

Go for the Millions

INGO Invitation to Go

Recently, “The International Network Go Organization (INGO)” is receiving many mails saying “I am interested in the game of Go and wish to play it but I know nothing about it. How should I learn Go?”

Thus we decided to provide you with a new ideal introductory textbook.

By reading it carefully, I am sure you will be able to understand the game well enough to start and test playing a game and then you will soon get used to it and become a new Go fan.

This textbook consists of several chapters and we shall put them on our homepage one at a time. If you have questions, do not hesitate to write to us.

Foreword

The purpose of this material is to invite people to learn and enjoy a fascinating game named Go. In Japanese it is called Go or Igo. It is called Weiqi in Chinese and Baduk in Korean.

Once you learn it and get interested in the charm of it, it is sure to become your lifetime hobby. In fact, lovers of Go are enjoying it regardless of how strong, age, nationality, religion or other factors. Beginners will be charmed by it. Many amateurs love it and forget other things while playing a game. More surprisingly, late Mr. Shuko Fujisawa, a top level professional, said that he loved Go so much that he ignored many other important matters of his life.

The rules of Go are relatively simple but surprisingly difficult to explain in words. For this reason, introduction of Go is not easy. As a matter of fact, it is much easier to invite people to the world of chess in which the rules are much more complicated than Go.

The author will do his best to explain Go as clearly as possible in this material. If this objective is successfully achieved, this material will invite a number of readers to the fascinating world of Go.

By the way, it appears that Chess and Go are the two big board games invented by human beings. Interestingly, Chess is said to have been born in India and then spread worldwide to the west and to the east. Today, it seems that western version of chess has the largest population but there are many varieties of chess in different countries. Korea has Korean chess and China has Chinese chess. Similarly Japan has a Japanese chess.

As for Go, there is only one version. However, it is played under slightly different rules in different countries. Rules of Go in Japan and that in Korea, that in mainland China and that in Taiwan are all slightly different. The difference is trivial but you cannot ignore it, since the ultimate scores may be different in some rare cases which makes it necessary to define the adopted rules before official games are to be played.

It appears that Go named Weiqi was born in China thousands of years ago. It traveled to the east and reached Korea and then to Japan. Strangely, it did not travel so much to the west. Only in areas such as Nepal, they have their version of Weiqi. We have not been able to find an evidence or a historical record of Weiqi to have reached Europe. However, Go became very popular and the level of study was quite high in Edo era in

Japan(400 years ago) and Japan became the leading country of Go until about fifty years ago when China became just as strong and then Korea became another leading country.

At the present moment, China, Korea, Japan and Taiwan are the major regions where the level of study is at its highest. It is pleasant that the game was introduced to many other countries in the past fifty years and now we are proud to say that it is an international game played worldwide.

The author is very anxious to invite many people to this charming world of Go as friends regardless of nationality, religion, political background or age or how strong or weak one may be.

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