

# TALENT EDUCATION JOURNAL



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## Editor's Note

Masayoshi Kataoka

This past summer the Fifth International Suzuki Teachers' Conference was held at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Previous conferences were in Hawaii, '75 and '77, San Francisco, '78, and Munich, '79. We are pleased to present Dr. Suzuki's personal reflections on "The Fifth International Conference."

Dr. Suzuki's "Lecture on Musical Instruction" offers a new approach to practice fixing the power on the tip of the bow through the use of a ballpoint pen. In two other articles he urges teachers to adopt the Lottery Concert method and to encourage students to use a tape recorder with speed control device.

We are happy to introduce Shōichi Yamamura's article, "On the Fundamental Point of Instruction" from the *Japanese Instructors' Newsletter*, no. 3. Mr. Yamamura, one of the earliest violin instructors, has produced many fine students.

This issue contains two reports on summer institutes at Matsumoto. These are "The Violin Is Easy" from the 32nd Summer Institute, by Hisashi Nakatsuka and "After the Third Piano Summer School" by Mrs. Yoshimo Sakakura. These were the first summer institutes held in Dr. Suzuki's absence, due to the international conference at Amherst.

In the "Parents' Round Table Discussion" of the Matsumoto chapter, Dr. Suzuki addresses an issue of particular concern to parents and teachers: What is to be done if the child does not want to practice.

## A Challenging Life

Shin'ichi Suzuki

*The most joyous and worthy thing in the world is to have a task to pursue throughout life.*

Yukichi Fukuzawa

To have a task throughout our lives, a life-long task engaging us for the sake of children. . . . Since awakening to a new way of education, this is, I think, a great joy for us instructors. We have a purpose in life.

These words of Yukichi Fukuzawa, a late nineteenth century thinker and educator, teach us to have zest for living a life with a challenge.

How uninteresting it would be if one lived every day merely for the sake of living, with neither a lifelong task nor a dream. Yet, aren't there many such people in society?

A task throughout life--what a wonderful phrase this is. Daily life directed toward a challenging task must be pleasant and cheerful. If we constantly raise ourselves, improve ourselves, and live in love for the sake of children's happiness with all our vivacious energy of life, that constitutes a purposeful life.

We discovered the fallacy of mankind's commonsense from the ancient times which believed differences in ability to be inborn traits. We have been telling the world about this. Again, we have demonstrated the facts of potential for education with which every child clearly can grow, and that to extremely high ability. Our movement is certainly

bringing about a great revolution.

Consider the weight of demonstrating the principle and fact that ability is not inborn. It is a task of great significance, of a lifetime; and that is the task of all of us instructors.

Ability is not inborn. It grows by the law of ability, and is controlled by physiology, the physiology of the big brain; it is something that life acquires and develops (the Suzuki theory). Now that this is clear, hope for tomorrow's world has emerged: we can eventually create an era in which, depending on how we raise children from birth, people all over the world can be fostered correctly. It will probably take a very long time. However, some day, an age will surely come when mankind awakens to this and every child will be fostered well as a human being. If ability were inborn, such a thing would clearly be impossible.

Let us instructors harbor this grand dream in our hearts, make it our life work. Let's continue to study the method by which every child grows and to seek the way to raise children better and better; let's together continue our quest for deeper study and practice.

How fortunate it is that we have challenging lives, in which we are walking together holding hands.

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## On the Fundamental Point of Instruction

Shōichi Yamamura  
Director of Education

I have accumulated various experiences over long years of teaching. What I feel most strongly now is how precious young students' life is in our arenas of teaching. Their life functions according to the environment, catches whatever is there, and this grows into ability. This recognition somehow controls me where I am unconscious. Students, too, unconsciously grow absorbing what projects from me, modest human being that I am. In the old days I often used to get angry and give my students a hard time, but I have come to be able to teach them with an entirely different attitude.

What if we enshroud the gleaming eyes in a young life at the earliest stage? Every pair of eyes in infancy is really shining. In two or three years, those beautiful round eyes lose their brilliance. It was at the second graduation held, I think, at Aoyama Gakuin University. Mr. Suzuki said that talent education students don't have to be awarded honors or anything; it was all written on their faces. I, too, now value the obvious: I must cherish that brightness in their eyes and on their faces.

We talent education instructors share the weight of the word "the earliest stage." Consider the earliest stage; consider the pricelessness of a human life. Infants adapt to the environment most strongly during the

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earliest stage of human life. As our dream is in the age when the globe will be filled with parents who have correct commonsense toward infants, our mission in the talent education movement is in leading young souls to beauty, purity, and dignity. Therefore, these days I think it is at the earliest stage that the full use of the instructors' teaching ability is required.

My present experience is that students, as they become more and more advanced, develop rapidly if I simply guide them to study with maestros in recordings as their teachers. Limiting myself to emphasizing how to make the string ring, I am making effort to help them every day, while still learning myself. How to let the strings ring, I think, is the precise thing to learn from the records of the maestros.

"Art is man," "the sound represents the person" --I have come to realize this through my study of violin playing. As I see before my eyes how the young mind develops beautifully and loftily, I am often deeply moved. I am sure you teachers have been visited by the same awe.

Though I may sound abrupt, education at large today seems to neglect the fact that man has a heart; yet the heart is the most precious treasure God has bestowed on human beings. One of the topics to be discussed at the general meeting of the national instructors' conference this year is "On Morals." If this topic is going to be annually included in the conference, we need to share the modesty to start again from such basics of talent education as "the law of ability."

To search for the truth is impossible unless the seeker's heart is unprejudiced. The beautiful mechanism of nature, is, I think, perceived only in humility. When truly involved

in the study of violin playing, we are training our own hearts in an effort to reach out for the truth. All the ways that human beings seek after, I daresay, are, in the beyond, focused and sublimated into beauty. Philosophical thinking concerning how to play should not be closed in a narrow area. We must pay more attention to Mr. Suzuki's frequent remark: open your eyes to nature, notice its wonder. The ultimate truth ends in beauty; great nature is indeed its highest embodiment. Nature has given us human beings the ability to appreciate its beauty. We are human because we know it and can polish it; yet we are also poor animals who easily lose this treasure while being drowned in the intellect and preoccupied with ego.

I hope to foster children well, caring for the earliest period: I think it will be done naturally while I keep on changing myself.

*Instructors' Newsletter,*  
no. 3, November 1, 1981



## The Fifth International Suzuki Conference

University of Massachusetts  
July 27-31

Shin'ichi Suzuki

The International Conference at Amherst this year brought together over 1,200 people from 14 different countries, including 105 Japanese. During the five day period, we had a wonderful gathering, each day bringing joy and moving events. Thanks to American teachers' thoughtful care, the convention proved truly great, including wonderful daily recitals.

### *Morning Sessions on Instruction*

From 9:30 to 11:30 daily, teachers from various countries gathered at the recital hall where I reported on my study of the method and new instruction ideas. While I explained and demonstrated many things over four mornings, I particularly emphasized the following:

1. I asked that the lottery method be used everywhere, for it is an important approach for fostering ability by the Suzuki method. I distributed lottery cards by way of encouraging this approach.

2. I distributed copies of the English pamphlet concerning the 24 points of instruction and explained and demonstrated important aspects of tonalization, class instruction, etc.

Foreign teachers seemed pleased by my report on and demonstration of many innovative approaches. To bring education closer step by

step to the mother tongue approach whereby children on earth without pain and agony achieve high ability --this is our direction. I wish to join hands with teachers around the world in cooperative study that will some day lead us to develop a painless and natural method of education by which every child grows as in the mother tongue. Let's seek this together, I asked the foreign teachers.

### *The University Campus Was Almost Too Spacious*

The walk from the college dormitory where the participants stayed to the dining hall where meals were served was almost as long as the walk from Matsumoto Station to the Talent Education Hall; the recital hall was likewise very far. Certainly the campus was spacious beyond our imagination. So much so that we joked to each other that we could use roller skates.

Nearly 1,300 participants found the days very exciting, and without much complaining about this spaciousness shared in good spirits this place of joy, this gathering of cheer and happiness.

### *A Great Big Omelet*

One day, I was invited to a nearby restaurant and went out with three teachers.

Everything in American cooking is big; often, a steak appears three times the size of a Japanese steak. Since I was somewhat full that day, I ordered an omelet, thinking of a modest dish.

But to my surprise, what an omelet appeared, spreading to the sides of a great plate, occupying half of it. It was a big model I had never seen before, probably made of as many as ten eggs. At the first glimpse I was knocked out: I just barely enjoyed one third and was

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pleasantly satiated.

Reader, if you go to the States, be prepared when you order.

### *The Pentel Ball Point*

I took about 200 Pentel ball points to the States as materials for effective instruction of violin and cello bow hold, for teaching the bow hold that improves tone, or how to create the ability to hold the bow while strongly pushing the frame of the bow with the tip of the thumb.

As a new and highly effective idea for teaching the bow hold which helps produce good tone, I had already begun to spread it among students in Japan. I thought of introducing it to teachers of the world so I took sample ball points, meaning to give one to each teacher. However, there were over six hundred teachers, and I had to say I would send the rest.

It is purely by chance that Pentel ball points proved helpful for the practice of proper bow hold. It's not that I was commissioned by the Pentel company; but I would like this method to spread throughout the world for tens of thousands of Suzuki children.

Teachers from various countries, pleased by the ball points, walked around with them: they recognized the big effect, the big change in the sound produced by this bow hold. This year, then, marks the period when the ball point was initiated into the violin teaching method.

I hope that Japanese teachers, too, will incorporate in every lesson instruction for improving the tone with the use of the ball point.

### *The World Standard Is Growing Higher*

To my great pleasure performances by many students from the States and other countries at recitals and group lessons during the

conference showed that their musical standard has clearly grown high. It has now become natural that children in every country play Bach concertos and Fiocco Allegro.

Their tone becomes yearly more beautiful, their posture more correct. I realize that everything depends on the way they are fostered.

The study at this last international gathering will contribute to further growth.

### *The Sixth International Suzuki Conference to Be Held in Japan in Two Years*

On the third day (July 29) of the International Suzuki Conference, the meeting of representatives from each country discussed our future plans. Concerning the next international conference, most shared the wish that "the 1983 conference be held in Japan."

So it was unanimously voted that the next conference will be held for the first time in Japan. The first two conferences met in Hawaii, the third in San Francisco, the fourth in Munich, and the fifth, this year, in Massachusetts.

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## "The Violin Is Easy"

From the 32nd Summer Institute

Hisashi Nakatsuka  
Permanent Director

Participants in the first session of the summer school who gathered at Matsumoto in the midst of the restless weather stirred up by a typhoon, found the following fresh morning a complete change from the day before, and hopefully thoroughly enjoyed the "Summer Morning" of Matsumoto, the highland city. The endlessly blue sky, snow white summer clouds, clearly etched mountain ranges of the Japan's Northern Alps --the lucid air unique to the highlands creates such bright and clear colors. Each year I come, I find the Matsumoto summer mornings truly beautiful.

The 32nd summer school started in splendid weather. The number of participating students was a little over 500 in the first session and 750 in the second session, somewhat lower than last year. This seems due to the smaller participation in the first session held during Mr. Suzuki's absence and to the delay of the summer school, for this year it started in August, considerably later than usual. As for the weather, the first session had the mid-summer sun which was scorchingly bright from about the second day, the temperature rising to 90 degrees during the day, whereas the second session had cool days from the start, and I hear that there even was a chilly morning dropping to 40 degrees.

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Talent Education was incorporated in October, 1950. Last fall a grand celebration was held in Matsumoto on its thirtieth anniversary. In 1951, the first summer school was held at Kirigamine, Shinshū, in the style of a music camp for students only. For a while after that summer school was held in Asama Spa in the suburbs of Matsumoto. For classrooms we used Hongo Elementary School buildings (where Shigeki Tanaka's talent education experimental class was installed), just outside of town. Staying at different inns of the spa, people went back and forth in threes and fives between the lodgings and the elementary school, on the stone pavement of the town or through the rice field in back. After supper children changed into *yukata* (summer kimono), and went to the gymnasium to hear the recital, round fan in hand, and chasing after fireflies on the evening street. It was a very poetic scene indeed. In those days, many teachers brought children to the summer school participating as a group, instead of having them participate individually. Matsumoto probably was still a distant place for many at that time. Later on as the long waited Talent Education Hall was constructed and started to function as the center, the summer school also moved to Matsumoto. The Talent Education Hall and City Hall became the center of the summer school, along with buildings of Shinshū University (now Agata-no-Mori Cultural Center) and Matsumoto School of Commerce for Girls. This became the foundation of the present form of the summer school.

In order to meet the yearly increasing demand of more students, summer school was divided into the first and second sessions, and the lodgings were also moved from Asama to the more

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convenient Utsukushigahara, or the Fair Plain. Matters pertaining to accommodations and bus transportation were handed over from our office to the travel agency for a more efficient operation. I was involved in running the summer school about five times in the past as a member of the steering committee and shared the efforts of hosting Matsumoto people by working with them, so to speak, in the kitchen that provides for this huge family. Therefore I still cannot attend the occasion as a "guest." However, this applies not only to me; I consider the summer school an event created by the joint efforts of all the participants including students, parents, and teachers. In today's Japanese society which is increasingly segmented into nuclear units, it may be difficult to make this kind of group event a Suzuki family like affair. However, at least we must make efforts toward this.

\* \* \*

On the third day of the first session, which had proceeded on schedule in Mr. Suzuki's absence, the afternoon group lesson was just about to start at the City Hall. On stage were about 250 students in neat lines, all tuned, and waiting for the start of the lesson. Mr. Suzuki's arrival was announced, and he appeared from the stage side with his usual smile, to unanimous applause. "Friends, I have just returned from the States," he said, and again there was a thunderous applause. It was something like an explosion of emotion of all who had been waiting for him in their hearts. He stood before the students and said, "Friends, please repeat my exact words. Okay? 'Violin is easy.'" "The violin is easy," the children echoed. He continued, "Right, the violin is easy. Now: 'The piano

is easier.'" The students repeated, "The piano is easier." Mr. Suzuki said again, "Because you can use ten fingers for the piano," stirring laughter in the hall. How much meaning did the audience find in these laconic words? Some might have taken them simply as a suggestive expression directed toward students. Some others might have insightfully viewed them as a statement with an implication that the violin, traditionally thought very difficult, was made easy for everyone by talent education. These words in fact contained Mr. Suzuki's wish urging parents and teachers to reflect upon themselves, as we came to know from the words that followed.

Do Japanese children quit learning Japanese saying that "Japanese is too difficult"? Aren't there still many among us who guide children by the talent education method, also called the "mother tongue method," who commit the folly of making children feel the violin is difficult, thereby cornering them to drop out? Don't some parents push their children, out of unrestrained enthusiasm, to simply advance in pieces, till the little ones feel that the violin is hard, which makes them dislike learning it? "Progress" means, it can be said, that ability constructed on a firm basis advances the pieces. It is from this sense that Mr. Suzuki has recently been emphasizing the effective use of the "lottery concert." Returning to the original point of talent education, we should now try to let children walk along the right road with solid faith that is unhampered by worldly commonsense.

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The summer school proved a fruitful experience to all of us who participated.

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Autographing Passes me  
through Customs

Shin'ichi Suzuki

Getting off a Northwest airplane which arrived at Chicago on July 25, fourteen hours after leaving Narita Airport, Tokyo, I lined up behind people for the luggage check at customs.

After a while, those in front of me having had their things checked, my turn came. As I approached the desk with my paraphernalia, an attendant recognized me. "Oh, Dr. Suzuki," he said excitedly, stretching out his hand, "My five year old child is studying the violin by the Suzuki method. Welcome to the States!" He and another attendant each pulled out a small pocket notebook and asked for my autograph. I signed my name in the two notebooks. When I finished, paying no heed to the luggage check, they said, "Please go right ahead," and I cleared customs without ado.

Having never imagined finding kinship of Suzuki children among airport customs officers, this was a pleasant little happening.

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After the Third Piano Summer  
School

Yoshimo Sakakura  
Lecturer, Piano Study Group

Let's cherish  
the joy of trusting each other;  
good-bye for this day  
until we meet again.

The teachers' chorus beautifully resounded in the Talent Education Hall auditorium, filling my chest with a pathos of parting as I still tasted the splendor of the summer school.

This year's summer school was a little lonesome as Mr. Suzuki was away, but I was happy that there was even greater enthusiasm than last year, supported by the zeal of Kenkō Aoki and Daisuke Kamijō as well as instructors and the Piano Study Group members.

I daily observed as many lessons as time allowed me, going back and forth between the Agata-no-Mori Cultural Center, Talent Education Hall, and the Suzuki Method Center. Particularly impressive were the pre-elementary group lessons and lottery concerts introduced for the first time this year.

The first day's group lessons was given by Tetsuko Miyahara. Due to the character of the instrument, the piano school tends to emphasize individual lessons, not offering too many opportunities for children to perform while listening to each other's sounds. The attempt at such group lessons was a very good learning experience for me. The children started out with the *do-re-mi* exercise, walked

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and skipped to the piano music, and performed together using rhythmic instruments. One good idea used there was giving them the beginning of a song played only with the left or the right hand; the children try to guess the piece, and one of them then performed it. I was impressed by Teacher Miyahara's exquisite timing as she drew the little children from one game to another never boring anyone.

I observed the lottery concert under the direction of Shizuko Suzuki on the 28th. This time it was not just four and five year olds; all the Pre-Elementary Level children tried the lottery. About six more-experienced students sat in a line on the stage waiting for their turns. The first student drew Allegretto I. After a beautiful performance, he received a chocolate for a reward and left the stage. Cuckoo and Lightly Row followed. The next student was a bigger boy. The card he drew from the tissue paper box in the hands of a teacher who assisted Teacher Suzuki was the Song of Children. "Oh, no," he said as if disappointed and faced the piano. With somewhat serious excitement, he gave a beautiful and caring performance. Those who seemed a little scared, this being their first experience, performed very well one by one as they began to understand what it was all about. A child became so impatient that he helped himself to chocolate while the teacher was seating the next group of children, and another drew again because the piece he got from the box wasn't exactly to his taste-- scenes that brought a smile to the on-lookers. The second round was a lottery from Book 2. By the time the third round started, many children seemed impatient, wanting to play some more.

"This time, let's have volunteers," Shizuko Suzuki said, and no sooner had she finished

saying this when many rushed up on the stage. I was quite impressed, finding a phase of talent education in this.

Pre-Elementary students seemed really happy at the summer school, exposed to the triple experience of group lesson, lottery concert, and individual lesson. I met children here and there who expressed their wishes to come back again next summer.

What is pleasant to me about summer school, besides learning much, is the encounter with many people and heart to heart contact. I became friends with teachers from other areas as we all stayed four days at the same inn. We exchanged problems and encouraged one another. If this relation does not end right there but continues into the future, how wonderful it will be. I feel that our hearts are melting into one thought, "education by which every child grows," regardless of the level of experience, and regardless of the age. Seeing how teachers participating from different areas are engaged in teaching with passion, I reflected upon myself every day: I can't allow myself to stagnate.

I would like to continue to make efforts remembering that "if love is deep, much can be achieved."

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## Lottery Concert to Start Every Lesson

Shin'ichi Suzuki

Please have your child practice earlier pieces daily with the study tape. Before he knows it he will acquire ability; he will definitely become the kind of student who makes smooth progress. If the child only practices the assigned piece, he will not only be a slow goer but it won't be the real Suzuki method.

Traditional commonsense considered that music lessons meant learning just the assigned piece. What wrongheaded education this is. Above all else I would like parents and teachers to understand this.

Think of the teaching method in the mother tongue: because the child uses in daily speech the words he has learned, he acquires ability. That is precisely how every child grows with a wonderfully high linguistic ability in his native tongue. It is not because of some in-born quality.

In music or any field, this principle of acquiring ability remains the same. This is the Suzuki method. Those who understand this understand the educational approach which I have long been discussing.

Since long ago I have asked parents to help children acquire ability through practicing previous pieces. Parents who refuse to understand this principle of our method still emphasize only the presently assigned piece, influenced by the traditional commonsense in musical training. It is an antiquated view.

They think it natural that children, as in

the general practice of education in society, hobble along slowly without creating sufficient ability. Already for thirty years, I have struggled with such conventional views, but alas, it isn't easy to convince these parents. How lonely they make me feel. Please sympathize with me. It's been thirty long years.

I tried to find a good method to counter this, and what I came up with this time is this lottery approach. It's a method to effortlessly create ability while the child daily refines his earlier pieces at home using the study tape. This ought to be accompanied by a second method: the teacher must check the growth of ability at lesson to see whether the approach is practiced well at home.

At the beginning of each lesson, let the student draw a card from the "lottery box" containing cards with the names of the pieces he has studied earlier. Listen to him to judge whether he can play any one of them beautifully, and whether he is practicing well at home with the study tape. Children love to give a lottery performance: it's a happy game for them. If they do well, applaud plenty.

Here's a favor I am asking all teachers: Establish the habit of letting the student (up to Book 5) give a lottery performance before giving a lesson on the assignment; explain to the parent that this is the Suzuki method. Eventually, there will be without fail a great change in ability-creating in every child. Every child will grow faster. Once the ability is there, you can even assign two new pieces at a time; the child will quickly learn both pieces. Try it. By our method, every child without fail grows well, if only it is practiced properly, and develops outstanding

musical ability.

Please put this into practice everywhere.

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*"Man is a child of the environment."*

*"Sound breathes life--  
Without form it lives."*

*"Strings are mindless  
They only sing forth the heart  
Of those who ring them out."*

--words of Shin'ichi Suzuki



## Speed Control Tape Recorder for Practice

Shin'ichi Suzuki

I would like to ask all teachers, especially piano teachers:

When the student practices at home, he is to study some pieces he has already learned by playing them to the study tape. This is the most important unique system in the Suzuki method. While practicing the pieces every day at home with the taped accompaniment, musical rhythm and expressiveness are acquired; in other words this is the mother tongue approach system by which everyone acquires outstanding musicality before realizing it, a method which I have been practicing from long ago.

Since long ago violin students have been practicing by tuning their instruments to the pitch of the record and playing with the record. However, in the case of the piano, unless it is in the same pitch as the record or tape, it is impossible for the student to play with it. Yet, if the student does not practice by this method at home, it is no Suzuki method: musical sensitivity won't grow well; outstanding musical rhythm won't develop quickly.

By listening to parents' speech, children gradually learn to talk; Osaka children learn to speak Osaka dialect, and Tokyo children Tokyo dialect. In that optimal daily environment, every child learns to speak at the same tempo, with the same expressions and pronunciation as his parents. Doesn't everyone thus grow to acquire outstanding linguistic ability? I would like you to really marvel at this fact before your eyes. Every child grows.

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Please have faith in this discovery of mine. Foster your child as a child of ability by practicing this fact, and be a parent who knows that now is the time to open the way to your child's happiness.

Let me ask piano teachers: please encourage students to use tape recorders with speed control at home. Particularly in the case of a new student, I would like you to explain it well so that the right kind is chosen when purchasing a tape recorder.

I hope you will press this important point of our method. If the student studies with the tape every day, without fail he will grow as a child of high musical ability as smoothly and naturally as in learning the mother tongue. When the students repeatedly review the former pieces every day with the study tape, how much faster do you think they will make progress, how much faster will they grow? I am sure they will advance with surprisingly greater speed than the one traditional lazy education allows.

This is our method.

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## Parents' Round Table Discussion

Matsumoto Chapter

1. *Children Who Don't Like to Practice*
2. *When to Introduce Note-Reading*
3. *How to Deal with Siblings*



Shin'ichi Suzuki  
Hiroshi Kataoka, instructor  
Yuko Mori, instructor  
Kenji Miura, instructor

Discussion leader:  
Hiroshi Numanami

NUMANAMI: We have gathered today for a discussion by mothers of the Matsumoto chapter. Let's talk about talent education and problems of home practice.

Mr. Suzuki has spared time to come despite his busy schedule; instructors Sekai Kataoka, Keiji Miura, and Yuko Mori are also here. Since this is a wonderful opportunity, please ask them questions without reserve.

SUZUKI: Just as Mr. Numanami, the chapter leader, says, I would like you to ask questions on this good occasion; we will offer our views in response, so let's together discuss children's growth. I would also like you all to try to learn from each other's experiences. Go ahead, anybody.

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*Children Who Don't Like to Practice*

MOTHER A: I have a boy who just turned five in March. It is a year since he started. Right now he is studying Bach's Minuet toward the end of Book 1. He is a healthy boy and loves to play outdoors. He doesn't dislike the violin, but somehow he dislikes practicing. Recently he's been saying that he'll practice on his own initiative. He doesn't want to practice if I'm there, but, he says, he'll practice if he can be left alone. How should I approach this?

SUZUKI: That seems to reflect the history of his past practice. I think the enthusiasm with which you worked to teach him after all burdened your child. Therefore, in such a case, I'd say it would be best to listen in the next room. If he is working on Bach's Minuet, play it for him on the phonograph first, and say something like "Mother will be listening in the next room, all right?" I think that will probably work. It is important to let him listen. You don't have to say to an Osaka born child, "Stay listening," for anyway he will learn to speak the Osaka dialect. In the same way, if the child hears repeatedly, he absorbs all the musical elements before you know it. Well, if the child is as you describe him, I'm sure it'll turn out that way. If you leave the house, however, your child will be disappointed and won't practice. He feels secure thinking that you are listening to him in the next room. In other words, he doesn't want you to be right there to criticize him. So how about trying something like this once? Do it with a piece he can really play. Again, since children like games, you can do it in a game style. "Tonight, let's have a darkness concert before you go to sleep. You played the Minuet quite well today, except that your eyes

went in all directions, I think. So I'd like you to see if you can play that piece even in the dark." Then, say, "Quite good. You can certainly play it in darkness." Darkness is quite effective. For you can hear your own tone clearly. No good if you can only play looking at the strings; see if you can play in the dark. Sometimes say to your child, "Let's play a game." Your child will practice thinking he is playing a game. May I suggest that you try something like that? However, you have to stay home listening. It doesn't work if you go out shopping. (Laughter.)

MOTHER A: I understand that very well. I myself thought that would do, and occasionally say to him, "I'll be listening in the kitchen so why don't you play?" But I wonder if it should be that way all the time--how should I correct his posture, errors, and things like that?

SUZUKI: Well, I guess you don't have to hurry about that. If the present situation is as you describe, work on it first; your child will become motivated. When he feels motivated, then tell him to play two pieces, or three pieces. Leave the rest to his teacher, who'll correct him. First of all let your child try by himself without parents. Ask him, "You remember what your teacher told you to do, don't you?" Gradually he will change: he will want to ask his mother to teach him. Instead of assuming you can fix everything at once, try to create a gradual change. The initial change of mood is extremely important. When I take a student, too, it is impossible to work a little and suddenly improve him. So I resolve in my mind to make him great in a year or two, or three. Fostering a child is always like this, isn't it. At the start, the student is much slower than we wish. But while repeating

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what's good, we learn to skillfully motivate the student. When you tell the child to practice, do it, as I said just now, by asking him to give you a refined performance of two or maybe three pieces, and tell him to first study those three pieces by himself. When he studies by himself, there will be a lot of shortcomings. Tell his teacher about it; report to him that you are working on creating incentive right now. His teacher will understand and will, in your place, carefully teach your child how to study and so forth. Follow this course and assist your child at home when he has questions. I would like you to be this kind of mother.

The mother may wish to correct her child. Since she is no violin virtuoso herself, yet having heard fine performances on records as well as other children's performances, she is apt to expect her child to play like them, with the result that she crams him. However, why should he be taking lessons if he can play? Being unable to play is the child's speciality, so you can just relax and say to yourself, "well, in time, he will." If you motivate him, he will try to improve on his own initiative. I think it suffices to guide him at that point so that he won't do incorrect things.

In our experience, when the parent can play, she may often neglect to play records for the child, or to follow what the teachers say. I would be very happy if parents refrain from wanting to teach but try simply to help. How about changing your approach a little this way? Please first try what I have said and then report what has happened. I bet your child will begin to enjoy practicing. You've played the three pieces well, so this Saturday why don't you give your father a concert of these refined pieces. Tell him this, and put him on an orange crate or something; anything'll do for a stage.

I think this kind of thing will please a child. If you encourage your child this way, it will be the starting point. You needn't worry when he doesn't advance at all. Be confident; when he becomes motivated, he will start to advance. I guess that'll take care of your problem.

MOTHER A: Thank you very much.

MOTHER B: I have a seven year old child. If I tell him to practice, he does; otherwise, he comes up with all kinds of excuses and goes out to play. How should I handle this?

SUZUKI: In this case, too, there was considerable mishandling at the start. The parent had incentive which made her say, "practice, practice," which, again, had a bad influence on the child. Meet this problem by playing the piece he is studying on the phonograph. Also those he can already play, the ones before the present piece. Have him perform from those pieces at a workshop or something and have everyone praise him and motivate him this way. The teacher should prepare the child in advance about performing, say, Allegro and Perpetual Motion, and have him study them before everything else. It's okay to leave the present piece alone for a while; work on refining Allegro and Perpetual Motion, and have him study them before everything else. Saturday concert of Allegro and



Perpetual Motion--how about doing something like this? You listen to the performance and comment, "Well played." Record them in a tape; that'll do.

MOTHER B: I try various things like that, but he doesn't really enjoy playing.

MIURA: This is about my student. The child started to say he's going to quit before the parents said a thing. I feel that there are

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various emotional problems behind it. Would you like to comment on this?

SUZUKI: What do you think? One very difficult problem is that everything is decided during the Book 1 stage, between Twinkle and Gossec-- by whether the child at that early stage can generally do a nice solid job or doesn't like to study. The period up to then is difficult for the teacher, too. Therefore, at a meeting like this, suppose the teachers choose children on or under Gossec who are not very well motivated to practice. Next time Mr. Suzuki is going to give a lesson here; let's practice this piece solidly and ask him to listen-- if you prepare the children this way in advance, they may start to study and improve. If you chose those who are advanced, the session would take too long, so it would be advisable to limit the scope, like a minuet around the middle of Book 1, and then after that the Allegro. Give a fine performance of just one piece that you can play; a group performance will do, let's try-- I might try helping mothers who are stuck by encouraging children this way. Such an approach may turn out to be quite interesting. To do this, you don't say "let's" on the spot; you must tell the child beforehand. That will prove helpful as the child will start to practice hard. This is a new attempt at creating incentive. The classroom concert is something I started in order to achieve this. If teachers actually do it, children will change considerably. Suppose it's decided that the last Monday, for example of February, is the day of the class concert. The date is announced beforehand; each child performs a solo which he or she feels absolutely confident to play, and everybody praises.

According to the classroom, this will be over well within an hour. And when it's over,

people have tea and say bye bye. This way, a very pleasant occasion comes about once in two months. Again, when children are expected to study hard the piece that the teacher assigned for the stage performance, in other words, when there is some kind of goal, they are very happy to respond. Like group performances, this sort of thing is very pleasant. However, suppose the teacher corrects the child, and the mother, too, criticizes the child about what the teacher said; lessons and criticisms continue without ever coming to an end. Is life a continuation of this? I don't like it, the child will say. (Laughter.) What I'm saying is that you mustn't turn the matter into a joyless thing like this. Well, it will be fine for you mothers to talk about such things with the teachers, and to propose to them, "Let's have a concert when you have a chance next." NUMANAMI: Thank you very much.

MOTHER C: Mine is similar to the case of Mother B with a seven year old boy. My child studied hard as I told him to until he started school. However, the moment he entered school, his life environment changed. He has to play with his friends, he has to do various things within a limited amount of time. So he tends to use his time for what he would rather do. On coming home from school, of course he may feel like riding his bike, or he may play happily with his friends, creating tension between himself and me. He's been made to practice so far, but now there is an awakening: "why do I have to study this?" So, he works hard on something like playing with math tiles. He works hard, but he seems to dislike "being made to do" something.

NUMANAMI: May I respond to that? I think this applies to all. The child graduates from

kindergarten and enters elementary school, he goes out to play when he comes home from school. If the mother says, "practice your instrument," he gradually loses play time. It was like that when my child started school. When she came home from school, her friends were already there waiting for her. So her mother says, "It's only ten minutes, so practice first." The child practiced, at first in tears, but gradually becoming absorbed in playing. Then, her mother let her go, saying, "Now go out and play." Ten or twenty minutes would be nice for a child of two or three years; thirty or forty minutes wouldn't work. Anyway, the practice must be done even if just briefly. This is part of the child's discipline.

MOTHER C: So I try to do it by fixing the practice time, but if he has something else he wants to do then, after all he doesn't cooperate. Can that be called resistance? I guess he is resisting because his mind is not on the lesson. He says this and that, carping. So I think of letting him practice after he has had an outlet, and let him play around first. But then after that he comes up with other things he wants to do. I would like to know how other people manage to secure time for practice within a limited amount of time in a child's day.

SUZUKI: I think that kind of problem again has something to do with the mother's attitude when she tries to make the child practice. I also think that the teacher will be able to help. You can talk to his teacher about it and have him ask your child how he practices at home. Then the teacher can try asking the student to practice every day at that hour before playing around and add: "Put a circle when you have accomplished it, and report back

to me." What do you say to using a knack like this? When the teacher says something, unlike when the parent does, the child feels a stronger sense of obligation. Once a habit forms, it is easy. Give him a chance like that; ask the teacher to say something like this in a casual manner. The teacher might hand the student a card or something and say, "This is for this month." He might add, "The dates are written in here; put a circle when you have practiced according to your schedule, and give it back to me." At the following lesson, the teacher might please him and encourage him by adding a red circle: "Well done, you get a double circle this week." We might be able to help you in this way. The most basic problem, however, is that parents tend to be all too preoccupied with school education. Don't place too much emphasis on school; don't think that "the violin is just a hobby, so it's fine if my child can handle it a bit." Instead, think that you are helping to cover a great deficiency in today's education with something important. Be aware that other parents are also studying ways to motivate their children so they will become fine human beings. Our association exists for that purpose. Don't be the kind of parents who insist on the immediate progress of their children. Sit back calmly with a determination to make your child great. It's fine to be slow; handle it so your child enjoys it. Self-criticism of this sort, I expect, will arise. All you need is to be faithful to the principle, "no hurry, no rest;" there is no need to compare yours with other children. Recognize how your family operates and motivate your child within the given environment; he will improve. Eventually, each child will have a basis for developing in his own unique way. If you think of everything

in this manner, children brought up on talent education will be truly great. Among Matsumoto children, for example, a little boy Fumio Nakajima whom I taught twenty-five years ago, has become a leading scholar on China problems, though he didn't go into music; and he is an assistant professor of the University of Foreign Languages at his young age. It doesn't matter where the child goes. All I hope is that parents will skillfully raise an ability which prepares the child to cope with a challenge like that.

MOTHER C: Thank you very much.

### *When to Introduce Note-Reading*



MOTHER D: I put on the records every day, but my child doesn't really listen to the ones I select while he is at play. So recently we have started to listen together during the practice time of, say, one hour. This reduces the actual practice time to about half an hour. But we

listen to the record and the lesson tape from the previous week. I find this effective.

I would like to ask one question. Children are responsive to what parents say, and are more or less willing to be corrected when they are small. But when they grow big, especially in boys' cases, they become rebellious and refuse to be corrected. They might do better if they are left alone to practice by themselves, I think. So I give my child the music, but since he can't read the music, he can't get the rhythm. If he has heard the record, he should be able to, but he can't when it comes to a fast piece. So he learns it all wrong, and it is a job to correct it, far worse than if I had

helped him from the start. I would like to ask when he'll be able to start practicing by himself, and when he will be taught to read. KATAOKA: I would like to leave that to mothers. We of course help you, but if we teach reading at lesson, the lesson time is taken up, so I think there is no other way than trying to take care of that by the joint efforts of you and me. I would say that it would be fine if you are prepared to start reading about the time of Vivaldi a minor concerto in Book 4. MOTHER D: I've been reading Mr. Suzuki's book on note reading for the violin, but a complete amateur can't follow it. I have discussed it with other mothers. We talked about the possibility of asking you to set up a time for studying reading for parents. Our knowledge of music is limited to about the middle school level.

SUZUKI: Doesn't that book work? I wrote it for mothers and children. Of course, if you have questions, please ask your teacher. It's fine to start, for example, about the time the child can play Bach's Bourree, or the a minor concerto; let the child do the fingers looking at the music, from Twinkle on. It depends upon the child's age, too. If he is big, it's fine to start early. It's also fine to study reading without the violin. No need to cover a lot in one day; one page will do. Do the next page at the next session. Show the music of a piece he can play, and teach, for example, the rhythm: "the beat is this way, isn't it?" I have included applied problems, so you can challenge the child and stimulate his interest: "Let's stop to see if you can play this one." Quit saying, "How come you don't understand such a thing;" don't teach a lot at a time like that. Have the child look at the music and explain little by little; he can

already play, so I think it is very easy for him to understand. . . .

MOTHER D: But the parents don't understand how to read from printed letters.

SUZUKI: When you say the parents don't understand, what don't they understand?

MOTHER D: As a letter, each note enters our minds, but we don't understand it in relation to the music in such a way that we respond to it with the heart.

SUZUKI: The rhythm of no. 1 which I quoted there from the violin textbook is when you count four. It's like division in math.

I have even quoted the music, so such places must be easily understandable to mothers. Don't think the child can't do it because you can't play the violin; if you let him play, he'll understand all right. For he can play it. If you cover the material all in one breath and say "Now you understand, don't you," naturally your child will say, "I don't understand it." Since he can play, he understands that much less at first. So, when he has played one thing, add a little explanation, and let him understand--then he will gradually comprehend it. It is wrong to try teaching it all at once. "Knowledge is not ability." Knowledge is useless by itself. I would like you to instruct your child with this sort of patience. Let's say Bach's Bourree, or the a minor concerto. It takes a considerable amount of time to learn to play the first and the third movements of the a minor. Using the same amount of diligence, if you try letting him play all the previous pieces little by little looking at the music up to a minor, I'm convinced he will understand written notes. However, small children don't need to read. I wonder if, after all, parents aren't rushing. You may think your child may understand,

but he may not really understand. So, it is necessary to try letting the child play looking at the music.

MOTHER D: If that's so, the child's age increases in the meanwhile; does the parent have to continue to be with the child forever?

SUZUKI: So, as I say, if you teach reading gradually, the child will gradually be able to try playing from the notes. What the mother should teach is not the written music; her task is to remember what the teacher has said and what is there to correct, and tell the child, "Let's be conscientious about finishing the assignment your teacher has given you." Therefore, although you just have to help him read music, the crux is to guide him to eventually be able to play by sight reading. So, if your child presently working on Bach's Bourrée can play it looking at the music, it means that he has begun to understand music to a fair amount. Though there may still be things he doesn't understand, if he continues to practice reading music while playing pieces, his comprehension will increase. The positions are also written in to make it easy. It's not as if you can let him read the note-reading exercise book separately as a book and say, "Now you understand, don't you." All you have to do is check his growing comprehension, growing reading ability while he studies note reading along with his violin pieces. It's that slow-going, in fact.

KATAOKA: If you try to do everything, it will be a chore; one step at a time would be preferable. Some mothers use their mind to tell their children very early: "This is the note for the open E," "this is the note for the A," etc. Instead of discussing in many words looking at many notes, focus, as Mr. Suzuki

said, on the notes for the open A and E. Then relate them to the finger numbers 1, 2, and 3, so that the child will be able to associate these notes with the sounds he has in mind. How about going at it slow and steady like this? Also about counting the rhythm, I understand very well your problem. We count the rhythm unconsciously, and the children understand it well. However, Veracini is an example in which children who can read music to some extent may not understand the beat. I let them do this patiently. (Claps his hands.) They gradually begin to get it. It's not enough to do it just two or three times, but if I insist on doing only this for a month, they begin to get it. When you feel like that (understanding printed music as letters but being unable to express it when actually trying to do so), please ask us questions and study reading with us: I think it'll work if you then go home and review.

SUZUKI: In your class, Miss Mori, you taught reading to small children. Would you please talk a little about that? Children of about kindergarten age are in a fairly advanced category.

MORI: In my class they usually start reading in Book 4. Two or three children get together at the lesson time. Since I cannot take time out of the individual lesson especially for reading, I explain notes to them when they gather. I haven't done enough to be able to report on it, but anyway children don't seem to enjoy reading much. They love to memorize violin pieces, but if I teach them the lengths of notes or kinds of notes, they don't learn. Even so, I train them to have a solid knowledge of the basics, such as the locations of the open strings in the staff, since that is most helpful in violin playing. I would also like

to work on listening to sounds chosen from the violin textbook and questioning where they would be written on the staff or what time value they have. From about the time they enter Book 6 they can read by themselves little by little while listening to the record. Until then, mothers and children study together. SUZUKI: It takes a considerable amount of time. It's supposed to. How about the ages of the children you are teaching?

MORI: I limit reading groups to children of five, six, or seven who are studying Book 4.

SUZUKI: So it will be effective if mothers assist children at home a little, and if teachers also help from time to time. I don't really like the idea that one has to take time from the classroom lesson to teach reading. Reading is something that requires much time, so I think it is good to handle it in a group as in Miss Mori's case. It may also be good to set a regular time for a workshop for mothers. When the mother's approach is poor, she may teach reading once through as in elementary education. That will produce a lot of dropouts, and a lot of children who don't understand it well. The crux, after all, is not to rush. As long as we observe the rule, "don't rush, don't rest," in most cases, music advances of itself, and children are eventually caught up, so let's take time and proceed this way.

You shouldn't introduce *do, re, mi, fa* in the instruction of reading. Far more important to foster than the mere knowledge of the note names is the ability of fingers to play glancing at the music. Otherwise, children will be confused. Anyway, that's how I feel. In any case, you must not just teach the written music. You must teach the child only

in such a way that the right finger quite simply goes to the position of 3 on the right string, or 1, or 4, at a quick glance. Then, when he plays a new piece, his fingers simply go to the proper places.

Reading ability in the real sense of the word means that the child's musical sensitivity has grown so high that he can not only play beautifully but also understand written music. Unless the child acquires reading ability in the musical sense, I can't claim that he has true reading ability. What is the ability to read books? If asked "what's written in that book you've read?" you may answer, "I've read it all, but I don't know what's written in it." If music reading resembles this, it's no good. When you read music you may feel moved and understand the content. The moment you see the printed page, you may be able to say, how beautiful. We should engage in creating that kind of reading ability. You read a book; you are moved, you find it interesting. --That is what reading a book means. Similarly, to read music does not mean just to learn the fingering. It will be fine if you prepare the basis for such future development. If you jump too high now, what is very simple will become complicated. It will become incomprehensible to children. When you think too intellectually, you will create poor children who don't grow well.

### *What to Do with Siblings*



MOTHER E: I have three children, all boys, ages three and nine months, two and six months, and one and three months. I

I brought the oldest one here when he was one and eight months. We started out observing Miss Mori's class. I had him listen to the record a lot, too. At three, he was still singing Twinkle when he was in the mood. Now at three and nine months, he is still at the beginning of Twinkle. I criticize myself for having been so clumsy at motivating my child, as I realized later when I myself started the violin a little while ago, along with the one and three months old. I just felt like doing it somehow myself. When I or my oldest boy is playing, the others are listening. Then, the one and three months old wants to do it, too. "So, this is what it is like," I thought. The two year old has long been wanting to do it. When I am practicing, he comes near me and says, "I want to do it, I want to do it," and he gets mad if I don't let him. So, I say to the oldest one, "then, shall we practice?" I don't force him, but I sort of invite him when I feel like practicing myself. The second oldest is already there, wanting to practice. So I ask, "Then who's first?" The oldest one says, "The smallest one first," and always chooses to be the last.

What I want to ask is what is the proper time to start? I have a feeling that it was a little too early with my children. When would be the best time? Again, what I think dangerous is that I am making very funny sounds. Exposing the children to those funny sounds constantly, I fear, may prove a negative influence. Let me ask you about these two points.

SUZUKI: I don't think that the problem of being too early exists. We don't ever say "it was too early to teach Japanese;" it's the same thing. In your case, when the older one is doing it, the younger ones want to do it, too. That creates impatience. If you think too much

about fostering, you end in cramming. Your oldest one started at one and eight months; the earliest so far on record is one and five months. But the age itself doesn't really have much to do with whether the child can or cannot play the violin. A young sibling who has been exposed to many aspects of music at home, since he has music in his mind, just wants so badly to express it, as a baby who has been exposed to spoken language wants to say "mma mma." When your children can play the first portion of Twinkle or something, say to them, "Let's all play together," and let them enjoy each other. The oldest plays Twinkle best. And gradually the younger ones begin to play it well.

Our greatest problem is when the older sibling starts first and the younger one comes after him. When the younger one starts, everything is already there, including the motivation. So he advances fast. He gradually catches up with the older one. There is a possibility that he passes the older one. How should the teacher handle this? If the older one lags, he will lose motivation. So that's where we have the hardest time.

Kenji and Takeshi Kobayashi have both become fine musicians, but when I taught them, I started out with the younger brother. Since he was making progress, their father withdrew the big brother from another teacher with whom he had been studying and brought him to me. Since the little brother had already begun with me, I had to give the materials he had already studied to the big brother. When I tried that, the big brother, I could see, lost incentive. I thought this wouldn't do. So, after all I taught the two with completely different pieces, since this was the time when the textbooks weren't completed. I think it is very difficult

with siblings. Let them play together, let them enjoy having a happy time together. If we don't forget this line of approach, they will, I think, develop well.

As for my instruction, I emphasize the third finger on the E string, that single finger, very good posture, and a very good tone. And how to hold the violin or the bow. No need to press the bow; if only the child holds the bow in close contact with the string, he can produce a beautiful sound, without having to think of pressing down the bow to play. Produce one beautiful sound-- if you can encourage that, that will be the basis of your child's growth. When the child understands one thing, he will understand all. He will try this and try that in order somehow to produce a good tone. I always use one sound to let the student understand about a fine tone, a tone not inferior to the teacher's. A beautiful sound rather than a big sound. I think it will be nice if you try that.

Also, even if you play with funny sounds, there won't be a bad influence if you play the records for your children. You needn't worry. Instead, won't you practice a bit so you'll be able to produce a good sound? (Laughter.)

NUMANAMI: The time is about up now. Mr. Suzuki has other business to attend to so I would like to conclude the discussion here. Thank you very much.

## Fix My Power on the Tip

### *the Crux of Violin Playing*



Shin'ichi Suzuki

For forty years I have repeated, "Fix your power firmly on the tip." This expression may be a little hard to understand, but it is the key to violin playing.

I have often used the tightrope to explain this. I tell the following, asking listeners to first think well about the horse hair of the bow which lets the strings ring.

The tightrope is pulled taut at both ends. Only because the rope is tight, can you walk across it. What would happen if one end of the rope became loose? The tightrope dancer would immediately tumble down.

This principle applies equally to the horse hair ringing the strings. Like the taut rope, if the tip of the bow is just as tense and immobile as the bottom of the bow, the strings ring with a fine tone; it gives out a big and powerful tone. If the tip of the bow has no power, if it is completely different from the bottom, if it is not tense and has no guts, the sound will also be emaciated and small. Since the sound is small, many people often press the string with the bow, producing stiff and miserable sounds. Those people have never once thought of the power of the horse hair that produces beautiful ringing sounds on the strings.

## *Training to Fix the Power on the Tip of the Bow*

I have finally devised an effective way to instruct on this important point, so please share it with students everywhere. It is a simple method; have them do it every day so that they will thoroughly master it. You will realize that it produces a good result, a big change in producing a fine tone.

First let the student try with a ball point. Let him hold the ball point as if holding the bow (hold it with the thumb and middle two fingers, then put down the index and the little finger). Let him raise the middle and ring fingers so that he will be holding the bow with just the index and little fingers, with the thumb in the central position.

The student then says "pan-da," powerfully tilting down the tip of the ball point with the index finger and holding it still. The thumb and index finger should be strong, but the little finger should be relaxed, its function being to stop the tilt of the ball point at the proper angle.

Now let the student push up with a finger of his free hand from under the tip of the ball point which was held still at the "panda" signal. Teach that "the power that doesn't allow the tip to budge is indeed the power you need at the tip when you hold the bow." Let the student repeat at home this training of bow hold with the index finger, little finger and thumb on a ball point. Do it in class, too. The crux is to foster the power of the fingers so they can fix the bow tip still. It's no good if the tip becomes loose and powerless. It is necessary to create the ability to hold the bow so that the tip has the right amount of tension.

When the student has been trained with the



ball point, let him practice "panda" with the bow with the same good bow hold; let him practice focusing power to the tip by maneuvering the index and little fingers. Train children in this bow hold practice from the earliest stage.

Touch the tip of the bow, push it, in order to see whether the bow is held with a strong tip. Foster this ability gradually.

This changes the tone into a finer one. If the power is focused at the bow tip, the string resounds with a big tone just by the weight of the bow; thus the student can simply put the weight of the bow on the string without pressing it down, and play with a tender yet big and beautiful sound. Check the tip of every student's bow. Have the student practice the present piece by first holding the bow with just the thumb, the index, and the little finger until the tone improves. Instruct him to practice this way at home also. I promise that the tone will become big and refined.

When the tone becomes refined, allow the middle and ring fingers to lightly touch the bow, and instruct him to play with the same amount of power as before in the index and the little finger. Advise him to retain the secure bow hold with the power focused at the tip even when he plays with all five fingers on the bow. I also let the student lift or put down the middle and ring fingers in the middle of a piece. The tone should not change.

Fix the power on the tip-- please instruct all students on this so that they will develop ability to play with a big, beautiful, and tender tone.

Lectures on Musical Instruction, 30  
Talent Education, no. 57

## Toys and Teaching Materials



Shigeki Tanaka  
*Young Children: Everything  
Depends upon How We Raise  
Them*, no. 11

### Chapter 4 Toys and Teaching Materials That Can Be Prepared at Home

#### 1. Don't Give Too much; Don't Be Jittery

(1) *No matter how good a toy (teaching material) you may provide, it's useless unless the child is motivated.*

As I have repeated many times, the problem is how to motivate the child. If you force him when he doesn't feel like it, it produces a dark sense of duty or hatred about learning which will become deeply ingrained in the future. If that's the case, children are better off if you don't give them anything. For children, play (learning) should be pleasant, happy, and inviting. Those who provide it have to keep this well in mind. If the child loses motivation midway, the parent must reflect on how the material is presented as well as her own attitude (especially her praise and punishment concerning his progress).

(2) *Excessive praise and punishment can dampen the child's motivation.*

Repetition of such words as "That's not so," "It's wrong," "Why can't you understand such a thing?" lead to a sense of failure; they create an enervated and unresponsive child.

Praise, too, when given too lavishly, loses its effect. When given in too many words it sounds insincere. Feigned words of praise are

transparent to children. A prize should never be given except on a very special occasion. The child who becomes used to acting in expectation of a prize loses interest in doing things without prizes. In the first place, it is funny to give a prize each time the child does something he wants to.

(3) *It is harmful to greedily give too many materials.*

When I went on a lecture tour in Taiwan, after my lecture in a certain city, a young father visited me in the waiting room with a boy of about four, and asked what he should do with the child who had no concentration. The boy's eyes were restless looking this way and that. On talking more with the father, I found that he seemed to be feeding his son too much, trying to teach him this and that and this and that. Contrary to expectation, excessive stimulation is harmful.

(4) *You should not feel jittery wanting to see good results.*

We are talking about pleasant play in which the child is the subject. The parent should not interfere with him. Some parents can't watch in silence: they pull and push their children about each little thing saying, "Do it this way," or "Why can't you do it more skillfully?" The child of a pushy mother is said to have below average intellectual development.

Even more dangerous than this is to feel jittery wanting the child to advance to the next stage more quickly. As Mr. Suzuki says, "Pushing children to advance in the teaching material results in creating dropouts." The secret of raising ability is to aim at absorption in the earliest stage rather than anticipating what is higher.

## 2. Mental Development: Manual Training

I have repeated that the development of finger skills is closely related to the child's mental development. This seems to be fairly strongly influenced by the mother's child-raising attitude from birth.

Kant goes so far as to say that the hands are man's external brain. The question is not just technical as in whether one is skillful with the hands. They are the most basic of the sensory organs. As the tactual sense is concentrated in the hands, we are capable of distinguishing not only between cold and warm, mobile and still, soft and hard, but telling the weight, shape, and size of things that we touch.

Fröbel emphasizes the need of hand training activities in kindergarten, insisting that young children experience greater joy in playing with various things with their hands than in anything else and that this is important for later intellectual development.

### (1) Finger play

The baby is born with clenched fists with the thumb inside. When the thumb goes outside the fist, the action of grabbing rapidly develops.

#### (a) Rock, paper, scissors

Some children can play rock and paper well, but can't shape their hands properly for scissors. Help them to respond quickly in forming that shape.

#### (b) Which finger do you want out?

Join the hands interlocking the fingers. Quickly stretch the finger that is called. The middle and ring



fingers are difficult to raise.

(c) *Inch worm*

This also is an exercise of the thumbs and forefingers. Train the fingers so they can do it rhythmically and gradually faster. Touching and separating should make one motion.



(2) *Fold, pick up, tear, knot, fit*

(a) *Basic action of folding (folding once)*

Pay attention to the reciprocal action of the forefinger and the thumb. Get the edges perfectly together. Make the fold neatly.



(b) *Picking up (With finger tips)*

Pick up slippery round things and flat things fast and one after another.

(With chopsticks)

This is somewhat difficult for children who are used to spoons and forks. Start with easy objects to pick up.

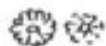


(c) *Tearing*

(Using old newspaper)

1. Tear fast vertically in equal widths.

2. Stop quickly leaving just five millimeters from the bottom. As you get better, you can leave



only three millimeters, then two millimeters.

3. Tear from the top; turn the paper upside-down and tear. Repeat this, alternating top and bottom.

4. Hold on to both ends and gently pull: it becomes a paper tape. Compare to see whose is longest.



(d) *Knot*

(Regular knot)

Making knots seems quite difficult to children, but when practised they make very neat knots.

(Temporary knot)

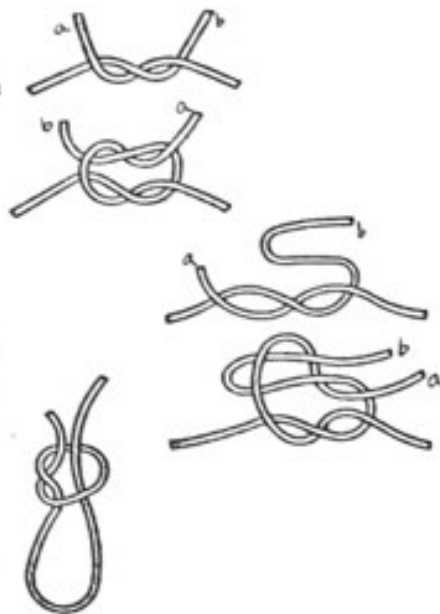
Pull one string to make it longer, fold it double, then tie as in a regular knot, then pull the end of b; the knot comes off easily.

(Sliding knot)

If you pull, it becomes too tight, so you have to be careful.

(e) *Fitting*

Children should be able to button themselves. Practice buttoning with big buttons. Gradually change to smaller and smaller ones. There are many two year olds who can skillfully button themselves. Don't always dress them in clothes with fasteners; let them wear things with buttons.



For one thing this is necessary for developing skillfulness of the finger tips.

Some toys on the market use the idea of fitting: you fit a certain shape in a space, or put a certain size block through a matching hole. This not only trains finger tips but fosters the eye to differentiate objects. The speed is crucial here. Children have to train themselves to play these games fast.

### (3) *Exercising the whole arm*

When writing or drawing, the skill in fingers is not sufficient. It is necessary for the entire arm to move well.

The following training in line drawing is intended for arm exercise; therefore please focus on how the arm moves rather than how neat the result of the drawing is. When children start something like this, mothers are apt to become preoccupied by the shape surrounded by lines on the paper, and want to criticize quickly: "Do it more neatly;" "Do it more carefully." If you pay attention only to such details which are a matter of fingers, the child's arm becomes stiff, and he can't produce smooth and free lines. Shapes are not important at first; what is more important is that the whole arm is moving uninhibitedly. Please keep this in mind.

Select a pencil about the softness of 2B. Use the back of any scrap paper. Typing paper is a good size.

Sit erect at the desk, hold the pencil properly using the thumb and the forefinger, supporting it with the flank of the middle finger. The distance from the pencil point to the point where it is held should be about the same as that from the thumb tip to the first joint. The pencil should be held somewhat diagonally

toward the right so that, when it moves to the center front, the eraser of the pencil points toward the right shoulder. Two year olds who can't yet hold the pencil properly can just grab it. How hard should the pencil press the paper? The arm naturally learns the proper and not too strong pressure that best fits the child, but if it is exceptionally strong or weak, a little guidance will be helpful.

Lift the arm from the desk, hold it horizontally, and make sure that the whole elbow moves and not just the finger tips: think that the lines are to draw not with finger tips but with the elbow. At first the elbow gets tired, but soon it will be fine as you get used to it. Have patience. Keep the hand from resting on the paper.

#### (a) *Going around*

Once you start don't stop in the middle. Continue with the speed suitable to the child. Start with ten seconds and gradually increase the time. Practice both going right and left. Do it in the same place; do it shifting the place gradually.

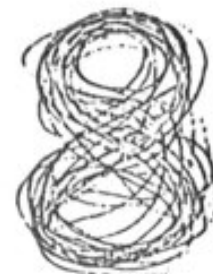


#### (b) *Figure 8*

In place; moving gradually.

#### (c) *Taking a walk*

Draw all over the paper so it becomes darker in the same way. Mixing straight and circular lines, draw freely and smoothly.



*(d) One-line designs*

1. Decide the starting point (at first it should be upper left corner).

2. Start at the signal, use the entire paper if possible, and return to the starting point.

3. The line cannot cross.

4. Once you start, you can't slow down or stop until you return to the starting point.

5. Start with about ten seconds; make it gradually longer.

6. When finished, color it.

*(e) Guessing game*

Put something gently on the child's palms behind her, and let her guess what it is. It may be square, flat, coarse, slippery, hard, soft, warm, or cold. The child guesses the object by the feel and size.

Use such familiar objects as a ball, a ping pong ball, a match, a cigaret lighter, a pencil, an eraser, a key, a button, a cup, etc. The more quickly the child guesses, the better.

It may be fun to include an item or two which is hard to guess.

Next is picking something that is asked for out of similar objects. For example, let the child pick just by touch a Corona SL from among similarly shaped minicars.

Finding a specific one out of the same size *shitajiki* (celluloid notebook liner used under the page for a smooth, hard surface), or, at an



advanced stage, telling the grade of sand paper by the touch, are also good ideas easy to think of in our daily life. A two year old standing with his back toward them instantly guessed the persons when Grandpa, Grandma, and mother put their hands in his in turns.

Five year olds in kindergarten play guessing objects in a bag just by the touch. When the entire family joins in this game, you will find that the child's guesses are better than adults'.



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

(Five Mottoes of  
Talent Education)



## On the Teachers' Conference

Kansai District Teachers' Association

This year's National Teachers' Conference was held at the Lake Biwa Hotel in Shiga Prefecture from May 31 to June 5 over five nights and six days.

Since the conference came to Kansai after many years, we Kansai teachers participated in it wishing that teachers from all over the country would enjoy studying together.

On the first evening, the famous Italian violinist Uto Ughi who happened to be visiting Japan showed up at the hall, and, graciously accepting Mr. Suzuki's invitation, played unaccompanied works by Bach and Paganini.

The conference hall was not built for recitals, so the acoustics were miserable. Yet his

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wonderful performance, overriding the poor conditions, irresistibly moved us and provided a propitious start for the conference.

Every day study sessions and recitals alternated. The study sessions included Mr. Suzuki's lecture on "one point, one lesson." To summarize:

1. The proper angle of the bow, right arm and hand, which provides the basis of string crossing.
2. Don'ts in string crossing.
3. Ability to put the weight of the bow on the string; ability to ring the string by placing a properly balanced bow on the string.
4. The point of resonance.
5. The ability to use the entire bow in a straight line.
6. Let the string ring with the bow arm; the ability to ring out a big tone.
7. The bow hold.
8. The power at the tip of the bow.
9. Clear articulation of each sound, which is the most important aspect of violin playing.
10. Casals' tonalization.
11. The ability to maneuver the fingers.
12. Creating the ability to move the tip of the bow right and left with the fingers.
13. The panda method.
14. The harmonics.
15. The finger power for pizzicato.
16. Relaxing stiff hand and fingers.
17. Smoothing the twist in the right index finger and lowering the elbow.
18. Relaxing the wrist and elbow at each bow.
19. The principle of moving the bow with the arm.
20. Elementary instruction in playing without the middle finger.

21. Training in staccato playing at the tip of the bow.
22. Position etudes.
23. Driving home the importance of fine vibrato.
24. Hang the right hand low in front of the right leg: "the right arm and the bow should not go to the right of this line."

Mr. Suzuki's report, full of ideas as always, renewed my admiration. Mr. Ōuchi's demonstration of vibrato instruction was also very well received.

Mr. Suzuki's use of the ball point for creating the right thumb ability drew an enthusiastic response. Other teachers responded with their own ideas to go along his, contributing to the pleasant communal study hour.

In usual years, several teachers are called by Mr. Suzuki to stand on the stage like guinea pigs, but this time there was one occasion in which the instructors each gave a lottery solo performance, a rarity since the number of participants is now so large.

Among the daily recitals, the cello ensemble was particularly memorable.

At the annual conference, the cello school meets separately from the violin school; therefore violin teachers may not know what cello teachers are doing. This concert organized by Instructor Adamira with the support of Mineo Hayashi was, I think, a red letter event in the history of the talent education cello school.

The program consisted of Boccherini's Sonata for Two Cellos, Beethoven's Trio for Three Cellos, Popper's Requiem for Three Cellos and Piano, and Villa-Lobos' Bachianas Brasileiras No. 1, first and second movements.

The last, a composition for eight cellos only, was performed by eleven cellists, the

majority of the cello instructors. The eleven cellos lined up in a semi circle on the stage were really a sight enough to overwhelm the audience. The harmony produced by the cellos, often thought to specialize only in low notes, had so much depth and wealth that it powerfully spoke to the listeners' hearts.

How wonderful it would be if a performance like this were given by cello children at the national concert in the future.

At this cello ensemble concert, Mineo Hayashi who performed in all the numbers, deserves particular mention. His tone was a glittering pearl with an outstanding sheen.

The six days ended aglow in Mr. Suzuki's love. His wonderful ideas, we are sure, are now blooming in classrooms throughout the country.

*Talent Education, no. 57*



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





