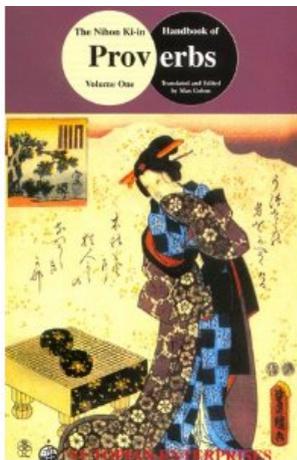


PROVERBS

Andrew Lipson



Yutopian are churning them out these days. They have just published yet another new book, *Proverbs*. It is truly excellent.

The book is divided into about 150 short sections (divided into 10 different subject areas – ‘Good Shape and Bad’, ‘Fighting Ko’, ‘A Guide to Fighting’, etc.), ranging from a paragraph to a couple of pages in length. Each of these addresses a single ‘proverb’, although the term is interpreted fairly loosely. As well as all your old favourites (‘Don’t play Go if you can’t read a ladder’, ‘Play hane at the head of two stones’, etc.) there are the standard manoeuvres all beginners have to learn (the 3-3 invasion under the 4-4 point, the various big eyes and how they die...) and some rather higher-level stuff (‘Play forcing moves when you have to, then abandon them’, ‘If you know the Carpenter’s Square, you must be six dan’, ‘Don’t make only one huge territory’ – why didn’t anyone tell me that when I was 20 kyu?).

I enjoyed and (I think) profited from reading this book at my present level of 5 kyu, but I think it would probably be useful to almost anyone who has passed beyond the total beginner stage. Lots of useful information – some of it new and some of it reminding you of stuff you ‘really’ know – and predigested into nice bite-size chunks for bedtime reading. It has everything. Some joseki, some middle game tactics, some life-and-death, some strategic advice... What more can you ask?

I do have a few quibbles. I realise it is difficult laying out such a book, but far too often the text referred to a diagram that could not be seen without turning a page, which is always distracting. While most of the sections illustrate their points with sample sequences, some do not. These latter are in my view the least useful in the book.

The worst is ‘The kosumi is never bad’. The highly condensed three sentences under this heading tell you that a kosumi is a diagonal move, that it is slow but rarely bad, that it is fully connected and quite strong, and that it is sometimes the perfect move. In the absence of examples, I cannot imagine this being useful information to anyone who does not already possess it. And many of the proverbs could be (and in other places in the literature have been) rendered in slightly pithier English (‘Cross-cut? Extend!). However, I would not like to leave a negative impression. My complaints are minor.

This is a great book. It is unusual in that I expect both to read it repeatedly myself and to lend it to beginners. You should buy a copy (unless you are of about my own rank and attend the same local club as I do. In that case I would rather you did not read

it. . .). This is billed as volume 1 of the Nihon Ki-in's Handbook Series. Expected future volumes are *Fuseki* (which should address a gaping hole in the English language Go literature), *Joseki, part 1*, *Joseki, part 2* and *Handicap Go*. If they're all as good as *Proverbs* were in for a treat.