

Korean Rule

Many mysteries are still remaining about the history of Korean Baduk. At least for a long time a special rule called **Sunjang Baduk** was used, and it was even used at the early 20th century. Since then, Korea adopted modern Baduk through Japan, and many people even assume that Korea shared the Baduk rule with Japan until recently. However, according to Prof. Jeong Soo-Hyun, even before 1992, Korea Baduk Association already had a simple rulesets including a few special rulings on disputable shapes. In 1992, a more complete **Korean Rule of Baduk** is announced and it basically tried to resolve disputes through the **concept of rights**, though it ended up including many special rulings. One important point of comparison is that this ruleset judges that the combined moonshine life in Figure 3.40 is dead. This Korean rule document is still widely circulated on the internet and many people have the false belief that it is the most up to date Korean rule even though it is far from the truth, and I have even saw some hybrid rulesets mixing the 1992 version and later version.

Since 1992, the Korean rule has been revised a few times. One available version is the 2009 Korean rule which was listed in 2009 Korean Baduk White Paper. (김달수, 2014) mentions a few other rules such as 2010 Korean rule and 2011 Sports Toto Baduk rule. The most recent Korean rule with an English version is the 2013 [Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games Baduk Rule](#), and a similar Korean text for 2015 [Korean National Sports Festival](#) is also available.¹ This 2013 version has another advantage that it included [attachment 1](#) and [attachment 2](#) explaining how the rule has to be applied. A Baduk rule expert, Robert Jasiak, did a great job keeping these historical documents and make [commentary](#) on them.

While I was preparing this book, the situation became much more clearer, and the [2016 Korean Baduk rule](#) is now announced on the homepage of the Korean Baduk Association, and this is the most recent Korean Baduk rule. Even though it tries to resolve all issues with one simple principle, I do not think it has gained much success as it claims, and the lack of detailed examples makes it much harder to understand. The Korean Baduk Association did not announce its English version, and for your better understanding of the current situation of the Korean rule, I will present a direct translation of the 2016 Korean rule here. The current Korean rule is practically identical to the 2013 Asian Game rule, and I will use some texts from this version. Most readers will agree that the 2013 rule is a written in a better way than the current Korean rule. For example, the 2013 rule defines the concept of a group but the 2016 version does not. Anyway, I intentionally chose to make a direct translation of

¹ However, many of these rules were not the official Korean Baduk Association rule.

the Korean text of the 2016 Korean rule. Afterwards, I will make some comments with the help of 2009, 2010 and 2011 versions. Please understand that I have made a few technical modification of texts and figures due to the bookbinding and game drawing software issues.

6.1 Korean Rule of Baduk

Article 1. Baduk is

Baduk is a game in which two players, Black and White, compete on a board, by alternately playing a Black/White Baduk stone at an intersection on the board. The territory and captured stones are added and the player owning more of them wins the game.

Article 2. Baduk Equipment

1. Board

The Baduk board is marked by 19 horizontal and 19 vertical straight lines forming a grid with 361 intersections.

2. Stones

It is recommended to provide 181 black stones and 180 white stones for each set.

3. Container

1) It contains the stones.

2) The cover of the container is used to keep the captured stones.

Article 3. Placement(Move)

1. Black plays the first move.

2. Black and White alternatively place one stone at an intersection.

3. The move is made on a point where the stone touched first. If the touched position is not an intersection, the move is made on the nearest point. Once the stone touches the board, a move must be made.

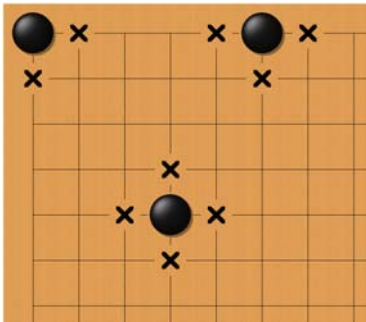
4. Once a stone is placed on the board, it cannot be moved to another place on the board.

Article 4. Liberty

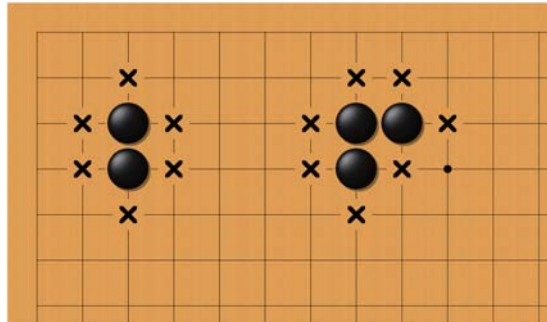
1. Liberty

An empty intersection immediately adjacent to a single stone is called a liberty. (X points of <Diagram 1>)

The liberties of a connected stones are the addition of the liberties of each stone, as shown in <Diagram 2>.



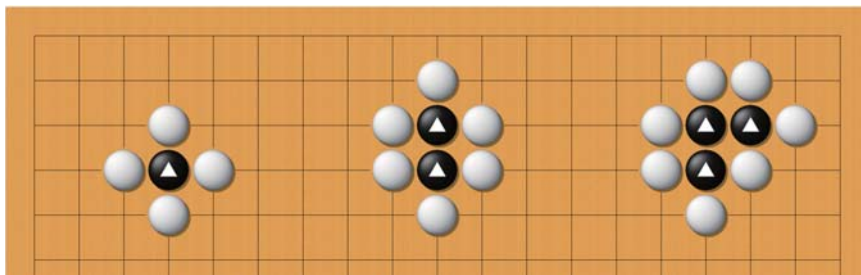
⟨Diagram 1⟩



⟨Diagram 2⟩

2. Capture

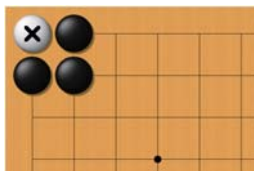
If one player's stones surround all the liberties of the opponent's stone(s) as shown in ⟨Diagram 3⟩, the stones without liberty are removed from the board. This action is called a 'capture'.



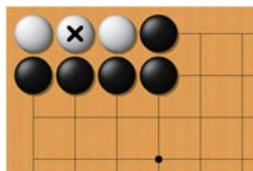
⟨Diagram 3⟩ White captures Black ▲ stones.

Article 5. Forbidden intersection

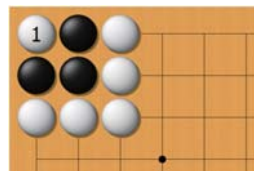
A player cannot place a stone at an intersection if that move results in no liberty for the stone as shown in ⟨Diagram 4-1⟩ and ⟨Diagram 4-2⟩ because it creates a shape that the opponent captures. However, a player can place a stone at the intersection if it is a capturing move as shown in ⟨Diagram 4-3⟩ and ⟨Diagram 4-4⟩.



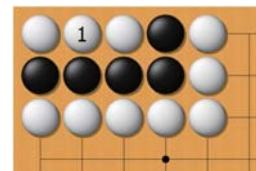
⟨Diagram 4-1⟩



⟨Diagram 4-2⟩



⟨Diagram 4-3⟩

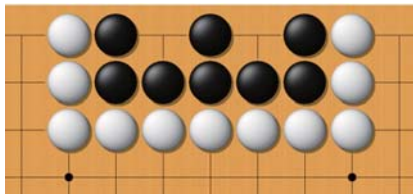


⟨Diagram 4-4⟩

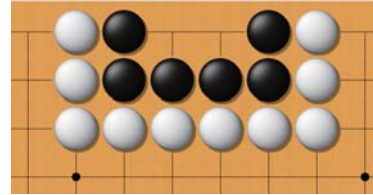
Article 6. Life and Death of Stones

All uncapturable stones are alive and all capturable stones are dead.

1. The Black stones in ⟨Diagram 5⟩ have two liberties, and White cannot make a move on any of them. Therefore, these Black stones are alive.
2. The Black stones in ⟨Diagram 6⟩ also have two liberties, but White can remove them by placing stones. Therefore, these Black stones are dead.



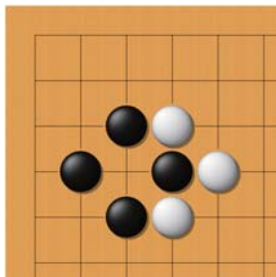
⟨Diagram 5⟩



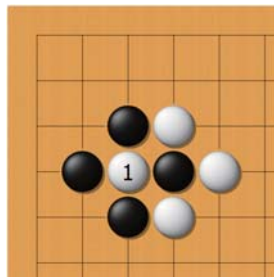
⟨Diagram 6⟩

Article 7. Ko

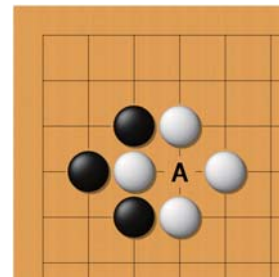
A shape in which Black and White can alternately capture and recapture one of opponent's stones is called "Ko". In this case, a player can recapture a ko after making one or more moves on other places (ko threat). (See ⟨Diagram 7-1~7-3⟩—White 1 or Black A).



⟨Diagram 7-1⟩



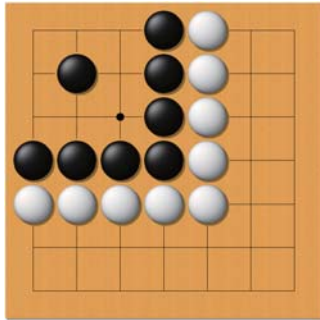
⟨Diagram 7-2⟩ White captures first



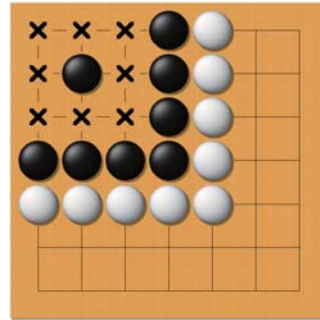
⟨Diagram 7-3⟩ Black cannot immediately play at A

Article 8. Territory and Neutral Point

1. Territory consists of points surrounded by live stones. Each intersection is one point. ⟨Diagram 8-1, 8-2⟩

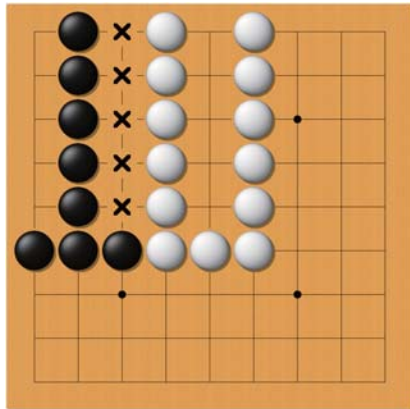


⟨Diagram 8-1⟩

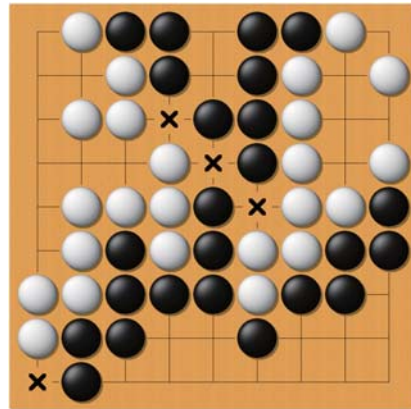


⟨Diagram 8-2⟩

2. The empty point that Black and White cannot make a territory is called a Neutral point. (⟨X of Diagrams 9 and 10⟩). Neutral points must be filled alternately.



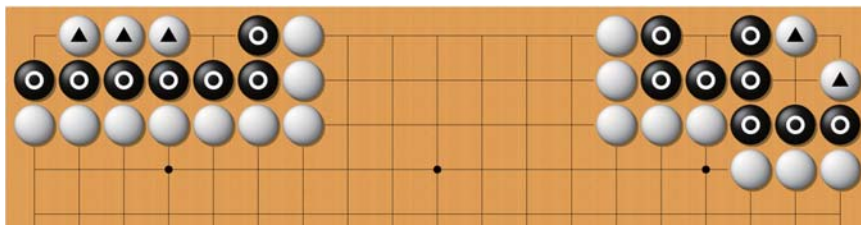
⟨Diagram 9⟩



⟨Diagram 10⟩

Article 9. Seki

A seki is a shape in which Black and White stones adjacent to one or more neutral point(s) coexist. The seki is excluded in the process of territory counting.



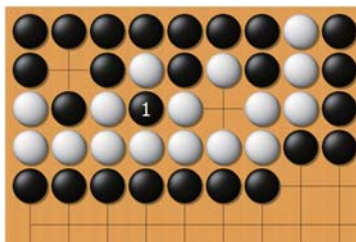
⟨Diagram 11⟩

Article 10. Recreation of the same whole board position

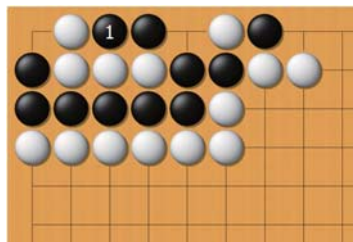
A whole board repetition is returning to the same whole board position after a certain number of sequences.

1. Situations that both players can repeat

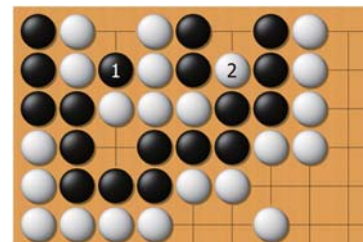
If both players repeat, the game ends with a draw. 1) triple ko (Diagram 12) 2) eternal life (Diagram 13) 3) round robin ko (Diagram 14) 4) Two double ko (Diagrams 15, 16 and 17) 5) three-point eternal life (Diagram 18)



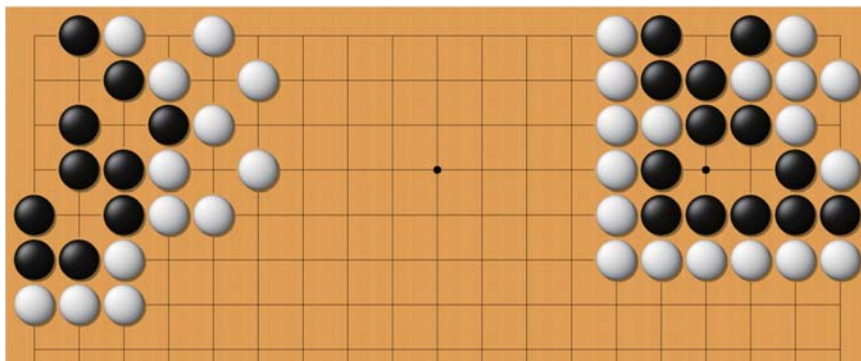
⟨Diagram 12⟩



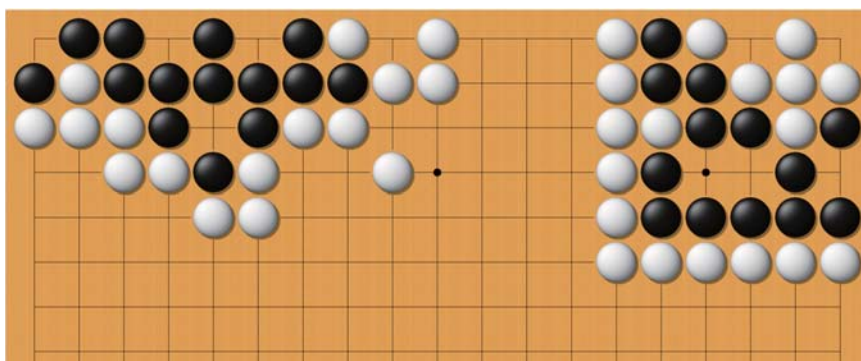
⟨Diagram 13⟩



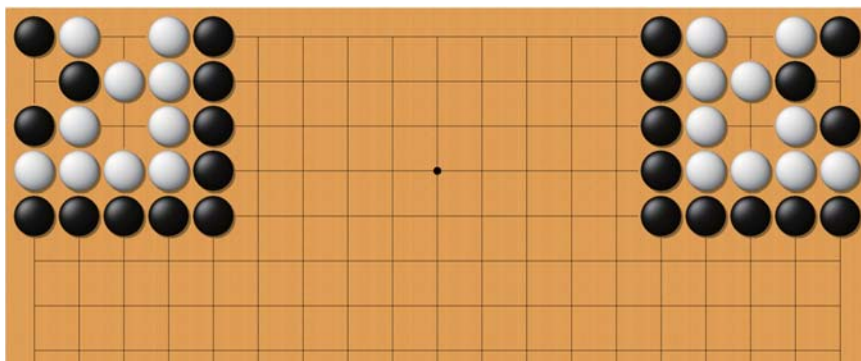
⟨Diagram 14⟩



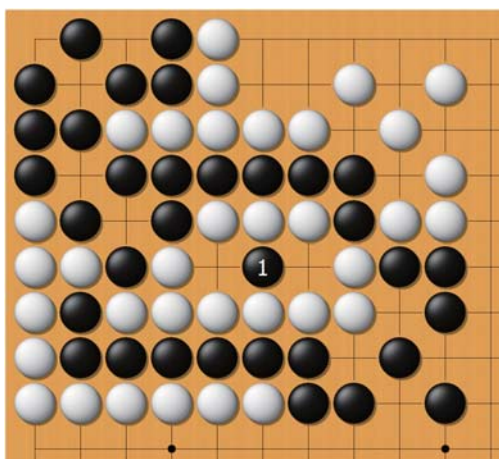
⟨Diagram 15⟩



⟨Diagram 16⟩



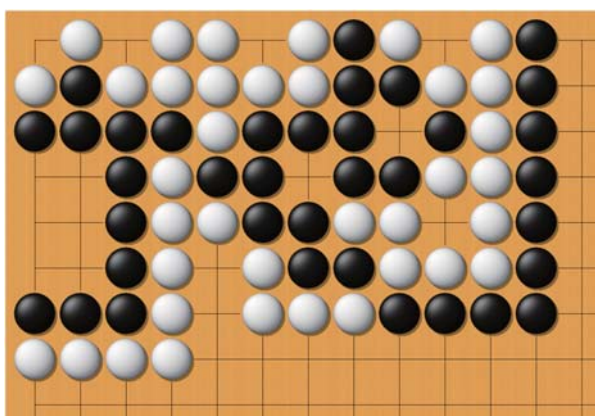
⟨Diagram 17⟩



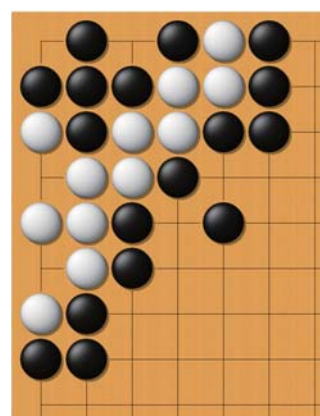
⟨Diagram 18⟩

2. Situations that only one player can repeat

For situations like ⟨Diagram 19⟩ and ⟨Diagram 20⟩, the game ends with a draw if Black repeats.



⟨Diagram 19⟩



⟨Diagram 20⟩

Article 11. Ending the Game

pass

If a player thinks that one does not need to make a move, the player must express it to the opponent. (e.g. “Please keep playing”). The game continues if the opponent makes a move. If the opponent also passes, the life and death of stones are judged after separating the local shaped. The game ends when no more moves are available.

Article 12. Scoring and Decision of Winner

1. Each player fill in the opponents’ territory using captured stones.
2. The player with the more territory wins.

This is the Korean Baduk rule specifying how the game should be played on the board. The 2016 rule includes another text specifying **Competition Codes** such as board, stones, clocks, overtime, starting and ending of the game, and referee’s role. I will not explain such competition codes in this book.

6.2 Interpretation and Criticism

The readers who have been following this book will agree that there are many problems in the current text of the Korean rule, and I will make comments on each article in this section. This section is short not because there are small number of problems, but because there are so many ambiguous sentences, I cannot do anything other than just saying that they are ambiguous. I also postponed a few common criticism on the territory rule to the next chapter where Japanese rule is explained. Therefore, when you read the next chapter, I recommend you to think how the shapes presented there should be judged in the Korean rule.

Comments on Articles 1, 2 and 3

A few Baduk terms are defined quickly, and the palying method is explained. Terms are not clearly defined, but such a lack of rigorosity can be compensated without much problem, so I will not spend too much time pointing them out. However, at least I feel like to say that territory must be clearly defined later for the expression “territory and captured stones” to be meaningful. In the 3rd article, “Black and White alternatively place one stone” sounds like that a pass is prohibited before the end of the game, but it is contradictory to article 11.²

Comments on Articles 4 and 5

² If you play on the internet, your client probably has an “pass” button that can be pressed at any time, provided that you are willing to take the loss. The readers who are accustomed to the system may be surprised, but according to the interpretation of Kim Soojang who is the practical author of the current Korean rule, a pass is only allowed when it is necessary.