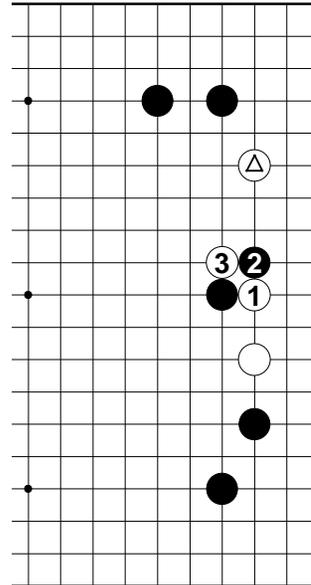


Basic Position Twenty-one



**WHEN WHITE ATTACHES AND CUTS WITH 1 AND 3,
WHAT IS BLACK'S BEST RESPONSE?**

The ladder is a weapon

This position comes up frequently in games with handicaps of 6 stones or more. Since the triangled White stone is present, Black should not expect to reap a big profit, but there is a variation that leads to a good position.

Proper Black Attitude

If the ladder is favorable, it should be used as a weapon. Of course, the simplest approach is the best.

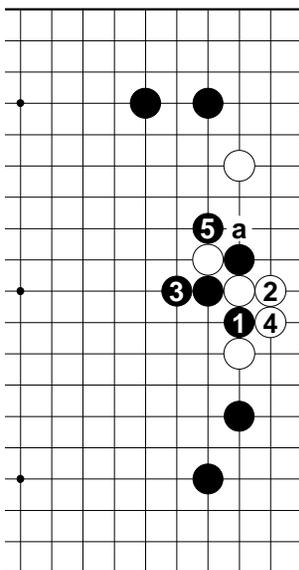


Diagram 1 (Ladder)

The correct sequence is to give *atari* with 1 and then pull back with 3. If White crosses under with 4, Black should be satisfied to capture a stone in a ladder with 5.

This combination of 1 and 3 can be applied to a lot of positions, not just the one in the current diagram.

It's also possible for Black to try playing at a to get a little more out the position, but in a handicap game it's better to take the simple course with the ladder at 5. Continuing after 5...

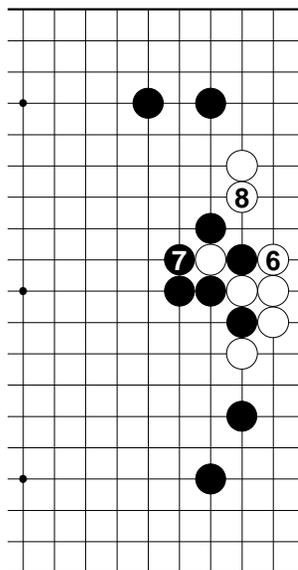


Diagram 2 (Black gains thickness in sente)

White has no option but to cross under with 6. Black gets a ponnuki with 7. White 8 completes the connection, but Black's thickness is better. What's more, Black has sente.

In a handicap game, it's important to be able to give up a little bit of territory like this to gain thickness. From the stronger player's standpoint, opponents who can do this are much harder to give stones to.

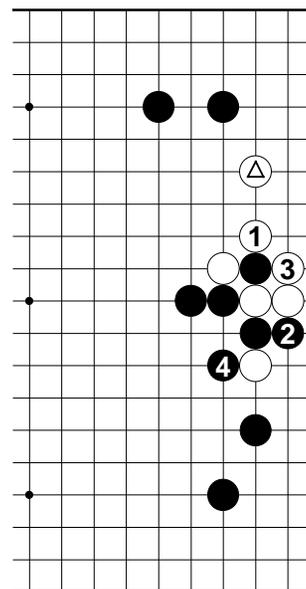


Diagram 3 (Black is thick)

Instead of crossing under with White 4 in Diagram 1, gripping a stone with White 1 in the current diagram falls in with Black's plans. Black cuts White in half with 2 and White has no choice but to capture with 3. Black makes shape with 4 and has a good position.

Looking at White's position, the spacing between the ponnuki at 1 and the triangled stone is not right. This is exactly what is meant by "over-concentrated position."

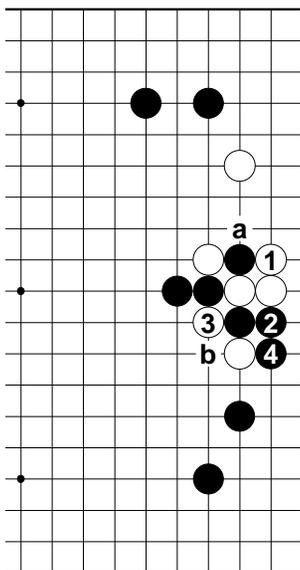


Diagram 4 (Bad aji for White)

By giving *atari* underneath at 1, White is straining to get an advantage, but this clearly leaves bad *aji*.

Black calmly comes down with 2. White can cut with 3, but Black simply bends around with 4.

Now Black is threatening to come out with *a*, so White will doubtless capture there and Black will cut at *b*. This result is not much different from the result in Diagram 3.

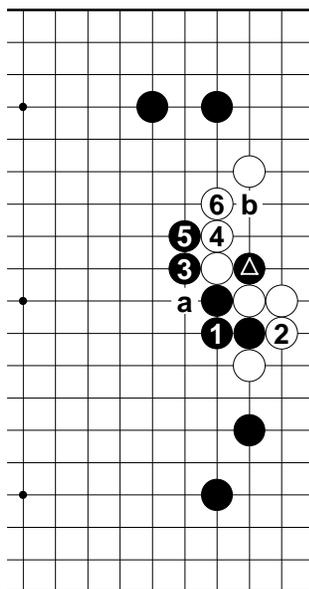


Diagram 5 (Wrong path 1)

Connecting at 1 instead of extending to *a* is not good for Black. Of course White will cross under with 2, and now simply sacrificing the triangled stone with 3 and 5 is a bit sad.

At very least it would be better for Black to attach at 6 instead of playing 5. Then if White responds with *b*, Black gives *atari* with 5 and compresses White's position a little.

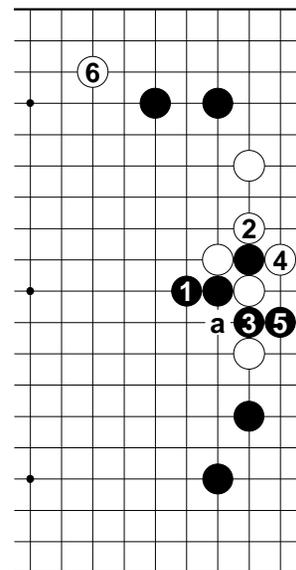


Diagram 6 (Wrong path 2)

Immediately pulling back with 1 is also not good. White will give *atari* with 2, Black gives *atari* with 3 and White makes a *ponnuki* with 4.

Black now has no choice except to continue with 5, but this lets White turn to the attack with 6. What's more, White still has the possibility of cutting at *a*. Compare this result carefully with Diagram 3.

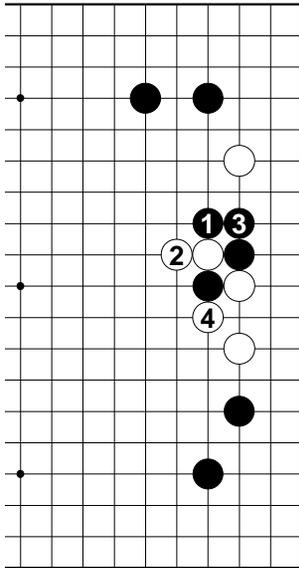


Diagram 7 (Almost as good)

If the ladder in Diagram 1 is not good for Black, then giving *atari* and connecting with 1 and 3 is a straightforward line of play that is almost as good as the correct solution. If White plays 4...

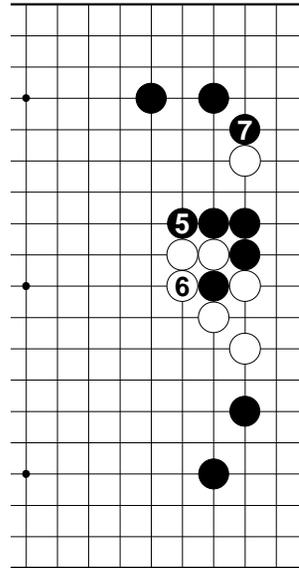


Diagram 8 (Simple for Black)

Black forces with 5 and then attaches with 7. This is an easy line to play for Black.

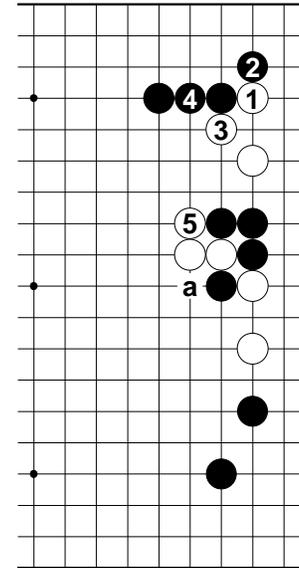


Diagram 9 (Possible complications)

However, instead of 4 in Diagram 7, White can look for complications by attaching in the corner with 1 and 3 in the current diagram. After Black 4, White starts a complicated fight with 5. It follows, therefore, that instead of 2 Black should resist with *a*. At any rate, this is a less attractive alternative than Diagram 1