

Visiting Hane 9p's Study Group

by Yasuo Kiga

When I was arranging my plan to visit Nagoya for some reasons, I found that the next day was the date for Yasumasa Hane (picture below) Sensei's study group. With Sensei's approval, I was honored to observe the study group. I took lunch with Hironari Nakano Sensei, who was kind enough to show me the way to the group. Then, we got to the house of Yasumasa Sensei just a bit before 1 pm, when the group



Yasuo Kiga teaching ladies



Yasumasa Hane 9p

started. The attendants were professional players and “Insei” etc, young people aspiring to become professionals. On that day, 14 people gathered. The contents of the study group was to play a game with another member. Though chess clocks were not used, the games would end around 5 pm. In order to catch my Bullet Train back to Tokyo, I had to leave the house around 3 pm, when all the games were still before the stage of middle game. The truth was that if I stayed until night, I could have watched their after-the-game studies and Yasumasa Sensei's commentary. My schedule forced me to save it for the next time's pleasure.

Yasumasa Sensei is committed to several other such groups as well. The Yasumasa Cup Amateur-professional Open, which the Yomiuri Shimbun Newspaper is affiliated. Mr. Ueno, alumnus of Keio, is playing in this cup. The games are handicapped. But in order to win the cup, the system asks you beat several professionals. I think this is very hard. Also there is Yasumasa-kai, a friendship group of professionals and amateurs, which is different from the study group I observed.

On that day, there were no pure amateur attending (All were professionals or Insei, or former Insei) . I was allowed to look into their handicap system sheet. In short, it was almost the same as the point system of AKIA (All Keio Igo Association), but the points were more minutely made.



*Hironari
Nakano 9p*

The arrangement of the players were made by the wife of Nakano Sensei, (picture left) who was asked by Yasumasa Sensei to do so. For you information, Mrs. Hane had to leave the house to take care of her grandson (youngest son of Naoki Sensei) . Naoki Sensei had a schedule in Tokyo on that day and was to get to the group after I left. To my chagrin, I had no chance to speak with him this time.

Well, my impression on observing the first half of the study group was, in short, as follows.

This time, there was no direct teaching to me about Go, but my honest impression was that it was a very good lesson to me just to be there with them in the same room.

1. First of all, I was impressed by Yasumasa Sensei's personality. One can easily feel his love to Go and his sincere attitude to his followers and students.



Nakano 9p and Hane 9p(in yellow vest), from above Yuuki, Bian, Shouya

2 . On that day Yasumasa Sensei played with Yuuki, daughter of Nakano Sensei. Insei and other young people aspiring to become professionals had to challenge professional by 2 st. hdp. Yuuki was doing well, giving it her best. Yasumasa Sensei had to leave the room for a while to get a phone call. When he returned, he courteously said to her, "I'm sorry". I was really impressed. Age of the opponent didn't matter to

him.

3 . 7 games went on at the same time, and all the boards were made of precious Kaya tree. The stones were good, too. And I noticed 3 other boards that were not used were piled up.

4 . There was no game that ended within the 2 hours while I was there. At 3 pm, all the games were just before the stage of middle game. Unlike amateurs, no one resigned within just 2 hours.

5 . Nakano Sensei's opponent was Bian Wenkai, former Insei from China. He was doing well by 2st hdp. And Shouya, son of Nakano Sensei, now an Insei and giving it his best, was playing



Yuuki Nakano

with Kiwada pro. He absented from his Junior Highschool to play this game and I heard his teacher acknowledged it.

6 . I observed the games for 2 hours and to my surprise, no one said anything at all. Everyone was silent. I heard some professionals grumble while playing a game. But in this group, no one uttered a word of grumbling. The sincerity transmitted to me. One thing I noticed was occasionally someone would show a little bit perplexed face after watching a move by the opponent , and that's all.

7 . Each game, every move was played with some time. There was no very long thinking, but just a common move such as connecting after an atari, was done after a careful confirmation. I was impressed with such an attitude. We should be like this.

8 . At the beginning of the games, Mrs. Hane handed served tea to everyone. Then an electric pot was prepared, and those who were thirsty during a game would come and pour tea to themselves. At around 3, some sweets were delivered.

9 . As I reflect, when Nakano Sensei's car was to get to Hane 9p's house, we passed by a young man on

a bicycle. Mrs. Nakano, the driver, noticed that the young man was a young professional going to the study group. I heard that he would come to the group every time in this manner, taking 20 minutes to get there. Even if it rained, he would come by bicycle. I understood a professional trains like this.

1 0 . When I said farewell, I talked to them from their side to Yasumasa Sensei and Nakano Sensei. But Yasumasa Sensei stood up from the board side and went to the door of the house to show me off. I was impressed that he took such a courtesy even to an amateur like me, and at the same time I was extremely grateful for that.

1 1 . I was also grateful for Mrs. Nakano because she drove me to Nagoya station. I heard at the time, that Yasumasa Sensei would pay for all the supper to every attendant of the group. I heard some of the parents of “Insei” and “Gairai” didn't even notice this. I thought I felt how deeply Yasumasa Sensei treasures these young people.



Shouya Nakano

1 2 . When I first met Shouya, he was a baby. About 15 years passed. I felt the flow of the time by the fact now this baby grew up to take tests to become a professional. Now, he even comments on his father's moves of Go. Nakano 9p must be happy. Quite often he wins against his father by 2 st. hdp. “Otherwise, he can't become a professional.” his mother strictly commented.

1 3 . On my way back to Tokyo in the Bullet Train, faces of young people playing sincerely occurred in mind. I wondered how many of them could become a professional to get good results in tournaments? I thought about what those young people were thinking, having had an opportunity that even in Tokyo would be hard to get. From the bottom of my heart, I do hope their future success.

(Translated by Yuji Kaneko)