

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# Discover **THE GAME OF GO!**

*'Discover the Game of Go!' is coming to — Bookstore on — at — (time and place) —. Members of the — Go Club will give a short introduction to the legendary Asian game of 'Go,' and then involve the audience in playing it. Since Go is a game that is vastly more complicated than Chess, you might ask how can they do this? 'It's easy,' says —, president of the club. 'There are only two rules that take five minutes to learn. You don't even have to memorize them.'*

Go is an ancient game, which has been played in China for 4000 years, (according to legend), but computers still have not figured it out. 'In fact,' says —, a —, 'someone who plays casually for a few months will easily beat any full-sized board computer program made.' The regular playing board, on which black and white stones are alternately placed, is a grid that is six times the size of a Chessboard. According to one calculation, that results in  $19$  to the  $19^{\text{th}}$  power number of moves compared to Chess's  $8$  to the  $8^{\text{th}}$  power. The total number of possible games comes to more than the number of atoms in the universe. 'But don't worry,' —(he, she)— says, 'when we teach, it is on a small-scale board, about the size of a Chessboard. Even a full-scale game takes only slightly longer than an average Chess match.'

Played by millions of people in the Far East and by tens of thousands in the USA, Europe and on the Internet, Go has become quite popular in the West. There are clubs in every major city in the country and the parent organization, the American Go Association, is sponsoring this 'tour,' which resembles an authors book tour.

About a dozen books have introduced the game to English speaking players and the local members will be displaying these while they talk about the history and mystique, 'Of which we guarantee, there is plenty,' says —, another long-term aficionado of the game. 'For one thing, it is much more of a visual and tactile game than Chess. Good play involves making good 'shapes' with your pieces—your 'stones'—and you win by 'surrounding' the most territory. It is not a 'killing game.' Although, of course, there is trouble if your opponent is already there! While you are surrounding him or her, you might be surrounded yourself! It is not a game of killing but of strategies. Once they learn, men, women, boys and girls equally love to play it. That's why it's survived for 4000 years.'

Legends of the game's origins go back to the legendary 'Yellow Emperor' in China 4000 years ago and the game is mentioned in Chinese histories around 2700 years ago. That's 1500 years before Chess was thought up. The game was brought to Japan from Korea around 500 AD where, for a long time, only warriors and the nobility were allowed to play. Japanese game records go back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. From the 16<sup>th</sup> century on, there has been a professional association, which, today, offers millions of dollars in prize-money to top international players. The name 'Go,' incidentally, comes from the Japanese name 'Igo' and that comes from being called 'Wei-chi' or 'Weiqi' in Chinese—'surrounding Chess.' It is said that the Japanese in World War II, Mao Tse-tung in China and the Vietnamese Liberation Army used its principles in planning their campaigns.

In an even game, the board begins empty and the two players put down pieces—their 'stones'—in turns, but compared to the single 'battle' of Chess, Go is like a whole war and requires not just tactics but whole-game strategies. It is not a game of 'complete domination' like Chess,' — said. 'We all have 'ranks' but we speak of sharing the 'harmony' of the Go board. We are always saying, 'If I take this, I will have to give you that.' Decisions are often made on the basis of intuition—what looks good, what feels good. I am an artist. I like looking at beautiful things. That's why I love the game.'

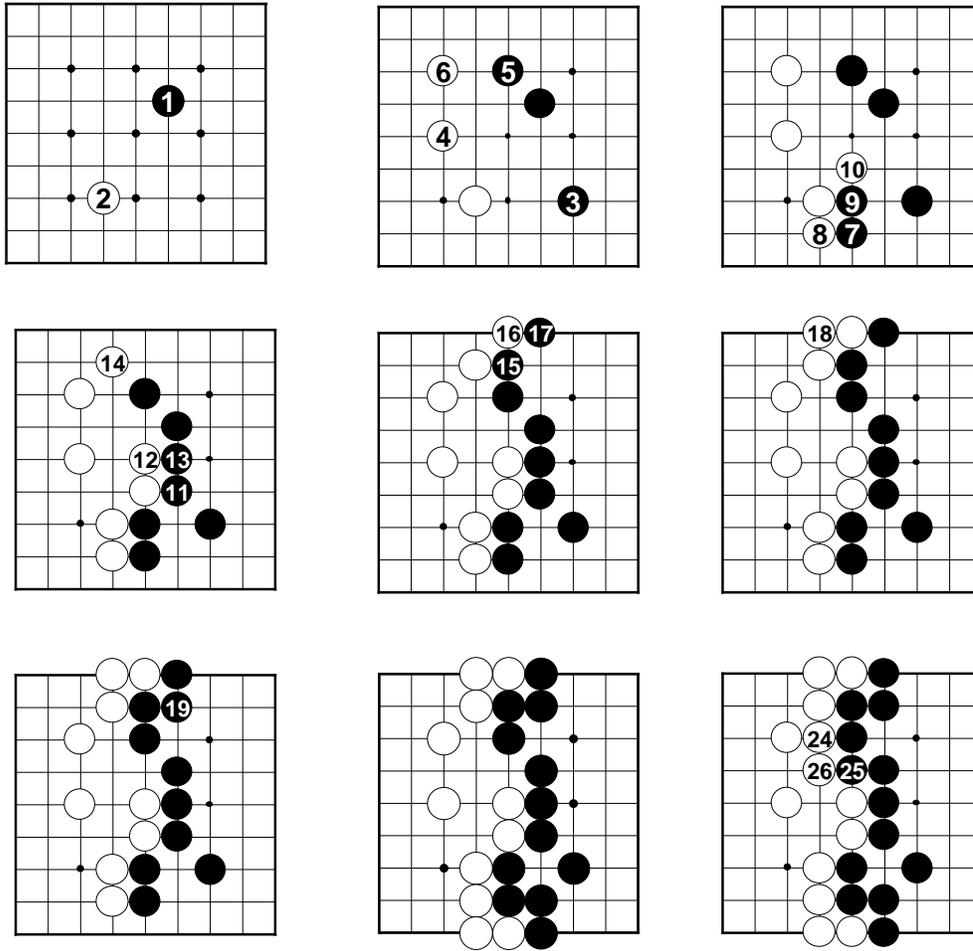
It is true there is a tremendous aesthetic built into the game and a whole genre of artwork has grown up around the game. The demonstration will include some of the Ukiyo woodcuts that were made in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Japan. There will also be pictures of famous Go playing boards almost a foot thick that used to be made from 500-1000 year-old trees. The best playing stones are made from special clamshells and slate. In China, Go has always been considered as one of the four great 'accomplishments' that any cultured man or woman became proficient at. The other three were music, poetry and calligraphy.

Go is now becoming a presence in the pop culture scene, too. The game made a spectacular appearance in the 1970's thriller 'Shibumi' by Trevanian, and more recently played a starring role in the sci-fi cult film 'Pi.' Supporting roles were also played by the game on the TV series 'Wild Palms' and in a recent 'Alley McBeal' production. The game has been featured in a half-dozen articles in the New York Times and a famous match between two champions was the subject of Nobel Prize winner Yosunari Kawabata's book, 'The Master of Go,' which explored many of the games esoteric facets.

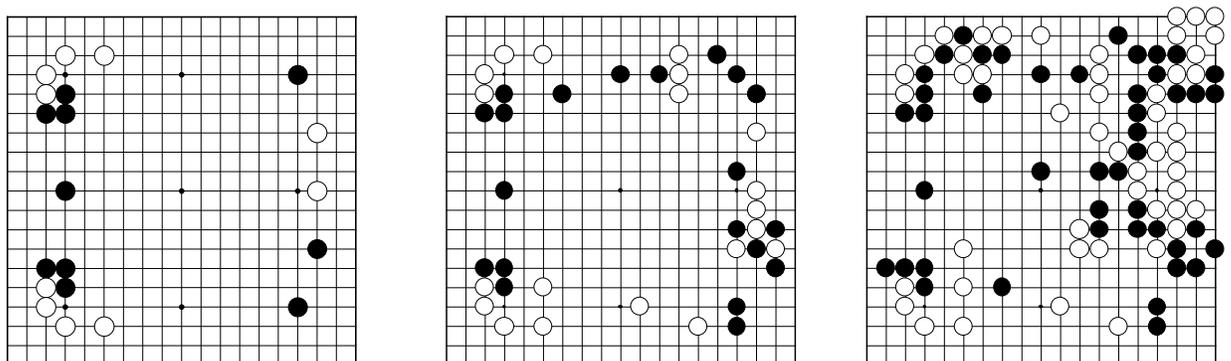
At the demonstration, games will be played on a 'small' 9x9 lined board—which is not all that small. A Chess board is 8x8 (although in Go the 'stones' are placed at the intersections and not inside the squares). To even things up, there is a logical handicap system so, unlike Chess, raw beginners can play even masters and have an exciting game without destroying the game's integrity. For

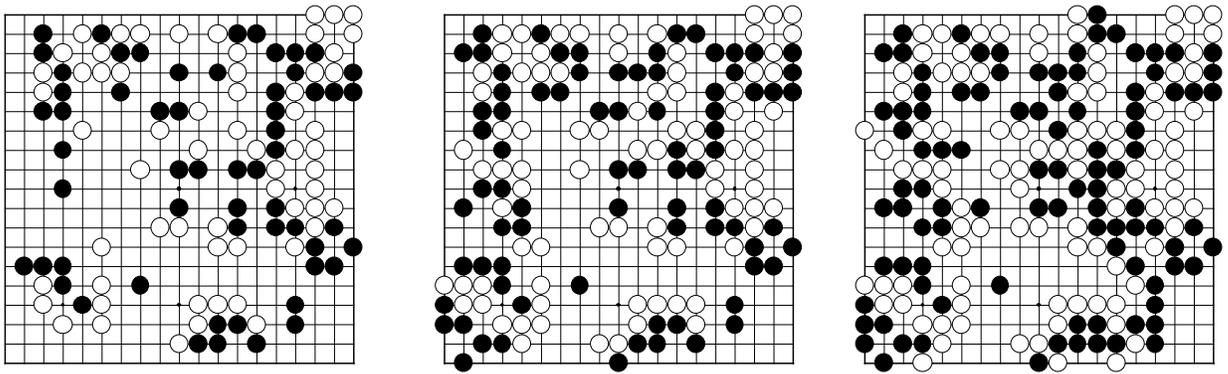
children, it is a wonderful game. 'If they are old enough to know not to eat the stones, they are old enough to play,' says —, a local teacher. 'Go is certainly as good, if not better than Chess, for improving children's reasoning powers.'

Here is the progress of a game between beginners on a small board:



Here is a full-blown professional game on a full-sized 19x19 board.





In addition to playing and showing the dozen or so books out on the market about how to play—some of which have been in print for more than fifty years—club members will be giving away 9x9 sets that audience members can take home along with some instructional material. The members will also hand out an interesting freeware program on a computer disk that, very unlike its ‘big board’ cousins, plays almost perfect Go on the 9x9 size board. The members of the club say that playing this program will provide endless entertainment for beginners because it gives them handicaps, but even they cannot play up to its full strength. They will also show the audience how to play Go on the Internet—there are a number of gaming sites including Yahoo! and Microsoft in addition to the several sites that are dedicated only to Go playing (igs.joynet.net and xxxxx).

Club members say, however, that ‘real Go’ takes place on ‘real boards.’ The feel and sound of the stones coming down on wooden boards is important to get a feel for the game and they will invite the audience to visit the club at —. Beginner’s nights and lessons are on — and the club meets —(daily, weekly, monthly) at — (time). There will also be a sign-up sheet for special children’s lessons and club members will visit interested schools or organizations with their presentation.

More information about the tour and Go in general can be found at the American Go Association website at [www.usgo.org](http://www.usgo.org). or by contacting the American Go Association at — or the local club representative — at —.