



English Title: Yi Ch'ang-ho Hamete 10-Times Easier to Learn (21st Century Baduk Special Topics Series Vol. 6)

Korean Title: 이창호 함정수 10배 쉽게 배우기 (21세기 바둑특강 시리즈 6)

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Audience: Advanced

Rating: ●●●○○

Summary: The authors provide a fair, first hamete book to learn from, but its inconsistent editing and restricted layout make it all the more important for readers to consider a different or additional hamete book.

Hamete is a Japanese word referring to a subset of trick plays. They are non-standard joseki variations whose correct reply requires an understanding of high-level techniques. In contrast, a non-hamete trick play is more narrow, easily seen through, and not necessarily a non-standard joseki variation.

The study of hamete has long been an area for stronger players -- already in possession of a wide range of joseki and wishing to deepen their understanding of joseki subtleties. I remember a nice passage that Kageyama Toshiro 7d wrote about his experience with trick plays more broadly:

Just the words "trick play" conjure up images of swindling, of taking the low road, of dirty underhandedness; going so far as to consider that the aesthetics of the game of go are sullied by them. Should one clumsily apply such research and study, one might even find imputations directed against one's character. What miserable soul would devote serious attention to these kinds of matters?

In fact, in the past I too thought that way. That was around the time that I was amateur 1 kyu or shodan.

However, seeing a trick play in the classical praxis of Honinbo Dosaku turned my attitude 180 degrees around. Is it likely that a Meijin whose name has

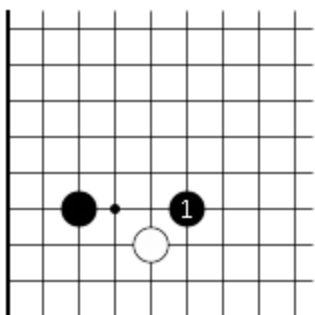
gone down in the annals of history would use a so-called vicious technique, I asked myself, and without even verifying the facts of the situation, I looked beyond the unpleasant nuances of the words "trick play" and felt ashamed of my own narrow-minded thinking. Since that time I have assiduously researched trick plays. And at the same time I have realized that an appreciation of the fascination inherent in trick plays has been instrumental in boosting my strength in go, insofar as it has made apparent the interrelationship and operation of the stones and skillful technique. (A Compendium of Trick Plays, p. 78)

Yi Ch'ang-ho Hamete 10-Times Easier to Learn is volume six of the *21st Century Baduk Special Topics Series* and is written in Korean. It was published in 2007 by Dasan Publishing and addresses the topic of hamete (or "hamcheongsu" in Korean).

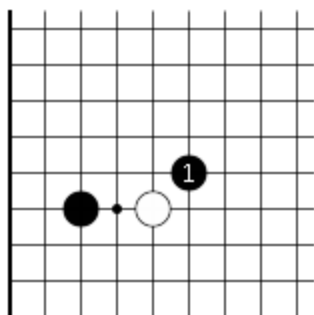
The aim of the book is, as the title says, to make learning hamete easier. It does this by eschewing the dozens of diagrams for each situation that most hamete books include and instead focusing on only two or three per situation. The book is divided into three sections. The first two have two situations on the front page and four diagrams on the back (two for each situation). The first diagram will always be the Correct Variation, while the second will be either a Failure, Continuation, Opponent Variation, or Correct Variation 2. The third section has a bit more space, with one situation on the front and three diagrams on the back. In addition to each sections' diagrams are accompanying question/explanation text.

The aforementioned layout leads to two clear benefits. First, by having a set amount of diagrams a consistent study schedule is easier to maintain: compared to a random number of diagrams in a normal hamete book (anywhere from 5-30) readers know exactly what they're in for every time they pick up the book. Second, since the first solution diagram is always the Correct Variation it makes learning the hamete much easier -- no diagram or text hunting is required to find the Correct Variation. Similarly, the second or third solution diagram is often the Failure. This gives readers the feeling of confidence, because they then know how to play both sides of the position -- that is, how to reply correctly and punish a failure.

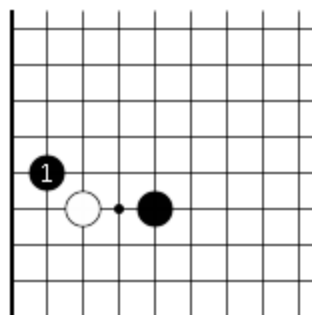
The book also benefits rereading. Curious and studious readers will have the opportunity to uncover subtle insights between the various situations. For example, the following three positions all involve shoulder hits. Are there any relationships between the solutions? Do some variations work in some situations but not in others, and why?



Situation 1, p. 105



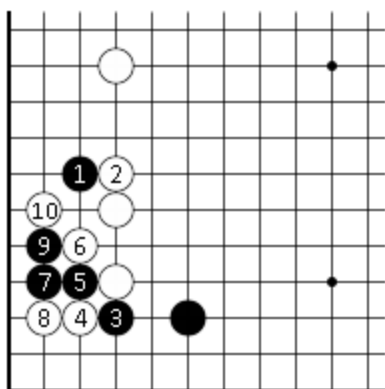
Situation 11, p. 119



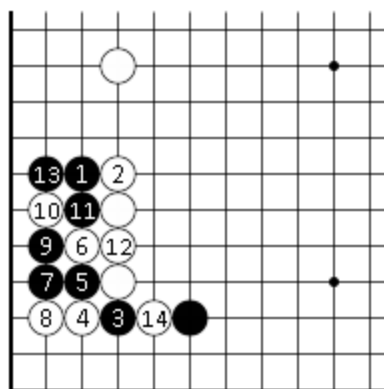
Situation 19, p. 195

After learning some initial hamete readers will be able to engage in comparative analysis, using the sequences they've already learned as starting points. Personally, I enjoy books that offer these kinds of opportunities and rewards to the attentive reader.

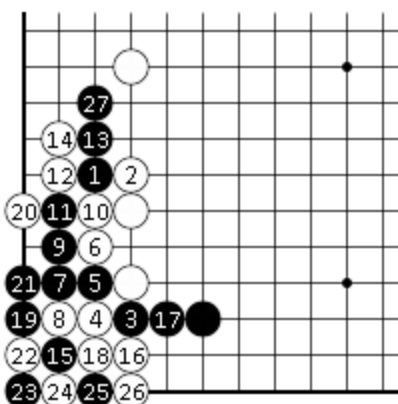
However, the unique layout is also the book's Achilles' heel. Some hamete have more than one correct solution while others have a more complex, yet common, solution. The restricted layout means that neither of these facets are usually addressed. Part and parcel of this is the book's poor economy of numbering in diagrams, such as using both solution diagrams to show a 14-move solution instead of one. This isn't the case of trying to keep things simple for readers, because there also exist single diagrams with over twenty moves. One example is situation 13. The book uses both its diagrams to show one variation, when better numbering could have allowed it to fit in a second, more dangerous variation.



Situation 13, Solution Diagram 1



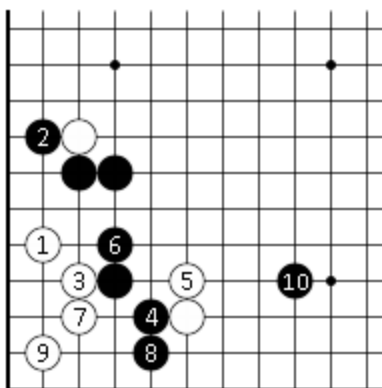
Situation 13, Solution Diagram 2



Better numbering could have allowed it to also address this dangerous variation.

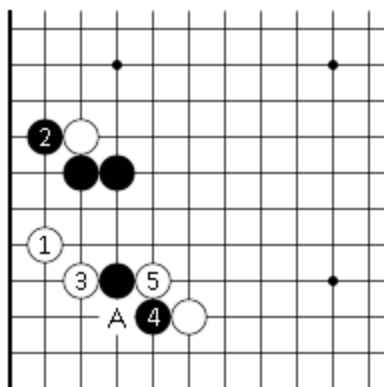
Aside from some of the limitations of the layout are several glaring errors, inconsistencies and duplicate situations.

The errors come in the form of wrong solutions. The strange part is that all of these wrong solutions could have been avoided by quickly thumbing through any number of other hamete books. This gives off a feeling of laziness and indifference by the authors and editors. For example, situation 45.



Situation 45, book solution

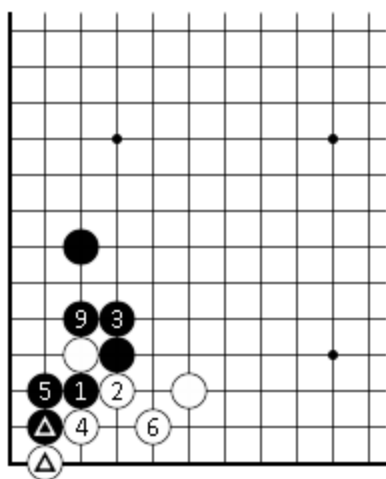
The key move here is Black 4, which is blatantly wrong thanks to a superb tesuji by White. In fact, the tesuji is famous in this position.



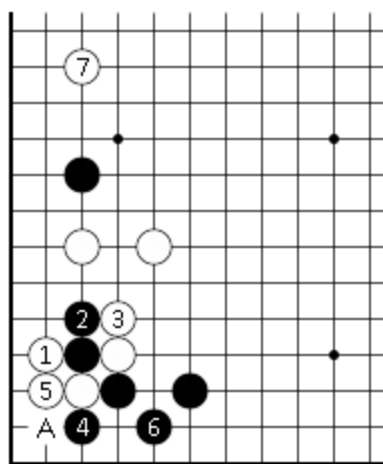
White's tesuji

There are many variations after this, but the end result is that Black should play Black 4 @ 'A' -- not the book's solution.

As for the inconsistencies, identical solutions will vary for no apparent reason leading to confusion from the reader. It may seem like a fun opportunity for critical thinking, but for the reader who just wants the right solution or has limited time to study it's a hassle. Two examples can be seen in situations 32/35 & 33/36.

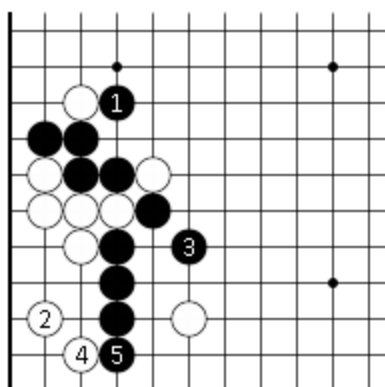


Situation 32: Black makes the marked exchange

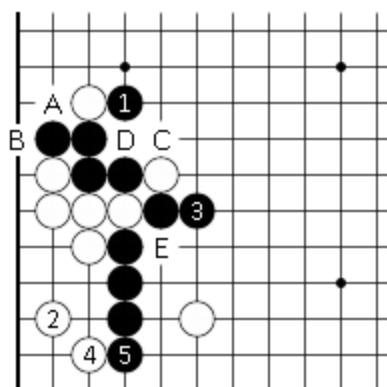


Situation 35: The same exchange is omitted

'A' is a double sente move for both players. It involves the safety of two groups and giving free points, so should be played in situation 35 as well.



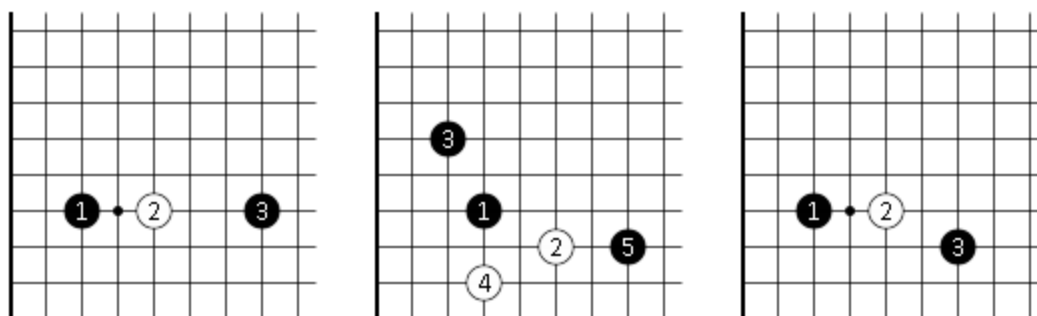
Situation 33



Situation 36

Both situations place Black 3 in a different position. So which is correct? Which should you be playing in your games? The truth of the matter is that situation 36 is correct. After White tries to move his stones with something like White A, Black B, White C, Black D, Black 3 in situation 36 is better placed to deal with White's various ploys (the cut at E isn't an issue).

An exciting part of reviewing hamete books is seeing which hamete the authors choose. This book is divided into three sections: *4-4 Point*, *3-4 Point*, and *Other* -- with the last section containing mostly taisha and 5-4 point hamete. The 4-4 and 3-4 point sections have a thoughtful selection, choosing more modern hametes and removing some of the less relevant ones. For example, the following three modern positions each have hamete, while some of Dosaku's older, but famous ones aren't included.



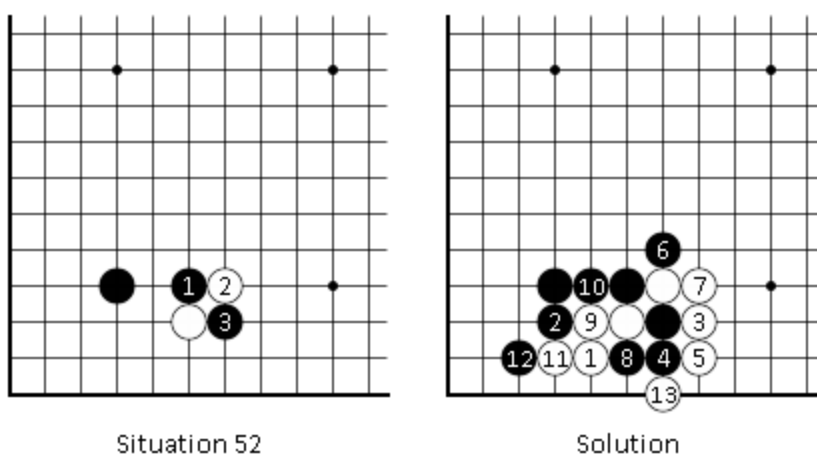
But the last section is riddled with duplicate diagrams and a less thoughtful hamete selection. Situations 3 & 17 of pages 163 & 191 and 10 & 18 of pages 177 & 193 are duplicates. They even go so far as to rewrite the text, but the meanings stay pretty much the same.

And they omit 3-3 hamete altogether for a very limited 5-3 & 5-4 selection and an over twenty-page coverage of old taisha hamete. This last inclusion is strange for two reasons. First, the diagram layout (of only two or three variations per situation) is ineffective for tackling the taisha. They appear to have just been aiming to hit the standard hamete notes rather than thinking critically about how their layout would affect the inclusion of certain hamete. Second, if

they wanted to touch on a complex joseki family, then the modern avalanche would have been more relevant; and including at least some 3-3 hamete would have been more useful than the large amounts of taisha. In other words, the book doesn't appear to have tailored its selection of hamete to its layout.

While the book distinguishes 178 situations, it's actually not as many as it sounds. That's because most hamete books include several of these 178 situations in their normal 5-30 diagram explanations. For example, some hamete books might only distinguish 100 situations, but will discuss the remaining 78 within the 100. This book breaks them into distinct parts -- only having the *appearance* that there is more content. (As a reminder, this is partly to facilitate the learning process, which it does.) It's why the problems of poor economy of numbering and duplicate diagrams are even worse, because they represent wasted space and decreased value for the reader.

But not everything is grim in the valley of hamete. A few situations appear to be taken from Yi Ch'ang-ho games or chosen by Yi himself. For example, situation 52.



What's special about this solution is that it first appears (professionally) in a Yi Ch'ang-ho game (1996-09-04) and seems to be regularly misplayed by unaware professionals even today.

Yi Ch'ang-ho Hamete 10-Times Easier to Learn is a mixed bag. Its unique layout does aid in learning and make it a fair book for first-hamete-learners; it rewards repeated visits; the first two sections have a good selection; and it includes a few "Yi Ch'ang-ho" hamete situations. The flipside is that its coverage -- in both depth and breadth -- is sometimes lacking or strange and it contains several errors and inconsistencies which may mislead the hamete neophyte.