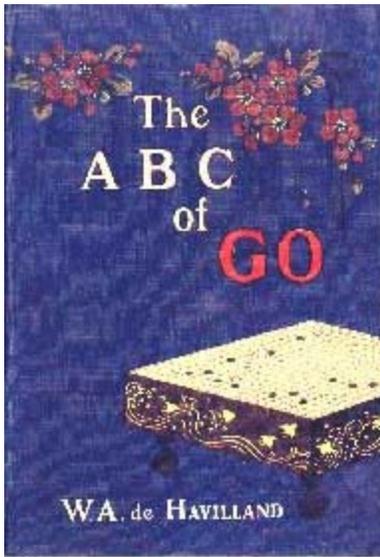


The A B C of Go: The National War-Game of Japan

by W. A. de Havilland, M. A.
(Kelly & Walsh, Ltd., Yokohama, 1910)

Book Review by Steven J.C. Mays



Walter Augustus de Havilland (1872-1968) has two claims to fame: (1) for go players, he's the author of this little gem; and (2) for movie buffs, he's the father of two of Hollywood's great stars of the silver screen—Olivia de Havilland and Joan Fontaine (both of whom, by the way, were born in Tokyo). The author, a British patent attorney by profession, spent a number of years in the Orient studying the copyright and patent laws of Japan and Korea (he even wrote a few booklets on the subject), and he obviously used part of his time in the Far East to be productive in other, and more useful, ways.

The A B C of Go is a slim book (75 pages, it measures about 13.5 cm in width and 19.5 cm in height), but it does provide the reader with a detailed and comprehensive description of the game. The book is divided into four parts, in addition to a one-page preface:

(1) *Introduction* (pp. vii-xiv). This section covers such topics as descriptions of the board and stones; object of the game; how to capture stones; the rules; and the handicap system.

(2) *Elementary Studies of Various Positions* (pp. 15-45). This section is the heart of the book. Here de Havilland illustrates various concepts using examples (each one called a *case*; all together, he has 45 cases). Throughout this section, the author provides examples on a go-ban on the right-hand side of the book and provides commentaries on the left-hand side. The topics covered include: capturing; real and false eyes (eight examples); *seki*; *ko* fights; the monkey-jump (called the *monkey-slide*); life-and-death situations; some elementary *tesujis*; and the ladder.

An interesting observation in this section is that the author places his examples on a full board, he never provides his examples with individual diagrams, and none of the stones are numbered. If the author wishes to indicate the last move played, he uses a white stone. (Throughout the book, the author uses the color red to indicate the white stones, and each diagram is viewed from White's point of view.)

(3) *The Game* (pp. 47-71). In this section, de Havilland goes through a four-stone handicap game, but he begins the game by having the players play an *opening* in each corner (although he doesn't say so, it seems obvious that the author is using this occasion to describe possible corner *josekis*). After move 40, the end of the corner openings, the game continues up to move 177, (11 diagrams are used).

De Havilland manages to provide the reader with a commentary for each move. How does he do this



in the limited space available? Simple, each move is given a number referring to one of ten possible reasons for the move. The reader of this review might find it interesting to see de Havilland's complete list:

1. To take ground, either by opening up fresh territory or by stretching out from an established base.
2. To secure Hama [territory], or attempt to capture a group by surrounding.
3. To escape from a dangerous position, or assist men [stones] so placed.
4. To make eyes.
5. To hinder the formation of eyes.
6. To trespass upon or press into the enemy's territory.
7. To act on the defensive, or reply in self-defense.
8. To threaten or attack neighbouring forces.
9. To oppose junction with neighbouring forces.
10. To attempt to effect, or actually effect, junction with neighbouring forces.

Special comments are indicated with an asterisk and the comments are referenced by move number. The game ends with the neutral points being filled, and the author describes how to re-arrange the territories on the board for easy counting. In this section, the stones are numbered in continuous sequential order for the moves played in each diagram.

On page 71, at the end of the game, de Havilland acknowledges his teacher, Mr. Yoshida, for his assistance in compiling the notes for each move.

(4) *Appendix* (pp. 73-75). In this section, the author presents a game between Yoshida Hanjiro (White) and Sakai Yasujiro (Black), both of the fifth class. No date or diagram is provided for the game. As in the section entitled *The Game*, each move is commented using the ten *Reference Notes* listed above. (The game ended in a draw, according to the author.)

A serious inconvenience in reading this book is the strange system used by the author to describe positions and moves. In each diagram, the board is divided into quadrants, beginning with the letter A, in the lower-left corner, and moving counter-clockwise to the letter D, in the upper-left corner.

In addition, each quadrant has its own numbering system along the sides to provide coordinates. For example, in quadrant A, the numbers along the horizontal side begin with 1 on the left and end with 9, then the numbering continues into quadrant B, starting with 1 again (this would be the 11th line) and ending with 9 again. The 10th line is given the coordinate of 0. To confuse matters even more, the reverse is done on the top horizontal line. Here the numbering begins with 1 on the right-hand side of the board and proceeds to 9, followed by 0, then followed by 1 to 9 again.

The vertical sides are treated differently. Beginning on left side of quadrant A, the numbering begins with 1 and ends with 9, followed by 0, but now the numbers are reversed, the 11th line begins with 9 and ends with 1 at the top of the board. The right side is a mirror image of the left side.

If it weren't for the strange system of coordinates, this book could be considered as a fairly good introduction to go, given its small size. The author demonstrates a good understanding of the intricacies of the game and is able to draw the reader's attention to them.



Who Was Walter de Havilland?

(The biographical information provided below is taken from two sources: (1) Joan Fontaine's autobiography No Bed of Roses, published in 1978 by William Morrow & Company, Inc., New York; and (2) Charles Higham's Sisters, the Story of Olivia de Havilland and Joan Fontaine, published in 1984 by Coward-McCann Inc., New York. It doesn't seem that Olivia de Havilland ever wrote her own autobiography.)

The youngest of ten children, Walter Augustus de Havilland was born on August 31, 1872, in Lewisham, Kent, England, and was raised in Guernsey in the Channel Islands, the ancestral home of the de Havillands. He attended Harrow and later, Cambridge, where he was reading in theology to follow in his father's profession. Given his academic orientation, he mastered Latin, Greek, and even Aramaic. But he lost interest in theology and, apparently unhappy with England's rigid class system that had perhaps prevented him from attending Eton and Oxford, where he had wanted to study, he planned to leave his native country at the earliest opportunity.

After receiving his M.A. degree, he sailed in 1893 for Japan, which, as Joan Fontaine recounts in her autobiography, he had selected as his destination in the most peculiar way: "My father placed the index finger of his left hand on the mouth of the Thames, his right index finger at the same latitude on the opposite side of the globe. He found that he was pointing to Hokkaido, a remote island in the Sea of Japan..."

At first, Walter taught English and French in Hokkaido while waiting to obtain his Japanese law degree. He later taught in Kobe, and finally in Tokyo, where, in 1913, he met Lilian Augusta Rusé (1880 or 1886-1975), Walter's first wife and the future mother of Olivia de Havilland and Joan Fontaine. She was in Tokyo visiting her brother, who was teaching music at Waseda University. By this time, Walter, who had become a leading authority in Japan on patent law, was a prominent professor of law at the same university.

Joan describes her father as being "six feet tall, blue-eyed, and undeniably handsome." His former students, according to her, described him as strict and autocratic, and that he behaved with "supercilious hauteur." But he enjoyed upsetting the social smugness of the British colony in Tokyo as often as possible. During his long stay in Japan, he learned Japanese and Chinese.

In 1914, Walter and Lilian left Japan together for England via the Panama Canal (apparently, she was unaware of his presence on board until after the ship was at sea). They married on November 16, 1914, in New York City, honeymooned at Niagara Falls, and then resumed their trip to England. They soon returned to Japan.

The marriage was doomed to failure from the start. Although Walter's main profession at the time was that of patent attorney, he "felt that the proper role of an Englishman in Japan was to spend his leisure hours at his chess and go clubs." He was also a formidable tennis player. He was also, according to Joan, "geisha-trained." And shortly after the birth of Joan (1917), the couple's second daughter, Lilian discovered that her husband was having an affair with the household maid,

Yuki-san, whom Walter had installed as his in-house mistress. (Note: The publishers of *No Bed of Roses*, William Morrow & Company, Inc., incorrectly spelled the name of Yuki as Yoki.)

In February 1919, en route to Italy, Walter brought his wife and daughters to California where he apparently abandoned them and returned to Japan and Yuki-san, without providing any support for his family. Olivia and Joan didn't see or hear from their father again until 1933.

Lilian went back to Japan in 1924 to arrange for her divorce, which she obtained in 1925. (No alimony was stipulated, and custody for the children was not even mentioned in the divorce decree; furthermore, Lilian had to pay the court costs because Walter sued her for divorce on the grounds of wilful desertion). In 1927, Walter married Yuki-san at the British Embassy in Tokyo, an act that apparently ostracized him from the European colony there.



Walter de Havilland playing go. Photo probably taken in the 1930s.
(Source: *No Bed of Roses*, page 80.)

In 1933, Walter returned to California and visited with his two daughters for two weeks. At the end of this period, it was decided that Joan would return to Japan with her father and resume her schooling there. At this time, the de Havillands were living at Tokyo's Imperial Hotel where they had taken up residence since their marriage.

Evidence that Walter always maintained an avid interest in go after publishing his book on the game in 1910 is provided by Joan in her autobiography where she writes of her stay in Japan in 1933-34: "His days were spent at his chess and go clubs, where I watched him play in silence for hours on end, sitting cross-legged on the tatami-ed floor, the wooden playing board with its black and white stones, called *ishi*, before him." Joan doesn't say whether she or her sister ever took an interest in the game.

After a serious quarrel with her father in 1934, centering on Walter's improper behavior towards his daughter, Joan returned to California. She did not see him again until 1950. However, in 1937 he went to California to see his daughters, but neither one of them wanted to see him. While in California, Walter wrote to R.K.O. complaining that his daughters, whose film careers were well underway, were not supporting their aging father. According to Joan, he even held a news conference aboard his ship to complain about this to the media. (Joan feels that her father's claim of impecuniousness was bogus as he had long played the stock market, ever since the time of his first marriage, and that his life-style in Tokyo and his frequent trips to the United States were evidence that his financial situation was healthy enough.)

With the menacing storm in the Pacific gathering strength, Walter had come under suspicion by the Japanese government because of his association with a group of Englishman who had been arrested and charged with espionage. Under these conditions, Walter and Yuki-san fled to the United States in 1940. Again Walter made an effort to see his daughters, and again they refused to see him. Again he made attempts to obtain financial support, writing to both the movie studios and the media, and again nothing came of these efforts.

Shortly after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Yuki-san was interned in Colorado. Walter was able to install himself and her in the luxurious resort of Broadmoor in Colorado Springs, under self-imposed house arrest, for the duration of the conflict. After the war, they moved to Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

On a fishing trip to Prince Albert Inlet, British Columbia, in 1950, Joan decided to pay a surprise visit to her father. She finally tracked him down at the Victoria Chess Club. Although he looked frail, his eccentricity and haughty aristocratic demeanor were still intact.

When Walter died in 1968, at the age of 96, his third wife, Rose Mary, contacted Olivia and Joan to inform them of his dying wish to have his ashes scattered in Guernsey. She gave each daughter a third of the ashes, which were scattered in the sea off Guernsey, while the remaining third was buried near Vancouver.