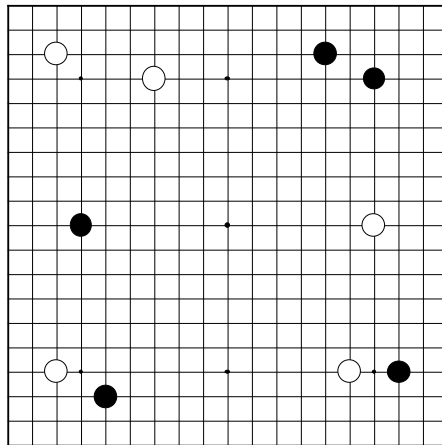


Discover THE GAME OF GO!

Hello. We are here from the xxxxxx Go Club to talk about the mysterious game we play, while the xxxxxx bookstore hopes this talk will encourage the sale of introductory Go books. You might have heard about Go from articles in the NY or LA *Times* (or if there was publicity for the talk), or books like *Shibumi* by Trevanian, TV shows like *Wild Palms* or from movies like *The Go Masters*. Or maybe you haven't heard about the game at all.

Go is one of the simplest games in the world and millions of people play it both in the Orient, Europe and here. You play it with 'stones' like this, putting them on the intersections like this.



Give a quick demonstration of placement of stones preferably on a stand up magnetic board.

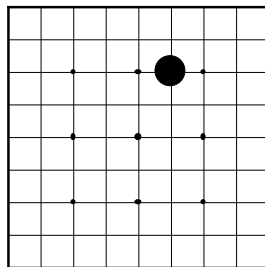
Unlike chess—which eliminates—Go accumulates. It is not a game of annihilation but a game of building what we call 'territory.' This gets complicated, however, because, while you are surrounding territory, your opponent might be surrounding you! In fact, it becomes so complicated that the best computer programs can only beat weak amateurs. On the other hand, it takes only five minutes to learn how to play. At the end of this talk, we can even play some games, if you like.

In order to understand the game, you need to remember only two rules. You will see that they are both a lot like the rules of life.

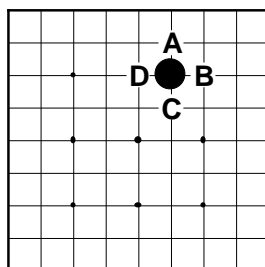
Number one: If you are completely surrounded, off you come from the playing board!

For the sake of this initial demonstration, we will use a small 9x9 board which we will mark off on the big board.

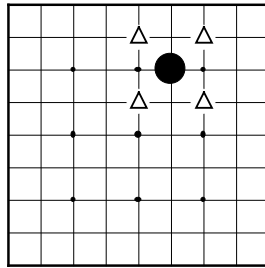
Notice how the stones are always placed on the intersections and not in the spaces. Once you place them down, they do not move. Usually Black—the weaker player—puts down the first stone.



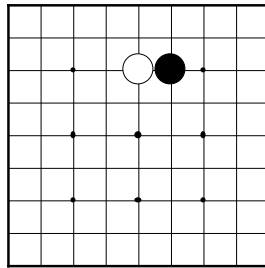
This stone has what we call four 'liberties.' The Chinese might say it has four 'breaths.' You can think of these liberties as being in the North, the South, the East and the West.



The diagonals are not liberties:

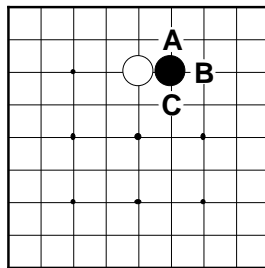


Now let's suppose White puts a stone down next to the Black one.



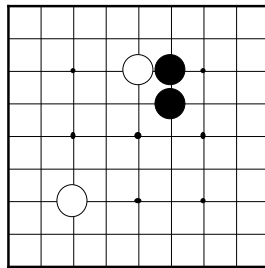
Now, how many liberties does the Black stone have?

If you guessed three, you are right.



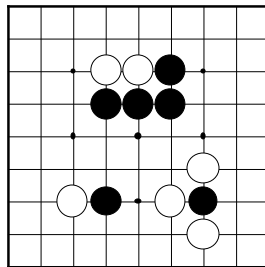
It is also easy to see that White in this situation also has three liberties. If you think of Go as a fight for liberties or breath you are on the right track. It is a game of 'living.'

Suppose White plays somewhere else and black plays like this:

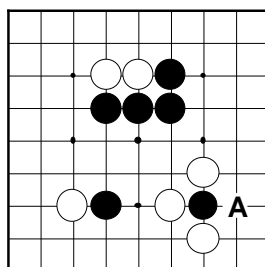


Black now has five liberties. Can you count them?

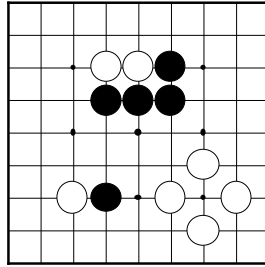
Lets skip ahead. A game is now in progress and a situation comes up in the bottom right-hand corner:



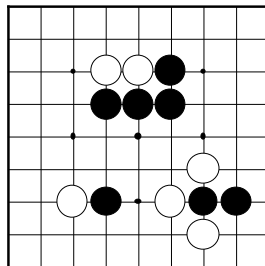
How many liberties does the Black stone have? One, of course. The Black stone is in, what we call in Japanese, '*atari*.' Because the Japanese were the first to introduce Go into America, we tend to use Japanese terms. '*Atari*' means something like 'check' in chess. If White puts a stone at 'A'



It is good-bye for Black!

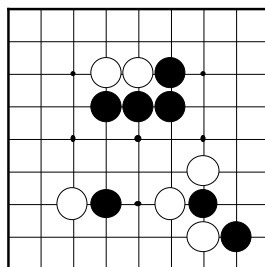


So what is a good strategy for Black if he or she— or 'it' if a computer is playing—doesn't want to lose that stone? Like the old Chinese proverb: 'of the 36 Strategies, the 36th is the best!'

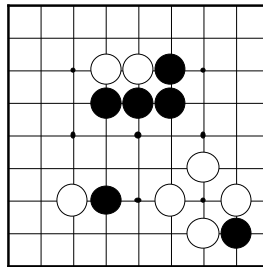


Black runs away.

Let's go back for a minute to review. Instead of running away, what if Black does this in the lower right hand corner?



Whoops! Remember, diagonal connections don't count:



I think you can begin to see why, simple as this principle of surrounding is, Go becomes at the highest levels of professional play, the world's most complicated board game and the idea is to 'share' the most territory. That is, you give some territory in one part of the board and try to take a little more than that in another part. It is a game of balance and constant judgement between taking profit now and building up strong positions that will take more profit later. We will see more of how this works in a few minutes.

Go is also the oldest game that is still being played—its age is from two to perhaps four thousand years.

Early legends of its founding involved mythical emperors of early China at around 2000 BC. There are literary records that date from about 700 BC. That is 1400 years before chess was invented.

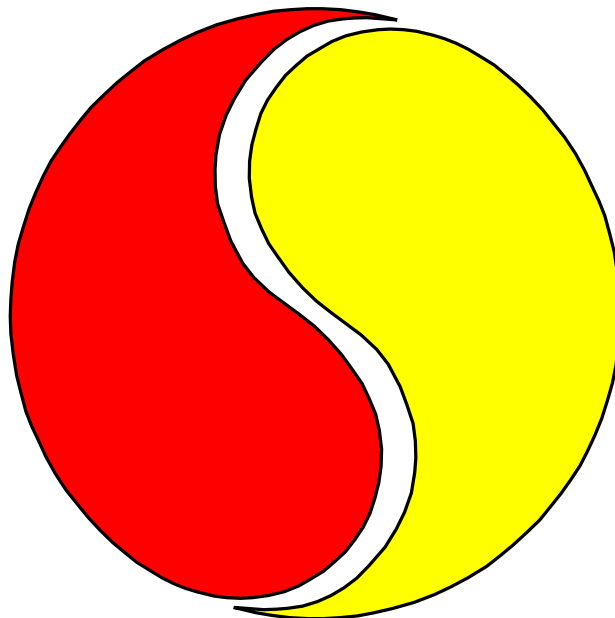
So why has this game intrigued so many people for so long? For a game to survive over this many years, anthropologists and common sense tell us that parents must have thought it was something worthwhile to teach their children.

However, cultural interests have changed not only over the centuries, but also over the generations. Many games our parents were enthusiastic about are doomed to be only footnotes in the March of Time. Has anyone played a game of Parcheesi recently? Or Canasta?

Go has appealed to all these different people for many different reasons. Today, in any Go club and now on the Internet, you will find

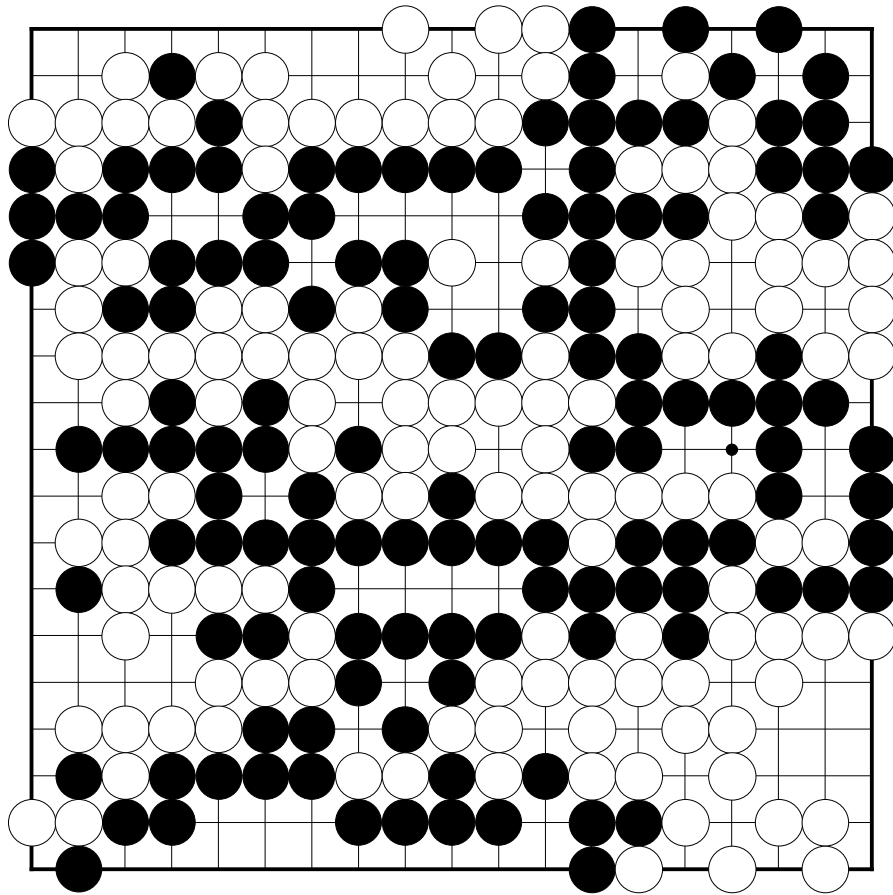
artists playing mathematicians, Americans playing Chinese, computer people playing politicians, Russians playing Koreans, children playing parents, the rich playing the poor . . .

I would like to illustrate this by talking about the history of Go in China and Japan for a few minutes. Go is in one sense a competitive game, but, in another sense, it gives vital lessons in harmony. Greed—the desire to have everything—will not get you very far on the Go board! In China, the ancient Taoists saw the principals of the balance of Yin and Yang at work.



(Show this to the audience) In the West, we tend to think of opposites as opposing each other. In the East, they tend to think of opposites as a whole. For example, with 'Right' and 'Left'—where does one end and the other begin? That, in a nutshell, is the story of Yin and Yang. There is a little bit of Yin in every Yang (*draw in the little dots in the Yin-Yang symbol*) and some Yang in every Yin. Go players tend to think that way, too, because Go is unlike most games. There is a score at the end—how much territory you have accumulated—but you never win a game 'completely'—it is always a matter of dividing things up. Go players tend to think of this in terms of 'sharing' or 'harmony.' You win by not trying to win too much.

Now here is a game that is nearly finished.



(Show this to the audience) White has surrounded territory in the upper left and in the lower right. *(Point to this on blow-ups)* You can see Black has some territory on the bottom. Other territories for both are entwined with each other like—Yin and Yang. Besides being a highly meaningful game in terms of its analogies with living life, we also tend to think of playing Go as a beautiful dance of the black and white stones. They are ‘in harmony.’

However, not everyone in China valued Go like the Taoists. Their ‘rivals,’ the Confucians—remember we are speaking in very general terms—thought Go playing was a waste of time—this was around 0 AD. Yet, five or six hundred years, it was the Confucians who were the most enthusiastic players! They were calling the game ‘hand-talk’ and Go was considered one of the ‘Four Great Accomplishments’ of any cultured gentleman. This is a typical picture *(show picture if possible of the Four Accomplishments)*—the other ones were music,

poetry, calligraphy and art. Sometimes, the Emperors would give rulerships to talented players. The common feeling was that if someone could control the 'microcosm,' they could certainly control the 'macrocosm.'

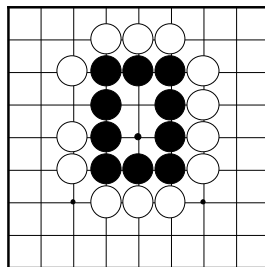
Alongside Taoism and Confucianism, the third great Chinese religion—Buddhism—swept through China in the third, fourth and fifth centuries AD. Those who achieved its 'Understanding' saw in the flow and patterns of a Go game a mirror of the universe. Playing Go was one technique used to lift off the '27 Veils of Ignorance.' By this, of course, the Buddhists meant 'spiritual' ignorance—not ignorance of the world and its mundane activities. With this knowledge, one could become immortal, like the Buddha.

Watch for a moment to see how groups on the Go board become immortal.

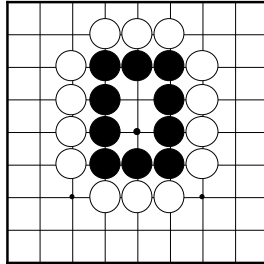
In the last example of our game on the small board, we saw what looked like various groups of connected stones chasing each other around.

There is one theory that the first Go players were children. Like we play marbles, they may have chased each other around on the Go board, capturing stones and maybe pocketing the spoils. There is even a theory that it was children playing with astrological paraphernalia left around by the shamans that got it all going.

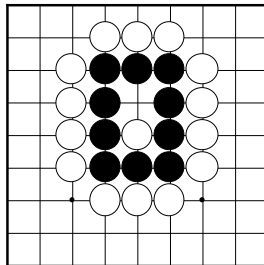
Eventually, someone got chased around in circle and the following happened:



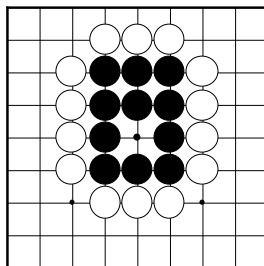
How many liberties does Black have now? If you guessed three, you are right. Next, White closes the circle.



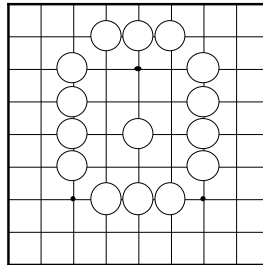
Black now has two liberties, right? Now, what if White plays here?



Black takes the White stone:



Black is down to one liberty. He, she or it is in *atari*! Next—Poof!

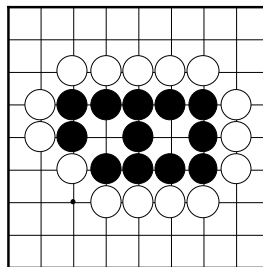


White suddenly has a lot of stones in his or her pocket!

Does Black have a way to prevent this?

(Usually no one guesses this, but occasionally there will be someone who does—i.e. let the audience participate as much as possible!)

What about this kind of group? How many liberties does it have?

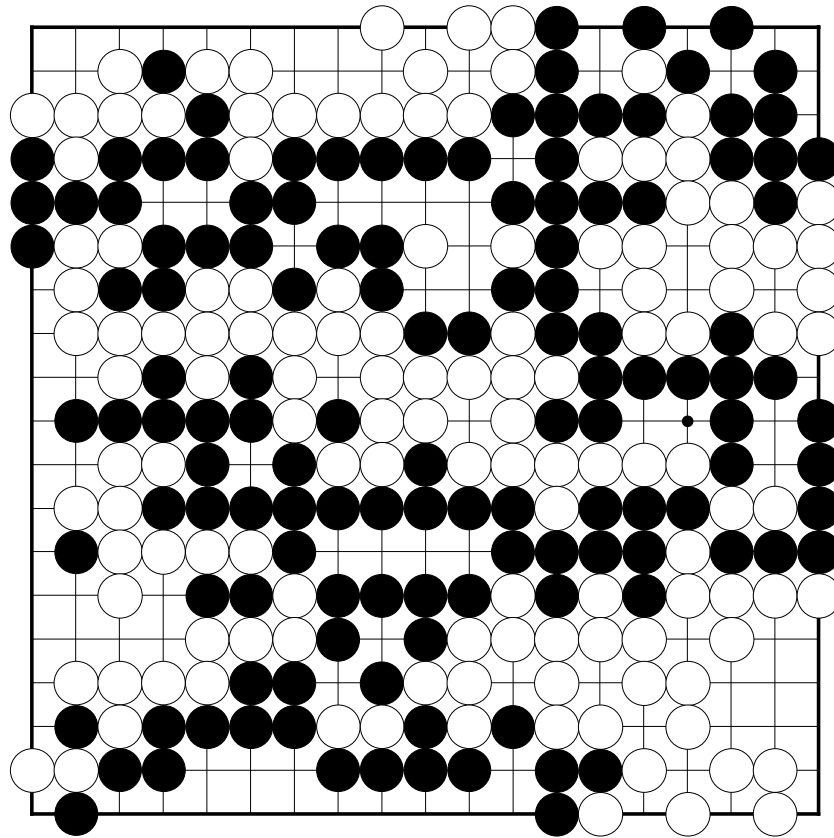


No matter what White does, Black will always have one liberty—forever. Right?

This is called a 'living group.' It is groups that are alive and in various stages of becoming alive (or dead) that we do our surrounding with to build up our territory. When I am playing, anything that is surrounded by a living group or parts of a living group 'belongs' to me!

In this case, black has two very solid points.

It is these kinds of groups that do the intertwining, the fighting, the dance of Go. Do you see the groups here? (*Point them out*)



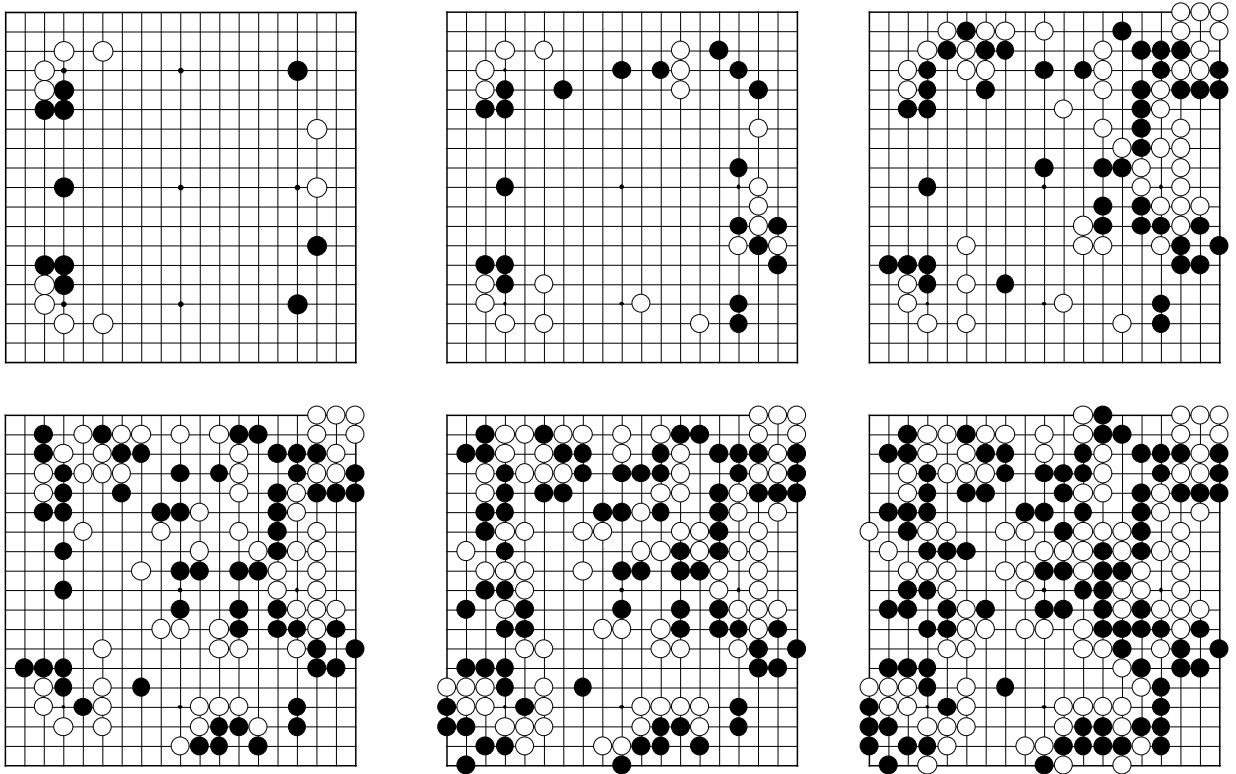
Are you starting to see some the magic of Go?

About the time that chess was being 'invented' in India or Persia—around 5-700 AD—Go had already spread from China to Japan and Korea. The Japanese enthusiastically incorporated it into their social system, seeing its mental gymnastics as invaluable for their warriors, philosophers, monks, princes, princesses and emperors.

(Show picture if possible of Genji peeking at women playing Go.)

In fact, the Japanese Emperors valued it so much that they founded four so-called 'Go houses' to do nothing but raise the level of expertise. For four hundred years during the Edo period—from about 1500 to early 1900—the members of these houses competed against

each other. To perpetuate themselves, the members scoured the countryside for budding young talents whom they would then adopt into their house. Needless to say, play substantially improved. We can chart this progress from game records. This game could have been played hundreds of years ago when one would have heard the soft clicking through the centuries of the original stones being played in the sacred recesses of a quiet temple.



Or it could have been played yesterday.

Meanwhile, Go became a regular feature of literature, poetry, plays and pictures. Here are some more woodcuts. This is from a legend of a giant spider, this is a kabuki play and this is a design on a kimono. There were also many beautiful poems written by Chinese, Koreans and Japanese about Go.

Show the appropriate Go World covers or calendars and pass them around along with a sheet of some of the lyrical and the humorous poetry.

In typical Japanese manner, not only was every detail of Go playing thoroughly analyzed and improved but also the aesthetic qualities were gone over in great detail. For example, Japanese Go boards were elongated slightly so that allowances for depth were made by the eye and the board appears square to the players. The traditional boards the aristocrats played on were 9 ½ inches thick and the players sat opposite on the floor.

*Show illustrations of Japanese playing on traditional Go boards.
Show a picture of the back of a traditional Go board.*

As you can see, the backs of these monster boards—which are still used today—have to be cut in a reverse pyramid to increase the amount of surface so they wouldn't crack. This is because the playing surface is exposed to more light.

The white stones were cut from only certain parts of certain clamshells from a certain beach. These so-called 'stones' were always played with the grain side up. The black stones were made from special shale dug from only one mine.

Show a photograph of a clamshell with holes cut in. Pass some clamshell and shale stones around.

The stones are just slightly larger than the distance between the intersections to conform to the Japanese ideal of slight disorder within order. Of course the wood of the boards was special, too. Only certain cuts from certain sections of 500 to a 1000-year-old kaya trees were used. The 'just-so' yellowish color of the kaya wood showed off the white and black stones to special effect. Just as important, it was so the stones—which are shaped like lozenges and held like this between the fingers . . .

Demonstrate.

. . . would make a special 'thunk' when played on the board.

Demonstrate.

This equipment is still made today but obviously, it can be fairly expensive. Fortunately, you can buy a perfectly adequate set for 20

or 30 dollars and we are giving away small boards and stones after the talk. Or you easily make one yourself. Beginning boards and cardboard stones come in some of the books on sale here. We are also going to give you a disk which has a powerful 9x9 playing program which we will talk about in a little while.

Show ordinary boards and stones

Not everyone has the time to play like they sometimes did in the Edo Period—games in those days often lasted for two or three days. In fact, one championship game lasted nine days and one of the players died afterwards from exhaustion.

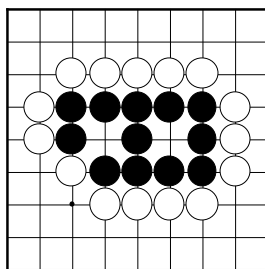
On the other hand, normal, ordinary games usually last less than an hour—slightly longer than a chess game. Nevertheless, when the classic civilizations collapsed in China and Japan, Go almost disappeared.

But then some curious things happened

At first, it was Japanese businessmen who noticed there was something special about how one's thinking tends to change after learning the principles of the game. As I said, Go is a game of balance and harmony. Just as in business markets, you cannot control *all* the territory all the time. In fact, you will fail miserably if you try to do this. This is not just my interpretation—professional players talk constantly of 'harmony,' both within themselves and with the world as being necessary for success on the board. Go is a game that cannot be won with aggressive tactics—for what you get, you must give up something. If you take early profit, you lose later influence. And vice-versa. If you try to take too much or too soon, your weaknesses will destroy you.

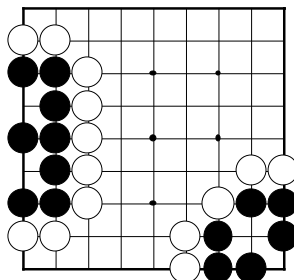
You can even think of your stones as 'money' that you are investing in different parts of the world. It is like Coke and Pepsi. Do you put money into Africa at the expense of China, for example? Do you risk an invasion, or try to reduce your rival from the 'outside,' so to speak? (*Point at board, etc.*)

This brings up the subject of 'efficiency.' Efficiency in Go can mean a lot of things. For example, in our immortally living group . . .



. . . notice how many stones or moves it took Black to secure two points. Eleven!

Now look at these two examples of living groups on the side and in the corner.



It took only eight stones to make what we call two 'eyes' on the side; and only six in the corner. That is efficiency!

But that is efficiency in only one sense—certain shapes are efficient for territory but there is another consideration. Territory is profit *now*. In business and life, though, there is the consideration that building influence *now* will result in bigger profits later!

We mentioned 'influence' vs. 'profit' before and the idea is that one generally one comes at the expense of the other on the Go board. Look at the result above. Black has four points but he, she or it is confined to the edges—I think you can see that White controls much more potential territory than Black since it will be hard for Black to build a 'living' group in the center without being captured.

There are other concepts, too, that we often use.

There is 'good shape' and 'bad shape.' Since it is often impossible to read out a sequence to see if a group is alive or not, we develop 'feelings' for good shapes—for shapes that are necessary for living. It is not efficient to dot every 'i' and cross every 'T.' You will notice that in the last groups shown that there are some corners missing. These missing corners can have meaning or not depending on their shape. *(Quickly show how different the effects of a white cutting stone would have in the three groups, ending with the one in the lower right corner.)*

These kinds of feelings for shapes—what is efficient and what will fall apart under pressure like our groups above—are especially important in the openings when so much is un-determined and fluid. You can't see everything that is going to happen. A Go board is six times the size of a chessboard and one calculation has it that there are more possible games of Go than there are atoms in the universe.

In that fluid, open state at the beginning, when so much of the board is empty, some psychologists have suggested that we might be using our right brain's artistic functions—our 'feelings'. In the end game—where calculations are being made on a smaller scale—we might be using more of our left brain. This is one reason why rote memorization is not a big factor in Go success. It is also a reason why computers have not had much success playing Go, either.

On the other hand, with all this complexity, there is a handicap system that can make everyone equal without distorting the game. We will show you more of that when it is time to play.

I'd like to continue with the history of Go in the twentieth century for a few more minutes before we play, because there are some more interesting things that happened in that time period.

With the end of the Edo and the disintegration of the old order in Japan, Go playing declined in the early 1900s. However, the military who defeated the Russians in 1905 kept on playing since the principles of Go are the same as those of the martial arts and Eastern ideas about war. If Sun Tze—who wrote the 'Art of War' in 500 BC—and Mao Tse Tung—who liberated China in the 1940's—and a professional Go player from today all sat down in the same room and

had a talk about strategies, they would understand each other completely.

If possible, show Go World cover of naval commander waiting to go into battle until the Go game is finished.

Then, in the 1920s, mass-market newspapers discovered there was a new large-scale audience for Go in the rapidly growing moneyed business classes. A professional league was organized. Famous players became household names. Again, it was because 'business-think' so resembles 'Go-think.' In fact, today, companies typically employ professional Go players to help keep their employees' minds active. If you include books on Chinese strategy—which is the same as Go strategy—there have been hundreds of books written in Hong Kong alone about the subject. In fact, Go is much more suitable than something like judo or flower arranging for learning something of the ideas behind the Eastern strategies of the martial arts. And it is not a moribund game in the sense that it is a 'dead game.'

For example, there is the constant development of new ideas about how to play in the fluidness of the opening. In the 1930s, the new science of air warfare encouraged Japanese players to look for opportunities in the center of the board rather than on the sides and corners.

Point to the center of the board and imitate bombs being dropped on the sides and corners

Even today, new opening styles are constantly being invented and many new 'josekis'—4 and 5 move combinations that are used in the openings—are being discovered every year.

Meanwhile, in war-traumatized China, Go languished but came back in a strong fashion after World War II, when it was declared the Chinese national game. In Japan, the effects of World War II democratized Go—there is a powerful book by Nobel Prize winner, Yasunari Kawabata . . .

Show 'The Master of Go.'

This is a hypnotic book about the last game of an old traditional champion as he tried to hold his own against a new, young professional in a match before the war. This book is still in print and available in this bookstore.

Now there is an even newer generation. If our parents thought things were speeding up too quickly, what about us? Go has kept pace in the computer age. In fact, Go has become *the* game for artificial intelligence programmers. They can't 'crunch' it with huge memories the way Big Blue crunched Garry Kasparov in chess. Even if they could, it would be impossible to play a game because it would take too long. In other words, the bridge, so to speak, of human thinking is still necessary. If any of you played more than a few months of casual Go, you could beat any program that has been made. There are no other popular games that can say this today. In fact, the Japanese have poured millions of dollars into a computer Go playing project, which failed, and there is a million-dollar prize for a computer program that will beat an average professional.

Show the recent NYTimes Science Page article on computers. Leave copies on table

So today, for the large part, Go is still played between people. It has spread out over the world and membership in American and European Go organizations have doubled every few years for the last several decades. A new development is that you can now watch or play at any time of the day or night on the Internet with people in China, Japan, Korea, Russia, and Europe. The best sites for beginners are at the Microsoft and Yahoo! 'game rooms.' They are divided into 'advanced' and 'beginner' sections. All you have to do is log on and you can play. For more advanced players, there are a dozen websites you play on. Some are international and some cater more to individual countries. There is also an Internet news group for Go called rec.games.go. All this information is on the fliers at the table along with copies of the NY and LA *Times* articles.

People play Go for many reasons. I have played Go for xx years and particularly love it because xxxxxxxx, My friends here play because xxxxxxxx. We are members of the local Go club, which is located at xxxxxxxx, and it meets on xxxxxxxx. We invite you to come down for a visit. We have a beginner's night every xxxxxxxx and children's

classes every xxxxxxx. All the information is on these handouts. If you are interested in having some literature sent to you or any of your friends, there is a sign-up sheet on the table here.

We have donated our time here, but the reason the bookstore has invited us is, of course, to sell books. These are the introductory books that this store carries, and we would like you to take a look at them. They are all good; they, like people, are all different, but they can all teach you how to play Go. Some have been in print for decades, others are newer. Once you know a few basics, there are 'big board' computer programs that can be bought (*or are on sale here???*) and some of these programs are installed and can be played on the Internet site. This store also carries more advanced books for when you reach a higher level.

Thank you for coming. Do you have any questions?

Encourage questions (a few 'plants' will liven things up!) The most obvious question will be about the diagonal connections in the small board double-eye groups—this can be explained as an example of 'efficiency'—i.e. you can explain to them that 'if you don't need it, you shouldn't waste time playing it.' Of course, you should explain that it helps to be right in one's calculations! Another common question will be about the star points.

Inevitably, comparisons with chess will crop up. Most teachers have said that it doesn't help Go to trivialize chess. You can explain that they are just different games and let them make their own conclusions.

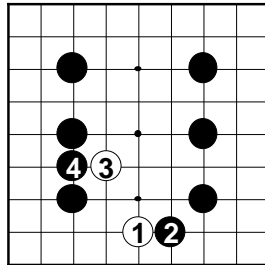
When the questions are finished, you can ask,

If you remember, I mentioned that there are two basic principles of Go. One was that if you are surrounded, you come off the board. If you are curious about the second one, please sit down and we'll try a game. That rule is that, again like life or maybe a river, no position can repeat itself. To understand how this works, though, we need to play a game. Don't be shy! After a few more minutes of 'on-board' practice, with the proper handicap, you will be able to play anyone in the world. If you play a game it also entitles you to a gift of a small board computer program. The small board is about the size of a

chess board so computers can handle it with considerable skill. If you win against the computer, you will go up a rank or two. If you lose, well, . . . *(If someone is able to bring a laptop with them)* One of us will demonstrate how to play this program afterwards. Also, on the disk is a complete tutorial beginning, well, from the beginning. We have a second disk that will enable you to play games and record them and try variations along with further information on how to play on the Internet. These are all free.

A quick demonstration game also might be played between a newer player from the club and a better player, depending on time and interest.

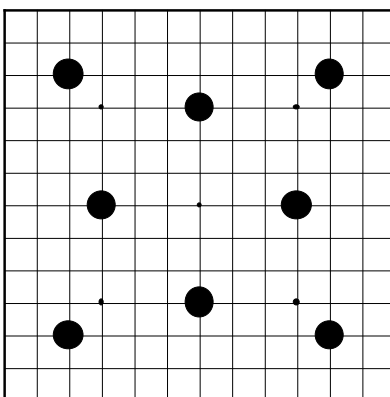
Barbara Calhoun, who has taught well over a hundred people to play Go, has found that beginning with a six stone handicap on a 9x9 board offers excitement for everyone. About the only hints she offers is that it is to Black's advantage to make 'fat' shapes, and to keep White 'thin' by using the sides and corners.



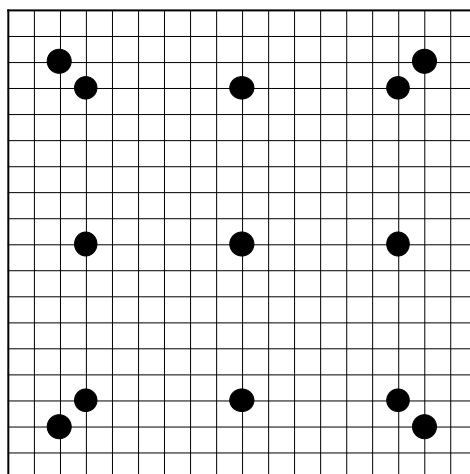
After the game, she would explain how Black 2 is 'efficient'—meaning it has many meanings—protecting the corner, putting pressure on White, etc.

Usually, the beginners lose the first game, but win the second. Then she goes to five stones and then after they win at five one time, they go to four (unless it was a real fluke win). After they win at four stones two times, she goes to 13x13 (which you can point out is four times the size of a chessboard). If they lose, they stay at the same handicap until they win. In the meantime, her strategy is only to keep rigorous track of liberties and wait until they make a mistake.

The 13x13 board is about twice the size of the 9x9 so if they can handle it at four stones on the 9x9, it means that an 8 or 9 stone handicap is appropriate on the 13x13.



Note how she puts the corner stones at the 3-3 points. The purpose of moving to the 13x13 is to allow them to learn about the center, which was not as possible on the 9x9 board. They should understand the corners by now. After they win at 6 stones, she sometimes moves the corner stones to the 4-4 points or else goes on to 19x19 with 13 stone handicaps (the regular 9 points plus the 3-3 points) since the 19x19 is about twice the size of the 13x13.



Again, she recommends one-game rather than three-game 'kadobans' i.e. advancements or retreats in the handicap. Also, she strongly thinks that moves should not be taken back and that no team go (two people discussing moves) be allowed. She regards these as teaching games so if she is winning by, say, 10 points, she won't try anything tricky to win by a larger margin. However, she always plays to win!

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Some other notes for the AGA readers: Publicity for the talk is everything. Contact with the local newspapers, radio talk show, TV news, etc. is vital! If all goes well, the store will probably welcome a semi-annual or annual return. There are usually other places to hold these talks, too, for example in schools, YMCAs, and in rival bookstores. By the way, there are more than several Borders, Barnes and Noble and Independent bookstores that invite Go clubs meet in their coffee areas. You could put up a shout on the AGA Chapter email to ask for accounts of those experiences.

Beforehand, the hosting club could think about having the possibility of some kid-oriented classes already set up so listeners can attend with their kids. This would facilitate getting demonstration dates at local schools, also.