

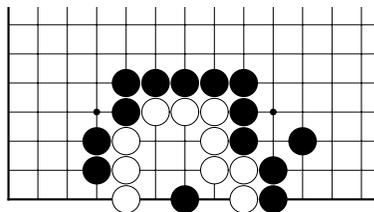
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CHAPTER TWO: BUILDING KILLING SHAPES

THE LAST PROBLEM IN CHAPTER ONE

Chapter One ended with this life and death problem.



The Problem from Chapter One

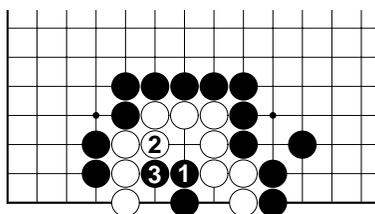


Diagram 1:
Problem 1 from Chapter One

In the effort to solve it, ① in Diagram 1 is an attractive point. It strikes at the center of the three white stones on the left and threatens to cut at ②. If White connects at ②, then ③ kills the group. This position was Diagram 15 in Chapter One, so I hope you can judge the status easily. White has a six point eye space, but he can't stop Black from almost filling it with a bulky five.

However, this is not the correct answer. It's a fine example of wishful reading.

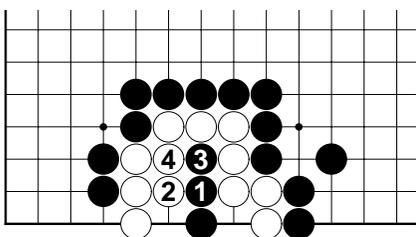


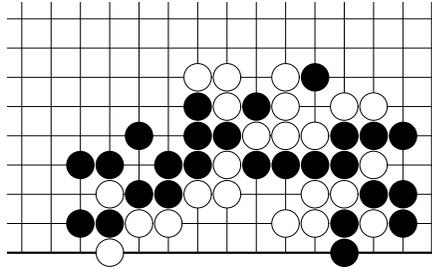
Diagram 1A

② in Diagram 1A also protects the cutting point, and it foils Black's attempt to construct a killing shape. ③ again threatens to cut, but White can simply connect at ④, making a seki.

This position was Diagram 16A in Chapter One. White has a smaller eye space than in Diagram 1 above, but what's important is its shape. If Black adds another stone to put White in atari after the outside liberty has been filled, he makes a bent four, which is not a killing shape. If Black leaves the situation alone, White must not add any more stones inside his own eye. That would be suicidal. As it stands, he is alive in seki.

CHAPTER SIX: GAME EXAMPLES OF KILLING WITH INSIDE MOVES

Problem 1: What is the status of the white group? Can White play elsewhere or does he need to defend? What happens if Black plays first here? This position, which came up in a professional game, is discussed later in this chapter. It's fairly difficult so either stop and think about it, or if you prefer, just read on and follow the discussion.



Problem 1: Status?

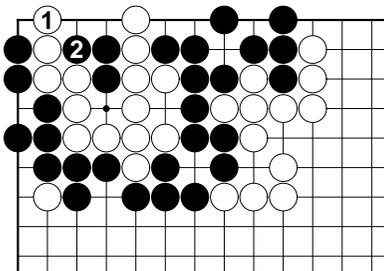


Diagram 1: Status?

Diagram 1: White's group is under attack. With ①, White widens his eye space and Black answers at ②. What is the status of the white group now? I hope that you recognize the status at a glance or can work it out very quickly.

The position in Diagram 1A is from a game between two kyu players that I watched online on the Kiseido Go Server (now called KGS). After ②, the action shifts to the bottom left corner. With ⑪, White returns to the top left. This kind of play is quite nerve wracking for spectators. It's a good thing it's possible to talk and comment about online games without the players hearing. If this were a real live club game, it would be difficult to remain silent.

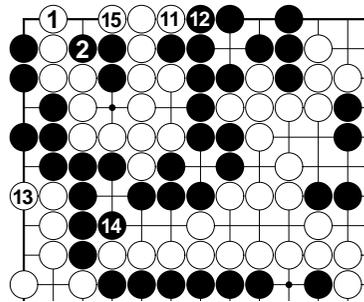


Diagram 1A: Seki
(③ to ⑩ elsewhere)

⑪ is sente because it threatens to win the capturing race. With ⑫, Black now safely makes two eyes. What do you think ⑬ and ⑭ do?

Finally, White settles the position with ⑮. This makes the top left corner into a seki. A black move at the same point would make a pyramid four, which Black could then increase to a bulky five, leading to death by a killing shape. You might like to count how many opportunities each side had to play a deci-

sive move in this unsettled position. I hope this never happens in your own games.

Well, I make blunders too. I'm sure we all do. Here's an example from one of my games. In Diagram 2, I'm White. Black has just connected on the first line in the late endgame. I hope you have alarm bells ringing in your head when you see a position like this. When all the outside liberties are filled, there's almost certain to be some danger of a liberty shortage inside.

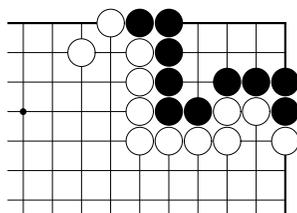


Diagram 2: Safe?

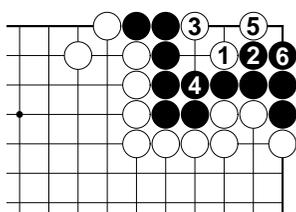


Diagram 2A: Status?

I play ① in Diagram 2A, expecting to get a seki at the minimum. After ⑤, I point out to my opponent that he needs to add a move at ⑥ to avoid a ko in the corner. This is a friendly social game, and I am giving him a three stone handicap. Later, near the end of the game, a kibitzer comments how sad it is that the black corner is dead. “It’s not dead, it’s a seki,” I say. But, after a while, I realize that

he is right. The black group really is dead. I tell my opponent that since we have agreed that the status of the corner is seki, that status will stand at the end of the game. My hallucination was to think that White has no move after ⑥ in Diagram 2A. Neither atari looks useful, but I overlooked the fact that White can fill in the partial eye to make a pyramid four and then increase it to a bulky five. I really should have known better, and I hope to avoid such misconceptions in the future. I hope you will too.

What is really galling is that not long afterwards I found this exact position in a book—and one that I had read before too. ②, the move I actually expected, was given as a failure because of the potential ko at ⑥. And it specifically mentioned ⑥ as being suicidal, because after ⑥ in Diagram 2A, Black is unconditionally dead.

The correct reply is ② in Diagram 2B. ⑤ threatens to start a ko, so Black must add a move at ⑥ to make a seki.

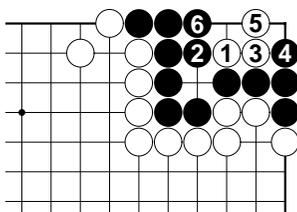


Diagram 2B: Seki

SECTION TWO: UNDER THE STONES

CHAPTER ONE: THE BASICS

In Section One we learned some standard inside killing shapes that kill an enemy group by almost filling its eye space. When your stones are captured, you play back on the vital (central) point, limiting the group to one eye. Killing with inside moves can be regarded as a special case of playing “under the stones” (*ishi-no-shita*). Some positions are classified as killing with inside moves in one book and as playing under the stones in another.

The classification is not really important; names just help you to remember shapes. As long as you can read out the correct answer, that’s fine. We’ll start by looking at positions involving playing under the stones that are different from positions involving killing with inside moves. Later, we’ll encounter positions where they overlap.

Playing under the stones is a sacrifice technique that can be used for killing or for living, by limiting a monolithic eye space to one eye (like killing with inside moves) or by making/breaking a second separate eye when one certain eye already exists.

THE SQUARE FOUR

Diagram 1: Black to play.

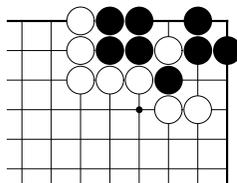


Diagram 1: Black to Play

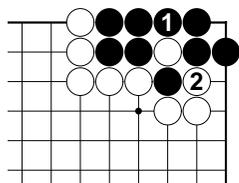


Diagram 1A:
Misguided

Diagram 1A: If Black focuses on his four stones in atari, he may capture with ① in Diagram 1A. But then ② makes this eye false, so all the black stones die.

Black should connect at ① in Diagram 1B. This is not a careless oversight. It’s a deliberate plan to sacrifice his four stones. When White captures them with ②, Black plays back in the empty space under the stones at ▲.

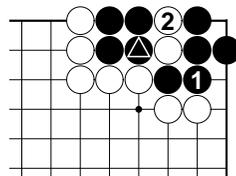


Diagram 1B: Correct

Diagram 1C: Look at the position when the square four of black stones has been removed.  means that Black can cut at A and capture two white stones. This makes a second eye for Black, so for the price of a small sacrifice, he saves his group.

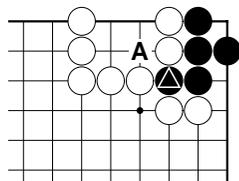


Diagram 1C:
Under the Stones

Seeing under the stones is mostly a matter of experience. The more examples you encounter, the easier it becomes. Positions that you have seen before tend to be fairly easy in the future, while “equally easy” positions that you haven’t seen before tend to be quite difficult. Solving a problem like this in a book should raise a smile, but finding a move like this in a game is really quite an uplifting experience. Every go player should have a check-list of moves they want to play sometime during their lives and “under the stones” is definitely on the list.

You might think that a square block of four stones, like in Diagram 1, is rather an unlikely artificial shape. On the contrary, if you recognize it as a desirable goal, you’ll find it surprisingly easy to create.

Diagram 1D: Black to Play. This is a famous problem. It’s in the *Gokyo Shumyo*, one of the classic go texts, and it gets recycled in many modern problem collections selected by various professional players. If you’ve seen it before, you’ll solve it at a glance. If not, it’s quite difficult. But, with the groundwork laid already, you should be able to work it out if you keep in mind the previous diagrams.

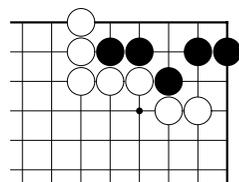


Diagram 1D:
Black to Play

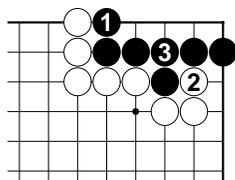


Diagram 1E: ② fails.

Black has very little space to try and make life. His only hope is to maximize his eye space with ① in Diagram 1E. ② does not work, because ③ makes a straight four, which is alive.

② in Diagram 1F is more promising. It threatens to extend at ③ and create a killing shape, so ③ is the only move. This makes one eye, but ④ wedges into Black’s wall, threatening to falsify the other eye. Next, connecting at ⑤ does not work.

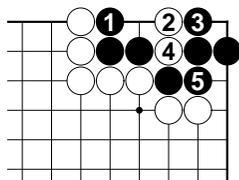


Diagram 1F: ⑤ is too early.

White captures three stones with ① in Diagram 1G, and Black does not have a continuation, so he dies.

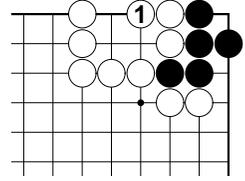


Diagram 1G: Dead

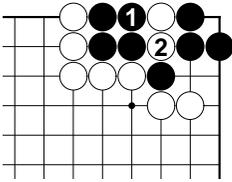


Diagram 1H:
Capture

Black must capture the two stones with ① in Diagram 1H. This produces the target square four. Next, White throws in at ②, and Black has to be careful. This is the position we saw in Diagram 1, which is presented as a problem (rated 10 to 4 kyu) in Maeda's *Shokyu Tsumego*, a popular and widely read book of problems in Japanese that I highly recommend. The language is not a significant barrier to doing the problems.

Here are a couple more variations on the theme.

Diagram 2: Black A might look promising, but White has a clever reply at B, which will create a ko. Is this the best Black can do?

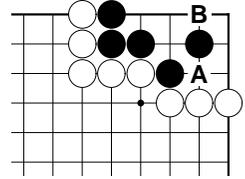


Diagram 2:
Black to Play

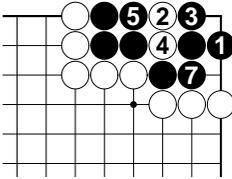


Diagram 2A:
Correct (⑥ at ④)

Black should descend to ① in Diagram 2A. White plays ② and ④, but ⑤ creates a square four. This position is essentially the same as Diagram 1H.

Diagram 3: Black to play.

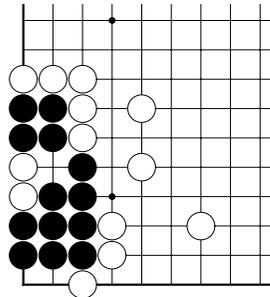


Diagram 3:
Black to Play

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE BEAUTY OF PLAYING UNDER THE STONES

I'd like to share with you a selection of the problems that I consider to be particularly beautiful. Some of them are fairly simple and use techniques we have studied in detail, some are more challenging and require techniques that we haven't specifically studied.

First, let's look at the answers to the two problems given at the end of Chapter Seven.

Answer to Problem 1 at the End of Chapter Seven

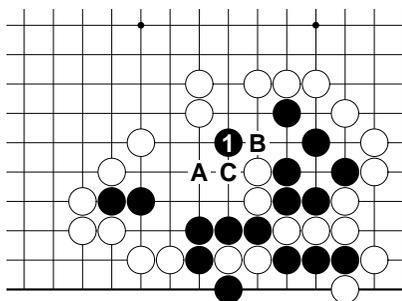


Diagram 1: Starting Point

Diagram 1: Black has one eye on the side. He needs to make another one in the middle. The two possibilities are to capture the two white stones or to make an eye by squeezing them. ① is the move that works. Please convince yourself that Black A, B, and C all fail.

Diagram 1A: ② and ④ are forced. With ⑥, White captures three black stones, but ⑦ is sente.

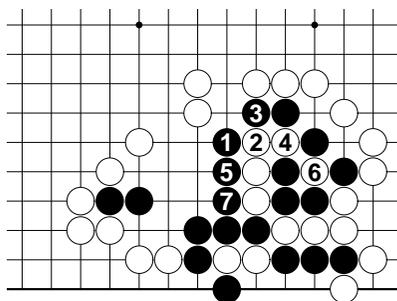


Diagram 1A: Sente

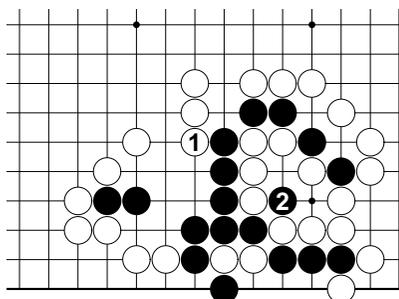


Diagram 1B: Under the Stones

Diagram 1B: Next, if White plays ① or a similar move to stop Black from getting an eye, Black cuts under the three stones with ②.