

The Discovery of Capoeira: Children and the Multicultural World

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I was born and grew up in Osaka. I moved to the States after I graduated from high school and lived there for a long time. My family and I came back to Japan six years ago. My husband and I decided to send our daughter who was 3 years old at that time to the French School in Kyoto. Our family friend, Andrea Urushima, whose daughter goes to the same school with my daughter at that time, invited us to the capoeira workshop in September 2014. My husband and I took our twelve year-old son and nine year-old daughter. Several French-Japanese families from my daughter's school also participated, and I saw other couples of mixed nationalities and their children.

I didn't know much about capoeira. All that I knew was that capoeira has multiple features that came from fight, dance and play. The main instructor and his interpreter started talking to the children in order to form a circle. The workshop had begun without any previous acknowledgement. The instruction was simple, like "imagine that you are animals, trees and even wind or water and express it by moving your bodies." My children were confused in the beginning, but as time went by they started getting into what the instructor and



the other children were doing. I could see that they had been captivated by it.

In the second half of the session, capoeira members played the music with their traditional instruments. I heard there that it wasn't meant for the new-comers, but they welcomed the children to participate with them. It was the most fun part of the workshop for our children.

I was a little surprised by the informality of the workshop, because I'm so used to the well-organized Japanese style ones. But after I saw how much my children were enjoying to play capoeira, I realized that it shouldn't be too up-tight and we should let children to be free in the class so that they will have chance to open-up themselves. Capoeira is not very known in Japan. I hope that people will have chance to know what capoeira is.

