

**Review by Tony Atkins in the *British Go Journal*,
Summer 2010 (#152), pp. 41-42.**

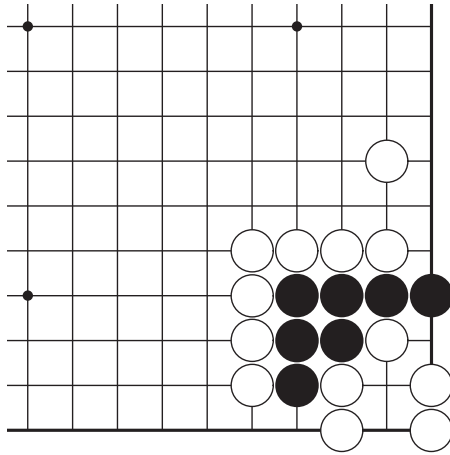
...”There are four main chapters. The first three are problems split by level of difficulty, 90 in all, and the fourth chapter consists of key parts of four famous historic games that involve stunning edge moves. The book claims that if you can do all the problems correctly then you are dan level, which must be true as, even with a three dan certificate, I would often only come up with the second best line in the answer. There are two problems on each page and at least two diagrams of answer to each overleaf. There is one bonus section which is one of Nakayama’s ladder problems, inserted to show the importance of reading.

As the title suggests, the book is all about the strange things that happen because of that missing liberty when a stone is played on the first line (edge) of the board. The answer to every problem is a move on the edge, but usually there are several possible choices of edge move. In one position the answer sequence involves four moves, all on the edge.

There are all sorts of problems involving making eyes, taking eyes, increasing liberties, removing liberties, playing under the stones, avoiding or making ko, capturing and connections. But each seems to be impossible until you see the beauty of an edge play that makes it all possible.

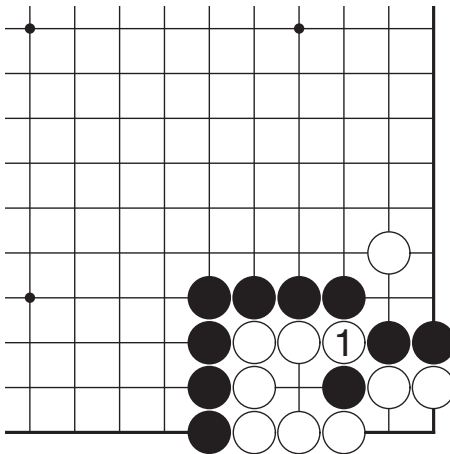
Magic on the First Line is an excellent book and one I recommend to have on your bookshelf.”

Problem 23



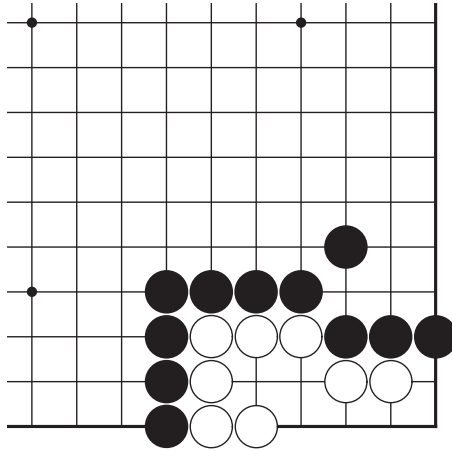
Here we have a variation in the complicated situation known as the “carpenter’s square”. However, if we ignore how this was cooked up, what is left is not so difficult. There is a skillful move for Black.

Problem 24



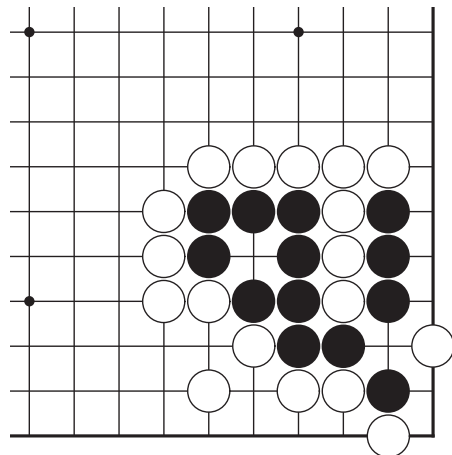
White has just played ①. So how are you going to respond? You might be thinking that there is nothing Black can do here, but there is something.

Problem 41



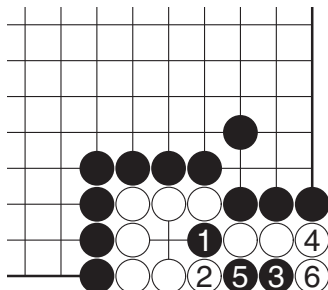
No matter how you scrutinize this situation, the white stones seem to be alive, but if you consider the order of moves exhaustively something will happen.

Problem 42



It looks like however he plays Black will be able to live, but if he plays carelessly I think the black stones might die. Black has to see through White's plan and firmly make life.

Problem 41 Answer: Double Snapback

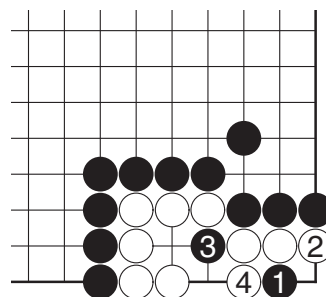


#41 Solution

(7 at 5)

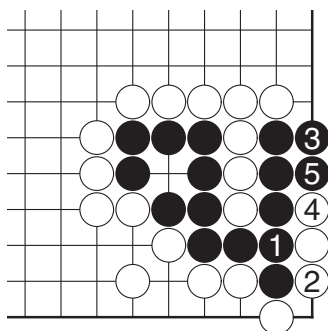
Solution: First ① cuts and after ② defends, ③ is excellence at the board's edge. If White plays ④, then after ⑤ and ⑥, ⑦ at the ⑤ point sets up the double snapback.

Failure: Playing ① first is a little too hurried. Now when Black plays ③, White can play ④ and the white stones live. This is an example of a case where the same tesuji is played but a mistake in the order of moves makes it turn out badly.



#41 Failure

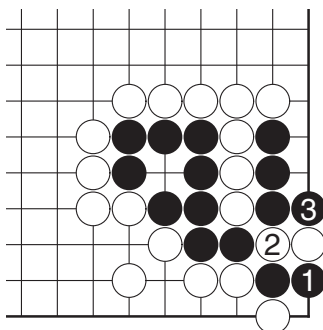
Problem 42 Answer: Greed is Taboo



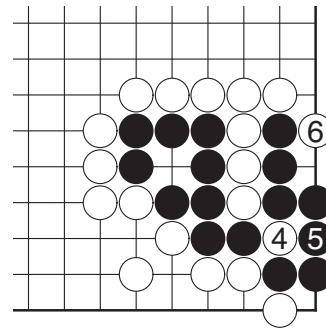
#42 Solution

Solution: First ① connects and White defends with ②. Next ③ is an edge of the board technique we have studied before. If ④, Black makes life by capturing at least three stones after ⑤.

Failure: ① is much too careless. After ② in Failure Diagram 1, the black stones are in trouble. Continuing as in Failure Diagram 2, the throw-in of ④ is sente, and ⑥ kills all the black stones.

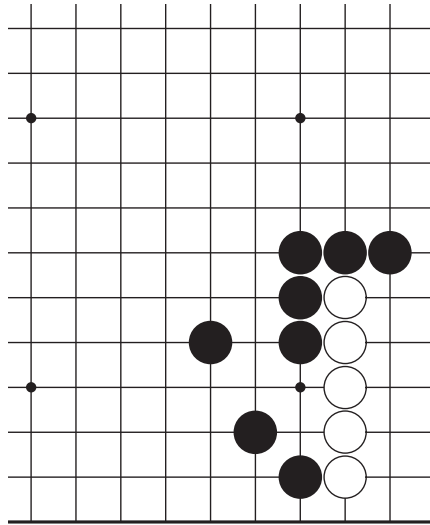


#42 Failure 1



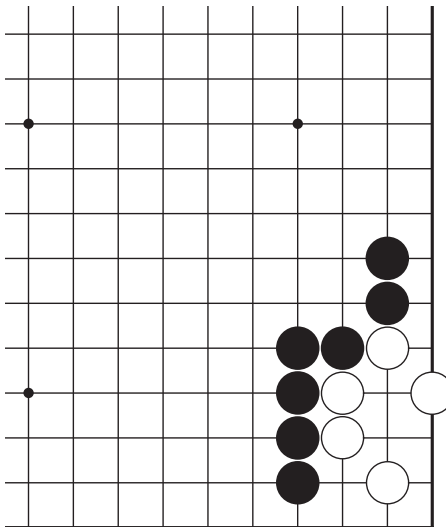
#42 Failure 2

Problem 87



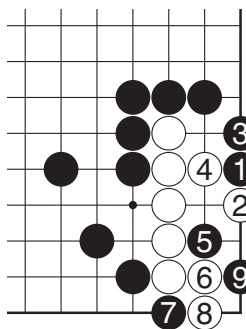
If you can confidently capture the white stones, you certainly have dan-level playing strength. This shape often occurs in real games so if you thoroughly study the well-known technique for killing it will always be useful.

Problem 88



These five white stones certainly have a stubborn shape. However, it is a small space so see if you can find something. As for a hint, it goes without saying that there is a good move on the edge of the board. This shape also occurs in games so there is no loss in studying it.

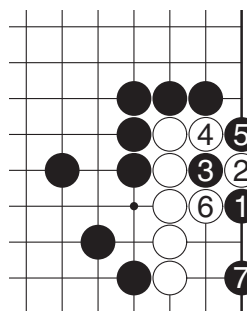
Problem 87 Answer: Ingenious Move Order



#87 Solution

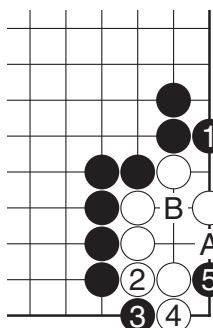
Solution: In this shape playing the small knight's move is skillful. ② and ④, expanding the space, are the strongest resistance. After Black's shot at ⑤ and White's response at ⑥, the moves ⑦ and ⑨ make a clever sequence. The white stones are dead.

Failure: The large knight's move at ① is answered by ② and following and, no matter what, a ko can't be avoided.



#87 Failure

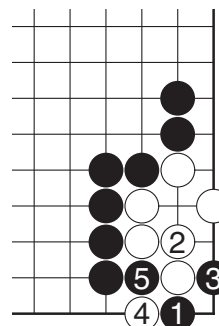
Problem 88 Answer: Calm and Cool



#88 Solution

Solution: Descending with ① seems slow-footed, but it is a good move that eats up the vital point of the white stones. Even if White widens his space with ②, after the hane of ③, ⑤ on the 2-1 point takes the vital point. There is nothing White can do to help himself. If White A, Black B.

Failure: If Black plays the knight's move at ①, White can play ② and following. No matter what, a ko can't be avoided.



#88 Failure