

children. It is amazing to find what great powers of concentration children have, and how flexible they are when they are having fun. A child's potential is much greater than what we as adults imagine. By pinning a label of immature on children, we may be missing something very important.

At the same time, the teachers were also making various discoveries for themselves. Mrs. Chiga Iwamura, a teacher at the Shonai kindergarten told me about one just the other day. Kindergartens contain materials for a large range of activities, such as drawing pictures or paper folding, but there is a decisive difference between Go and other activities. You start by sitting face to face with your opponent, and saying "*onegaishimasu*" [This phrase (oh-nay-guy-she-mas) expresses appreciation of the opponent's willingness to join you in playing a game], and when you finish you thank the other for the game.

Both players start together and finish together. After playing a game of Go, both children are satisfied with the game and start playing something else. When drawing pictures or folding paper, however, children all finish at different times. The children who have already finished will then ask others to play and those who do not complete the activity feel dissatisfied. However, all games of Go finish with some feeling of satisfaction for both parties. In another example, children tend to play with their favorite friends in a tight-knit group; and as a result, they get along only with these good friends. But after playing Go with different friends, the children often go off together to the playground to play. Thus relationships among children are expanded. A game of Go never has the same pattern, and therefore, children develop concentration while anticipating the opponent's moves. It seems that this kind of activity had not existed in children's education before.

The teachers also found their own human relations being expanded through Go. They were having as much fun as the children.

The value of educational activity through Go was presented to a children's education conference in Fukuoka prefecture. "There is no concrete data on this, but each child has become able to express their own opinion and listen to others' opinions. This change is amazing for five year old children," Mrs. Keiko Yamamoto reported.

tude was completely different. When I talked about why Go is needed, it was Mrs. Takizawa who understood what I wanted to convey.

The change that occurred at Daisan nursery school was the same change I had observed at the Shonai kindergarten. In particular, the children's power of concentration was amazing. Children cannot sit still if they are bored, and the educators could not believe that those small children would sit still for thirty minutes or even an hour, concentrating on playing Go.



Nursery school children playing Capture Go

There was another positive result at Daisan nursery school. The children who learned to play Go talked about it to their families, and they started to play with their siblings and parents. This evoked a great response among parents. Mrs. Takizawa told me that some parents requested a Go meeting time when both children and parents could participate. Some parents made paper records of games to ask what moves they should have taken. Teachers there had never seen parents so positively involved. Not only that, but where three generations lived together in one household, grandfathers and grandmothers learned how to play Capture Go and were able to communicate better with their grandchildren. Previously they had little opportunity for communicating with each other because of the generation gap, but now they enjoyed playing Go together. The story was broadcast as a feature pro-

who has not played Go before?” Without exception, everyone raised their hands.

As I continued, however, I realized that they had learned how to play. Every time I visit I find they have improved. The staff members of the center were in their 30's and 40's and yet when those young staff members played Capture Go with the elderly, they could not always beat them. Both the elderly people and the staff members thought about the next move seriously. It created a really good atmosphere. I started to think that the elderly should play Capture Go with children from a nursery school, since Go is an instrument for connecting people together.

When we started the exchange between children and the elderly, I soon realized that the children were not used to dealing with elderly people. One of the reasons for this is that few children live in households where three generations live together. The children weren't relaxed. They didn't shun the aged, but apparently were not eager to come into close contact with them. Later, their attitude began to change, and they took the elderly people's hands and walked with them to the Go board and handed them a stone. I had not instructed them to do this, it was a spontaneous act. The elderly must have felt that the children were adorable, and the exchange between them turned into a very warm one.

Recently, some facilities that combine services for the elderly with a nursery school have been designed. These are supposed to provide an opportunity for interaction between these two groups, but this often proves very difficult. Such exchange looks good on paper, but what can be done in practice, such as children singing songs for the elderly, is very limited. Unable to find many ways to interact, these facilities welcomed exchanges through Go when I visited them in Fukuoka. Through playing Capture Go, children are able to learn kindness from the elderly, and the elderly are able to regain some spirit from the children.

The exchanges have expanded slowly and Go games by mail have started between the day care centers for the elderly in Yuzamachi, Yamagata prefecture and Fukuoka prefecture. Playing Capture Go by mail is done by marking your next move on a paper board and sending it to the opponent along with letters, drawings, and photographs.

proceeding smoothly. I also didn't know whether or not children in the Netherlands would like Go. I was convinced that children in any country should be able to enjoy Go, but I was not sure if I could create a good enough atmosphere through an interpreter to make them enthusiastic about playing.

To create a good atmosphere, I played "rock, scissors, paper" and sang Japanese songs. I also wrote down the Chinese character for "horse" and gave them a quiz as to the meaning of it. These activities all helped to break the ice.

I then introduced the principle of "surround to capture" and soon the children started playing some games. The children were at least as excited as Japanese children. Soccer is very popular in the Netherlands and the excitement created was similar to that of fans at a soccer match. They stamped on the floor, shouted, and created a great commotion. The teachers were amazed that a Japanese could suddenly visit the school from the other side of the world and cause such a big sensation.



Capture Go in the Netherlands

The schools I visited were a private Jewish school and a Montessori