenever you enjoy doing something it's easy to learn from it. So, especially for beginners I recommend trying as many things as possible to find out what you enjoy, but please be patient, not everything will be enjoyable from the very beginning. Once you found out what helps you the most I think the most important thing is being consistent: If you spend a certain amount of time on Go every day, even if it is just a small amount, it will help you more than studying one whole day and then not doing anything for the next month.



## Stanislaw Frejlak 7D

Born 1996

Q: When did you first start playing Go?

A: My dad who is a 2D player, taught me Go when I was six years old. Together we went to lessons done by former Polish Champion.

Q: What is Go for you?

A: For me Go is a never-ending competition with other people and with myself. It is also a great teacher. Throughout a go career one will lose many games all the time. I feel that it teaches me a lot about my emotions and the mistakes in my thinking. If I want to improve I need to deeply understand the decision-making process in my brain and how it is affected by fear, laziness, self-confidence, anger etc...

Q: Why did you decide to apply for this programme?

A: My dream is to become an EGF professional player. In the beginning of this year after going to a few tournaments I understood that the competition for this title is pretty tough and I need to dedicate myself to Go if I want to succeed. Before I already spent ten months in China and I like the atmosphere in the Academy. In this environment I can push myself to study Go really hard.

Q: What advice would you give to these who want to improve at Go?

A: Solve more tsumego.





## **Dominik Boviz 6D**

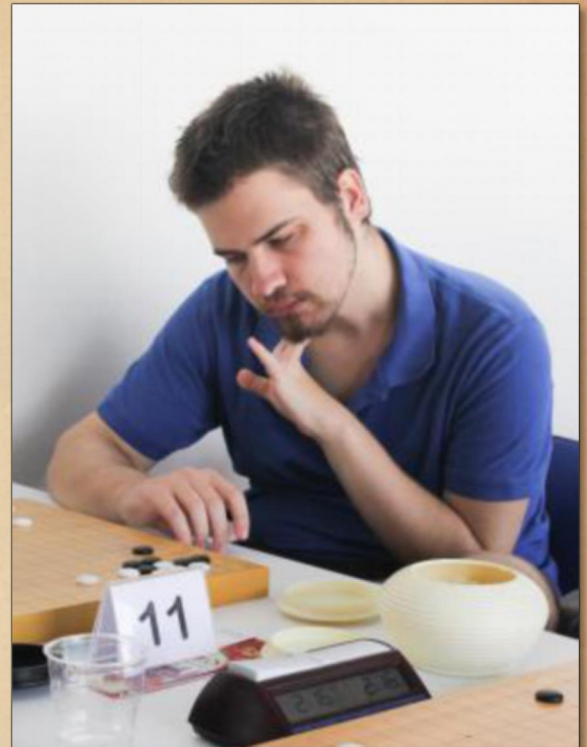
Born 1996

Q: When did you first start playing Go?

A: I started playing Go in 2005 and I played my first tournament in 2006.

Q: What is Go for you?

A: For me Go means many things. It is an endless competition, a sport with a scientific taste, but at the end of the day, Go is an art. Go is what is flowing in my veins.



Q: Why did you decide to apply for this programme?

A: I was very desperate to not be 5 dan and also very desperate to be a professional and it ended up this way.

Q: What advice would you give to these who want to improve at Go?

A: First of all, the most important thing for improvement is playing a lot of games, possibly on a real board with a real opponent. If you can't have that, then play online. Apart from this, watch Japanese pro games, study joseki, and try to take your time to understand the moves, the flow, and the reasons, if possible do so with a teacher. Furthermore, review your own games, solve tsumego if your reading is bad, study tsumego shapes to remember them, and you can also use Leela. Take care, however, as Leela can lead you to misunderstand many many things, especially if you are not even a dan player yet. Do not do things blindly, you have to work on your weaknesses!



## Anton Chernykh 6D

Born 2000

Q: When did you first start playing Go?

A: I started to play when I was 6, but started to study seriously only at 14.

Q: What is Go for you?

A: For me Go is the most fascinating game in the world. Every day I want to learn more and more about Go.

Q: Why did you decide to apply for this programme?

A: I am playing Go, because I want to fight with top professionals as much as possible. To prepare myself for this, I need to study a lot. But at home it's really hard to force yourself to study. I decided to go to China, because the atmosphere here is good to improve my skills.

Q: What advice would you give to these who want to improve at Go?

A: I think the best way to study is to find motivation and joy. For me, studying Go when you feel bad is not a good idea. During such moments, you need to take a break.

To find what you like to study the most, independent if it is joseki, fuseki, tesuji or etc, and to focus on studying that, is the best way to improve at Go.





## Sinan Djepov 5D

Born 2000

Q: When did you first start playing Go?

A: At the age of 13, neighbour taught me to the rules of Go.

Q: What is Go for you?

A: Go felt more than just a game from the very beginning. There were some days, when it was pretty much the only thing that I wanted to do. The beauty of the game is just breathtaking, if one does not try, he will never understand.

Q: Why did you decide to apply for this programme?

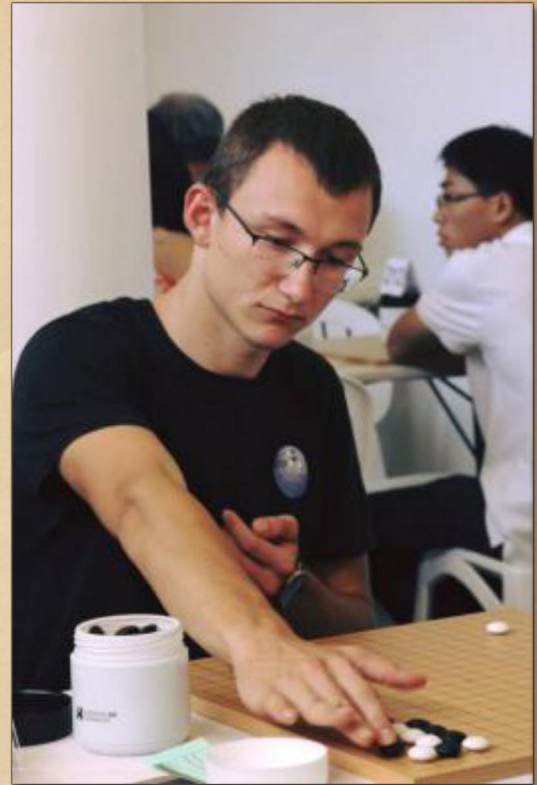
A: To study Go in Asia, has been a dream of mine since I started to get involved more and more into the game. Here in the academy, surrounded by all these players, it forms a very special environment which let me break my limits.

Q: What advice would you give to these who want to improve at Go?

To improve, one has to really focus inside himself, to observe his own Go very deeply and understand all the habits that he has in order to break the bad ones. Without hesitation I would say that the way a person plays Go, is a reflection of himself. When I say that one has to focus on himself, I don't mean only on one's moves. I talk about strategy, thinking, ideas, intentions. There is no doubt that studying is important and that learning at least one new thing daily can make you very powerful. But the effectiveness of studying matters much more to me. I was also teaching, which gave me the opportunity to meet many great people. Noticeable is that, at the end of a two hour-long lecture, there are people who cannot tell me five things which they learned during the lesson, even though they are great students.

This is the best example of inefficient studying.

At this point, I wouldn't give a conclusion, I think it's better for everyone to make one for themselves.





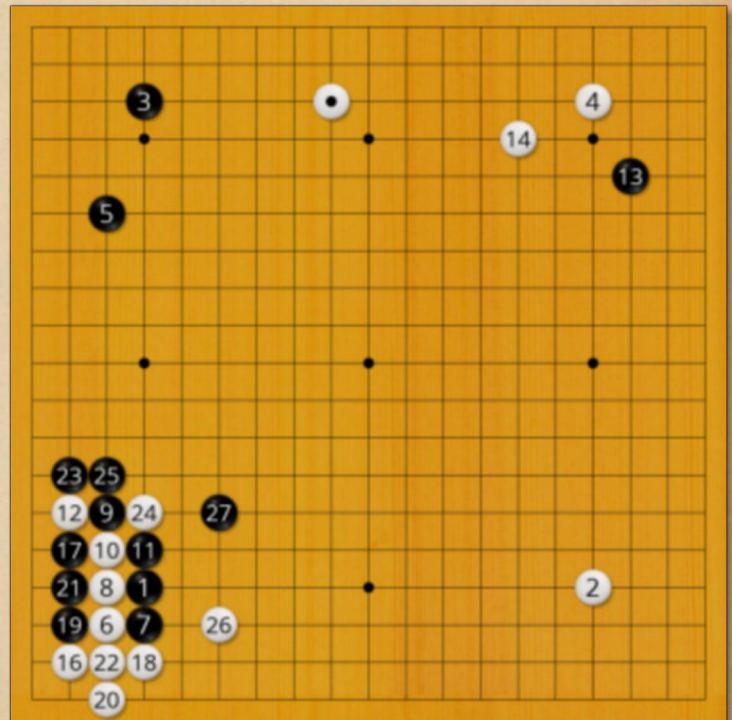
## Difference between human intuition and AI?

This is a game played on the Silk Road Tournament between Stanislaw (black) and Anton.

This game is a very interesting illustration of how different human intuition about fuseki is than that of AI.

The fuseki until 27 is now very typical and modern, it has become very difficult to see a game without any invasions of san-san.

Anton played the move at 28 (last move), which is pretty natural and I would also probably play that move. Oscar agreed that this is his first intuition, but in general AI values very highly playing pincer on the right side when there is a stone at 13.



Stanislaw said that his intuition is different and it is to play a pincer on the right side, because as he says “The joseki is unfinished and also the right side is bigger than the top” He also includes that maybe this intuition is build over a lot of hours studying with AI. But his point about the right side being bigger is very right. So why would other people tend to play on top?

Many people would play an extension at 28, because it is a big move for both players and because black has a corner enclosure on the top left, black wants to expand its framework to the top, so white extension limits black development on top.

AI on the other side seems to like making moyo and putting pressure on stones.



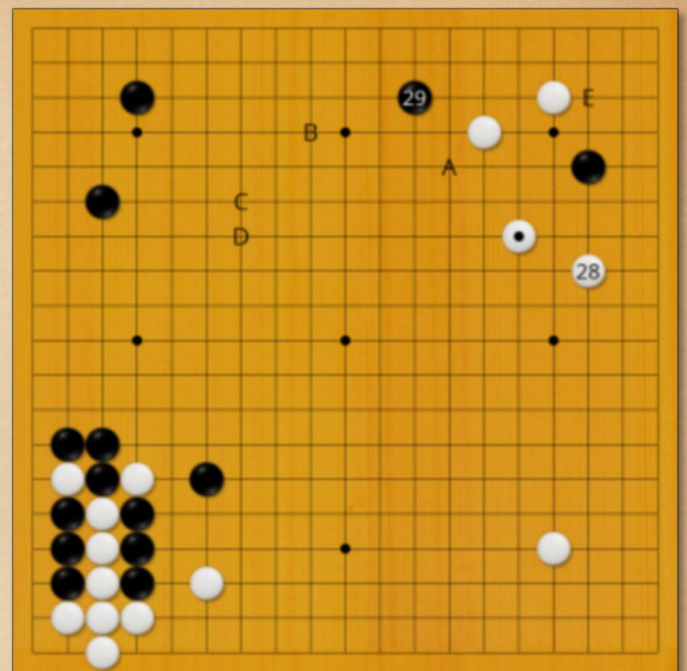
As shown below, AI would prefer to play a move at 28 on the right side and then black will grab the move at 29, which is the main reason why many players would prefer to play on the top side rather than on the right side.

Then white follows by playing keima, enclosing black stone and now it is all about style. I think all moves are possible.

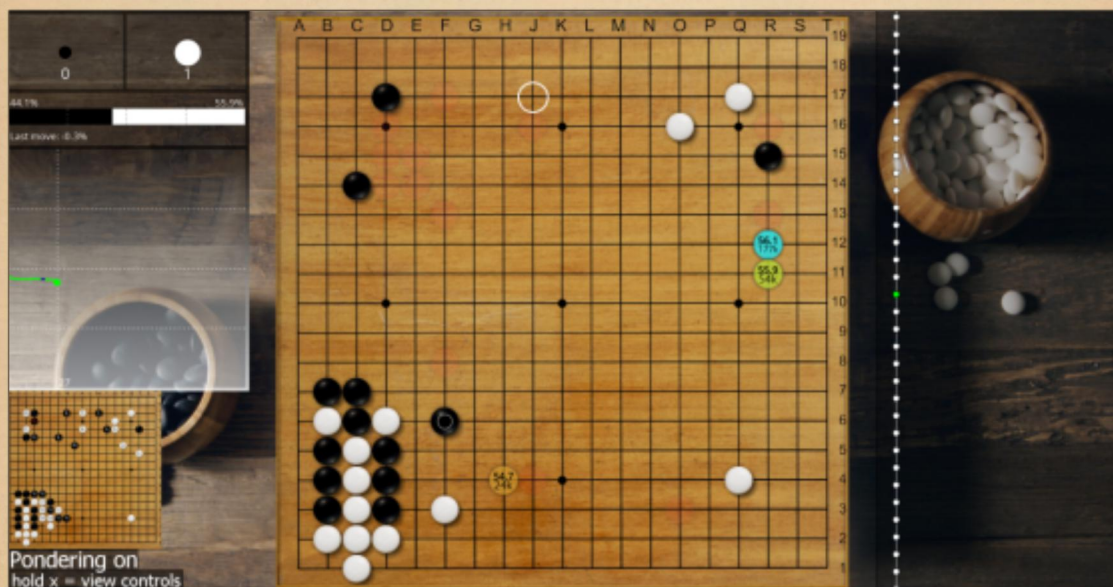
AI would play at A and complicate the game, personally I would play at B and Oscar said he would

immediately play at E to explore the aji of the stone, which indicates the difference in style. I'd rather play away and use the aji later, but he would play sharper and fight faster. It reminds me of the Go Seigen style that I characterize as the search for truth. It's like asking your opponent a question "Can you put pressure on my stones?"

Another AI option would be to play C or D to make a larger framework and fight.



Leela variation



Leela Zero 40 blocks



## Two moves unexplored !

At the very end of the Silk Road Tournament, we were honored to have an analysis with artificial intelligence that is not yet an open source to the public. It's called Golaxy.

As expected, the review was done on a huge wall, while two strong players explained the AI moves. As you might think, it was in Chinese, so we were guided only by the percentage of moves that the AI showed.

The analysis below may be a bit more complicated than the other parts of the book.

The game they took for review was Chang Fu Kang's final game against Ilya Shikshin. Although I don't remember the game's position, I found the joseki sequence suggested by the AI fascinating. We analyzed it later and found something even more exciting about the position.

On Dia. 1, white attaches with 8 to the black's corner enclosure and asks a question about black's strategy. If black defends the corner at A, white will be able to continue the development on the right side. Black answer at B is a little more active and could move the white direction of the game to the top. Answers at C or D can be treated as a good exchanges. White might play tenuki and make use of the exchange later.

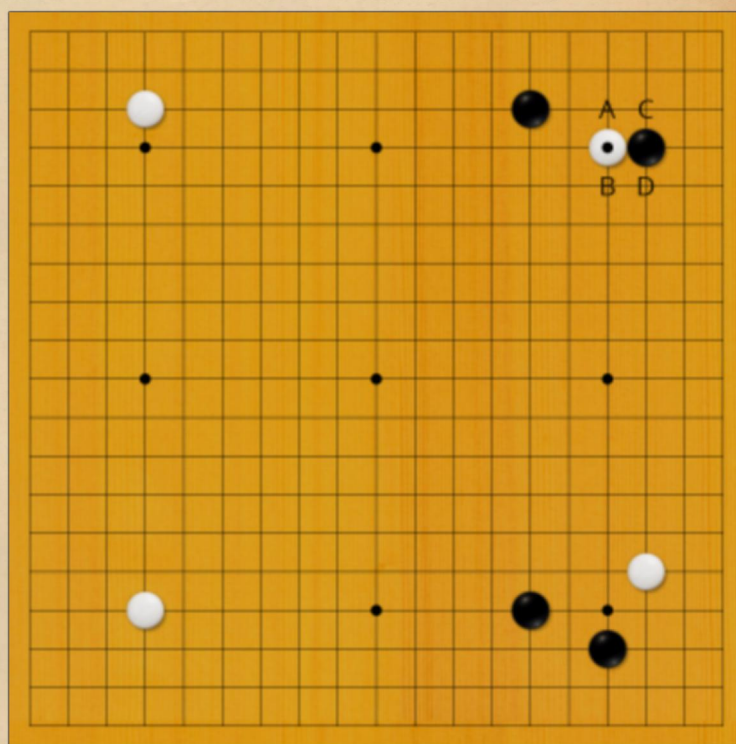


Diagram 1



Black taking the corner in Dia.2 at 9 is quite natural and the easiest way to play against white attachment.

White plays hane at 10 and after black protects with 13, white pushes at 14 to build strength for his stones. The sequence up to 18 is an example where we give our opponent some additional points to strengthen our stones.

Many players might wonder what if their opponent now resists by playing the hane at B.

The only way to find the truth is to cut at A.

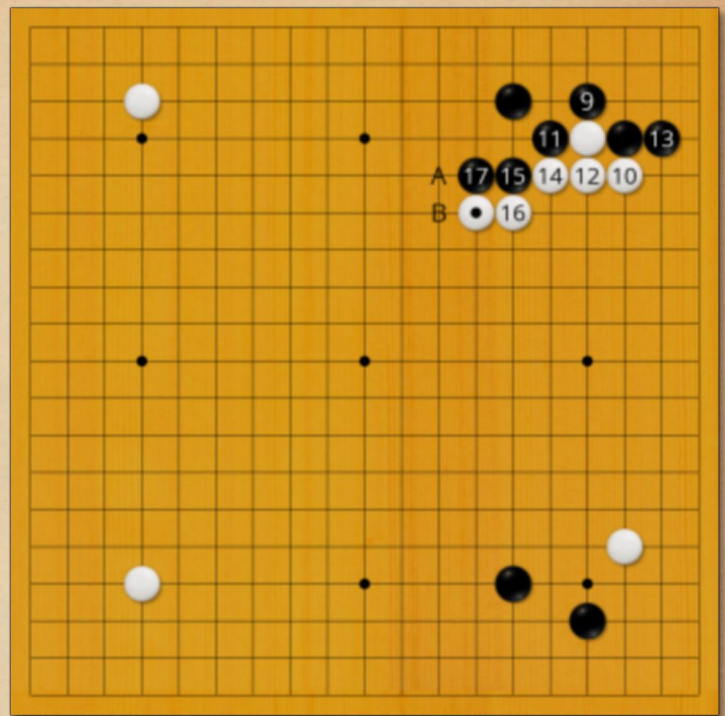


Diagram 2

A player can not win by simply following the opponent's intentions passively. The willpower to cut at A, should be as big as the desire to win the game.

After white cuts at 20 in Dia.3, for black to extend at 21 is one way to continue the fight. White cut at 22 is a good technique. If answered at A, it would give white the block at 23. If resisted at 23, then white can harass black's shape.

We can say that black's hane at 19 is a greedy move. But care must be taken against such moves, because, as the old Chinese quotation says, "A good thing takes a long time to accomplish, but a bad thing can be done so quickly that you are left with no time to correct."

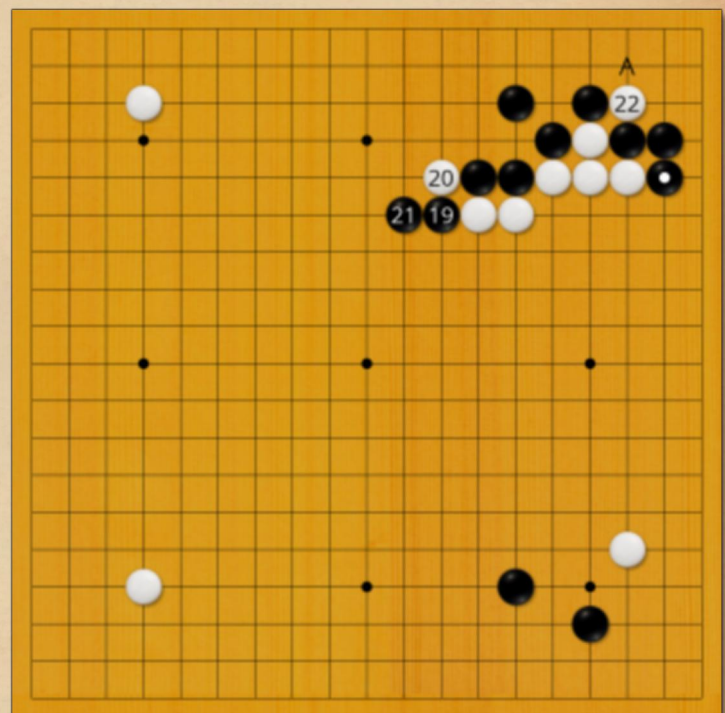


Diagram 3



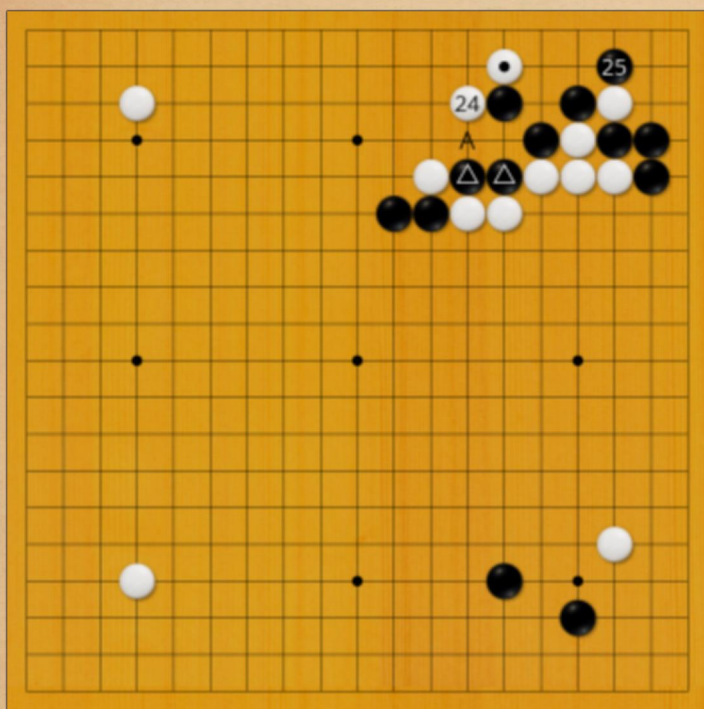


Diagram 4

White attach 24 in Dia.4 is a tesuji that aims to capture two stones by playing at A. After black defends at 25, white continues to harass black shape by playing 26 with target A.

As we can see, black already struggles, because of his shape issues.

Black protects the two stones in Dia.5 at 27. White pushes at 28 to establish a base on the top side.

White ignores the stones on the right, because sacrificing strategy is much more efficient and playing on the top is much more profitable. The main trend of kyu players is that they are tied to their own stones and afraid to sacrifice and exchange.

Overcoming the fear of giving up stones, can be a very valuable lesson to many players.

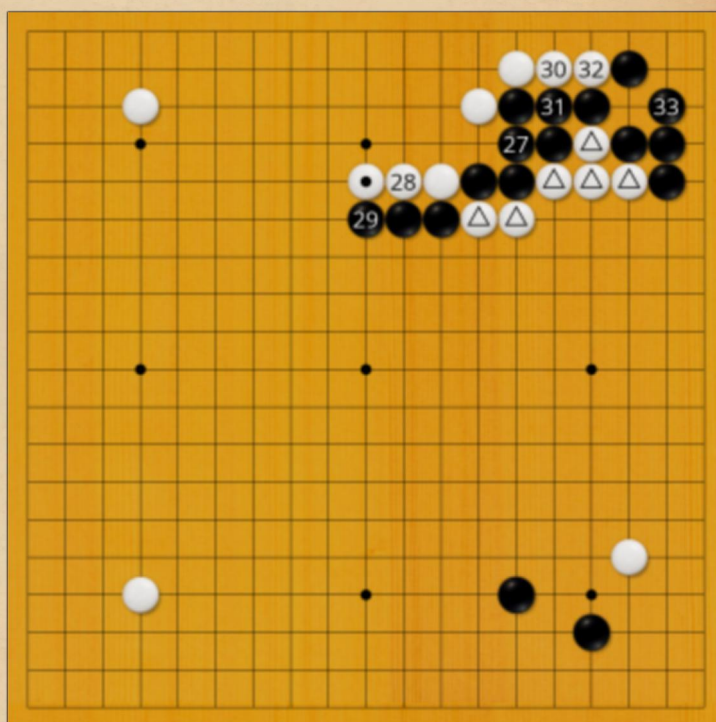


Diagram 5

Black extends at 29 to prevent the white hane on the top of the two stones. White continues to harass the shape of black by playing 30 and 32 before coming back to defend at 34. Black is not really happy about what happened to his right corner.



Black plays the vital point of white's stones at 35.  
 However, white will sacrifice and not run. After moves 36-37 in Dia.6, which confirms white intentions, white makes a good shape at 38 and can be satisfied with the result.  
 White stones on the right side might still be useful in the future. In conclusion, we can say that white occupying the top side with such a strong shape, cannot be a comfortable development for black.

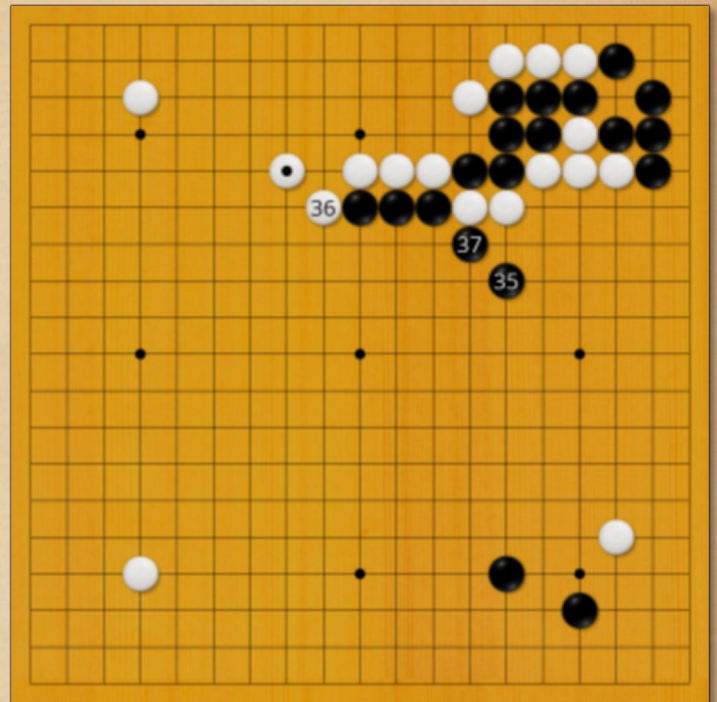


Diagram 6

Black extension at 19 is a solid play and the normal continuation, considered joseki. White cut at 20 is a probe. If black plays atari at 23, white will get 21 in pretty much sente.

But if black resists at 21, which is natural, then white will get another move at 22, which strengthen white's shape.  
 After black captures the stone in the corner with 23, in order to avoid problems, white can play a move on the right side at A or B, depending on the player's style.

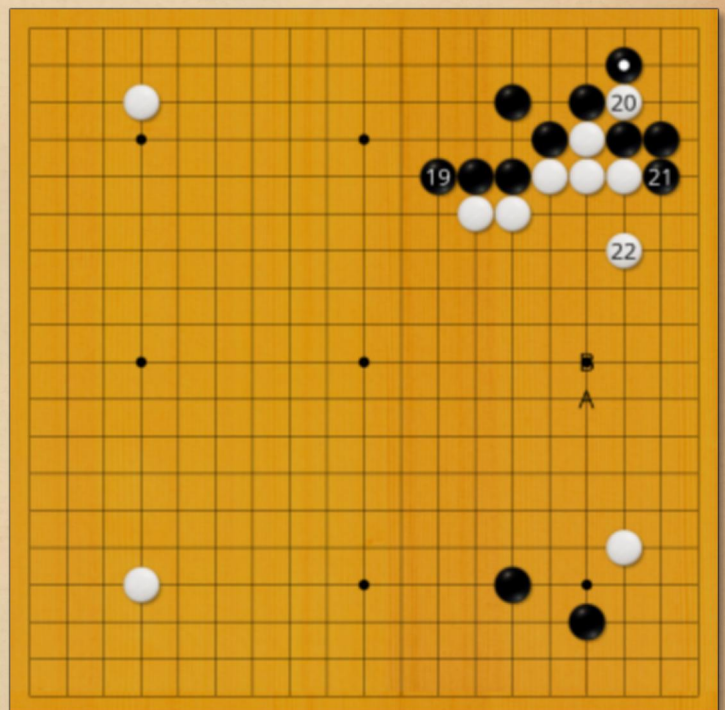


Diagram 7



Some players might question the need of spending a move in the corner and play tenuki at 23 as illustrated in Dia.8.

White will atari at 24 and make tiger mouth shape at 26. The future of the three black's stones in the corner is not bright. Even if the stones of black in the corner do not die, one should consider if move at 23 is actually more valuable.

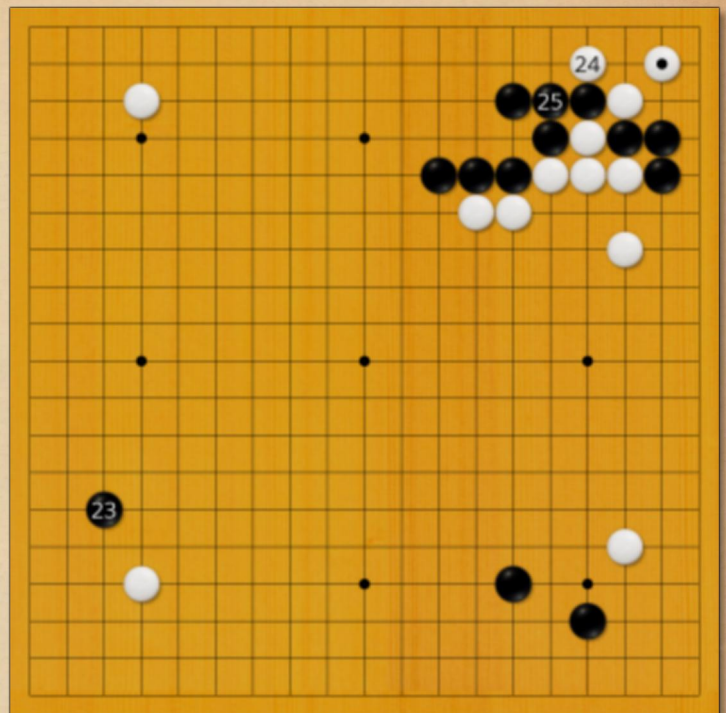


Diagram 8

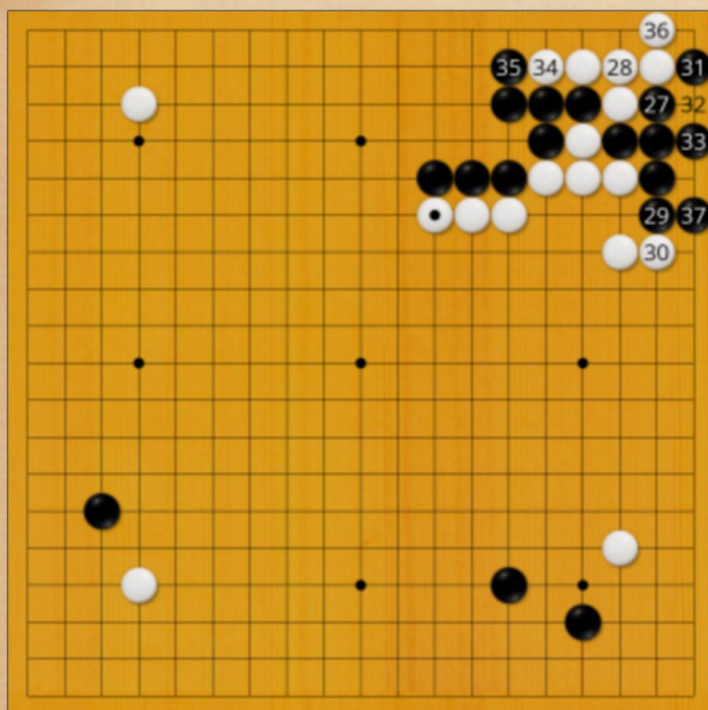


Diagram 9

Black plays atari at 27 to prevent white stones from making life in the corner. Then pushes at 29 to extend the liberties of the group. But when white blocks at 30, we can see that white group outside gets strengthened in the process.

Black plays hane at 31 and white move at 32 is a good technique to reduce black eye shape. White pushes at 34 and makes eye at 36. Black follows by making eye at 37, otherwise he will die. The corner is seki shape.

In conclusion, white reduced the corner while strengthening the group outside in sente, to play 38, the result is catastrophe.



Black outside hane is the most active response in Dia.10. White plays san-san, which gives black three ways to respond. Playing at A starts a very complicated sequence, which contains a new move, showed by the AI in the review. Black atari at B is also possible, but people do not play it often, because there is a nice way for white to play. Extension at C on the other hand is a move that we found with Leela Zero, later . But we haven't seen it played by professionals till now. AI thinks it is better than A or B

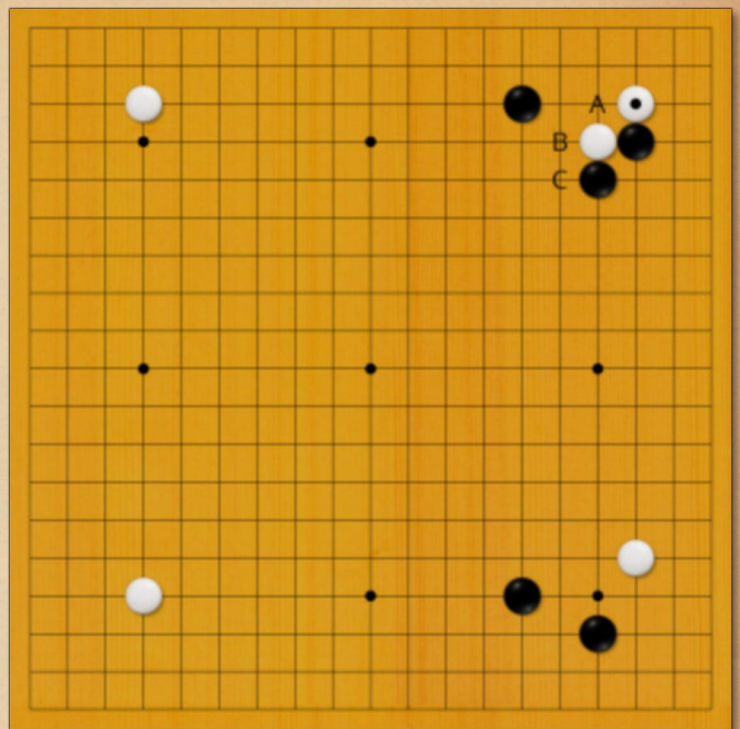


Diagram 10

When black atari at 11 in Dia.11 and make tiger mouth shape with 13, white has to make decision, whether to make life in the corner or to sacrifice the stones. Into the deepness of all these corner variations, it is very hard to make conclusions. Go theory changes all the time or at least the way we think about the positions. But for now, as far as I know, playing a cut at 14 and sacrificing the corner with extension up to 18 is a good strategy. Making life in the corner could give black too much of outside influence and this is not exactly what we want in the beginning of the game. White strategy is to gain valuable outside moves by using the three stones in the corner. The three stones later can still be of some use.

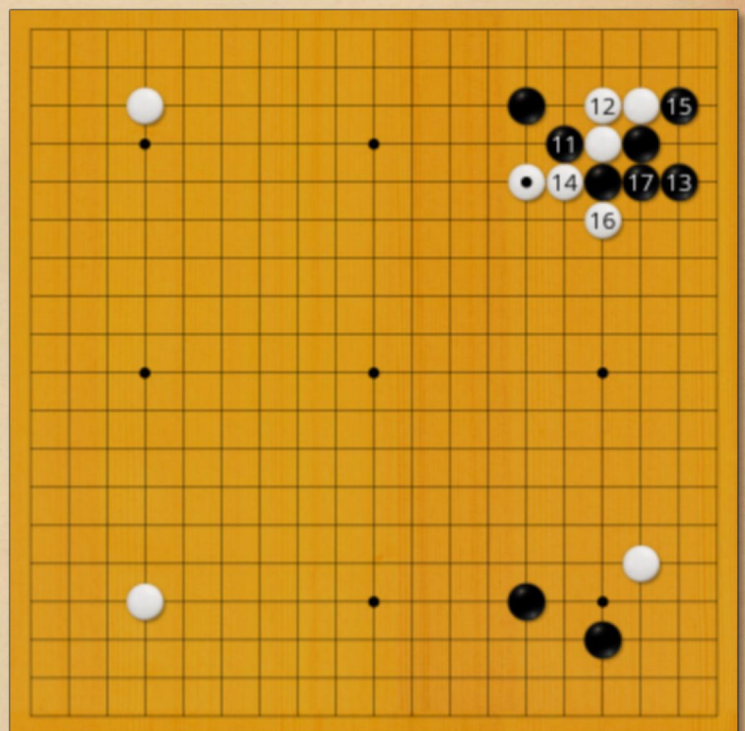


Diagram 11



The solid extension at 11 is the move that Stanislaw discovered later with AI. White will make life in the corner starting with 12 in Dia.12 and push at 14. After black blocks at 15, white clamps immediately at 16.

The clamp move is a good probe. If black descends, it will leave a lot of weaknesses and possibilities in the position.

This is the reason black connects at 17 and white spends a move in the corner to avoid being killed. Black gets sente and plays a move on right side, but then white exchanges 20 with 21, to reduce the right side slightly and to prevent black's hane-sente against the corner.

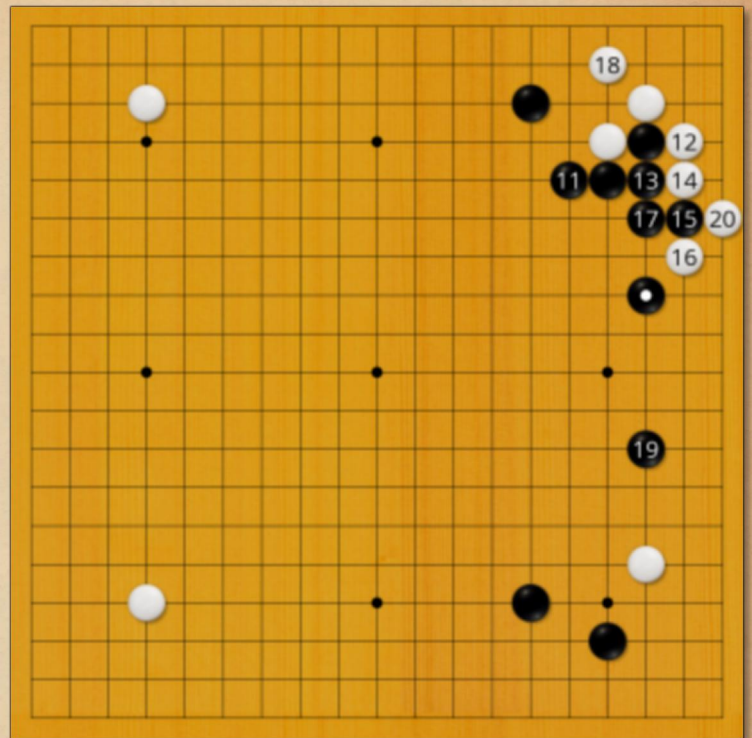


Diagram 12

The reader might be curious why black did not play hane at 19 in Dia.13, instantly.

The reason for this is that white will not respond in the corner, but take the bigger point on the right side with 20.

If black continues with A in the corner, white can attach at B and it becomes really difficult for black to kill.

On the other side if black plays at C, white can just play the vital point at A and white makes life.

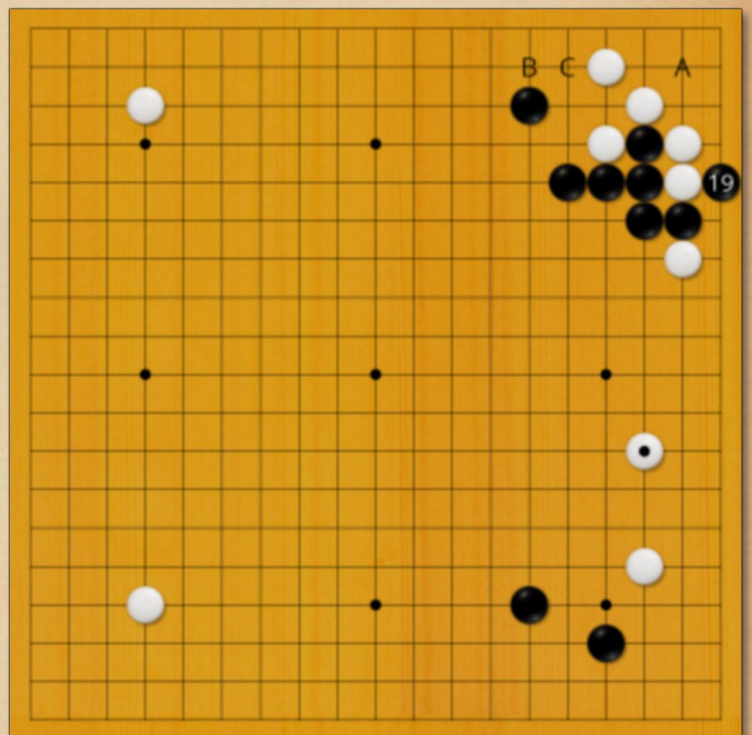


Diagram 13

We do not know much more about this new move, but it is worth trying it in a game.

It allows black to take outside and get a move on the right side, as showed in Dia. 12.



After A, black atari at 11 in Dia.14 is natural fighting spirit move.

When black connects at 13, white atari at 15 to create weaknesses into black's shape. Then atari at 16 in order to make use of A and to change the direction of the game towards the top side.

Black capturing the stone at 19 is expected, since black tries to decrease the weaknesses in his shape.

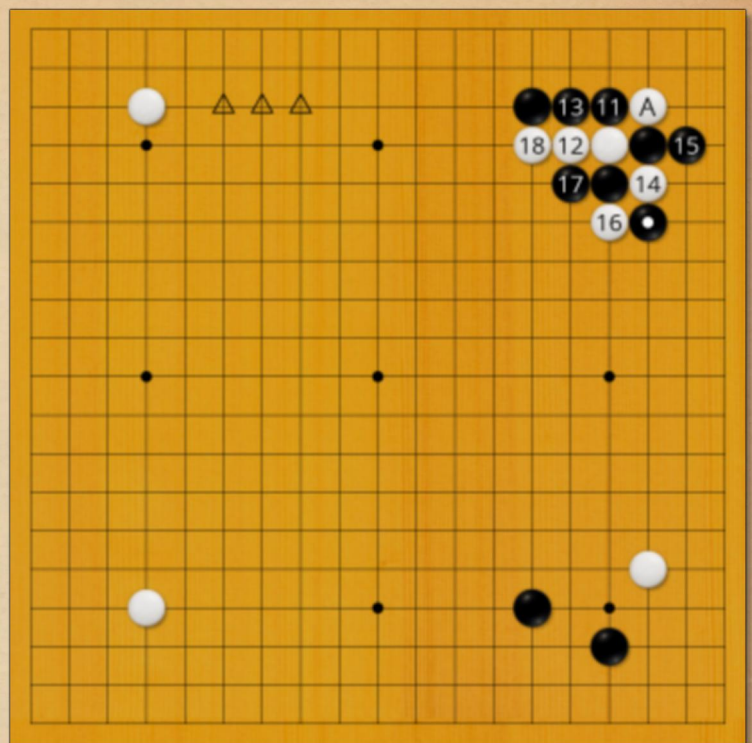


Diagram 14

White plays hane at 20 in Dia.15 even though it looks risky. It tries to make use of the corner stone and the small amount of liberties of the three black stones.

Black cannot just take the corner and play the kind of game that white wants. Passive moves are not the way we play in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Black resists and plays hane at 21. Both sides are pushing each other and no one is satisfied with his result. White exchanges 22 with 23 and plays hane at 24.

Now humans tend to play A as black, but Golaxy showed in the review that playing at B is better. Let's take a look on both.

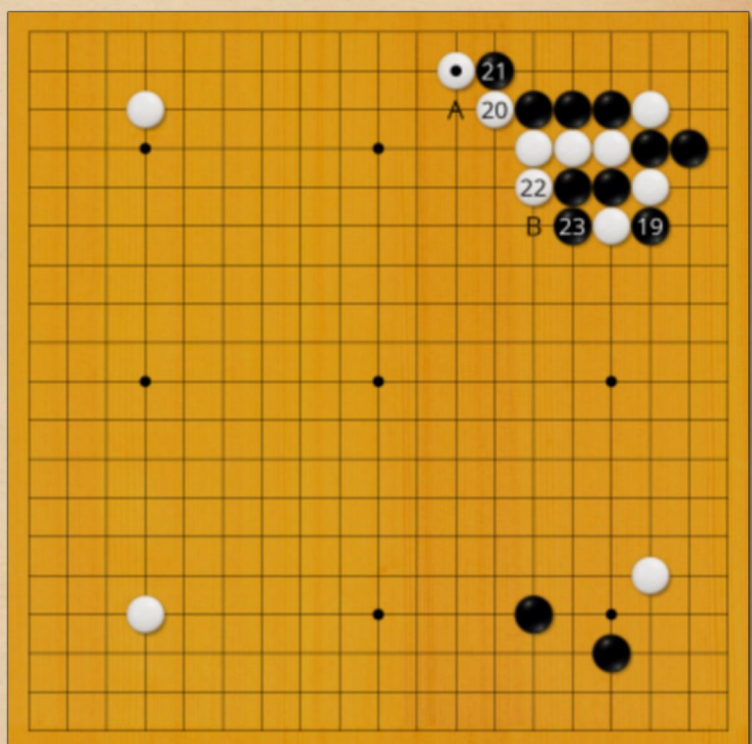


Diagram 15



In the main variation, Black exchanges 25 with 26 in Dia. 1 and connects back at 27, leaving a weakness in white's shape.

This is the reason why white captures the black stone in ladder with 28, to avoid any trouble. Black captures the stone at 29, because if he does not capture it, then white can play at A, forcing black to capture at 29 and then kill the corner stones at B. After 29, white captures the stone at 30, to avoid any potential ladder breaker of black.

White has endgame move at C later.

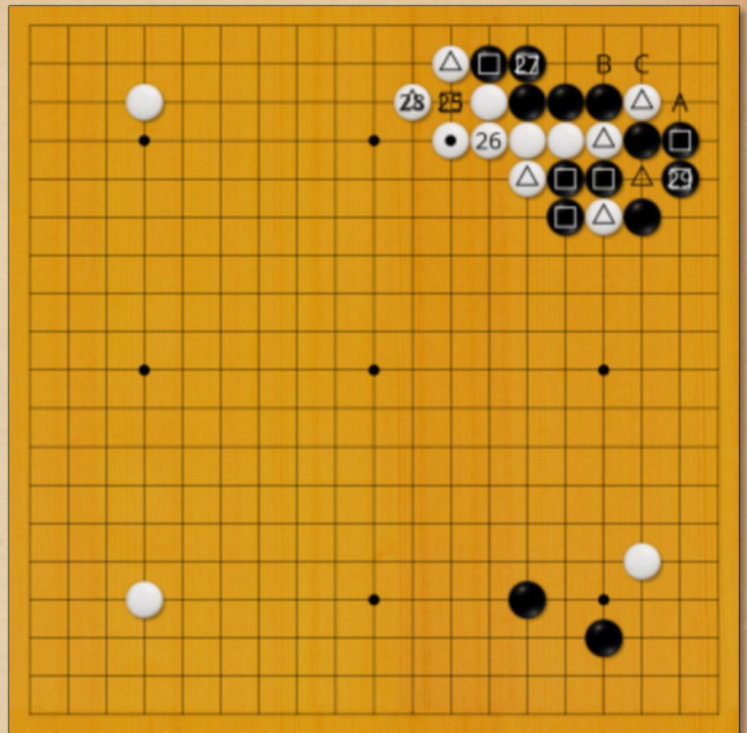


Diagram 1

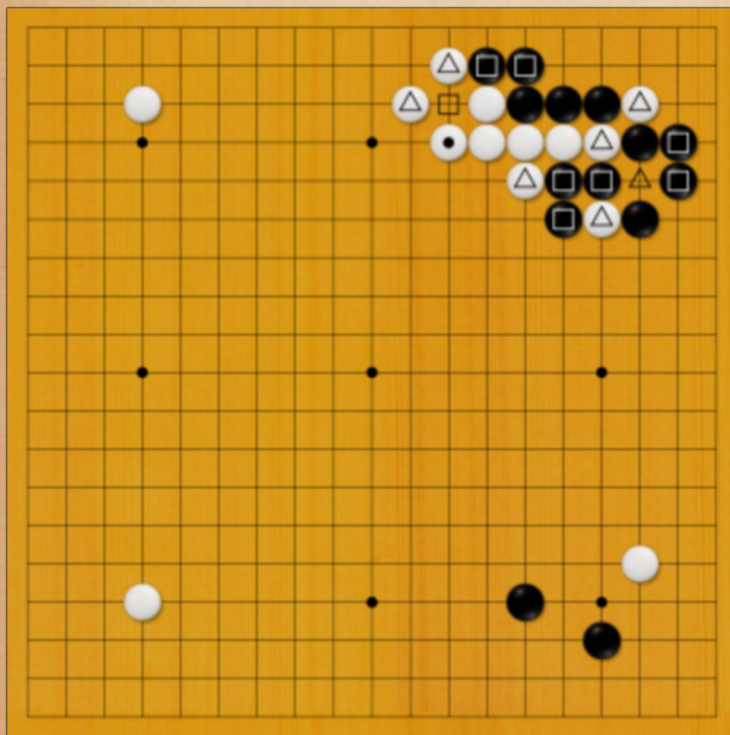


Diagram 2

To understand the final result of the position easier, we will use a tewari method.

To do this, we will remove 8 stones of each color to get a simpler position. Then determine, how good or bad are the exchanges that has been made.

The stones that we will remove are showed on Dia.2.



The result after we remove the stones is shown on Dia.3.

The judgement we made on this position on top right is as follows : black started with two additional stones, it is similar to the joseki on Dia.4 which is very common joseki shape. However, in Dia.3 black did made an extra push, which even though it increases the corner territory slightly, it probably helps white outside a lot more.

It becomes harder to attack the group of white.

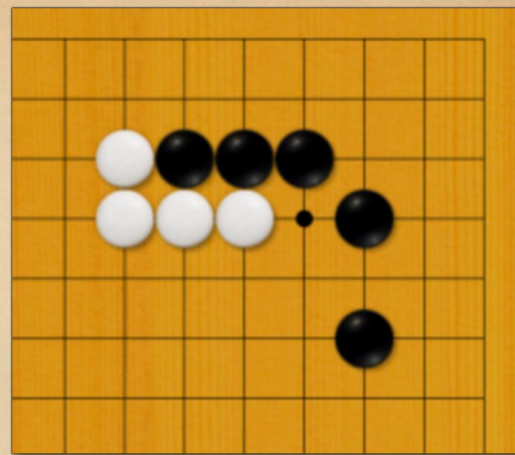


Diagram 3

Afterwards, on Dia.5, black played hane and connection at 1-3, giving white the tiger mouth at 4.

The group of white before, could have been pincer and attacked. These exchanges changed the strength of the stones drastically.

Additionally black throwed-in a stone at 1 in Dia.6, and white captured at 2.

In few moves, we can see that white stones became very strong and black did not really gain anything.

The exchanges that black did were disastrous.

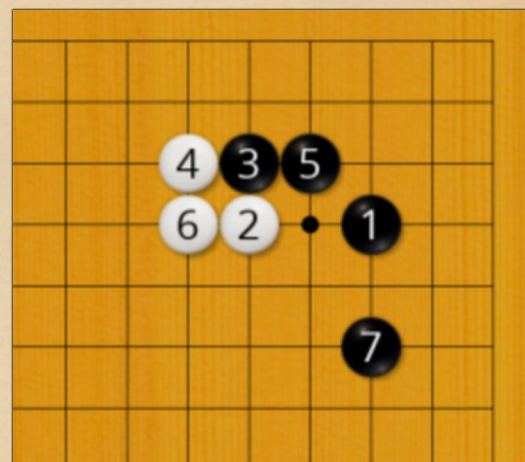


Diagram 4

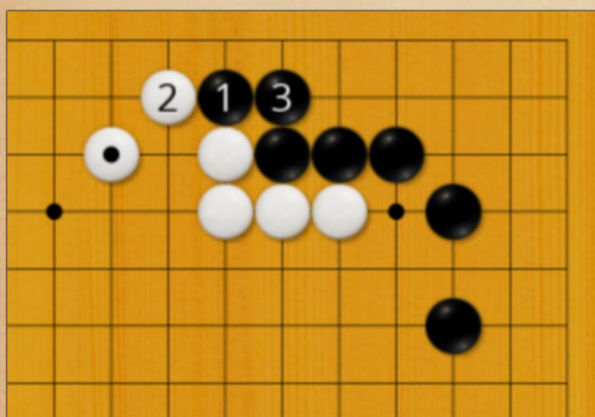


Diagram 5

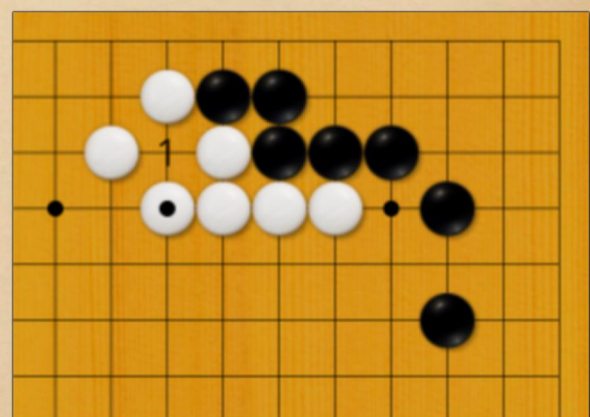


Diagram 6



It is time to take a look on what white did. White pushed at 1 in Dia.7, which was actively answered at 2, but then after white cut at 3, black answered at 4, which allows white a nice endgame at A later, which is not even a bad exchange. We can say that white profited by the exchange of 3-4.

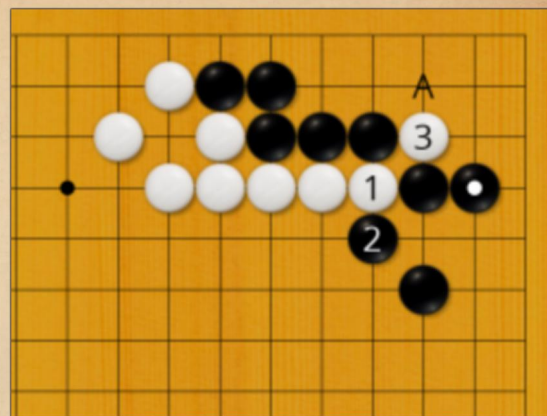


Diagram 7

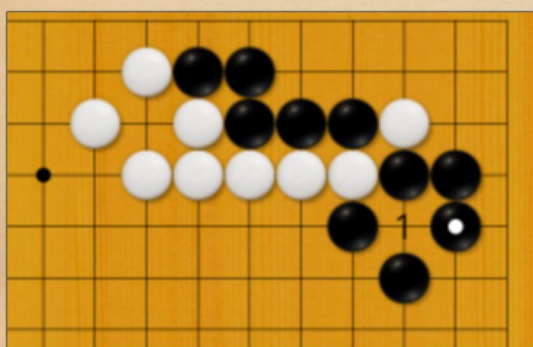


Diagram 8

Then in Dia.8, we can see that white also gave up one stone with 1-2 exchange.

However, this exchange is not as bad as black's exchange in Dia. 6.

The exchange of 1-2 in Dia.8, is giving a ponnuki inwards to an already strong group, while the exchange of black in Dia.6, gives white a ponnuki outwards, to a potentially weak group.

Afterwards, white makes the bad exchanges of 1 with 2 in Dia. 9, followed by push at 3-4. Finally we get to the original shape, and even though both players did made bad exchanges, we can conclude that the exchanges of black, were worse, because they changed the strength of the white stones, while the bad exchanges white chose did not make black's stones much stronger.

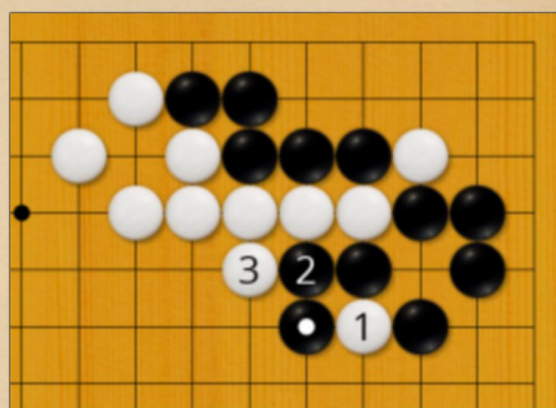


Diagram 9



Stanislaw found an alternative way to analyze the position.

In Dia. 1, we can see a position where black approached twice, because white tenuki-ed.

This is a position, which should give black a worse result than the corner enclosure on Dia.2. Because on Dia.2, black has two moves more, if white enters.

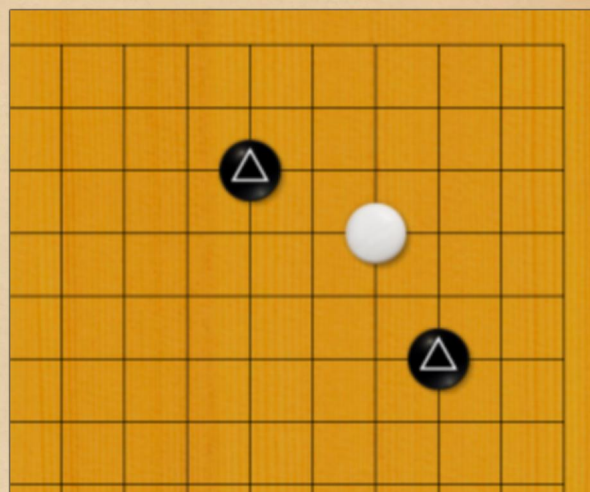


Diagram 1

We can see that white is trying to move out in order to not be enclosed inside. White attaches with 2 in Dia.3. Black responds with hane at 3, which is natural and white extends at 4.

Black attaches in the corner with 5 instead of simply extending and now white chose to play B instead of normal answer at A.

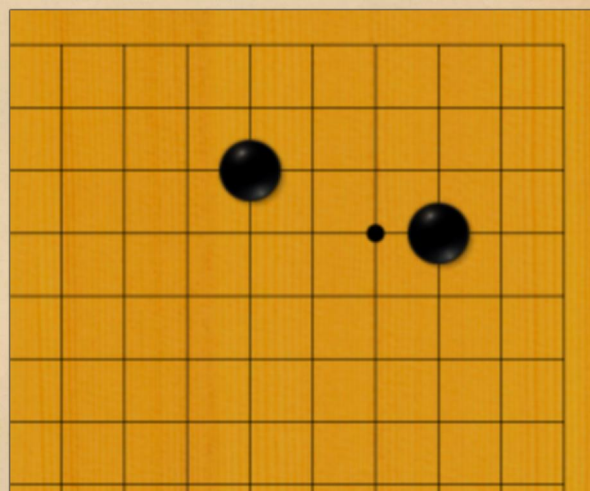


Diagram 2

A would take the corner, but it will let black to play on both sides. If the top is more important, white would rather cut at B and play over there.



Diagram 3





Diagram 4

On Dia.4 white cuts at 6 and black protects his stone by playing at 7. White captures the black stone outside with 8 in a ladder and black takes the corner with 9. To prevent black ladder breaker, white takes the stone at 10. This is modern joseki unseen in the past. Considered even result. Later white exchanges 1-2 in Dia. 5. The exchange is normal and could be played later, to test black's answer.

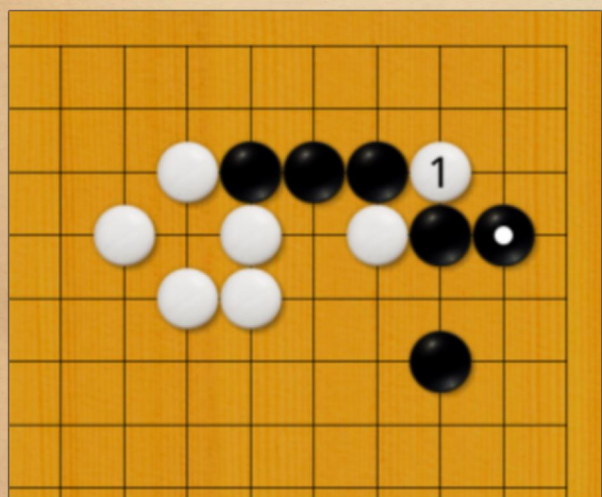


Diagram 5

In most cases black responds at 2, to defend the corner and white gains some endgame later. Now let's assume that black is trying to get the whole corner. Instead of playing at 3 first, he exchanges 1-2 in Dia.6 and then plays hane at 3 and connects at 5. So this result is the most similar to the shape in the corner enclosure sequence in Dia.7.

We could say that black is slow, because in the opening stage, black

played moves which do not have the value of a full opening move. In a position where black had an additional two stones, black ended up with result close to one where black had the same amount of stones as white. Making tewari in this joseki is very hard as you can see. This is the best we could do to explain why AI do not like this sequence for black.

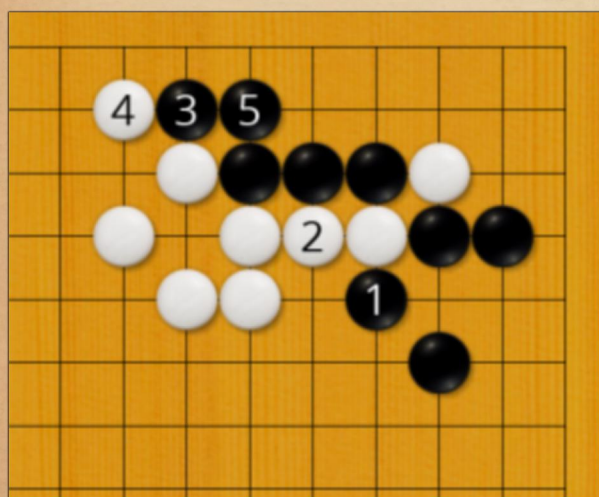
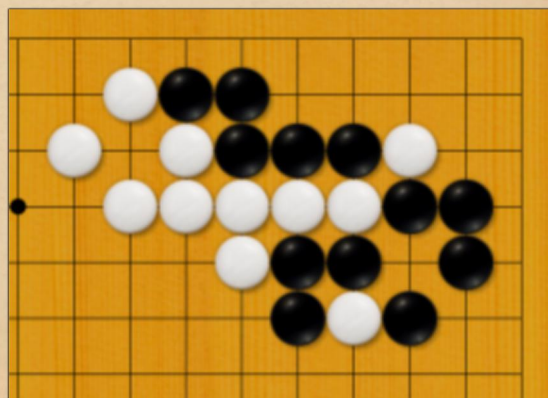


Diagram 6





Black's turn in Dia.1 is the move suggested by Golaxy. White has two ways to answer: A or B.

In the review with help of Golaxy, they showed white playing at A.

But Leela does not agree with this and thinks that white has to play at B. The position is getting even more complicated and intense.

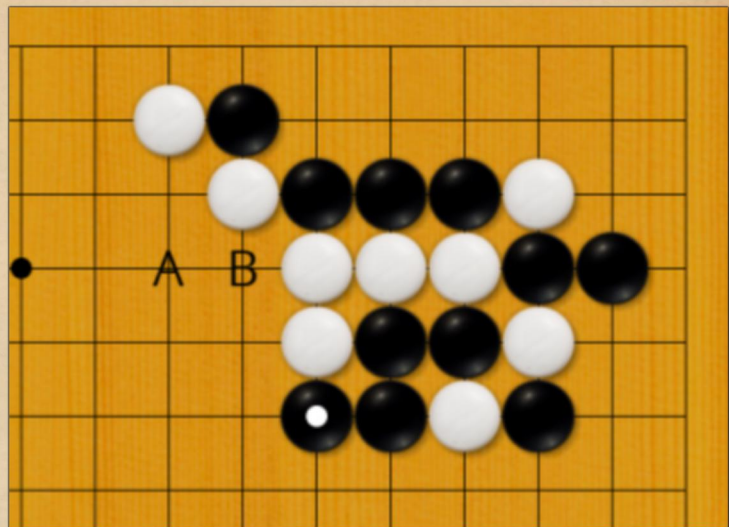


Diagram 1



Diagram 2

After black's turn at 25 in Dia.2, white defends at 26 and black takes the vital point at 27. White takes the corner with the forcing move at 28, we can see that black is about to lose his corner, but gain outside influence. I think AI values outside thickness and influence a lot. This might be the reason why it prefers for white not to play at 26.



The right timing to atari at 29 is now, before capturing 33. Black continues with atari at 31, and after he takes the stone at 33 to defend his two stones, black outside is very strong and white takes the stones in the corner with 34. However, I would feel comfortable taking black in this variation, because black took sente to play 35.

In professional database I found only one game in which black played the turn at 25 in Dia.2.

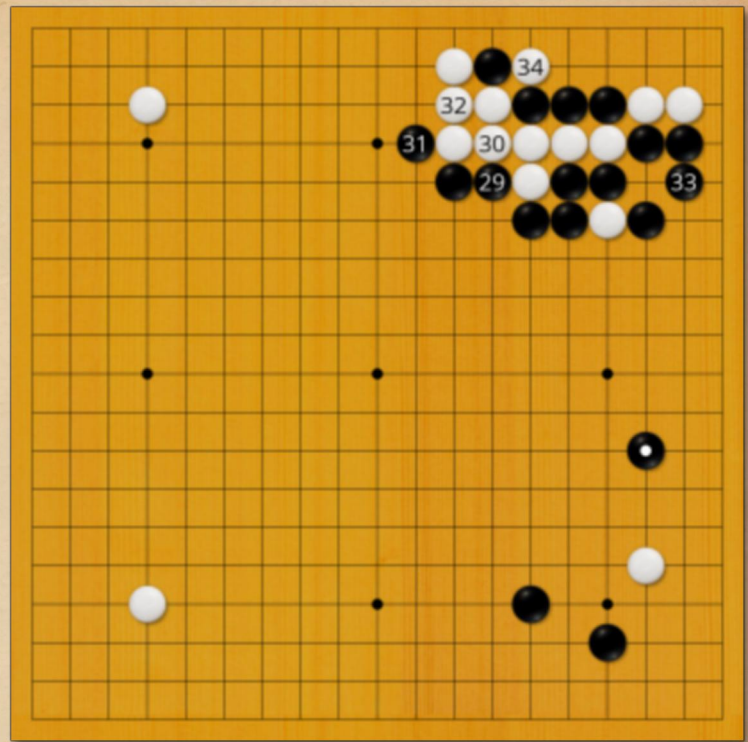


Diagram 3

The game is between Yang Kaiwen 6p taking black and Zhou Ruiyang 9p. It was played earlier this year on March 28<sup>th</sup>.

The moves up to 15 seems normal, even though before few years some people would have been in shock to see white playing san-san at move 6 exactly in this position. Playing hane at 9 is played very rarely nowadays and people prefer to play keima at 11 or just simply extend. Because after the exchanges 16-17, white gets sente to play somewhere else.

Afterwards, it is not very hard to invade. White continues with playing in the corner at 18, initiating complex fight.

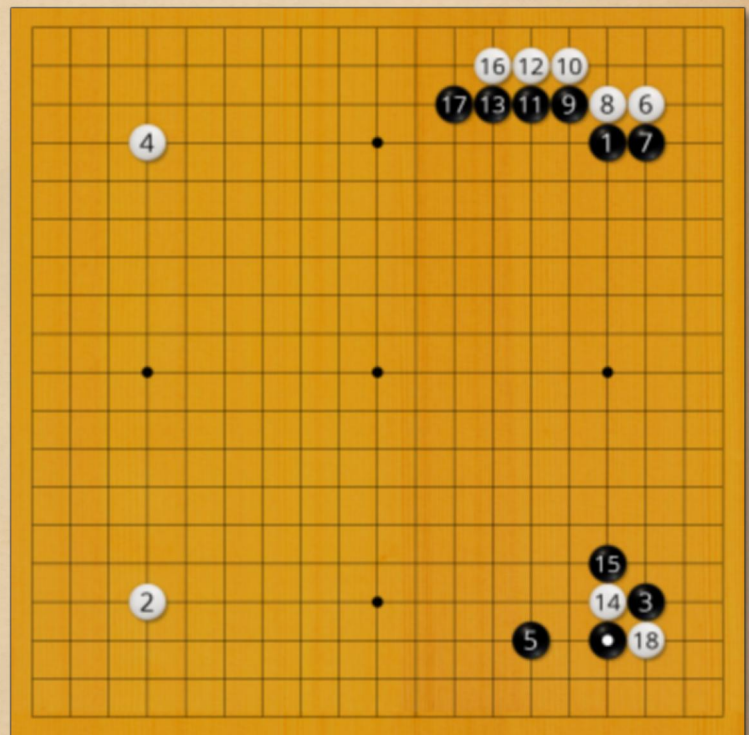


Diagram 1



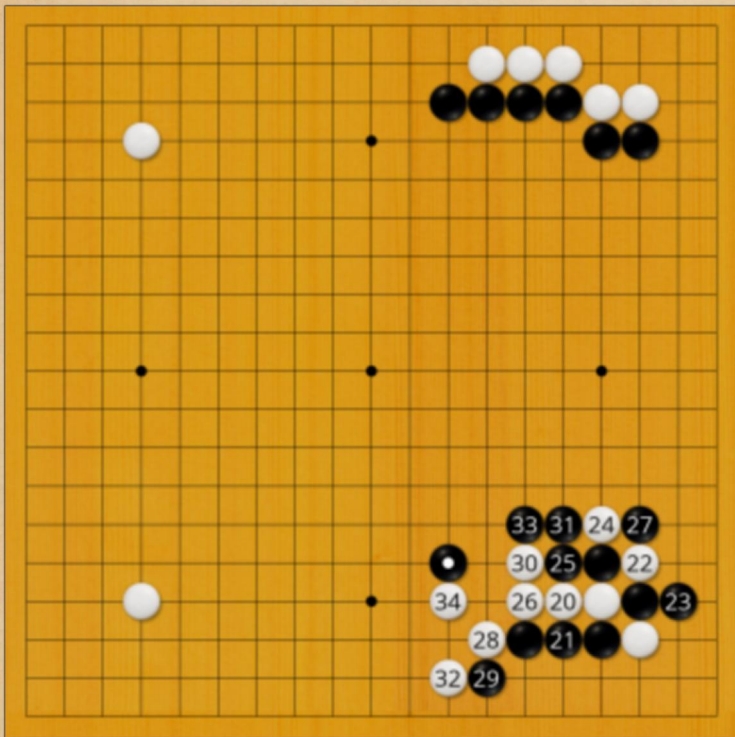


Diagram 2

As we can see on Dia.2, this is the sequence that Golaxy recommended. White played the tiger mouth at 34.

Black followed by attaching at 35 and now as u can see, black's right side is getting pretty large and we can say that this is black's area of influence.

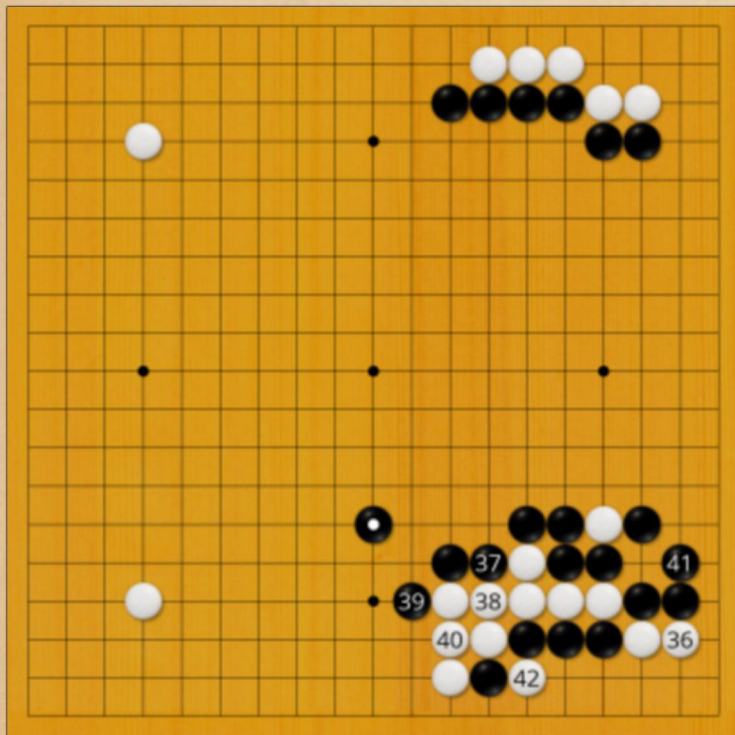


Diagram 3

With the sequence up to 43 in Dia.3, white takes the corner and black makes a big influence.

If white spends a move on the left side of the board now, black will add a move on the right side and it will become hard for white to reduce.

So how would you reduce the right side now?



White played the peep at 44 in Dia.4, which is good beginning black did not connect passively, but jumped at 45 instead.

Move 46 is quite beautiful, it might feel like white is flying. Invading directly on right side might be the intuition of some of the readers. I would not call it wrong, I think it would be too challenging, that's why white just reduced calmly up to 48, while black defended the right side with 47.

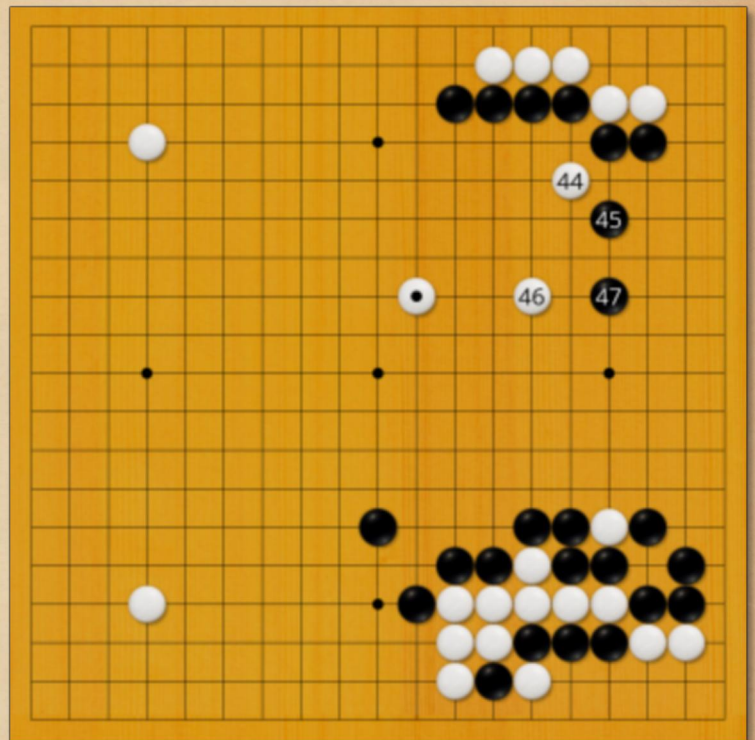
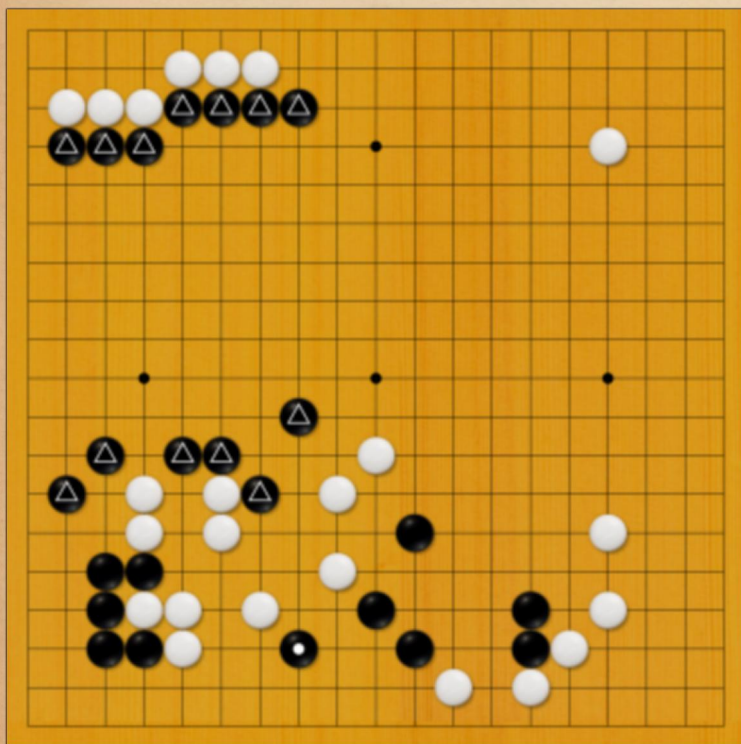


Diagram 4



AlphaGo Zero (W) - AlphaGo Lee

The peep at 44 in Dia.4, reminds me of this game between AlphaGo Zero taking white against AlphaGo Lee on the illustration on the left side.

Black seems to have a huge area of influence and white has to do something about it. What would you do about it?



Same as in the game of Zhou Ruiyang, playing a peep at 48 in Dia.1 is the correct answer, even though probably there are many other possible moves on the board to play. Black plays 49 which says “there is no way out”. White tries to get out with 50, but black closes with 51.

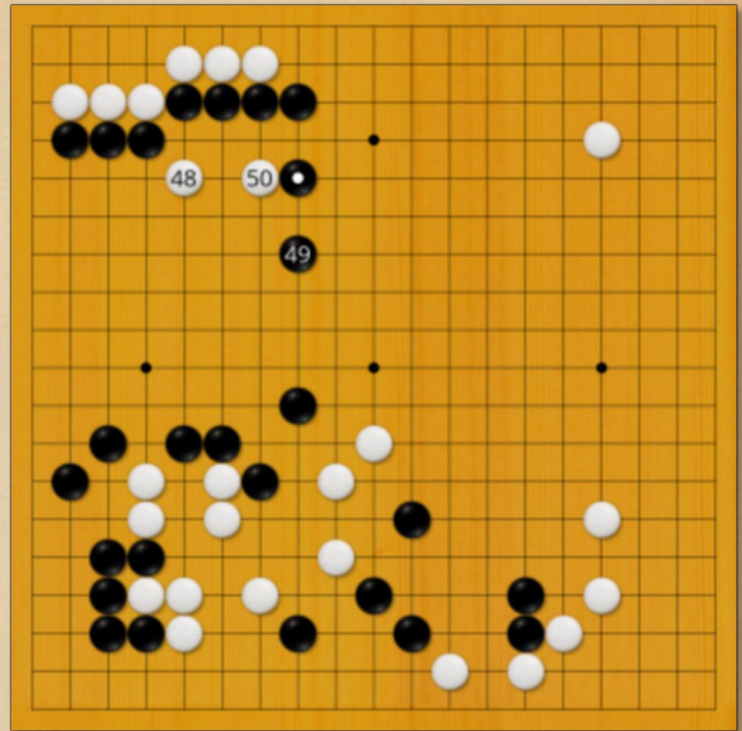


Diagram 1

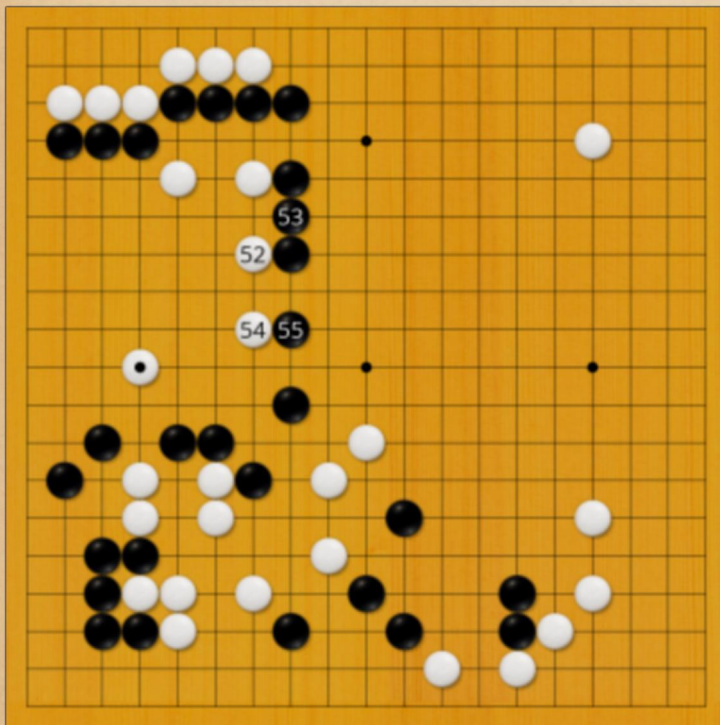


Diagram 2

White continues to look around to escape with 52 and 54 in Dia.2

Without hesitation black goes all in with 55 and if white make life, then black will be left without much cash. White’s move at 56 is aiming at the weaknesses of black’s shape. Once, I asked Dominik, what is the biggest change in his Go recently.

He told me, that the biggest change for him, is

when he invades he does not try to just make life anymore. He tries to put pressure on the opponent and to look for weak points. This way, making life is a lot easier.



Black has not much of choice but to defend at 57 in Dia.3. White next move at 58 is very annoying, because it is looking forward to cut at 59, so black again has not much of choice, and then suddenly white gets to play 60. What a surprise, the group of white might not only make life, but it may make points inside black's moyo. Such a disaster, isn't it?

However, AlphaGo Lee suffered a loss, just to give us this great example of invasion.

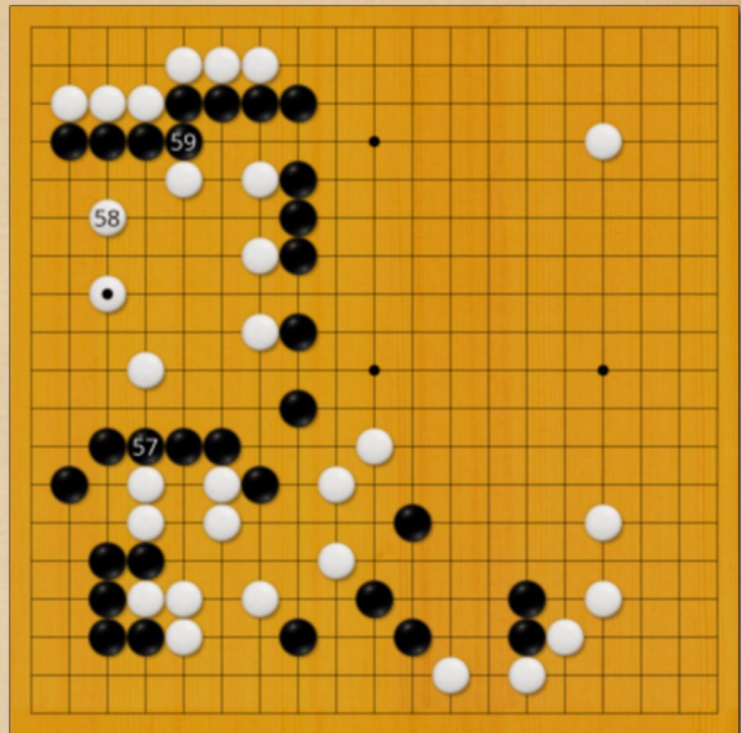


Diagram 3

Leela Zero prefers white's solid connection in Dia.1 rather than tiger mouth. Seems like giving black outside influence is not Leela's taste. After this solid connection, we will be able to see a situation similar to the first variation, where black gives white a ponnuki outside.

It ain't easy to understand AI right?

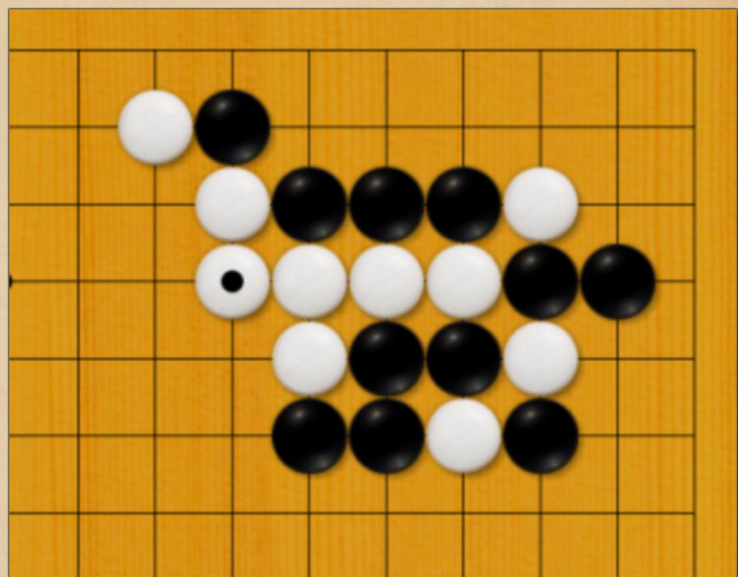


Diagram 1





Diagram 2

Black protects the stone with 27 in Dia.2 and allows white to make a good shape at 28. Afterwards, black takes the stone at 29, to protect the corner stones.

However if we compare the Dia.2 with Dia.3, we can see that white stones on Dia.2 are not as strong as the stones on the Dia.3, which is major difference.

On the other side, in Dia.3, black has choice how to invest his move, and he might not invest the move by playing at 3.

He would rather play a full fuseki value move.

However, on Dia.2, white gets sente and white can choose to play wherever he wants.

We could say that AI prefers the Dia.2 rather than Dia.3, because even though white got sente, white stones are not as strong as in Dia.3.

So the sequence on Dia.2 is pretty much, the best way to play in order to get as an equal result, as possible.

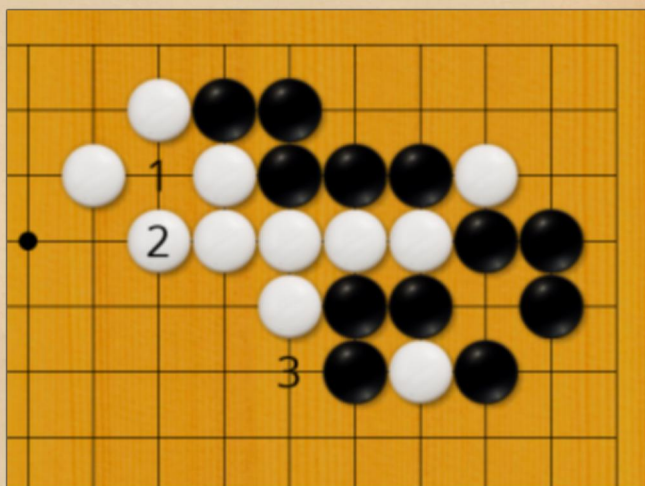


Diagram 3



## Conclusion over the analyze.

Happily we came to this point.

If you want to avoid all the complications, you can just play the simple extension at 1 in Dia.1.

You do not only avoid all the complications, but you will surprise your opponent, since this move is unknown.

If you anyway decide to go into these complex variations, remember to try B in Dia.2, rather than A in order to avoid the result showed in Dia.3, which makes white too strong.

If you manage to play this position as white and your opponent play the turn, depending on the position, consider playing B, rather than A in Dia.4 in order to avoid being sealed-in as showed on Dia.5.

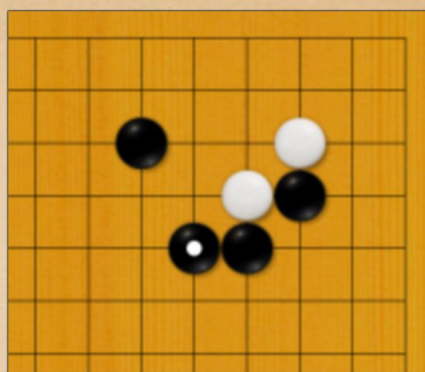
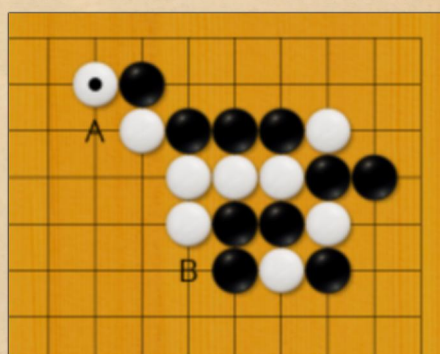


Diagram 1





## First encounter with Chinese food

My first encounter with Chinese food was the day after my arrival in Beijing. Stanislaw showed Gabriel, Oscar and me a restaurant near the apartment and we ate there. At this time Nikola Mitic was also with us because he went to the Silk Road Tournament together with us.

I didn't know that I will actually like the food so much.

However, I had a little difficulty learning to eat with chopsticks and others taught me. I didn't expect the price of food in restaurants to be so cheap and at the same time so good. It really seems underrated to me.

When we went to Silk Road, I already knew the basics on "how to eat with chopsticks", but not much more, so you can imagine how much of struggle it was to eat on table with shared meals with all other Chinese guys( laugh).

We mostly ate in restaurants and we even made our own names to call them.

For example there is a restaurant called "The new Arabic place", "the communist place" or "the best place" or all kind of other names.

As you might guess, we spend a lot of the time eating at the "best place" simply because it is the best place. At some point I was wondering if we should call it "the only place" since we stopped going to other places to compare.

I've never eaten dumplings, and here in Beijing I got a chance to try them.

I liked them, but I notice that they like to mix vegetables with meat and it is hard to find only meat or only vegetables in a meal.

The typical Chinese noodles were also quite nice and although it doesn't look like much food in a bowl, once you start to eat it, it's endless.

Stanislaw mentioned that this edition of the CEGO programme is also the first in which many of the participants cook.

Even though we ate a lot in restaurants, we also cooked.

Oscar, Dominik and me cooked from the beginning and later Gabriel cooked on the weekend.

I would say that all my experience with Chinese food was fantastic and I would really miss it as soon as I come to Europe.





## Bye bye Xi'An !

Before we went back from Xi'An, we played friendly matches with kids from the town, who were very kind to give us gifts like a fan and necklace with Go stone. After the Silk Road Tournament was over, it was time to go back to our apartment in Beijing to get ready to start studying in the school.

The school started in the beginning of September with a tournament called "Big Cycle" which determines in which league each player will be, so it is pretty important to get good results there in order to be placed highly. However, we had ten days to study on our own in the school, because we came back at the third week of August. In the school we noticed very soon that they had put very strong computers in each room, so that players can record their games later in folders and review them with Leela. The picture on the right side is the school. We studied Go on the forth floor which in top right corner of the picture. After the Big Cycle which is eleven rounds, we immediately started Small Cycles, that are the ordinary league games. Each two days and half, two players go up and two players go down. All leagues have six players and the schedule in the school looks like this :



8:30-9:30	Rapid game with 3x30 seconds byo-yomi without main time
9:45-11:40	League game, 1 hour main time + 3x30 sec, recording the game on computers is required, additionally can ask teacher questions
11:40-14:15	Lunch break
14:15-15:15	1 <sup>st</sup> Tsumego test
15:15-17:15	Review session
17:15-18:40	Dinner break
18:40-20:40	League game, 1 hour main time + 3x30 sec
20:40-22:40	2 <sup>nd</sup> Tsumego test + correction of previous tsumego test



When there is a review session, sometimes in the first room they review on real board and students are around the board looking at the teacher sequences and explanations. It is excessively surprising that AI mostly agree with everything what the teacher says. The teacher's review with help of Leela's is projected on the wall, while students are watching and asking questions. The method the teacher uses is that he shows first what he is thinking about and then afterwards he checks if AI agrees with his opinion or variation. Disagreement happens very rarely.

I haven't seen it until now, teachers leave a great impression for their strength.



When it comes to reviews, not all of us attend, because of the language barrier.

Even though Go can be a language and watching sequences can still be understandable, it would be much more efficient to know Chinese.

So sometimes we solve tsumego or we study on our own during these review sessions. Stanislaw, Oscar and Gabriel attend the reviews, because they do understand Chinese.

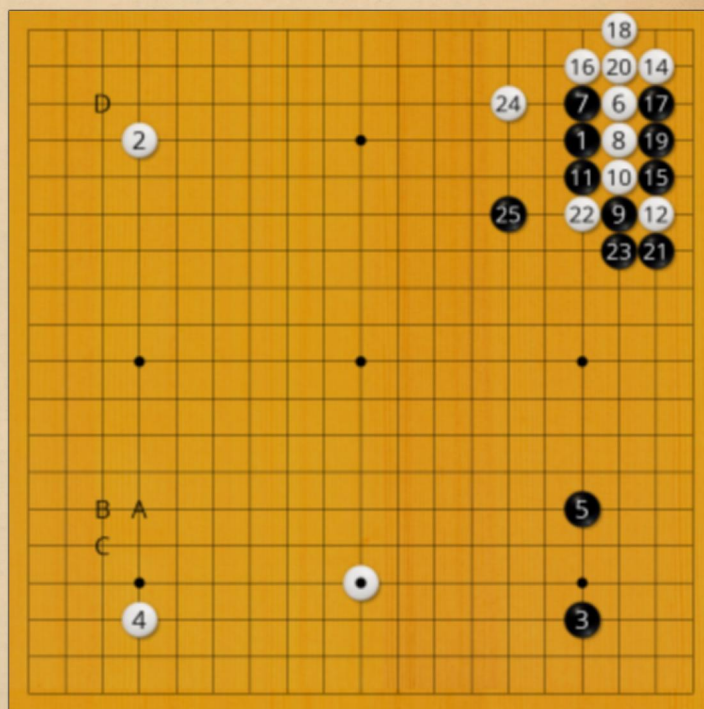




## Everything you know is wrong?

This is a game which I played in the Big Cycle against a strong player who was placed in the first league of amateurs afterwards.

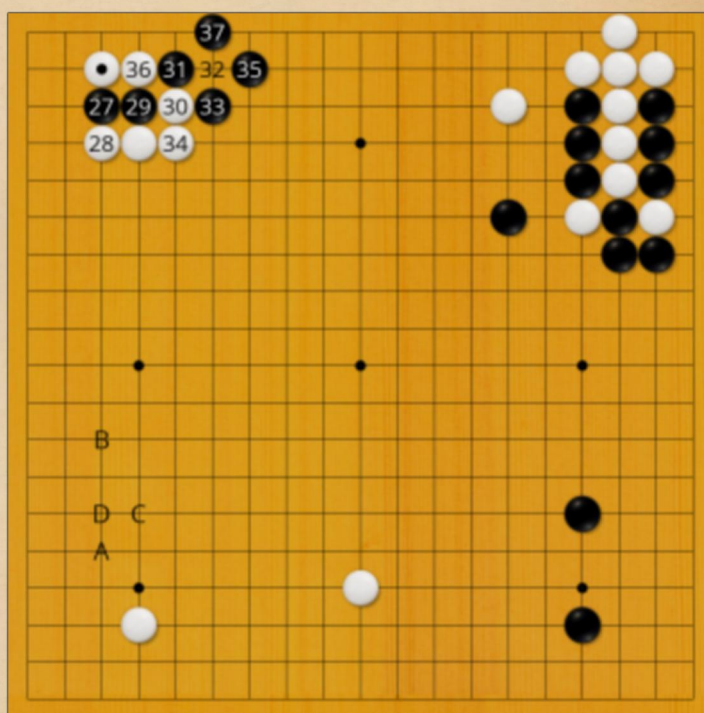
While reviewing, we figured out that most of our human knowledge about the fuseki shapes that appeared, were totally off according to AI sensei. He played white and after a normal modern pattern on top right corner, he played move 26 on bottom side instead of corner enclosure on top or lower left.



Game position

I did not expect white to play on bottom side, because it did not feel like the natural way for the game to develop, although it is about style, so 26 is totally fine. Now black can play either on the lower left at A to C or as I did in the game: play tenuki and come back later.

Up to move 38, it is common joseki. However, I don't like the choice of joseki that white chose in the game, playing keima at 33 instead of 30 would have been my choice.



Game position 2

I had to decide whether to approach at A, C or D. I did not take A, because I was afraid of a pincer at B, but as u might assume, A is the first AI choice and it has great way to deal with pincer at B.



After white pincers in Dia.1, my fear was that after A, white will cut at B and I will have a hard time finding continuation that makes me feel comfortable. Actually, it is mostly about finding a sequence that makes you feel comfortable about the game.

What we learned, however, is that black will not play at A as I thought, black will play at C or D and surprisingly even tenuki on top right.

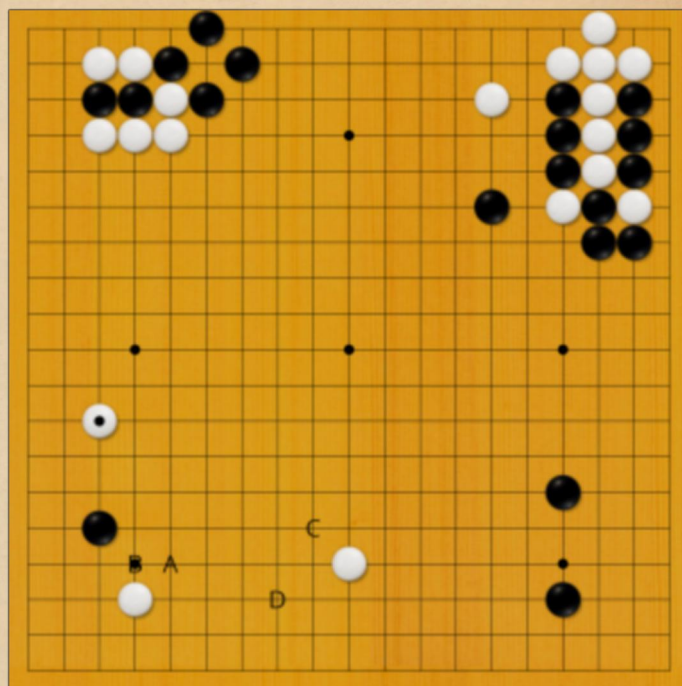


Diagram 1

Throwing a stone at 41 in Dia.2 seems a bit too complicated for me, so I doubt that I will ever play that move. The fight after attachment in the corner at 43 and the cut at 49 is just making the whole corner a mess. If I didn't solve my daily tsumego, I would have probably gone for this variation, but in the near future, I don't think that will happen.

However, the second suggested variation by AI is a bit more intriguing.

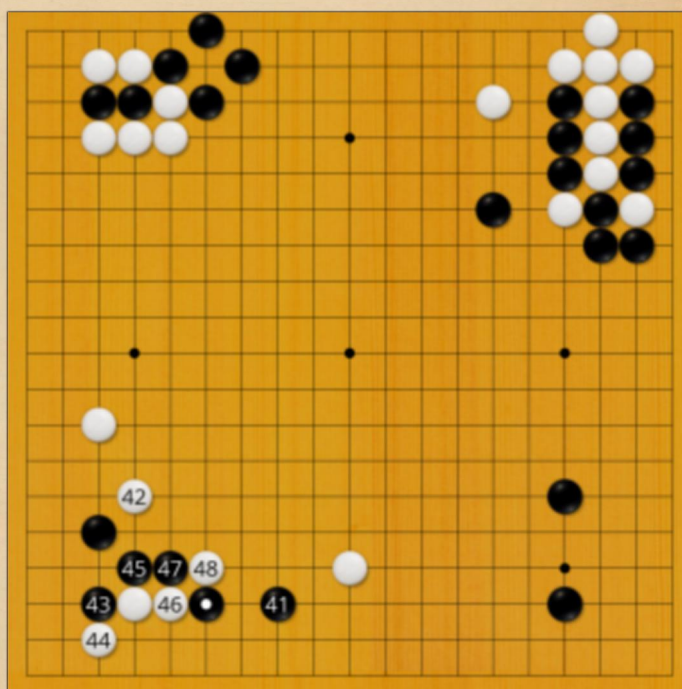


Diagram 2



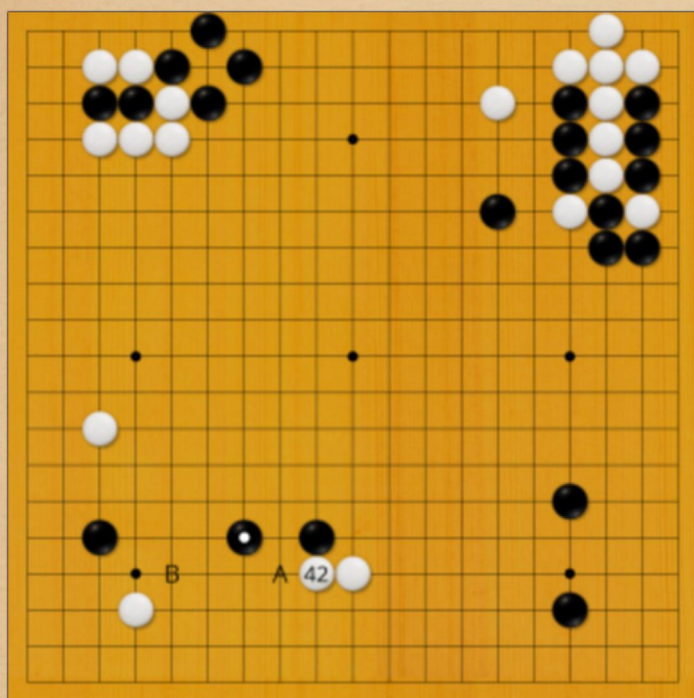


Diagram 3

Playing the shoulder hit in Dia.3 is very creative move and I really want to try it if I have a chance. After white pushes at 42, the idea behind the shoulder hit is very simple to understand, black jumps and then playing at A or taking B is miai, black can be satisfied with the development.

AlphaGo Zero also played this shoulder hit against AlphaGo Lee in the games released by DeepMind in similar case.

If white decides to resist after the shoulder hit and plays 42 in Dia.4 to seal in the black stone, then black can damage the stone in the middle with the sequence to 45.

We can say that an exchange happened on the board and even though probably it is even result, I would rather take black because I feel comfortable when the strength of my stones gets higher. It gives you freedom on the board, additionally the corner stone still has some aji and later it can be very useful.

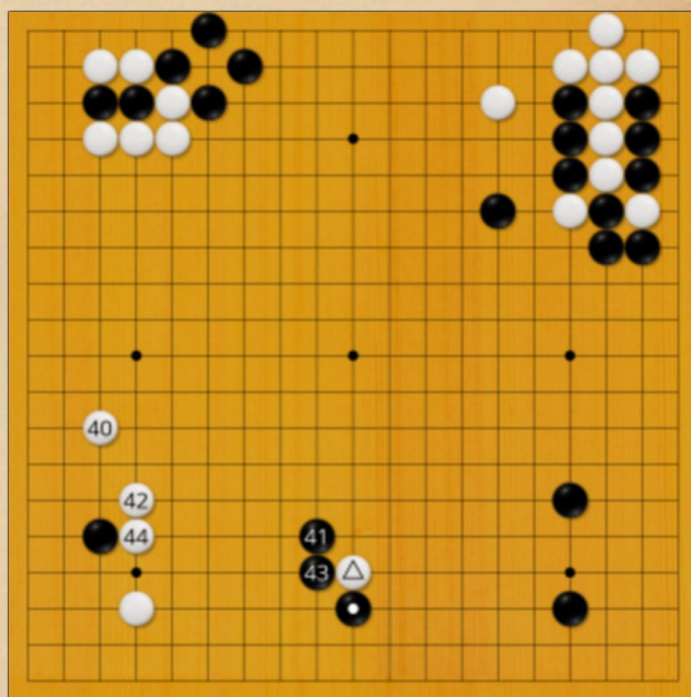


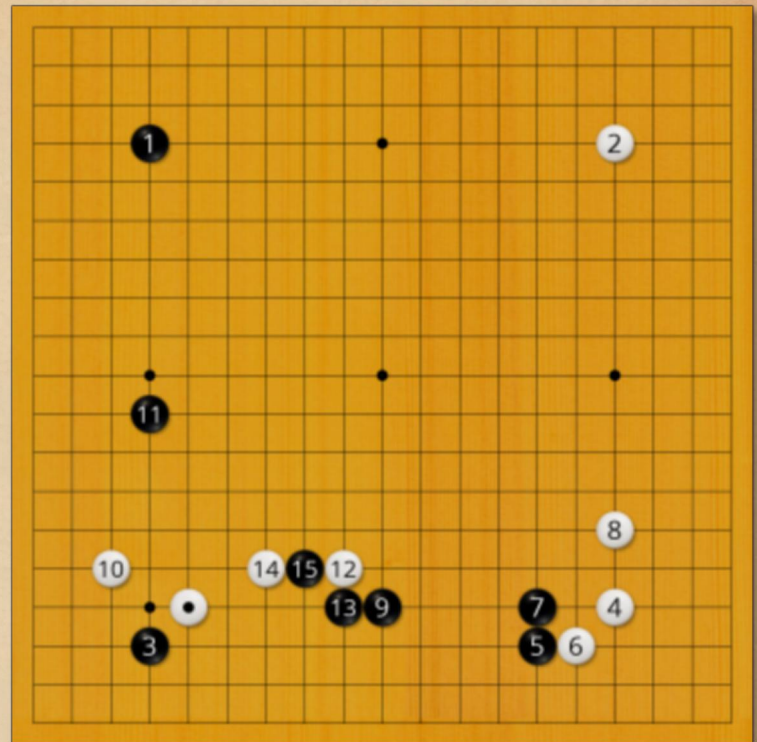
Diagram 4



This is game between AlphaGo Zero taking white and AlphaGo Lee.

After the approach at 10, black pincerd with 11 to make use of 13.

White played the shoulder hit at 12 and black pushed at 13, then white jumped at 14 as we discussed and that made miai, so black took one side and wedged at 15, but then white played keima at 16.

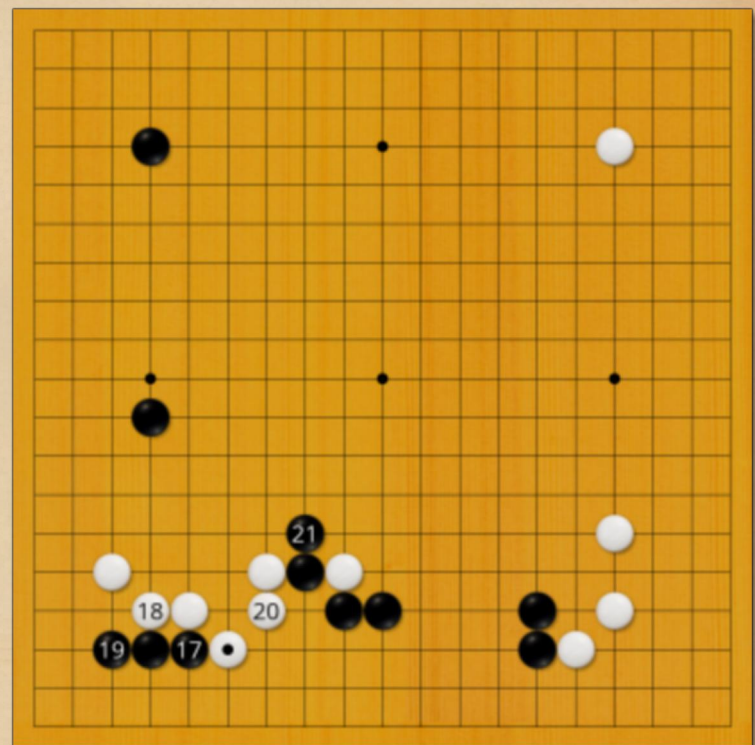


AlphaGo Zero vs AlphaGo Lee

Black pushed at 17 and white threaded to make a good shape in the corner with 18, so black resisted as expected and extended at 19.

White play at 20 is honte and it is looking forward to either atari at 21 or to play at 22.

Finally white got to play at 22 and created a very solid group. What is very impressive over here is that almost every move that white played in the sequence made a miai. That is pretty much what AI style is about - playing moves that always have more than one purpose. I remember Catalin Taranu 5p, teaching me to always try to find moves which have more than one purpose. If you observe the sequence deeply, you will notice that u can apply the same lesson to the game at any point.

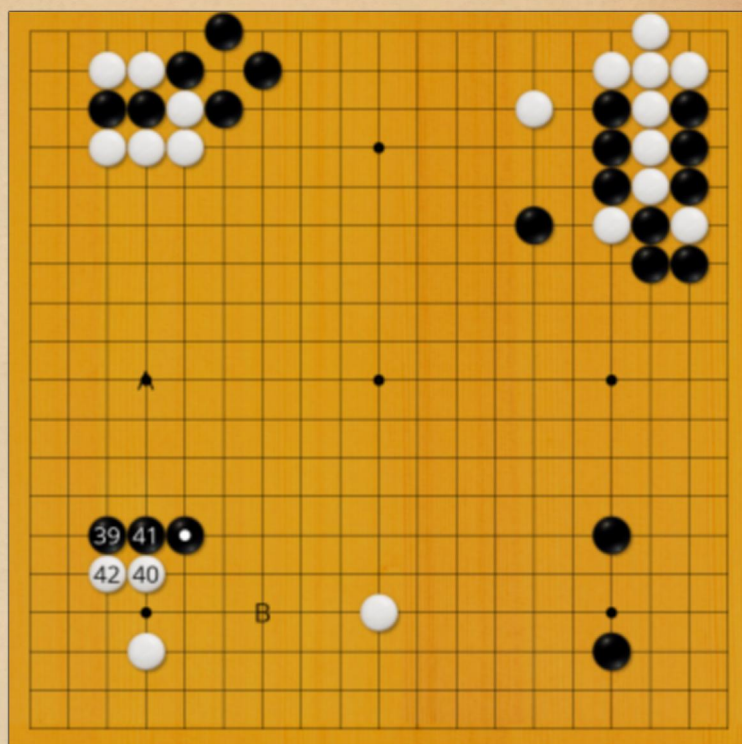


AlphaGo Zero vs AlphaGo Lee



In the game I chose to approach at 39 and the sequence up to 43 appeared, playing 42 at 43 is another option, but it would make the game a bit more complicated and since my opponent was stronger than me, he didn't really want to play that kind of game.

Now it would be normal to play at B and protect lower side, but it seems like he wanted to put more pressure on the three stones, so he played pincer.



Game position 3

We learned that after white "protects" the lower side at 44, black has a very nice move at 45 in Dia.5.

The probing move is very hard to answer and answering at A would be the toughest way, but we can consider other moves as well. The idea of the probing move is to gain something locally or we can say, to ask white a question to see what exactly white wants.

We can imagine that move 45 asks a question "What do you want?"

And if white answers at A, then the answer to the question would be:

"I want to put pressure on your group, the corner is not important for me".

On the other hand if white plays any other move, the answer of the question would be: "I want to take the corner, but now I am not feeling comfortable with doing it."

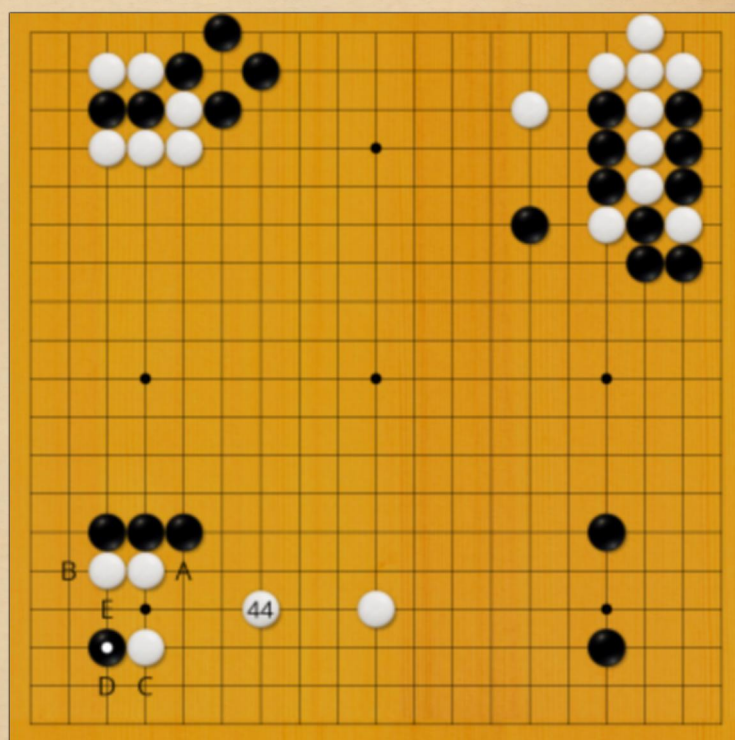


Diagram 5



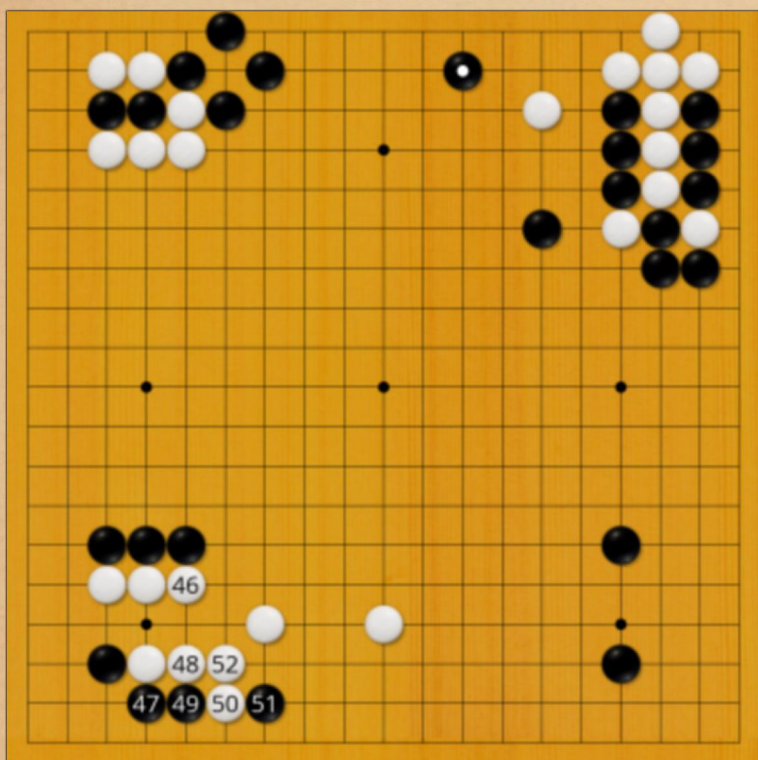


Diagram 6

Playing 46 in Dia.6 allows black to take the important hane at 47 and after move 50, black clamps at 51, to test how white will answer. Since living in the corner on lower left is not the biggest point now, black switches and plays on top. This is great example of faster development.

Extending down in Dia.7 can be answered the same way as extending up. However, now black is able to cut at 51 and he will not clamp anymore. It is a bit hard for white to answer now.

White might need to give up two stones, but then we can say that black again is developing fast and white sustained territory losses.

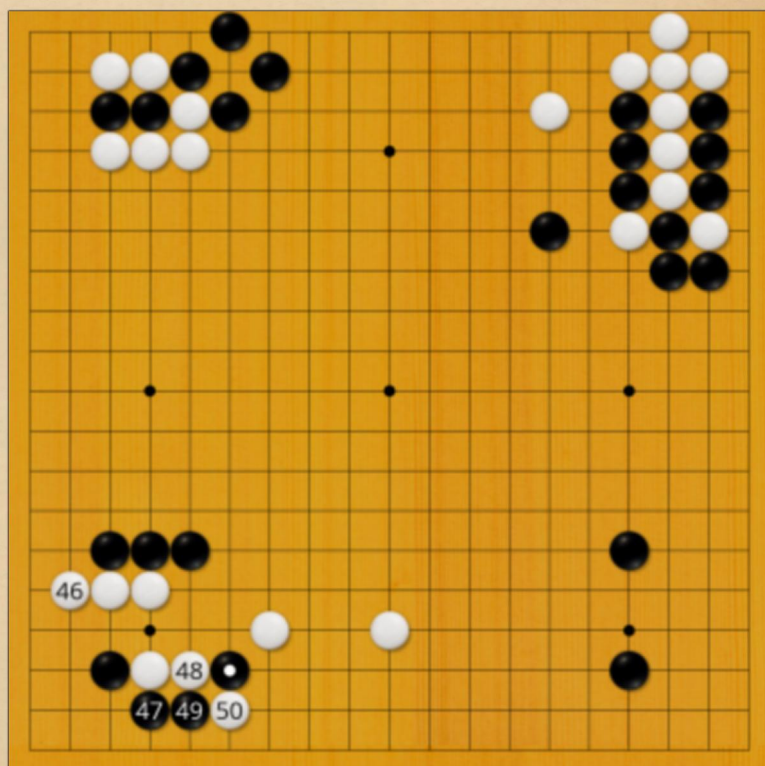


Diagram 7



Extending down at 46 in Dia.8 is exactly the answer “I want to take the corner, but now I am not feeling comfortable with doing it.” After black takes the point at 47, black stones became stronger. If you noticed the magic in Go, when your stones are stronger, even though you cannot see immediately territory popping up, in the long run the one which stones are stronger, has easier way to gain points and eventually win the game.

If white answers at A, black can easily reduce the corner at B and if white takes C, black can wedge and break into white territory with D.

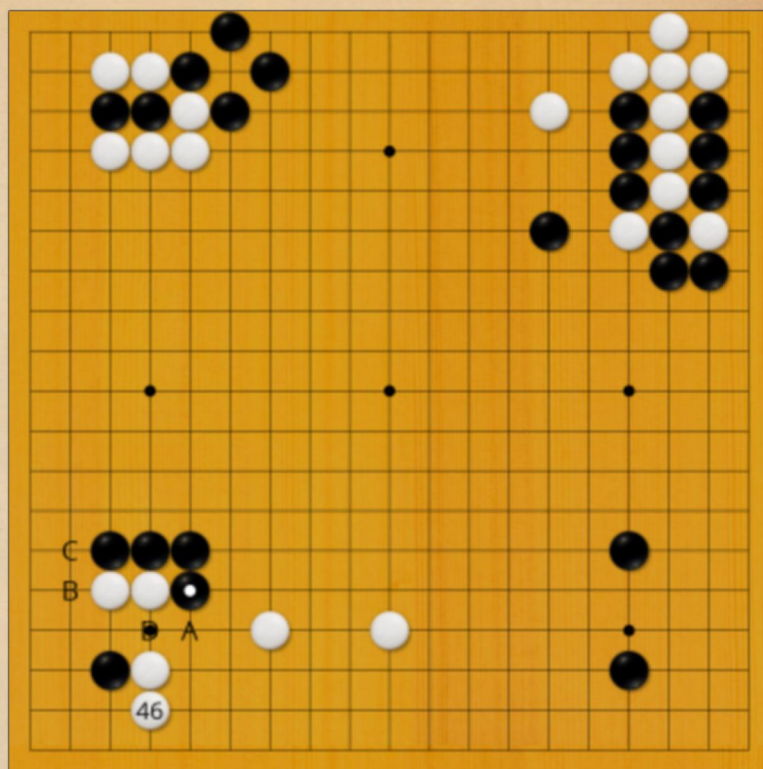


Diagram 8

Answering at 46 is a similar story and black again takes the vital point at 47, this time white has to defend the corner at 48, otherwise if white plays something like B black can connect at C. Black plays calmly on left at 49 and he can be satisfied. Later black can still attach at D and reduce the territory of white, this is an absolute failure for white.

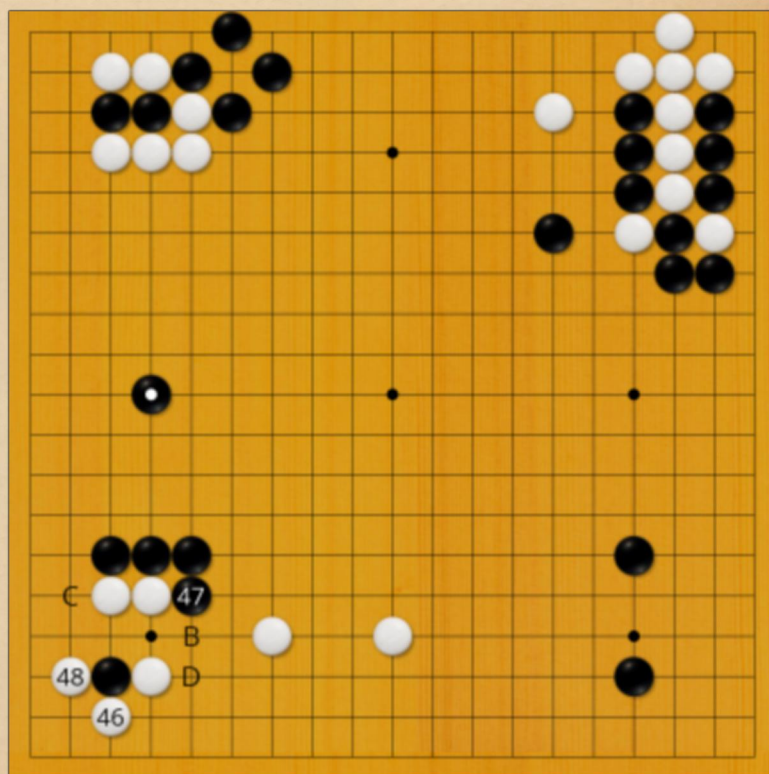


Diagram 9



Answering with this empty triangle in Dia.10 is not only looking very ugly, but it also makes the black move at 47 possible. Now black can even consider tenuki at C or D, but a normal play at D would also be good enough.

Later on A is very painful, because the corner stone might even extend.

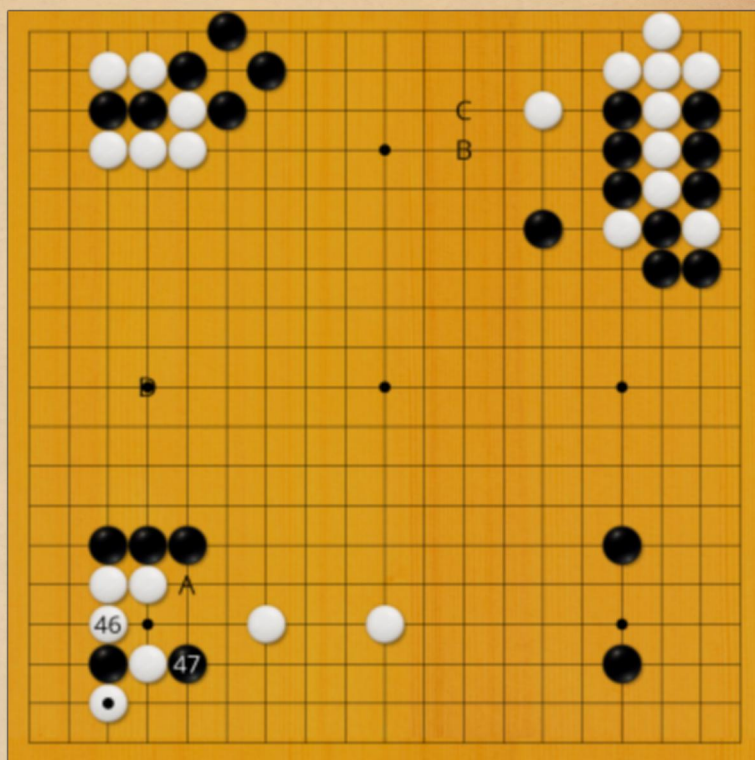
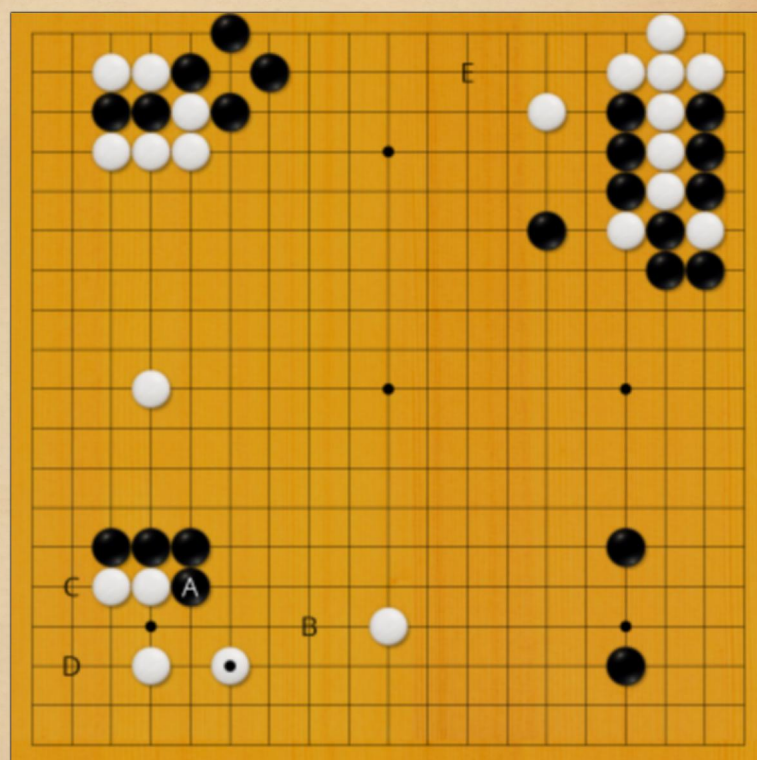


Diagram 10

In the game, white didn't play on the bottom side and avoided black's probe, so after white pincer the three stones, I turned again at A because it is the vital point. AI would suggest invading at B at this point, but I do not completely understand the idea why do I need to fight right now, so playing at A makes most sense to me.

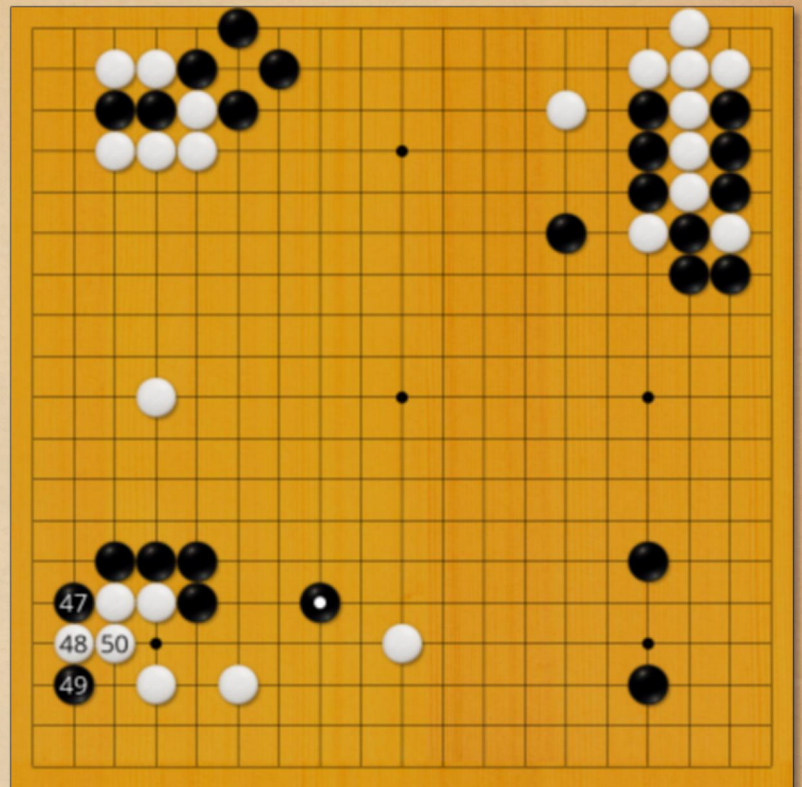
White's jump is natural and as Zhao Baolong 2p, teacher on EGF Academy showed once, black can later test with D. However, in old go books, you can find that C is normal move right now, so I played it because I knew the idea behind, so I felt more comfortable with it.



Game position 4



After hane at 47 and clamp at 49, my opponent answered at 50 quickly and I also jumped at 51 fast. Seems like neither one of us doubted the sequence that we played, because it is a sequence that appeared in books and he didn't consider if a move at 50 is necessary or if it is the best move locally.



Game position 5

In Go books, you can find that white cannot play atari at 50 in Dia.11, because black will atari back at 51, but why is that the point where they stop explanations in the books? If we play out the sequence, and when finally white takes at 56, black didn't really gain anything. Actually black lost a lot of possibilities and his stone's strength didn't increase much, but only made white stronger. According to AI, black clamp is mistake and white has to take the stone at 50. This is very impressive, but once we compare the two positions, it becomes clear.

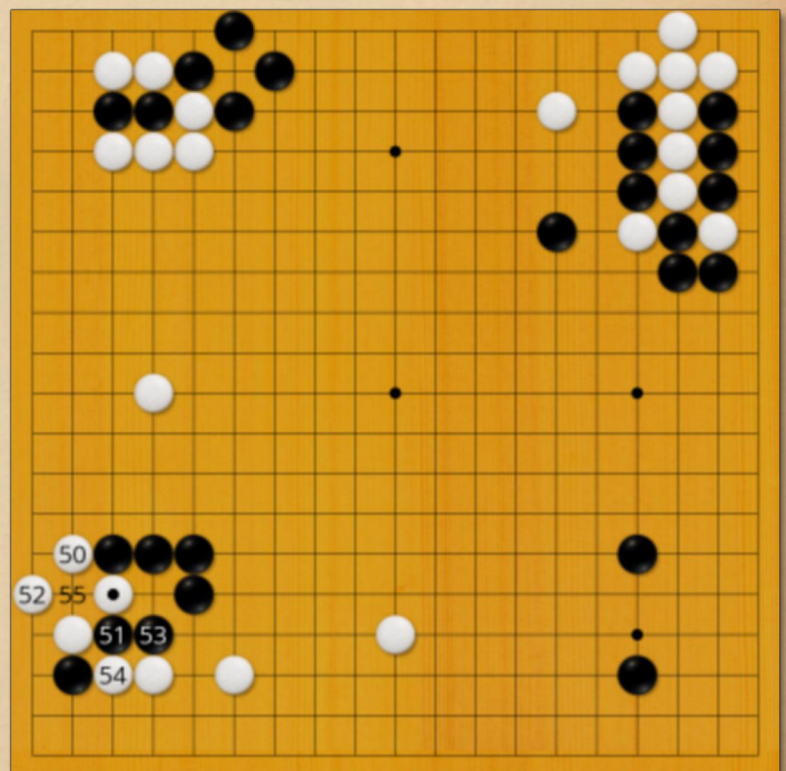


Diagram 11



On the lower left we can see the shape that AI suggests and on the right side we can see the position that appeared in my game and in Go books.

If we have to compare, we can see that on the right side black stone in the corner has a lot of aji and later even a direct connection at A could be possible because the possibility of making life in the corner. That way white cannot cut black.

Another thing is that black can play B later, in order to make a connection at A sente.

On the left we can see that if black hane outside, white will just capture the one stone or if black extends inside the corner, white will just connect to the stone on the middle. This is very interesting and I have always thought that capturing the one stone is a mistake, but white actually can do it and be happy about it.

So next time, feel free to try it out in your own games and to not be afraid.

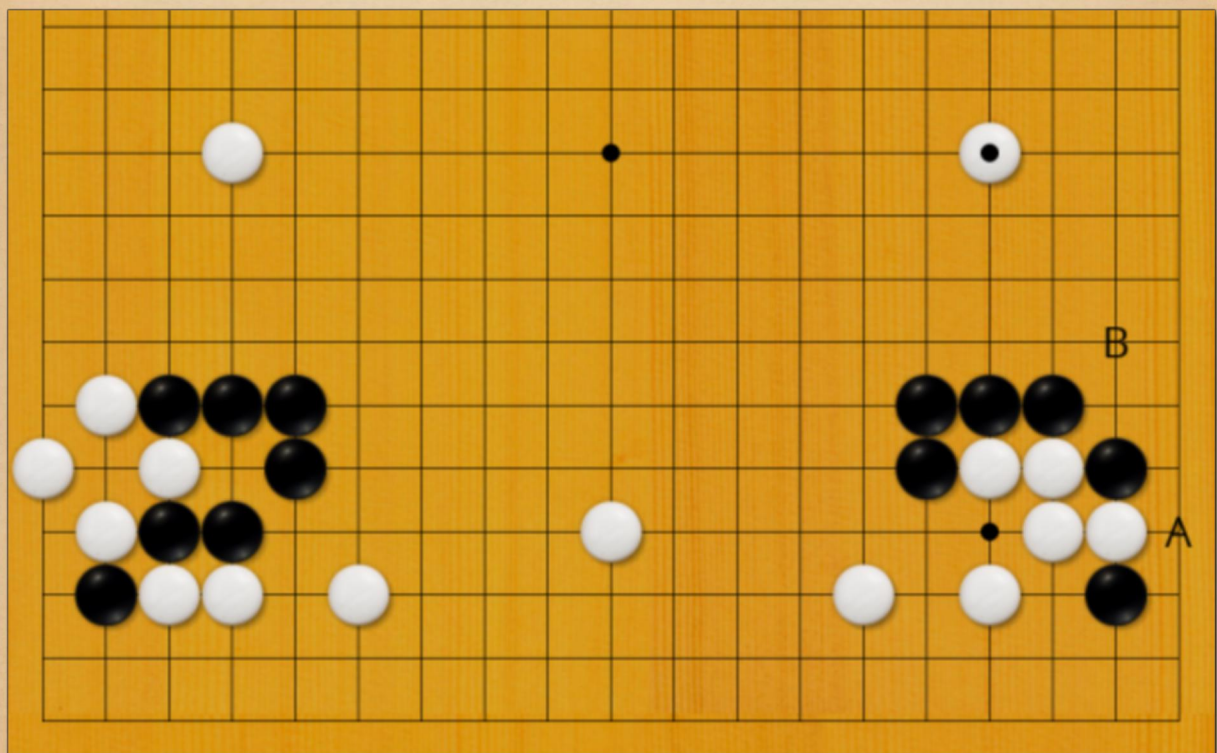


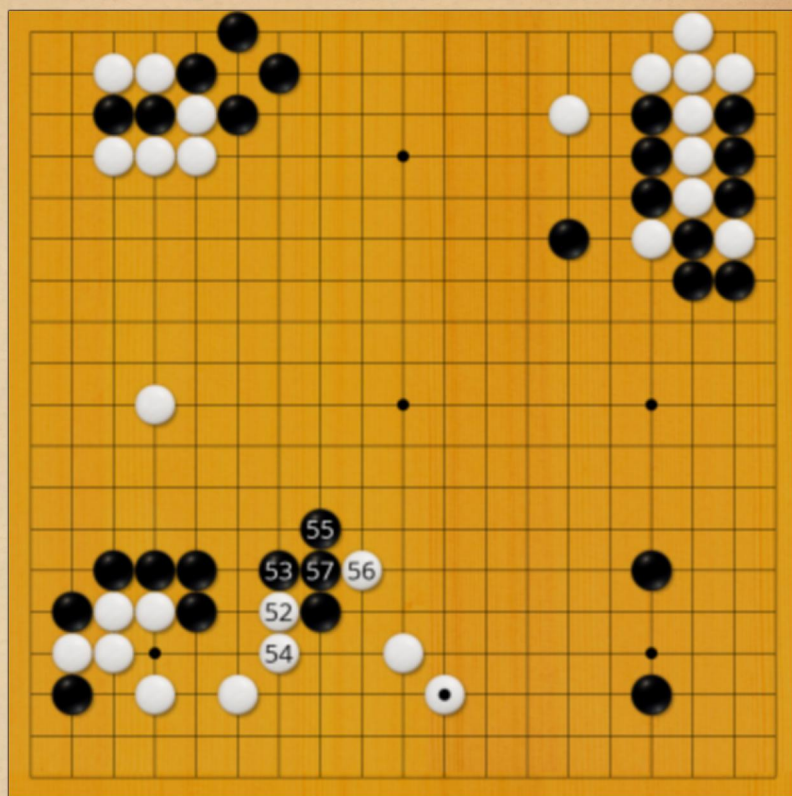
Diagram 12



The game continued with white attaching at 52 to be able to surround lower side territory. After I made tiger mouth shape at 55, white peeped at 56 and I without hesitation answered at 57.

After white defended at 58 I played on the top, but I wasn't able to gain lead in the game, my opponent was always komi ahead. 57 is passive, it is just following the opponent, totally wrong strategy. One cannot win the game if always follows the intentions of the opponent's plan. Resisting is normal and in this case it is needed.

Black had to push at 57 without considering the cut at A, because then black can gain move at B, and if white plays at B, then black can push at C. This way black is gaining strength and the game can be a bit more comfortable. This game was a very good opportunity to in a way update my knowledge from Go books.



Game position 6

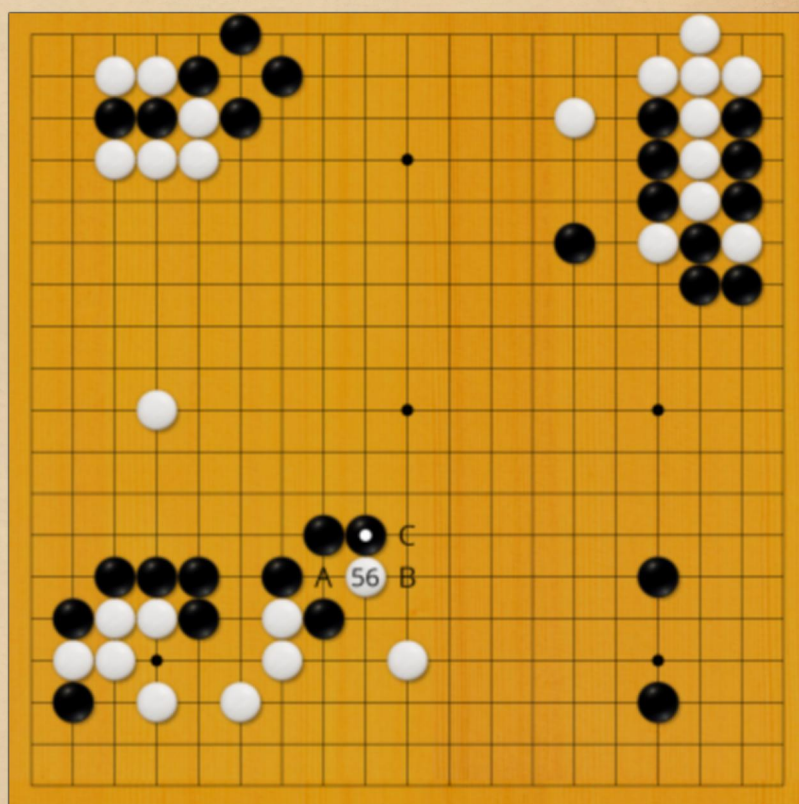


Diagram 13



## Foolish expectations you might have?

Even though my Go adventure lasted only three months, there was a moment in the very beginning which felt like we were adjusting to everything. The awkwardness in this was that, at a time where everybody else adjusted and it felt like “China” just started, it was already time for me to go back.

Two weeks before I went home, Oscar characterized the time as “ It does not feel like the beginning, but it also doesn’t feel like the end, it is just that long interval of time where you just play all the time.”

However, being here for a shorter period affected the way I appreciate my stay here.

Since I learned to play Go, I was very impressed by all of these strong players devoting their time in schools like the Nihon Ki-in in Japan, Tokyo. Part of that was due to the influence of Hikaru no Go.

It felt that it should be something mysterious to be an insei and to study Go in such schools.

About three years after I learned the rules, I was chosen as one of the few youngsters to represent Europe at the World Youth Go

Championship in 2016, which was a big honour for me and a dream of mine became true, and in the end I reached the 6<sup>th</sup> place which was very satisfying. I do not remember his exact words, but Takemiya Masaki - 9 dan professional,

gave a speech in the beginning of the tournament.

Translated by some, it meant :

“I hope that all of you will play games in which you will follow your intuition, and you will be nobody else, but yourself.”

I mention this because from my point of view, there is a big contrast between studying in the Go school here in China and my expectations, based on seeing the Nihon Ki-in in 2016.

I am not a big fan of living in a big cities, even though I adore visiting big cities for a short period of time. I love the high places and looking at the lights of the city in the darkness of late nights - feeling nothing but amazement and peace.



WYGC 2016 - Tokyo

Picture of European group in front of Nihon Ki-in



To me, Beijing is a city which can make you question many things about yourself. In a way, sometimes it is because of the terrible things that you might not like and the feelings that it is provoking inside you.

The atmosphere in the school is not as you might expect, or at least not as Dominik and I expected.

If we have to take into account the way the atmosphere of the school affects our studies, then the atmosphere is good. Being surrounded by all these players who are willing to improve and studying with them all day long, surely it is a place where you can break your limits.

However, there are drawbacks. Usually my expectations would be that a person playing Go, devoting his entire time into following his dream of becoming professional, would have learned good behaviour. But, that's not always the case in the school here. One of the myths about how Go was created is a story about a king who created the game for his children in order his kids to develop important leadership qualities. Nowadays, things are a bit different and I do understand that it is better to not expect anything in the first place, so that you do not feel foolish afterwards. For a Go school, however, good behaviour is something that I wouldn't even question.

Some of the kids in the school do not really have good manners. For example, they are often being noisy while they are playing and they are even laughing about it. Some of the sounds could be also followed by a smell which I didn't expect. The teachers often remind the kids that it is not good to do such things, but it does not have much of an effect because they are just young. So, even though their Go level is so high, their behavior level might be non-existent.

Once, while Gabriel was playing a small cycle game another kid approached them and started showing moves on the board, telling them where the next move should be, all while the game was still going on! Even though Gabriel got offended and told the kid to leave and to let them play, the kid refused and continued pointing at the shining move which was not even working. For our luck, the kids with such bad manners are not that numerous and the other aspects of the school are pretty enjoyable.

School teachers are quite friendly. Believe it or not, one plays in the Chinese League B and speaks English. Although his English is not so great, it is still amazing. His name is Han, and he's five dan professional. He told us that he was interested in European culture and has been to each of our countries with the exception of mine - Bulgaria. The study materials we receive at the school are very helpful, particularly the tsumego sheets we get can sometimes be very hard and contain all kinds of problems. We sometimes get even a yose problems that requires you to write the value of a move on the board. Studying in the school can also be very motivating, not only because you can move to a higher league or even play with a professional,



but simply because everyone is studying hard and you want to improve even more.

Once, when I was feeling a little sick, I asked my opponent if it's possible to play the day after and he kindly agreed, although he should miss the review session to play with me.

I remember once, some kids were quite noisy when I was studying alone in the last classroom on Saturday. Before I tried to tell them to be quieter, the teacher came and told them to study in the previous room not to distract me.

I was also surprised by the number of girls at the school.

Many young girls from 7 to 13 years old study in the school. I wondered if the number of the girls studying Go has increased since the Chinese pro-qualification system changed a little and now they make more professionals per year. People are coming and leaving school all the time, so you can play with all sorts of different players.

Playing these little cycle games sometimes makes Go feel like fighting. This endless process of trying to be better than you are now might be very exhausting, even though it is worth it. All your efforts to improve are crushed by losing more and more.

You sometimes might win few games against stronger opponents and you might as well end up losing to even weaker players a week later. You might start wondering if you really improved. These bad periods do not happen only to us, of course. There was a moment when some players seemed weak. But then a week after you can see them rise by defeating you to the first league.

One of the most beneficial parts of my school studies is that many questions arise about myself while I play and my psychology about my Go evolves. The traffic is sometimes literally crazy in the city. Crossing the zebras at green may not be much different from crossing at red. Actually, while crossing the zebra at green light once near the school.

A small delivery car couldn't stop and hit my leg. This was not much of a deal and healed in a few days, but since that moment I began to be much more careful about the traffic.

The weather was unexpectedly nice during my stay and pollution levels were never too high.

It is obvious that the school isn't perfect, but it shouldn't be perfect either. The important part is that they try everything they can to provide us with the best environment to improve.

Because we're here to improve, that's what matters most.

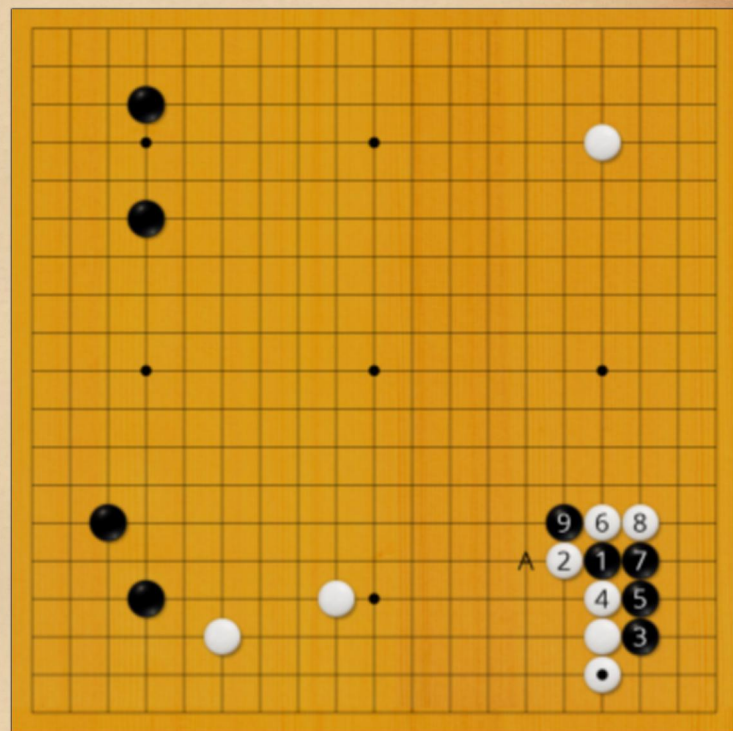


## A move seeking for complications. How to simplify the position?

This was one of my first games at the school and this encounter showed me how exactly my next two months of playing will proceed. They really like to complicate things and start a fight early in the game. My opponent is white in this game.

I approached with 1 and he attached at 2, then I didn't feel like playing hane over 9 so I attached back at 3, the sequence up to 8 is joseki. I cut immediately and my opponent unexpectedly played extension down instead of extension at A.

If I played 10 instead of 9 as change of timing, I could have avoided this unexpected move, but now I had to deal with it and all what I was thinking about, was how to deal with it in the simplest way.



Game position

The joseki in the game is similar to this normal san-san joseki showed in Dia.1 and Dia.2 .

However in this joseki, black has played a bad exchange at 1-2 (Dia.2) , black cuts directly at 7 in this position, because if black plays A, white might consider defending at 7 instead of playing hane at B. Although in the game white would have probably blocked at B, because lower side had more value.

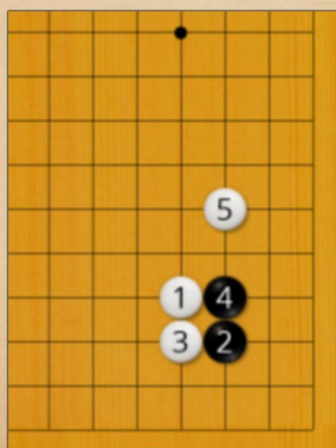


Diagram 1



Diagram 2



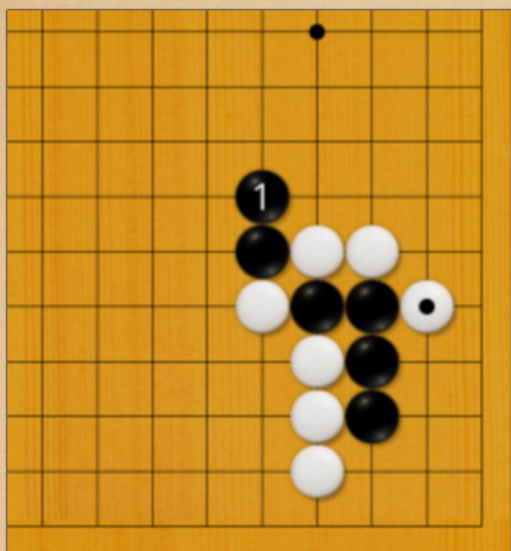


Diagram 3

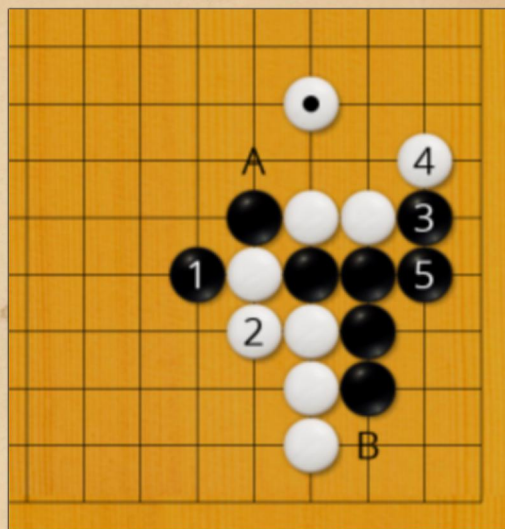


Diagram 4

Playing extension at 1 in Dia.3 and giving up the corner could be too big , this is the reason I chose the variation in Dia.4 .

Playing atari and afterwards hane and connection at 3-5, is a way of playing in which black separates white into two groups and protects his corner.

White defends at 6 which is honte and now it is very important to play B firsts, not A. I was careless in the game, but seems like my opponent who was seeking for complex variations also didn't notice.

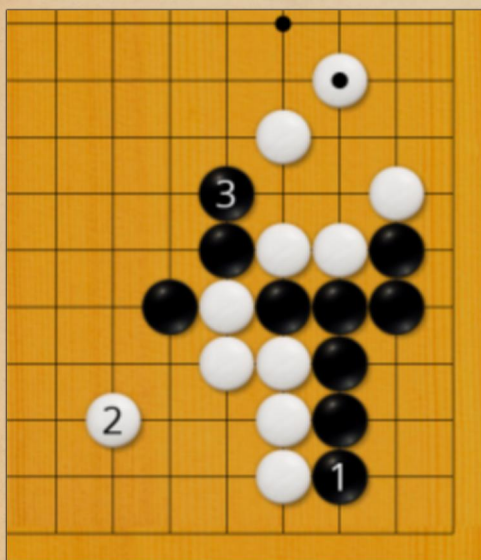


Diagram 5

The correct timing is for black to play 1 ( Dia.5) first and then extension at 3, since after 1.

White has not another choice, but to protect the group at 2. This way black could have avoided complications.



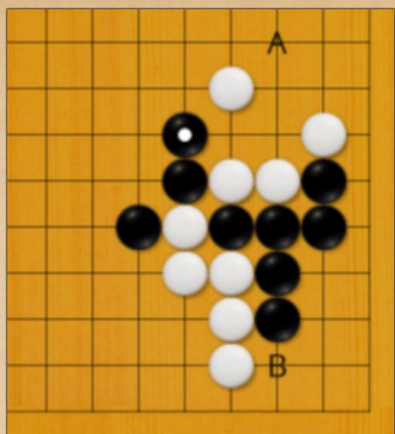


Diagram 6



Diagram 7

After my extension which is wrong timing, seems like we both thought that white has to defend at A.

But white can make the position a way more complicated by playing at B in Dia.6 .

After white takes the base of the corner, black's strongest response would be to attach at 2 (Dia.7) and start a fight, but that is already something that I wanted to avoid.

Connection at A in Dia.8 is the most natural way to continue after black attachment and black will make life for his corner group and make shape outside with 35 and 37. However, notice that the strength of white stones is increased and black lost some corner territory. I wouldn't really feel comfortable playing this game, although the result should be good enough.

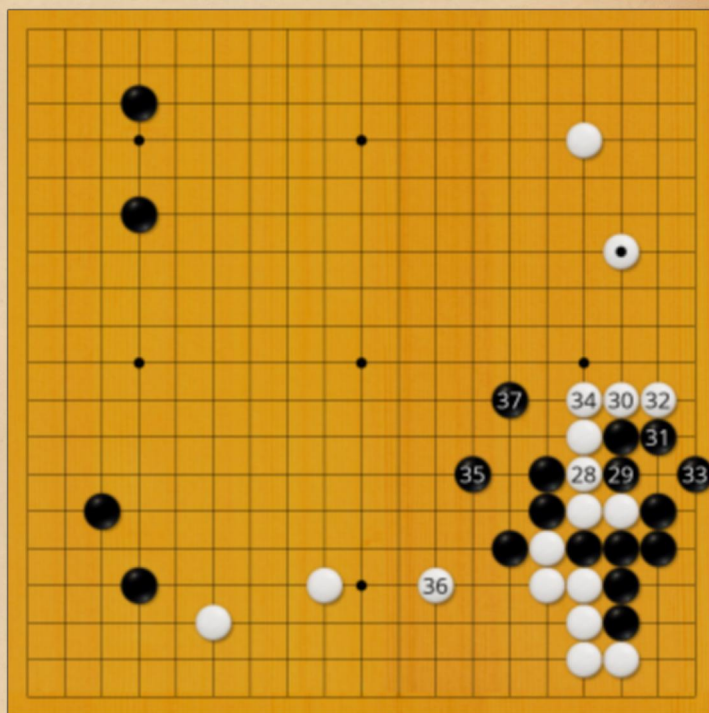


Diagram 8



Diagram 9

Playing at 28 in Dia.9. might seem like a bad move at first sight, but actually the move is quite severe. After black jumps to 33, to make a base for his stones, white takes the shape point at 34 and is looking forward to capture black stones. Black has no choice, but to fight at A.



White overlooked the way to make complications, so he just defended at 1 in Dia.10.

I defended my corner with 2 and then he simply defended his shape with keima at 3. Instead of keima, he could have jumped but that could also leave some weaknesses for later.

At this point black has a very important decision to make. Whether to play at B and defend his stones or to play away at C. In the game I played in the corner at C and I thought to leave the stones since they seemed unimportant to me.

But looking back, I have no idea how I came to that conclusion.

Playing at B is a very big turning point in the game and I felt very bad immediately after white got the move.

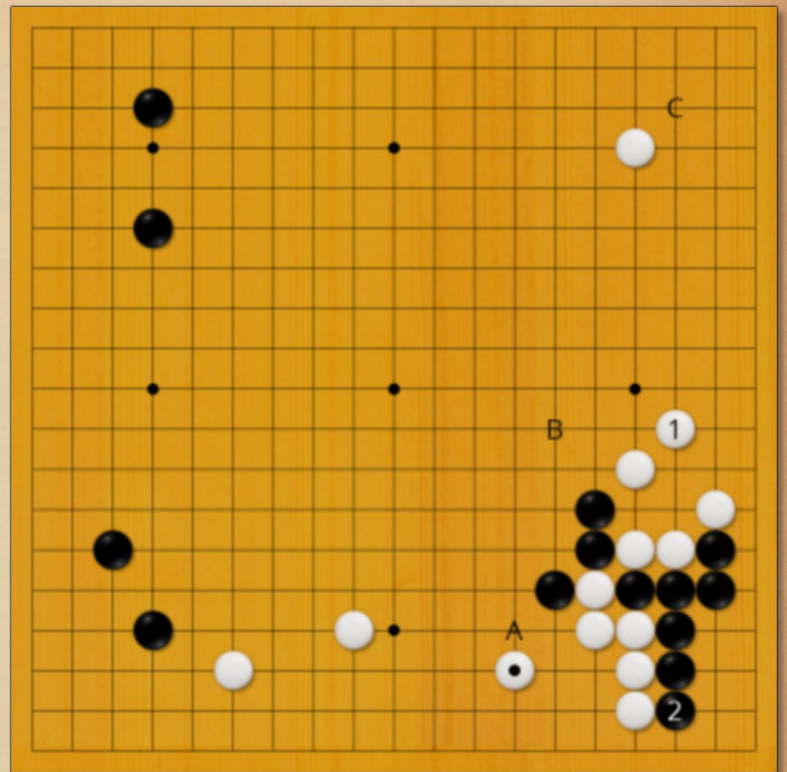


Diagram 10

Black should indeed defend with keima at 29 in Dia.11, then white defends at 30 otherwise black can start a fight later on. Then black plays another move at 31, to strengthen his group, white exchanges 32 with 33, to defend lower group and finally white gets sente, but black can be happy about the development.

Instead I went for a faster, but weaker development, which caused complications later, even though I managed to win this game. This was good lesson of how to not give your opponent unnecessary ways to complicate the position.

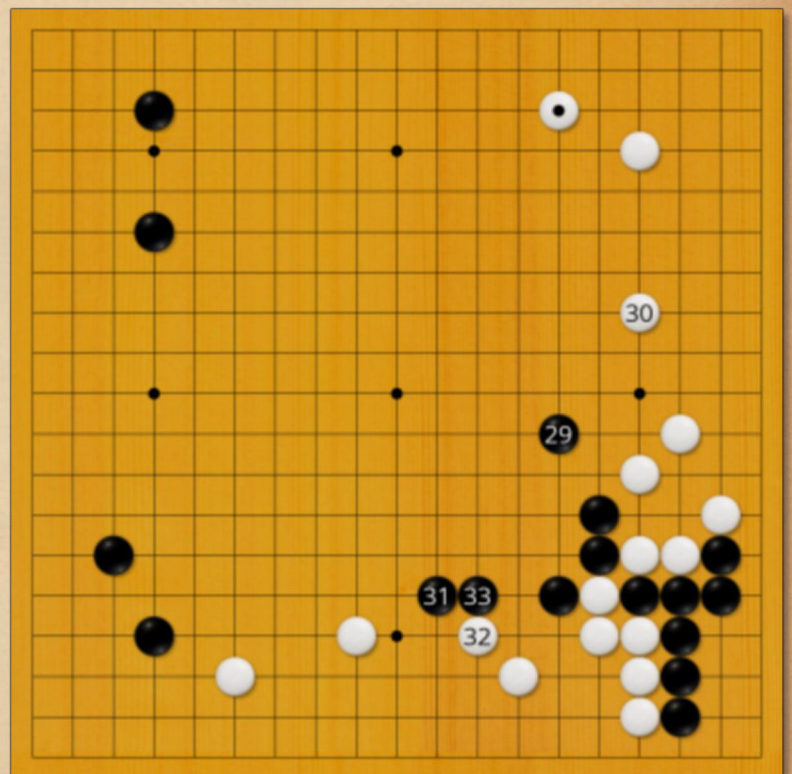


Diagram 11



## Don't start the ko too early !

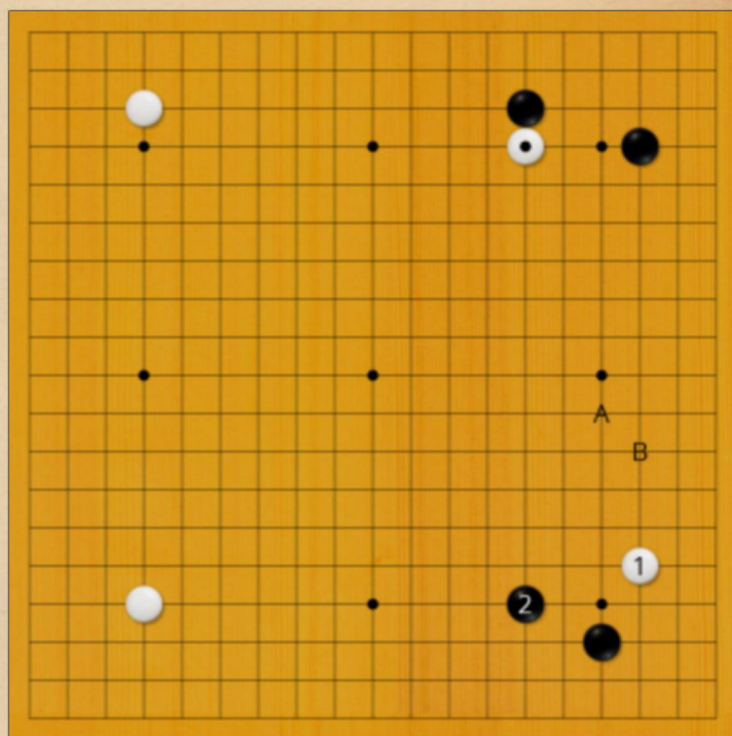
This game was a really good lesson about timing of playing ko my opponent is playing black.

I approached low with 1 and then black answered with keima at 2. Long time ago we used to think that pincer is the best, but nowadays after AI invasion, people changed the way of thinking about the position and right now, they don't like to be pressed down after they pincer, even though playing move on right side can also be both, extension and pincer.

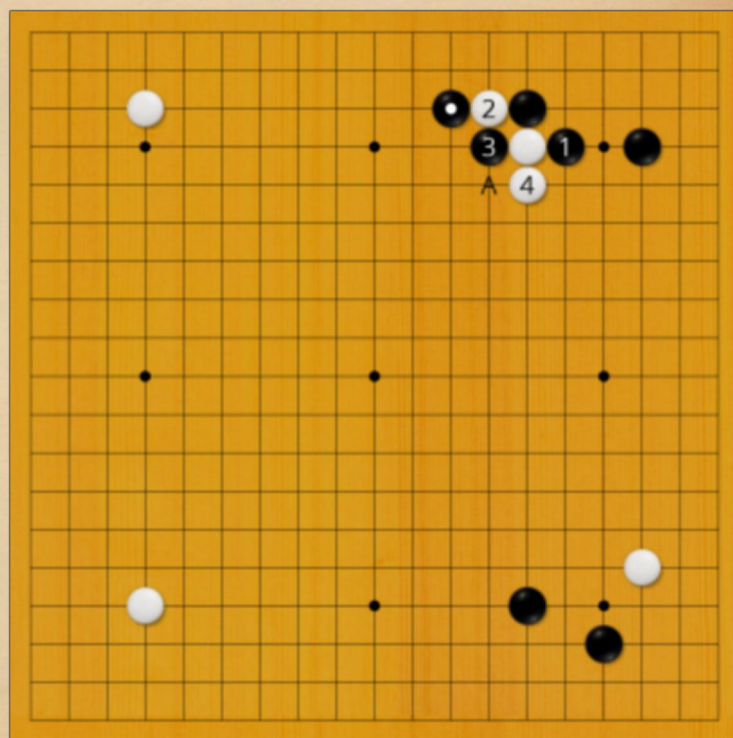
The attachment at 3 is a move with an idea to gain some exchanges before playing any extension at A or B on the right side.

Black played hane at 1, which is active answer to my attachment and the following sequence up to 4 is normal, but I expected black to push at A instead of playing 5. The opponent is very young kid who likes to fight a lot and we played in total 4 games in the school. However, I managed to win only one game.

What I noticed about the kids in the school, is that they are really good at fighting, but they lack some knowledge or sense of the direction of the game. Also, sometimes they play too fast and do not use much of their time.



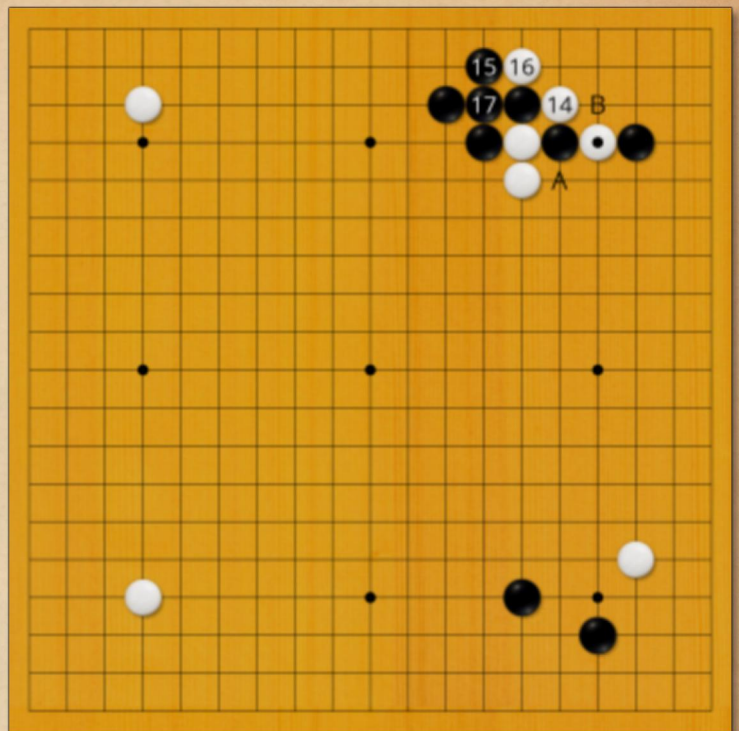
Game position



Game position 2



Atari at 14 is normal and is looking forward to break into black corner. White gave up one stone and atari at 16. Since it is fuseki stage of the game, there are not big enough ko threats, so black cannot start a ko, so his only option is to connect at 17. After my atari at 18, I thought that black has only one option and that is to play at A. Seems like black's choice to play at B got out one of my bad habits of starting ko too early.



Game position 3

Black extension at 19 in Dia.1 is the most normal development. White grabs the corner with 24, but black gains some outside influence. Now white has to decide whether to play at A and to enlarge the corner, but to give black a move on right side, or to play at B and to let black get even stronger outside by making white corner smaller. I believe both ways are possible and it is a matter of taste after all. While being here, I also noticed that some people consciously play move or sequence which is bad even though they know the better one, just because they feel more comfortable playing the game with the current position.

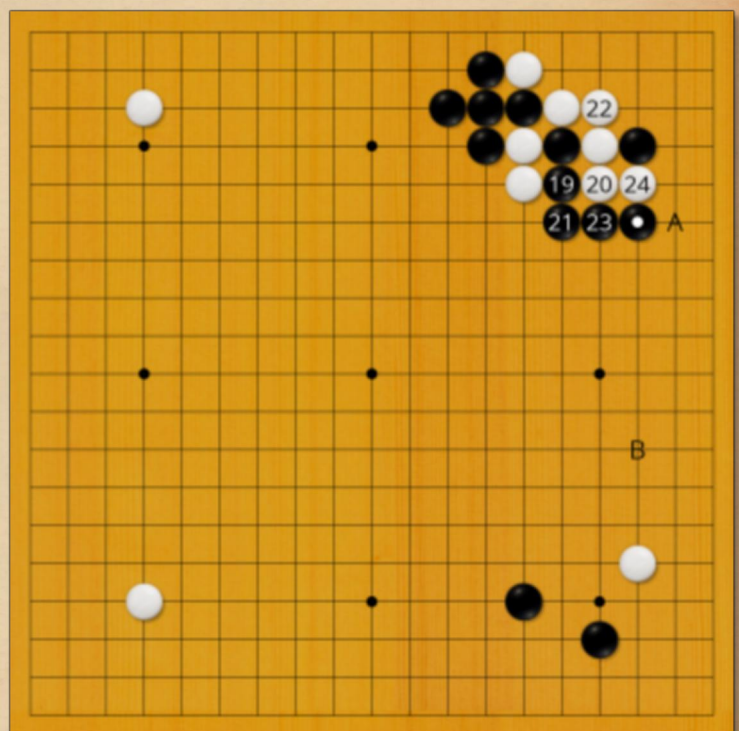
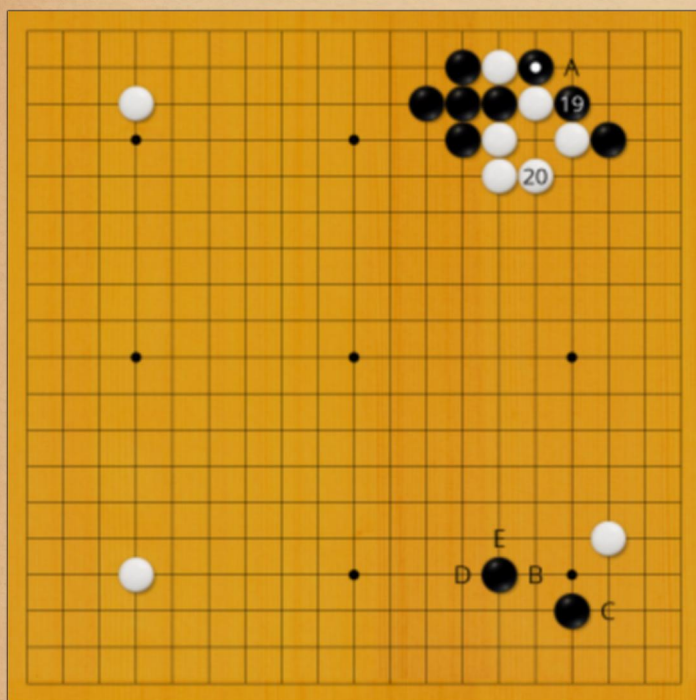


Diagram 1





Game position 4

Black atari at 19 was surprising and now I had to make an important decision. Whether to start the ko immediately or not. Playing at A is indeed premature and it is not good, but it is what happened in the game because I thought that ko-threat at B is big enough.

Better choices could have been to attach at C or to prepare ko-threats at E or D.

Attachments at E and D are a bit more complicated and I am not sure if I understand them good enough to comment, but C is a bit simpler.

After the attachment at 22, most normal way would be to hane and then extend at 25. Now white can go back to his stones on top right and play 26 to gain wall. After black capture one stone to ensure the strength of his corner stones and extends at 29, white has to decide where exactly to extend, I believe it is matter of taste. I would personally play B, because I think lower right few stones are quite flexible.

This kind of development would be very natural.

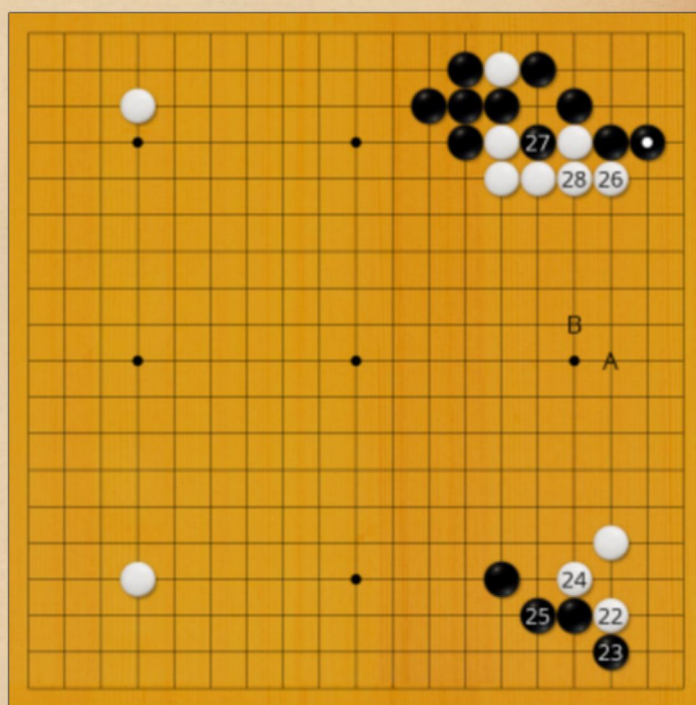


Diagram 2



Some people might wonder what will happen if black doesn't answer the attachment and instead goes for atari at 23. This could be a thing I would expect from these Chinese kids in the school, simply because they do not really like to play passively. But on this Dia.3, after white extends at 26, white is pretty solid and when white gives up the two stones on top right which are not important, black becomes over-concentrated. Additionally white atari at 30, which is painful.

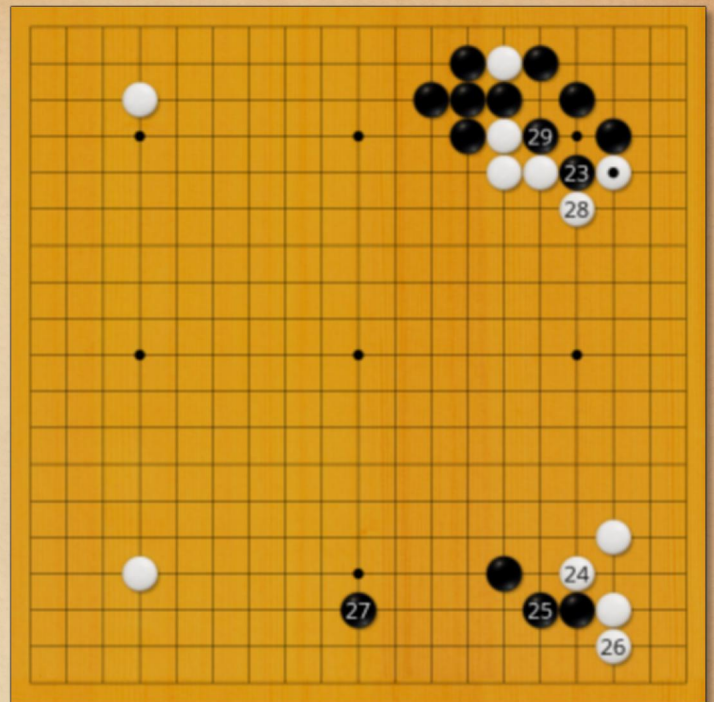
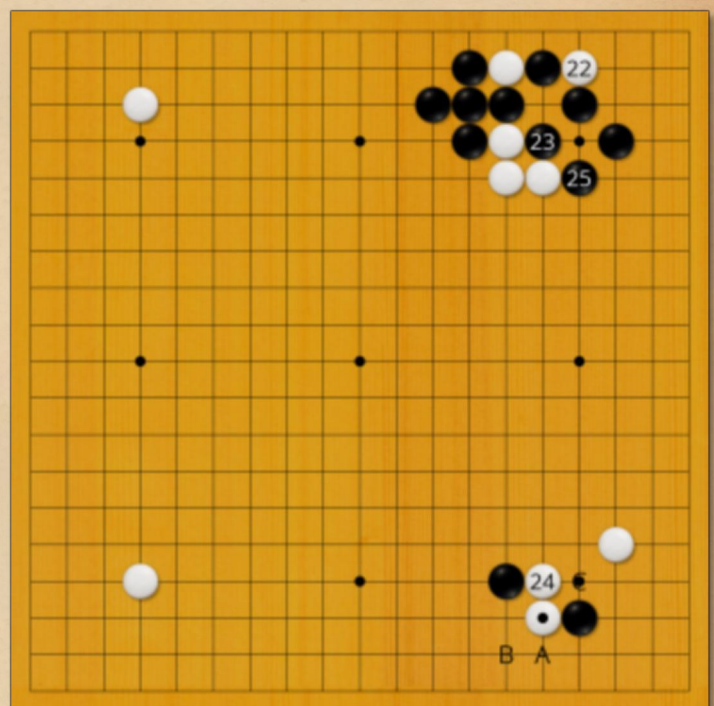


Diagram 3

In the game position, I started ko too early and the ko threat at 24, which seemed big, ended up being not enough. One might argue with whether it is really bad for white since white cut black keima. But the problem is that the stone of black's still has quite a lot of aji. For example when black play hane at A, white can hardly answer at B, because of black extension at C.



Game position 5

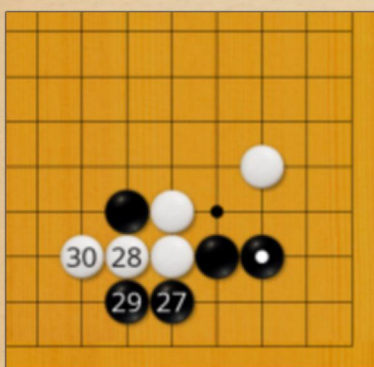


Diagram 4

On Dia.4, the normal way of the game to proceed is shown and it becomes clear that white compensation for losing the ko is not enough. So my lesson learned here was to not hurry up with ko, but to consider if I can make it even bigger or even if possible - to avoid it.



## Learn the ordinary, then differ - be unique!

In this small cycle game, I encountered a boy which seemed more disciplined than other kids at his age. He was very calm during the game. At the end he won, but I brought this example because of the creative fuseki which we played.

Even though sanrensei, which is the position marked on the left side is not very popular nowadays, I still enjoy to play it. For the simple reason that it makes me feel comfortable with my game and also that I do not really care if AI likes it or not.

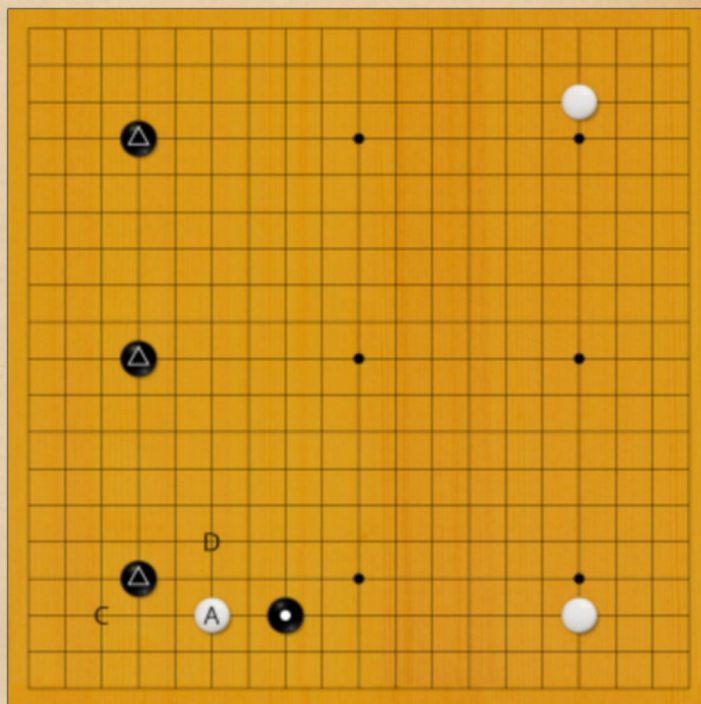


Diagram 1

Especially nowadays when it is hard to find a game without influence of AI, I start to feel the need to differ.

He approached with A in Dia.1, which was expected, but another strategy could be to build the right side and to have a moyo versus moyo game.

I pincer at B inviting him to invade at C, but instead he run out at D, which according to professionals is not the best idea. But at the level that we are now, these slight mistakes cannot really affect the game much, especially if jumping makes him feel comfortable about the development of the game.

The sequence in Dia.2 up to 17 is ordinary and because of the stone at A, white decided to push at D, to build a wall. This way his stones will be more efficient as well. Also, he could invade at B or defend his stones at C.

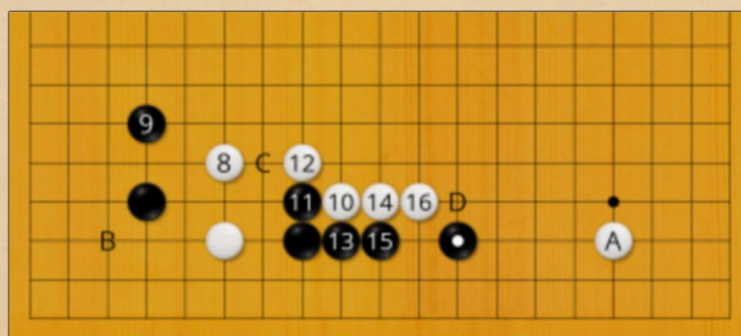


Diagram 2



After he pushed until 24 in Dia.3, I had a choice whether to cut at A or to split at B,C in order to make an indirect use of the cut at A.

I chose to cut immediately, because I wanted things to get more intense. In this special moment, the proverb “First think, then cut “ was reversed and it was more like “Cut first, think later”

Actually the cut at A is pretty much old joseki, but the game continued with a little improvements of the old joseki.

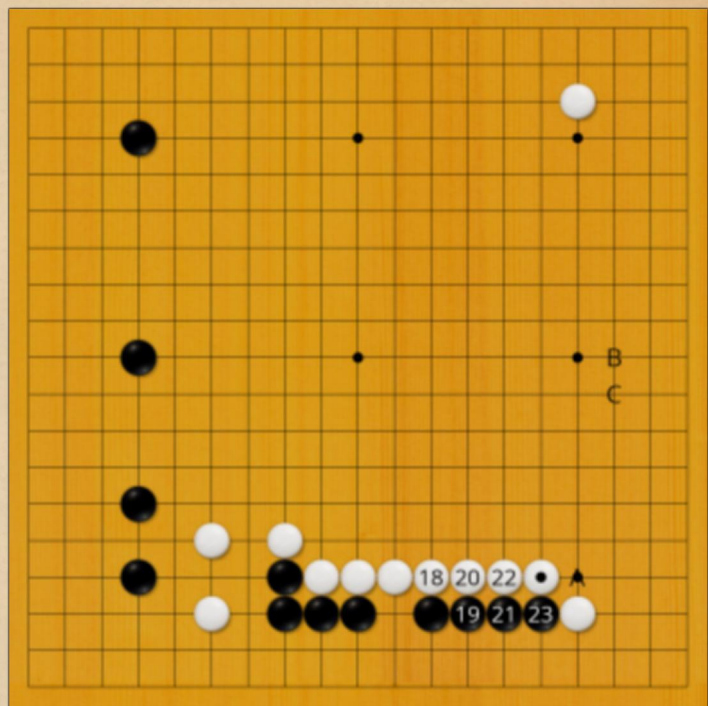


Diagram 3

If I had decided to split the right side with 25 as shown in Dia.4, then white might play at 26 and push me towards his wall. It is very important for players to learn to use walls to attack groups.

After black makes base with 27 and white covers till move 30, it is black's time to resist and to attach at 31. That could also be complicated development.

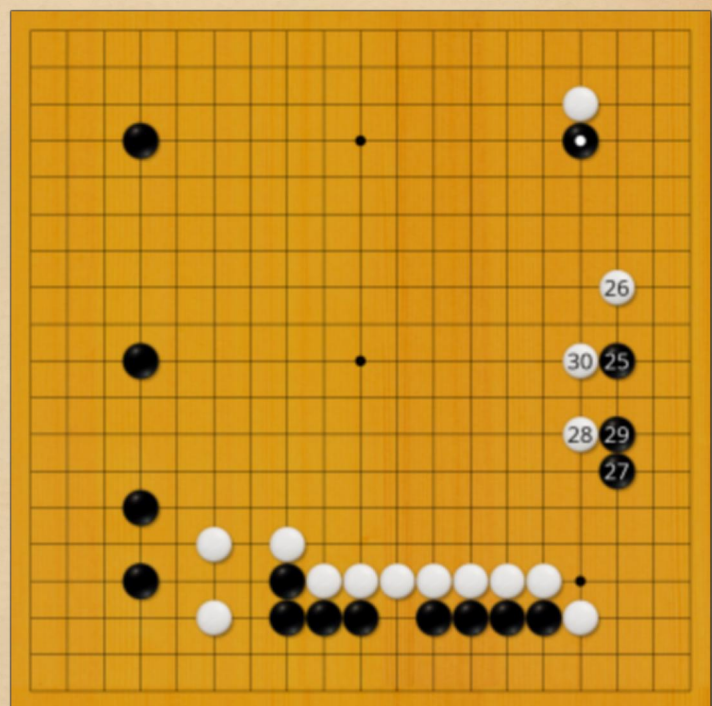
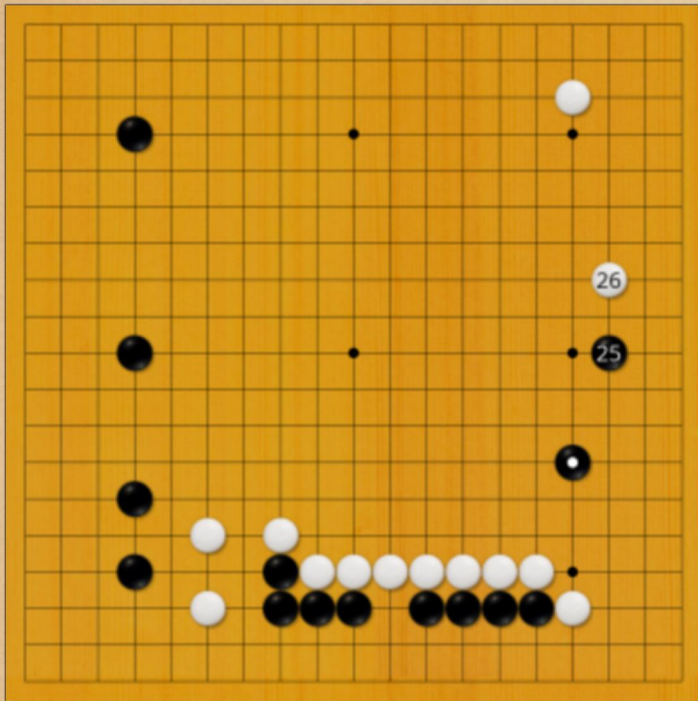


Diagram 4





### Diagram 5

Playing a bit more flexible with a high move at 27 in Dia.5 is another fashion.

This way it is unquestionably harder for white to press black down. But on the other hand, black might have more weaknesses.

After the cut at 25 in Dia.6, white extended at 26 to protect the corner, before he sacrifices it in a nice way with 28, this is the new idea.

White's corner stones must feel quite confused, they just got extended with the hope to make life and then suddenly they got sacrificed. However, sacrificing few stones in the corner, was the intention of my opponent since the very beginning, he wanted to get full outside influence, as more as possible.

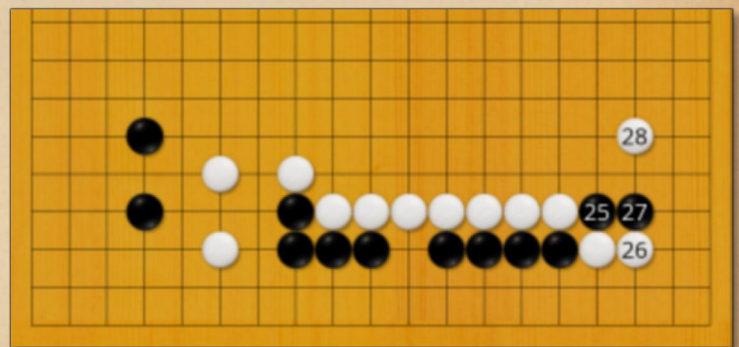


Diagram 6

The usual joseki which many professionals might suggest in this position, is to play hane at 28 in Dia.7 in order to protect the corner. Afterwards, white can decide whether to fight at B or to protect the corner at immediately at A and to give black a move outside comfortably.

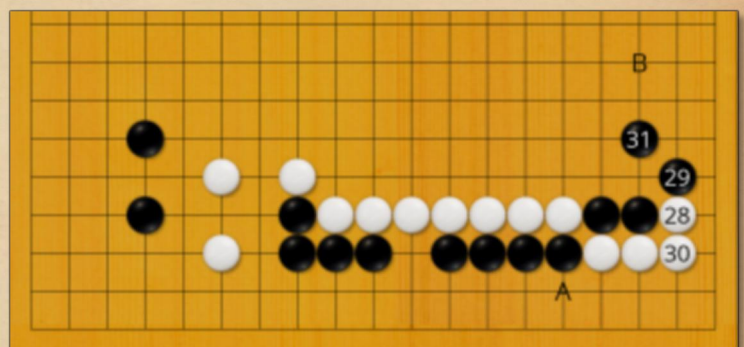


Diagram 7



Playing at 30 in Dia.8, was a bit too direct and it let black capture the two stones of white in the corner too easy with 31. It could be better if white played hane at A, in order to make it harder for black to capture the stones. When one is willing to sacrifice his stones, he should not be afraid to enlarge the amount of stones by few. Specially if that will make him stronger outside.

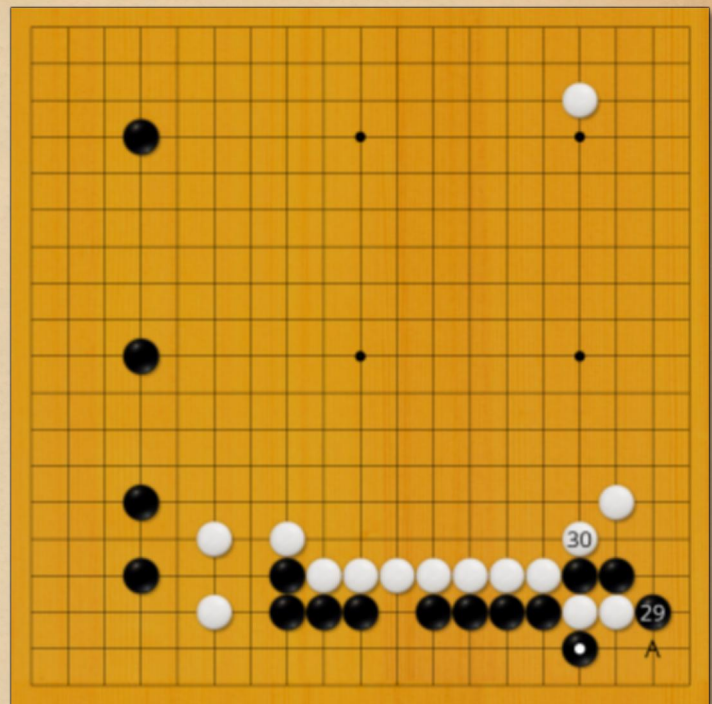


Diagram 8

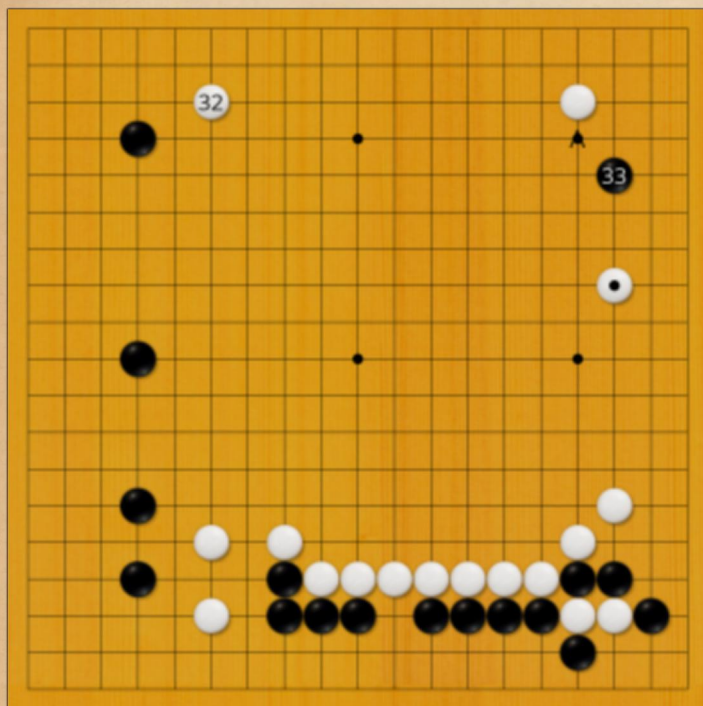


Diagram 9

When approaching at 32 in Dia.9, my opponent was seeking to add another move on the right side to enlarge his framework. By doing this, he could force me to invade and that could help him to use his wall. That's why I did not respond to his approach, but instead I approached back at 33. I expected the pincer at 34 and had a counter move prepared against it.

How would you answer?



I played the move at Dia.10 looking forward to press at A or to press at B.

Also, making good shape with C is option.

As we know, it is always good if the move has two purposes, same as the move in the game. Seems like my opponent did not expect it.

Rather, he expected me to play at A and to fight.

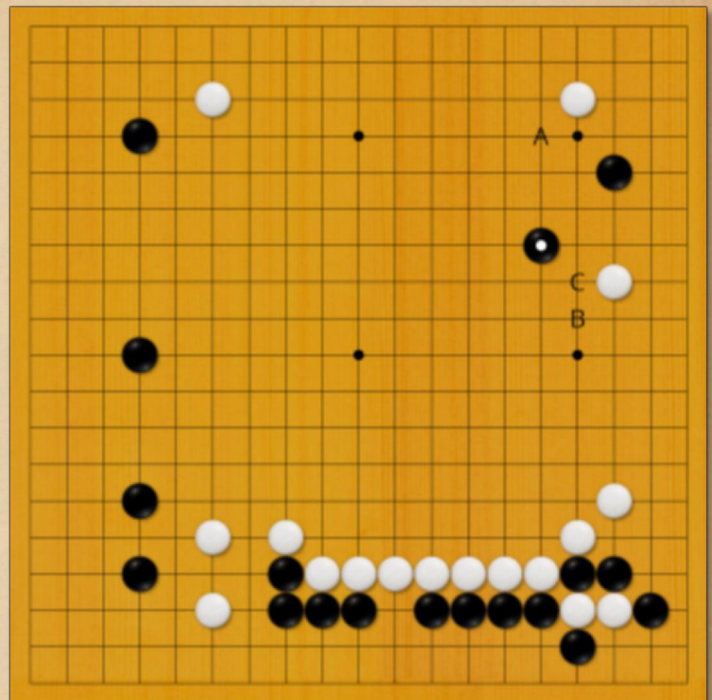


Diagram 10

Possible outcome after my move is the variation in Dia.11. Which shows that after white plays kosumi at 36, black takes the second vital point at 37 aiming to make good shape with 38. White cannot let black do that, so white takes it himself with 38, followed by black making shape at 39. After exchanges at 43-44, black takes the hane at 45 and a fight starts, jumping at A is another option.

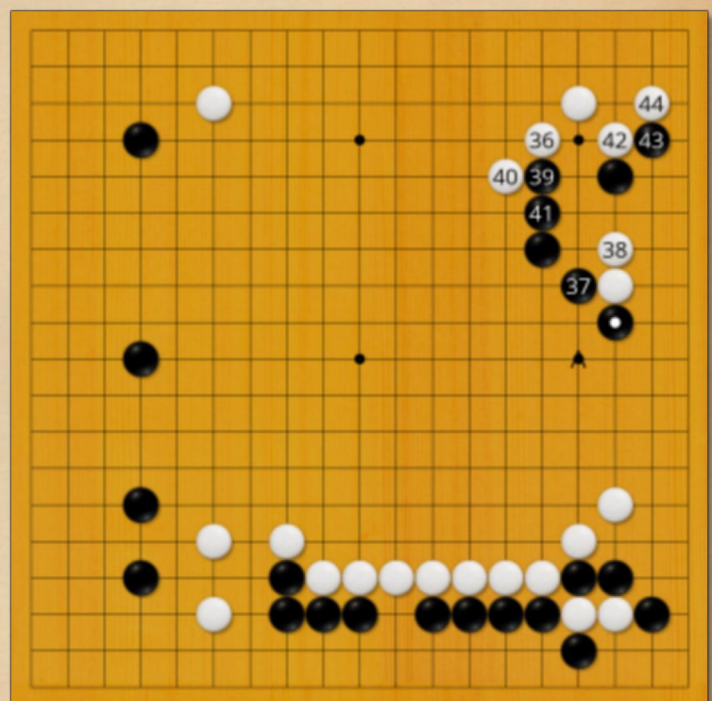


Diagram 11



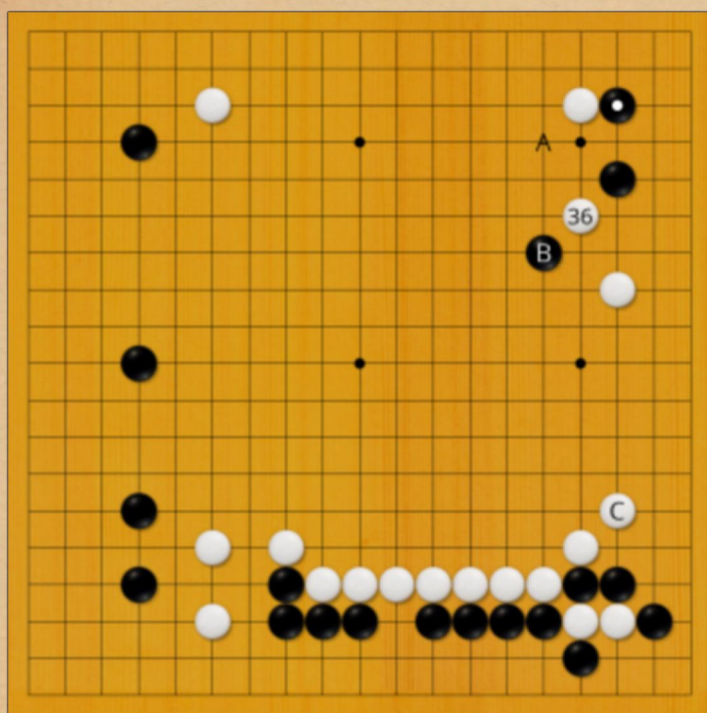


Diagram 12

White played at 36 in Dia.12 instead of A, which is not a good answer, but my answer was more tragic than his. I played at 37 which has nothing to do with my strategy at the very beginning with B. Even though my response made the game slightly better for him, it was very interesting to see the creative moves B and C being played.

To press white with 37 in Dia.13 is normal and then after 39, white has no choice but to jump at A. For white to cut at C, instead of 38 is unreasonable. We can see that black easily make shape with B. The development is rather easy for black and white wall will not be very efficient this way since black is solid.

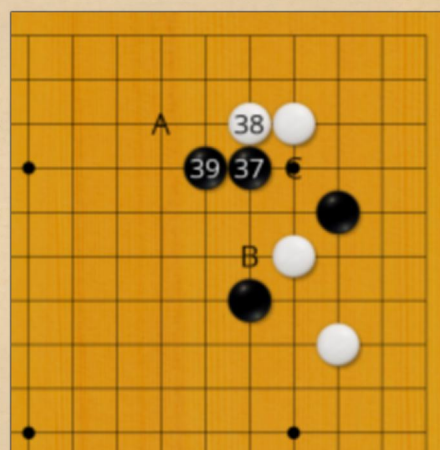


Diagram 13

For white to cut the stone at A with 38 in Dia.14 is unreasonable and black can capture the stone with the sequence up to 43. This could be disaster.



Diagram 14



## The path of least resistance is the path of the loser

Studying professional games is another very good way to improve at Go, although it might not be very valuable for beginners, because some moves could be very hard to understand. The strategy is at very high level as well, so that dan players cannot understand many things as well, but we can say that their interpretation about the moves is quite good.

Sometimes I am wondering if the players actually understand the game that they play themselves.

Even though studying in the Go school contains mostly playing, reviewing and tsumego practice. I also like to study professional games. Replaying as many games as possible on real board, till the moment your fingers start to feel where the next move should be.

The following game is between Nie Weiping 9 dan professional taking white and Li Jie 5 dan professional, played on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2007 at the event 20th Chinese Mingren.

In the school, there are small books with printed professional games played in the past few months. Kids very often get these books and relay professional games on the board, some of them even relay it on the computer, to analyze them with Lizzie - Leela Zero.

I enjoy watching old masters playing more than modern professional games, it somehow feels that nowadays the games are mostly like tsumego. Even though that this game is not old at all, it brought a very good strategical example.

Black just attached with 1 on the lower side in Dia.1, looking forward to take some cash.

How would you respond to this move?



Diagram 1



How many of you would just play at 1 in Dia.2 and give black the opportunity to pull back at 2 happily?

That is why this position of the board reminds me of the quote :  
 “The path of least resistance is the path of the loser.” - H. G. Wells

The game of Go is full of negotiations, many situations like this one appear, and one should never give the opponent that what he does not deserve. When black pulls back at 2, white's shape has a problem at B and black defended the area of A easily.



Diagram 2

Nie Weiping resisted and played the attachment at 1 in Dia.3, very good counterattack. If some of you are curious and wondering if AI would play the same move, then the answer is - yes. According to Leela, the attachment is a good technique, however, it takes some time for the AI to find it. For black to respond at A is the most active response, but it is not necessarily the best move. It is not easy at all to answer this move.

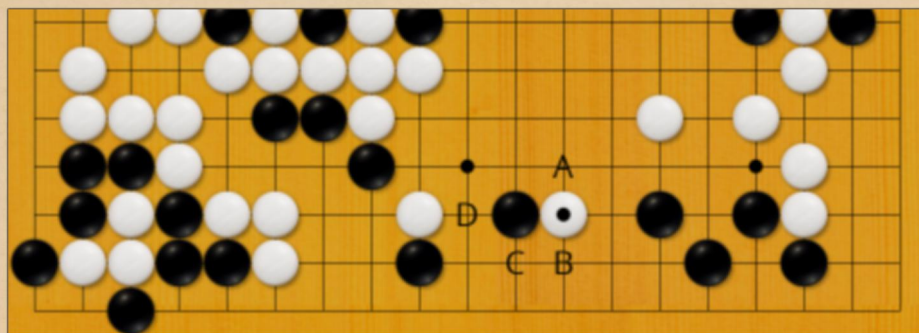


Diagram 3



To answer underneath with 1 in Dia.4 could be the most passive way to play.

The reason for this is that white will get opportunity to cover outside with moves to 4 and then go back with 6.

Even though the game was very close before this, now white's lead is ensured.



Diagram 4

The most active way is to play hane outside, but that would not differ much from the previous diagram.

After the push at 2 in Dia.5, white atari at 4 and takes outside with 6 and 8 threatening to reduce the territory of black with 9. Black defends at 9 and white goes black at 10.

The result of this sequence is worse than the result of playing passively.



Diagram 5



To respond at 1 in Dia.6 is wishful thinking and could be punished with bump at 2 destroying black's base.

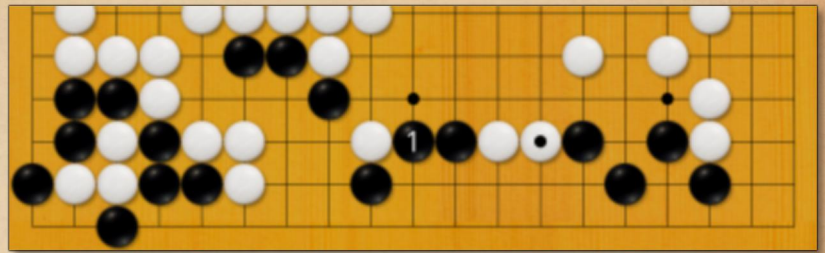


Diagram 6

In the actual game black played the extension down in Dia.7, which might seem equally passive and active. White defends at 2 and black draws back his stone and connects at 5.

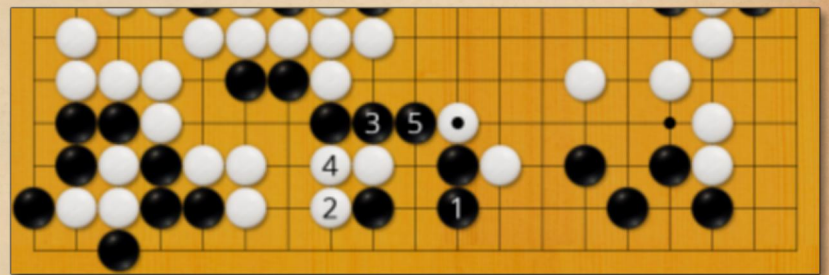


Diagram 7

However, the great master shows his abilities on harassing the opponents shape, by playing at 6. A very good technique.

In Dia.8 we can see the continuation of the game, where white captured one stone with 4, reduced a bit the lower side and gained sente to play the big move at 10 on the top side. Once again, if white didn't resist against black's attachment in the first place, nothing of this could have happened and most likely white would have lost the game.

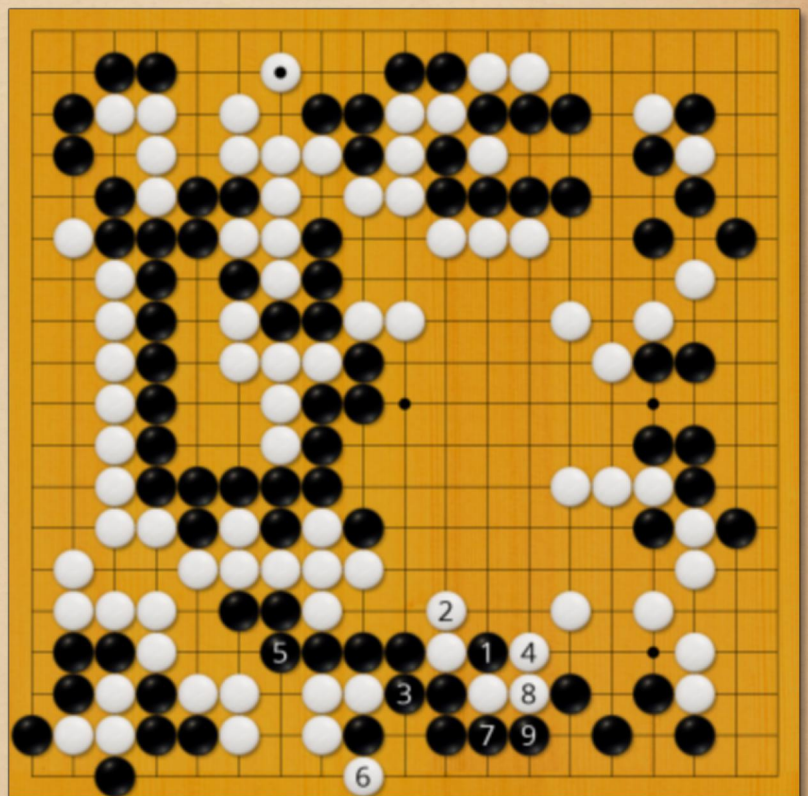


Diagram 8



## Flying against a natural disaster

It was the morning of the 13<sup>th</sup> September and it was time to travel to Huaian, which is located about 250 km to the northwest of Beijing, for a tournament. The amateur Chinese tournament was supposed to be from 14<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> September. We travelled by bus together with other 10 students from our school and arrived in Huaian in about five hours. At the same time, Anton was in Vladivostok at the Eastern Economic Forum Tournament. The population of the city is not much and it looks like a ghost town, because compared to the traffic in other cities this city had almost no traffic.



At the moment of arriving we gave our passports to check in at the hotel and visited our rooms. When we went to lunch at the hotel, I noticed that Mr. Wang, who was responsible for us, was standing and talking to the staff about my passport. They noticed something strange. I knew something was wrong and very soon after I knew the reason. My visa was not issued for 90 days, but only for one month.

Gabriel later described the situation in his articles to the European Go Federation with the words “ On the day that we arrived there were no tournament games. However, we were given a task completely different from all the tsumego training we did until now”

I knew how screwed I was and that my whole trip could end quickly. There was not enough time to extend the visa, because I literally had to leave China in two days. After lunch we went back to the rooms. Gabriel and Stanislaw came to my room with Oscar to help me find a solution. At some point I was sure that I would have to return to Bulgaria, which could be unfortunate. It was my mistake not to check my visa when I received it. Later I understood that although I had applied for 90 days, the Chinese Embassy only allowed one month due to the type of the letter of invitation. Although I check my documents again and again, this time I didn't do it for the most important one - the visa. We checked all the options, calculating how much money could be to go back to Bulgaria, to make new visa and a moment before we decided that I have to go back to Bulgaria, we found that Chinese visa can be issued in Hong Kong as well. It was decided that my only option will be to fly to Hong Kong.



The plan involved flying against Manghkut typhoon, to make my adventure even more interesting.

I didn't have enough money to cover everything, so Stanislaw helped me a lot and I paid him later.

The next morning I went back to Beijing by train with Mr. Wang and my flight was scheduled for September 15 at 20:10. It was my last day with a valid visa. I talked to Young Sam Kim in search of help, the main teacher at the Jena International Go School in Germany.

He contacted a friend of him, Kanno Hiroki, who lives and teaches in Hong Kong, to help me regarding the visa. I got an invitation letter from the school and it was time to fly. It happened that all flights arriving in Hong Kong after 23:00 were cancelled as far as I knew. Since it was written on my ticket that we had to arrive around 23:50 o'clock, I wondered if my flight would also be cancelled.

It was not cancelled and everything went well, I arrived a little earlier in Hong Kong and could take a taxi to the hostel.



As expected the taxi driver overcharged me and we literally almost got hit into a truck, due to the negligence of the driver. The Manghkut typhoon was breathtaking and the Hong Kong authorities gave a signal 10, which is the strongest possible storm warning.





When the typhoon was over and I could meet Hiroki, we solved the visa problem and he showed me the Hong Kong Go Association.

I was amazed at the city, how quickly it could recover and how people on the streets helped.

I would say if something like this happened in my village, it would take much more time to restore everything. At the Hong Kong Go Association, I had time to self study and enjoy the beautiful boards and stones.

Hiroki showed me some traditional Hong Kong food and made sure that everything is going well.

While being at the Hong Kong Go Association I even met a little kid who just learned how to play and we played a teaching game. I simply adore the quote: “The soul is healed by being with children.” - Fyodor Dostoevsky

After a week of adventure in Hong Kong trying to save my China dream, the visa problem was solved and I had nice time there thanks to the people who helped me.

I have also thought about how high the price of a dream is and how many are actually willing to pay the price. If not following your dream will kill part of you for the rest of your life, then in a way, isn't it better to die for your dream by following it?





## Shocking AlphaGo suggestions!

During the storm I had plenty of time to study Go and I studied AlphaGo variations with DeepMind's teaching tool.

I'll show you the most shocking ones to me, and I hope that the reader will like AI sensei's flexibility and creativity.

On Diagram 1, you can see normal approach and pincer where black approaches back and it is white's turn to play either modern variation with keima at A or to attach ordinary at B.

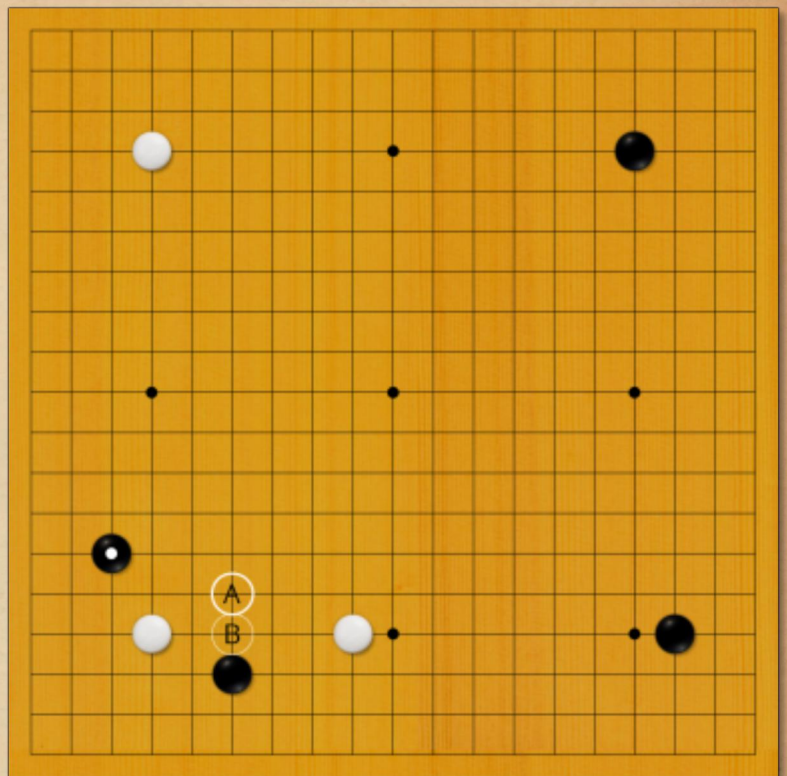


Diagram 1

We will check them both because they each have something fantastic. White keima on Dia.2 could normally be answered by invasion at san-san with A, but AlphaGo played the other marked move that is hard to understand for me, but surely it is certainly beautiful to observe.

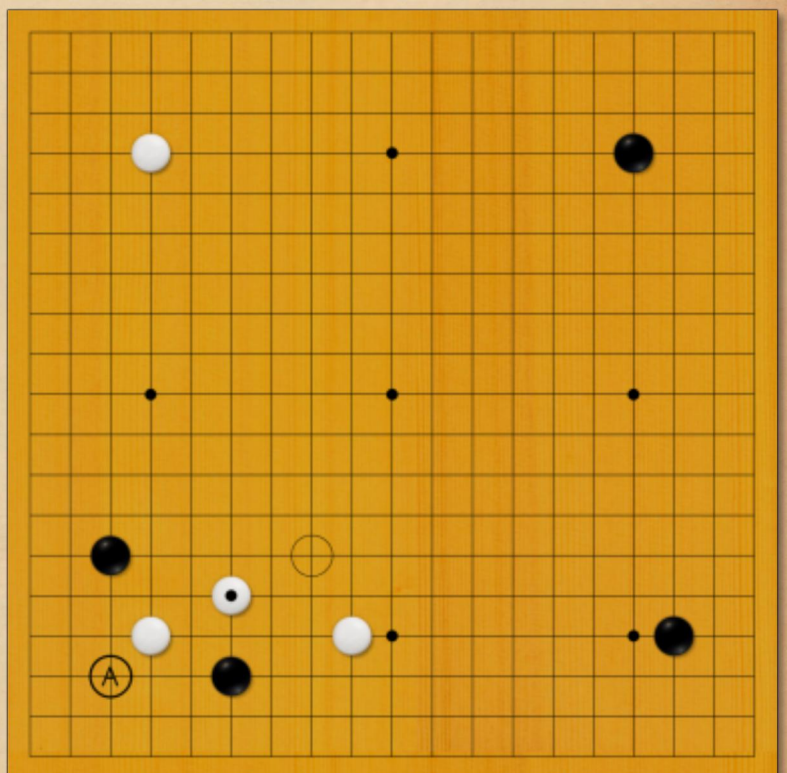


Diagram 2



From what I have seen in professional games online, normally black invades at the san-san and after white extends at 4, black defends his shape with kosumi which is the last move in Diagram 3.

However, this is far from what AlphaGo thinks on the situation, there is something much deeper, which I cannot understand still.

When we get shape like this, where black takes the corner and white takes something on the side, black has to know how he will use the lonely stone later.

This is my interpretation on the AlphaGo move showed in Diagram 4, I think exactly because it is very hard to know how will a stone be used later, AlphaGo wants to make an exchange and see how will white answer. For example if white plays passively and just takes the stone, black will totally sacrifice it and get as much as he can outside.

Probably this is one of the reasons why white tenukied and he did not respond locally.

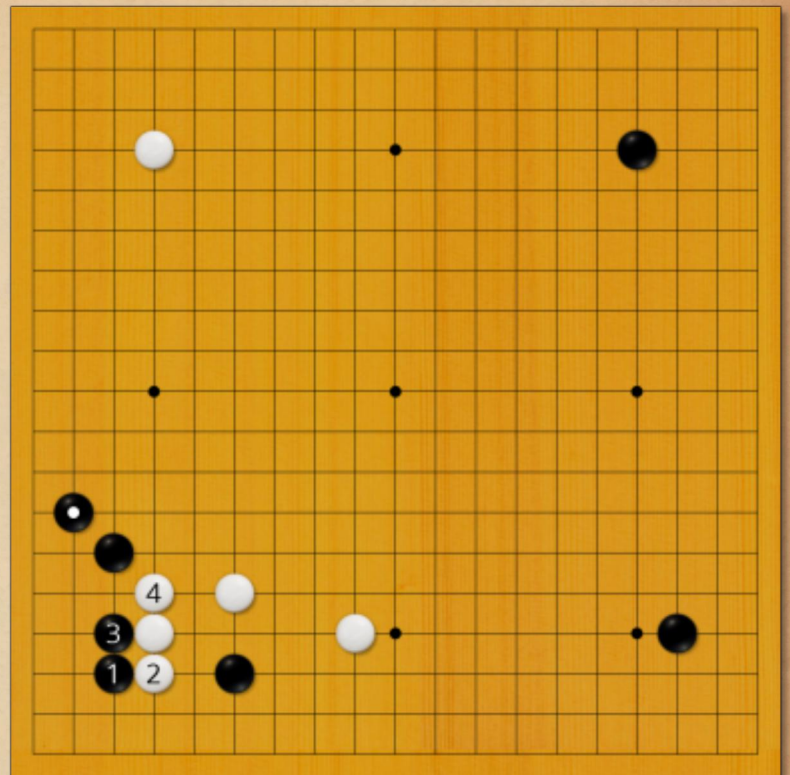


Diagram 3

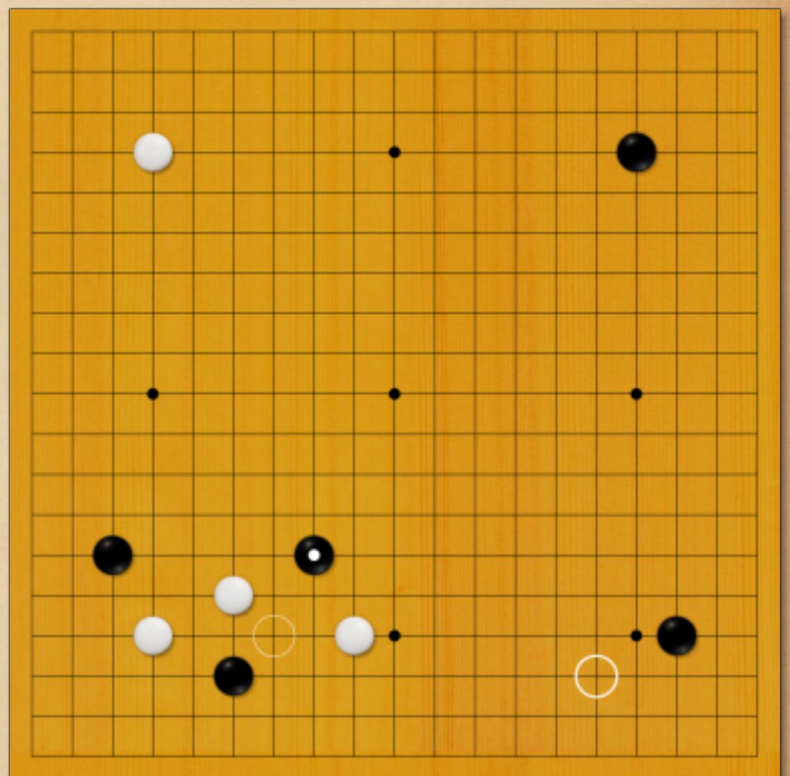


Diagram 4



The variation showed in Diagram 5 is the continuation according to AlphaGo teaching tool.

White does not answer locally, but approaches to which black immediately attaches at 2 and breaks through white's shape with 4, once white manages to defend his shape with 5, black plays on the right side.

As you can see, all of these AlphaGo variations are full of constant fighting and searching for the truth.

On Diagram 6, you can see that if white for example defends passively, black can take the corner and after 4, he might choose to even play tenuki, later it is possible to attach at A and make full use of the lower side stone. To me it seemed funny that the same move of AlphaGo can be played after 4 in Diagram 7, at this timing it seems even more weird. I am looking forward to try this move one day in my games, unfortunately I did not get a chance to play this in China..

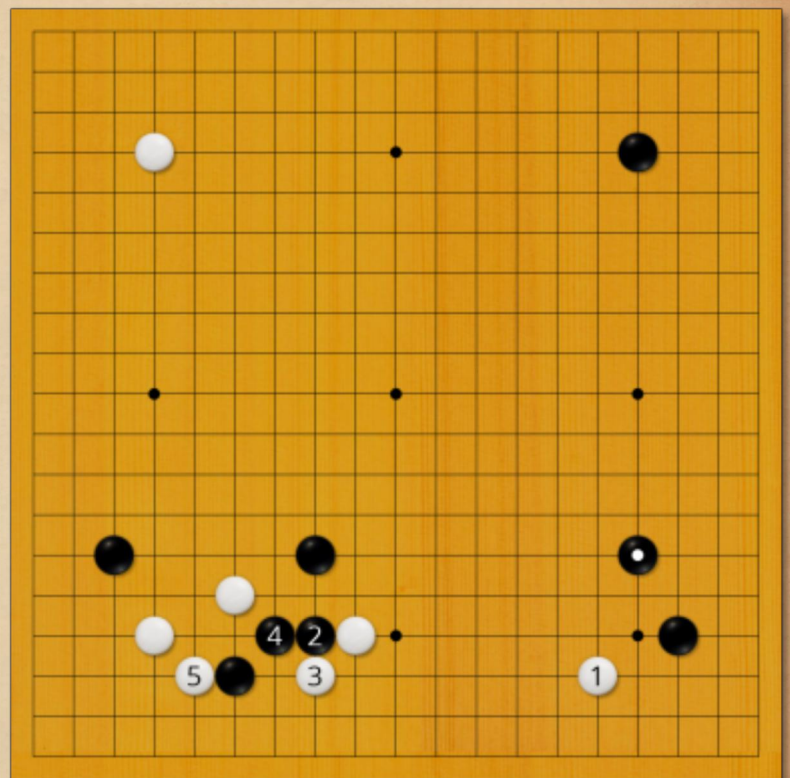


Diagram 5

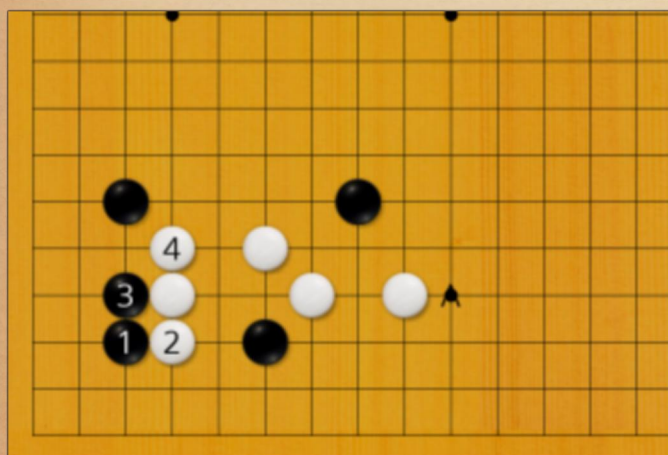


Diagram 6

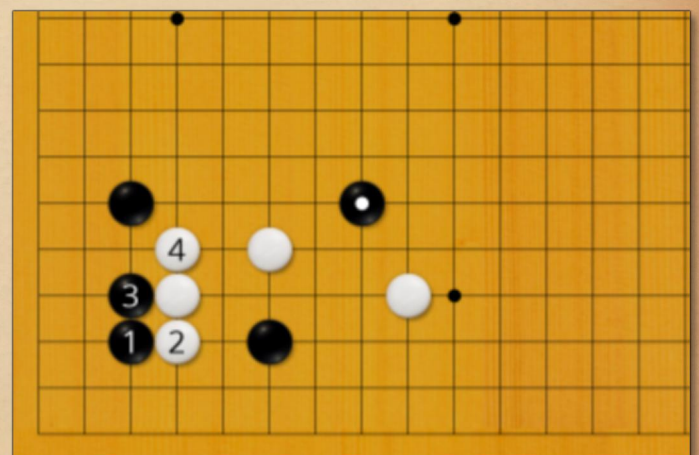


Diagram 7



Nowadays, it is more popular to play A rather than B in Diagram 8, however, my interest was into exploring B and the differences between humans and AI started to show up very quickly.

After white blocks at 4 in Diagram 9, black pushes at 5 which is pretty much normal, otherwise white can cover. White attachment is the last move and now AlphaGo prefers to play B rather than A which was unexpected to me.

According to Waltheri database, in the professional scene, A happened about 232 times while B only 6 times. Very interesting indeed !

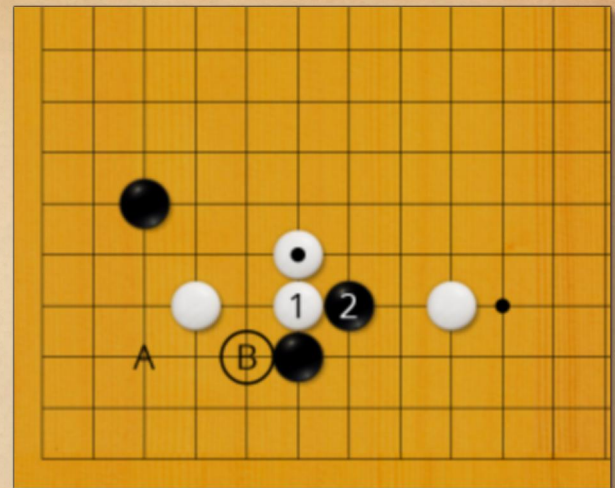


Diagram 8

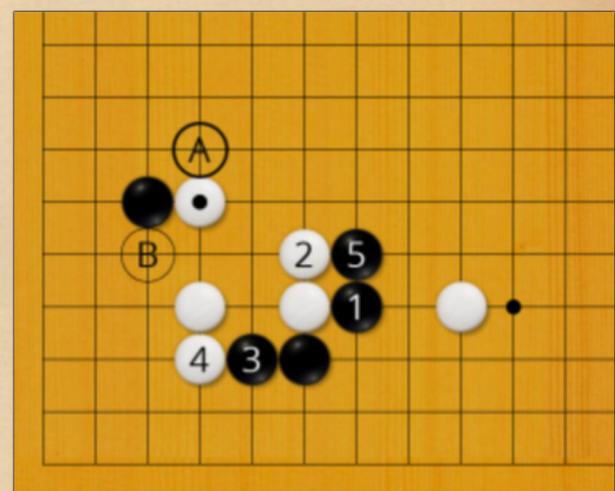


Diagram 9

### Matching games

Displaying 50 occurrences from 248 games

Black	White	Year
Yu Zhiming	Su Shengfang	2012
Hu Yaoyu	Wong Yukui	2009
Tao Xiaran	Zheng Huijiao	2012
Cho Hanseung	Kang Donggun	2009
Han Sanghoon	Woon Seongjin	2009
Li He	Park Shikun	2009
Han Han	Rui Naimai	2012
Park Jinsol	Cho Hushyun	2012
Chang Hao	Peng Lijiao	2009
Yamashiro Hiroshi	Cho Chikun	2012
Kim Yoseonyoung	Kim Jooyeon	2008

Select any game above to view it.

### Search control:

Selection:   Search in:

### Found continuations

78,642 pro games searched in 6.57 s

	Number of games	Winning ratio (%)
1	232 (0.1%)	56
2	6 (0.0%)	60
3	2 (0.0%)	0
4	1 (0.0%)	100

☐ Lost games 
 ☒ Won games 
 ☐ Unknown result

180  
120  
90

[Donate](#)



After black extension in Diagram 10, which to me looked a bit unusual, it is important to notice, that white will not connect at A according to AI, as humans have done.

When white connects at 2 and black jumps to the side in Diagram 11, we can see that white group is not really comfortable, we can say that black gained in this variation and the strength of white stones is not quite good. This is the reason why AlphaGo plays the jump at B in Diagram 10.

Diagram 12 illustrates a sacrifice strategy and a very complicated sequence by AlphaGo.

White jumps at 16 and black wedges at 17, with no hesitation white answers at 18 and black brakes through white's shape with 19. White gets to capture at 20, but black cuts at 21, after 22 white's shape is very comfortable. Also, because of black's weaknesses, white's stones are quite safe. Black has to sacrifice his three stones and to play 25-27. These three black stones still have some aji, which can later be used. However, now white can play tenuki and be fast.

A very complicated sequence and hard to judge who is better.

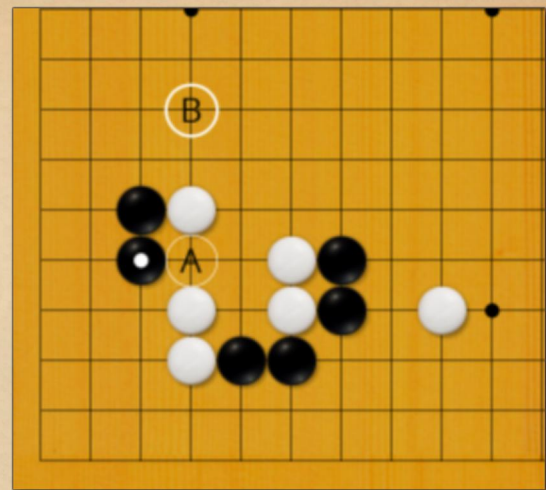


Diagram 10

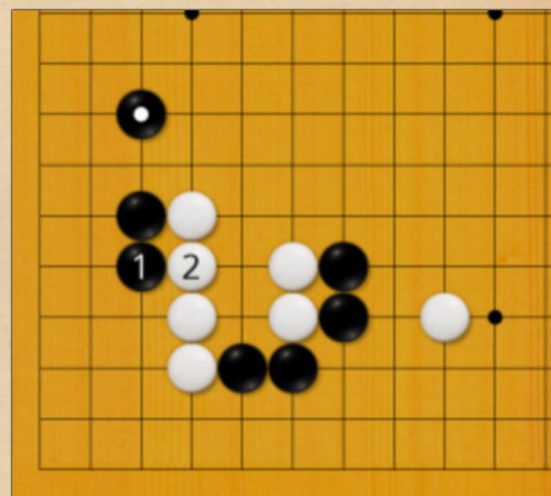


Diagram 11

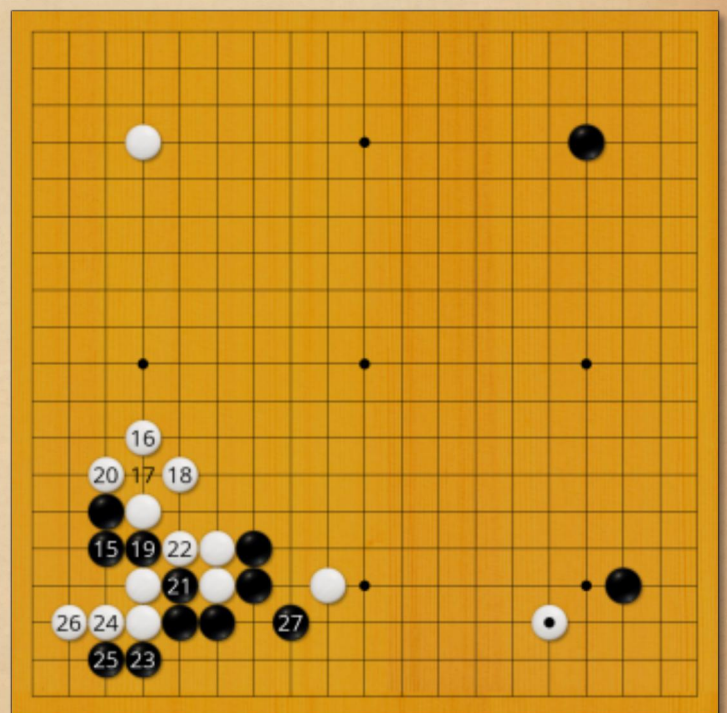


Diagram 12



Once black play this normal hane in Diagram 13, I was completely surprised to see that move B is better than move A according to AI, while for humans this is totally the other way.

For AlphaGo A gives black 46,2 %, while B only 42,6.

To me it is really hard to understand this suggestion by AI. The reason why we do not play A, is simply because it is really passive, it feels like we cannot let black get that beautiful atari at 2 showed in Diagram 14.

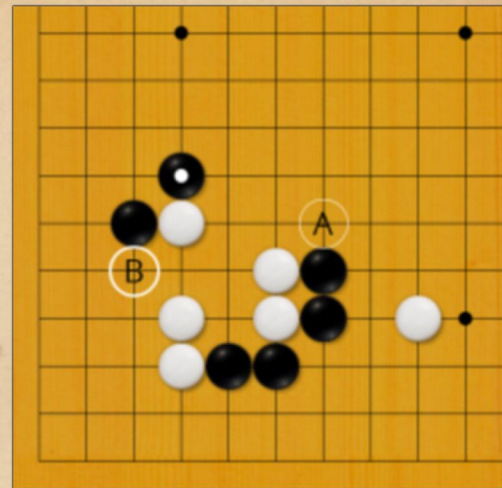


Diagram 13

White defends at 1, black atari at 2 and normally black would continue by playing at A in Diagram 14, however, AG plays corner enclosure. I would expect black to play extension at A in Dia.15 to strengthen his shape, but my guess is that white will peep at 2 and since the corner of white is completely strong, white can attach to black's komoku and get ahead in the game by being fast.

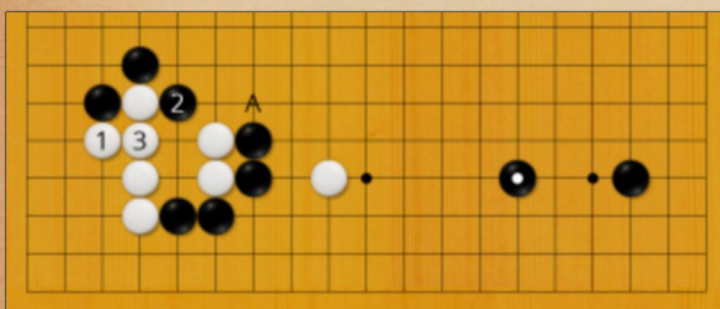


Diagram 14

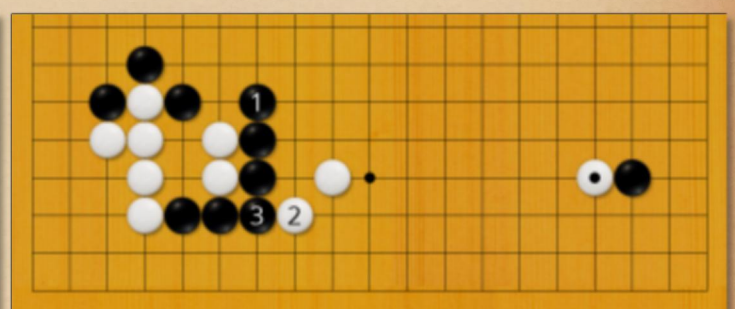


Diagram 15



On Dia.16 AG once again prefers to fight at A rather than playing B which you can meet mostly in your own games.

The sequence showed in Dia. 17 and continued in Dia.18 is very complicated and I barely understand it, however, it is just beautiful to watch it over and over again.

White cuts at 18 as expected and black protects his shape with 19 for which white puts full pressure on the stones with a good shape move at 20. Black creates some weakness outside by exchanging 21 with 22 and then he comes back at 23 to make life locally, once he plays 25

he is aiming to capture white stones, so white makes awkward, but good shape with the last move in Dia. 17 (26 in Dia.18). Black extends down at 27 and if white do not defend his outside shape weakness, black will gain a lot, therefore white extends at 28 and black plays atari at 29 to completely dumb white shape and split white. Finally we can see that black defends his lower group with 35 and white is trying to put pressure either on the three black stones in the middle or to black's stones on left, we can say this is still fighting.

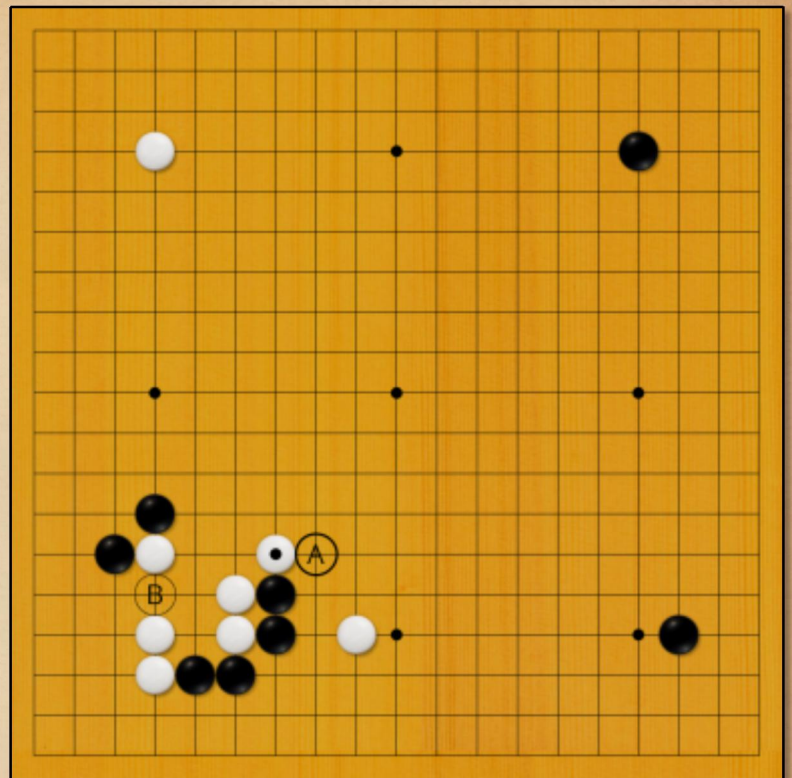


Diagram 16

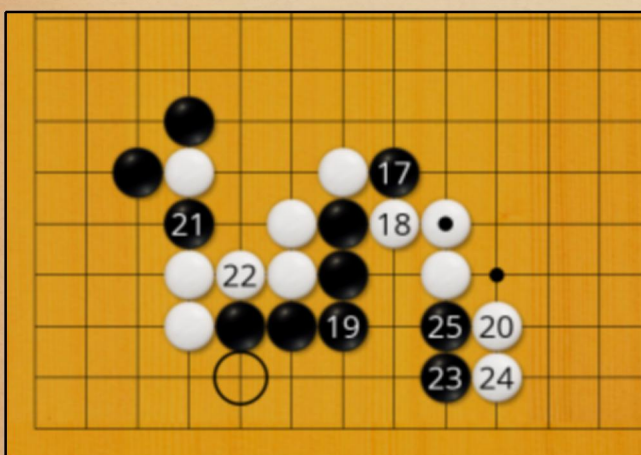


Diagram 17

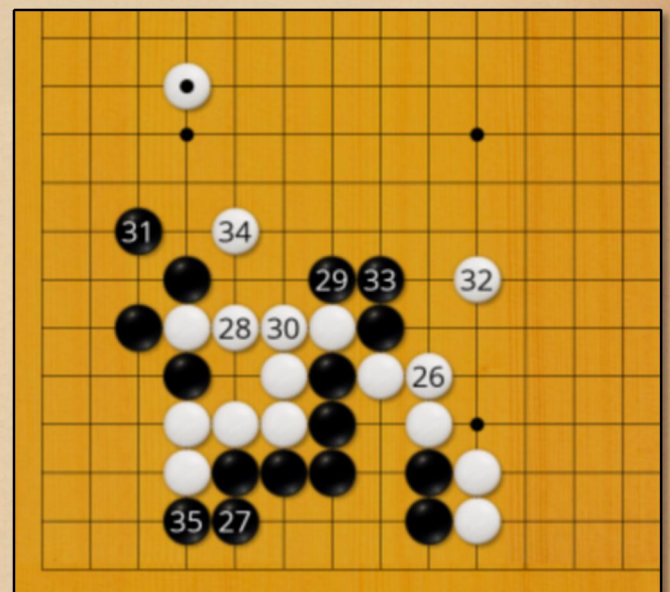


Diagram 18



The most popular variation showed in Dia.19 starting with black's atari at 1 and white connection also had one unexpected move. Whenever I play this, I would always without any hesitation play B, however, AG thinks that A is just better - interesting?

White would respond at 2 in Dia.20, because it is the vital point which black wants to take to settle his group and then black would go out to fight at 3 for which white would make a good shape at 4 and then after black tiger mouth at 5, white's atari at 6 is going to not get answered by connection, but by counterattack with atari.

Indeed very complicated, I bet the kids in the academy would like to play this variation because it involves a lot of fighting.

Diagram 21 shows another huge human mistake according to AG percentages at least.

The percentages below are for black.

A- 51,6

B- 43,2

Database of professional games shows that move A has been played about 150 times while B only 48 times.

Maybe we should consider B a lot more, but why should we?

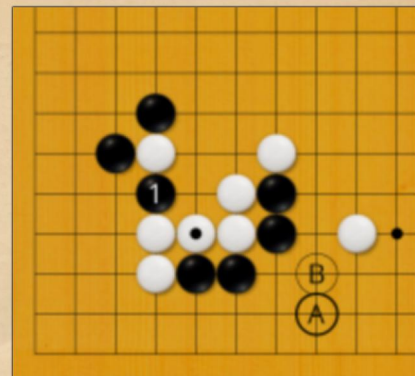


Diagram 19

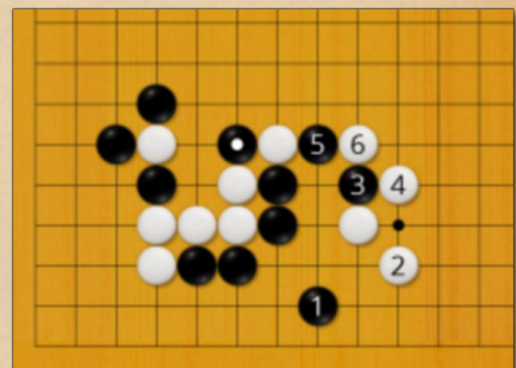


Diagram 20

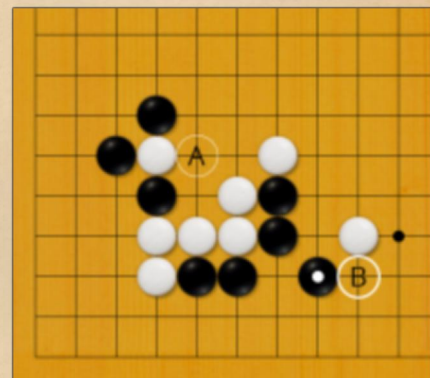


Diagram 21





It seems like as Dia.22 shows AG prefers to take the initiative on the lower side and to keep black's group not completely settled. The value on strength of stones of AI seems to be much higher than ours or at least in this case.

Black is forced to play the ugly shape move at 2 and then white saves his stone at 3. Black's move at 4 is very solid, such a bold move. Most importantly white gets to play on the lower right - approach. White has fast peace movement on the board.

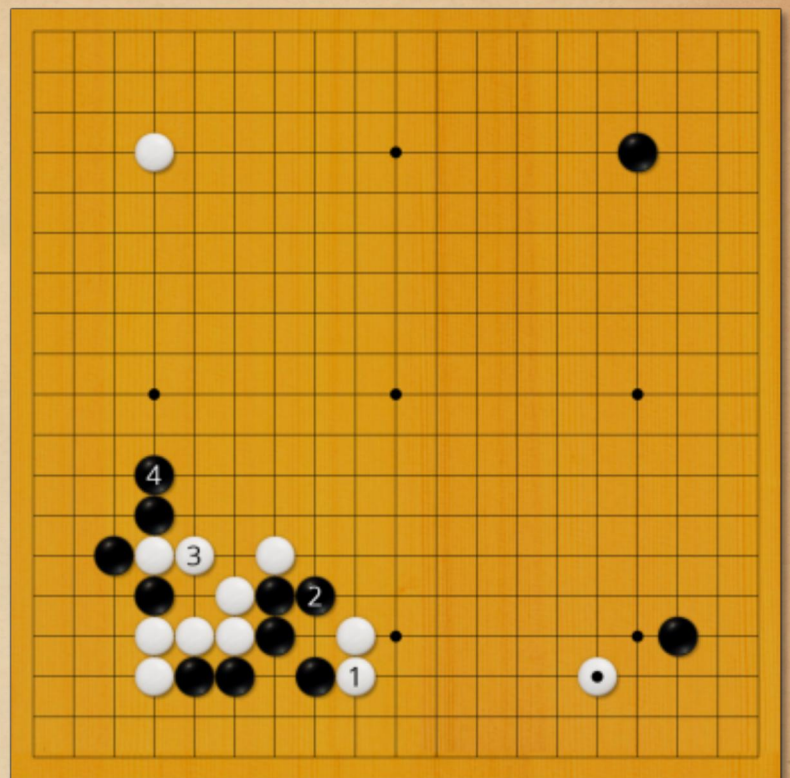


Diagram 22

Dia.23 on the other side shows what is most likely to happen in human game, black takes right side with 2 and gets to play hane at 4. Although black's stones on the left side gets cut, black can still use them later by playing any move at A or something else.

We could see that on Dia.23 black's lower right komoku is facing black's move 2-4, so most likely AI doesn't like to give black this comfortable development.

This is my interpretation and how I understand the position. Maybe one day we could know what AI is thinking about?

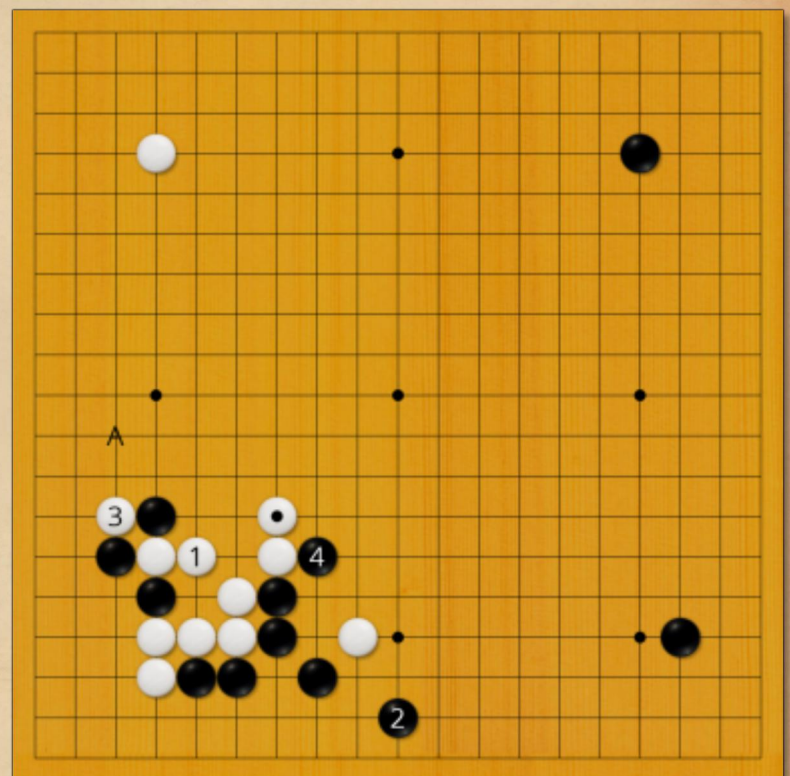


Diagram 23

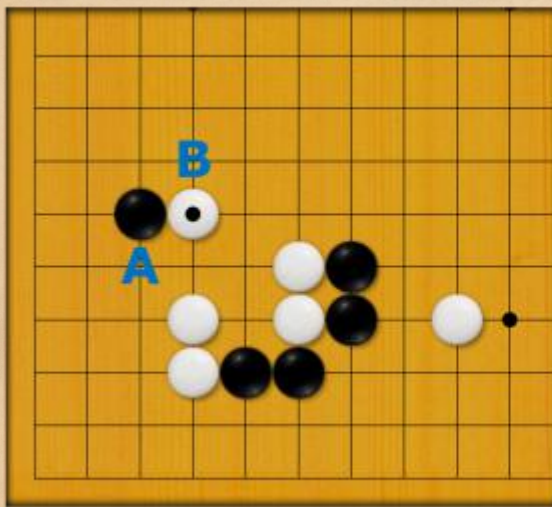


## Conclusion


The conclusion is that obviously it is really hard to understand all these moves which AlphaGo suggests, but it is good to try these moves few times and make your own interpretation on them. It is very unlikely that two players will see the same way the same position, so make your own interpretation and adapt it to your Go.

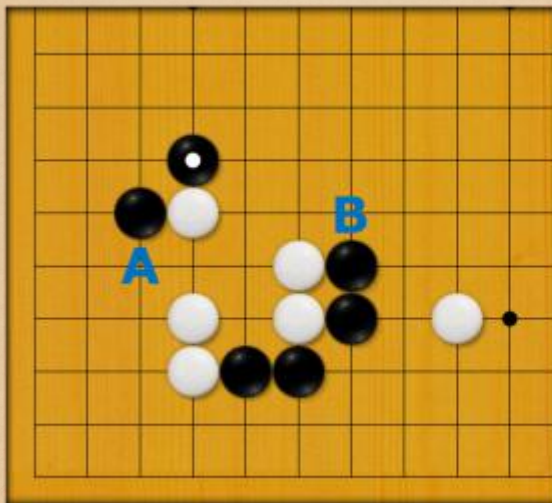
Overall, AlphaGo knows when to fight and when to defend shape a lot better than we do and it is possible that the huge difference in this normal joseki happened due to this.

Below all percentages are black's.




**A: 43,9**  AlphaGo

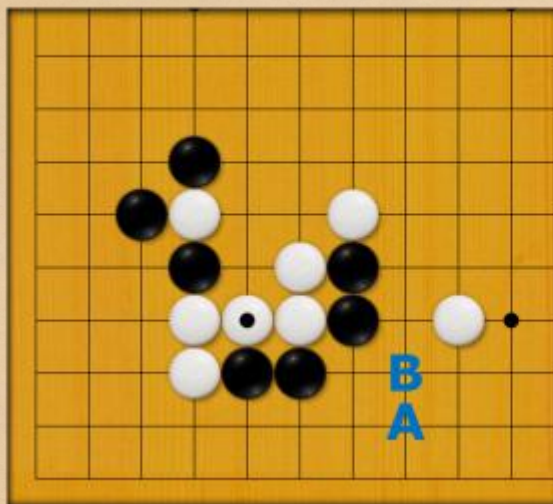
**B: 42,9** 




**A: 42,6**  AlphaGo

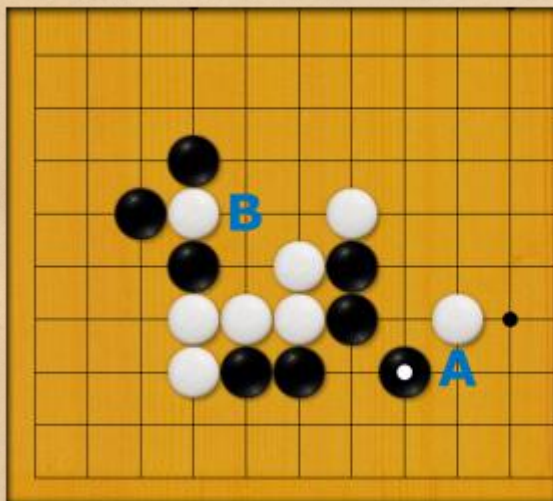
**B: 46,2** 






**A: 45,7**  AlphaGo

**B: 43,2** 



**A: 43,2**  AlphaGo

**B: 51,6** 

I appreciate a lot the time I had in Hong Kong and I think everything went really well and I even managed to continue studying Go there.

When I went back to Beijing, soon afterwards we had to go to extend my Visa, due to the length of it which I got in Hong Kong (30 days).

It was really kind of the Academy to help us and to find us a person who will get us there.

Gabriel also had to extend his Visa, so we went together with a woman chosen by the Academy or CEGO ( I do not know exactly).

She was waiting for us in the front of the school so we got in the car and she started driving. Her English was not bad at all, so we talked and she told us that she was in Europe several times and she even attended European Congresses. That was not the most amazing thing, trust me, more is coming.



We got stuck in a traffic and a road which on the way back was only 20 minutes, it became 2 hours and half.

We were talking and she asked us if we know WeiqiTV, to which we said definitely “yes”.

A moment later she mentioned Meng Tailing 6p, who is game commentator and a program host at WeiqiTV. Once again we agreed that we know him, personally I watched many of his lectures, although I do not understand Chinese, I do understand the language of Go, so I can understand what he is showing.

Additionally Viktor Lin 6 dan European translated some of his lectures in English, so I have seen them as well.

She smiled that we know him and she added: “He is my husband”

Yoah, imagine our reaction, we were both like: What? Really?

It was definitely unexpected.

We also asked if he is studying Go at home a lot, to which she said that they do not have board at home. We were speechless - he do not have board at home, he doesn't study at home at all ? ? ?

Sadly we couldn't manage to extend our Visas on that day, due to documents missing, so we did it on other day.

If my source is not wrong, this should be her on the left playing PairGo with her husband on the right side.



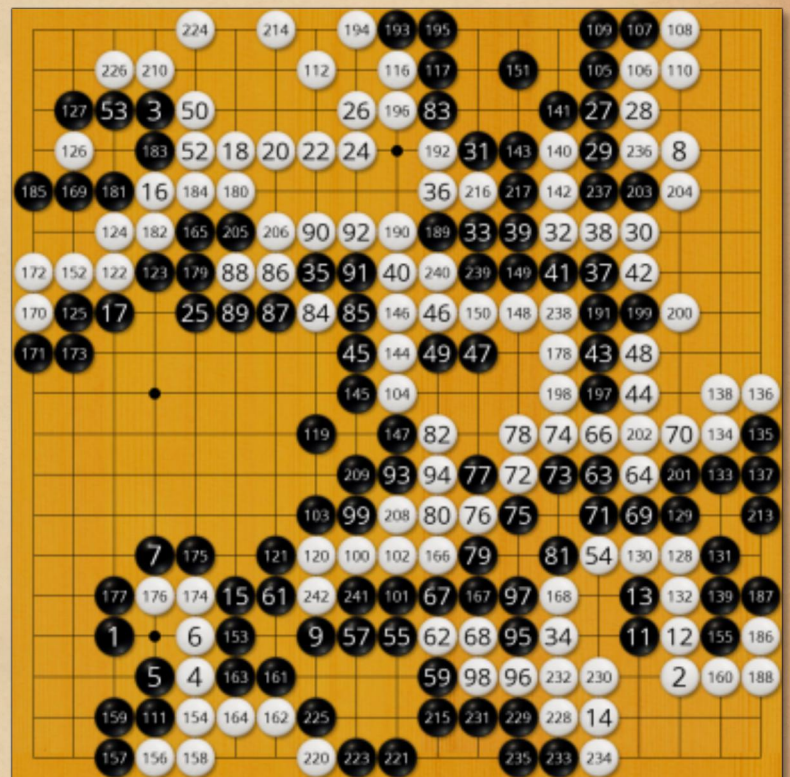


## Dominik's wonderful result in Professional League

Soon after I came back, Dominik managed to get into the professional league and although he dropped week later, he managed to win against a professional there which was amazing result.

This game was also very tremendous, because it had completely mindblowing exchange at the very end which did not change the result which was 0,5 !

It is great to see that studying in the Academy actually helps, by seeing such results.



Whole game

Let's see the most important points of this game.

Dominik playing white in this game started attacking black's group B on Dia.1 and black had to find a way to deal with the situation, however, he didn't manage to settle his group efficiently and let Dominik build big right side, which was success.

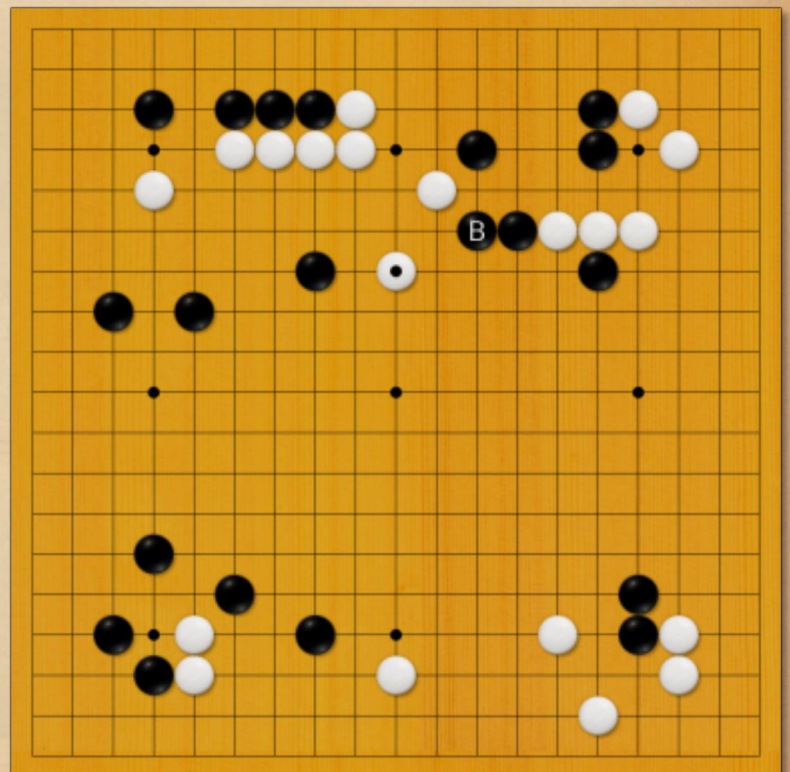


Diagram 1



Black simply played 1 in Dia.2 and let white get 2 and build right side with the last move. Black managed to successfully make white happy and get in the road of losing the game.

It is always better to find a move which accomplishes two things rather than one thing.

According to AI it is better to play more active at 1 in Dia.3. When white defends at 2, black can hane and atari at 5 and then cover, which looks a lot better than Dia.2 indeed. White cash on right side is non-existable at least.

My first instinct when I see the move at 1 is to immediately push at 2 without any hesitation, however, once black attaches in the corner, white is going to suffer a lot. Black's attachment in the corner is working only due to black's move at 1 outside.

This is very interesting example on how to be more effective when settling your group.

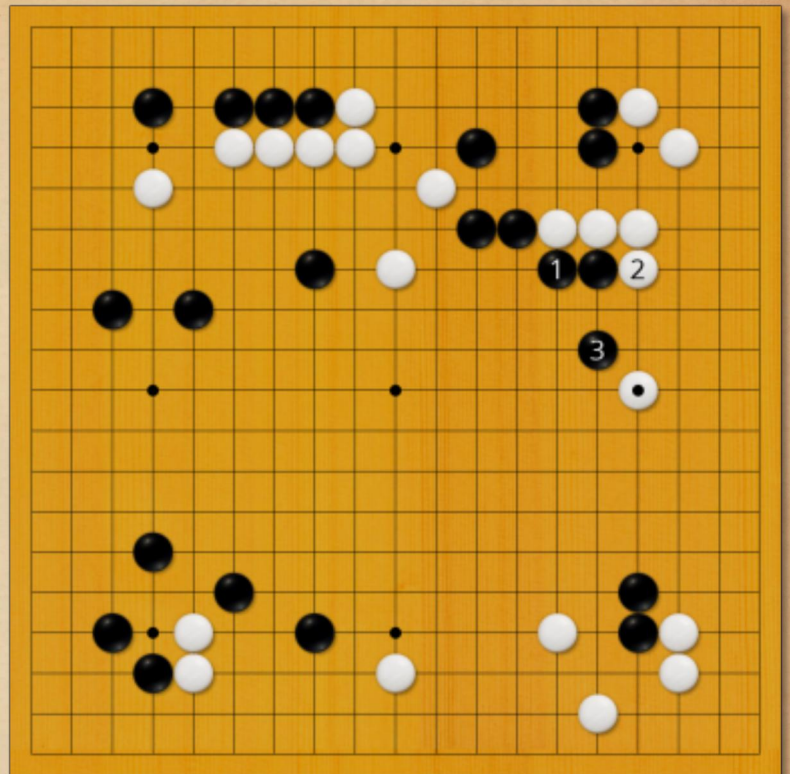


Diagram 2

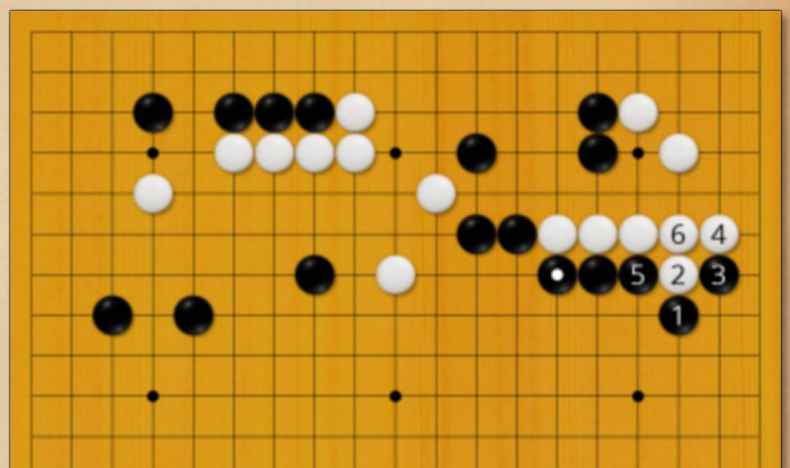


Diagram 3

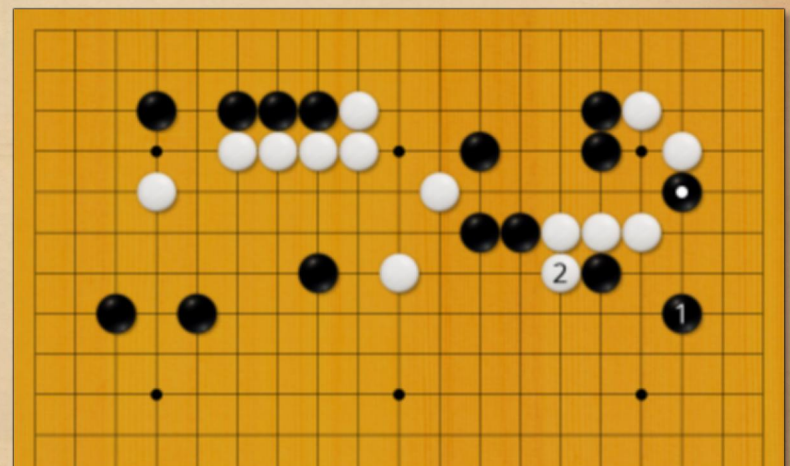


Diagram 4



Later on in the game when white already had this huge right side built. Black was building the center and he made a huge mistake.

On Dia.5 Black has to play extension at A, which is honte and to be expected, however, he played hane at B and Dominik punished him pretty well.

On Dia.6 you could see that Dominik exchanged 1-2 and then he cut black. The exchange of 1-2 is very significant and without it, white would have quite a bit of problems.

If white forgets to make the exchange and cuts immediately at 1 in Dia.7, we could see that black can double hane with 2-4(last move).

This mistake of black to play hane instead of extension cost him a lot of points and the game is clearly good for white at this moment. Black box is just not big enough.

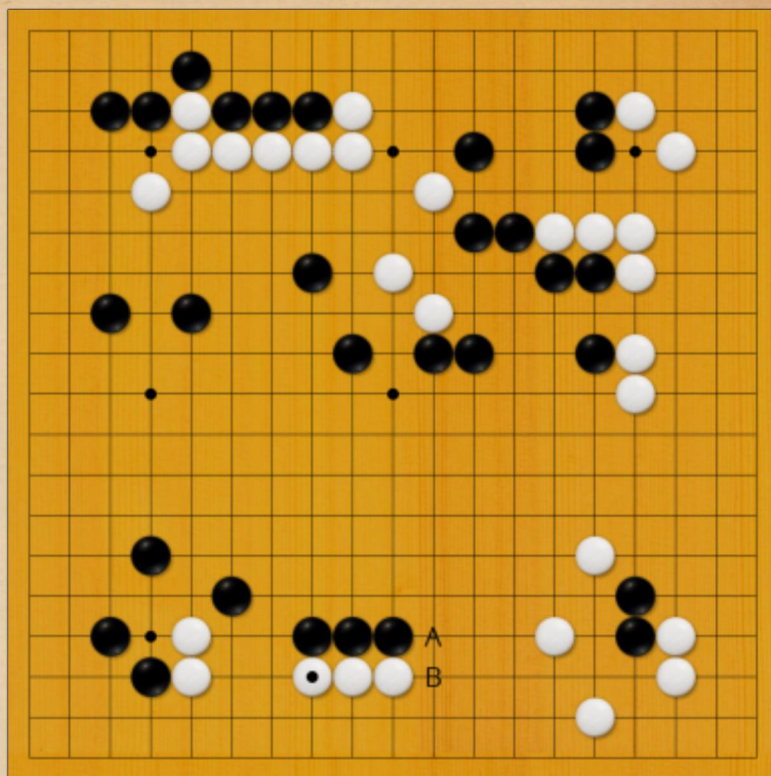


Diagram 5

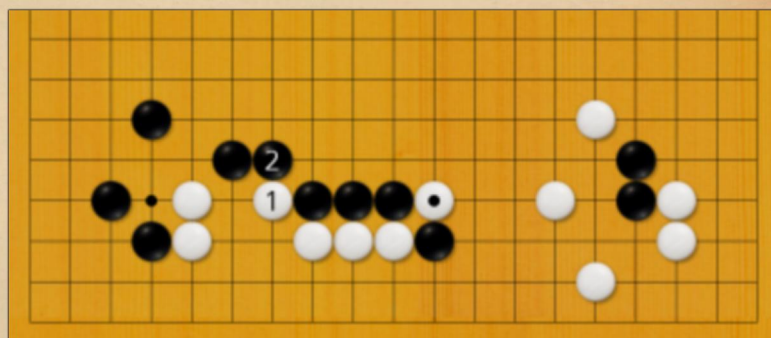


Diagram 6

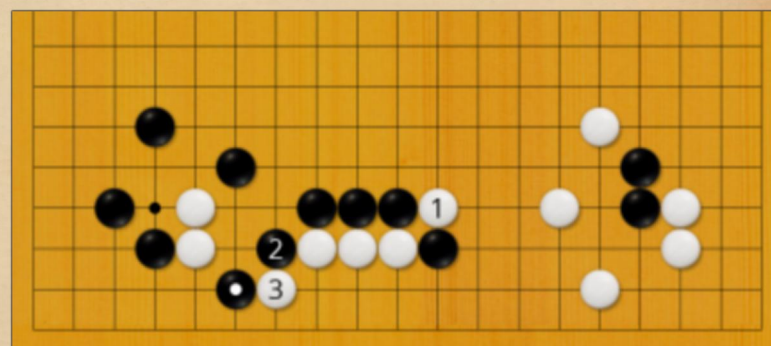


Diagram 7



At the very end of the game, it got very close and Dominik was winning by half a point, his opponent knew that and he tried to fight for the last one point by playing this move in Dia.8, which is making a ko for this huge top left territory, totally crazy !  
Very precise counting by his opponent.

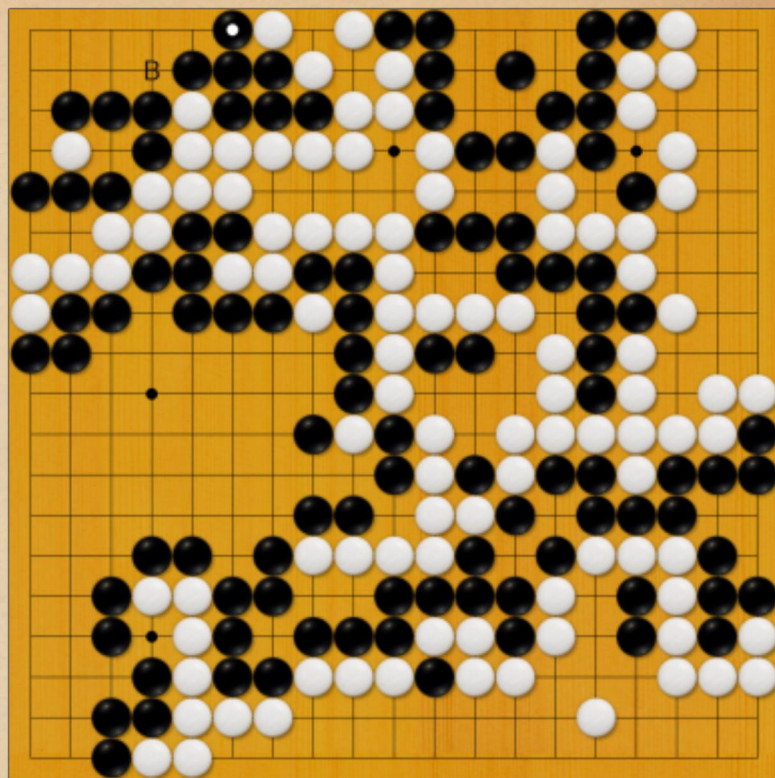


Diagram 8

They played the ko and they did huge exchange of territories as you can see top left corner which was black's became white's and lower side which was white's became black's. Totally insane and unbelievably at the end it was still 0,5 for white !

I am very happy for Dominik. This is very motivating for all of us indeed!



Diagram 9



## New move unseen in professional games !

Taking black in this league game I decided to try a new move which opponent of Stanislaw played against him.

I approached at 1 in Dia.1 and my opponent played pincer at 2, after I pincer back white can answer with A-B or C.

C is most popular move nowadays even though other two are also possible.

I cut at 1 in Diagram 2 and I extended at 3, this pattern arised after AlphaGo released it's own Zero games and people started studying them.

White atari at 4 and pushes down, now according to AlphaGo black should play the move at A which is normal and Leela Zero also thinks so.

However, once you play B, AI realizes that it is a better move than A, very interesting indeed. We would never know, but it is really possible that B was also blind spot move for AG?

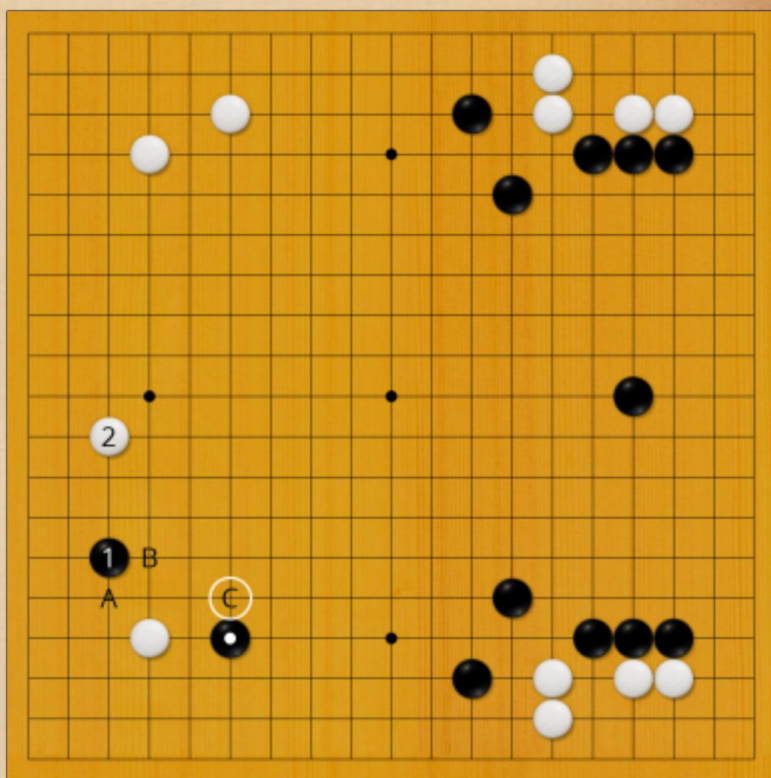


Diagram 1

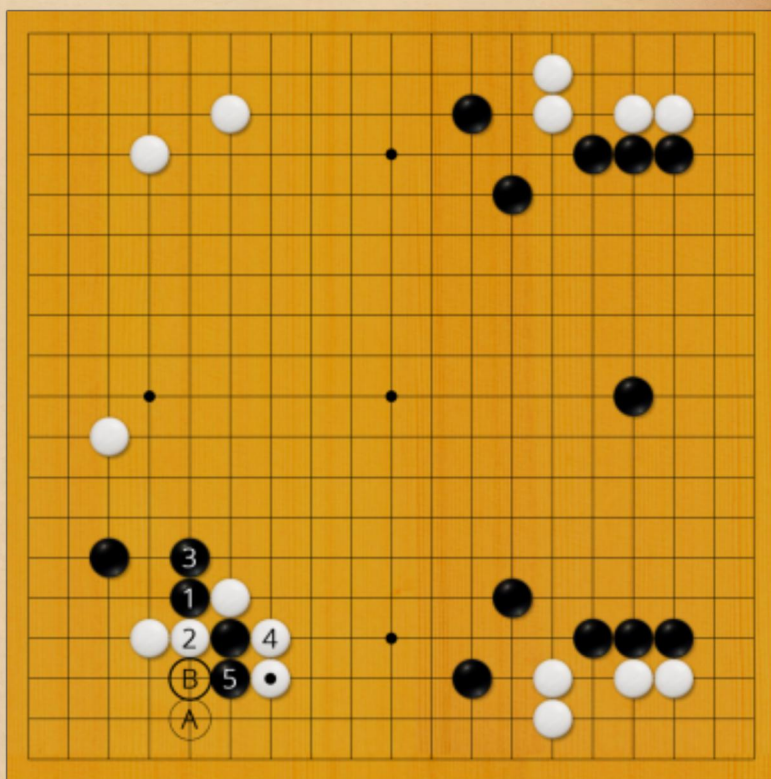


Diagram 2



Black's kosumi at 1 in Dia.3 is ordinary way to play and white extends at 2. B

Black attaches at 3 to get the corner in a good way and forces white to extend down until 6. Now white can either extend down or tenuki, I guess most likely white will add a move on the left side to make that one stone stronger, that would be natural.

I played the turn in Dia.4 and after white blocked, I played the hane at A.

To play hane at B first would be a huge mistake, since white will extend down at A and black will just die. White extends up and now it is time for black to take the move at B.

The sequence in Dia.5 happened and I got hane at 1 and white defended his corner with 4.

Instead of the last move, I could have also played hane, but it would have been too complicated and since

I was unsure what happens, I decided to extend.

Many times it is good to stick to something that you understand.

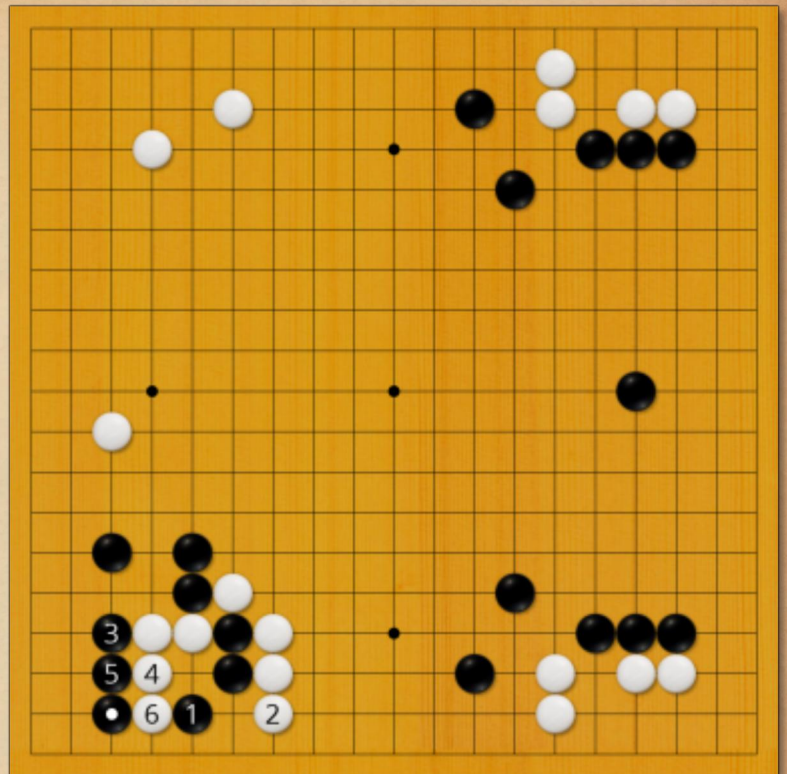


Diagram 3

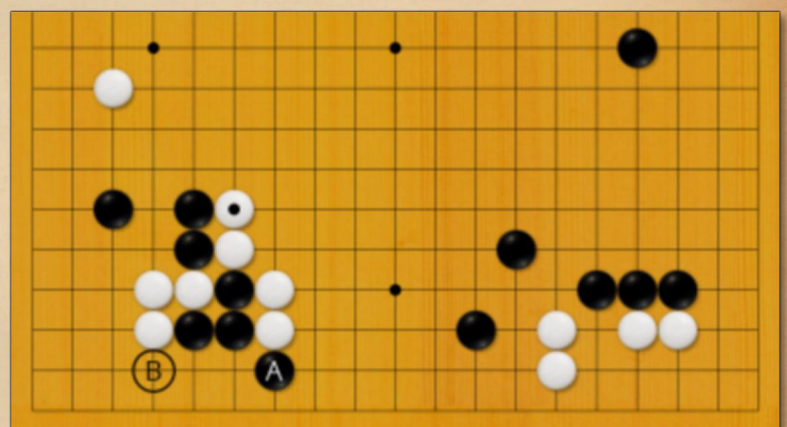


Diagram 4

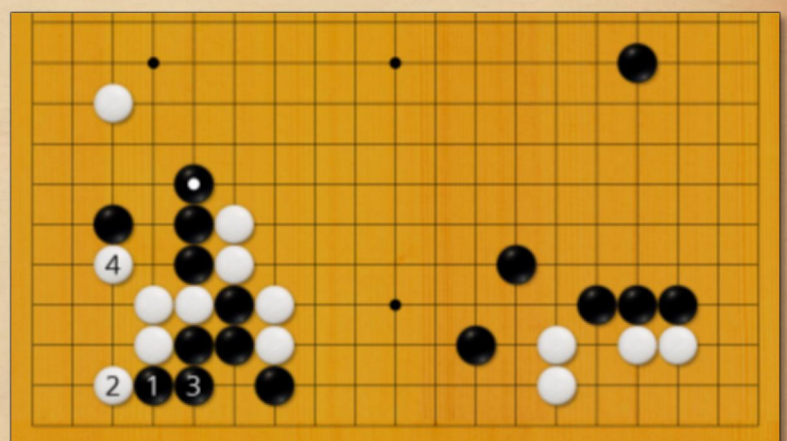


Diagram 5



After my extension at 1 in Dia.6, I expected white to play at A to continue fighting, instead he played passively at 2 and I got the move at 3, which is essential for my shape. Surprisingly white played A in Dia.7, however it seems like I shouldn't have answered at B in Dia.7, but instead I should have played B in Dia.6 - extension down to threaten to kill the corner. Either way I got that extension down after white defended his shape with C. I already knew that my move was successful, seems like my opponent got surprised, he didn't know the move and he got tricked into it. After Stanislaw showed the move to me, I studied it so I was prepared for the fight which happened in the game.

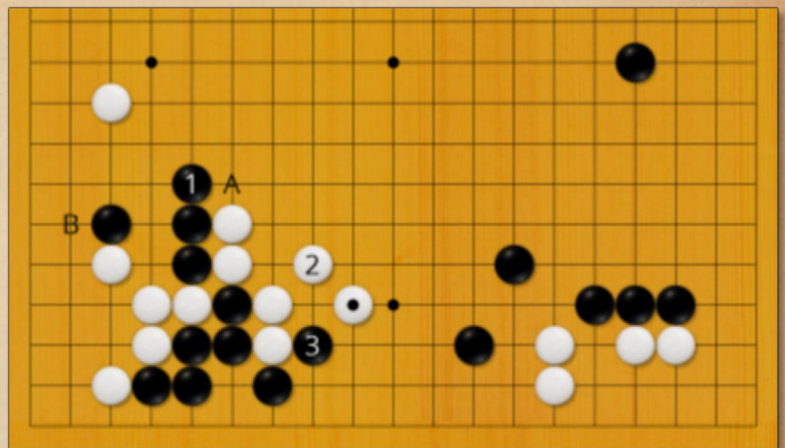


Diagram 6

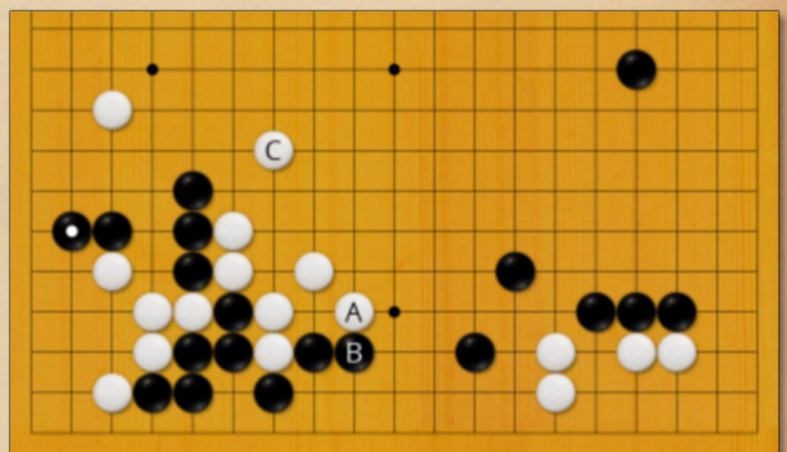


Diagram 7

White managed to make life in the corner with 1 in Dia.8, however, after black gets to play 4, black is pretty much alive and thick. So I just jumped out and according to AI, black has 90% even though percentage matters not much for human games, this game I won without any problems. So we can say that it was a successful try of this new move.

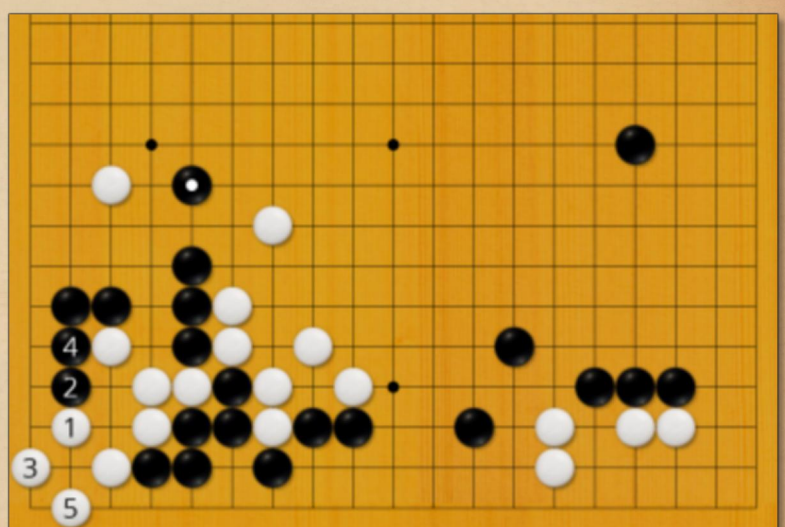


Diagram 8

I hope the people reading this book will get to try this move !



## This is why you should solve Life and Death!

This is a game which to me is really important, simply because I outplayed my opponent and I finally still lost unbelievably by 0,5. It was a very painful lesson, but also a pretty good one.

I took black in this game, I played the forcing move at A, which is supposed to be sente against the corner group C.

My opponent did not even consider that such a group can die and he played tenuki !

Black is ahead even if he do not kill this corner group.

In Dia.2 you can see that black played hane at 1, white responded and black attaches. Now it is only a matter of time and white dies.

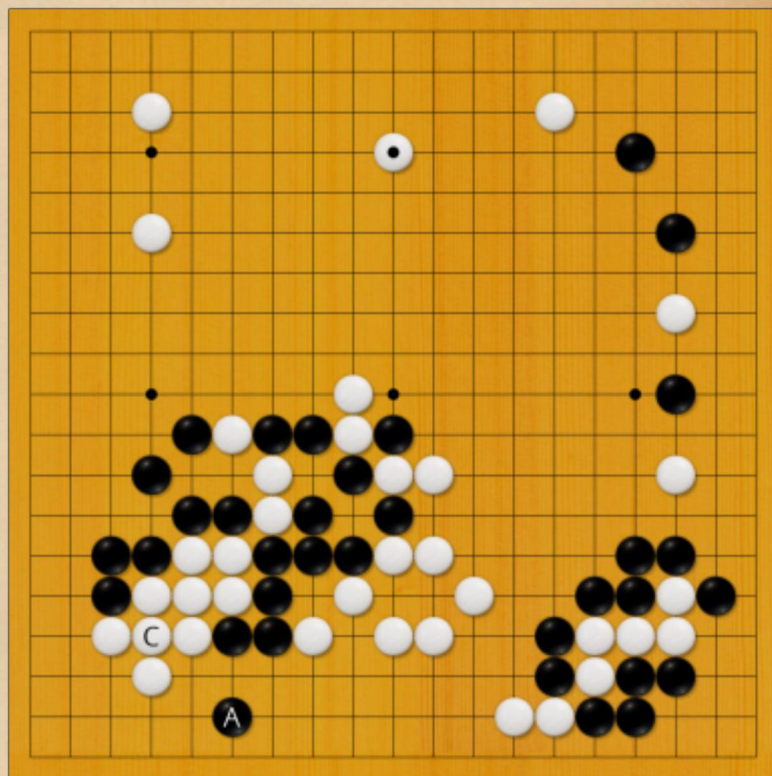


Diagram 1

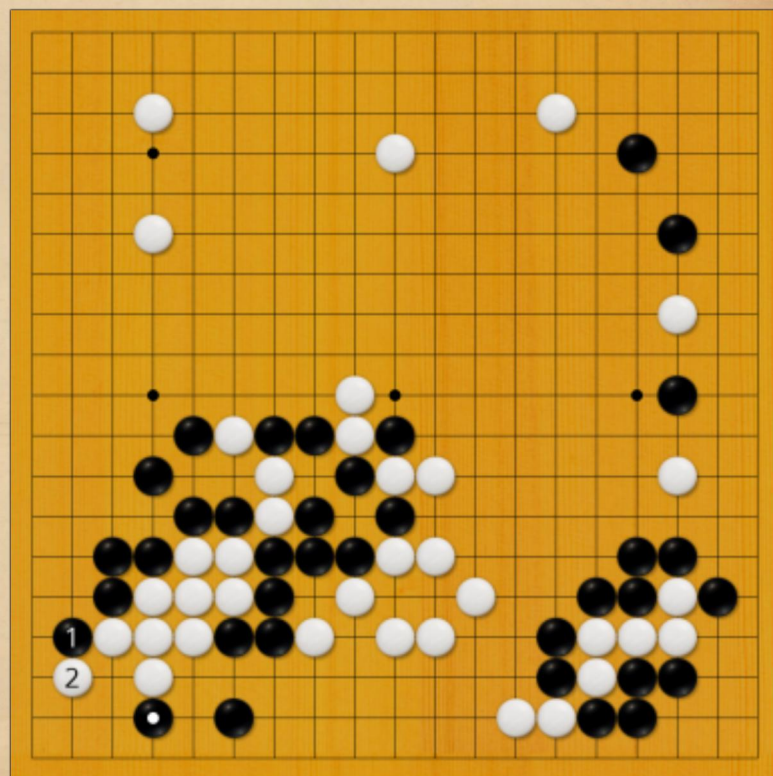


Diagram 2



White ataried one stone by playing at 1 in Dia.3 and I extended at 2 to completely kill. White extended at 3, looking at any possible weaknesses or way to increase his eye space, however, black just atari at 4 and extends, white is totally dead.

White played tenuki and he just left it dead, I have no idea how I lost this game, he was just catching up point by point. It is never easy to win a game where you are ahead, especially if you consider it to be game over, while it is not.

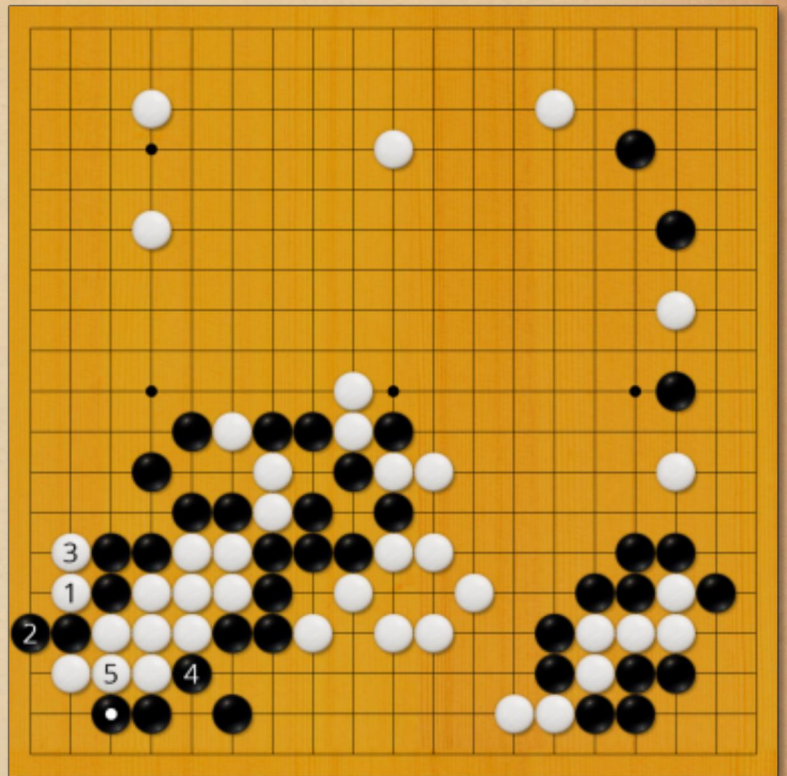


Diagram 3

If white plays at 1 in Dia.4, black can play at 2, if white extends at 3, black can just connect and if white plays at A, black can play at B and white is still dead shape inside.

I noticed that many kids do not quite enjoy solving tsumego in the school, that's why sometimes when we solve tsumego, they came to us and they even point the solutions out to us in order to help. Maybe they think that we struggle by solving tsumego?

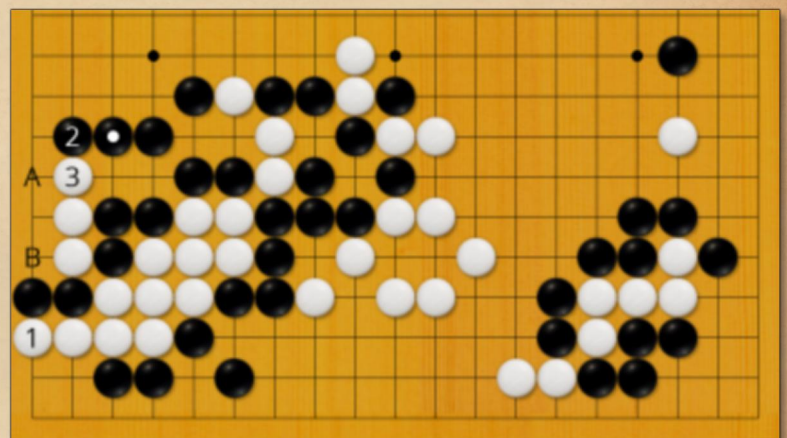


Diagram 4

White could have noticed that the group can die if he solved enough tsumego. Although I consider myself one of the worst players at tsumego, there in the league, it was just some instinct that this group can die, even before applying real reading skill.



## Old-school move against Oscar

This is game between me and Oscar for the last small league that I played in China, before going to a tournament. We both tried to enjoy a lot this game and as you can see, Oscar tried his best to make this game really intense by playing the moves 2,4,6 and 8.

It might look easy to deal with such strange opening, but it isn't easy at all.

I tried to imagine what an old master would say about each move in this fuseki as advice's, so I was just taking corners and I played the solid corner enclosure at 3 as well.

Once he played 8, I knew my move is going to be attachment at 9, I wanted to get into the small avalanche so that I can try a very old move, which I hoped that he does not know how to refute ( how risky !).

I extended with 1 in Diagram 2 and white forced me to defend at 3, after which white played 4 to protect corner.

This last move in the corner for black is the old-school trick move. Usually you could see black to cut at B in professional games, but this move is not easy to deal with either.

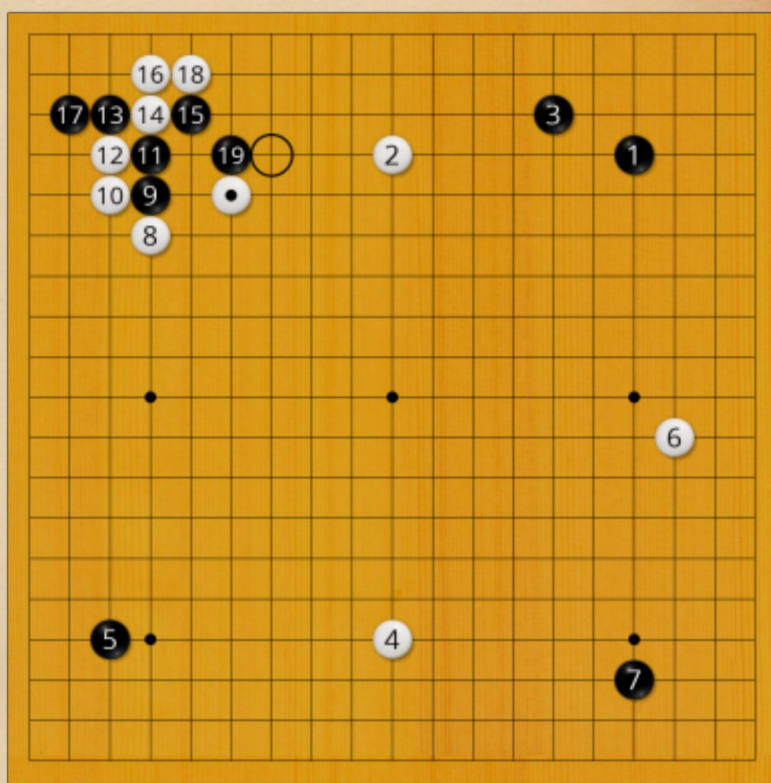


Diagram 1

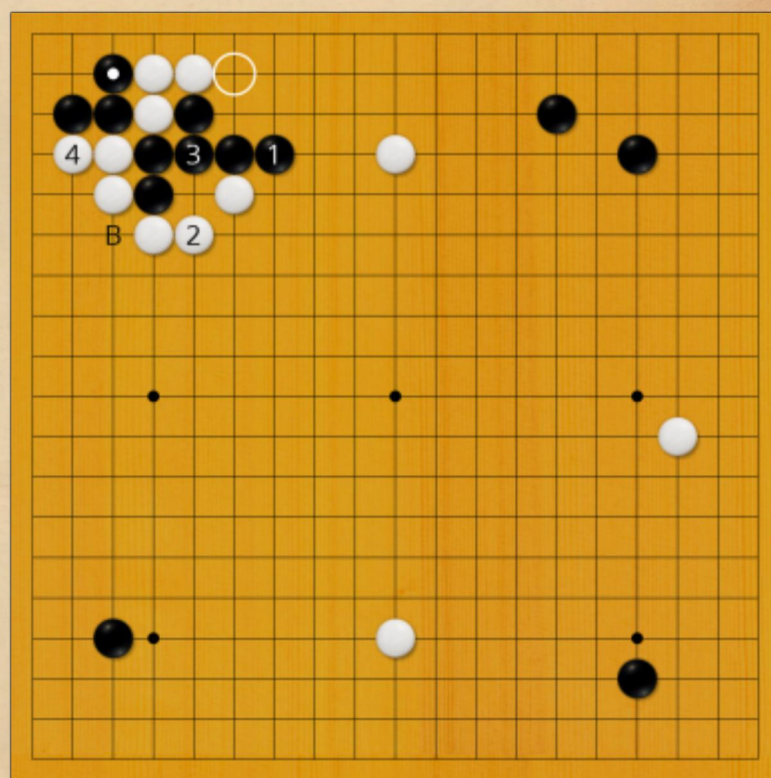


Diagram 2



After white extends at 1 in Dia.3, I cut and now it is very important for white to answer correctly and to not get tricked. Oscar got tricked in the game, but he did not really spend much time thinking on this situation, otherwise I am pretty sure he would find the move.

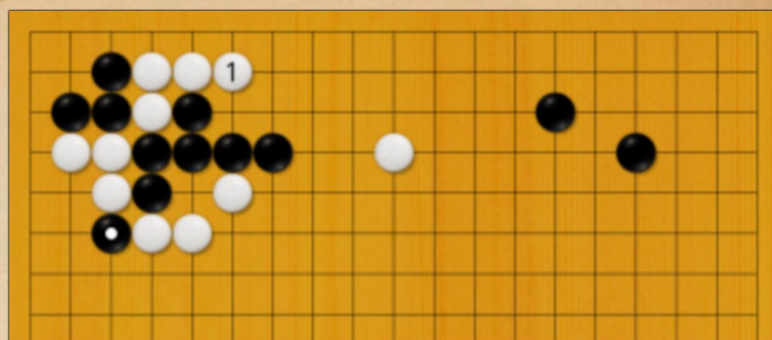


Diagram 3

He played atari from below at 1 and I extended at 2 in Dia.4, so after white pushed I got to atari at 4 and to attach on top, black is getting what he was looking for.

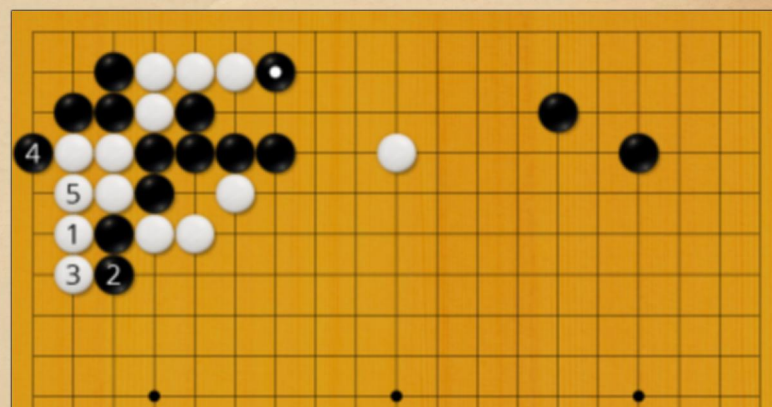


Diagram 4

On Dia.5 you can see a game between Go Seigen 9p (Black) and Fujisawa Kuranosuke 9p played on 1951-12-01 in which white tried to trick Go Seigen, however, he found the tesuji extension in this case. This move might look really counter-intuitive, but it is the best move in this local situation.

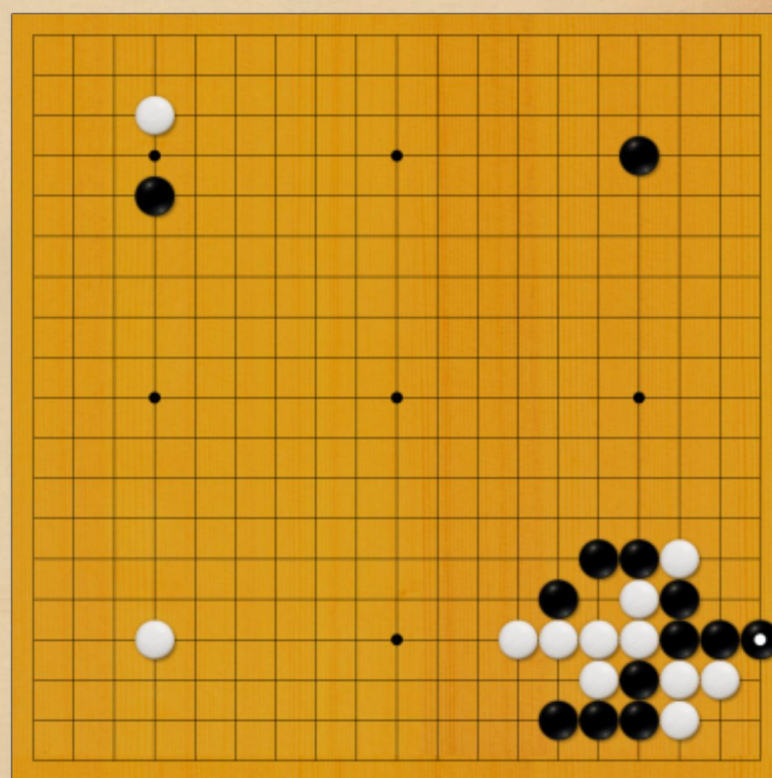


Diagram 5



For example one way to play would be to play 1 in Dia.6 and then white will push few times and kill the corner at 8, black can start fight outside, but I think white is surely favorable .

Another way would be to play 1 in the corner in Dia.7, but again after few pushes, white can kill the corner and white can be satisfied with this development. At least, I would be satisfied with this as white (locally).

In the actual game showed on Dia.8, white didn't find the wonderful tesuji extension down so white had to struggle. White attached at 1 and connected underneath with 3, black throw-ed in a stone at 4 and jumped out to split white's middle stone from his group. I was sure that white is screwed up right now, but of course it is always playable, Go is too long game, all kind of unexpected things can happen.

Before coming to China, I heard many people saying that Chinese kids like to fight a lot and if they are behind, they will show you such overplays, that you will never see anywhere in western countries. First I thought people are exaggerating and then, well - China happened, now I trust them all.

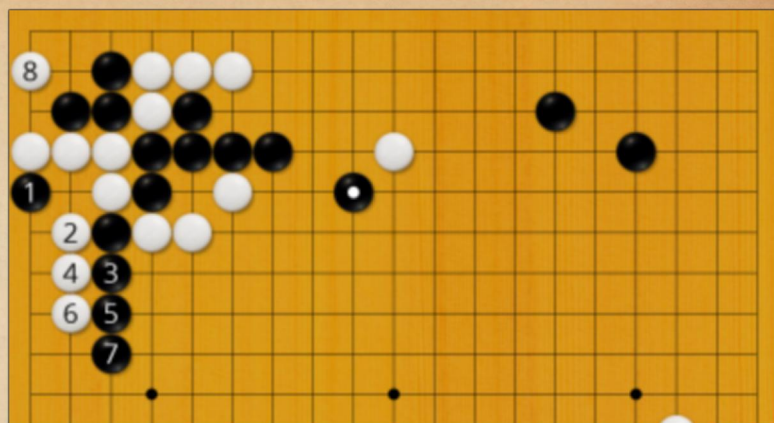


Diagram 6

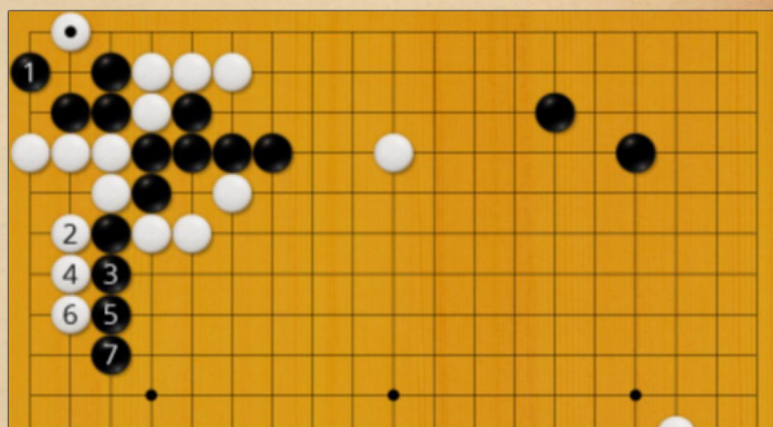


Diagram 7

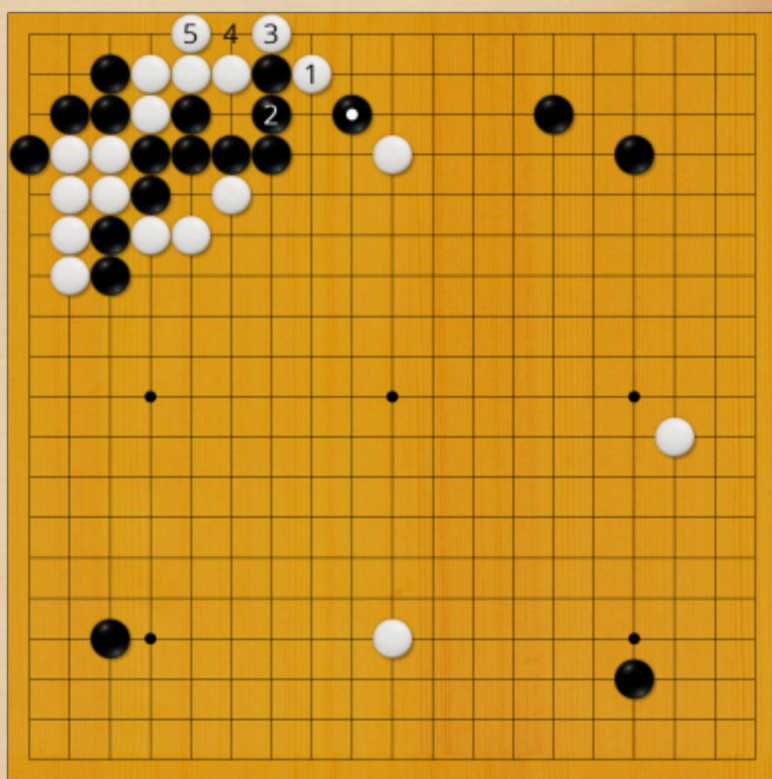


Diagram 8



Oscar pushed with 40 in Dia.9 and afterwards, when I managed to block at 51, he decided to take the big point outside at 52 and see if I can do something to the top. I throw-ed in a stone with move 53 at 58 on the diagram and he took the four stones outside completely by playing 54. I extended at 55 to capture white's group, he answered all my sente moves. And after 59 and white's connection. We came to very famous corner shape tsumego. Leela and ELF seems to not be able to find the magical move.

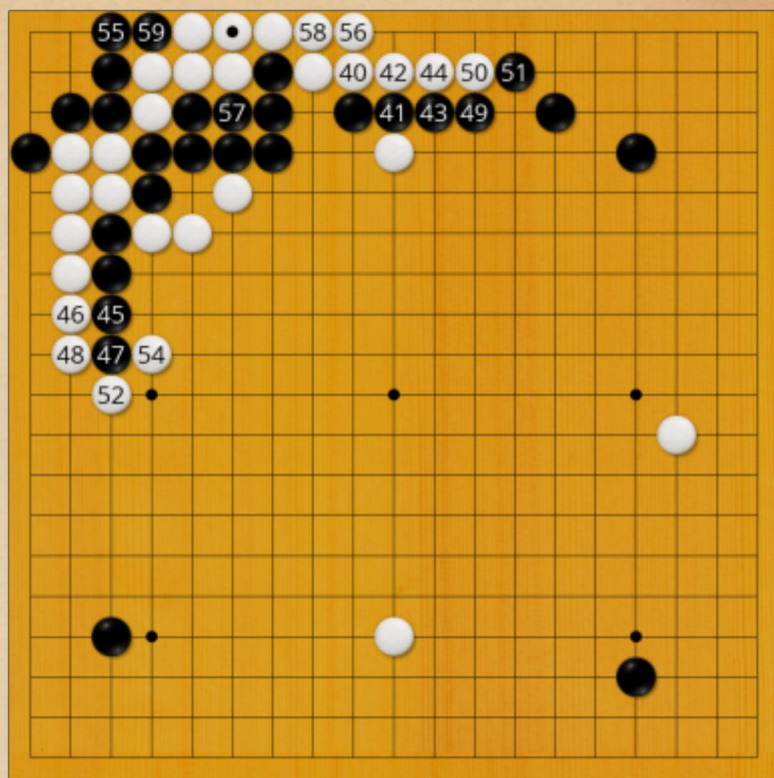


Diagram 9

Once I played this ugly move in Dia.10, Oscar said "So this is the trick", we both smiled and continued playing. The idea of this is that if white plays at 1, black can take liberties with 2-4 and white cannot fill last liberty inside after 3, because he is damezumari-ed, in other words he cannot fill liberty because it will be a self-atari. Very interesting old-school joseki including small tsumego which makes AI's struggle finding the correct move. They all find playing 1 in Dia.10, however after white takes black's move in Dia.10, it becomes ko, which is unsatisfactory result.

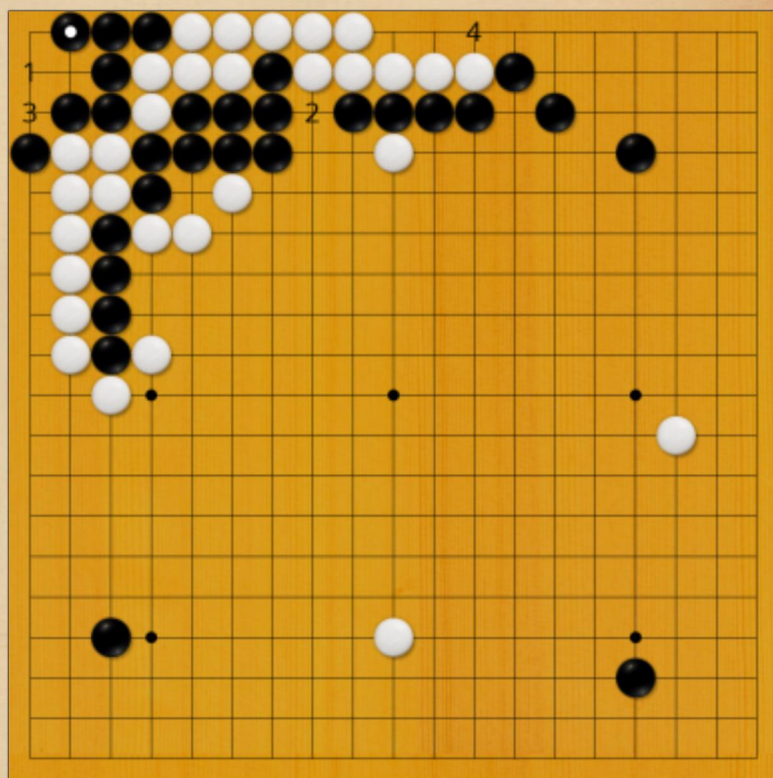


Diagram 10



## Tournament and last days in China !

At the end of October, we went to a tournament in some city which looked like it is being build now, or at least to me it looked that way.

Overall our accommodation was quite good and the tournament was pretty tough with a lot of strong players. I managed to get highest place of Europeans, which actually means just one space above Stanislaw. So my China trip finished pretty much great this way, by performing good at the last tournament. The thing about Go is that you can spend hours, weeks, even months and you might not see any significant difference in your results. Even though you know that you improved a lot and you learned many new variations, it is still hard to show actual progress in games. At least for me, whenever I study anything else, showing results is a way easier than with Go. Below you could see how the tournament atmosphere looked like, it was great and we had “eating tournament”. Well, it was only for us Europeans, since we were the main organizers, sponsored by CEGO and provided with food from the hotel. I am just joking of course, but when Go players are eating three times a day together, they can start laughing that they are having additional 3 rounds of eating tournament which is harder than the Go tournament. It gets a lot more interesting once these Go players start using terms to describe actions on the table. For example, I did a lot of furikawaris of food, however, the yose is always hard if you overplay too much in the fuseki. On our way back, we almost got our bus crushed into a truck which was scary to all of us, fortunately nothing happened and we were totally fine.





## Make life into the opponents territory

This is a game from the tournament against the strongest guy from another school and although at the end he won by 4,5. I am proud of the way I played.

I am playing white and as you can see, black is building huge framework on the top.

However, there are these two stones at A in Dia.1. They are shining to be used.

I played this beautiful invasion in Dia.2 looking forward to use the two stones and to either play A to escape or B to live.

When I played this invasion, my opponent looked at me really surprised, while I was quite confident that this cannot die and that my opponent is in huge trouble. I have never been so confident about such invasion as I was in this game.

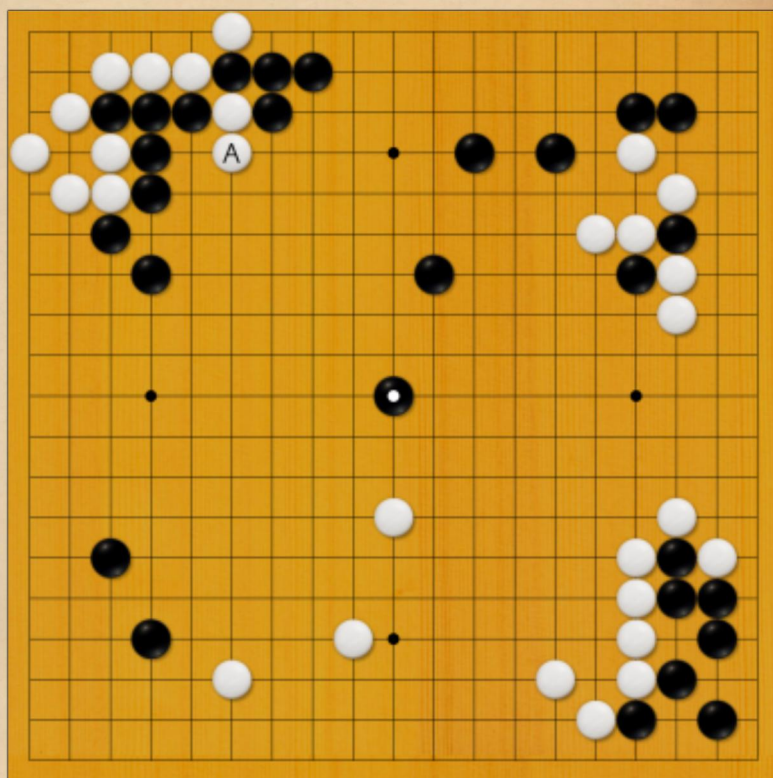


Diagram 1

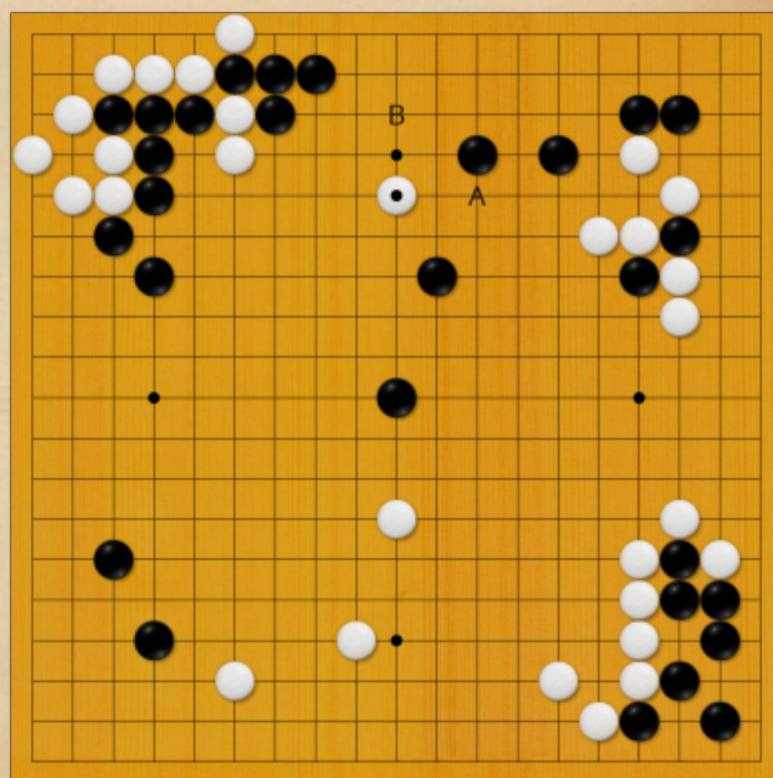


Diagram 2



After black prevented white from escaping by kicking at 1 in Dia.3, white jumped inside looking forward to either make use of A or the stones at B. It is pretty much a golden rule, to remember to always search for a weaknesses in opponents shape when you are invading.

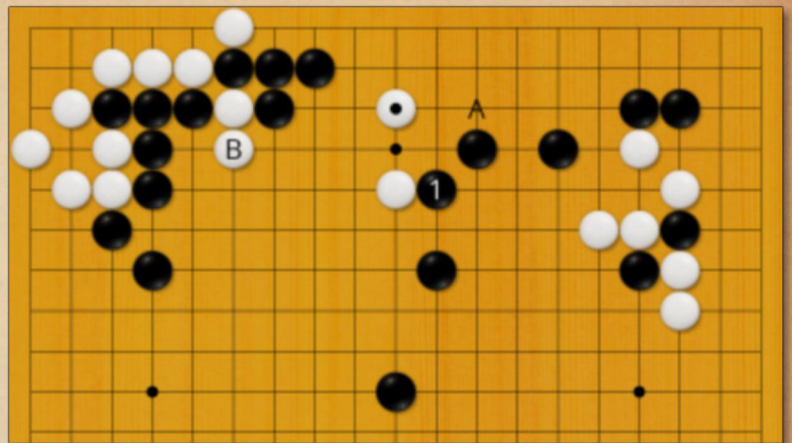


Diagram 3

Black played the keima at A in Dia.4, looking forward to put more pressure on white's stone, but after I attached, I knew this is on it's way to living land and there is nothing to be worried about. The simple reason was that these top left two stones, even after A, they still had aji.

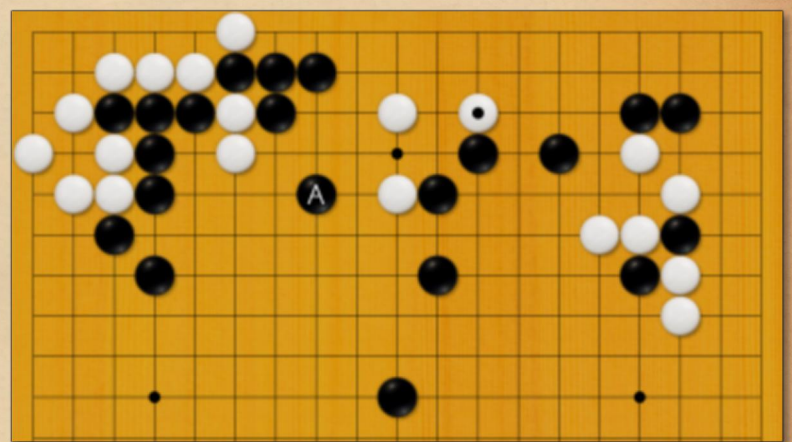


Diagram 4

Black wedge at 1 in Dia.5 was expected, otherwise white can take 3 and make a good shape, so after black connects at 3, white extends and you can see that magically white already creates some living space on the top.

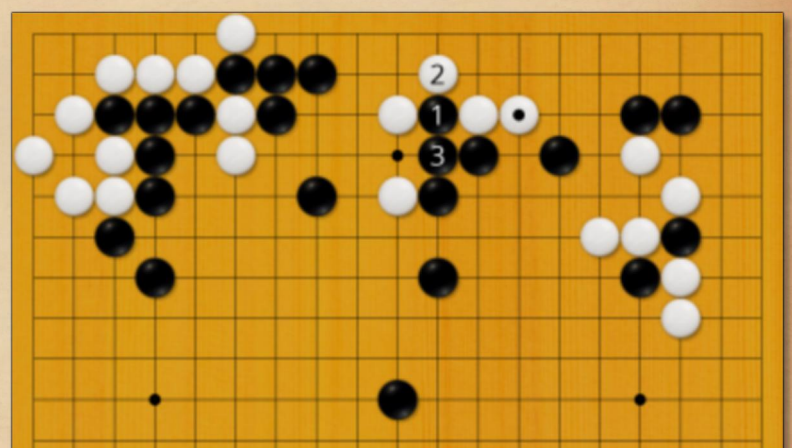


Diagram 5



Black blocked at 1 and after I exchanged 2-3 in Dia.6, finally I got to play the tiger mouth move which assures the life of my group.

White is alive because of A possibility to connect due to white move B outside, sneaky way and it works.

Black pushed at 1 and I created the most ugly shape ever, but at least my group is alive.

It is time for black to defend at 3 and let white finish the shape.

Diagram 8 shows that black defends at 1 and white makes life on the top.

This is successful result for white since I managed to make life on the top and reduce all the cash black had. According to other players, at this point I was ahead, however, once I got ahead, I started giving points as gift.

Later on, the game was a really good lesson to never give to the opponent points which he does not deserve. Although I didn't manage to win this game, I got the most of it and I felt so wonderful after this game that barely it mattered who won.

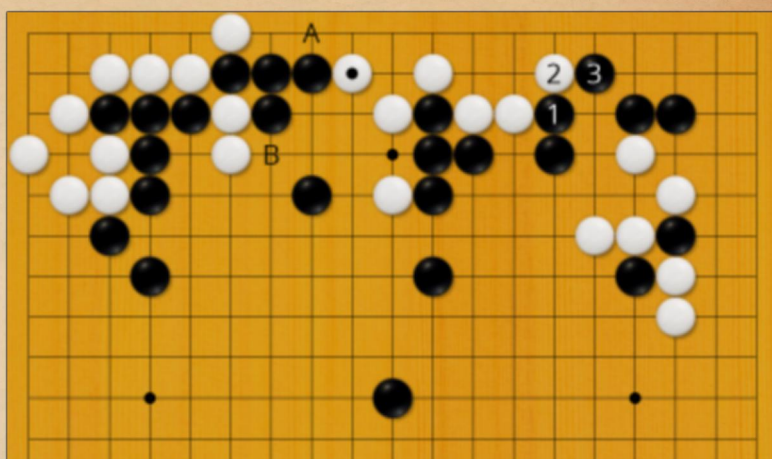


Diagram 6

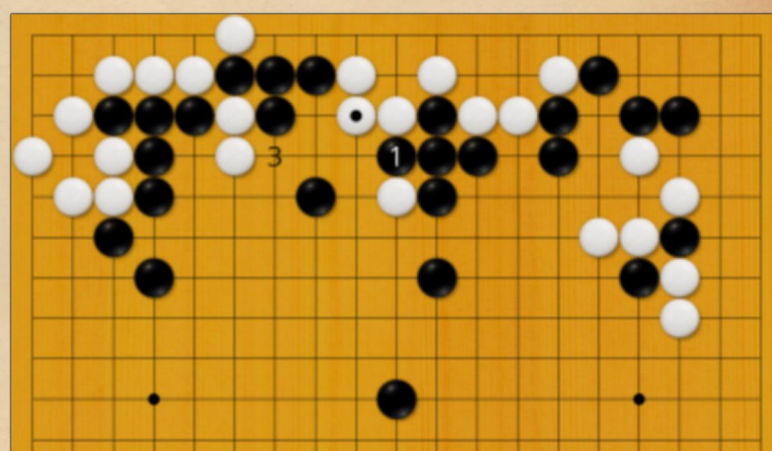


Diagram 7

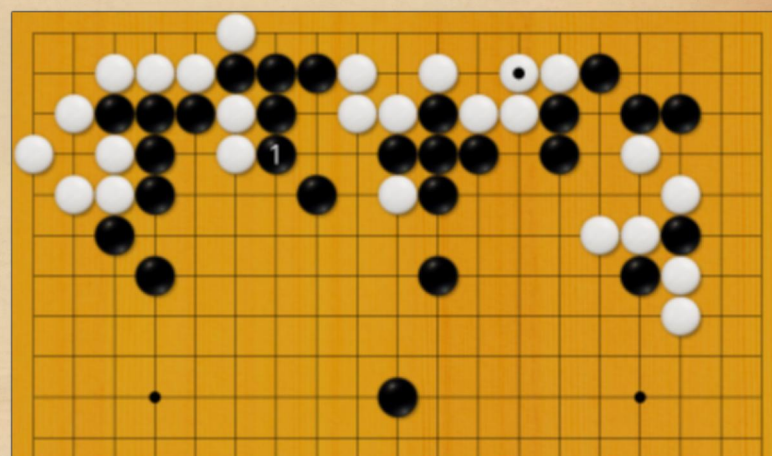


Diagram 8



## Blind-spot tesuji to surround territory

This is a game against a strong player from our school in the tournament, he is supposed to be stronger than me, so I was happy that I played a strong game and not collapsing fast.

White took the two stones on left. Black's territory is oriented in the lower and the center area. The game is pretty even at this stage and I played move at A very fast, which was huge mistake. It is the first true feeling and I asked others and they agreed, however, there was a tesuji which is not too hard to spot in this situation, but I missed it!

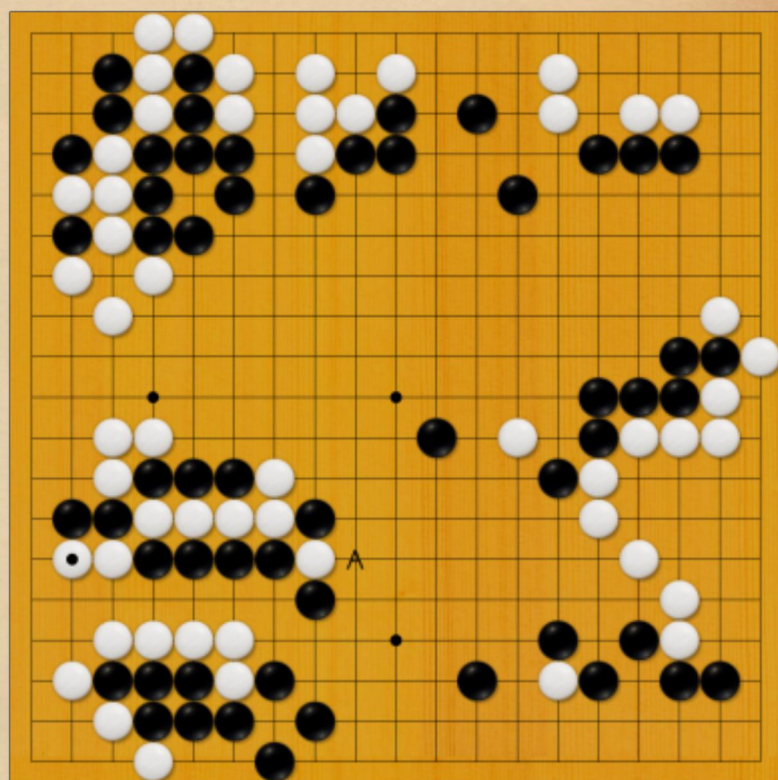


Diagram 1

Diagram 2 shows the amazing tesuji at 1 which manages to surround the center area in a wonderful way. The thing with the direct capture is that white can get to play 2 and black cannot really surround the same way as with move 1 showed in Diagram 2.

It is not that hard once you see it, but these kind of moves are sometimes really difficult to see, especially if you are not searching for them.

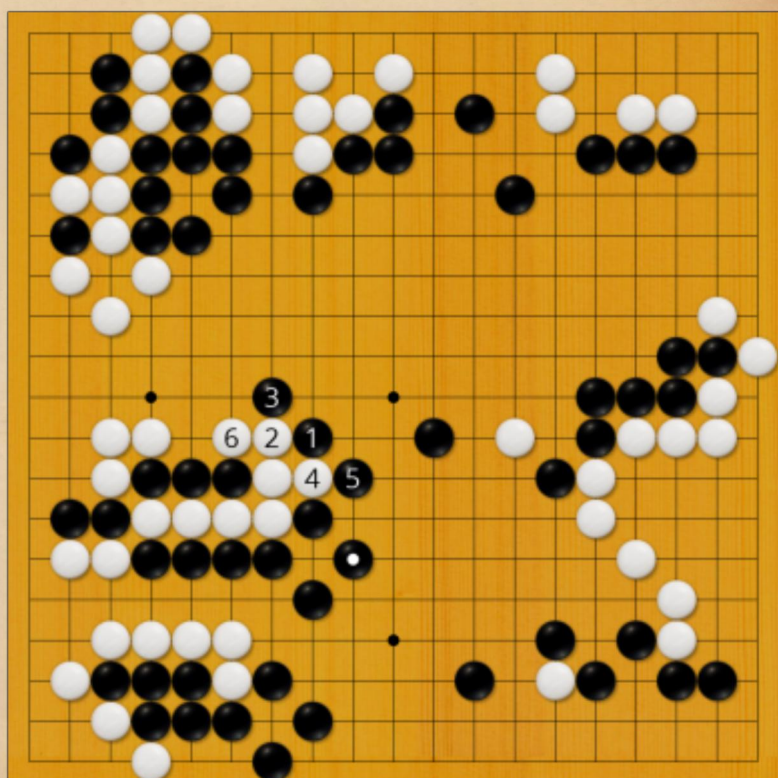


Diagram 2



## Final words

This whole experience in China was one of the most wonderful things that happened to me in my life and I wish to anyone who has chance to ever visit Go Academy, to do it.

This trip wouldn't have been that great without Stanislaw, Oscar, Dominik, Gabriel and Anton, so I want to thank to them for making my time in China as much enjoyable as possible.

I know that this book went a bit more complex than it looked in my mind in the beginning, but at least now people could get to see that studying Go to achieve higher levels is not easy and even at this level, we sometimes feel like we know not much.

Deeply I hope that "Go Studies: A History of Adventure", managed to show new intriguing ideas to readers and since this is the end of the book, I think the beginning is in each one of you, so you can try anything out of this book in your own games.

If this book manages to successfully teach a person even one new thing about Go, then my mission with this book is finished.

My best wishes to everyone to experience the supreme enjoyment of becoming one stone stronger as Go Seigen said in one of his books.





From my point of view, Go has always been something more than just a game with elegant rules and complex strategy, it has been a passion and art.

The last few years passed imperceptibly and learning the basic rules didn't take much time, but soon afterwards I realized that a lifetime might not be enough to master the game.

Nevertheless, Go is still one of the most joyful things in my life.

“Go Studies: A History of Adventure” is a book about an adventure into the deepness of Go in my three months of study in the Ge Yuhong Go Academy as part of the CEGO Academic Programme in China, Beijing. This book will reveal new opening ideas, joseki changes, creative moves, strategy plans and it will cover what it is like to study Go in a Chinese Go School in the 21st Century.

This book is also dedicated to all players who dive into the deepness of Go without any hesitation.



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