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Editor's Note

Masayoshi Kataoka

"There's not a thing wrong with the child; the problem is yourself," Mr. Suzuki tells the parents in his lecture, "On Home Practice," at the piano summer school in August, 1980. He reminds us once again of the guiding principle that every child grows with this detailed instruction.

His second article in this issue describes a new approach, the Lottery Concert, to inspire children to practice. He asks every teacher to use this enjoyable concert method.

In this issue we are pleased to introduce Toshio Takahashi's article, "Is Your Finger-Mustard Sharp?" Mr. Takahashi is a founder and head instructor of the Suzuki-Takahashi Flute School. Mr. Takahashi, a former concert flutist, has conducted numerous successful workshops in the United States and Canada.

The Mother's Note is Mrs. Tamae Yuzuhara's article, "A Suzuki Parent and School Teacher." Here is a school teacher who raised her children beautifully in spite of her overwhelmingly busy schedule.

"When and How to Start" by Shigeki Tanaka and "We Decide Not to Enter the Competition" by Kiyoshi Suzuki continue the serialization of their books, Young Children: Everything Depends on How We Raise Them, or Child Education by the Suzuki Method and A Father's Record.

On Home Practice

Shin'ichi Suzuki

(A Lecture Delivered to Piano Summer School Parents on August 4, 1980)

The Important Role of Parents

As usual my talk may sound misdirected, for my principle is that there is nothing wrong with the child. I often receive a phone call: "My child is a problem. I would like to see you about what to do with him." I reply: "There's not a thing wrong with the child; the problem is yourself. If it's all right to have to accept this, come see me." Some parents do come, and say, "I see, now I understand."

The fundamental error is that parents know nothing about children's wonderful potential. The traditional way of thinking that ascribed everything to inborn gift is the greatest mistake mankind has made from the earliest days till today. To appeal that it is not so is the movement that has engaged me over forty years. There was a thing called the law of heredity and nothing else. Therefore, we connected what we found in children with heredity. We saw the results and sought their causes in heredity. We considered them inherent. This was our error. Amateur as I am, I clearly saw that children's ability was not inborn. I have delved into the question of how children's ability is created, how their mind is fostered, how their sensitivity is developed. I have theorized my experiences into the law of ability. I have insisted that the laws of heredity and of ability both exist as principles not of human beings alone but of all living things.

About sixteen years ago, I lectured on this

question at various American colleges and received great responses. I have never studied psychology; however, reading a work by Ninomiya Sontoku (eighteenth century agronomist) when twenty, I awoke to his teaching, "Read not ten thousand volumes," but read into the truth of great nature. After that, I reduced my reading hours. Giving up the idea of trying to study everything from books, I gazed on nature. At twenty, I was moved by a sense of wonder each time I looked at things. What I would like to ask you is this: please become a person capable of being surprised, and at the same time, foster your child as a person who will gaze with wonder on the truth of great nature. Such intelligence, ability to think, great power of life, is given to man. Grateful to be born as human beings, we can discover the beautiful world which exists before us.

Take a baby for example: it grows by drinking its mother's milk day by day. Why is there such beautiful growth? This is the world of growth which is different from one ruled by the law of heredity. In the course of this growth, if a cold wind whips him every day, eventually a skin that withstands the cold develops. Again, the baby grows while adopting the mother's heart and sensitivity. When you awake to this, you will understand that the parent first has to be a fine person to bring up a child as a worthy human being.

Have Respect for Your Child

The same is obvious from the familiar example of the wolf girls. Think of Kamala discovered in the Indian jungle: since she was brought up by a wolf, since she grew up by a wolf's side, she turned into a wolf girl, mastering the wild beast's senses, ability, and habits. That is education. Then how should reflect upon yourself as a parent? Shouldn't you

first consider what you yourself are as a parent as the first step in your love for your child? Ordinarily, you may not think much about such a thing. You may lay your baby on his tummy if you want to lay him on his tummy; you may let him stand if you want to let him stand; you may let him fall if you want to-- in the daily repetition of this, the mother, with a belief that she gave birth to him, may turn into a selfish parent who can't be happy unless she can mold the child any way she likes. The child eventually develops ego. One day when he doesn't listen, the blood may rise to her head. This kind of selfishness seems to me to be created in most every parent. Unconsciously, you treat your own child differently from others. I would like you to stop this. To do that, you must have respect for your child, respect for life. Other children are living things; so is your own a wonderful life given by nature, despite the fact that you bore him. The same life you were given is also given to your child. When you think of how you, too, were born in the same way as your child was, the need for feeling superior to him will disappear, won't it? I would like to ask you to respect your child.

Great Power of Life

Intelligence--we are apt to be controlled by this. Should we not know that there is something beyond that? Does the baby think intelligently that he has to daily develop his arms plumper, his body bigger, and his legs longer? None of us remember having done that. In fact, Life gradually fosters the body. Ability develops likewise before the child himself knows it. If an Osaka child speaks Osaka dialect, he is totally unaware of the fact that he is speaking Osaka dialect. I myself grew up in Nagoya and speak Nagoya dialect, but I

don't know what part of my speech is characteristic of Nagoya. You probably don't know the dialectal features of your speech, either. Thus, Life is working where we are not aware. I see you here. It means that your Life and my Life come into contact: a great joy of human beings exists here. This is not something so narrow and petty as things conceived by mere intellectual processes.

Let me tell you about my experience in music. I give a lesson to a Music School student. He gets ready to play, say, Mozart's concerto No. 5. At that very moment, I shout, "Too high!" Other advanced students listening scream in laughter. For the note he plays just as I shout "too high" is a little high. Always it's a little off. So they ask, "We often hear you say 'too high' before someone starts to play. How do you know it's too high?" I answer "I don't know." --It seems one turns out to be this way when one looks for other people's weak points for forty years. (Laughter.) I myself feel quite impressed, and say to myself, "I see. So this is what my ability is." In other words, I experience something, and occasionally when people ask me about it, I am unable to explain. It is something that is beyond the world of intelligence. It is Life. You, too, do many things unawares. Among things that are done repeatedly, there are some that you can do without thinking with your brain, that you simply do before you know it. This, I think, is real ability.

In this sense, it is the wonderful power of what is called life that helps every child acquire an amazing ability depending upon how he is raised. The baby grows--isn't this already wonderful in itself? If we correctly understand the saying of Buddha, the great philosopher three thousand years ago, that "man has an inherent nature," I think it means that a great

power exists in every human being and that is indeed man's inherent nature. Why don't you think about it in the same way--then such a problem as whether man's inherent nature is good or evil dissolves itself. Regardless of good or evil, if we raise a child with the heart of a thief, our son will become a fine master thief. If a wolf raises a child, he becomes a wolf. Life imbibes its environment, changing in response to the environment. You can see the same in animals. Your dogs and cats are all lovable, but they were brought up by human beings in the context of human life. Take a cat to the mountains and have it fostered by a wild cat; it will become wild. Take a dog to the mountains and have it fostered by a wolf; it will turn into a wolf. In brief, the saying "man is a child of the environment," I think, can be stretched to all living things: "living things are children of the environment." When you think this way, I hope you will become intensely aware of the grave responsibility of child raising.

Consequently, what I would like to ask you first is to refrain from treating your child differently. Please try using the same expression, feeling, and language as when facing others' children. I requested at the national concert that parents say, when their children perform, "you've improved much, except for weak points." Many parents are too shy to mouth this compliment. (Laughter.) But weak points are the responsibility of the parents and the teacher. The child has practiced hard. So I think it's fine to say, "You've improved." If you try this kind of relaxed approach, you will notice a change in your child's facial expression.

Repeat What the Child Can Do



Another problem of education is how ability can be created. This concerns the law of ability: what is repeated again and again regardless of whether it is good or bad, is internalized as a physiological process. Therefore I say, "knowledge is not ability."

This may be extreme. Going to college to acquire knowledge--this happens after the child grows up. The most important thing in education is to deal with growth from birth. Regrettably, however, elementary education is based on the tradition of "knowledge education," hence it is inadequate. This is a fundamental error in school education not only in Japan but throughout the world. It lacks a direction for bringing up children as human beings. An approach for raising them with a high sensitivity is also missing. As a consequence, as you can tell from the newspaper, disagreeable thing after thing occurs in the world till we no longer feel like looking at the paper. . . . Those who commit crimes are people who received education. The results of miseducation today, don't you see, manifest themselves there.

Repetition is necessary in this sense. In the study of music, for example, parents often may think, "That child, who started lessons at the same time as ours, is already doing that piece, while ours is still on this piece. The teacher doesn't let him start the next piece at all; what's happening?" Such parents belong to the past. They are wrong. Ability is acquired while repeating what is already learned. In the case of the piano, the child plays the piece every day with the piano record or tape. He repeats this practice. He plays all the former pieces in the same way. While he continues this practice, he acquires ability easily before he

knows it--if he practices to play musically with the same rhythm and expression as in the record. The child picks up Osaka dialect because he listens to his parents' speech every day, reproducing an exact replica of what he hears, down to delicate details. While listening to the mother's voice, the child's vocal chords are prepared in the identical way so that his speech will be just like hers from the voice to the tone. If the mother speaks a little Osaka dialect just twice a day from babyhood, the child will never be a fluent speaker of that dialect. You know that the basis of the Suzuki method is the mother tongue approach, don't you? It's the method of language education by which children all over the world learn to speak. Children acquire ability gradually by the daily use of the ten or twenty words they have learned. Once ability is created, they rapidly increase their vocabulary to fifty, to one hundred words. By the time they are five or six, they fluently speak as many as four thousand words. Every child grows with this wonderful ability.

Today's current music education is based on a traditional error. Suppose you use this method. Tell your child, "Please play the next piece. Come on, now you play the next assignment." You have your child practice this way from the morning, and comment, "You did well." Then, when that's finished, your request is: "Okay now, the next piece, please," leaving the earlier pieces untouched. . . . What's the use? If children wish "to learn the next word," and you respond, "I see, then I'll teach you the next one. Now, practice hard, okay? Good, good, you are improving." You teach one word at a time, while shelving the earlier words that have once been learned. . . . What's going to happen at this rate? "Let's see if you can speak all the words you've learned," you ask, and the

children will say, "O no, I've forgotten them all. I'll speak just the ones I learned yesterday." Isn't this characteristic of the prevalent education? I would like you to free yourselves from this way of thinking, for it's wrong. Those who follow this don't know that ability is something you create. Ability is physiologically acquired while what's already learned is repeatedly reviewed.

How have you been using your hands? How have you repeatedly used them for writing? Have you used your left hand as well? Your right and left have totally different abilities; their senses are



also different. If you throw the ball with your left, you never know where it goes, though you can throw it where you like using your right hand. If you write with your right hand, you can write properly. If you write with your left, someone might ask, "What letter is that?" This is what education does. It is not inborn. Suppose the mother always holds the baby this way pressing his right hand. It may become his habit to move just the left hand which is free. If this continues every day during babyhood, the active hand will acquire ability, and he will become left-handed. Left or right handedness is not inborn.

Human beings are all crippled. Forty-one years ago, I think it was, I went to the Ueno Zoo at nine in the morning. And I watched the monkeys till noon. Why did I do that? It was in order to discover whether any of the forty or fifty monkeys there was either right- or left-handed. . . . It's a job, keeping track of those many monkeys hopping around. It really took me three hours; and after all, all of them were both-handed. Monkeys are a cut above human beings, indeed, as far as that point is concerned.

Human beings are crippled. If a right-handed person thinks those left-handed somewhat special, it means that he is not aware that he himself is a cripple, unable to use his left hand. We are all just about equal. (Laughter.) We tend to think that the majority are normal, and the minority deficient, but both sides are equally handicapped.

When I was teaching at the Imperial Music School, I met a student whose mother was ambidextrous. I visited her at home, for I was interested in this problem. I concluded that "after all it's possible to grow with equally competent hands; we need the kind of education which helps everybody to be that way." She showed me how she sewed. First she sewed with her right hand, and when tired, switched to her left. She was just as neat and as fast. She had the habit of using both hands, growing up left/right handed from childhood. I asked her to take me to the kitchen, where she sliced white radishes paper thin. She went chop chop chop really fast with her right hand; switching to her other hand when tired, and going chop chop chop in the same way. . . . I looked at the slices: they were equally neat thin slices. "I see, this is normal for a human being, the rest of us are all cripples," I thought.

During spare moments from music, I thought about the problem of human ability as well as about monkeys. I almost never read books. On picking up some books on psychology, I found their descriptions totally contradictory with reality. They say odd things like a child can do this or that at age four, or can go to the bathroom to pee by himself. (Laughter.) And here they are, four year olds playing Vivaldi's A Minor Concerto or Bach's Concerto so I don't know what they are talking about. I recommend that you read a book on psychology once. You'll see why I no longer read any. "If you leave a

child alone doing nothing for him" --if there were this subtitle, those psychology books would fit reality. What they are doing is discussing cases of neglected children, and so unreasonably they ascribe normal development to inborn talents.

On Child-Raising

This kind of thing is loudly discussed in the United States at present. I seem to be made into a topic for the reason that I clarified, though an amateur, the law of ability based on forty years of study. At the University of Washington, I saw a picture of myself at the end of a row of big photographs of real psychologists like Montessori, which makes me a psychologist also. (Laughter.) However, rather than psychology, please consider at your leisure the saying of Ninomiya Sontoku: "Read into the reason of the heavens."

Take for example a star, said to be thirty billion light years from us, which seems to be calculated with some kind of accuracy though it may include some cheating. It is ten minutes from the sun to the globe--that vast distance. Think of how far even ten thousand light years is. Don't we realize that we exist in such a huge universe that we can't even begin to think where we are. . . . Yet, at the same time, I am relaxed in a sense. If I think of this marvelous life of mine on the earth as a sight-seeing trip, I can feel that I'm enjoying a free ride for eighty years in this brave world. The reason that I recently postponed my retirement is, however, not for the sake of this sight-seeing, but because I feel I have something to do for children's happiness.

Children are spoiled on this earth. People are killing each other in the army--it's a sad mess of a world. Yet, all children on the globe



are endowed with life, with unlimited potential. If you ask what stage today's children are at, I'll answer I don't know. If you have your baby fostered by someone ten thousand years hence, he will grow up as an adult with the culture of ten thousand years hence. If you trust your baby with a stone age man and go to get him when he's twenty, you'll find him a perfect stone age man with the senses and ability of that age. Now that we know that "man is a child of the environment" and that "ability is not inborn," I think it is not just the parents' responsibility to foster their children with beautiful sensitivity; it's the supreme assignment for all mankind. Let's bring up children as fine human beings. I'm not thinking of raising them as professional musicians. I am no musician, though I do play the violin on and off. Rather, I am an individual who loves children, who happened to prove it with music.

As I have already said, the basis of the Suzuki method is to let the child daily play with the record or the tape the pieces he has already learned. Let him play five or six previous pieces. If it's long, even one piece will do. If he is studying the first movement, let him play with the record the first movement and the piece before that, and compare himself with it. The child enjoys playing in this way the pieces he can play. Let him play them in the same way as he repeatedly speaks the dialect his parents speak. That helps him acquire ability, which in turn helps him progress rapidly. I teach children who have developed this way: they learn the Beethoven concerto, which can be expected to take over a year, at the rate of a movement a week. I ask them to practice so they can play it with Kreisler's record, and they really come back after a week to play it with the record. When you raise the child this way from the start, it works. Whenever a student finishes a movement in my lesson, I have him play with Kreisler's record, paying attention

to his tone and his expression. The student doesn't pass if Kreisler can be heard over the student. The student's music becomes one with the record, and his sensitivity grows before he knows it. He then begins to advance quickly. For example, when he has finally reached Mozart's piano concerto, how about letting him finish the first movement in one week? In violin, that has already been done. The student plays a movement with the world's maestro, without at all diverging from him. The ability to do that is gradually created. Traditionally it was unthinkable to finish in a week the first movement of Beethoven's concerto including the cadenza, and go on to the next movement. I recently tried that on a child who will go to the States on the tour. She finished the entire concerto in a month. At age ten, she neatly plays the concerto. Instead of telling your child to practice, it's important to first let him enjoy playing what he can already play. When ability starts to develop, the child will be able to absorb any amount of fruit. This is our method.

Think of a way to let your child enjoy playing. From time to time on occasion, it would be nice to hold a home concert, say on a Saturday, and have the father applaud. However poorly your child plays, let him just clap his hands. (Laughter.) Sometimes, he won't even understand. There are fathers who understand, and there are those who don't. However, sooner or later they all begin to understand. A long time ago I received a letter from a parent about another Suzuki family. The mother started her child on the violin after reading books on talent education. The father, a physician, was absolutely against it. She continued to be a devoted Suzuki mother, while her husband remained unreconciled to it. The letter said, "Yesterday he passed by our house on a bike, singing the 'taka

taka tatta' variation of Twinkle. . . .
(Laughter.)

Fathers, too, gradually become tuned in. Those who understand are great fathers, and as for those who don't, I hope you mothers will take your time to gradually educate them in peace. . . . They may be critical at first, but don't worry, they will eventually sing Twinkle. Remember, "every child grows; everything depends on how we raise them." (Applause.)

Talent Education, no. 54



Is Your Finger-Mustard Sharp?



Toshio Takahashi
Head Instructor, Flute
School

To compare music study to the human body, the torso corresponds to musical expression, one of the two legs that help move it to

the tone, and the other leg to the fingering. Although one is apt to identify music practice with the practice of fingers alone, fingering, as well as tonalization, practice is only a means for musical expression. It amounts to only twenty-five percent of the entire value. Yet, without it, there is no performance. So, let's think about this leg.

Music contains long and short notes. The former exist to let tonal expression be heard, while the latter exist to let movement be heard clearly. Where tonalization is good, long sounds naturally assume tonal expressiveness. So the question then is how to give life to short sounds. As it were, quarter notes are like grownups who have just reached majority, and are short of expression. Eighth notes are like middle school students. Sixteenth notes are like elementary school students. Grace notes are like babies on the mother's back. What is important is that such short notes also have life. Short notes tend to be played without care as if they were worthless except as bundles of notes. Often, in playing a big piece, one may have taken tens and hundreds of lives, not unlike the Nazi's massacres.

The shorter the notes, the more care is needed. In order for small notes to be heard vividly one by one, you may try to play them louder

than longer notes; yet they may just barely whisper. Again, the faster the fingers move, the greater depth is required in the tone.

Finger practice, in short, consists of scale, arpeggio, and trill practice. However, this is not merely finger practice but tonal practice. In other words, long sounds are like straight lines, but scales, for example, represent long sounds that are diagonally drawn, or curved. Since everything artistic is like curved lines, to neglect scale and arpeggio practice is to abandon art. In passing, the great Moyse in his twenties is said to have practiced scales and arpeggios over three hours every day for ten years. This is understandable if we realize the importance of curved lines.

Now, the problem is how to practice. The target is clarity rather than speed. In other words, it is far better to play slowly but with fast fingers for every note than play fast with unclear sounds. In order to be heard clearly no matter how fast you play, you need karate-like fingers. Withdrawal rather than thrust, speed rather than power: unless the fingers are lifted with the same speed as they are put down, you cannot maintain the homogeneity of sounds. In the case of flute playing, instead of just gently patting the keys, it is necessary to beat them with fingers as if hammering on piano keys; fine to break a flute or two. You must train your fingers until you can clearly hear the melody as you lift your fingers just as when you put them down, in the same way as you simply beat the keys. Maestro Casals, when I participated in the Marlboro Music Festival, at tea time shattered a sugar cube on the table into a thousand pieces with a blow of one left finger. What an awe-inspiring power that was. Such famous cello players were there as Paul Tortelier and Maurice Gendron, but Casals took their bows away at lessons, and trained them till

they could clearly be heard playing difficult pieces by Bach and Dvorak with just the left hand. He said that the performer, no matter how skilled, is second rate unless he can be heard especially when lifting the finger. He called practice with just the left hand "finger drumming" and required it from string players as indispensable finger training. When listening to Casals' records, you can hear his unbelievable finger drumming in all kinds of places.

I have named this karate-like finger "karashi" (coined from kara, empty, + shi, finger, after karate, empty hand, or the art of empty handed fighting; karashi also means 'mustard'). In other words, it's no good if the mustard isn't sharp. In passing no other cello players could break sugar cubes. When the finger-mustard is sharp, all the fingered notes are in the same condition as open string notes; hence they sound lively and clear. Musical masters have all learned this kind of sharp power of concentration in some form or other. Moyses holds a European billiard championship. Primrose was a boxing champion as a student. Few people know that Mr. Suzuki holds a degree in the Shōrinji Art of Fist. At the time of the qualification test, I hear that he clasped a red hot poker heated in a coal fire and moved his hand right and left rubbing it. A whisp of white smoke rose, but his hand, I am told, was intact. This power of concentration has created that tone and those fingers of his. We can never reach him if we simply imitate him superficially. Among contemporary players, Horowitz in the piano, and in the violin, Perlman, seem to be degree holders. In order to increase the speed of lifting the fingers, it is effective to exercise quickly opening fingers like a Flamenco guitar player, or, as I often tell my flute students in

jest, to practice flipping something with fingers of both hands, picking different fingers according to the day of the week.

When a student listens to a record and tries to play like that, it is recommended that he train himself at the speed which allows him to play all the detail clearly and with life, instead of worrying about the speed required by the printed music or the speed at which the master musician plays in the record. "The speed that gives life to both the details and big parts is the true tempo"--this is what Dr. Schweitzer said. Friends, please train your karate-fingers.



Let's Universalize the New Approach

by Which Every Child Grows:

The Lottery Concert

Shin'ichi Suzuki

The teacher said to F: "The last lesson of the month is your lottery concert day. Practice all Volume 2 pieces well with the tape."

F had just entered Book 3. From that day on she practiced every day all the Book 2 pieces before playing the new assignment. Since she repeatedly practiced all the pieces she can play with the tape, her ability was rapidly raised and her tone improved. She also started to enjoy practicing. Eventually she was able to play everything solidly, musically, and with ease.

Now, on F's lottery concert lesson day, after A finished her lesson, the teacher said, "Today's F's lottery concert day. Everybody, please listen to her." He thus prepared the other students and their parents, then put an empty tissue box on the desk. He said, "Put your hand through the hole and take out two cards. It's a lottery; play the pieces written on the cards."

The box contained twelve small cards each with the name of a piece from Book 2. The cards F chose said Weber's "Hunters' Chorus" and Beethoven's Minuet. "Oh, no," said F, but she played the two pieces fairly well to the accompaniment tape. Everyone clapped. F was delighted. The teacher said, "Well done, F. Your next lottery concert will be in the second week, next month. Practice with the tape every day so you'll be able to play all the pieces even better." That day, the lesson ended after a session on tonalization.

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This is an approach I would like every class to use from now on. F got into the habit of practicing earlier pieces every day. That fostered her ability so much that she was then able to learn newly assigned pieces quickly and well. The mother tongue method fosters ability smoothly only by this kind of skillful approach.

This lottery concert was initiated in Matsumoto by Teacher Hiroko Masaoka. One student asked her mother to make the same box and cards at home. The mother was delighted, she told me, thinking that her daughter wanted to have lottery concerts at home in order to practice earlier pieces. "No, no, mother," the child said, "it's not that. I just want to practice picking easier pieces from the lottery box." Both the mother and I laughed.

In any case, from now on this teaching method will be applied everywhere in the Suzuki method. I would like you parents to cooperate with this. This way, every child will grow. It will be practiced not only in the violin but in the piano, cello, and flute schools.

The name lottery concert was given by Mr. Norimichi Kai when I reported on the approach in Tokyo. The box is unpredictable: no matter how much the student practices picking easy pieces, the box shows no mercy. There is nothing to do but to practice well.

Students throughout the country will find it enjoyable to practice earlier pieces once this approach is put into practice. I would like Suzuki teachers to start it right away.

To Teachers

On applying this method, teachers can try any variations in response to students' different abilities.

If you make the review practice a habit from the beginning through Book 4 or 5, every student will smoothly acquire ability. When deciding

the repertoire for the lottery concert, if the student is studying a piece in the middle of Book 2, for example, tell him that the ten pieces before that (including some Book 1 pieces) will be included in his lottery. Ask him to pick three cards for his lottery recital. For a student learning a piece in the middle of Book 4, eight pieces before that can be the lottery pieces, two of which he has to play for his recital. The teacher should be flexible according to each student's level.

Further, since it is important to create the habit of practicing earlier pieces at home during the Book 1 period, my idea is to have a preparatory session for a lottery recital before the child starts his practice: if he is on the seventh piece, let him draw a lot out of the six previous pieces and play it before every lesson.

Thorough and repeated practice of earlier pieces at home is the crux of creating ability. Think of various devices toward this end. Create a habit in the students to study every day all the pieces they have learned starting with Twinkle.

What Is MANUKE (Absent-Mindedness)?

When I tell a student in class, "Your performance has improved, but it's still a little manuke ('absent-minded,' or, more literally, 'characterized by the absence of intervals')," all the students laugh. This is my special musical term. "It's a little manuke (lacking in correct intervals)"--this does not sound like a lovable expression, for it reminds you of the expression about a person, "He's manuke (a jerk)." This ancient expression is a wonderful word pointing to the most important thing in music education. I don't know who invented this word, but I use it frequently with admiration. However, I never call the

student a jerk.

Ma--in other words, the beauty of the interval in musical rhythm--is crucial to good performance. In a master artist's performance, the skill of the interval, of singing a phrase and of breathing into the next, is beyond words. It is natural and beautiful. This is called ma, interval.

In an unskilled performance, there is no musical interval to flavor and enjoy, but the music moves thoughtlessly from phrase to phrase like a march, or just rushes jerkily onward in a flurry. This is called absent-minded. While I only comment, "A little absent-minded," it still passes. But among very poor performers, some calmly give a "great big absent-minded" performance. The interval is so important that one can even say that "the interval is the life of music."

An outstanding conductor, with nothing more than a baton, leads the orchestra to bring out the superb rhythm and intervals contained in the music. In music study, it is important to study rhythm and interval. It is the teacher's most important responsibility to save his students from absent-mindedness. If the teacher is manuke, his students will become manuke, too. Please try to be interval-minded, not absent-minded; treasure the essence of interval, not the absence of interval.

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Lectures on Music Education, 27



When and How to Start

Shigeki Tanaka
from Young Children: Every-
thing Depends on How We
Raise Them (no. 8)

Chapter II When and How to Start

1. Before Starting Early Education

A young person visited me recently and told me she wanted to teach hiragana (Japanese phonetic script) to her daughter who had just turned two years old.

She gave the child a picture book with no writing in it except OFURO (bath), written large across the front cover. Her daughter loves this book. She always walks around with it, asking grownups to tell her a story about it. When the mother tells her to bring the book of OFURO, she delightedly picks out the right one from among ten others. Once when the mother pointed at the letters on the cover and asked casually, "What does this say?" the child said "ofuro" right away. The mother was pleased, thinking she could read. Can she really?

Dr. Glenn Doman of the U. S. is said to have successfully treated brain injured children by teaching them how to read at age three, which stimulated the development of the big brain. Moreover, his experiments indicate that reading can be taught more smoothly when started at age three or four than at five. Age two is reported to be the optimum age in the case of children with a healthy brain.

Guided by Dr. Doman's teaching, I decided to assist this mother who wanted to teach her girl to read, but on the following nine conditions:

1. Teach with love and make learning fun.

2. Don't push for outstanding results.
3. Give no tests (though indirect testing is necessary).
4. Repeat much.
5. Make each session short (quit before the child becomes bored).
6. Prepare a good environment.
7. Continue only as long as the child's interest is sustained.
8. Do not assume a teaching manner.
9. Keep remembering that this is a game to enjoy playing with the child.

When I tell this to teachers, they all look puzzled. It is probably because they are still possessed with the traditional idea that a child can only be taught to read at six, that forcing it before the period of "readiness" results in obstructing normal development.

Is it wrong to teach a child how to read before age six? Almost all "Older Group" children in kindergarten today (age five to six) can read hiragana. Do they teach them how to read at kindergarten? No. Most children learn at home. If more than 90 percent of new first graders read hiragana, the homeroom teacher may conduct classes on the assumption that all do. Those who did not pick up reading at home may then be left behind.

I am sorry to quote rather dated material, but please see the table below based on a survey by a certain day care center in a typical workers' residential area in downtown Tokyo. Nearly 80 percent of the children are reported to be able to read at the simplest level. Literacy among preschool children has probably gone up to over 90 percent. The survey of individual families indicates that children learned how to read by themselves with nobody in particular teaching them. A mother answered that her child asked about this letter or that so persistently

Reading and Writing Hiragana
A Survey

Reading Level	Age 5	4	3	Total
Read with comprehension	11	1	0	12
Can read all 44 symbols	6	5	3	14
Can read about half	11	5	0	16
Can read own name only	8	12	5	25
Cannot read at all	0	0	5	5
Total	36	23	13	72

Writing Level	5	4	3	Total
Can write easy sentences	10	0	0	10
Can write all 44 symbols	2	2	1	5
Can write some symbols	18	7	0	25
Can write own name only	5	12	3	20
Cannot write at all	1	2	9	12
Total	36	23	13	72

that she had to teach him individual letters on various occasions, and "he seems to have learned how to read before he knew it."

Then, is it best to leave children alone to pick up reading without guidance?

Mr. Kiyoshi Suda of Myōjō School who published this survey writes:

It has been a hundred years since compulsory education was established in 1872. In those early years children of illiterate parents learned to read at age six in an environment without newspapers or magazines and only by candlelight at night. It is natural that three year olds now burn with curiosity about letters in today's environment of mass communication. Again, when children have this curiosity, teaching them hiragana is not a big chore; grownups have the duty to respond to this. This survey clearly proves that the era is long over when "it was sufficient for a pre-school child to

read and write his own name." Nevertheless, educational and women's columns in newspapers continue to carry articles recommending that "at the time of entering elementary school, it is enough if the child can read his own name." Some teachers, when asked by mothers, parrot the same answer as forty years ago. This is unkind, almost criminal to parents whose children are starting school. For if they believe these words, their children will suffer after entering school.

"Children spontaneously learn to read when the time comes, so just leave them alone," some say. However, think of the new religions that took root in rural areas soon after the war. One of them preached that "the less fertilizer you apply, the better for the plants." Peasants who practiced this faithfully received a severe blow. The same can be said of education. Is it better to leave children alone so they will learn to read by themselves? Or is it better to give them appropriate fertilizer at the right time to help them grow into robust seedlings? The answer is obvious. However, we must also strictly restrain ourselves from the folly of giving an overdose of strong fertilizer and drying out the seedlings.

(from How to Teach Hiragana)

Similarly, Professor Kei Tōyama of Tokyo University of Technology, known for developing a new approach for teaching math to children, says about math:

In the past, it was believed that children should just play happily at nursery school and kindergarten, and that it was wrong to feed them math. This is not without reason. First, since we didn't know appropriate ways to teach young children, we tended to force first graders' math in its unchanged form on four and five year olds. If they have already learned

what they are expected to study as first graders, of course they will yawn from boredom when they are in the first grade. Therefore, elementary schools requested that "nursery schools and kindergartens teach nothing." Come to think of it, however, it is ludicrous. If correctly taught, children will understand math well, and consequently elementary school teachers will have an easier time. If what was taught before school proves obstructive, that is because there is something wrong about the way it is taught.

Correctly taught, the result can only be welcomed at elementary school, never regarded as nuisance.

As far as math is concerned, it seems that the earlier it is taught the better. In other words, math is suitable for early education. Young children all love math as long as it is correctly taught. I think the following reasons explain this fact:

1. The thought processes are simple and are fit for young children's ability to think.
2. The answer is clear. Young children don't like ambiguity. They demand a clear answer of yes, or no. In math, three plus four is always seven; there is no other answer.
3. Math contains no favoritism. No matter how bright a child may be, if he makes a mistake, he cannot camouflage it. No matter how poor a student a child may be, if he answers correctly, the answer is evaluated with no points deducted. Young children, since they are honest and love fair play, seem to like this aspect of math.

I think it is wise to take the opportunity while children are at an age when they still love math, and give them good training; "strike while the iron is hot."

On hearing this kind of argument, some may think, "Oh no, I've got to do something about

my child before it's too late." What occurs to them first may be how the child will perform at elementary school. However, the era of entrance examinations (for high school and college) and of priority on academic qualifications is already beginning to pass. As we see in a recent report by the Ministry of Labor, one no longer automatically gets an administrative job just because one has graduated from a prestigious college. The percentage is becoming smaller and smaller. On the other hand, the wages of high school graduates are now not very different from those of university graduates their age.

Early education is not preparation for success in the entrance exam era. It is education of love, for meeting the desires of children. I would like you to shake off the traditional concept of education which has reigned since compulsory education began in 1892, and awaken to this education of love by which every child grows.

As I said at the start, the rigid old concept of education cannot be changed in a day. When the parent fortuitously awakens to the desirability of early education, and the child begins to show wonderful potential--she may be so carried away at the prospect that her child is a genius that she may begin to harbor excessive ambitions. Every child can do almost everything. It's not that your child alone is a born genius.

2. Don't Compare, Don't Be Impatient, Don't Give Up

I always ask parents three things.

First, don't compare. Comparison is not always wrong. It is important to know where your child stands in comparison with other young children. However, parents tend to do this with excessive competitiveness. Whether

or not the child is ahead becomes the focus, which obstructs correct evaluation of the child. Moreover, in the narrow parental vista, the objects of comparison are often limited to children in the neighborhood, relatives, siblings, and classmates.

One would not think of sending a child to Tokyo University just because he is tops at a rural elementary school, but some parents' way of thinking is not far from this. I know many examples of parents who expected so much that the child, overburdened, simply broke down. Some others only notice shortcomings of the child and complain. Please open your eyes wider, and take the time to gaze on your child. If he has strong points, praise him and encourage him to further develop his skills; if he has weaknesses, think with him so he will progress even if only a little further.

If you must compare, don't compare your child with others but with himself: limit your comparison to judging your child's own progress.

Second, don't lose patience. If you become impatient and pull your child, you will certainly fail. Think of how a plant grows. If you pull, wishing for rapid growth, when the first twin leaflets are out, the root will become loose, and the plant will die.

No matter what the subject is, if the parent is so carried away as to pull the child, he will turn away. Unless the child has the self motivation to do it himself, you can't get anywhere. The more you force, the greater the rejection will be. If there is a child who does as forced, he, not ones who resist, is a problem child. A child who moves only according to what the parent says will develop no ego, and even when grown up, he will not be able to act independently.

Third, don't give up. "Our child's no good," some parents say, as if giving up. However, it's not that easy to give it all up. They try to

give up, but right after making such a decision, painful thoughts stir in the mind. They are unable to give it up. I hear that this is common to giving up in general. This painful feeling, uttered, turns into complaints.

"Why was such a child ever born? I envy so-and-so's mother," "Don't show me any more tests," the mother says, and furtively opens the child's school knapsack to check his tests in his absence. When the condition worsens, she may develop a hard attitude of ignoring the child: "It was clear from the start that a child like you couldn't do well."

Try to stand in the place of a child who hears this every day. He can only think, "I'm really no good." Then there is a problem. He becomes incapable of doing even the simplest things.

If the parent gives up, it only results in fostering an inferiority complex in the child. Nothing impedes his learning more than the feeling of inferiority. The child may be incapable of doing this or that, but the cause of this incapacity, it is not too much to say, is his feeling of inferiority.

Let me repeat and repeat. Every child has plenty of learning desire, and has splendid potential. There is no reason to worry or to exult over each little comparison with other children. Please stop pulling the child from impatience. Do not complain.

A Child Who Refused to Greet

The Center for Development of Young Children scouts mother researchers from the general public. With their cooperation a study on child raising is published annually in pamphlet form. The study is divided into such sections as development of speech, learning to read, music, social behavior, creative activity, and physical development. I would



like to quote a report in connection with the three restraints discussed above:

(The reporter lost her first child soon after a difficult birth, and had this boy after several years of waiting.)

The First Year

I started with softly playing the cassette of Mozart's Eine Kleine Nachtmusik sent from the Center each time I put the baby to my breast.

He now is in the habit of taking a nap listening to the FM Stereo Classic Hour which starts at one. If I switch it off, he wakes up, so I just leave it on till three for the entire Classic Hour. I also try popular and other types of music, but it is with classical music that he plays alone with concentration. I think he especially likes piano solos and chamber orchestra pieces.

The Second Year

Kōta has to have the TV on all the time, a bad habit. I worry about his watching TV with his head almost glued to the set. So I decided that he should watch only two children's programs, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, and something on the educational channel when he has nothing to do, while I am busy working. When the program is interrupted by the Diet news or something, he doesn't forget it easily and gives me a hard time. He has no interest in adult programs, and even when I want to watch something, he says "no" and refuses to let me watch it. And yet he learns commercials before I know it. One day I said, "Want some tea?" He responded with "Yo-ho!" just as in a certain commercial.

A few days pass while I think no child is as lovely and as intelligent as Kōta. Then one

day all of a sudden he changes into an impossible rascal and crybaby, naughty and fresh about everything. This transformation has been repeated in cycles for the past several months. At first I didn't realize that it came in cycles. When Kōta and I have clashes all day long, I feel insecure. Was I wrong in how I raised him? He endlessly behaves like a mama's baby, plays naughty tricks, wets his pants despite the toilet training he already has, won't take a nap, just runs me ragged. Is this an expression of unfulfilled desire? Losing confidence, and losing morale, I have begun to fret over the difficulty of child raising.

A Year Later, Starting to Take Violin

On the first lesson day, there were seven or eight children between second grade and two years and four months. They lined up and practiced how to greet the teacher: "Please teach me." "Come on, Kōta, you line up with the other kids," I said, but he said, "No," not moving. "Everybody's to line up." "No. Pee pee." I became gradually irritated. "I want a drink of water," "Let's play outside," "Let's go home quick," he said, trying to get out of that place as quickly as possible. "You've got friends here, and you'll enjoy it as soon as you get used to it. Let's come again next week," I said. Probably reflecting that he had annoyed his mother, Kōta became docile. As I left for home holding his hand, I thought, "This may turn out to be an experience like ascetic practice."

The class is held at the place of a piano teacher who has a boy by the name of Yotchan. He is three months older than Kōta and started lessons at the same time. He is a little wild but can greet the teacher well. Kōta shows interest in Yotchan's toys in the yard; he plays with them as though they were his own, and

sometimes fights with the rightful owner. He gets so carried away in playing that he doesn't easily enter the class when it's time for the lesson. He won't stop playing until I lose patience and, holding him in my arms, bring him in. Since I have always felt I would not like to force lessons on him, I am at a loss.

The other day, again, he resisted staying in class saying, "I'm playing outside." A little irritated, I said, "Okay then go out by yourself." He put on his shoes, went out, and played in the sand in silence in the foggy rain. Yotchan's mother laughed, "It's as if Kōta comes to class to play with the sand." Yet, when he hears the piano or violin, he sometimes stops playing and returns, drawn by the sound.

The class advances little by little. When the child learns to greet, he practices beating the rhythm "takataka tatta" with his hands. Then he moves on to bow hold. He learns the posture and the bow hold with a violin made of a ruler and an empty box of mosquito coils, and a chopstick for a bow. At home, the child reviews this, and listens to the Twinkle Variations on the record. Kōta, however, stumbles with greeting, time after time, never advancing. "Today, he'll do it," I think, but the moment the lesson starts, he frantically clings to me, saying, "I can't do it, I can't do it." How come Kōta can't do it, when his friends do it fine? "He's still small," "He's probably sleepy," other mothers console me, but I remain puzzled by Kōta who clings to me tight, refusing to let go. Where is the usual Kōta, who tells me, "You can't come with me," goes down the staircase by himself from the fourth floor apartment, and stays out for two or three hours if I leave him alone? While I have sometimes experienced anxiety having lost sight of him, I have also felt reassured by his independence watching him boldly mingling with friends. Is it that the characteristic of the only child

has now begun to show?

Gradually Thursday has become a burden. Since he still can't greet, we tried giving him a chopstick to practice bow hold, skipping the greeting. Thank god he held it, however poorly; but the moment he did, he turned toward me and displayed his swordsmanship. His eyes brighten only on such occasions. I take pains to give him a nap before the lesson, so he should be feeling fine, yet he quickly gets bored, and gives me a hard time, repeating, "Let's go home." Today, again, as usual, the result was, "Let him sit down till he's a little more used."

On the way home, I said to Kōta, staring at him, "I'm ashamed." He looked guilty yet liberated. As I watched him lick the ice cream I bought on the way home, I even felt sorry for him. "You don't like going to violin?" "I don't like it." "Do you like violin?" He doesn't answer. "You aren't going with your mother any more?" ". . ." "Do you like violin?" Kōta approaches me on tiptoe and whispers into my ear, "I like violin." It may be just that he doesn't find the cue for opening up.

The teacher says, "If you keep bringing him every week, he'll eventually join us." My husband says, "Kōta can't get used to the atmosphere of the class where he's not allowed to act as he wants. But it probably makes sense to take him there: it's only once a week, and it gives him a chance to get used to social order. It's no good for the parent to feel it a burden. You'd better take it easy."--Easier said than done, papa, I mumble to myself. However, it does seem I need to think it over well instead of being tempted to blame Kōta by comparing him with his lesson mates. Let's watch him patiently. "Don't be impatient, don't compare, don't give up"--don't I remember this in

print somewhere?

Publicized reports often emphasize only the positive, but this is candid with no frills. Don't most mothers go through similar experiences at some point?

If I dare to comment, I think the child was not ready to start lessons. When the parent tries to rush before appropriate preparation just because the child is old enough, the result is naturally like this. That he can't greet the teacher is proof. Since he can't greet, skip it and let him practice the bow hold--it's natural that he brandishes his bow-sword, it's natural that his eyes shine. Most mothers may find it difficult to secure a way to skillfully prepare the child. In most cases, however, the child gradually develops incentive himself while passing through such processes. Whether it comes early or late, I think, after all depends on how the parents handle it.



We Decide Not to Enter the Competition

Kiyoshi Suzuki

from A Father's Record
(no. 8) continued from
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48. We Decide Not to Enter the Competition --Age Ten

One spring day when Eiko had just turned a fourth grader, her violin teacher spoke to me in class: "Mr. Suzuki, how would you feel about entering Eiko in the competition?" "Do you mean the Mainichi News Competition?" I asked. "Yes. I'm sure a fourth grader playing as well as she does will do fairly well," he said. "Would you say so?" I replied non-committally, and went home leaving it at that for the day.

"Certainly, it will be a learning experience. If she is lucky enough to win first prize, it would be the best starting point for her. We would feel proud if she won it as a fourth grader, and enjoy the small recognition society might grant her. Shall I be bold enough to let her try?" I momentarily felt positive about it, and the following day I wrote for the regulations for participating in the competition. The time till the form arrived proved to be a cooling off period: during that time I did a lot of thinking.

I fantasied about the glory of her winning first place, about the newspaper article with her picture, the celebration, the recital in honor of her feat. I also imagined the opposite result: how would it be if she failed to pass the preliminary screening, or, even if she luckily passed the screening, failed in the final contest? Both parents and child would be disheartened.

Now what should we do? I went back and forth in my mind, when suddenly I came to realize this: "Even if she should win first place, it is just first place of this year, and that only among the children who participate. That's not Japan's real top number one, yet Eiko might presumptuously think she is number one. If she fails, it will make her feel inferior. Then, whichever way it turns out, it doesn't seem to be very good for her. At the same time, we shouldn't foster her in such a way that she won't practice unless she goes to competitions."

I told her teacher, "Somehow I think it's better not to try the competition." He said, "I see," and asked no questions. He never mentioned it again.

After some time, I thought it was really good to pass up the competition. However, I don't consider the competition itself meaningless. It is a very good chance for concentrated study. What I didn't like about it was the fear that it might focus our attention entirely on the results alone.

Since joining talent education, I have heard countless times about how music makes man. I have heard that the true meaning of violin playing is to create human sensitivity. Although I hesitated much when I heard about the competition, I feel intuitively that I did not err in this decision.

49. From Half Size to Three Quarter Size

--Ten Years and Three Months

During the talent education summer school of 1956, an evening concert was held nightly at the Hongo Elementary School auditorium just outside Matsumoto. We enjoyed the cool and pleasant hours attending the concerts.

At one of these concerts, Eiko played the first movement of Bruch's concerto. Even through the ears of the "prejudiced" parent, it still sounded short of perfection, and I thought her half size violin did not ring too well. However, people said really nice words about her performance--which after all left her father happy.

People from Yokohama who heard Eiko play later wrote to me inviting her to play a solo at a fund raising recital there. This was to help the construction of the Talent Education Center Hall. They wrote, "Eiko's performance at the evening concert was beautiful. We would like her to come to play at Yokohama." Eiko was delighted. Of course I accepted the offer with gratitude. Neither Eiko nor I was much bothered by having to skip school for this, but I explained it well to obtain the school's permission.

On the morning of November 9, 1956, we entered a Toyohashi station platform, Eiko with her violin. We waited for the train, holding second class tickets, not third as usual. The second class car of a regular far going train is normally quite empty. I decided to splurge since Eiko was travelling for the first time all the way to Yokohama to perform, though just one piece. I did not consider this extravagant. I wished to avoid her getting exhausted on the way so that she would be able to do her best at the concert. I, too, appreciated riding second class thanks to Eiko.

That night we stayed at the place of Mr. Funahashi, Yokohama district's instructor. The following day, we went to the concert with Mr. and Mrs. Funahashi. I was impressed first by the fine music hall, which was full. Miss Tomiko Shida of Matsumoto gave a beautiful performance, and Yokohama district children's group performances were so clean that it was moving to hear them.

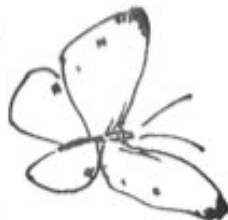
At an evaluation meeting after the concert, Mr. Suzuki said, "Eiko-chan's violin is half size, isn't it? I think the three quarter size will do now. For the violin to ring a little, it's got to be that size. . . ." He borrowed someone's three quarter size violin that was there and let Eiko try holding it.

"Is it a little big? But it's about time, don't you think? Let's get her used to the size by and by," he said half to Eiko and half to me. I thought the three quarter size was still a little big, but felt persuaded and said, "Then, let's switch by and by," asking him to arrange for Mr. Shirō Suzuki of Matsumoto to make her a three quarter size violin.

Eiko started out with the sixteenth size, and went to the tenth, to the eighth, to the quarter size, and when she switched to the half size, I thought, "My, how Eiko has grown." But already time came to have a three quarter size violin made. There was no time to relax. A child we think small grows up before we know it.

It has always been exciting for Eiko to change her violin for a bigger one. This time again she began to anticipate the instrument the moment Mr. Suzuki mentioned it: "Papa, when is the three quarter size going to be finished?" "I wonder. It's hard to tell when it will be, but Mr. Suzuki has asked to have one made, so keep waiting. It's still a little too big for you," I told Eiko.

The day after the concert was rainy. I had thought of showing her the harbor, weather permitting, but gave up the idea and went direct to the station with Mrs. Funahashi who saw us off there.



50. The Lullaby Puzzles Us --Eleven Years Old

Our town finally stopped using the wartime siren, now marking time with a sweet bell sound. This reflected the wish of the citizens who thought the siren noisy and, ringing on top of the public hall, especially insensitive during concerts and other events. Besides, the siren reminded us of the odious air raid alarm.

This new bell plays a lullaby at ten o'clock at night to tell youngsters to hurry home, and to remind grownups of them. Depending on the wind, this chime sometimes reaches our home. One night, we heard the tune very clearly.

"This lullaby's odd, papa," Eiko looked at my face.

"You're right, it sounds a little tone-deaf," I said. After we heard it for the second time as it repeated, Eiko said, "It's here. It's odd right here," and sang the tune.

"Right, right, I thought so, too, when I heard it the first time," I said.

"It's the city hall's bell, how come they don't play a better lullaby?" Eiko seemed unreconciled.

Fortunately, Eiko grew with a sense of scale that judged this lullaby faulty, but it is sad to think that there are children who might accept this as the right melody. I published a comment in the bulletin of the town's cultural center, but the lullaby remained the same. Some may have smiled, and maybe that was all the response it ever got.

It is difficult to create musical sensitivity after growing up. However, it is mastered without much toil if fostered during childhood. Mr. Suzuki often tells parents that something like the sense of scale, if firmly implanted in the brain during babyhood, can only be perfect so

that the child does not simply accept it if anything is wrong in a given scale. Of course, it is not that Eiko has such a firm scale, as is clear from how her tone is corrected all the time in class. However, she is off by a hair's difference which I would not even notice. I cannot point out her wrong intonation when listening to her practice. My tonal sense is quite inferior. Yet, the lullaby from the chime is so far off that even I can't accept it. Doesn't this manifest a lack of cultural sensitivity in our country?

51. Eiko Stays Out for the First Time --Eleven Years Old

During the 1957 talent education summer school, the Chuō line stopped running because of flooding. People from the Nagoya area were restlessly thinking about their trips home. Some thought of going home by the Iida line; others more carefully planned to take a long route via Tokyo. I decided to use the Iida line, since it was more convenient for returning to Toyohashi. The day before our scheduled departure, Mr. Shin'ichi Suzuki said,

"How do you feel about leaving Eiko-chan with me for a while? Since the Chuō line is not running, the Iida line is a real mess now. It's sad to take a child in that crowd. If you leave her here, I'm happy to listen to her violin. Besides, I have told the same to other people, so there'll be plenty of children for her to be with. In a week or so at any rate the Chuō line will reopen; let her relax here till then."

I didn't know how to answer on the spot, but said, "Yes, thank you very much."

Now, what shall I do, I thought, but decided that it would be better to leave Eiko with Mr.

Suzuki after all.

On returning to the lodging, I found children busy preparing for their trips home the following day. I said to Eiko as casually as possible, after thinking clumsily about how to tell her to remain at the Suzukis':

"Eiko, Mr. Suzuki kindly offers to let you stay with him for a while since the Chuō line is not running, and the Iida line is terribly crowded. So you stay here, all right?"

"At Mr. Suzuki's place? With whom?" Eiko said, not so enthusiastically.

"Of course by yourself. But there'll be some other children who do the same."

"I see, so I'm staying here by myself?"

"You see, the Chuō isn't running, so the Iida is super crowded. Mr. Suzuki thinks it's too dangerous for children, and asks me to leave you with him. So stay at his place for a while. I have business to tend to at the office, so I have to go home for now, but I'll come back to pick you up. You understand now, don't you?" I said. Eiko nodded. I said, "Good, good," and took her to the next room. I greeted the people I was to leave with the following day: "Eiko's going to stay at Mr. Suzuki's place for a few days. I thought I'd let you know beforehand." I did this to help Eiko make up her mind firmly.

"Is that so? By herself? How brave," they said.

Back in our room, I put together the things to leave for Eiko, and said, "Now, go to sleep. I'll take a quick bath and come right back." By the time I returned, Eiko was already fast asleep. I had never let Eiko stay away from us. While watching her sleep, I felt bad about returning to Toyohashi alone. "It's nothing to feel sorry about, I'm leaving her with Mr. Suzuki who's sincerity itself," I told myself, but I remained restless. Rather than the child,

the parent proved immature.

On the day of departure, Mr. Suzuki said at the summer school hall, "Both the Iida and the Chuō lines are so badly crowded that the return trip will be risky for children. Please don't hesitate to leave your child until the trains going toward Nagoya start to run again. We can easily take twenty children at our place. If there are more, I'll arrange with the head of the Matsumoto chapter to lodge them with absolute care. Leave your children with us." However, no child remained except Eiko. She was by her luggage reading a fairy tale which she had bought at the summer school. The bus arrived.

"Well, I'll be off, be a good child now," I said and got on the bus, running. Eiko came out to where the bus was. I avoided looking at her.

"Eiko's crying," a child said in the bus. I quietly turned my head around to see outside. Eiko was crying with her face down. I saw Miss Tomiko Shida tending her as the bus left.

The bus took us to Tatsuno station. Inside the bus was full of merry songs and laughter, but I was in no mood to enjoy it. Even after getting on the Toyohashi bound train at Tatsuno, my heart was heavy, thinking of Eiko in tears at parting.

At Toyohashi, F's mother who had come to meet her noticed Eiko's absence right away and asked, "Where's Eiko?" "Yes, I left her at Matsumoto, at Mr. Suzuki's place." "Did you?" Alone by herself? How brave of you," she comforted me.

I walked home with a heavy gait, alone. "I've left Eiko," I said to my wife and explained the situation. "That's really wonderful," she sounded unexpectedly calm. "Well, I'm so much more fragile," I thought, reassured by her calm. Yet, the following day, I felt miserable again, missing Eiko at breakfast. I called

Matsumoto.

"Eiko-chan's fine, don't worry. She's in the middle of her lesson now. Please listen," Mr. Suzuki said. I heard the sound of the violin, then Eiko's voice: "Papa, did you hear me play?" She laughed and added, "Papa, when are you coming?"

"Well, Saturday or Sunday, I think. Wash your clothes yourself, stay neat and clean. And help Auntie a lot."

"Yes. Auntie's going to talk."

'Auntie,' Mr. Suzuki's younger sister, also said, "Please don't worry, Eiko-chan's very fine."

"Thank you very much for caring for Eiko," I said and hung up. There was no need to worry. Eiko sounded just as cheerful as at home. I wrote to her on the same day:

Dear Eiko-san,

How are you? I returned to Toyohashi safe and sound. Mama was very pleased to hear that you are staying with Mr. Suzuki, and asks you to study well with him. We are lonely without you after all, but are working hard, thinking we shouldn't be lonely because this is for Eiko's growth.

Wash your shirts and underwear; wear clean things. Have a good time studying with Mr. Suzuki. I think I can come to pick you up on the 17th or the 18th, though I may be delayed by business, in which case you'll wait without feeling lonely, won't you? I will work as hard as you, Eiko. Drop a post card in case you need anything.

Two days later, a tape arrived from Matsumoto. It made us visualize the great merriment and laughter of Mr. Suzuki, Auntie, Eiko, and surrounding people. I was grateful to

Mr. Suzuki for such a delightful recording, and, feeling better and better, sent back a taped reply.

I left for Matsumoto on Saturday. Eiko answered the door. "Auntie, papa's here," she said turning back.

Eiko was like a princess. Cared for by everyone, she was spending the days pleasantly, turning even Mr. Suzuki into a chum. I thought she would be happy to stay on there any number of days.

That night, I discussed problems of talent education with Mr. Suzuki until late. Eiko, who was tended by Auntie all the time, said, "Good night," and went to sleep first as at home.

The following day when leaving with Eiko, Mr. Suzuki and Auntie both kindly invited her again: "Come stay with us from time to time, you are big enough to be here alone; come during the winter vacation." Eiko said, "Yes," with a smile. I thanked them heartily and headed for Matsumoto station with Eiko. This time the Iida line was closed because of an accident, so we took the Chūō line to Toyohashi. On the train, Eiko whispered to me, "I don't want to go home." I felt a mild chill. I imagined with what depth Mr. Suzuki's love must have penetrated her.

52. "Prodigy," a Disagreeable Word

--Twelve Years Old



This was when Eiko and I visited a fall music festival held at Hachiman, Kōrigami, Gofu Prefecture. At the request of the Hachiman violin class, Eiko was to play Mozart-Kreisler's Rondo. I was expected to have a

round table discussion with the parents of the class.

When Eiko started to play on the stage, someone behind me, whether or not he knew I was her father I don't know, said, "Ah, that child's a prodigy." This comment was a great blow to me.

Acquaintances and friends have commented that Eiko was a prodigy a number of times in the past, and each time I explained talent education to them in brief words: "There's no genius in this world. If we raise our children in the talent education way, children who can speak will all become what common-sense called 'geniuses' in the old days." However, this comment I heard at Hachiman was particularly disagreeable.

I sensed an irresponsible attitude in the tone of the words, "that child's a prodigy," refusing to understand the efforts of Eiko and her parents.

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If, having failed to make efforts and to grow, one does not reflect upon oneself but merely calls those who have mastered a skill "geniuses," that is irresponsible. In a sense, it may be a consolation for oneself. I don't at all think that Eiko has grown beyond criticism, but when she is done away with the single word "prodigy," I find it an insult for all all those who grew with efforts to reach the level of what commonsense used to call "prodigies."

Parents who say "How come our child doesn't study?" neglect to make efforts to let their child study hard, not knowing how to let him bud and grow. Yet, seeing other children work hard and acquire skills, they comment on them: "Your child's a prodigy, really." Thus to praise the efforts with the label is to pretend that their own child can't do well because he is no prodigy. Those commented on having a child prodigy are so flattered that they, too, say, "Well, I don't know if he's a



prodigy or not, but he seems to be doing well despite the fact that we teach him nothing at home," hinting that he is in fact a prodigy.

It's quite understandable that parents want to boast of their children. But I would like them to boast more: I wish them to frankly inform many other parents of how they raised their children.

That no child knows things before being taught at all is a matter of fact. That no child grows without being fostered is also a plain fact.

Unless parents have faith in the possibility of raising the child toward greater ability, I think it will be impossible for them to help him reach the height of the "genius."



The earlier period
The better environment
The better teaching method
The more training
The superior instructor.

(Five mottoes of
Talent Education)

A Mother's Note

A Suzuki Parent and School Teacher

Tamae Yuzuhara
Odawara Chapter

Forward by the Violin Teacher

Mr. Kenkō Aoki, editor of TALENT EDUCATION, called a few days ago saying that he would like Mrs. Yuzuhara to write "A Mother's Note." I conveyed the message to her immediately. As I had expected, she seemed overwhelmed, and tried to excuse herself saying that there were many parents better equipped to write. However, I encouraged her, for I thought that many others watching their children grow must share her experiences. Mrs. Yuzuhara spends exhausting days as a school teacher, yet she has raised two children past the advanced curriculum. The older child this year passed the entrance examination for Shōnan High School which is regarded as one of the narrowest gates in this area; to make it even harder, she applied from another school district. Not only that, she continued to practice the violin all this while, reinforcing the claim that talent education can coexist with school work. Both mother and daughter must have made great efforts to bring this about. I think many drop the violin unwillingly under the pressure of entrance examinations, and many deeply regret it. I am sure many talent education members have faced the dilemma as successfully as did the Yuzuharas, but respecting the editor's request, I have pressed her to write.

Mariko Hara

I understand that talent education applies its epoch making method for the happiness of

children throughout the world. For a person like me to appear in the bulletin of this wonderful organization is too embarrassing. Up to now this column was always filled by those who successfully raised their children. Yet I agreed to write thinking that a sample of unsuccessful child raising might amuse readers. I am grateful to Teacher Mariko Hara for giving me this opportunity.

I must confess that I am a failure as a mother. My job as a middle school teacher comes before my duty as a mother. Nowadays many people teach at school while raising children at home. I was never confident that I could do both, but at any rate, I have kept the two pairs of sandals on.

Unlike many of you, I encountered talent education late. It was about ten years ago, a little before my daughter entered elementary school.

I was fascinated by the beautiful ability of the young child who was as absorbent as blotting paper. I thought it too precious to be left alone, and had her take piano lessons. My son was then a toddler. He gradually grew mischievous, and started to obstruct her piano practice. Just as I was thinking about finding an instrument for him which would not take space, the list of talent education violin classes throughout the country caught my eye in a magazine; I discovered that a class existed in our town also. Instantly I knew this was what I was looking for. I went to see Teacher Kaneshige Tanaka right away. He looked at my son, and said, "This boy is still very young. Why don't you let his big sister study first so you can prepare a good learning environment for him?" This became my daughter's first encounter with the violin.

With absolutely no knowledge of the instrument, not even how to loosen the bow or to rub

rosin on it, she started to learn the violin as a ploy for her brother. Naturally she was unenthusiastic. But she dropped the piano to concentrate on the violin about the time she started the Gossec Gavotte. Children three or four years younger than she played beautifully in class, and every mother could read music. I admired the way children and parents worked together and how Teacher Hara guided them.

About that time, I discovered to my great pleasure that a colleague of mine was also a member of talent education. He told me about the summer school. We participated in it with no knowledge of what it would be like. From that time on, both the children and I have been captives of the summer school. Our first stay at Matsumoto was an intense and refreshing experience in every way. I especially cannot forget my emotion when I saw Mr. Suzuki teaching lovely small children overflowing the wide stage: the scene is still etched in my mind. Since then I think we have been bound to talent education with a strong invisible tie.

My daughter started late, but, I thought, I should never let her give up on that account. Our teacher comforted me saying that "ability develops greatly until age ten." Through age nine, therefore, both my daughter and I struggled hard with a goal ahead of us. Striking notes on the piano, which I now realize was not even sufficiently tuned, I tightened and loosened the strings. It was a job for me, tone-deaf as I was, to try to keep the violins in playing condition for the children. Following the teacher's advice that the morning practice was the most fruitful, I let them practice every morning. However, since the morning hour right before I leave for school is when every minute, every second counts, I could not

give them a long session. It was several minutes at most. I beat the rhythm with my hands, and made big gestures for crescendo. I refrained from commenting. I recorded the same piece many times on an empty tape. I bought a small backpack style tape recorder at summer school for the children to carry. I also often used the endless tape. When we finished Handel's Sonatas, our teacher gave us a tape of sonatas. We listened to it many times. When entering Book 8, she gave us a Mozart tape so we could listen ahead of time.

Since ours was a family with no contact with music, in response to Mr. Suzuki's teaching, "Always the highest in this world," my husband and I talked a lot about creating the best possible musical environment.

Within our limited time together, naturally there's no time to talk about school. I have entrusted teachers to handle school matters, and at home, I have tried to find the point of parent-child contact in what's not done at school, i. e., only in the violin. Therefore, even if I learned the names of the children's homeroom teachers, I had no leisure to worry about where their classrooms were, or which class they were in. Before I learned them, my son graduated from elementary school and my daughter from middle school. Especially during elementary school days, I was relaxed about tests and report cards, respecting whatever path they opened up themselves. Right through the ninth grade, my daughter never showed me any school announcements about meetings requiring parents' attendance, since she knew I could not attend. I felt sorriest this year at the time of her high school entrance ceremony. "Some one I don't know asked me if my parents weren't coming. I was embarrassed," she said. "I hear that the lion tosses her baby down to the valley," I answered. "It's

okay, I'd come right up again," she was calm. Everything is this way when it comes to the matter of school.

* * * *

We concentrated on how to improve ourselves rather than how to advance. We hung the photograph at the beginning of Book 1 showing the bow hold. We also posted the twelve points of instruction from "Beautiful and good tonalization" to "Beautiful and good vibrato." Since I could not stay to see the practice on coming home in the afternoon, at one point I had my daughter record on a graph how many times she practiced tonalization. Remembering how Mr. Suzuki danced a minuet on the summer school stage, I, too, sometimes danced to the violin in my untrained way, and with so much enthusiasm that we ended up rolling with laughter. Since I work hard at school, by the time I get home, I am totally exhausted. I often gave way to hysteria. I thought this wouldn't do, and started to tape violin lessons in the classroom. By now there is a tape recorder in the classroom, but earlier I carried our own to class. After the children went to sleep, I listened to the tape, marking the music where they were to pay special attention. This helped to avoid my unwanted criticisms during their practice.

* * * *

In her third year of violin, when she was a third grader, my daughter was asked to play a solo at a Shonan district conference recital. As our initial shock turned to joy, we held each other's hands. This prompted her to practice with concentration no matter how short each session might be.

We believed that to advance in pieces was not the only way to create ability. Observing the law of ability, we put weight on the

pieces she could play. We especially emphasized the style of playing, while practicing bow hold and bowing technique with Book 1 and 2 pieces. She was able to tape Bach's A Minor Concerto rather belatedly as a fourth grader.

From about that time, she fell into a slump. She opened her case only at the lesson--I don't remember how long that lasted. I never dared to tell this to our teacher who continued to guide her with undiminished enthusiasm. But she seemed to see through everything: her comment was always, "Well played."

Since it was this way, it took her a whole year to study Mozart's concerto no. 5. She graduated from the Advanced Curriculum I when a first year student in junior high school, which filled me with joy and gratitude. During that time, she not only participated despite a 102 degrees fever in Mr. Primrose's open lesson, but had the honor to play at the Prime Minister's residence in the welcome concert for Chinese Vice-Premier Deng Xiaoping.

In the beginning of her second year in junior high school, she was fortunate enough to receive instruction from Mr. Suzuki himself. It was paradise. On that occasion she was asked to perform during the summer school, and again both of us nearly lost our legs with surprise. She finished the Graduate Curriculum II as a second year student in junior high. In December, in her third year, Mr. Suzuki heard her performance and asked her to play again in the summer school the following year.

From about that time, she had to start studying for the high school entrance examination. Even after passing the exams, she remained too wrapped up in the new environment to practice much. At this rate it seemed presumptuous to think of having her stand on the summer school stage. Yet she played, prepared for a humbling experience this year.

* * * *

We have walked this far thanks to Mariko Hara's guidance. I am filled with deep respect and gratitude. By the side of many wonderful Suzuki children, my son and daughter were born with the handicap of having a teaching mother. However, my daughter truly appreciates being able to play the violin. How strange it is that she encountered Mr. Suzuki, coming out of a family which didn't even know the 't' of talent education.

Pray;

The flowers will bloom.

Whispering these words to myself, I would like to continue to walk, praying that flowers will open one by one. Whatever their future directions will be, I hope my children will grow up as adults capable of returning to society what they have received from talent education.

Talent Education, no.54

Fix my power
firmly on the tip:
bow won't wobble.
Move on, pony hair,
as my elbow moves.
I won't let you float,
I won't press you down.

--Shin'ichi Suzuki



H.S.

